

FRIDAY 1st AUGUST
Living Lightly in Your Environment



All participants arrived by 13.45, so we began early! Martin gave a brief welcome and introduction to the weekend before everyone was efficiently herded to Merrywalks Bus Station (a five minute walk) for the Number 40 to Horsley, Nailsworth.



Ruskin Mill: the group gathered in the Gallery room, currently housing the student's exhibition, to hear Max's keynote speech.



"You will recall that old Chinese saying - or is that a threat? - 'May you live in interesting times!' Well, it has never been more apt. Did anyone see today's Guardian? It seems we now have 100 months (that's 8½ years) to avoid a climactic tipping point, the moment that climate change becomes irreversible. I read last week that by 2017, China's demand for milk will outstrip the world's supply. I believe there's a very real chance of energy and water wars between the major world powers in the next decade. Our economic system has deceived and failed us. Greed - and the belief that more money is a hedge against fear and death - Greed has been outed. We cannot any longer rely on the State to govern. 'They' only react, with the sole driver being to stay in power for as long as possible, swapping purpose for attachment. Corporations may claim to be environmentally and socially responsible, but only if they can afford it financially. A hollow, sneaky stance. Penguin chicks are freezing to death in Antarctica because it's raining there now, not snowing. I could go on... So, what can I do to mitigate these pretty awesome predictions and trends? Very little, actually! I could, I suppose, spend the rest of my life travelling, polluting, enjoying and ignoring the slow death of the human race. Let's be clear: the planet is fine. Global warming, peak oil and the England cricket score are not problems for the planet. It's been there before. It will bounce back... ..in a million years or so. It's the potential end of homo parasiticus we're talking about, the end of so-called man-made civilisation, the thing that Gandhi thought would be a good idea. We've fucked over Paradise. The Four SUVs of the Apocalypse are revving up

their engines already. This is our moment of no return. You can't BOGOF with Earth.

But, on the other hand, if I want to ensure that something of the remaining beauty of this world survives long enough for my grandchildren to enjoy - they'll be respectively 13, 12, 10 and 8 in 100 month's time - if I want to be as responsible as I can in the circumstances, what can I do?

I could probably start by no longer watching TV - it's nearly all a fear-generating machine on the one hand, anaesthetic on the other (clever!).

I could derive inspiration from great thinkers and do-ers: Schumacher, Matthew Fox, Ruskin, Thomas Berry and His Holiness the Dalai Lama with His concept of Contentment.

I could only work and/or spend time with people I admire.

I could continue systematically to question everything that originates from Government - national and local - and from corporations, who are legally bound to focus primarily on making money.

I could continue to rage against the utter stupidity of "unlimited growth", the 3rd runway at Heathrow, or promote the idea that progress isn't always more or always fast forward.

I could continue to agitate against social and environmental crimes...

Challenge hypocrisy...

Listen...

Walk to the shops...

Eat less...

Will any of this have any effect on World events? Almost certainly some, but not a lot.

So, what can I do?

I will tell you.

I can continue to raise and discuss these issues everywhere I go.

I can focus down my area of attention, narrow my range of activities and agitations to one where I do have influence, where I can have a positive impact.

I can continue to think globally - oppose globalisation, the World Trade Organisation, and reject interface with self-serving, avaricious business - and act locally.

Here, in Stroud, I am well placed to do just that. I'm in a community which is intellectually aware, quite inner-directed, a community which does not need to ask for permission before acting in its own best interests; a community that talks to itself, co-operates more than competes.

Here, I have vehicles to which I can hitch my wisdom, experience and energy.

Here, I can be part of teams of people in civil society, making a difference, often doing something for the first time ever, innovating, daring to do that which hitherto has only been dreamed of.

Here, I am making a difference, influencing and shaping what

I hope will be a future based on common-sense, compassion, humility and kindness. A needs-based future, not a frills and froth non-future. Because Martin [Large] and I are proud of what is happening here in Stroud, we wanted to find a way of sharing our experiences, our frustrations and triumphs, our unique Cotswold way of bringing Vision into Action. Stroud Communiversity is our way of doing just that, working closely with Transition Stroud - a brilliant team! Thank you for joining us in this experiment! I hope it is a stimulating and learning experience for all of us. Let's see how it unfolds!"

Then it was time for *Will Mercer* of Ruskin Mill, to take the lead and guide us through the history, journey and direction of this innovative establishment¹.

- Descent into matter is key to what they do in Ruskin Mill
- Engaging the whole being
By being practical, using the hands. NB Dr Aric Sigmun. research into the biological implications of using screen technology [author of 'Remotely Controlled']. Found evidence of how using the hands exercises the brain. Most of the courses at Ruskin Mill are practice based.
- Organisation is top down and bottom up, but there is always a gap in the middle. Communiversity tries to bring it together as does transition movement.

History

- Gordan family took over dis-used mill. It was rebuilt.
- The education programme started with Cotswold Chine school, first worked on restoring the wheel.
- Inspiration. 3 people.
 - **John Ruskin** (thinker, art critic and social commentator. Ruskin's "social economy" - networks of charitable, co-operative and other non-governmental organisations) - inspired people to think outside the box of industrial revolution. Ruskin lead to...
 - **William Morris** - one of the principal founders of the British Arts and Crafts movement, a pioneer of the socialist movement in Britain, and a writer. William had battles with emerging socialism of the time.
 - **Rudolph Steiner**. founder of Anthroposophy, Waldorf education, biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine, and Eurythmy. Steiner advocated a form of ethical individualism, to which he later brought a more explicitly spiritual component. He derived his epistemology from Johann Wolfgang Goethe's world view, where "Thinking... is no more and no less an organ of perception than the eye or ear. Just as the eye perceives colours and the ear sounds, so thinking perceives ideas." He looked for individuation within universal context.²

1 Observational notes from Julie Newton

2 From Will Mercer's Notes

Outside tour of Ruskin Mill

- **energy** – carbon trust is doing an energy audit of the place [(Energy Descent), Transport, Water, Food, Procurement, Building (BREEAM)].
- **Alternative Technology:** *Solar:* 4.8 kW with 30 photo voltaic panels. *Hydro:* Ossberger crossflow turbine. 5.71kW generating 22,562kW p/a = 15% of building. Both the solar and hydro = 4.2% energy savings (7.7 tonnes CO₂)
- part of curriculum is recycling (within educational programme)
professional development to build resilience and sustainability – **Hiram Academy** : Modules up to L3/4 in *Sustainability management, Therapeutic practical skills edu.; Care and Nutrition, Universe, Earth & People, Ecology of Leadership.*
- funded by Learning Skills council – treated as a specialist college, further education in a higher education.
- students usually referred by parents or systems, then there is a matrix to establish their suitability

craft shops at Ruskin Mill

- They encourage crafts people to work here so students have sense of work experience – crafts people help with the education.
- education system for children with aspergers syndrome, learning difficulty, emotional behavioural programmes.
- Building was renovated, with coffee shop open to public and that helped to rebuild the place. Idea of growing, processing harvesting and serving. Built upon natural cycles.
- incorporate festivals.
- Flow forms are designed with observation of nature, used with reed bed systems to re-oxygenate the water.
- Apothecary, bringing in the natural healing side. This aspect will be key in Sheffield.

(Martin points out that 15 years ago the place was a complete mess: was recreated by students, staff and community).

Walking through Ruskin Mill

- Many of the children come from urban backgrounds and it takes a year for them to settle down and then get involved in understanding nutrition and what is a healthy diet. They get plenty of exercise.
- Work in small groups. Students have personal tutors. There is a mentorship scheme. After 3 years they will understand a lot more about positive integrative values and why people work together.
- Many still have to take medication. In-house GP works with anthroposophical medicine.
- try to deal as much as possible in-house. Doesn't always work.
- They write some of it up for OFSTED and for agencies that evaluate them.

Ruskin Mill. Geni Loci (spirit of place)

Each college is audited or communed with, to explore the natural elements and the elementals and beings

working within it, as well as its anthropogenic connections. Each place has its characteristics: natural economy, geological radiance, bio-diversity, hydrology, botanical developments, meteorological and micro climate, animal and human history.

Key questions when studying **geni loci**:

- What is disabling the environment, and community?
- Who are you?
- What is your integrity?
- Permission to develop and change
- Methods of co-creation, collaboration and communication.audit (geological, hydrological)... what can grow here organically? How can humans grow around here in collaboration with nature and still gain spiritual achievement where ideas and thoughts can circulate? ...the old fisheries...
- Idea is to give people a sense of experience of seasons. But also about hardening up the physical.
- Work *with* nature in the animal kingdom.

Action Learning at Star Anise...

followed by buffet supper...

'Learning from our Ancestors'

'That we may work in righteousness, and Lay the Foundation of Making the Earth a common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor, that every one that is born on the Land, may be fed by the Earth his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that rules Creation.'

Gerard Winstanley, St. George's Hill, London, April Fool's Day, 1649

Molly Scott Cato & Helen Pitel

The Economics of Transition

- Living from the land
- Bioregional economics
- Creating sustainable livelihoods
- William Cobbett: Cottage Economy (1822) 'The evils of tea (and the virtues of beer)'



Bioregionalism. Economy with Eco-System

- Bioregionalism has at its heart two of the central principles of green economics: balance and cycles.
- Bioregionalism means living a rooted life, being aware of where your resources come from and where your wastes go
- Can think of it as borrowing our resources from the local natural environment
- *The local* is a principle that trumps other principles such as *price* or *choice*

A bioregion is literally and etymologically a 'life-place'—a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and non-human living communities. Bioregions can be variously defined by the geography of watersheds, similar plant and animal ecosystems, and related identifiable landforms and by the unique human cultures that grow from natural limits and potentials of the region.

Life-Place. Bioregional Thought and Practice, **R.L. Thayer**, 2003

The Passivhaus. a radical change to our relationship with our environment

- Everything we consume and every action we take impacts on our environment. mostly negatively
- We need to learn the lessons of ecology and take practical steps towards being a species inhabiting our environmental niche, rather than a parasitic invader
- We need to work with the systems of nature and the energy of life.



Rainwater harvesting: **closing the loop**

- All activities should be based on the closed loop.
- We need an economy that follows the cyclical pattern of nature rather than the linear progress model, e.g. the carbon cycle
- Biofuels on the farm
- Reducing the flows in and out of our household, e.g. rainwater harvesting.

Learning to **Reinhabit Nature**

- We need to re-embed ourselves in nature
- Learning to live as a part of nature can mean reorganizing our urban spaces into edible estates, e.g. planting fruit trees in towns
- At the personal level we can eat in rhythm with nature

Personal permaculture

- Local and regional currencies
- Car, lift and tool sharing
- Farmers' markets and CSA
- Life-cycle analysis
- WWOOFing
- Co-operatives
- Co-housing and ecovillages

'The land is Our Mother'

In societies whose very existence depended upon knowing the earth and how to hunt its animals and forage for its foods—the way of life for 99 percent of human history—respect for the natural world and an appreciation of the land itself as sacred and inviolable was surely inevitable. That sensibility was literally so vital that it was embedded in some central place in each culture's myths and traditions and was embodied in each culture's supreme spirits and deities

Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in th Land: The Bioregional Vision*, 2000

Mrs Brown Went to Town

People work in pairs First person says ‘Mrs Brown went to town and bought a mango’. The person next to her/him responds with ‘Mrs Brown went to town and she bought a plum tree’, so a low-carbon substitute for the high-carbon item. Then the next pair do the same around the circle. Go round twice so everybody can be virtuous at least once!

A Positive Vision...

- The convivial economy not the lean economy
- An opportunity to reclaim control of production and value
- We need to be producers as well as consumers
- The importance of community through production & consumption



- Stroud known for its people and the earth... **local characters** such as John Marjoram the Green Party mayor, and Dennis Gould football poet.
- The town council has been controlled by Greens for some ten years and there are at present 11 Green Councillors on town council and 5 or 6 On District Council.
- Mary sells all manner of very useful second hand household stuff at the **Shambles market** on Fridays. Fairtrade Town. District Population is 108,000.
- **Made in Stroud** – a shop selling work of 120 local artists and craftworkers. Arts and crafts importance – textiles past and present. Going for 8 years. Brunel’s engine shed. Landscape of the five valleys has inspired artists. Fringe Festival, Open Studios, Stroud water Textile Trust festival, Katie Fforde, Jamila Gavin, Jilly Cooper and Laurie Lee.
- **Stroud Valleys Project** – a wide range of local work, working with volunteers, looking after greenspaces, including pocket parks, habitat management. Education work including this shot of Family Learning Week – families learning about composting, making wormeries.
- **Car club**. 24 hr access to 3 cars. Each car in car club replaces 5–8 cars. Transition Stroud transport group v. active. Green travel plan. *Carol Mathews* researched list of family days out solely by public transport.
- Medical and health facilities. **St Lukes** is an NHS surgery also offering a range of alternative therapies. Take control of your own health – find out about natural remedies and treatments. Grow your own medicine chest.
- **The Green Shop** –products for a natural, healthy home. New state of the art co-building, solar, green and brown roofs, rainwater harvesting shown here etc.They sell a range of household, cleaning goods and toiletries for everyday use. When you do DIY and decoration you can get eco paints and finishes. If you do refurbishments you can get kit for eco-renovation and if you are lucky enough to be doing new build you can get ideas and goods for building. Link to **Transition Open Eco Homes** in September.
- **Institutional food growing**. An NHS psychiatric open ward – Helen has been teaching staff and patients to grow food. Could every hospital grow food?
- Starting a gardening a **wildlife group**. Gardening is very popular in Stroud – we could do more. These are beans grown from seed obtained at one of our seed swap evenings. Grown in newspaper pots.

- **Permaculture gardening** (develop aspects of permaculture for yourself)– easy things to do. Grow food in pots and containers. Urine becomes input for compost. Grow your own flowers – I also grow lavender on my allotment for anti moth bags. Grow your own herbs for fresh teas and medicines – this is chamomile. Collect urine = liquid gold for easy compost making. Grow flowers – where have all the butterflies gone? Loss of biodiversity is a real concern. We have fab countryside on our doorstep – Rod Common is an SAC (special area of Conservation EU) best invertebrate populations. Photo of Swift's Hill.

Discussion.

Stroud valleys project: does good work of reaching out to people but percentage is still more. (reached 13000 through the education programme, would have to double check the figures).

Discussion about the open home for energy efficient homes. Talk about tranquillity house which is state of art, but the challenge is to make it affordable.

Team Feedback: Everything went surprisingly smoothly for a first day. All bookers were present and arrived on time. We were particularly grateful for the journey to Ruskin Mill by public transport so close to the start of the Communiversity, as this immediately called for interaction and networking creating a mood of momentum and conviviality which continued throughout the weekend. The tour of Ruskn Mill was thoroughly enjoyed, but it was noted that too much was said in the Gallery rather than en route and spontaneous. Also, the walk was a bit much for some. The return transport went smoothly and Action Learning kept to its time. The dinner was delicious, although too much emphasis on bread and not quite enough pizza to go round. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed what they got! Sadly not enough time for Molly & Helen to do their work justice in just two hours, but good ground was covered and a lot of inspiration generated.

Saturday 2nd August
Creating a Sustainable Local Food Economy



Jade Bashford

Jade works for Soil Association helping food enterprises from bottom up. Also advisor for Lottery fund. Food projects in Stroud

- **Farmers market** – privately owned, small family business with strong moral values.
- **Chalford Community Shop** – most towns have these, fairly easy to set up. Has paid worker and 30 volunteers, owned and run by the community. Sells whole food and organic food, provides outlet for local producers.
- **Wholefood buying groups** – Jade belongs to one with 24 household members, formally a cooperative. Bulkbuy from wholesaler and lorry delivers to someone's house, take turns on rota to sort out food in piles. Easy and straightforward to do. Very informal, no regulation. Just work out between themselves.
- **Stroud LETS allotment** – for more than 10 years. Have 4/5 allotments. Meet regularly on Friday. They love it. Used to trade food for LETS. (LETS disappeared for many reasons, a short answer being the administration was tedious to do).
- **Chicken share, sheep share, pig share**
- **Community orchard** – on private land. Owner was generous and didn't have time to do it. There was no formal tenancy agreement cause he wants to be able to sell the land when he needs to. He does it as a generous act on his part.
- **Orchard group**
- **Leonard Stanley** – were going to set up CSA but couldn't because Council owned farm, requiring tenancy. Council unwilling to consider them without business history. Organise occasional group buying schemes, put in a village order. Will plan to set up a village shop.
- **StroudSown** – collective of local food enthusiasts supporting new food initiatives and promoting local food.

Stroudco

- CIC owned and controlled by producers and consumers (50/50, not for profit)
- 200 members (all local)
- Runs for principle
- School drop off
- Free use of systems
- All producers put products online and consumers will order online, producers will drop it at school on sat morning and sort it out, in afternoon consumer comes and collects food that they paid in advance.
- voluntary requirement – producer has open days.
- Much easier for a producer to trade this way than at farmers market. Producer will give up 5/8% to fund someone to manage the website and orders. This will pay for a paid worker. Consumers will also pay a membership fee.
- Risk. huge amount of work and don't know if it will succeed.
- could become commercial if simply looking at profits.
- Main competition would be the supermarkets. (Aim is to get people out of the supermarkets!)
- what is the unique selling point (how do you corner the market).
- cause very low cost to run, should be of use to producers (she still doesn't know if it works) .

Discussion of legal model.

“went for CIC model, (was a difficult decision). Had to adapt a model. Don’t have a legal expertise.”

Mark: “all legal structures are different tools, but all do the same thing. Most organisations look the same – it is there in the background.”

Paul: “good thing about CIC, is straight forward and Cheap to do. Foreseeable problem is how to avoid being taxed by inland revenue. Wants to make sure it goes into charity account without incurring charge from inland revenue.”

Main feature of CIC (why it is popular) is you can set up a trading arm. Reason it is popular is that it has an asset lock. You can’t wind business up and divvy surplus amongst members. It has to go to a nominated body or another social enterprise. It is good for a charity because as a trading arm it doesn’t have all the impositions of a charity and is a lot freer. But everything is locked back into the charity.

...(grey area in the law)...

Paul: also can use funds to pay some of the directors. What is left over is the pot that can be applied to the CIC.

Michael raises issues of volunteerism. Situations where begin as volunteers and then get paid, and then there are those who don’t get paid. How this is dealt with can be a strain.

Mark: “One way around this is to have a volunteers agreement, all written, everyone understands where they are. Some shy away from that because then they think they have a contract of employment. Volunteers with employment right creates different situations. Might mean have to comply with certain legislation if volunteers employed. Also issue that don’t need you, easily dismissed. Especially with food groups, a volunteer agreement does not mean contract of employment. Need to seek legal advice on agreement. If there is an exchange of consideration (i.e. if you get given veg to taken home), that creates a contract of employment. So have to be very careful.”

Paul: timebank is good way of doing that. If people want to offer their time, the time-bank records this.

Community Supported Agriculture – There are a handful of CSAs in the country, many trying to set up. Soil Association helps to set up. There are more CSAs in the states. (see soil association website for more info). Currently 2 in Stroud – SCA & SSFC (Stroud Slad Farm Community). This second CSA has around 100 members, and is based on a different model to SCA: the private land owners are involved as stakeholders of the CSA. The CSA is a tenant of the private landowners who bought up a local veg box scheme. The incentive to start the CSA stemmed from financial hardship and an urge for community involvement.

What is it (CSA)?

A partnership between farmers and consumers where, at its best, the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared.

Stroud Community Agriculture

- Operates solely to further a set of principles
- A community owned enterprise
- 2 farmers paid a wage
- Runs a 50 acre organic mixed farm
- A rich community life around the farm
- 200 households – Wanted to be no bigger than 200 because all decisions made by consensus, wanted to know each other and recognise each other at picnics. Decided to help a second CSA start.
- £80,000 turnover



Notes. No land is owned (they would like to own land but haven't got the land). Farmers don't own the business, it is run by the community. It's a community run business and rents the land. The tenancy is between the community group and the landowners and it is a secure agreement. The farmers do this work full time, and they do have apprentices. SCA started in 2001 and has grown gradually.

Consensus making structures. when that doesn't work, their legal structure requires that they vote. There has only been one occasion when this happened and this is when a core member wanted to be re-elected. "always been embarrassed about being middle-class and green". When they did a survey of themselves, found out that not as middle class as thought. A lot of people were on low-income, with kids, or on disability. Partly a discomfort more than fact. but difficult to be welcoming to people who are not green (cause there would be no reason to get involved.). Not too expensive.

when they did a survey of their cost of veg, found that actually a lot cheaper than supermarket organic veg. Do have a bursary scheme. also found that some people were embarrassed to admit that they couldn't afford to be members. So, it is for this reason only that they set up a workshare scheme. There are some people who don't have money or time (i.e. caring for someone), but they are not asked questions about their income.

Difficult to make it accessible for disability. But there are some areas for people with special needs. Have someone who makes canvas bags for veg.

Currently looking at rainwater harvesting and would need a grant for this.

What is it for?

- To support organic and biodynamic agriculture.
- To pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk and ensure that the farmers have a decent livelihood.
- To be fully inclusive. Low income shall not exclude anyone.
- To encourage practical involvement on all levels.
- To be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.

- To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.
- To network with others to promote community supported agriculture to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).
- To encourage Stroud Community Agriculture members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.
- To develop a non-exclusive sense of community around the farm

A new economic model

- Based on mutual benefit and shared risk
- No profiting shareholders - not trying to make a profit (£12 last year)
- Not grant dependant
- Farmers paid £19k pro rata
- We all decide the finances



Agriculture Supported Community

- Formed from community debate
- Community events, engagement
- A sense of ownership
- Relationships
- Resilience



How did it begin?

Started with no land, no farm, no money, no relationships – just a wild vision

- There was a public meeting in 2001
- Further discussions organised into a core group & work groups
- Set principles and purpose
- Made a plan
- Started on 2 acres of walled garden



How does it work?

- Members pay a subscription of 8 pounds a week for one veg share which people mostly collect. One share is good for a couple, but a family with children might need 2 shares³.
- There is also a gift box.
- Members can buy meat: it's in freezer. Take what you need and write it in the book. Leave a cheque each month.
- For extra, can buy potatoes, onions and carrots. Do sell surpluses.
- Members decide all matters.

³ The principle of the shares was to take the total cost and divide that by all members. But don't have enough money to buy new things, would need more money.

- A core group of 8/9 people who do the day to day work. In first days were more meetings (around 20 people) talking about what they would do, but now things are 'ticking over nicely' in core group who deal with issues that come up (e.g. Horse).
- A difficult question will go to whole membership group (e.g. attaining new land)
- Farmers have delegated responsibilities. Unless they want to do something quite radical or spend a lot of money, they can make a lot of decisions on their own.
- In the same way, they respond to members' (reasonable) demands: when people said they wanted flowers in their share, they were supportive in finding ways to make this possible.
- No compulsion for members to volunteer. Open access to farm for everyone.
- Wanted a new economic model to work financially without being grant dependent. Had one small grant, but managed quite well without grant funding.
- Based on mutual benefit and shared risk: want farmers to take risks and members to share that responsibility and risk in farming. So, if there's a poor crop, members get less food and farmers get the same salary if they can cope with farming. If they do very well, farmers get a bonus.
- No profit for share-holders and not much capital investment at all. Not trying to make profit. Have managed to build surplus and have been able to increase salaries of farmers and build up a reserve. Farmer's salary is £19,000, which is not good but much better for a mixed farm compared to others working under same conditions. Would like to pay them more.
- *Problem*: pigs use a lot of money but the whole group decided to keep them. Even vegans wanted to keep them.
- *Wart*: the treasurer administrative manager have only recently been paid. Wanted to pay them before, but no money.

Discussion.

the issue of spare time and income.

Molly: "there are some people in Stroud who choose to have a low income."

Someone said that they have that choice to be 'poor'. But they may have this choice because they are able to sustain themselves in other ways.

Some said it is easy for people who have the money who say that some volunteer activities don't have to be paid.

Jade: "there has been a lot of this discussion and we have changed by this experience." By doing many of these activities on a voluntary basis, it means that only a certain sector of community can be involved with no recompenses for their work. Won't be able to give this time if don't have earnings, that's why it gets into the middle class/ green areas. Concept of spare time if don't have much earnings is difficult.

"it's agriculture supported community just as much as it is community supported agriculture".

The farm is almost a biproduct because many feel that they have been changed by the experience.

Jade: community events, bonfires, seasonal festivals... a proper community. A lot of families

bring their children to the farm, friendships are created, a loving community. Some come for benefit some come out of necessity. Also a sense of ownership even those who have come more recently. Talk about it as “our farm”. some people leave, not many, but with the new land, have been able to increase members). Some people don’t know what to do with vegetables, some are growing their own, some people leave area. There is not a consistent pattern.

Molly mentioned a problem. sometimes get bored of getting same vegetables, or getting dirty vegetables and other might think “it’s not for us, we’re not like you.”.

Jade adds that reason might not join in first place is it is about perception “it’s not for us, it’s like a Stroud thing to do”. Molly mentions that this is why they are trying to build up in Gloucester because the second site is located nearer that end.

Luke asked about transferring of skills or are people ‘let loose on the farm’. Jade explains that they have skilled farmers one of the farmers specialises in livestock and the other in horticulture.

Helen says that through volunteering, working alongside someone who is experienced is the best ways to transfer skills. Jade mentioned that they had some apprenticeships who are formal.

But members are not formally trained. Some just turn up or come on a week day or come with their kids. (home educated).

When asked whether members dig up weeds. Jade responded that they are “well supervised” and that Mark is “very skilled, not only with vegetables, but with people, he is a very fine man”

Steven asked whether the farmers had been trained to become educators. Jade said they haven’t. She says that the farmers are very good with the people.

Background of the farmers.

- One had a biodynamic camphill background, and the other was a veg grower on newly acquired site (need to double check).
- Both farmers go backwards and forwards between the site. Molly mentioned a third part-time worker.

Insurance.

- To begin with, SCA was not incorporated and had no insurance, so the core group was personally liable. There was the feeling that they should have insurance but didn’t like the insurance industry. It was dangerous – uncomfortable to have your house on the line. They have insurance now that they are incorporated.
- They are not insured for property or when stuff stolen, but are insured for *product liability* (if it makes you sick) and *employers liability* (in case if you fall or break anything).
- the polytunnels have been vandalised on a couple of occasions.

What to look out for

- People – when you walk about farm, you’ll bump into more people than usual
- Quality of grass, ecology – not sprayed, cut from hay, full of flowers
- Evidence of children – swings, etc
- Scale and diversity – see a handful of sheep, cows, a bit of this and that which is unusual.
- Condition of animals – very large and healthy
- Quality of produce
- Trust – Padlock on gate: some veg/meat was stolen
- Closed cycles
- Packaging and plastic – hay is not wrapped in plastic and veg in canvas bags, a few plastic bags
- Beauty – people care what it looks like.

Thinking about local and community driven food enterprise

Overview of food issues

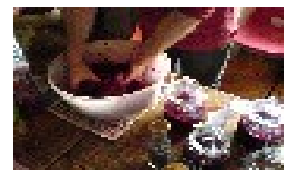
- Environment
- Oil dependency
- Food security
- Nutrition
- Overseas
- Animal welfare
- Rural communities and social capital
- Large businesses, economies of scale
- Power and control

Some underlying barriers

- Access to land
- Time poverty/ convenience
- Food culture
- Cooking habits and skills
- Lack of infrastructure
- Fewer small businesses
- Farming skills
- Loss of local distinctiveness
- Social capital and identity

Exercise: What would an ideal food system look like?

- Who is in control?
- What is it for?
- What does it look like?
- What does it supply?



- What is the social setting?
- What part does money play?
- How does it affect the people involved?

Odi's notes. Control? – **Relationships**. Purpose? – **Nourishment**.

- The community would be the farmer
- Inter-generational responsibility
- Respect. Acknowledge **everyone's** responsibility.
- *Trade* as opposed to *Money*. **Fayre Trade**.
- 'Produit du Terroire'... Local Food Identity... Sense of Place through Food...
- Medaeval Lessons. Food & Craft Festivals.

- “The Cloud Atlas”
- **GAST** general agreement on sustainable Trade

Team Feedback: A very full day. Inspiring session with Jade, including some great exercises. The presentation lacked images, which were missed by some and may have helped to engage those less well versed in local food work. Very grateful for the last minute appearance of Nadine to present the water purification system at Hawkwood. Her enthusiasm and dedication were highly appreciated. The Hawkwood tour could have been more detailed, presenting exactly what was growing where, but there was plenty of time for people to take their own pace and level of enquiry. **Social at Star Anise:** Bring & Share worked very well with broad range of food and lots of it. Very good atmosphere and social cohesion. The band, *Smoothee*, very much appreciated. Under attendance of Stroudies & TT folk, perhaps due to holidays, poor advertising or apathy. For the Communiversers it was a jovial breathing out.

Sunday 3rd August *Land, housing & livelihood*



Martin Large & Max Comfort

Summary fo Key Issues

Group 1:

Lack of land, highly urbanised area... land is being taken over by private developers, therefore high prices... local housing associations are not building which is leading to 3 generations of inappropriately sited dwellings... ownership of land, and high price of land, mean more land is being disaggregated... individual farms on periphery of settlement, individual fields being bought by houses next door, therefore ownership becoming fragmented. Community doesn't feel in control of what is happening on its doorstep. Primary processes are very complex planning processes with which communities need to engage. Therefore easy to feel disempowered. The other issue was that the houses being built by developers are not being built to the

right size for affordability. The focus is more for profit. Property developers only focused in building so many homes.

Group 2:

Planning system trapped. Allocation of new build requires so many houses to be built. Lots of high rise going up – expected that this is what is wanted. Many are single person households. Issue of behaviour change of living on own.

Group 3:

People coming from city, new influences in villages, the tensions it creates. How the land is bound in few hands (understatement). Land around every village has ‘hope value’.

Group 4:

Getting access to land to grow food is becoming impossible. Nationwide there is massive queues to get on allotments. Intergenerational aspect of using existing housing stock and using housing wisely. There is tendency to expand out. Might be better to expand up as it would be cheaper, would mean less land is using up.

Burning issues:

- Social disintegration, villages becoming dysfunctional, schools, people can't live in places where they work.
- Control, cost and conflict. Who is controlling land, what it costs, and the conflict of use (planning system)
- How do we care for our cultural landscape. E.g. Slad valley is being gentrified?
- Some people looking towards Pembrokeshire as an example. Parkinson's famous law – it takes several weeks for a ministry to put up bike shed, but nuclear station decision gets put up in 5 days.
- When you think of CLT, need to think of control, cost, conflict and design.
- Need to think of CLT as a way of reconnecting with place.
- In Martin's work, unless you reconnect with land and place, it becomes too abstract.

Triggers for CLT in Stroud. BACKGROUND

- In the 1990s, globalisation hit Stroud. Martin used to work as a chair at Painswick Inn. Used to give training to young people. Had income of £30,000 a year when gov cut grant.
- Pursued a community asset development strategy so bought lots of property anyway to house young people (16–25 year old). This served to generate income as they were a charity. (15,000 a year)
- Second: supermarkets in Stroud. Stroud is hollowed out,, doesn't have a good shopping centre. you need to go to Tescos or Waitrose. There were 90 empty properties in middle of Stroud.
- Response, was a community planning process in 1994 and 1995, engaged 1000 people in what we wanted for Stroud focusing on arts. One of key issue how to culturally regenerate town. So, they developed the cultural regeneration strategy called ‘up 2 us’ looking at drama, the arts...Stroud Valleys Artspace (mixture of studios).
- They got a drama course going using 100 part time students with 9 and 10 plays a year. Needed a

space to do it. In 1999, the church in lansdown was put on sale by the County Council. they said they wanted it as a theatre, got 40 art groups together and asked whether they needed this as a performing arts centre.

- Out of that they formed *Stroud Common Wealth* with 2 objectives:
 - a) to own land for land and property for community benefit
 - b)develop social enterprise
- If they hadn't put in for a bid for it, the church would have been sold off. It became a success. They developed a charity (Stroud Performing Arts Charity - SPACE) to run it and have now sold the church to this charity.
- From this experience, realised need to look into this. Heard about CLT from the States, so held a conference in 2000 called "land for people conference" which got from Winston Churchill's 1910 address and people came from all over the country. Realised this was a big issue, people came from wales, Scotland and people didn't know much about it. This set the scene.
- Then in 2003, a group of them went the states to study Community Land Trusts. Included Bob Patterson from University of Salford, Pat Connaghty of *nef*.
- brought this back & has since worked on national demonstration projects going with 14 pilots
- Max and Martin then did a feasibility study and business plan for setting up Gloucestershire Land for People.
- In the meantime, property values rocketed and did not have a strategic vehicle to hold land for property community benefit. So had all newcomers coming into Stroud and property prices going up and people excluded, all sorts of issues.
- Key issue that they have found is that property has become a commodity, not a right.
- **Polyani** (philosopher) predicted that *if land, people and property are treated as commodities, society would be devastated.*
- We have abused land by regarding it as a commodity belonging to us rather than a community to which we belong. (regarding it with love and respect).

Asked us to consider how we connect with space because 'placemaking' is what community building is about :

work place people

Martin was in Norway recently where they are recreating a farm in high pastures, taking sheep, goats and cows up the fjord valleys and mountains. Have May , June, July and August farms, as they eat grass they go up the valleys. This community, through its state school, developed an environmental curriculum out of the realisation that the community was losing the fjords. They are reconnecting with place. They get thousands of tourists every year. Working on recreating the cultural landscape of the fjords. He met a young 18 year old doing high school project on Norwegian horses carrying cement to this high farm on precipitous planks. Farm was surrounded by waterfalls was called 'singing farm', because at night can hear the waterfalls sing. It was a type of pilgrimage place.

The heart and spirit of community development is trying to reconnect with spirit of place.

People's experiences of place

Patrick Geddes was father of town planning, landscape architecture, asked how do you create communities grounded in sense of place and how do you create a real sense of place. How to recreate the landscape.

Ebenezer Howard tried to do this with Letchworth garden city.

Geddes, Edinburgh zoo was an attempt to do this. Geddes said you forget about analysis until you experience the seasons and the essence of place. Explored the regions. He invented word 'region'. Explored how to use experience of place to foster communities of place and what they want.

Martin mentions you can look at this at Ruskin mill which was pretty run down 20 years ago.

Margaret (C) [Hawthorn Press] did lots of workshops around that valley, looking at what was there, what was the story, what was the essence of different places. Out of this they recreated the whole valley, adding new elements, creating new elements and created a new cultural landscape.

An architect, **Chris Day**, looks at how you analyse place and create buildings that match the activities of that landscape.

How do you understand place and the people who work to create housing? Land Trusts take a lead on this.

One of Geddes's contemporaries was John Ruskin, (author of "unto this last"). 'There is no wealth but life'. ...idea of land trusteeship. His ideas were very infectious. He helped Octavia Hill with money and support the first housing association in London. He founded various Saint George trust which owns property in midlands, was originally a land trust. His writings had huge influence. Tolstoy read 'unto this last'...experimented in Russia. People read about this in England and started up the Whiteway community in 1898 in Sheepscombe. They re-imported Ruskin via Tolstoy. Famously burnt the land deeds and built houses on this piece of land. There is still a community there with monthly meetings.

Ruskin's ideas also influenced the foundation of The National Trust, the generation of countryside and national heritage.

Talks about the **Gandhi** Film...apparently he read Ruskin and Gandhi followed ideas to set up settlements based on and trusts in south Africa and then took this back to India. One of Gandhi's pupils set up a village land gift movement in 1950s and 60s. His ideas were taken up by American **Robert Swan**, American pioneer of CLT.

Swan was a friend of Martin Luther King cousin and started one of first land trusts in American south for shared crops and land farmers.

In 2003, 'we' reimported Ruskin's ideas to try and make them work in British Context.

The word trusteeship is instantly recognised, not land ownership, it is very different, stewarding the land for the community. Inland revenue understands trusteeship

Fordhall farm:

21 and 20 year old farmers approached Greg Pilley (Soil Association) and Martin because their farm was being sold in 2004. At that time, Greg and Martin were working on Community Farm Land Trust action research project under Stroud Common Wealth. They got funding from the Tudor Trust. It was the first farm to approach them so they visited in Nov 2004. Very run down and Charlotte was 21 and Ben was 20. They were very young. Their dad, Arthur (90), was an organic pioneer. Allowed tenancy to fall into a state . Repossession. The mother (50) still lived there. Farm was very cold, damp and run down. They asked for help.

They managed to set up a community benefit society cooperative (Industrial Provident Society). Members were able to buy 8000 shares and raised 800,000 pounds to buy that farm on July 1st 2006. The news went around the world.

The reason Greg worked with them is they were young people. Charlotte had fantastic communication skills with a thick press file. Because they prevented a 10acre field next to the farm from getting planning permission for housing. Mueller Yogurt (German firm) near their farm would have been interested in buying it. Charlotte was very skilled and Ben was keen on farming. From modest beginnings, they were able to mobilise the community. They now have lots of young people who volunteer on the farm.

Original farmer (Arthur) inherited the farm in 1929 and then stopped using chemicals in 1930s. one of first organic farmers.

It was an amazing story that got such a lot of press and incredible publicity, it did touch people's hearts. Reason it resonated so well with people was because it was a story about reconnecting place and the story. People want to support young farmers. Story of David and Goliath. Restoring the countryside, they had a passion to want to make something happen with that land. It's that initial passion.

Another reason could be that there is not really a profit motivation because it talks about shares. It's a different type of investment and control mechanism. That could appeal more to people.

IPS status allowed a cheap way to buy shares that were transferable. It means you have a stake and ownership. Very simple process. Some people gave donations instead of shareholders. They have a stake in the farm.

Charlotte and Ben were able to draw up tremendous support. The structure was right. IPS status allows in

cheap way to buy £50 shares. The benefits were social and environmental. Feeling you have a stake in things... these are transferable, you can sell them off. But they don't go up. This is a very flexible form.

IT and website (not possible 15 years ago), enabled this. The IPS selected a board to steward the land and make sure that the community interest is secured so that access for all sorts of education (social, health, cultural, heritage) benefits. But unless you have a clear agreement, some of these might get eroded down the line. Therefore it's the job of the board of directors and members to make sure that land is stewarded and that there is clear lease agreement with Fordhall Farm Ltd who run the farm. Very simple model.

The essence of this legal mechanism (IPS) is it allows you to secure community interest on one hand and , ownership of land and the wider benefits and the individual ownership. You don't want farms badly run by the community. That's why a lot of community farms use this IPS model.

(steve gives a plug for similar thing they are setting up).

Some discussion about how to get people to feel a sense of community. Raises the 'scale' issue... how do you do that when a lot more people are involved... knowing who everyone is.

Martin describes Fordhall Farm as a **thought leader** , values, legal structures, ways of doing things, practices, people can look at it as way of doing something and use it as a springboard for their own projects., can see how it operates. A lesson. Horticulture is more specific and often usually easier to raise money rather than housing which is contested.

That's how they work in Stroud, trying to develop models of good practice in order to spread it .

As a result of project under big lottery food programme, community food projects can get up to £300,000 as a grant from big lottery to purchase land which.

The national trust owns a lot of farm land.

The social association has set up the social association land trust. There are several other farm land trusts set up. Tablehurst Farm in Sussex is good example of community farm land trust which has a turnover in excess of a million. Farm business is capitalised by shares from village people. They lease the land from other farmers.

(outcomes of their community farm land trust action research. Soil association also has resources on website).

Gloucestershire land for people

Martin shows a slide of a notice to keep people off the cashes green site. (get off the land).

Was a hospital till 1994. there were many allotments. The health authority cleared people off the allotments. Local community still remembers this clearly. A lot of public land around. When they did the feasibility study, the 11 acre land was identified as a possible place. GLP got grant from county council to do feasibility, and result of that set up good board of people. This was their first project.

Aim of GLP is not just to develop this project, originally wanted to develop mutual home ownership where land trust own land and lease the land to variety of users (like allotment association and doctor surgery, but especially to cooperative housing society which would develop own buildings and lease the right to occupy to 50 households). This fell foul of government best value for money guidelines. They didn't tell them that before they started. It took 2 years to do the feasibility.

In June 2007, EP (gov landowner) said yes, that they will recommend it to the minister, than civil servants, treasury at senior level said it was not value for money. Therefore a lot of positive engagement work was lost....

They were not successful in getting land for housing. Now ministers are embarrassed by this. However, they are now re-engaging with the community who were very resistant to doing another plan. GLP might get 25% or half the land or 1/3 of land for land trust housing. The rest may go to private housing.

So, GLP has tried to change values and attitudes. As a result of that work and the national demonstration project, there are a number of pilot projects going nationally that are working. These are mainly small projects. Now CLT is legally defined by act of parliament. Labour ministers were blocking it for a long time. This is a major victory. They are changing values but it takes time.

GLP also developing community land trusts in villages.

Chedworth village near Cirencester with 2000 people approached GLP. They are very wealthy and have 2 acres land. They have land trust bug, and want a form of land trust. At annual parish plan meeting, they said they wanted to develop a community land farm on land, want 2 tennis courts, basket ball court, housing etc. They are ok, they have all sort of house trusts and have finance in the village. GLP is helping them. Cirencester Cotswold district council are supporting them too. Forest of Dean District Council is also interested. Farmer Finch in Chedworth said that all the land from council houses were sold off in 1980s under right to buy. He gave that land for village people to live in. villagers remember these people. He asked what guarantee does he have if he gives land away, want to make sure land looked after?.

Where does the land come from in land trust? It is all well to set up a trusteeship of people but buying land is very expensive. Forest Of Dean is planning in future for 600 houses in Lydney. They are considering for 10% to 25% of this go into CLT for social housing. Could be a stream of land going into the land trust.

Stonesfileld in Oxfordshire

- Small CLT started in 1980s in response to gentrification and geriatrification
- Tony Craft gifted the land. There are people particularly in villages and small farms prepared to give land or sell land at low cost if they can be sure the trusteeship will hold that land way into the future (like 16th century alm house)

This is why act of parliament with definition of CLT is important. Challenge of government policy with all political parties is people want the have the right to buy. The land trust says no, we want to keep the land. **So GLP are assisting a number of villages to set up land trusts, for village hall or for food growing. More villages are thinking about it, even on a small scale.**

Max Comfort

I'd like to start with a quote from **Thomas Berry**. He is a historian of cultures and author of many books including *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. He said, in *Resurgence* last Autumn.

“The Universe is primarily a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. Those of us who live in the industrial world have become locked into ourselves, into the human process. We cannot relate to the outer world in any effective manner. We cannot get out, and the outer world cannot penetrate the human. We have lost our reverence, our sense of mystery, our sense of the sacred. We do not hear the voices of the surrounding world, the voices of the entire range of natural phenomena. The forests seem to be there primarily for exploitation. Any depth of human presence to the forests is relegated to “marginal” persons, such as poets and painters, who are considered victimised by sentiment. The reality of the tree is simply its utility, its economic value. To accept that trees have rights to be what they are and that all living beings have rights to their habitat is the challenge. Humans too have rights within the larger context of the Earth Community. If our rights are sacred, we must accept that the rights of other beings also are sacred.”

Has anyone looked at the full moon recently and wondered at how it can just hang there, this incredible ball in the middle of nothing? And, as for the sun, is it not a total miracle that that inferno hanging there in space can warm us from 91,000,000 miles away? I regard with awe these things that it is so easy to take for granted and to dismiss in terms of scientific fact and measurement. I consciously keep alive my wonder and reverence for our extraordinary world. It's so easy to forget.

oOo

A little bit about me. Increasingly, I describe myself as a business subversive, questioning perceived wisdom around the need for jobs, for huge corporations, for unlimited growth, for work being about survival and

not about personal fulfilment and development. I have a Portfolio Career, that's to say I do lots of different things for different people. When I was in architecture and masterplanning, I was keenly aware that many of my interests were not being addressed, that there was no time to exercise my strong curiosity, that only some of my skills were being utilised.

Now, I can let my curiosity loose on the world, use all my experience and put myself to the test, learning all the time, cross fertilising experience from one task to another. I'm lucky in that I can choose what I do, work only with people I respect and admire, and be fully in charge of my own destiny. In London, I'm an executive coach and facilitator, and I teach at the Royal College of Art and at other creative colleges. In Stroud I'm a social entrepreneur, harnessing good old-fashioned business acumen to vision and innovation for the benefit of the community. I also write the occasional book. When asked what I do, I nowadays say that my job is being Max Comfort.

oOo

So, today, we're going to look at these three interrelated areas.

Work
Money
Livelihood

oOo

Let's look first at **work**. What would you say if asked: "What is the future of Work? What will Work be like in 20 year's time?" Here are some thoughts.

- Peak oil; climate change; localisation; decentralising; re-ruralisation; simplification; less personal mobility; etc
- Technology as the driver for nomadic working
- The demise of loyalty
- Increasing need for purpose – now a bigger issue than making money

Quotes from **Charles Handy**. "To re-invent work in its fullest sense we need another word: portfolio." And he warns us against worshipping only at the feet of efficiency and sets out his principle of the inside-out doughnut, where the core represents the basic, common denominator activity or target, and the space around the core represents "...our opportunity to make a difference, to live up to our full potential."

Quote from **John Naisbitt** ("Megatrends" in 1982). He called for a balance between "...the material wonders of technology" and "...the spiritual demands of our human nature..." and advised that "...we are shifting from a managerial society to an entrepreneurial society."

William Bridges, in "Jobshift", says that the Job is being replaced by "part-time and temporary work

situations". Since "...today's organisation is rapidly being transformed from a structure built out of jobs to a field of work needing to be done..." and it follows that "...jobs are rigid solutions to an elastic problem ... and are no longer socially adaptive creatures, and so they are going the way of the dinosaur."

Matthew Fox tells us: "We dare not miss the truly radical and creative moment in which we live – one in which we are being asked to redefine work itself." And continues: "Work is the expression of the Spirit at work in the world through us. Work is that which puts us in touch with others, not so much at the level of personal interaction, but at the level of service in the community."

William DeFoore calls for change from the expression "a good head for business" (representing a disconnection from the rest of our body) to "a good heart or a good soul for business."

Steiner talks in *The Threefold Commonwealth* of the triformation of the social organism and describes the three distinct realms within it, each interacting with another but to be treated autonomously: Liberty and the individual's spiritual and cultural rights; Equality and social and legal obligations and, finally Fraternity as opposed to competition in the economic sector.

What are your reasons for "going to the office"?

So, *why do we work?* Here are some reasons I've come up with.

1. To make money.

To support our basic needs and our family's.

Job as life-raft.

2. To be fulfilled.

To be recognised as a being.

To have a purpose, a role, however small.

To bring meaning into our existence in what is generally a very unhappy world.

To develop transferable skills and experience.

To use work as a venue for self-development.

3. To experience Community & Relationship.

Many people meet their life's partner at work.

To be part of a team.

To combat isolation and loneliness.

To belong to something.

To use feedback to develop confidence.

To learn about the difference between us and others.

4. To get and exercise power.

Perhaps if we don't have it at home we can get it at work.

Work out some of our schooltime frustrations on others.

To experience our competitiveness and – sometimes – our aggression.

To learn to be assertive.

To learn not to use the power we have.

5. To develop status and gain recognition.

To make a name for ourselves at work.

Attain respect that might be missing in other parts of our life.

Reinforce our self-esteem and confidence.

6. To serve.

There is so much out there that needs to be done, so we need to do it.

Serving our own deep needs.

Serving others.

Serving the needs of the future.

7. To experience creativity.

Making things.

Helping others achieve their aims.

Building a business or project – or helping to.

Experiencing shared creativity.

Experiencing completion – washing up beautifully!

8. To hide from the awesomeness of our own true purpose.

“It is our Light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world.”¹

Having an impossible project.

Never having to engage with change but being pulled along with it.

Avoiding making a commitment.

Denying and hiding from what we are passionate about.

I’d like you to contemplate these questions and note your energetic response to them.

- What are you passionate about?
- What inspires you?
- Where else – in relation to work – might you want to be, now or later?
- How will you start the journey toward that place?

Now make some action points – three things you are going to do in the next 7 days in relation to your work or the work you long to do.

Finally, in this section, another question, a biggie! Whatever you do, please do not answer this question now. Wait until you are safely under your duvet tonight. Ready for the question? OK Here it comes.

“Why do you work?”

oOo

Money

Who loves money? Who hates it?

Do you know the root of the word “economy”? It comes from the Greek Ekonos, to steward, to care for. The word has been hijacked by the financial sector and the care has been replaced with greed.

And of course, hand in hand with greed goes fear. Would you agree that there’s a fair bit of fear around money? We fear, don’t we, that we’ll lose it, it will be stolen, we’ll lose the ability to make it, we’ll invest unwisely, and – ultimately – we’ll end up in a cardboard box in a door way.

I once experienced having absolutely no money – not a bean. Aged 18, I was in Egypt, having run out of money hitch-hiking through Libya and conned my way through the Egyptian border guards. I lived on the roof of the Cairo Youth Hostel, climbing in at night; friends put my washing in with theirs. I discovered a fantastic workers canteen in the centre of the city where you could get a free mug of boiling water. As it was a large building, there were columns all over the place and around each column was a shelf with various condiments: ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, HP etc. Shaking these into the hot water gave me a passable soup. When I tired of “Column Soup” I would sit in the Lounge of the Nile Hilton, eyeing up American ladies of a certain age in the hope that they would invite me to lunch etc. I won’t go into the “etc”! The point is, I was never happier. I had nothing, so nothing to lose. Not a worry in the world except the immediate moment, the next hour or so. I’m not suggesting this as a sustainable lifestyle but I’m really grateful for that experience.

So, why is there so much fear around money? I have a theory which has to do with the Industrial Revolution that started in Europe around the end of the 18th C. Before this time, there was little money around and most people fended for themselves; they were multi-taskers, able to build their homes, look after animals, make their clothes, grow their food, see to their medical needs and so forth. Then along came those “dark, satanic mills” and with them the machining of Men through the Job. And the Job brought money. So we were able then to swap our ability to look after ourselves – to be largely self-sufficient – with the ability to pay others to do it for us. That’s the paradigm we’re in now. We are so removed from the source of our basic needs (clothing, food, shelter, security etc) that the only way we can answer them is through money. Money is all that now connects most of us with the place that answers our needs and so we feel strongly our lack of self-sufficiency are – at some level – fearful of our dependence on systems largely established in the interests of those who have no interest in us other than as a purchasing unit. We are like new-born babies in our helplessness. No wonder we are scared.

Who can define the word Abundance for me? It’s often depicted as that great horn with lots of beautiful fruit spilling out of it. Abundance is having more than enough. In terms of money, is Abundance having

more money than we need? I would say not, although it's true that having lots of money can sometimes make things easier. As a very wealthy man, I would say that Abundance is having good friends, a great relationship, a loving family, sunrises, woods to walk in, little children putting their hand trustingly in mine, trees, the Moon. Money is also part of my Abundance, but is most certainly not the whole of it. Why do I describe myself as wealthy? Because if I choose to be, if I choose to revere the amazing place I've found myself in, I am truly wealthy. I don't have a great deal of money – there is always just enough – but, because I focus on the non-financial aspects of my life more than on money, I am rich beyond words.

These thoughts help me get money in perspective and, conversely, give me the confidence to charge for my services at a rate that serves me. I get paid well because I give good service and because I know my own worth. This is not about being arrogant, but being in good relationship with money, knowing my boundaries well and electing not to have them transgressed.

Part of my relationship with money is having a clear sense of how much I really need. How much do we really, really need? What can we reasonably expect to have in our lives in terms of stuff? And, more fundamentally, how can we free ourselves from The System, the system that sees to it that we have all this stuff, that we accumulate huge numbers of material possessions?

Disengaging from The System is one of my most sacred intentions, so how can I go about it? Well, I can work towards being debt free, stop using credit cards. I can decline to have loyalty cards. I can minimise the information I give out about myself to Government Departments and corporates. I can encourage and use a local economy of alternative currency or bartering or both. I can use cash as much as possible. I can shop locally from people I know. I can stop watching TV.

I can draw up a Content List. No, not a Contents List – as in stuff that I have in my cupboards or lofts. A Content List, in other words what it is that I need in order to be truly content and fulfilled, the bare minimum I really, really need to be happy.

I invite you to draw up your own Content List. It's a form of divine de-cluttering, getting back to the core, pruning our possessions.

Finally, I'd like to invite you to list three things you are now going to do around money when you get home – or before!

oOo

Livelihood

First I'd like to dispel any impression I might have given that we should survive. Please don't survive. Survival is for wimps! I would love you to Thrive! This is not about being greedy or selfish. it's common

sense. How can you give of your best to the world that so badly needs you if you are barely surviving, probably in burn-out and beginning to resent the very people you have set out to help? You need to be in tip-top condition to operate in this world, to give the 120% that will set you apart from others and ensure that you are valued and asked to do more. So thrive!!

A further thought, following on from money: how desperately sad to be limited to a life of only making lots of money. How limiting that must be. Is this what we mean by livelihood? It's certainly not my definition. Listen to the word: live-li-hood. This is all about being alive, living to the full, being engaged with our best selves, utilising our compassion, operating in our light.

So how do we manage if there's a clash between our values system and other peoples' different values system? How do we deal with what we may regard as materialism, avarice, ignorance, prejudice, hypocrisy? Or the absolute certainty of someone's faith?

Examples please...

One way of course is to accept rather than fight strongly held views, perhaps to exercise compassion in the face of apparently fear-inspired rigidity, to allow the possibility of multiple realities.

Where do the attitudes that we use to form judgements on our values and those of others – where do these attitudes come from? How do they develop? And how are attitudes different from opinions and beliefs? Do opinions shape our attitudes or vice versa?

Please now make an Attitudes List in three columns: the left hand column is for listing your attitudes; the middle column is for you to say where they stemmed from; and the right hand column is where you note down what might change them.

Now I'd like to say a little about what I call Self Management.

Since the old loyalties between employer and employee have long gone, it's now down to individuals to chart and manage their careers. I call this self management. Here are a few thoughts about that: it's to do with:

- Focusing on others' needs before our own
- Abandoning the notion of rights and embracing responsibility
- Treating employers like clients, not parents
- Maintaining your values and boundaries and respecting other peoples'
- Reviewing your attitudes regularly
- Expecting nothing – and everything
- Actively maintaining your curiosity.

oOo

Finally I'd like to share something of my experience of running my own and other peoples' businesses, social enterprises, and charities for more than 20 years. That experience is best characterised by what I call the Four Cornerstones. You won't find these on the curriculum of Harvard MBA courses or in the numerous motivational speeches telling you how to be a more successful business-person. But I know that these four elements of my life are what have supported me most in my post-architecture career.

The first cornerstone is **Time Management**. Contrary to what you will be told in the clever books that encourage you to squeeze more out of your day – or tell you how to cram more in – really effective time management is doing less better. As a so-called civilised society, we are actually in the process of destroying time. We spend so much time trying to make time that we never have time to enjoy, that the whole exercise is rather pointless. We are on a great mindless squirrel wheel, flying faster and ever faster towards our extinction, never having time to consider why we are doing what we are doing, never having time to experience the present moment, so focused are we on rushing, so terrified of being still. I can't understand the hurry – why do so many people seem hell bent on meeting their doom as soon as possible?

I say this to anyone who'll listen, be they the Vice Presidents of some of the most powerful companies in the world, or Trustees of small charities: the best possible project management tool you have in your possession is Day Dreaming. Employ day dreaming on a regular basis; let your mind wander away. It knows where to go and it will come back, often laden with insights, realisations and solutions. We are so fixated on doing, doing, doing, we are so like a dog worrying a bone, that we don't give ourselves time to allow in resolution born of peacefulness and surrender.

The second cornerstone is **Relationship**. Fairly obvious really, we need to forge good relationships with as many people as possible in order to thrive and to serve others. Sometimes we will need to put effort into relationships with people we don't much care for, people we would not normally want to associate with. These might be the bank manager or the taxman, but these are the very people that we have to deal with whether we like it or not, so it behoves us to strike up a good relationship, one that serves us. If we only approach them when there is a problem they will perceive us as a problem; if we make an effort to establish a good working relationship with them when things are going well – and let them know – they will experience us quite differently, and in a much more positive light.

It doesn't take much effort to put that little bit extra into building relationships. We can talk to people (it's now called networking) anywhere: at parties, at conferences, in the corner shop, in the John, anywhere where there are other people. Get into the habit of relating.

The third cornerstone is **Focus**. A client is a client is a client. Give even the most unprepossessing person that 120%. You may never see them again but they may well recommend you to someone else if they've had a fantastic time with you. This is all part of what Ram Dass called "Being Here Now", being in the

present moment, focusing fully on the now. Never having time to experience the now is part of Time Management as well; a client of mine, a top designer, regularly bemoans the fact that his designs are now sent to the clients by email. Before, they would be sent by courier and would sometimes take a couple of days to reach Japan, Korea, wherever. That meant there was time to go round the corner to the pub to celebrate having successfully completed the project and getting it off on time. Now, there is no time to experience completion: within minutes of the designs going out on the ether, the client is on the phone wanting to discuss revisions. So, moments of experiencing completion are becoming rarer as we all hurry on to...

To deal with this, organise moments for yourself when you experience the satisfaction of taking time to complete something beautifully. Turn as much of your life as possible into the equivalent of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, where nothing is hurried and everything is savoured. Do your washing up beautifully, turn it into an Art Form, lining all the same glasses up in neat rows, stacking the dishes in descending order of size, and putting knives with knives, forks with forks. Perpetrate random acts of mindfulness!

The fourth cornerstone – and the most important – is **Trust**. I have this special relationship with little green men; not the ones that gave Dan Dare such a hard time in the comics of the 50s and 60s – they were Mekons. No, the little green men who live in the pedestrian crossings. I have noticed (and I do test this on a regular basis everywhere I go) that when I walk up to the crossing the little red men nearly always give way immediately to their green friends, allowing me to cross the road without really stopping in my stride. So I experience my life as flowing through the day. The reason this works is that every morning I get up trusting that this is going to be a great day, that it will flow and that, if there are challenges, I will have the inner strength to deal with them well. (By the way, please don't try this without looking!)

When I'm out there in the hurly burly, I have a choice. I can either get annoyed if things don't go to plan or if someone is being rude or obstructive; or I can trust that things will work out fine and that what is, is meant for me to handle as best I can. I have no need to get angry. Just to trust that there is a reason for whatever is going on, that I have a role to play and that I have something to contribute.

oOo

Finally, don't forget that important question tonight when you're safely tucked up!

FEEDBACK

Bev, Paul, Fiona, Ivan, Sue, Elisabeth **Communiversity Review 3 August 2008**

- Keep visits to successful projects and meeting people leading them
- Hearing the stories and the WARTS
- Keep Action Learning
- Keep positive, can do, anything possible approach

- Keep mobile discussion groups on bus trips and the walks
- Walking and talking led to flow and change according to interests and serendipity
- Keep the inspiring environment
- Format made us think-liked discussing in pairs, in groups and whole group
- We never had the sense of being talked at
- It was a full 3 days. What would help I future would be to send advance info to read before so we an prepare and create more time for discussions
- Use Wiki
- Be clear about what handout is/is not available at outset of a session
- Can Notes be put on the Stroud Common Wealth website? E.g. Jades'
- Can Julie circulate her notes and put them on web site?
- Put Max inspiring Ruskin Mill talk on website
- Create an Open Space half day
- Proper badges
- Add CPD to Attendance Certificate- could help get funded for course fee

Closing Circle Review

- Create TT evening or session
- Open Space half day
- Friday to Sunday works
- Need rain gear and walking shoes for walking and talking
- 9.30 Start on Sundays
- Over limits, danger of overload

How to take it forward?

How does this contribute to sustainable education?

- Broadened my horizons beyond narrow environmental concerns and focus
- Useful theory sessions and visits
- Fantastic seed bed of ideas and good practice... Really inspired me, wonderful way of moving what's happening here into a wider context
- Brilliant sharing and learning
- Liked the focus on legal, organisational an financial structures that hook into what we have got
- You're invited to S. Wales to test out these ideas in a new situation and perhaps sceptical audience
- People presented in their own ways and we could be ourselves. Wanted to call it a Diversity...
- Like being home educated. Closest I'll get!
- Suggest snapshots and day for local people. They are curious
- Gap was TT Stroud. e.g. Sat night
- Offer of Light Foot Energy Service session
- Action learning useful
- Liked Certificate as a community ward. Duplicate this in other parts of the country?
- CPD recognition for funding and employer sponsorship

- Could come here and be myself.

Participant Feedback

Firstly, I just wanted to say many thanks to you in particular for being such a good host and popping up with food and smiles everywhere! It makes a difference to participants when they feel looked after and you certainly provided that in abundance!

I like the idea of 'Communiversity' and the Summer School - I think it adds importance (value), strength and brings a sense of learning if not academia to the proceedings. As such there may be links which could be made to further develop this aspect and lead to participants qualifying for Open University / open college credits. CPD is obviously relevant and perhaps the event itself should be recognised as qualifying and for awarding certificates for this purpose.

It seems to me, not being aware of anything like this elsewhere, that Communiversity ideals / events should take place in other parts of the UK. Everywhere communities are experimenting and seeking guidance on how to be more sustainable - both economically and environmentally. We know that economically the concept of social enterprise is growing, especially as ethical, fair trade and the at the scale of "every individual can make a change." Environmentally it is obvious - we need to share, learn and quickly put into practice what is good for people and the planet. We also know that this change comes both from the community and from the leaders of government. Both must come together to succeed. Individuals and communities can make a difference - but also the leaders and politicians at all levels must act and support this change. Communiversity might demonstrate this and connect with the regional office (GOSW?) and include a presentation from an MP and/or junior minister. These are opportunities for learning and understanding both ways!

I would imagine that it would be possible for the Government's department of communities to endorse (maybe co-fund?) the idea of community leaders having this wonderful opportunity to see and learn from other successful and imaginative social enterprise and sustainable towns (villages and cities) in future.

Sponsorship for scholarships and making the event widely accessible through Internet and film documentary should also be possible through both government and business associations. BT say they are community conscious - and so maybe they could provide technology to enable many more people who cannot attend in person to be part of the process as well as contribute to and build the "tool kit for sustainable communities and lifestyles". Microsoft - have the software to enable presentations to be transcribed and enable easy editing and transfer to web site or download as podcasts / MP3 files.

Certainly the proceedings of Communiversity 2008 should be published and, following future events, issue complete papers and descriptions from the presenters and Communiversity reporters, who would record the field trip content.

We heard about the Learning and Skills Council and they might be worth involving for funding purposes?

On the question about length and cost...

You may think of the event composed of two parts. The first might open with the more academic approach with lectures and workshops focussing on details, research and analysis of success, failure, lessons learnt, etc on and around whatever the chosen topic or subject focus will be each year. This part would contribute to the award of credits for open university / college certificates and degrees.

This might then lead into the second half or last few days dedicated to field trips (some optional / or choice of places visited) where a further intake of participants could join at a lesser fee than for the whole event and those who are not interested in the more academic side but wish to meet others and see places and projects in real life.

This idea comes in a roundabout way from the Radio Academy's annual Festival which I used to go to and teach at Tech.Con. It started with university students and others having the first days in a technical conference and workshops - learning the art and technology of radio before the main event started.

Students might not be able to afford the whole event so it gave them a special part and focus. They also operate scholarships so that some students are able to stay for the whole Festival, excused from paying

the fees.

Perhaps, in years to come, if this event becomes a national one, it might also include an element of international study with a separate study tour of relevant sites in Europe (funded by the EU / UN Environment Programme/?).

Stroud has done marvellously well, congratulations!

Even if you decide to keep it within Stroud each year I am sure people will still come and take away many things which they can use in communities across the country.

Well done everyone and thank you again for giving me the chance to experience Communiversity. I came back to Glastonbury with renewed energy and desire to achieve our vision and hopes for a more sustainable community.

With best wishes

Paul Lund

Director

The Sustainable Environment Company CIC (founded in Glastonbury, not-for-private-profit community interest company)

It was great to meet everybody (from Stroud and elsewhere!) and for me the whole thing was informative, enjoyable and well organised - not to mention the refreshments and meals which were brilliant (and not forgetting the products of Stroud Brewery!)

Hearing about and seeing the projects being achieved and developed around Stroud from the people who are closely involved was inspiring - also it was really good to share information and experiences from elsewhere.

Thanks very much much to all those engaged in making Stroud Communiversity happen - I'm sure that there will be some good outcomes.....

Bye for now

Michael

Thank you for your part in organising the Communiversity. It was a hugely helpful event and I really appreciated the opportunity to meet both the presenters and participants.

Bev

Feedback Comments

How has Communiversity helped or inspired you?

...clearer idea of how to take my local TT initiative forward.

...shown me more about how to use the existing fiscal and legal system to achieve my/our aims.

...new ideas, new projects. Very inspiring.

...has made me far more likely to actually do something.

...I realise that action is the last part of setting up a project, so face the fear and go ahead and do it anyway! (as they say).

...I have been inspired by example ie: seeing projects being established and the way they create a web of mutual support and creativity in and around Stroud. Experiencing this is very energising and the openness and transparency with which it is presented is very inclusive and encouraging.

...given me the overall picture. Put me in contact with wonderful people doing very important work.

...introduced me to a range of initiatives that are happening in Stroud where i have a home.

...massively. I have collected ideas/support/resources/contacts to take back.

...made me think about sustainability education.

...to do it again - i must be mad!

...seeing and hearing re: existing projects and meeting those involved (participants included).

...it has been inspiring to see how the projects we have seen have grown largely out of the dreams, enthusiasm, visions and commitment of small groups of people who want to make a difference. I have witnessed the power of that process over this week-end. My challenge is to find the people to work with where i live. I have also made very good local connections which may well act as a starting point.
...meeting people, collecting information.
...helped me tremendously with current work and inspired me on a personal level.
...wealth of ideas to pass on to others. Ideas for speakers who might inspire others.
...always good to see and mix with others involved and dedicated to same principles and ideals.
...seeing the various projects and activities going on in Stroud has been very useful. The event has been really good - especially meeting the people who organised and ran the event and all those who attended. It was great to be part of the event and exchange information and experiences - lots of valuable conversations and connections.
...encouraged me. I now know i know enough to get on with (developing) my project.
...development of my understanding.

What would you like to learn more about now?

- Facilitation
- Fiscal & legal structures for action
- Collective modes of organisation
- Raising Funding
- The Nuts & Bolts
- Examples of good practice around the country
- Community Land Trusts
- Deepening the way...
- Marketing Communiversity
- What went well, what we would do differently ie: learning to assist us in our future initiatives.
- The skills needed to work together with others
- Social development & styles of management and leadership.
- Whiteway Colony
- the history of ideas
- more information and guests coming from similar CLT
- sustainable transport
- how you engage with mainstream population
- District & County Council response to our work
- How other communities do their thing
- what else is going on and how people are forming networks around the country.
- How plans to develop Stroud Communiversity proceed
- Doing more with less (ie: relaxing, daydreaming, focussing)
- Other Food projects

Any Other Comments?

“instead of a crammed programme covering a whole range of topics, would two day modules on different topics be better?”

“brilliant. Enjoyed meeting you all (and all the participants).”

“suggest develop the summer school theme and credits for HE?FE or CPD.

Is there an institute for Community social enterprise and sustainability? ICSES.

Handouts and more learning materials.

Toolkits to take back to own community to pass on good practice.

Session for each participant to give say 5 mins presentation on what they do in their project/etc.

Hopes. Concerns. Offers. Ideas exchange.

Some people not aware of SWOT analysis.

Perhaps Communiversity website for alumni and networking”.

“exhausting but stimulating - days felt very long but i didn't mean they dragged - i just got very tired”.

“would be good to hear more about Stroud Valleys Project. Was fantastic, inspiring, well organised.

Loved the action learning at end of day to reflect. Would be good to offer daily rate.”

“it has been a great privilege to attend this course - inspiring, thought provoking and brilliant. I think the format is great. I really hope i can start to work with the ideas and put them into practice to help make a difference.”

“the whole event was a life turning time. I feel that having been here, nothing will ever be the same. Thankyou from my heart.”

“thankyou everybody for all the effort you have put in to organising this excellent event and oppportunity to exchange ideas.”

“Go on the road?”

“a panel question/answer session would be good.”

“more on fundamental concepts, especially Permaculture principles.”

Feedback *statistics*

1) information in advance

75% “good”.

10% “superb”.

10% “vague”.

5% “good, but a bit vague”.

2) arrangements for accomodation

35% made their own arrangements. Of remaining,

77% “great”.

23% “sufficient”.

3) arrangements for food

90% “fantastic”.

10% “sufficient”.

4) venue

70% “appropriate”.

5% “appropriate & sufficient”.

25% “sufficient”.

5) organisation of sessions & equipment

55% “definitely good”.

45% “mostly good”.

6) facilitation methods - varied, interesting & promoted learning?

60% “definitely”.

40% “mostly”.

9) recommend to a friend?

85% “definitely”.

15% “perhaps”.

11) “communiversy”?

50% “spot on!”.

45% “alright”.

5% “no”.

12) was cost a barrier?

60% “no”.

35% “somewhat”.

5% “definitely”.

13) three days?

75% “definitely”

25% “mostly”,

Final Assessment Yes, it was worth it! And we broke even!! A thoroughly enjoyable if slightly shambolic soiree at *Sorentos* (we all preferred *Star Anise* food, but hey, it was good to get out). Tired but satisfied we all agreed this first Stroud Communiversy was definitely NOT a one off... Watch this space!!