

News from the mews

Guerilla gardening is on the way up, literally on a well hidden slope in the shelter of a regenerating woodland.

I have evolved, from gorilla gardening to grueling gardening to guerilla gardening. If only one could picture Darwin now, first a stick, then a spade, then a sheet of cardboard. The closest we could ever come to being animals again is to forage, but evolution requires us to design landscapes with a human need. That means carefully selecting for plants that benefit all living systems including earth as a whole. It seems that I hear about guerilla gardening everywhere I go now. One should visit the Project Dirt website to see that many projects are doing just that reclaiming under-used land. It is a bit of a buzz, getting back to our roots, the same motive that brought on the agricultural revolutions. We must remember to maintain the wilderness, for here dwells our genetic ancestry. On our new site at the 'Reservoir' we have encountered a piece of land that has a preservation order slapped on it. In our investigations we found out that the local residents rather conceitedly used an ecological survey to prevent the owner from building on it. The owner is so rich as to buy an adjoining property in order that he could bulldoze it down to make an access route into it. But Lewi-

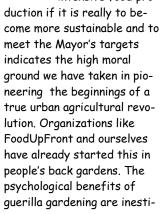
sham still prevented him from building, and still he tries with subsequent applications. As guerilla gardeners we have become middle-men. Some of the locals are concerned, giving their reasons that if they show no protest against our actions then the owner may use this as ammunition for a subsequent planning applica-

tion. We have also had encouragement from others who feel that the land should go to more productive use. As a permaculturist I would have already taken this into consideration. Diversity is

essential, and natural regeneration is allowed for. The rare grasses, subject to a full London-wide comparison, tend to be on areas where competition is lessened. If the land were to go over to woodland without maintenance then those wild grasses would be lost. Wilderness management requires human input to maintain the ecological diversity. By lowering the net we allow the ecologists to work with our intentions of increasing diversity through the introduction of crops on areas that have gone to couch grass and

bramble. We also allow the owner to make a reappraisal of the quality of the land and an ethical planning application for instance, self-build. Why else should we destroy a rare piece of landscape history, once a water reservoir? True ownership is participation. My vision is of an urban farm, one providing an education re-

source for all the local schools. It is an ideal, and recently on visiting Vauxhall City Farm for Project Dirt's first birthday party I could see their ongoing attraction. That London needs to earmark these places for more intensive food pro-



mable for its need to cultivate the wilderness in all of us. It is on the fringes where policy changes are deeply

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Membership offers (see back page)

- ◆ Free DVD
- Regular email bulletins on courses and events around the UK
- A collectable design portfolio
- 10% discount on courses run by SLP
- Discounted books and library resources
- Volunteer and paid opportunities at festivals and other events
- Workdays and private tuition
- 2 free newsletters per year
- Reduced prices on plants and freebies



You are what you cultivate

Chair's Chat

few centuries after

If you had a choice between being of British nationality or an indigene which would you chose in the current climate of impending deep recession and increased bureaucratic control?

In my studies I have discovered an extraordinary coincidence. History is repeating itself, and it may well be worthwhile exploring this avenue to see where we go from here. The period I am relating to is the first the Roman withdrawal from Britain. Of course, with their legions went their authority and what remained was a legacy of technological achievement. One may call it fortuitous that the Roman Empire was converted to Christianity in the 4th century AD. The Roman influence extending as far as Scotland, but there were certain areas that they couldn't touch, namely Ireland and the fringes of the Empire. In other words there remained a strong influence of the indigenous values of the Celts. But Christendom went much further, and after the Roman withdrawal the country was held together by a new

monastic movement. The monastic movement was extraordinary in that it was fluidic and had structure only as far as it had been developed across the nations. The emerging Celtic Church could have been construed as separatist against Roman Christianity who had brought a diocesan form of rule decreed from Rome itself. The Catholic transition though had exercised a much greater degree of cultural, legal and liturgical pluralism and so allowed for an autonomous bishopric in those areas where the Roman style of urban rule had no influence. In fact Catholicism only really become centralized from the 11th century onwards. The Celtic Church had expressed a more spiritual administration where religious, political, social and cultural sites tended to blend into each other.

So what am I saying here? Well, we are heading into a recession are we not, and this recession means many things to many types of peoples. For travellers, self-builders, fringe groups like squatters and gypsies, and other intentional communities it is the actualisation of their deepest anxieties; one's choice of living subsequently means much more in the light of the failed systems which they had rejected anyway. What we may be seeing here are the last years of an empire going through its death throes. This empire I am referring to is not the British Empire - that ceased to exist a while back. I am talking about the high-energy technological exploitation and degradation of the landscape for its resources for which the Romans amongst other empires were highly responsible. Nature eventually rears her ugly head once in a while. In fact, after the Roman withdrawal the land was given rest and the forests returned to Europe only to be exploited again in the agricultural revolution of the 9th century onwards. In that time the monks came to the forefront. The monastic ideal had come from the likes of John Cassian who brought different forms of worship from Egypt and Palestine and explored its use particularly in Gaul and Britain. As such the monastic movement was already under way who's ascetic values created 'deserts' in the forms of islands and forest enclosures. Where buildings were grouped within a boundary wall in a sort of haphazard way this was to become the loosely structured community for which the emergent Celtic monasticism modelled itself on. The Roman concept of anchoring spiritual authority to cities was to differ from the Celtic Church's sense of "location". During the 6 and 7th centuries non-territorial allegiances allowed the 'local' church to expand indefinitely.

This is anarchy. Those Celtic bishops, likened to the druids and called thus, followed their own rules. They travelled the landscape between 'deserts' with a nomadic sentiment setting up new communities. They brought with them the skills that allowed the laity to engage in, especially for the production of food in very difficult conditions. Well, one need not look far to realise that this is the emerging pattern today, amongst permaculturalists, low impact developers, and traveller organisations who are setting up their anarchic locales and challenging the law in the wake of the expected receding 'empire'. These forest dwellers who are practising traditional forms of tree management, and the gardeners who are growing food and bringing peoples together by sharing their skills, who by example are changing public opinion in favour of living more lightly in the land and are thus forcing political decisions, are all saints. Like the Columbas of old they are creating communities in the shadow of an impending worldly 'disaster' - the withdrawal of urban life and the dilapidation of the technological infrastructure.

Well maybe that is a bit hard. Rome did not disappear, it just lost its influence. The cycle of corrupted power-struggles still goes on today as is the legacy of elitism under different guises. If history is repeating itself what great news it would be to see four centuries of woodland regenerate. But I am afraid the speed of development has accelerated also. That means we will soon be going to other planets to mine its ores – a triumph for the technocrats who have always had faith in human invention to come up with the answers. But until that happens let anarchy reign and take care of the people by providing the skills and resources to re-coagulate our "reductionist societies".

And this leads me to my final point, that of the reassertion of indigenous rights. One does not have to accept Roman rule; I'd rather be a saint living on the edge. My resurrection is ominous, I am that close to the Kingdom of God. My peregrination will take me to the thin veil between this world and the be-

A raw foodist attitude to going veggie by Theresa Webb

An ad campaign ran a few years ago: 'You can't be a meat eating environmentalist'. For our own species health and survival and to support the environment Gaia -Earth, the most effective way is to draw on the natural resources we are provided in the form of fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds, pulses and legumes. These provide us with oxygen and water. A vegan and raw diet is one that includes the above. This production method feeds humans directly. whereas the production of livestock for human consumption is indirect and abuses resources. It takes 3 times as much land, water and feed to raise an animal per protein yield and as a result draws on our valued energy reserves. Livestock pollute our atmosphere through emitting methane gas; studies show that levels are higher than that of world-wide transport emissions. Producing plant based nutrition is gentle for both our own health and Earth as a living organism.

Fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds, sprouting pulses and legumes provide us with our requirements for carbohydrate, fat and protein. It's an ecological choice with our palate and plate; healing for our Earth and us. I've far fewer colds, circulation improvements, inner healing and increased energy levels; a better balance emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Fresh leaves provide our calcium, magnesium and potassium requirements and we gain much

more than from wheat or sugar carbohydrates. Fresh ingredients also contain their own enzymes which enable easy and effective digestion

Raw vegan meals are often very quick and easy to prepare and also use less water and detergent in washing up. Beautiful and flavourful it is essentially free from gluten, processed sugar and lactose. Many symptoms also clear up from internal cleansing as our bodies begin to self-heal.

Theresa has been a vegan and raw for 7 years. She is head of Kitchen Buddy and teaches culinary workshops and retreats, specialising in gluten-free, vegan and raw nutrition and meals. She is a specialist raw chocolatier with deluxe assortments of dark chocolates and truffles.

See p.7 for her delicious recipes

Chris Kennett petitions us to make better use of waste oil

Its time to stop making problems pouring waste oil into landfill and down the drain. This waste problem could be recycled, turning it into a resource. Waste oil can be filtered and used directly as a fuel without the need for extra energy in processing. Please sign our petition

http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/waste-vegetable-oil-recycling.html

This is achievable, some councils have already started schemes. Lets get it done nationally. Its already been added to the Portsmouth Climate strategy and we are in talks with Portsmouth City Council and Southern Water at the moment.

The Urban Green Fair An independent green fair for London, powered by solar and wind energy. 20th Sept 2009 Brockwell Park



The Urban Green Fair is an annual family event, with films, talks in the social justice zone and energy transition zone, workshops, kids activities, stalls, sunshine and unusual bicycles. With no bars or big stages the emphasis is on education and communication. A chance to share ideas, meet familiar faces and make new friends.

With little government action on peak oil and climate change there is plenty to discuss and lots we can do as individuals. Check out the contributions of each zone and to download a stalls form at http://www.urbangreenfair.org. For more info email us at info@urbangreenfair.org

South London Permaculture at the UGF

Every year I hope to add something different. Last year, despite the weather, we had a lovely garden zone. The celebration of the event was the bread baking competition which displayed some phenomenal talent. Just the sheer look of the display was enough to hold people there in great anticipation of the results. We hope to do the same this year but even bigger. I am pushing for an outdoor oven bake as one of the entry categories. Last year Peter Turski and PassionFlower built a facade of a house with a garden in front. That display will make a return, again much more enlarged and many more plants. I have asked that Peter supply a greater selection of edibles, and hopefully with SLP's help, greater variety. Whilst I may be on the ball this year I cannot guarantee everything I want to do. but in order to make the area more funky and practical we are looking to create ongoing garden space, by guerilla gardening certain parts of the zone. We also like to display people's wares from their allotments and organisations like FuF will be hosting a competition. Wild food walks, solar technology, kid's gardening, bees, and some good old home cooking will carry the day through. With confirmation we are setting up an outdoor kitchen for those who want to try their hand at food preparation. The theme is family and heritage value, so if there are any persons out there who have a desire to be heard on a dais then give me a shout and I will schedule you into the Cookers and Eaters kitchen area. To contribute go to volunteers@southlondonpermaculture.com

The 5th Brockwell Park Mid-Summer Feast 14th June 2009



What a treat, this was by far the tastiest Brockwell feast I have had, with a delicious lentil soup followed by gorgeous quiche and a multicoloured salad, and then cake and stewed fruit to end. On top of this the auction was another magnificent donation of goods and services for the benefit of raising money for the park. For those who stayed behind you may have listened to a bit of impromptu garden playing from myself. Lets look forward now to the UGF and see the contributions of the wider community to this



EnviroClub's Corner Garden...

By Grace Kyne-Lilley

EnviroClub is a society at Goldsmiths College. We are a small group of people who are all interested in subjects like climate change, permaculture, and generally trying to be nice to our planet. We are also encouraging the university to reduce its carbon footprint and implement widespread recycling in all the buildings as steps in the right direction.

In the short history of EnviroClub, having a garden has always been an aim. Last year there was a very long, bureaucratic conversation with National Rail; they are apparently keen to have their surplus land used by the local community. However, little headway was made. This year, eventually a plot was designated by the college on its grounds. Next to the Student Union's bins, and underneath the balcony where drinks cups and cigarettes sporadically rain down from, it wasn't the most ideal locations. Fortunately, the college decided we couldn't use that pitch, and recently we found our garden.

It's a triangular shaped raised bed, hidden away between the back of a building and some car parking spaces. It's enclosed on all sides; by a high brick wall, by a seldom used building, and a wire fence. When we first discovered it, it was overgrown with weeds, ivy, and a kiwi producing actual kiwis! It may sound slightly undermato, lettuce, potatoes, comfrey, Japanese ginger...It's such an exciting moment, to have planned and waited for a goal for months, then to see it executed in only a couple of hours.

Not only did we plant, but we also started discussing what else will happen in this small enclave. We are planning to cut a door and win-



whelming, but the space has a lot of potential. With Merlyn's encouragement, gardening know-how and lots of his plants, we now have todow into the wire fence that separates the garden from the car spaces, beyond which is the back field and college. This entrance would make

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the space much more accessible. While it has its charm as a secret den, ultimately we want as many people to enjoy and use the garden as possible. We need to build steps and ramps, so the bed can be walked across and the whole area easily reached. Also, a tunnel of climbers from the new door to one of the sets of steps will make a grand entrance.

As always, we need to make as many people aware of our project. Hopefully one day it will be used by a range of students and the facility, not only for gardening but also as an outdoor space for performances, meetings and socialising. If we're not ambitious, who will be?

This is a student-based project. Further details can be obtained from: the.enviro.club@googlemail.com



Get growing in Honor Oak Park! By Ruth Robinson

As a student of Permaculture I began to think about urban permaculture and in particular, how to make city life greener, more natural and pleasant. Guerrilla gardening is one way of doing this. However, it doesn't always have to be done at night and in secret. It can be done out with full support of land-users and in broad daylight! I have an allotment and am aware of long waiting lists for plots, so I know there are people out there who want to grow food or flowers. Then I started to think about land that is not used for anything in particular but is a nice open space, perhaps some of this unused land could be put to work to grow easy fruit and vegetables? I enquired with St Saviour's vicar, Alyson Peberdy, last winter about the possibility of growing food on some of the grass surrounding St Saviour's church, (seems a shame to let it go to waste!) and am glad to say she was very supportive. The church halls are well used by local groups - Brownies, Scouts, an after-school club, a toddler group – all of whom may enjoy access to a bit of land to experiment with growing on and to care for. Local residents could also take part if they wished. However, the garden has very little funding as yet, so if it is to work would rely heavily on volunteers and donations, especially at the outset. Initially I am asking people for

- · reclaimed wood for raised beds (not huge planks though), pallets are good
- · cardboard for base of beds to repress the grass growth
- · transport for compost and wood chip
- · compost if you have got any spare!
- · vegetable seeds or fruit plants to start a bed off

I would like the garden to be a low budget operation using as much recycled or freely available stuff as possible. The plot does not yet have a fixed name. Any suggestions would be welcomed especially if they include 'St Saviour's'.

So, if you want to get your hands on a bit of earth or just help out in a friendly local project, please contact me on rufina36@hotmail.com (subject: St Saviour's Garden) or leave a message on 07766 596600 and I can get back to you. Then I can keep you posted on potential volunteer days and developments.

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Kids Korner

By Dil Green

Family School

We have a great site (800 sq m) in Clapham, that has lots of established trees, where we hope to build an eco-building etc. There is scheme for enough building to accommodate our needs that retains most of the trees, but we are looking to do more than that: we are not going to create any real 'playground' type spaces - there is enough blacktop in the city. Instead, we want to retain and enhance

South London Permaculture the existing character of the site as paths through a wooded area, and our thought is to work along the lines of permaculture 'forest gardening'. Unfortunately, no-one involved has enough experience to take this forward confidently, so we need advice!

As well as the site design, we have a more immediate need for advice, which might well be possible without a site visit. I've attached some 'photos of a rammed earth tyre wall we have begun building along the boundary of the site. The first photo sets the scene: we have a very busy and NOISY train line along the full length of the site. We need to control noise, which needs firstly, mass; BUT we can't do trench foundations for fear of harming the tree roots. So we came up with rammed earth, stabilised by the tyres (the wall may be up to 2m high in places). Houses called 'earthships' are built with a variety of this technique, if you know of them.

In case you are concerned, there has been a fair amount of research on possible contamination from old tyres, but by reassuring our situation has whole tyres above the water table, this most importantly and significantly reduces exposure of metal internal wires to the water.

The idea is to plant into the wall on the railway side (which faces SW), using a variety of species, for which the following characteristics will be important/valuable (not all will have all characteristics!)

- . drought tolerant (conditions high up the wall may well be fairly dry for much of the year)
- . hardy will be exposed to wind in winter
- . lots of foliage both to hide the tyres, and for added sound reduction
- . evergreen/winter cover see above
- . no maintenance required inaccessible
- . indigenous?
- . good for wildlife.
- . self propagating annuals
- . perennials that spread, but not too rampant
- . range of sizes
- . not needing rich soil tyres mainly filled with sub-soil topsoil limited to 'pockets' in the wall .

We can think of some obvious plants: buddleia, ivy (various),

wild strawberry, dog rose, 'old man's beard' (wild clematis)... but not enough.?

This view shows the tyre wall in construction, the train lines are beyond. The wall is threaded between

trees. The inside will be earth plastered - over some sort of mesh, we will then cut pockets into that and plant things like wild strawberry and other berries.

The next picture shows a detail of the outside of the wall. Mesh across the front will hold pockets of topsoil rammed into the triangular gaps between tyres - we will







plant into these. Other planting locations are the ground in front of the wall (the line of the wall curves in and out to get past trees - some are outside, some inside), and the top of the wall - top tyres can be entirely filled with topsoil.

For an idea of scale, we have more than 30 metres of wall, around 1.8 - 2 metres high. doing the numbers, this means around 450 triangular pockets of earth (say 20 cm each side, and 20cm deep: roots can get into the soil inside the wall as well), and around 45 tyres along the top. So we need a great deal of variety - partly to make it look good, partly to

make sure that there is variety to cope with some inevitable failed choices and varying weather conditions, and partly to be a haven for wildlife - once built, there will be no reason for people to be on that side of the wall. We are keen to get some plants in asap - so that we have something to show this summer. Can you help? Dil Green dilgreen@nildram.co.uk

A full list of plants will be made available in the near future on the website.

Kitchen Buddy

Cook with confidence. Kitchen Buddy culinary courses, workshops and retreats specialise in gluten-free, vegan and raw living food nutrition. They are held in some of the most beautiful locations and venues including Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Dorset.

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Theresa Webb over 15 years experience

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Vegan raw foodist & chocalatier

Thought-out FOOd



 Make seed milk smoothies for breakfasts with either fruit or a combination of fruit and vegetables.

They are especially rich in calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and vitamin C.

Milk

1 handful sunflower seeds (soak them overnight in water, ideally)

1/2 pt fresh water

Strain the soak water off the seeds.

Blend the seeds and fresh water together (ideally use a filter or VitaMix).

Use to mix with a museli combination of oats, seeds, slices of fruit, dried fruits or chopped nuts.

• Green Smoothie

1 portion of milk

1 banana

1 apple

Handful of berries

2 sticks of celery

1/4 chunk of cucumber 2" or more.

1 handful of spinach leaves (add more, or less, as preferred).

Blend together all the ingredients

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2009 Courses, events & further contacts

Space of Love

August 14th – 17th Cost: £65/55/25 Surrey/Sussex www.spaceoflove.co.uk

t 0870 7344 888 e gathering@spaceoflove.co.uk

Ongoing Permaculture Gardening

Cost: Free Contact: Merlyn Peter Soteriologic Garden & The Reservoir

www.southlondonpermaculture.com t 0845 458 1734 e volunteers@southlondon permaculture.com

PC Design Course (residential)

September 7th - 19th Cost: £350/425 Incl. meals/accom. Contact: Merlyn

Coed Hills Environmental Arts Centre, Cardiff

t 0845 458 1734 www coedhills co uk/ e info@coedhills.co.uk

Indigenous Man Fayre

August Monday 24th Cost: members only Contact: Merlyn Peter Soteriologic Garden www.southlondon permaculture.com t 0845 458 1734 e info@southlondon permaculture.com

Urban Green Fair

September Sunday 20th Cost: Donation Contact: Shane Collins **Brockwell Park, Brixton** www.urbangreenfair.org t 0208 671 5936 e info@urbangreenfair.org

Brighton Permaculture Trust

Fruit tree grafting August 15th

Scything

19th - 20th September

Introduction to Pc Design 19th – 20th September

Self-build an earthship 15th - 16th September 24th - 25th October

Practical Pc gardening 3rd - 4th October

Green Architecture Day 20th March 2010 www.brigtonpermacultre.co.uk T 07746 18 59 27

FoodupFront

Ongoing workshop Contact: Toni www.foodupfront.org e fufevents@gmail.com

Festival of Life September Saturday 26th

To place an advert or an article

please call Merlyn on 0845 458 1734 newsletter@southlondonpermaculture.com

Free offer

This is a limited offer only available to members. Membership applications will receive a free

DVD entitled 'The World of Permaculture'. The short documentary highlights 3 projects: Ragman's Lane Farm, Naturewise and Soteriologic Garden.

> Limited Offer only £3.99 Richard Bambrey's 'Simple Grafting'

SLP: WHO ARE WE?

10.30 - 11.30Cost: £10/8 & £7/5 Conway Hall, Red Lion Square www.festivaloflife.net t 0870 7344 888 e admin@festivaloflife.net

Apple Day

October 10th Cost: Donation Contact: Merlyn Peter Soteriologic Garden www.southlondonpermaculture. t 0845 458 1734 info@southlondonpermaculture.

Forest Gardening & Permaculture

October 17th - 18th Cost: £110 Incl. meals/accom. Contact: Merlyn

Coed Hills Environmental Arts Centre, Cardiff

www.southlondon per maculture.com t 0845 458 1734 www.coedhills.co.uk/ e courses@southlondon

permaculture.com

South London Permaculture was formed in 2003 as a voluntary organization. We run as a not-forprofit business enterprise. Although we apply a minimalist attitude to development we have engaged in a number of projects for both adults and children. These include a children's mobile yurt classroom entitled Re-LEAF (learning, entertainment, art, and food), a woodland allotment community project, guerilla gardening, full & introductory permaculture design courses, horticultural courses, teacher training, facilitation, consultancy, and a membership scheme. To register your interest and support us please become a member. Our business address is:

South London Permaculture PO Box 24991, Forest Hill, London SE23 0845 458 1734

Merlyn Peter (Hon) Chair

"Our constitution is rooted in the indigenous understanding of sustainability."

Sign-up/renewal form Sign up for: Price Individual Membership **£**6 Family membership (2 adults, 2 kids) Group Membership (3 copies of newsletter) £10 Londo Simple Grafting Richard Bambrey £3.99 Grafted fruit trees to order – please ring £10 DVD - The World of Permaculture Free to members Nini's Olive Oil E. Virgin cold pressed Itr £10.00 P & P (or collect) **Permaculture** £1.50 Subtotal: Donation: Total: Method of Payment Name Check (payable to South Address London Permaculture) Cash in person only Emai Phone

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Signature