

South London Permaculture

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News from the mews

DESTINATIONAFRICA



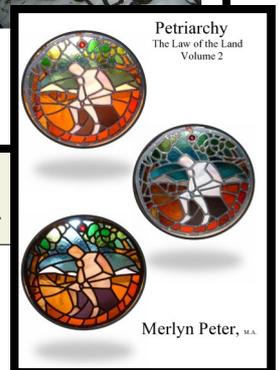
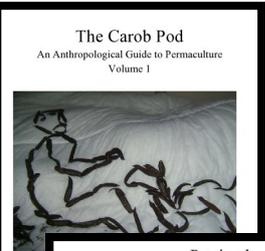
This is the last issue before I leave for my charity fund ride to West Africa. I have a special invitation from EcoGambia to pass some time there volunteering but also to become one of many to help run a permaculture resource centre. The amazing girl behind the scenes is a certain Eleanor Wilson who through her work at Passing Clouds has accumulated enough influence to generate support from overseas.

Have you ever wondered what it is like breathing in artificial air. Keep wondering, it is really quite alienating.



The Gambia Permaculture Resource Centre is a project initiated by the Ecotourism Society, the Gambia (the ESG), a group of passionate young Gambians focussed on promoting the role of Ecotourism as a key driver for sustainable development in the country. The ESG recognises the important role of local, organic farming in this vision and are particularly keen to bring knowledge of permaculture to the country. They aim to launch the Gambia Permaculture Resource Centre in 2016, a place providing training and other resources as well as a meet up point for people interested in permaculture both locally and internationally. The resource centre will also function as a guest house for international people coming to collaborate on the project or for those wishing to have a permaculture holiday in the Gambia, organised by the ESG. The ESG have already acquired premises for the Centre and have completed renovations and initial work on the garden. The ESG now need some funds to cover additional resources for the centre including furniture, equipment, educational materials and wages for key staff. The project will open to the public in the second half of 2016. For more information, please contact info@ecogambia.com or go to EcoGambia on face-

The first and second volumes of a 3-part series available at the Market. See also the new journal format.



**Sponsor
me!**

Of the other groups who will receive your funds include the Abolicao Trust and their work in South Africa teaching kids to learn Capoeira, the Botanical Institute in Barcelona who of course protect endangered plant species, and SLP in continuing to defy Western convention. Other groups will be added as I meet and experience them along the way. Don't be shy, really, it is for a good cause. The monies will be distributed by consensus agreement between the beneficiaries and the cheque book is already drawn. All links can be found at www.solterilogicgarden.com including the 3 ways you can donate. There is crowdfunding at JustGiving which has less than one month to run, an electronic sponsor form, and a downloadable manual form to collect on my behalf. The journey should take 3 months and 5,000 km. SPONSOR ME 1,2, or 3p per km, a lump sum, or a with a gift.

AVAILABLE at **WELLBEING** in SYDENHAM, **SMBS FOODS** in EAST DULWICH, **FOREST HILL SUPERMARKET** in FOREST HILL ROAD, **THE LARDER** in LADYWELL, **GET JUICED** in TOOTING INDOOR MARKET, and **ALKALINE JUICE** in BRIXTON HILL. Please contact me to retail at reduced prices. Free advertising.

Come to Catalonia

book. The website www.ecogambia.com will launch in January 2016.

Volunteer opportunities for one or two members to help work the land in a beautiful part of Spain. Access to the sea and neighbouring towns, and a shared caravan. Self-catering but many benefits include trips to regional mountainous and valley beauty spots, as well as direct rail services to Valencia, Tarragona and Barcelona. Cycling is also a must in this country. The project is the beginnings of an eco-settlement illustrated in the above books. The first phase building the large cistern and developing the polytunnel has already progressed. Other learning experiences include dry-stone walling, eco-build, walking and mountaineering, olive and carob cultivation, and fruit and vegetable production. The main period of farming is between October and March. Only companions are sort and must be of a spiritual disposition. Please contact the editor for further details or see our website www.solterilogicgarden.com



Solteriology: In the name of the sun, the earth, and the water, I bless thee with clarity of mind

It disappoints me as always to go to some of these volunteer-run garden community projects and seeing its leaders without any horticultural qualifications. It begs the question how some of these projects become fantastically diverse fruit and flower havens. Relying on contributions and a lot of hard graft the mentality teeters between lots of initial energy in the beginning

and dwindling enthusiasm towards the end. For 2 years running now, my grafted fruit trees were just neglected; dried up or bounded in weed despite the promise of sharing the spoils. It happened at Evelyn Community Gardens in Deptford and was repeated at Grow Mayow in Sydenham.. What made it worse is that I had previously donated 10 fruit trees from my own stock at a considerably reduced price through the One Tree scheme and discovered that none of them had been put in, save the first one which a fox apparently dug up. Strange? The pile of parched twigs in the corner may explain this. Likewise at Evelyn the 8 fruit trees we planted on the Pepys Estate has been slowly reduced to chew sticks and football posts. I think 3 remain. These were expensive trees we bought from Deacons nursery. The lack of appreciation by the residents who live opposite them is mirrored by the bureaucratic fudging that stifles more than encourages volunteers to self-organise: an essential permaculture principle. The exception has been Oasis Nature Garden in Stockwell funded years in advance with workers who are well supported and organised. Even they refused my trees because they knew their limitations: another good permaculture principle. Meanwhile, as I check over another project at the top of Devonshire Road in Forest Hill I see again that unmistakable sign of diversity and vigour.

Can I put a finger on why some projects work better than others? For instance, is it to do with the ethnic background of the areas' residents? Is it more to do with the nature of the volunteers themselves, their charisma? Is it to do with potential and creativity? Of course, these are factors but I think, retrospectively, that what makes a successful project is parent-child participation. They need to keep coming back because for them it is a celebration of nature. I don't think it is about trying to teach them new tricks, but

socially they must feel like a club, that they belong. With the exception of maybe Evelyn Community garden, and I stand to be contested here, the rest develop social protocol whether by design (Oasis) or accident (Grow Mayow due to its unique position near the entrance of the park where there is now a cafeteria). A trip to 121 Peckham Park Road shows much the same formula. The church run entertainment functions alongside service with many outreach groups utilizing its computer facilities, herb garden and social welfare programs.

It's Christmas again and I prepare for a return trip to Spain to check over my volunteer project there. A nice alternative wouldn't you say to the wet money-quenching weather of Britain? It's quite hard being a gardener here, but I would never let the business go because what keeps me going are *my* gardens. I own them in a strange way because I can see myself growing through them. Even in December I am still eating apples out of them. I sit down with my retired Polish doctor and have a chinwag whilst I drink tea to my heart's content and learn something about the war. Not least do I get fed especially by my Turkish clients who occasionally allow me to sample their oil. The son of the Indians opposite chats with me about Football as I try to convey to him my understanding of the meaning of spiritual patronage. Their West Indian neighbours leaves me to get on with it whilst the Iraqis on the other side engage me in deep discussion about the continuous bombing of Iraq between the two gulf wars. We mention the role of the press and how news is filtered to suit government objectives. The couple opposite with their new babe learning about growing again but have no time for the garden. Meanwhile I keep one eye on the 85+-year old Austrian, slowly getting shorter, who lives in a massive house all by herself. Next door an ex-athlete lives in a palace as his financial business blossoms like a repeating rose. The other gardener who takes away my rubbish happily puffs away on his joints and probably earns much more than me. Even the unemployed who sign on get more than me: that's a fact. But with diversity comes vigour, knowledge, and life. Solteriology. It is the sun that brings the colour out of persons, the soil that provides a good footing, and the rain that washes their feet of all its hidden sins. That's what the Chinese say don't they? That the feet are the waste pit of the human body including unwanted thoughts. No wonder we wear shoes.



DestinationAfrica

When the bicycle meets the sea



Pedalling from Catalonia to the coast of Africa living under the stars. A journey of thousands of kilometres over three months leaving at the end of the year. Support me by going to the website for details. All donations will go to selected groups or charities that support children in need, indigenous cultures and wildlife. There are some ways to help me including sponsorship, fundraising, raising awareness, management and promotion, contacts, accommodation abroad, or become a member for the formation of a group towards future projects. Register to sponsor me per kilometre. Send a message if you want to share an idea.

info@southlondonpermaculture.com

www.solteriologicgarden.com

In this entry Mario is submitting a paper considering some of the manifold meanings of offal for presentation at the 2016 Oxford Symposium.

“Offal can mean many things. It does not just refer to organ meats but to the manifold ways in which certain foods may be rejected and despised (‘awful offal!’); or reclaimed and loved. There can be vegetable offal, in the form of the ‘ugly’ vegetables deemed too imperfect for supermarkets to sell. We invite papers that embrace the subject of offal from a wide and imaginative perspective.

The dictionary definition of offal (in the O.E.D.) carries several distinct concepts. The most commonly understood is offal as organ meats and entrails: liver, kidneys, heart, and so on. Offal cuisine around the world is a rich subject to explore, with many iconic dishes such as the pig’s feet cooked in Les Halles in Paris. In Rome, many favourite offal dishes were born in the Testaccio district, near slaughterhouses where the rejects (in slaughterhouse jargon *il quinto quarto*, ‘the fifth quarter’, of the animal) were used up. In Spain the church did not consider offal to be meat so allowed it during Lent and other meatless days. Papers might wish to consider blood and bones, such as the famous marrow-bone with parsley cooked by Fergus Henderson, pioneer of ‘Nose to Tail’ cookery. You may also find traces of offal in surprising places: offal may be a setting agent (calf’s foot jelly) or a processing aid (isinglass).

Beyond cuisine, offal invites consideration from a cultural or anthropological perspective. More than other forms of meat, offal has inspired magical beliefs about the effects it may have on the eater. There is an idea in many cultures that eating brains will make you clever. The converse of this is that offal may be avoided because – unlike other meats, whose animal nature is generally disguised through cooking – it reminds us too vividly of our own body parts.

Papers might also wish to bear in mind some other meanings of offal. It can refer to ‘the rejected’ or the ‘parts of the animal deemed unfit for consumption’. And it can mean ‘dregs’ or ‘scum’. This raises interesting questions about food taboos and prejudices. How do we decide which foods to eat and which to place beyond the pale? Are vegan fake meats a kind of offal? And does the term offal include the in vitro hamburgers that scientists are now developing?

A further meaning of offal is rubbish or refuse; and oddments of small cheap fish caught in the nets along with the main catch. This opens up many avenues of research into food sustainability and waste. How do we rescue nutritious foods that have been treated as rubbish? Food Banks around the world are reclaiming perfectly edible discarded food and redistributing it to the hungry. Themes might include food coops and other social initiatives; ways in which the industrial food supply deals with rubbish; sustainable food policy; new technologies to manage waste.”

OFF-BALANCE

Mario Molinari

It is as if people were surplus to requirement. Rejects. Seconds. It starts with food and an assessment of what it is and how it affects us. The dimension of food to our understanding of the way we live and work is somewhat overlooked. Two dimensions stand out: food is for life and food is for learning too. Should we enter the food cycles first we would then be in a very fortunate and privileged position to enter all life cycles. Welcome to Life!

We reminisce at times and say that food is the produce of the soil. Has food lost its way and if so what is this substance we eat and drink? Can you think of any food you have said fervently ‘no’ to, apart from brussel sprouts? From junk to taboo foods there is quite a lot we turn down because we say it is not to our taste. We call food what we like, and is edible; and we call offal all the rest – what we dislike, and is inedible and yucky. But is what we like always good for us, or maybe even right for us? Can taste be our only guide? Food requires a more detailed definition. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) food is, ‘What is taken into the system to maintain life and growth, and to supply the waste of tissue’. There is no disguising one’s disappointment. Firstly, can we be sure that anything goes? Is there an optimum intake? On the specifics, when it comes to maintaining life and growth (no less!) food is in good company – air, water and carbon also maintain and support life. Food is not unique in this respect.

And secondly, the OED errs on the side of caution when placing food at the point of consumption onwards with the misplaced emphasis, we would argue, on what we take down and eat. Enjoy. The ambience is flawless but for one

thing. Crucially, something has come off the menu ... and it is not the *hors d'oeuvre*! What has come off is food production. How do we know that food does what it is supposed to? How is it being produced? Where? Should food production not be part of the equation? There are many good reasons why food production and food consumption should be covered together, and these are the same reasons for wanting to put two and two together. We need to bathe, blanch and immerse ourselves in that production process. Production evokes the making, creating and growing cycles. Of all possible food definitions one stands out head and shoulders above all others – food is the produce of the soil that is taken into the system ...

Production is blanked out. Instead consumption gets all the attention, and accolades. As it stands, the OED definition is not an isolated case and, almost everywhere, the emphasis is on eating better, first bite, the 5-a-day promotions, healthy eating, the cuisines of the world, cream chicken risottos, and diets and waste streams. 'Don't Cook! Just Eat!' pretty much sums up our attitude to food – eat, drink, and be merry. So cosy! Offal then becomes the unwanted, the undesirable and the uninvited guest. The wisdom of the day is the word of the day as recorded in the OED.

In their inimitable ways, the grand economies of scale have bagged food. Gone are the days when we could return to the soil what came from the soil. Return to the sea what came from the sea. Gone are the seasons replaced by shelf life. Gone is conviviality replaced by the festivity of coupons. Gone is substance for looks. Gone is texture for smoothies. Gone is full nutritional value for vitamin supplements, and, last but not least, gone is the sight of outdoor chickens for drum sticks. Animals are gutted and decapitated lest we make eye contact. Fish is filleted, sauced and peppered. White meat is lean and clean, almost polished, with any trace of blood removed. The battle still rages on. The equation is skewed.

The best part of food is left out, entrails and all, of our calculations. There are many a story of seeds we do not plant, of crops we do not harvest, of forbidden fruits we do not eat, and the half thrown away mayo sandwich we could no longer stomach. What grabs the headlines is a type of Alice in Wonderland bacchanal. Unsafely, floating waste laps at the plimsoll line. The shadows of the grand distribution, the sea routes, the industrial refrigeration and the spaghetti junctions loom large. They create and consecrate the prize winners – the benign big earners and spenders – and fashion too the many losers and health sufferers. They do not see it that way nor do they see uncommon queues forming everywhere and getting longer still. It is a tragedy, but they do not see it that way. Be that as it may, we fail to recognise that food is our consciousness. What is missing is an important oddment – the great pyrotechnics of food. Say food and the term transports you to the unfolding of life with its hues and colours, its waters and energy, and then meadows and caterpillars. The inclusiveness of food is exclusive to food, warts and all. Life can meet all our expectations.

But, alas, the very ground we stand on is a-groaning. The human costs are hushed. Talent is unrealised, dreams are shattered, journeys are interrupted.

Paper-proposers are asked to consider some of the manifold meanings of offal.

Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the 2016 Symposium should submit a proposal of 500-1000 words by 20 January 2016 to Mark McWilliams at editor@oxfordsymposium.org.uk. For more information, please see Giving a Paper. <http://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/this-year/topic/>

Letters to the Editor

Here, after visiting our family on the farm in Spain, food nutritionist and chocolatier Theresa Webb, made some very acute observations. Of course, trying to teach an old dog new tricks is like trying to explain to my father that cancer requires members of one's family to make regular visits.

"Nutritional recommendations for your parents re their health & well-being and that of the dogs too!

Bread (refined white flour) isn't going to really help to sustain man or beast (in my opinion). I know that this is what is widely available but it has had a detrimental effect on the digestive systems of the dogs (& possibly your father). Wheat used to make me feel very bloated and almost uncomfortable; which is why I had to stop and to experience the benefits of a great reduction is a very good thing! Re the sandwiches & dog's dinner; prevent the dogs from eating left over bread! I appreciate that it is a cheap, staple 'food' and it does release a form of opioids (like opium) which makes it satisfying eating. However, I'm sure that this white baguette-style loaf has contributed to the dog's size & weight etc. So please tell your mum from me to try to resist feeding them her bread left-overs! They like fresh & freshly cooked meat/fish because it contains more nutrients & is less processed.

It is better not to consume too much alcohol but I appreciate that your dad has to enjoy his tittle and it is part of his life at the moment. Finding fun activities for them both to enjoy is the thing. Your dad likes his films but maybe still somewhat alienated up there; maybe he also needs another group project to be involved with.

Dairy products - margarine, cheese, ice-cream etc. - are all processed and sadly are not going to help reduce acidity for your mum's arthritis in her hands.

Alternatives to refined\animal products include:

The Health food shop on the old street we visited near to the olive oil factory sells a lot of veggie things including a very nice jar of Tofu & Miso spread! (Which I ate on a baguette on the way back - don't tell me of the irony..!) They also have many types of nut butters and spreads, burgers etc. there, so although all are expensive in comparison to cheap meat products, this makes it a treat and a healthy option to enjoy.

Replace the meat pate at meal time with this type of spread, just as an alternative, plus hummus etc. - she could make her own versions with Tahini & herbs, if she'd like this.

I know that neither of your parents are running out to the health shop any time soon, but it will be helpful in the long run to ensure their greater health overall. They have various veggie burgers and styles of alternatives plus also, obviously, meat-free meals include lentils, beans etc. They may have a wholegrain loaf, somewhere, like we'd purchased, to start off with!

To help your mum consume more nutrients, I'd recommend fresh juices, soups and purees that would be helpful as her teeth are not as strong as before and she can't eat lots of solid or tough foods. Greens (even in a powdered form) may add to her magnesium & calcium levels to work towards reducing her anxiety from an inner perspective. I recommend more Mg, Zinc, Potassium and minerals generally for increasing calmness... the sugar in tea\fizzy drinks etc., may take away those very minerals that her body requires. Even the fake sweeteners are in fact troublesome.

I notice that she has food processors\equipment etc. in the kitchen. So, if she'd like any of my own recipes e.g. for desserts including banana ice cream etc. please let me know.

I hope that you can involve your mum in a local knitting\crafting activity, as there are lots going on in UK right now for this. I wish I were even more involved in it too; it is a great opportunity for her to teach others the skills that she knows, how to produce their own items of clothing and to make friends with the business side too. She'd make an excellent teacher and would enjoy it. I expect, on a monthly or weekly meeting, to instruct and to knit with others. "

Knitting Group info on here: <http://www.ravelry.com/>

My local London group: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/london-knaughty-knitters>

Theresa Webb BA. Dip. NT is a qualified **Nutritional Therapist (CNM London)**. She practices in Central and South London clinics and freelance across SE England. She has worked in the field for over 10 years as a Food Industry Consultant, Specialist and in 2005 founded Kitchen Buddy Culinary School Classes to teach families and busy professionals the principles of sound nutrition, by exploring new ways to introduce whole food cookery, to create exciting menus for their individual lifestyles.



South London Permaculture

We have a number of fruit trees for sale, including family types in which trees bear more than one type of fruit. A few trees should be available all year round at discounted prices for members.

South London Permaculture



We also run apple days and grafting workshops and have an authentic Italian wine/apple press and scratter. Please contact us to book in advance.
See the website under 'market' for a full list of plants available.

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SLP: WHO ARE WE?

South London Permaculture was formed in 2003 as a voluntary organization. We run as a not-for-profit 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, guerrilla 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:

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Merlyn Peter (Hon) Chair

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

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Membership offers

- ◆ **Free DVD or copy of new journal**
- ◆ Regular email bulletins on courses and events around the UK
- ◆ A collectable design portfolio
- ◆ Discounts on courses run by SLP and associated partners
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Brighton Permaculture Trust

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Five courses with places available:
9-10 January 2016, 23-24 April 2016, 25-26 June 2016, 10-11 September 2016, 19-20 November 2016
Permaculture in the Pub (PIP)
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16-17 January 2016

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19 March 2016

Building with Straw Bales
Two courses with places available:
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www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk
† 0774 618 5927

To place an advert or an article please call Merlyn on 0753 022 3360

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Come to Catalonia

October to April (book to confirm)
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Mario Molinari

e mario@startwithfood.net
www.startwithfood.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/foodbirth.pdf

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Sign-up/Renewal form

Members sign up Price

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Free offer

This is a limited offer only available to new members. **Membership applications will receive either a free copy of the journal or a DVD entitled 'The World of Permaculture'**. The short documentary highlights 3 projects: Ragman's Lane Farm, Naturewise and Soteriologic Garden. Please indicate in the additional notes box opposite.



THESIS title: *If land economies are the ecological imperative of the rise of the modern environmental movement, may one find an historical precedent in the origins of Christianity?*
By Merlyn Peter

Bounded p165 £9 (members)

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