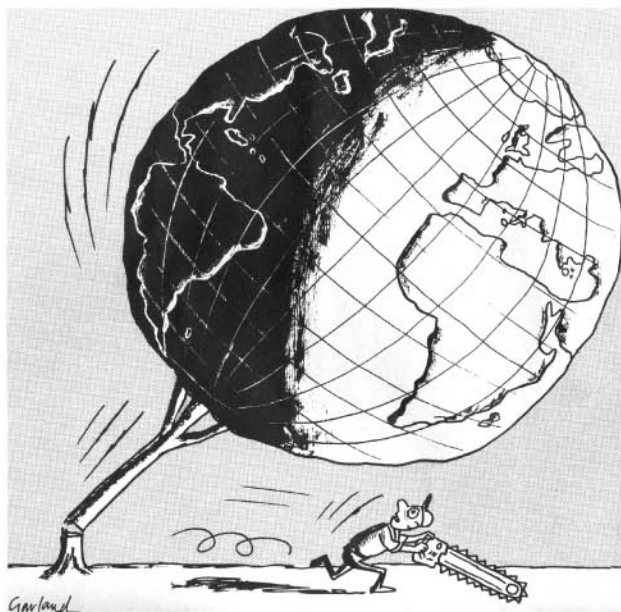


particular news

Winter 2006

Have good cheer!

sustainability is about living together



Reinventing the LOCAL

Climate change is happening.

You only have to be in a room with climate scientists for a few minutes to be struck by the seriousness of the situation we all find ourselves in. You only have to have a short memory to recognise that the time they say we have left, to change our ways before we pass a point of no return, is compressing all the time. Sir Nicolas Stern's 700 page report on Climate Change has turned heads at least, because it has a stark economic message. And Al Gore has used his position to persuade political and business elites to think beyond the short term. The cry 'It's no good doing anything, we are only capable of achieving 1% of what's needed – it's them over there....' will no longer wash. Every part of one percent matters. Elsted with Treyford cum Diddling is on the same stage as Shanghai and the Kalahari.

Acting BIG

Our plea goes deeper. Preoccupation with climate change makes us forgetful of the real problem which is our deracination from nature, our forgetfulness that everything is connected.

Living with nature is different from merely surviving in nature. Our responses need to be practical and philosophical, unless we are driven by an ethic relating us to the land, we shall neither understand nor feel the satisfaction of succeeding. Our culture has to change – we have to explore a new mutuality between nature and culture.

Read "Land Ethic" in 'A Sand County Almanac' by Aldo Leopold; David Abrams, 'The Spell of the Sensuous'; Richard Mabey 'Nature Cure'.

Your place matters in the face of global worries with climate because everywhere is part of the whole. Your attachment to a place offers a foothold on the ladder of concern and a way into doing something beyond your personal activities.

Floods and droughts are killing hundreds of thousands of us already, many more people are on the move. Our intensively exploited soils are degrading (see Graham Harvey, 'We Want Real Food'), how long before 'dust bowl' once more stalks America's vast mid-west and our little East Anglia? These are big issues. And the solutions will have to be both big and small, supra national and very local. The prospect of being subjected to draconian laws is not appealing, better to be a part of the positive. You and me, them and us – we are all implicated. We have to change our ways. And we have great examples all around us of how we can live well with nature.

Forty percent of species on earth, it is suggested by Stern, may be in danger of extinction. Nearly one third of seafood species have collapsed. The ecosystem we have grown with and out-grown is in grave danger. Nature will always find a way through, but we, along with much of what makes our lives worth living, will not, unless we all do something now. We have to face the consequences of our actions in our own countryside, villages, suburbs and cities. And it is vital that these changes are for the long-term good, and not excuses for political or financial gain or short term solutions to saving the planet – such as intensive sea fish farming or ploughing up wild life habitats to grow biofuels.

The threats envisaged by those who are investigating global warming include increasingly volatile and extreme weather conditions with more high winds, severe flooding and droughts, lower river and higher sea levels; here warmer winters and hotter summers are bringing increased problems with human health, agricultural pests and spread of diseases (one in ten of our horse chestnuts is

currently threatened), less stable availability of food leading to rising prices, increased oil prices leading to higher heating bills. Our seasons are more fluid, plants and animals are moving north, farming is even less predictable. How can we turn around these seemingly overwhelming problems to make our land and our towns not only viable but liveable and meaningful as places?

Most places could originally sustain themselves for basic necessities of water, wood, farm land, with water and wind mills, regional and local specialisms. Self-sufficiency to this extent will only spring up again if some survive the worst that climate change could bring. Heaven forbid. But we need to learn from historical and extra-national ways of thinking and doing. We need new philosophies, and they have been emerging for decades – remember Small is Beautiful by E.F. Schumacher?

We need to eat less and be healthier with more fruit, nuts, vegetables and grain and little meat or fish. At least a third of the world's grain harvest goes to feed animals - we could feed far more people if we ate the grain ourselves, and keep domestic animals for what they are good at – converting so-called poor grassland (from moors to saltmarsh) into protein while maintaining valuable wild life habitats. Low input, less intensive farming, organic and welfare driven, has to become the normal way of producing quality food. And it makes sense that more of our food should be eaten in season and be grown close to where it is eaten - around our towns – market gardens and orchards should be given priority.

Conscientiousness should start with energy efficiency in house and work place, reduced movement, generation close to home – home-based solar collection, neighbourhood and office wind turbines and biogas from the town's sewage. Woods are needed to supply renewable building materials with leftovers for fuel. Small quarries and brick works should be as close as can be to the places where the materials are to be used. We need to feel the impact of our actions as well as reducing transport.

How would this affect our perception and use of our own places? There should be more allotments and market gardens; woods and orchards could also be places for recreation; rivers should be so clean we can swim in them with a rich mix of wild life, suburbs should be more densely packed, more urbane with shops and community facilities as in town and city centre. We will need to be more sociable and to live in a much more co-operative way, sharing vehicles, making sure that all sectors of society have access to ways of turning houses and work places into energy conservers and generators involving insulation, micro turbines, passive solar greenhouses, solar panels and photovoltaics. This will necessitate a huge change in how we perceive our buildings and their context. How can we conserve and create beauty and local distinctiveness in our buildings while changing their character? It is much easier to make new buildings energy efficient (although we are not doing so nearly fast enough). Some traditional ways of building such as with cob (earth) and thatch are great insulators and should be encouraged where the materials are indigenous. There is a great need for the development of new local vernaculars especially in housing.

Using our cars less will have huge benefits to us, to wild life and to the environment (3,200 people, 50,000 badgers, 50,000 deer, 100,000 foxes, as well as otters and countless birds are

killed on the roads each year). We need to cut down our reliance on oil and all that implies on the world stage, and on biofuels – hardly the panacea since growing them will be in competition with food production and with wild nature. We do not have enough land. To put this in perspective, Lester Brown, head of the Earth Policy Institute says "Just a single fill of ethanol for a four-wheel drive SUV uses enough grain to feed one person for an entire year" (Geoffrey Lean 'The hungry planet' Independent on Sunday 6/9/06).

As well as the reduced CO2 emissions, we will need to build fewer roads and take less aggregate from quarries, our own and those far away. Less travel means we will have more time to focus on and spend in the locality – which will need to provide more for us practically and socially.

We will need more informal open spaces for recreation (Natural England wants a green space within 300m of every home), more locally typical trees to provide shade and shelter, more communal buildings for social interaction and entertainment. We will need to keep our gardens to grow food as well as for aesthetic reasons, and make them important habitats for wild life. We will need to grow plants that thrive on our soils without the need for watering – which will help to make places more locally distinctive again.

We must learn to live within the limits of our river catchment and understand that water will be less plentiful in the east and south. We must not build on flood plains and we shall have to abandon some low coastal places ensuring that those who lose their homes and livelihoods are relocated with understanding and care. We need to rethink our relationships with trees, caring for any that are mature and old, and planting and encouraging many more in our river valleys and in the uplands to control run-off.

We have to act quickly but the solutions are full of promise, more social interaction, more local inventiveness, more wild life. I T keeps us in touch with the world in ways we never envisaged. While keeping our global links from our homes, we will learn live in a more social and local way again, while eating better, keeping warm or cool and benefiting from a place that has enhanced its character and identity.

Things to do

- Talk to your local authority about wanting local renewable energy generation provision, start discussions with local people about how to bring this about. See: Swaffham's two wind turbines that power 75% of the town.
- Join or start a movement for turning your village, town or city green. See: energy efficiency / renewable energy projects by Woking Borough Council; Chew Magna's Go Zero campaign and Ashton Hayes attempt to become carbon neutral.
- Put pressure on your MP / local authority to ensure that all new development is energy efficient / energy saving and water saving, with material as locally sourced as possible.
- Tell your MP that you are prepared to make lifestyle changes but that more Government direction and intervention is needed, especially in new developments.

- Make sure your house is insulated to the highest standards with loft insulation / cavity wall insulation. Does your local authority give grants for this?
- Eat locally produced, seasonal food – organic if possible. Patronise your independent greengrocer, Country (WI) and Farmers' Markets.
- Grow your own fruit and vegetables – lobby for more allotments.
- Eat less meat, fish and dairy products and far more fruit and vegetables – go for quality, ask where everything comes from.
- Use your car less and try to cycle / walk more. Instead of jumping in your car to go for a walk, try starting from your house or work place. Investigate car sharing schemes.
- Use less water, find out where it comes from, seek out and protect local springs

For examples and ideas see www.England-in-particular.info

Celebrate what you have.

Since 'Holding Your Ground - an action guide to local conservation' in 1985, Common Ground has produced many publications about local action including the Manifesto for Fields ... Field Days ... Celebrating Local Distinctiveness ... Rivers, Rhynes and Running Brooks ... The Art of Gentle Gardening ... Local Flora Britannica ... Common Ground Book of Orchards ... Apple Games and Customs ... Community Orchards ... Save Our Orchards.

You can buy these and more besides from our on-line Market Place at www.commonground.org.uk.

The Garland and Calman cartoons are from 'Pulp!', Common Ground's one-off newspaper about trees, published in 1989 (also available from our on-line Market Place).



WINTER



HOLLY

A much-loved evergreen tree with prickly leaves and scarlet berries, in winter the holly outranks: 'the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly' the 'Sans Day Carol' proclaims. Cuttings brought in on Christmas Eve once protected homes from fire, lightning, witches and fairy folk. With pagan roots in Roman Saturnalia, holly was Christianised in carols that linked its red berries to the blood of Christ. But traces of the ancient Holly Boy and Ivy Girl, personifying the battle of the sexes, persist in old songs, where the prickly holly sometimes triumphs over the clinging ivy: 'Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.'



MUMMING PLAYS

'In comes I', says Bold Slasher, and Saint or King George, the Turkish Knight or Black Prince of Paradise, Robin Hood, the Doctor/Toss Pot, Beelzebub, Father Christmas, Jack Finney or the King of Egypt, as each, among their fellows, 'takes the stage' - commonly the street ... The stories and parts have been passed on orally. Their origins are unknown; the earliest written texts do not appear until the early 1700s ... Mumming Plays were enacted between the end of October and Easter, and one purpose is clear - they were a means of raising money (a collection was always made afterwards).



WASSAILING

With the revival of interest in traditional orchards and the growth of community orchards, wassailing has become a part of the calendar once again. 'Wassail' comes from the Anglo-saxon *waes haeil* - to be healthy, so wassailing apple trees was a way of encouraging a good crop in the following season. It usually took place after dark on Old Twelfth Night, 17 January, but could occur on other days around Christmas and the New Year ... The wassailers fill their earthenware cups with cider and toss it into the branches. They then refill their cups and drink and sing a toast to the tree.



The above are extracts from **England In Particular** by Sue Clifford and Angela King, published by Hodder & Stoughton .

£30.00 rrp. 528 pp, 594 entries, 450 illustrations. ISBN 0 340 82616 9.

This book is available from book shops and from on-line retailers.

For more information, see our Market Place on www.commonground.org.uk.

Read more about the book on www.England-in-particular.info.

APPLE DAY 2006



Broad Oak Community Orchard, Dorset. It was a privilege to be in this small Community Orchard managed by the Dorset Wildlife Trust and to hear actor/folk singer Tim Laycock give the first performance of his Wassail Song specially written for and about the orchard.



Broad Oak Community Orchard, Dorset



The festival bar at Middle Farm, Firlie in Sussex was a big hit, offering straw bales to sit on undercover away from the pouring rain, and a chance to taste some of the National Collection of Cider and Perry held at the Farm. In the barn there were lots of varieties of apples, and juices, heaped into apple crates on straw bale tables. A simple history of each variety was given, and each could be tasted and bought.



Tenbury Wells, Worcs. The beautiful light, airy, old, round pannier market building was the perfect place to show off the wonderful display of apples by Trees For Life. This is the best setting for an apple display we have seen.



A queue for apple identification by the East of England Apples and Orchards Project at Bromham Mill Apple Day, Bedford. It was great to see a map and photos showing the location of Bedfordshire's orchard fruits along with a display of the county's apples.



Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. David Wheatly shows visitors around his apple orchards, explaining the attributes of each variety, his plans for using the crop and the importance of this maturing orchard to wild life.



Donkey Field Community Orchard, Shaftesbury, Dorset. This young orchard provided space for lots of games such as catching apples on strings, apple bobbing and apple and spoon races. Photograph by Barry Freeman.

The Longest Peel Competition



Photograph by John Ely

Rob Allen sets new UK Apple Day record

At Apple Day events across the country, people have been taking part in the annual competition to make the longest continuous apple peel, and the resulting measurements have been sent to us to determine the winner. Results are in four categories, hand- or machine-peeled, and over and under 16.

This year's overall winner, with an apple peel measuring 1066.80 cm (35 feet!) is Rob Allen (pictured above) who peeled a Chelmsford Wonder apple with a hand-operated peeling machine at the Shenley Park Apple Day in Hertfordshire. In doing so he beat his own record of 947 cm (31 feet), set on Apple Day in 2002.

Winners of all four categories will receive an apple tree donated by RV Rogers Nursery in Pickering, a box of different apple varieties donated by Crepes Fruit Farm near Colchester, the Common Ground book *Apple Games and Customs*, and our Apple Map poster.

The winners of the 2006 competition:

By hand:

Over 16 : **Dr Justin Pachebat** peeled a Bramley apple at Ely Palace Green Apple Day in Cambridgeshire - 662cm (22 ft)
 16 & under : **Theo Hussey** peeled a Crispin apple at Acorn Bank Apple Day in Cumbria - 151.5cm (5 ft)

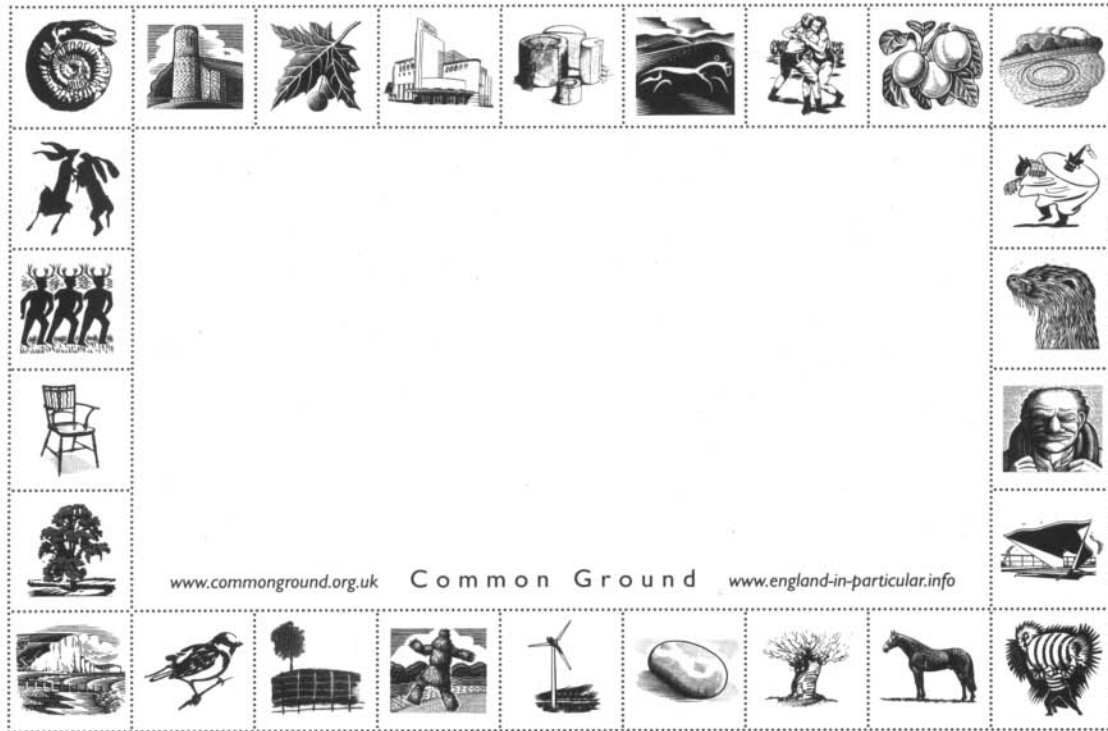
Peeling machine:

Over 16 : **Rob Allen** at Shenley Park Apple Day, Hertfordshire - 1066.80cm (35 ft).
 16 & under : **Robert Vandy** at Brimstige Hall Apple Day, Wirral, Cheshire - 269cm (9 ft).

New from Common Ground

Common Ground produces a large range of merchandise from books, cards and posters to T-shirts and CDs - there are many stocking-filler ideas to be had by visiting our on-line Market Place at www.commonground.org.uk.

Recent additions include our little book **Apple Games and Customs**, £5.95 plus £2 p&p in the UK (contact us for international rates), and ...



England In Particular envelope re-use labels.

Re-cycle your envelopes with self-adhesive labels.

Each pad contains approx. 100 labels, featuring a border of images from our book England In Particular (shown actual size above).

1 pad for £3.50 plus £1 p&p in the UK (contact us for international rates).

England in Particular postcards

A pack of 14 A6 colour postcards featuring letters of the alphabet and images from England in Particular.

Letters available are:

A - B - C - F - G - H - IJK - M - O - P - R - S - T - W

14 for £7 plus £2 p&p in the UK (contact us for international rates).

These items and many more can be ordered by credit or debit card from the Market Place at:

www.commonground.org



A Sense of Place: West Sussex Parish Maps

Common Ground's Parish Maps project was initiated in the 1980s with the challenge to local people to chart what they value in their place as a first step to engaging in its care. Not only in Britain, but in Europe, North America, Australia and Africa, Parish Maps have been helpful in starting people in a social exchange of environmental knowledge and action.

Marking the culmination of an eight year long community project involving some two thousand people, a book – a large format 320 page handsome hardback depicting 75 Parish Maps in full colour, along with many enlarged cameo features from each map – is launched at the end of November. This is the first book to be published on a county's Parish Maps. Kim Leslie, based in the County Record Office in Chichester, has been the inspiration behind parish councils and groups making their own Parish Maps. He writes in his introduction: *"West Sussex County Council first took up the idea of parish mapping as one of several ways to celebrate the new millennium. Parish Maps were felt to be ideal for making a permanent record – a snapshot in time – of places and people in the county at this key moment in the calendar. The idea proved so successful that the project has continued, and is continuing, to spread across the county..."*

Kim gave talks to all the parish groups and hosted a conference in May 1999, followed by newsletters to keep everyone informed and interest alive, giving advice on the use of materials to conservation standards, framing and printing, and much more. 'Mapping the Millennium', an exhibition of 66 of the maps, was displayed in Worthing Museum & Art Gallery from 2001 – 2002, attracting thousands of visitors from near and far. Since then the number of maps made has risen to just over 100, with the hope that all the parishes in the county will eventually take part.

Kim says the book is no conventional atlas guidebook *"The commentary is more a series of personal views and feelings to try and capture the spirit or sense of each place, about what it is that gives a place its distinct atmosphere. And, as with the maps, these are highly personal statements. In the end this approach is all about understanding the distinction between 'looking and seeing' – in 'reading' a place at its many different levels.... What has been remarkable has been the way the project has touched so many lives. It has been the process of making these maps as much the maps themselves, that has been significant both in personal and community terms"*.

One example: *"Copthorne's map makes a tree a metaphor for the community – the mighty oak symbolising the strength of community spirit, the shape of the tree creating the map itself, the village its branches. The roots beneath the tree feature family names, so that just as its roots nurture growth so the people themselves make the community; and as the tree brings forth its fruit as acorns, so these fruits encase the harvest of talent in the form of clubs and societies. This is a brilliant conception."* (see illustration below).

We echo this and add that Kim's selfless advocacy and sharing of knowledge deserves our thanks and the thanks of all who have been encouraged by his enthusiasm.

'A Sense of Place: West Sussex Parish Maps' by Kim Leslie is published by West Sussex County Council on November 23, 2006. It is available from the West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RN (£35 rrp), at a special price of £30 including p&p to Particular News-readers. Cheque payable to West Sussex County Council.

For further information: 01243 753600 / e-mail: kim.leslie@westsussex.gov.uk. Information on Common Ground's Parish Maps Project can be found on www.england-in-particular.info. Common Ground publish 'from place to PLACE: maps and Parish Maps', a collection of writings on and illustrations of Parish Maps, £10 plus £2 p&p or order from our Market Place at www.commonground.org.uk.





Roger Deakin 1943 - 2006

It is with profound sadness that we announced the death of our co-founder Roger Deakin on August 19th. In April this year he discovered he had a brain tumour, and had been undergoing treatment.

Roger founded Common Ground with Sue Clifford and Angela King in 1982/3. We had met at different times working as we all had for Friends of the Earth through the 1970's – Angela had been their first wildlife campaigner, Sue was on the board of directors and Roger had acted as consultant helping with promotional and fundraising events – one of the most memorable of which involved some of the Monty Python gang exhorting us to 'Save the Krill'.

Roger could turn his hands to anything. At last he found himself a writer, but he had taught English in school, been a copywriter, made films, organised local festivals, put on concerts for the Aldeburgh Foundation at Snape Maltings, made furniture, rebuilt timber house and barn and looked after his smallholding. He was a regular contributor to newspapers, magazines and radio and had been a director of Eastern Arts, Suffolk Dance and the Gogmagogs. He loved literature, music, swimming, cycling, walking, gardening, farming, cooking, watching wild life, travelling and giving time to his family and friends. His great forte was friendship and compassion – he loved people and they loved him.

He also cared passionately about his patch in Suffolk, campaigning relentlessly to save Cow Pasture Lane and Mellis Common from harm. He managed his few fields

and woodland in traditional ways, conserving plants and animals that were there, gently coaxing back some that had fled. Everything he took on was undertaken with enthusiasm, care and thoroughness.

As an honorary trustee / director of Common Ground he gave generously of his time and thoughts; he introduced us to David Holmes our long time art director, they shared a belief in high quality visual as well as verbal communication. In 1989 working at our peak, Roger rolled up his sleeves to work breakneck alongside Pearce Marchbank in the production of our one off publication - Pulp! - a newspaper demanding "all arboreal life is here".

It was with the publication of 'Waterlog - a swimmer's journey through Britain' that he found warm acclaim. The reviews it received were great – without exception. For example, Craig Brown wrote in The Mail on Sunday. "A simply wonderful book ... the perfect union of a writer and a subject ... a delightfully eccentric masterpiece, no poolside or riverbank should be without it."

Roger has followed this with 'Wildwood - a journey through trees', which thankfully is complete following several years of research that has taken him around the world.

Selfishly we mourn the loss of a dear friend, his company, and a future without his insights and thoughtful and imaginative advice. Our thoughts are with his son Rufus, Alison, and all the close family and friends that have been helping him.

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Contact us for previous copies of this newsletter, or download them as PDF files from our web-site.

www.commonground.org.uk
www.england-in-particular.info

Common Ground is a national arts and environment charity. We play a unique role in linking nature and culture, working to inform, inspire and involve people in enjoying and taking more responsibility for their own locality. Parish Maps, Community Orchards, the Water Market and Apple Day are a few of our projects. **Producing the Goods**, champions production and consumption that reflects and sustains locality, nature and culture.



Common Ground and Producing the Goods are funded by Defra Environmental Action Fund, the John Ellerman Foundation, the Tedworth Charitable Trust, the Headley Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and others.

Charity no. 326335.