

The
JELLIED EEL

London's magazine for ethical eating

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cup of
tea:**

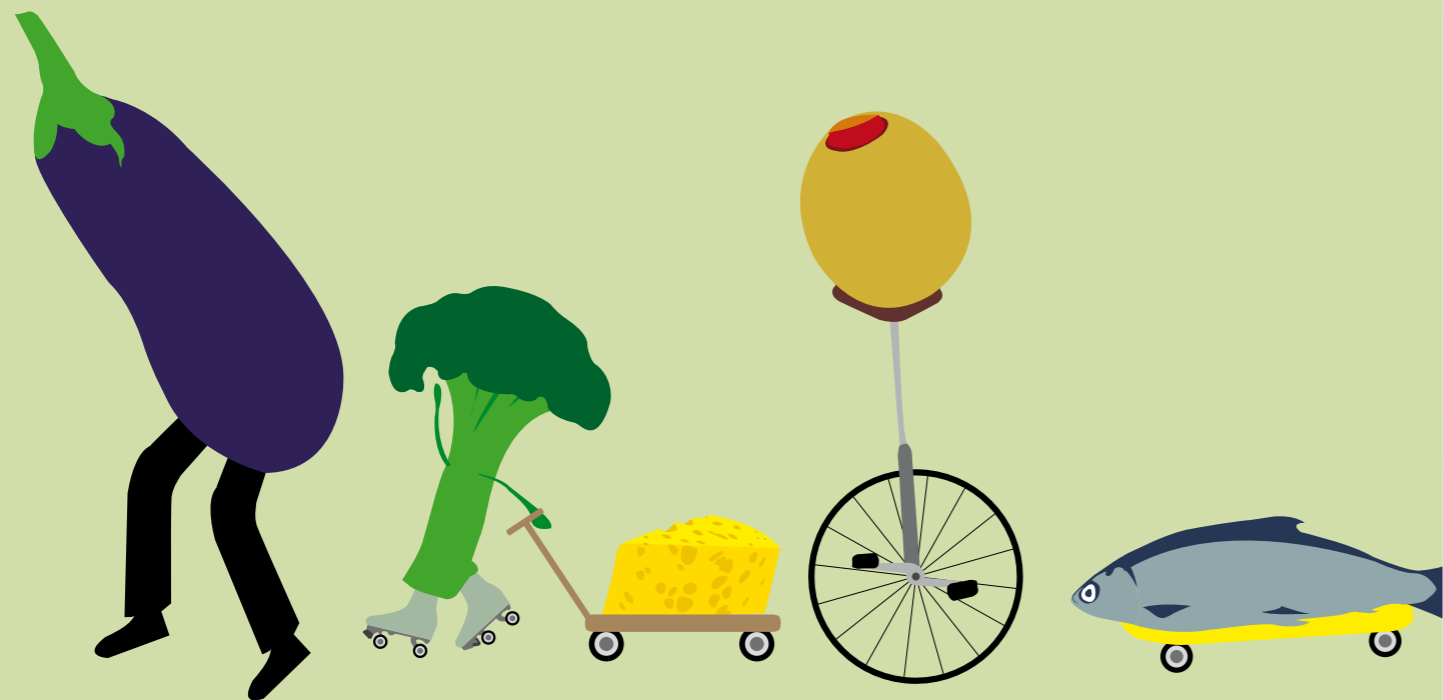
**London's
love for
Fairtrade
food**

Sustainable
fish swaps

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ethical?

WINTER 2011
FREE
magazine
ISSUE 30

Help London's bees * Food deserts ten years on * Organic coffee



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Say hello to the Jellied Eel

The phrase “never waste a good crisis” seems to be on many lips of late, echoing the arched eyebrow of disbelief as revelation is heaped upon revelation about what the new government can come up with next. While I can only really pass comment on the schemes dreamed up that affect food, it would appear that there is a slightly absurd trend emerging which will wind the clock back from years of progress. This is no more evident than in the health sector. We have seen front page news of the government’s decision to leave nutrition policy to the companies that are arguably most to blame for the state of the country’s diets. Far from following ‘the polluter pays’ principle, it would appear it pays to be a polluter – if you aren’t causing enough damage to the nation’s health, then you don’t get a seat around the table! Joining the companies on these ‘responsibility deal’ networks are a handful of health experts, many of whom already admit they don’t think this approach will work.

I hope you don’t think me a lazy liberal, as taking a swipe at government policy has never been easier. But voluntary measures, the sorts of which are being prescribed by Andrew Lansley who has set up the networks, do not work. Has traffic light labelling been adopted by all companies? No. Are all supermarkets abiding by the code of conduct for fair dealing with their suppliers? No. Have all junk food companies stopped promoting their products to children? No. We need to make it clear to government that handing over food and health policy to big business will not do. Please sign the petition ‘UK Health Department: Stop Seeking Advice from Junk Food Producers’ at <http://chn.ge/bHIFBL> and watch this space for more action.

Looking beyond health to another crucial issue: fish stocks. We have found many companies who support the idea of a level playing field for buying standards – something that can only be produced by legislation. In the meantime, the Olympics has created a catering standard banning all ‘at risk’ species (as identified by the Marine Conservation Society) from games catering. Building on the momentum from these Olympic commitments, and the support of the Mayor of London’s bodies (the police, fire brigade and Transport for London), we’re backing a new campaign – Sustainable Fish City. But many more could do worse than using the rule of thumb: ‘avoiding the worst, promoting the best, and improving the rest’ to all aspects of London’s fish consumption (See page 15).

But I don’t want to leave you in the ‘slough of despond’ – there is plenty to celebrate, as shown in the stories over the following pages. None more so than Fairtrade Fortnight, which arrives at the end of February (See page 12), bringing with it a welcome supply of chocolate, tea and coffee (and obviously much more) to help cheer up our early 2011.

Ben
Editor



Photo: Pamela Troni

- 4 Bulletin
- 6 Around Town
- 7 Shop Window
Melrose and Morgan
- 8 To Market
Sutton Farmers’ Market
- 8 What’s in season
- 11 Feature Food deserts
- 12 Feature Fairtrade in London
- 14 Local to London
Providence Organics
- 15 Feature Sustainable Fish City
- 16 Feature Is your detox ethical?
- 19 Capital Growth
- 19 Growing Calendar
- 20 Reader’s Kitchen
Jemima Roberts
- 21 London Food Link
Westminster Artisans
- 22 What’s on



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A new market for food vouchers

Healthy Start vouchers – which provide milk, fresh fruit and vegetables, and infant formula, to pregnant women and families with young children that are on certain benefits – are now accepted by London Farmers' Markets. Stallholders signed up to the scheme so far are: Millets Fruit; Bury Lane Farm Shop; Ted's Veg; Wild Country Organics; Bramble Tye Fruit Farm and Manor Farm Shop. Check online at www.lfm.org.uk to see which markets they appear at.



Sustainable fish sandwich survey

We trawled around London's sandwich sellers to find the most ethical offerings. The joint winners were Marks & Spencer and the Co-op for their excellent fish buying policies and communication to customers. For the full report on our survey, including the worst offenders, please see www.thejelliedeel.org



Photo: Robin. Creative Commons <http://bit.ly/hW386j>

Bulletin

A lesson in good food

The London School of Economics (LSE) was one of 22 organisations recognised at the recent Good Food on the Public Plate awards, run by Sustain and the Greater London Authority. The awards celebrate those non-profit organisations working to make sure the meals they serve are not only tasty and value for money, but good for the environment, and winners have made one or more significant changes. LSE, for example, converted to using only free range eggs and composts food waste. Catering manager Liz Thomas said: "In circumstances where there is constant pressure on cost reduction it would be easy to ignore sustainability, animal welfare and ethical sourcing. However we are committed to improving the lot of workers and animals in the food chain and reducing negative environmental impact." Other winners included Sutton Council, now serving school children fish from certified sustainable sources, and Imperial College, which buys seasonal vegetables from a farm in Kent. For a full report see www.thejelliedeel.org



Joint runner up
Best Drinks Producer
Sipsmith, London

Joint runner up
Best Food Market
Growing Communities,
London

www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/ffa/2010/finalists



Local food delivery service Hubbub beat Tesco to win top prize in the Retail, Services & Utilities category

A spread of the latest sustainable food news

Food waste tips

- * Plan your portions – ensure you don't overdo your dinner by using this handy tool: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/everyday_perfect_portions
- * Check stored fruit and veg like apples or squashes to make sure they're not off – to use up quickly juice them or make soup and freeze
- * Mash up overripe bananas and use in cakes, muffins or pancake batter

Maresa Bossano

Shopping basket

London lager



Meantime's new lager uses local ingredients (Kentish hops, East-Anglian barley and London water). Produced in their new purpose-built brewery in Greenwich, London Lager is cold matured (ie left alone!) for six weeks before it gets sent to shops and pubs. You can find the beer at a number of outlets around London, but for the full range, go to its pub The Greenwich Union. www.greenwichunion.com
www.meantimebeers.com

Rootsy delights

Described as 'rootsy, healing, refreshing and flavourful with a kick to it!', Roots Ginger Beer is the creation of Tottenham-based vegan food and drink manufacturer, Mighty Veg Delights. Made with fresh ginger and freshly squeezed lemon juice, and a sprinkling of Fairtrade sugar, it also makes a great mixer for cocktails. For details on where to buy go to www.mightyvegdelights.com

Spice Caravan falafel

The falafel made by Spice Caravan, a refugee catering enterprise based in North London, might be inspired by the flavours of Morocco, Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea, but they are now made with locally-grown dried field beans from the UK! Try them at Queen's Park farmers' market on the first and third Sunday of the month. spicecaravan@hotmail.com

Fairtrade Shopping basket

Beans mean fair
The Fairtrade mark has been popping up on some unexpected places recently – like baked beans and bean sprouts – thanks to a new Fairtrade standard for pulses. The white kidney and mung beans behind these new arrivals come from a group of farmers living in one of China's poorest regions in Inner Mongolia, and premiums from the sales will be invested in local schools. www.seriouslyorganic.co.uk

Cafédirect São Tomé instant hot chocolate

São Tomé, also known as Chocolate Island, is steeped in cocoa farming history. It has an unparalleled reputation for growing some of the most prized cocoa beans on earth, due to its location on the equator, rich soils and the perfect balance of temperature found there, along with the humidity and forest shade. Only four ingredients and no added nasties!

www.cafedirect.co.uk

First Fairtrade product from Afghanistan

Afghan raisins have a reputation for being among the best anywhere and Tropical Wholefoods has been working with international NGO Mercy Corps and the Parwan Raisin Producer Co-operative, based near Kabul, to bring them to the UK. Because of security in the region, Fairtrade auditors haven't been able to carry out physical inspections, but thanks to a compromise on the certification process, we won't miss out on these succulent, high-quality dried fruit. www.tropicalwholefoods.com

AROUND TOWN

Get into what's happening in your area

PEOPLE'S KITCHEN OPENS FOR BUSINESS WC1

The People's Supermarket co-operative in Lamb's Conduit Street now features a kitchen, turning food from the store which would otherwise go to waste, into ready-prepared meals. A broken bag of lentils becomes a spicy dahl, bruised apples are used for apple crumble, and damaged oranges equal an orange cake. Lasagnes, curries, quiches, salads and soups are prepared with no additives or flavouring, from recipes supplied by the supermarket's founder, chef and sustainability pioneer Arthur Potts Dawson.

www.thepeoplessupermarket.org

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS AGAIN CITY / SW1

Street Kitchen will be taking its New York-style food truck on the road again in early 2011, with plans to pop up in the City, and also around Sloane Square. In the first venture of its kind in the UK, last October saw Jun Tanaka, executive chef at Pearl Restaurant, and Mark Jankel, chef and founder of The Food Initiative, take to the streets of London in an Airstream kitchen, cooking up British seasonal food for Londoners to eat on the go, with all produce bought directly from sustainable and organic UK farms and producers.

Follow @streetkitchen on twitter for updates

CHICKENS IN (GREY) COURT TW10

Grey Court School in Ham, Richmond, is one step closer to its dream of setting up a school farm. With the help of local campaigning group School Food Matters, it reached the finals of ITV's People's Millions competition, winning funding to keep free range hens in secure enclosures on the school grounds, and set up an egg-selling enterprise. As well as helping other local schools rear chickens, Grey Court will have a 'hen hotel' in the holidays for all local school chickens, cared for by the part-time poultry keeper, who will also teach students and locals about chicken keeping. Local families can also get involved, by boarding some chickens in the holidays.

www.schoolfoodmatters.com



TUFNELL PARK BALCONY GARDEN PROVIDES £669 OF FOOD N19

Can you grow £500 worth of food without a garden or an allotment? That's the target North London resident Mark Ridsdill Smith set himself in May last year. And by 8 October he'd already beaten it by £169 – all from his 9 x 6 foot north-west facing balcony and six window sills. "Few people realise just how much you can grow in a tiny space" said Mark. "My balcony and window sills produced the equivalent of 100 bags of salad, 120 packets of herbs and 92 punnets of tomatoes – as well as runner beans, courgettes, mange tout, carrots, potatoes, blueberries and strawberries." He added: "A big advantage of balcony growing is that you can keep a constant eye on your crops and harvest your food five minutes before you eat. It doesn't get fresher than that!" Even if you have only a few windowsills, you can still grow several hundred pounds of food a year. Mark estimates that over £200 of food came from his four south-facing window sills.

www.verticalveg.org.uk

BROADWATER'S HARMONY GARDENS N17

At the end of last year, the public decided to award £50,000 to Harmony Gardens, a Haringey community gardening project, as part of The People's Millions – a partnership between the BIG Lottery Fund and ITV. The project, run by charity Back2Earth, works with the local community to provide flourishing, local food-growing community gardens, on the empty ground around the Broadwater Farm Community Centre. The project also aims to provide: green gyms and community vegetable growing, with raised beds for easy access; a cordoned fruit tree tunnel walkway; a productive, organic children's nature garden; beekeeping with beehives; a polytunnel for propagation; and a potting shed/eco building.

www.back2earth.org.uk

NEXT STAGE IN THE CYCLE N4

Station House Community Café is the first of a series of cafés to be launched by food-recycling project FoodCycle. The café uses FoodCycle's model of combining young volunteers and surplus food to create nutritious meals and positive social change in the community, and is open every Friday lunchtime, at MIND, Station House, 73c Stapleton Hall Road, N4 3QF.

www.foodcycle.org.uk



After establishing a grocery/deli in Primrose Hill in 2004, owners Nick Selby and Ian James recently opened a sister shop in Hampstead. Clare Hill took a peek...

According to Nick, the idea behind Melrose and Morgan is "to recreate the feel of a farmers' market seven days a week." Albeit a small and stylish one – with artfully mismatched Victorian tiles and shelves, and doors hewn from recycled cheeseboards and vintage school desks.

Like the original store in Gloucester Avenue, NW1, the new shop, just across from Hampstead tube, sells a range of larder ingredients such as oils, vinegars and preserves, as well as bread, milk, packaged meat, eggs, cheeses and seasonal fruit to buy loose. The other side of their offering is pre-prepared food, for eating now or dinner later: think doorstep egg and cress sandwiches, cottage pie, hearty soups and chicken curry. A central table heaves with freshly baked cakes, tarts, pastries and biscuits – all prepared onsite or in Melrose and Morgan's production kitchen in Chalk Farm. Deliveries are made with the company's electric van.

A commitment to quality and sustainable and local food is reflected in the standard of produce. All the meat is free-range and organic, the same goes for eggs and milk. And at Melrose and Morgan, there really is no cod – their fish pie contains pollack and organic farmed salmon instead of the over-fished national favourite. Familiar names like Neal's Yard Cheeses, Monmouth Coffee and Chegworth Valley (apples and juices) are also stocked. Regent's Park honey is proudly on sale too – a case of measuring 'food yards' not 'food miles'.

Nick says that the opening of the original store received quite a lot of press, as one of a number of establishments blazing a trail for British, local, seasonal food six years ago. "We were so committed to 'Britishness' we refused to sell croissants, and made our own Chelsea buns instead." But Melrose and Morgan also prides itself on listening to its customers, and he concedes that a balance always needs to be struck: "Chicken, leek and prune stew eventually gave way to coq au vin, and we do now sell croissants and things like chorizo. We couldn't be all about boiled beef and carrots."

Oriel Hall, Oriel Place NW3 1QN
www.melroseandmorgan.com

TO MARKET

Food markets around London

Sutton farmers' market

Town Square and Millennium Gardens
High Street, Sutton SM1 1DU
9.30am-1.30pm
Fourth Saturday of every month
www.ecolocal.org.uk/markets



JA Keen & Son's poultry stall

Every month a hoard of local farmers and producers descends on the leafy South London borough of Sutton, bearing fresh local produce, including fruit and veg from Perry Court and Bessborough Farms, free range pork, chicken, game from JA Keen in Dorking, plus eggs, cheese, jams, chutneys, bread, cakes and confectionery and much more.

The market is accredited by FARMA, the co-operative of farmers and producers selling on a local scale, and is organised by local environmental charity EcoLocal.

People visit to buy home-produced food: "It's always excellent quality and it's good to support local growers and producers," says a customer buying a jar of jam. "We're aware of global warming and we don't like our food trekked around the world. If you have a pot of local jam you'll taste the difference."

They were right: the jam not only tasted delicious but 'plum, apple and elderflower' is a flavour combination unlikely to be found on the shelves of the local supermarket.

It was produced by Kush Cuisine, run by husband and wife team Ian and Sadie Jennings. Ian is a chef with over 20 years' experience: "I originally created our range of preserves for my family and friends to enjoy," he says. "Now we're producing chutneys, jams and marmalades, sauces, spice rubs and marinades."

Tony from Perry Court Farm took great pleasure in showing off his line of air-dried apple crisps, a healthy alternative

to fried potato crisps: "People come to the market to buy British and for the freshness of the food," he says pointing to his display of fruit and veg. "Those salads were picked yesterday afternoon and bagged last night - that's almost as good as growing your own. Supermarkets want a seven-day shelf life."

* Featured stallholder

J A Keen & Son Dorking, Surrey

This is a family-run business situated on Etherley Farm at the foot of Leith Hill. It's a National Trust tenant farm, managed within the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to preserve the natural habitat and beauty of the surrounding countryside. It specialises in producing poultry: "chickens and ducks are available all year round, whilst turkeys and geese are produced seasonally for Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving," says Charlie Keen. "We have a small farm shop where all of our products can be bought, including free range chicken and duck eggs and a range of homemade preserves, and a campsite, perfectly situated for a relaxing weekend in the country." The latest addition to the farm is the reinstatement of an old orchard. Young trees were planted in January 2009, with the intention of having fruit for sale in the coming years.

<http://etherleyfarm.co.uk>

By Michael Dees

WHAT'S IN season

JANUARY

Crab A surprising starter for dinner with friends. Buy a whole crab and honour the crustacean with pride of place on the kitchen table. Roll up your sleeves, then get cracking with a hammer and skewer. Look for pot-caught crabs over 14cms wide, and buy whole crabs rather than crab claws (claws are often removed from live crabs, with the clawless crabs then put back in the sea to starve).

Also avoid egg-bearing females to give them a chance to breed; crabs tend to spawn in the winter months.

Also in season beetroot, celeriac, horseradish, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, red cabbage, rock oysters, scallops (choose dive caught), swede.



FEBRUARY

Forced Rhubarb More pricey than outdoor rhubarb, with tender stalks of vivid pink. Roast until tender in a moderate oven, adding a generous sprinkle of brown sugar, lemon zest, and squeeze of orange juice.

Also in season Brussels tops and sprouts, cabbage, kale, mussels, onions, pollack, purple sprouting broccoli, rock oysters.



Photo: Garry Knight. Creative Commons <http://bit.ly/dJm1NF>

MARCH

Chicory Often paired with nuts and blue cheese, but your best bet is in the oven. Cut in half lengthways, dab with butter and honey, season and then roast until golden. Bacon, thyme, and hazelnuts are optional extras.

Also in season cauliflower, kohlrabi, outdoor rhubarb, radishes, wild garlic.

Tom Moggach

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www.planetorganic.com

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42 Westbourne Grove, London W2 5SH
BLOOMSBURY
22 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HJ

MUSWELL HILL
111-117 Muswell Hill Road, London N10 3HS
ISLINGTON
64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR

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Email _____

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Would you be happy for Christian Aid to call you? Yes No

If yes, my daytime telephone number is _____

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A011239



taking away health inequality

London may be one of the world's leading foodie destinations, but behind the façade, various projects are working hard to tackle food access problems that still blight the city. **By Kelly Parsons**

Despite being only a few miles apart, if you travel east on the Jubilee line from Westminster to Canning Town, each of the tube stops represents a year of life expectancy lost. That's eight years in less than 20 minutes. And when you alight in the borough of Newham, you'll be surrounded by over 250 hot food takeaway shops, a third of which are fried-chicken sellers.

Ten years after the issue was highlighted some projects have made a genuine difference, but food deserts are still a problem in London

It was statistics like these that prompted a flood of research and proposals on 'food deserts' and 'food access' ten years ago, as policymakers attempted to address some of the capital's food inequalities. But a decade later, London – one of the world's top gastronomic cities, with its thriving sustainable food movement and Fairtrade accolades – is still home to some of the worst health deprivation in the country.

The Health Minister's recently announced plan to overhaul our public health policy is more evidence that, despite so many projects aimed at improving access to healthy food, the same issues persist, and education alone isn't having a big enough impact. Government initiatives like 5-a-day, Change4Life, and the Food Standard Agency's salt and fat campaigns may have raised public awareness, but they haven't changed the fact that in certain parts of the city, nine per cent

of men and six per cent of women still eat no fruit and veg at all.

Tackling health inequalities used to mean community food co-ops being parachuted into areas of London by public health departments. But more recently there's been a shift towards more sustainable solutions to food access problems.

And where better to start than the local corner shop? Often located at heart of deprived areas, local shops can have a huge influence on how people eat. But how often have you popped into the corner store for some veg, only to be faced with a couple of shrivelled carrots and some overripe bananas? Not exactly inspiring if you are looking for something to cook for dinner.

Buywell and Eatwell, two strands of the Well London project, have been helping retailers and community members to up their game, linking together thence for good food with the right suppliers.

One of Buywell's aims is to connect shops with providers of affordable produce, and encourage them to sell more local, seasonal fruit and vegetables. It has worked with stores in neighbourhoods all over London, with each retailer receiving personalised business support, fresh produce training, Change4Life marketing materials and a launch event to help them sell more fresh produce. And Eatwell has complemented the retail work by introducing cooking clubs, and community feast events to get more people in the community cooking and eating fresh produce.

The current economic climate means that, now more than ever, the ability of communities to buy healthy affordable food is under pressure. Ten years since the issues of food access were brought to our attention, some great projects have made a genuine difference to people's lives. But ultimately, the problems in these food deserts are 'systemic'. Rather than solving the problem, the work to date has highlighted the scale and difficulty of these challenges, and reinforces the need for government to take this issue more seriously.

www.sustainweb.org/buywell
www.london.gov.uk/welllondon/projects/eatwell



Photos: www.londonshopfronts.com

Kelly Parsons talks to campaigners, café owners, caterers, councillors and even a visiting Kenyan tea grower, about their experiences of Fairtrade food in the city

First of all, let's give ourselves a pat on the back: London is officially the world's largest Fairtrade city. Twenty-one out of its 33 boroughs have achieved certified status. It's also home to some of the movement's most successful organisations and companies, including Twin-trading, the pioneering organisation initially funded by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council 25 years ago, Divine Chocolate, Cafédirect, and now Liberation nuts. That's not to mention the many individuals and groups around the city promoting fairly traded foods. Over 1,000 retailers and 600 catering outlets

to revive the group in time for Fairtrade Fortnight 2011, says lead council member on the Harrow Fairtrade borough campaign, Nana Asante. "Today, everybody wants to be ethical, and pays lip service to justice, but not everyone really believes in it or takes action," she says, adding that she's heartened by the way people in the borough have embraced the idea. A campaign has been underway to encourage locals to include Fairtrade items in their shopping, and local businesses to convert. A borough's Fairtrade status depends on: the council passing a resolution supporting the cause and agreeing to serve products in

Building on London's

in the capital now sell a range of products carrying the famous Fairtrade mark, including iconic London institutions like the British Library, the London Eye and the Houses of Parliament.

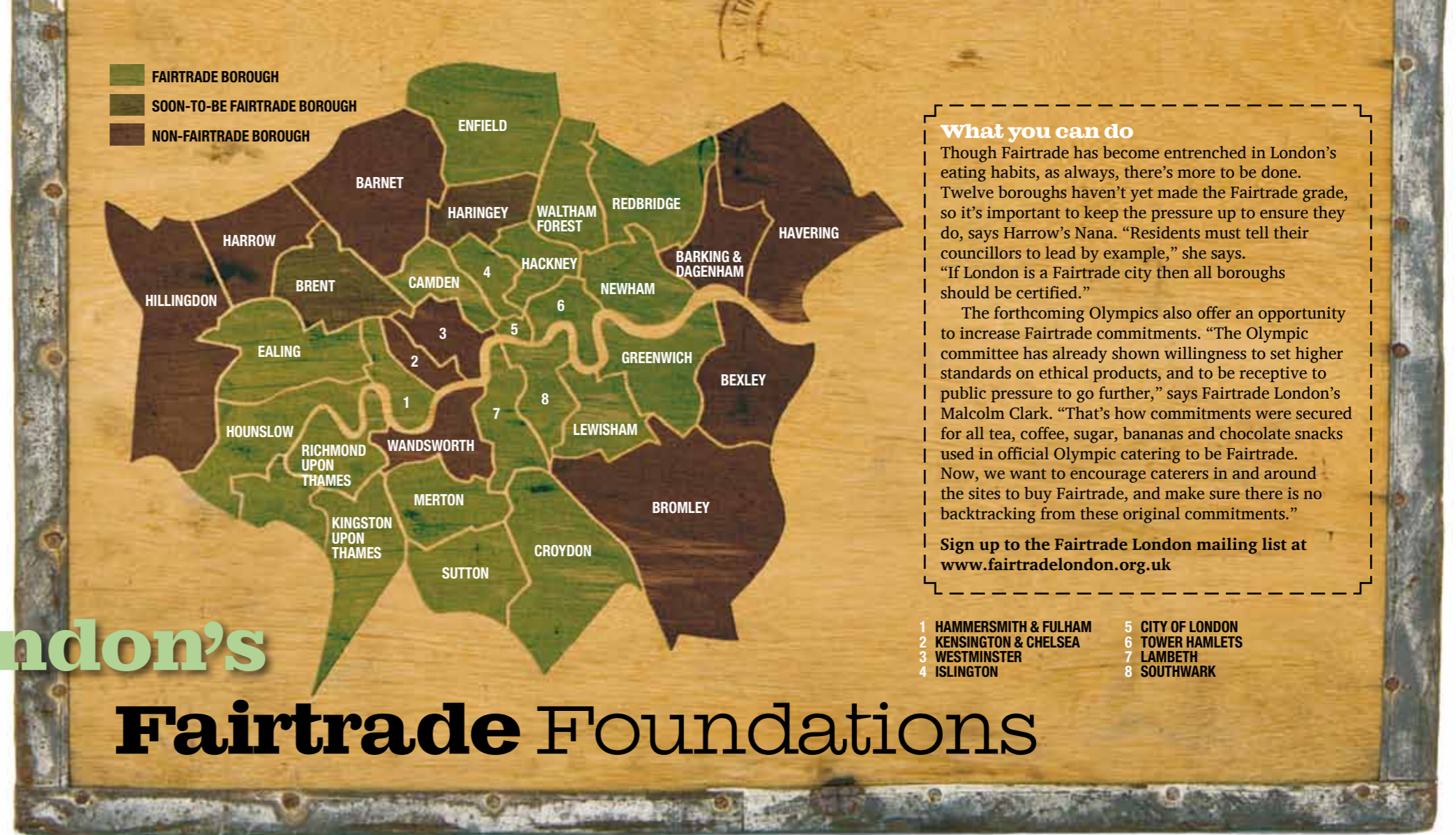
But as with any relationship, there's a real danger of us getting complacent, particularly in light of the current squeeze on council budgets and consumer purses, says Fairtrade London's campaign co-ordinator Malcolm Clark. "No borough has yet had its Fairtrade status revoked," says Malcolm, "but the challenge is to ensure councils don't withdraw support for financial reasons. There are also some boroughs, like Barnet, Wandsworth and Westminster, where there is grassroots support, but the council is the main sticking point to becoming Fairtrade-certified."

Harrow council has been stuck in Fairtrade limbo for years. Three years ago local supporters persuaded it to pass a resolution in support of Fairtrade, but a change in administration resulted in less interest, and the steering group folded. Now the council is keen

meetings, offices and canteens; a range of products being available in shops and served in local cafés and restaurants; and workplaces and community organisations supporting Fairtrade and using products.

Tiny price to pay

One business helping Enfield borough qualify is My Coffee Stop, a café on the platform of Enfield Chase station. Co-owner Karen Mercer hadn't even heard of Fairtrade until she happened across a leaflet three months before opening her new venture last year. She was sold on the concept instantly, she says, and has since become one of the borough's most ardent Fairtrade supporters, sitting on its steering group and putting on promotional events for Fairtrade Fortnight. "You wouldn't believe how far people will travel to support Fairtrade," says Karen. "We're meant to be for commuters but people are so drawn they visit us rather than the high street, and I have one customer who came all the way from Chingford to try our tea!" And, she points out, the investment required to take



What you can do

Though Fairtrade has become entrenched in London's eating habits, as always, there's more to be done. Twelve boroughs haven't yet made the Fairtrade grade, so it's important to keep the pressure up to ensure they do, says Harrow's Nana. "Residents must tell their councillors to lead by example," she says. "If London is a Fairtrade city then all boroughs should be certified."

The forthcoming Olympics also offer an opportunity to increase Fairtrade commitments. "The Olympic committee has already shown willingness to set higher standards on ethical products, and to be receptive to public pressure to go further," says Fairtrade London's Malcolm Clark. "That's how commitments were secured for all tea, coffee, sugar, bananas and chocolate snacks used in official Olympic catering to be Fairtrade. Now, we want to encourage caterers in and around the sites to buy Fairtrade, and make sure there is no backtracking from these original commitments."

Sign up to the Fairtrade London mailing list at www.fairtradelondon.org.uk

- 1 HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
- 2 KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
- 3 WESTMINSTER
- 4 ISLINGTON
- 5 CITY OF LONDON
- 6 TOWER HAMLETS
- 7 LAMBETH
- 8 SOUTHWARK

Fairtrade Foundations



In some boroughs like Barnet, Wandsworth and Westminster there is grassroots support, but the council is the main sticking point to becoming Fairtrade-certified

Malcolm Clark, Fairtrade London

an ethical approach is more about effort than money. "Finding products takes time, because there is no one supplier with everything we need, but financially for each cup of coffee the price difference is less than 1p, which makes you realise what a tiny price it is to pay to support Fairtrade."

Time, rather than cost, is also the biggest investment for businesses at

the other end of the size spectrum, says Giles Burton, hospitality manager for Avenance, caterer for a staff restaurant, 12 kitchens and 37 meeting and dining rooms at City law firm Baker & Mackenzie. "We have gone from one Fairtrade product two years ago to a range of house wines, fruit juices, teas, coffee, bananas, sugar sachets and more, and managing that takes time," he says, "but people are surprised to hear the products aren't necessarily more expensive." The coffee and tea don't cost any more, neither do coffee beans used by its internal branch of Starbucks, and its Fairtrade orange juice is actually cheaper than non-Fairtrade equivalents it used in the past.

"Large corporations aren't silly," he says when asked why the firm is embracing Fairtrade. "They know

they have to take action like this now or they'll lag behind competitors. And as a contract caterer, when we do sales tenders we are increasingly asked about our approach to corporate social responsibility."

Keep drinking

But perhaps the most convincing argument comes from tea grower Andrew Ethuru, board member of social enterprise Cafédirect, and chairman of the Michimikuru tea company in Kenya, which became Fairtrade-certified in 2007. "When I fly to London it makes me happy to see our tea being sold," he says, "knowing the funds will be ploughed back in to making better tea, by improving our environmental practices and increasing quality controls," though he is keen to point out that not all Fairtrade organisations reinvest

profits, as Cafédirect does.

But, he warns, Londoners shouldn't assume their work is done – his plans to get other producers involved rely on us keeping up our support, through plenty of quality Fairtrade tea and coffee-drinking. "There is an impression that Fairtrade is a success and has now done its job, but in fact our organisation is selling less than a couple of years ago, mainly because of unscrupulous factories producing machine-picked bulk blended teas in the name of Fairtrade." His advice: look beyond the label and go by taste. If you like it, buy more. "I love drinking our tea, if you have ten cups a day you will be jumping up and down in good health, but I can't drink it all, so I'm happy for the people of London to buy and enjoy the rest!"

LOCAL TO LONDON

A taste of the Colombian mountains lands in West London

Michael Wale discovers how one man's travels to the coastal mountains of Colombia led to a speciality Fairtrade-certified coffee being drunk across the capital



Photos: Elizabeth Waight

When James Deeble went back-packing around South America in January last year he ended up in Colombia, more particularly the northern Sierra Nevada mountain region. It was a journey that led him to discover a group of unique indigenous coffee farmers, and resulted in him bringing their Fairtrade organic coffee back to London.

He had already decided to start a business on his return. "I wanted a company that combined my passion for coffee with an interest in exciting cultures and the environment," he reflects. "Colombia is the biggest Arabica coffee producer in the world, and there's a lot of good coffees there I could have imported, but I wanted a coffee that also told a story about where it was grown and its farmers."

In his coffee quest, he got permission to visit the protected community of the Arhuaco Indians based in the Sierra Nevada. Historically, the indigenous farmers haven't had an easy ride, James says, and over the years have had to deal with everything from battling with Spanish colonisers, to the Colombian drug war affecting their home. But the community has managed to maintain its traditions and farming practices for hundreds of years. "Their organic coffee is grown in small farms, 1,300 metres above sea level, and harvested by hand. All the coffee is Fairtrade-certified, and the additional premium helps the community continue with its traditional farming practices, and supports the families." James explains.

The Arhuaco are an interesting group with their own language and spiritual beliefs, which focus on the protection of the Sierra Nevada, which they call 'mother earth'. They do this through maintaining their environment with small-scale sustainable agriculture that doesn't damage the land. They have never used chemical fertilisers or pesticides, and the water used in the farming process comes from local mountain springs, so all the coffee they grow is certified organic.

James's new company, Providence Organics, based in Richmond, West London, imports the green coffee beans directly from Colombia, and they are locally roasted. "We are different to a lot of coffee companies in that we import the green beans ourselves," he says, "which can sometimes be difficult because of the work involved in importing goods into the UK, but it was important for me to meet the farmers and buy the coffee from the source."

While he is happy to talk about the different issues surrounding exporting and importing of the coffee, it is clearly the social side that really enthuses and rewards James. He is proud for his coffee to be certified organic and Fairtrade, and is in regular contact with the farmers to keep updated on their community and current coffee crops. "I can really see how Fairtrade works to help the growers involved. I've witnessed first-hand the difficulties farmers face in poor countries, and know the additional premium they receive can really make a difference to their lives."

To read more about the story behind Providence Organics and for sales visit www.providenceorganics.co.uk. You can also find James selling his Fairtrade organic coffee at various events in and around the capital.



Fins can only get better

January saw the launch of the Sustainable Fish City campaign, which asks Londoners to take action to save fish stocks. Ben Reynolds finds out what it's hoping to achieve and who's backing it

Henry Dimpleby is one of the co-founders of Leon Restaurants, which has eight outlets around London. The restaurants have a buying policy that takes into account flavour, quality, provenance and sustainability, with a public commitment that states: 'Any fish that we use is from sustainable shoals'.

In practice, this means that the Leon menu avoids using endangered species of white fish, and features more sustainable species such as mackerel, an oily fish that is also better for health. Like many food outlets and caterers across the city – big and small, selling luxury and everyday foods – it has shown that sustainable fish is achievable and affordable.

Henry is also a founder of the Sustainable Restaurant Association, which helps other restaurants and caterers to adopt health and sustainability standards. As the association explains, 'Sustainability is good for business and the planet. Sustainable fish, recycled waste, energy efficiency: it's what more and more customers want'.

Leon is not alone in calling for action. Concern for fish stocks has been rising, with a peak of activity in London last year, off the back of the *End of the Line* documentary and the *Evening Standard's* campaign to get Blue Fin tuna off the menu (though alas, high-end restaurant Nobu is still serving it!). While Jamie Oliver and a platter of other celeb chefs are gearing up to tackle the plight of fish, London has a campaign of its own, aiming to become the first capital to rid itself of unsustainable fish. Sustain's Kath Dalmeny, who

is working on the Sustainable Fish City campaign, explains why this is what London needs right now:

"Fish need our help. There is a real danger that we could lose this precious natural resource from our oceans forever.

We need to help fish, fishermen and marine environments by insisting on buying seafood only from sustainable species, stocks and fishing methods. The advice on sustainable fish is quite simple: avoid the worst, promote the best and improve the rest. Sustainable Fish City can show everyone how."

The campaign has a range of high-profile targets against which it will judge its success, and aims for all London councils to serve sustainable fish.

At its launch in January, the campaign already had a number of influential supporters including the National Trust, Sodexo, Greenwich University, The School of Oriental and African Studies, Goldsmiths University, Imperial University and the Greater London Authority family (Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade and Transport for London), as well as a veritable shoal of smaller food companies and individual supporters.

The *Jellied Eel* is backing its call for common sense and we implore you to join this vital campaign in whatever way you can (see box), whether you're a punter, company food buyer, or work for an organisation that caters for meetings or events. We're kicking off in this issue by looking at the state of the city's sandwiches (see page three), and will be keeping you up to speed on the campaign as it progresses.

What you can do

- 1 Change the fish you buy
- 2 Influence the fish that other people buy
- 3 Inspire others to join in!

Want to find out how to do this? Go to www.sustainablefishcity.net

Give over-exploited old favourites a rest by trying some of these delicious alternatives:

Old favourite	Alternatives
Haddock	* Coley – often sold as saithe * MSC-certified haddock from Scotland or Norway
Cod	* Line-caught pollack from Cornwall * Coley * MSC-certified Alaskan Pollock * MSC-certified cod from the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific oceans
Plaice	* Flounder, dab or lemon sole – caught by otter trawl or seine net * MSC-certified plaice * MSC-certified Dover sole
Skate	* Starry, spotted and cuckoo rays
Halibut	* Red, grey or tub gurnard * MSC-certified Pacific halibut

Michael Dees investigates the sustainability, and science, behind our annual January 'cleanse'



how ethical is your detox?

If you overdid it with the mince pies and sherry this festive season, you might find yourself tempted by the promises of the many detox programmes on offer. But before you part with your hard-earned cash, take a moment to consider how ethical, or even how necessary, your detox might be.

For starters, much of the fruit or veg suggested – such as strawberries or salads – is likely to be out of season in the UK at this time of year, in which case they may have either travelled thousands of miles, or been grown in heated polytunnels – both of which use large amounts of energy which bumps up your ecological footprint.

Better to go for root veg like carrots, parsnips and beetroot: all available at the moment. Beetroot is high in vitamins such as betacarotene and folic acid, and some people claim that regularly eating beetroot is good for the liver and even helps reduce the incidence of heart disease. There are also lots of green vegetables



such as kale, spinach and purple sprouting broccoli on offer in the early months. Kale contains vitamins A, C and E, minerals including manganese, iron, calcium and potassium and phytochemicals (chemicals that naturally occur in plants) linked to cancer prevention. Fruit such as apples and pears are also available. Apples contain useful amounts of fibre, vitamin C and potassium and quercetin, a flavonoid (another type of naturally occurring plant chemical) that may help protect against heart disease.

And don't forget the customary herbal tea. Many teas recommended for their antioxidant properties are available from Fairtrade brands, so you can guarantee the producer a fair deal at the same time as treating yourself to a refreshing drink.

A new year's resolution to eat local fresh fruit and veg, as part of a long-term plan

of diet and exercise, and to buy Fairtrade products from further afield, will have long lasting benefits regardless of the choices we made at last year's staff Christmas party.

It could also potentially save wasting anything from tens to hundreds of pounds, on detox systems which promise cleansing and toxin flushing. As Dr Ben Goldacre, full-time doctor and author of *Bad Science*, warns: "Anyone who talks confidently and authoritatively about detox is misleading you, and you should be very cautious about all the other things they say too, as it's quite likely they are based in fantasy, rather than evidence."

He maintains that detox systems are nothing but a marketing invention: "The whole notion of detox is foolish," he says. "It's a marketing term rather than a medical one, and it distracts people from the real things they can do to improve their health."

Eating more fruit and veg, getting some exercise, drinking less, and losing weight are things that improve your long-term health over a lifetime. Doing them for three magical days, or six days, or two weeks, is worse than useless, because you are falsely reassured that you're doing something useful."

Photos: Elizabeth Waight

Gourmet experiences from field to fork

Food Safari gives you behind-the-scenes access to some of Suffolk's best loved food and drink producers. We specialise in Field to Fork days: farm walks, fishing trips, and wild food forays; cookery and butchery workshops; and fabulous feasts.

www.foodsafari.co.uk
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NEXT ISSUE
 APRIL 2011

You can now buy all your fresh food straight from local farms



An alternative to the supermarket for North Londoners:

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CAPITAL GROWTH

Give bees a chance
(London's)



Photo: Steve Benbow

Michael Dees explains that helping our troubled bee population isn't just the responsibility of those living in the countryside.



As the winter frost casts a silver blanket over London's urban apiaries, the bees are huddled together in clusters that keep them warm at a constant 35°C. The queens are probably already laying the eggs that will more than double the size of their colonies by spring, ready for the season of foraging which pollinates one in three mouthfuls of the food we eat. Our bees are under a lot of pressure with the global population in dramatic decline and, as Albert Einstein is believed to have said, if the bee disappeared then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no man.

CAPITAL BEE COMPETITION

As part of the Capital Bee campaign, a competition to win 50 hives and training is being run. The competition opened on 16 December 2010 and final date for completed applications is 5pm on Friday 28 January 2011. The winners will receive a beehive, protective clothing, basic tools, training, mentoring and support to enable their community to set up beekeeping by spring 2012. www.capitalgrowth.org/bee_competition

GROWING CALENDAR

JANUARY

- * Order your seed for the season ahead. Jot down a rough planting plan, then order online in one batch to save on packaging and delivery costs.
- * Try forcing rhubarb. Choose an established plant, clear weeds, then cover with a container. Harvest in five weeks, tugging off the stems.

FEBRUARY

- * Take this last, precious opportunity before the season kicks off to finish overdue projects. Order in seed potatoes, especially 'first earlies'. These can be chitted and planted out around mid-March, weather permitting.

MARCH

- * Start off chillies, as they require a long growing season. The seed needs extra heat to germinate – around 21°C, so use a heated propagator or snug spot such as an airing cupboard, then grow them in your sunniest spot.
- * For an early crop of strawberries, cover your plants towards the end of the month. with fleece, bell or recycled bottle cloches. When the plants are flowering, remove the cloches during the day to promote pollination.

Tom Moggach of City Leaf*

Help is at hand. Capital Bee, part of the Capital Growth campaign to create 2,012 new growing spaces, aims to promote community bee-keeping in London and campaigns for a bee-friendly city. In December last year, a bee summit at the Southbank Centre brought together beekeepers, organisations and projects to debate what is happening to the honey bee and what Londoners can do about it.

"There's lots of things people can do to help bees and other pollinators in London," says Pamela Brunton, Capital Bee campaign officer at Sustain. "We can make sure we give them all the food they need and somewhere safe to live, by planting wild flowers, flowering herbs and fruit trees, even in pots on the windowsill; and by avoiding using too much concrete and chemicals in your garden. Buying bee-friendly food, like organic, or making a bee hotel out of old logs, can help wild bees too."

Gardening organically is also important, as chemicals can sometimes have an adverse effect on bees and other wildlife.

Urban environments, like London, are particularly good for bees because of the variety of forage available to them year-round in parks and gardens, and lots of people are becoming interested in city beekeeping. If you reckon keeping bees is for you, start by contacting your local association and going along to one of their beginners' courses before you invest in your hives and equipment.

* City Leaf provides food-growing training to groups and schools. For more information, call 020 7485 9262 or see www.cityleaf.co.uk

baking



Clare Hill enjoys a scented spin around the kitchen of keen baker and organic enthusiast Jemima Roberts

The aroma of freshly baked cookies in Jemima's kitchen is a giveaway. "This looks like a set up," she says almost apologetically. "It's not like this every Saturday, but I really do love baking."

On the bench, plump hazelnut and ginger cookies vie for space with trays of crunchy granola flavoured with molasses and cinnamon. Later on, she reveals cupboards filled with jars of homemade pear and chilli, and beetroot and horseradish chutneys.

Jemima says she buys virtually everything organic, and likes making most meals from scratch. But surely most people don't have the time and/or funds to do this? She is bemused by the question: "Yes it can take time. But I choose to spend time on that rather than something else – in short, what else would I rather be doing? I work from home; I love cooking and approach it as a pleasure more than a chore."

On the subject of cost, she is resolute about looking at the bigger picture: "Organic food more expensive? The reality is more complicated: often non-organic is subsidised – taxpayers funding agrochemical-dependent agriculture, for example."

It's helpful that Jemima lives a stone's throw from Stoke Newington Farmers' Market, promoted as UK's only all-organic farmers' market. This also means usually not having to choose between 'organic' and 'local'. The rest of her groceries are from nearby Mother Earth, a whole food shop in Albion Road. She also uses its fruit bag and veg box scheme.

Jemima's sustainable food knowledge, and fervour, have undoubtedly been shaped by her stint at sea as an assistant chef for Greenpeace, experience working for food co-ops and an idyllic-sounding childhood in rural Wales, with a veggie patch, fruit-laden hedgerows, and a jersey cow called Bronwen.

When she's not baking treats, everyday meals are another chance to experiment with ingredients. "I'm the sort of person who could wake up in the middle of the night with

ideas for what to do with beetroot." 'Barlotto' – a barley-based version of risotto – with beetroot and goat's cheese, and roasted beetroot borscht, are two recent creations.

At the moment Jemima is cooking just for herself, as her partner is away at sea. "If anything, I'm guilty of over-catering sometimes, I'm used to cooking for lots of people. But it means I always have something homemade to share when I see friends, or I freeze the surplus."

It seems Jemima has left virtually no stone unturned when it comes to sustainable eating, while enjoying an interesting range of food that continues to inspire her. But she points out: "An important thing missing for me is land to grow food, there's no outdoor space here at the flat. I'm planning to return to Wales and put down my roots there, I'd really like some land."

From the sea, to the big smoke and then to the countryside, the next chapter in Jemima's food adventures is certain to be well catered-for.

Jemima gets a free goody bag from the splendid ladies at **Happy Kitchen** as a thank you for letting us through her door.

If you would like us to consider putting your kitchen under our microscope, please contact ben@sustainweb.org

Scorecard

High scores for buying nearly everything from farmers' markets and independent shops, and for buying organic.

Slight deductions for sometimes over-catering.

"I couldn't live without...an occasional Alphonso mango." Renowned for their superior flavour and fragrance, they are ripened on the tree in India and have a short shelf life, so are likely to be air-freighted.

Featured London Food Link member **Westminster Artisans**



Did you know that as a trader with Westminster Artisans you're not permitted to swear?

LONDON FOOD LINK

As an overseas travel journalist and reviewer for many years, Julie Bundy always enjoyed visiting farmers' markets and food fairs. Back in London, she was equally taken by the capital's pop up restaurants and markets, which further inspired her to develop her love of good food into a business. The result is her company Westminster Artisans, which runs two markets: Maida Hill in W9 and Tachbrook Street in Pimlico SW1.

Maida Hill, running since late 2009, is a regular street market with local and regional traders, and an occasional farmers' market on a Saturday. Julie was instrumental in developing the market and the popular pop-up coffee shop, Maida Hill Café Gallery, both of which have helped increase visitors to the area.

Tachbrook Street (pictured, with Julie third from left) was relaunched in October 2010, and is managed by Westminster Artisans on behalf of Westminster Council. The market is a mix of established traders and modern new food stalls that have been a hit with local residents and businesses. Julie's market food epiphanies include Masih Masala's take away Indian food (another London Food Link member) and London traiteur (catering business) Madame Gautier's 'La Boucherie'.

London Food Link *Join us!*

Love the Jellied Eel?

Join London Food Link and have a copy delivered to your door every quarter. London Food Link is a network of organisations and individuals: farmers and food writers, caterers and community food projects, restaurants and reviewers. We work on increasing the availability of sustainable food in London through training, advice and campaigning. The *Jellied Eel* is a free magazine we publish to raise awareness of ethical food issues in London and London's growing local and sustainable food movement. We are a charity.

Member benefits

- * get our magazine the *Jellied Eel* with London news and articles delivered to your door
- * make useful London food contacts
- * find out what's going on around London with our regular email updates including local food news and funding info
- * invites and discounted entry to our regular London Food Link soirées and affiliated training/events – great for networking and accessing expertise

How to join

Online: Go to www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/membership, complete the form and send it to georgie@sustainweb.org, then click the 'make a payment' link. Post: Complete this form and send it with a cheque made payable to 'Sustain', to 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF.

Membership form London Food Link

Name _____

Business/organisation _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Your website/Facebook/Twitter address _____

Please write a brief summary of who you are/your interest in local food

- £20 – individual or not-for-profit community project
- £40 – charity, social enterprise or company with less than £100,000 annual turnover
- £70 – public body, or company with £100,000–£1,000,000 annual turnover
- £100 – company with more than £1,000,000 annual turnover

Rate If the fee is not, for whatever reason, a fair reflection of your ability to pay membership, then please get in touch. If you are a community project, food business or local authority, contact georgie@sustainweb.org for more information on how you can be involved with London Food Link.

WHAT'S ON

Capital Growth A.B.Seed education competition

17 January London-wide

Challenges educational institutions – from pre-school to colleges and universities – to get growing to be in with a chance of winning some fantastic prizes.

www.capitalgrowth.org/schools/abseed

Capital Growth funding round

17 January London-wide

Launch of funding round for new growing spaces. Deadline for applications: 14 February. www.capitalgrowth.org

Get your hands dirty - grow food

26 January 11-2pm Spitalfields City Farm

Food-growing course held most weeks

www.spitalfieldscityfarm.org/what-s-on

Grow, pick, cook & eat garden course

29 January 2-3pm every Saturday King's Cross

Learn basic gardening skills at the Calthorpe Project. Courses for parents and children. www.calthorpeproject.org.uk

City Shoots: sprouting sustainable action in schools

8 February City Hall

An event promoting sustainable food in primary schools, providing an opportunity for teachers, head teachers, parent helpers and community organisations to learn more about food growing. Registration essential.

<http://cityshoots.wordpress.com>

Seeds glorious seeds Family fun food-growing activities

February 23, 25 & 27 half-term Carshalton

Planting potatoes and seeds, all ages welcome.

Advance booking needed. www.ecolocal.org.uk

London Food Link network do

23 February 4.30-7.30pm FARM:shop, Dalston

Gathering of folks interested in good food. Hear from some of the most exciting ethical food enterprises and initiatives in the capital. £15 (£10 for LFL members).

georgie@sustainweb.org www.londonfoodlink.org

Fairtrade Fortnight

28 February-13 March

The theme for this year is 'show off your label', so tell the world about your cake made extra special by using Fairtrade sugar and spice, your most tempting bottle of wine, your comfiest pants! www.fairtradelondon.org.uk

Youth enterprise event

March, date and location TBC

www.capitalgrowth.org

Real Food Festival Markets

4-6 February Southbank, 25-27 March Brent Cross

More details at www.realfoodfestival.com

JELLIED EEL *star* STOCKIST



Unpackaged



Housed in a former dairy, Unpackaged retains an authentic, traditional and local charm, despite having opened only three years ago.

Over that time, owner Catherine Conway has transformed it into a very forward-thinking and unusual corner shop.

The clue to its singularity is in the name – everything is sold without wrapping, bulky foam trays or unnecessary *stuff*: just pure, organic and Fairtrade produce.

Customers are encouraged to bring along their own containers to fill with a variety of whole foods, fresh produce, chutneys and preserves, environmentally-friendly household cleaning products, herbs, spices, and even wine! The Unpackaged model tackles several sustainability issues head on – reducing CO2 emissions by using less packaging, reducing food

wastage (because you can choose how much you want), and reducing the material being sent to landfill. You can, of course, stock up on the *Jellied Eel* here too – no packaging, just good stuff inside!

<http://beunpackaged.com>

The *Jellied Eel* would like to thank Unpackaged and its staff for their continued support.

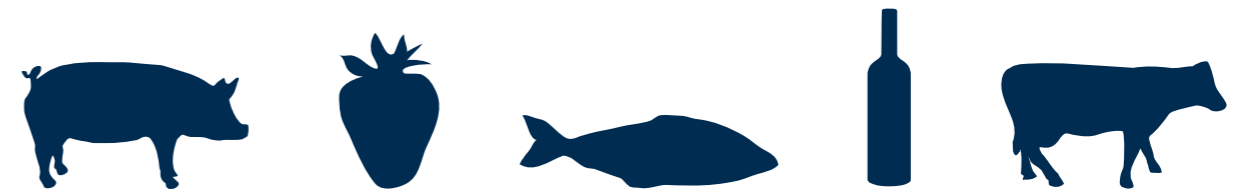
Are you a shop, restaurant, café, trader or community centre with sustainable food at its heart that wants to help us spread the word around London? Get in touch with thejelliedeel@sustainweb.org about stocking the *Jellied Eel*.

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