

SPRING 2004 No 6

London Food Link aims to help producers, consumers and retailers make a positive choice for sustainable, local food. This means better access to affordable, high quality and seasonal food, shorter supply chains and campaigning for policies which promote a thriving local food economy and culture.

London Food Link intends to:

- establish a local food network for London
- promote a sustainable local food economy
- support new and existing food projects
- advise local and regional authorities on supporting the growth of a local food sector in London
- celebrate London's food culture

Hospital Food Project launched

Welcome Fiona Cairncross

Following the launch of the new London Food Link Hospital Food Project on BBC London on 7th January, we are delighted to welcome Fiona Cairncross to our staff to lead this project co-ordinator for the next two years.

Fiona, formerly a supermarket supply chain expert and environmental charity worker, will be working in partnership with the Soil Association to establish supply chain and technical procurement workshops to help food suppliers in London and the South East, and hospital catering staff optimise conditions for getting local and/or organic food into wards and staff canteens.

Additionally, a think-tank of procurement specialists from around the country will promote the project and help to replicate its successes in other areas of public sector catering such as schools, resulting in a major conference in November 2005.

As well as fostering better opportunities for supplying local food, the Hospital Food Project

will also commission research on food distribution in London, on the viability of new local food infrastructure and on measuring the health and economic impact of increasing local and/or organic food supply to participating hospitals.

The project has now grown to include four NHS hospitals with very different catering arrangements and services. These are:

- The Royal Brompton in Chelsea (heart & lung)
- St George's in Tooting (general and teaching)
- The Lambeth Hospital in Stockwell (mental health)
- Ealing General

This project is supported under the England Rural Development Programme by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. London Food Link is also grateful to the King's Fund for providing a grant to help with this project.

Bread Street exhibition launch - 8th March 6-8pm

London Food Link will be launching the *Bread Street* exhibition of 30 photographs by Sara Hannant. Over the winter, Sara has been photographing commercial bakers and people baking at home. The work aims to celebrate bread as a reflection of the cultural diversity of Londoners. Speeches will precede the launch of Mel Barrett's London Food Link report on the history and evolution of bread in Britain. Sara will be at the launch to talk about her work and inspiration for the project. All are welcome but you **MUST** be on the delegates' list for security reasons. So, if you haven't had an invitation, contact Dan on 020 7837 1228. Unexpected visitors can't be admitted.

Sara's photos will be at City Hall for a week and then move to the Gunnersbury Gallery in Acton from Good Friday (9th April) - details from www.cip.org.uk. Another exhibition is planned at Three Mills, Bromley-by-Bow, the date to be confirmed. This project has been funded by the

Association of London Government Outer London Cultural Development Fund and the



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LONDON FOOD LINK

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Food Access Conference - 5th March

A half-day conference (9am - 2pm) on **Food Access & Social Housing** in London. This London Food Link conference is hosted by Jenny Jones, Deputy Mayor of London, and funded by East Thames Housing Group and Newlon Housing Trust. Food access projects in housing estates or run by housing association tenants are mushrooming in the current policy climate of trying to address premature death rates by tackling cardiovascular disease and cancers. Schemes include food co-ops, box schemes, community cafes and school-based fruit and vegetable markets. Food projects can offer many other social and economic benefits to an area beyond health, such as vocational training, neighbourly meeting opportunities, links to local retailers and cooking advice.

This practical conference will show existing examples of good practice through resident-led workshops, and advice on business and finance planning for food groups. It will also place food access work in a London policy context, to help housing associations support food access schemes on their patch. Speakers include: Jenny Jones, June Barnes, Chief Executive of East Thames Housing Group, Eric Samuel, Chief Executive of Community Food Enterprise, Dr Martin Caraher of City University. Three workshops are also offered on getting started, business and financial planning and finding customers. To book visit www.londonfoodlink.org or call Dan on 020 7837 1228.

Community Supported Agriculture - 25th March, 6pm - 9.30pm

Resurgence Magazine, the Soil Association and Demos present: *Meeting the People Who Grow Our Food*. An Event to Set up a Community Supported Agriculture Scheme for London, hosted at Demos, The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ. Speakers include Jenny Jones, Greg Pilley of the Soil Association, Dan Keech of London Food Link and Julie Brown of Growing Communities. Entry £5 including wine. Community Supported Agriculture schemes allow customers to meet farmers and request particular produce. CSA members can visit the farms to see the quality of produce and join in the harvest. For farmers the schemes bring guaranteed local markets. More information from Peter Lang peterlang@resurgence.org or tel: 0208 809 2391.

London food policy body launched by Mayor

Following almost two years of campaigning by London Food Link to secure more direct involvement from the Greater London Authority on food issues, Ken Livingstone has announced the establishment of London Food, a mayoral commission on food policy. His announcement was made at the London Conference during the 'Eat London' workshop from the platform shared with London Food Link, Claire

Pritchard of the Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (LFL Member), Geetie Singh of Singhboulton Organic Pubs, Dr Ken Ife of the African/Caribbean Business Association and Deputy Mayor Jenny Jones, who will chair London Food. Dan Keech will be temporarily seconded to the London Development Agency for one day a week to help with the establishment of London Food, while appropriate staff are recruited.

Children's Food Bill

In February, Sustain will be launching a Children's Food Bill (CFB) in Parliament, the purpose of which is to improve children's health and prevent food-related ill-health, such as childhood obesity. An important focus for the Bill will be to introduce regulations prohibiting the promotion of unhealthy foods to children. There is overwhelming support for this measure amongst parents and health professionals. Around one hundred national organisations already support Sustain's campaign for the introduction of legislation to protect children from unhealthy food advertising.

In addition to providing statutory controls to protect children against junk food promotions, the Bill will also introduce measures to promote influences which have a positive effect on children's diets. These include improvements in the quality of children's food, as well as the requirement for food education and related practical skills, such as cooking and growing, to be included in the national curriculum. The CFB will place a duty on the Food Standards Agency to specify criteria for healthy and unhealthy foods, taking into consideration nutritional quality, additives, contaminants and food production techniques. A legal responsibility will then be placed on the government to ensure that healthy foods are promoted to children. Following its launch, there will be both public and parliamentary campaigns leading to a vote on the Bill early after the next general election. To find out more about the Children's Food Bill, contact Charlie Powell on 0207 837 1228 or e-mail charlie@sustainweb.org

Study aims to woo fruit suppliers

Our 'cousins' at East Anglia Food Link (EAFL) are investigating better ways of supplying a government initiative which gives children free fruit. The feasibility study is examining the potential for a sustainable supply chain for the Department of Health's school fruit Scheme. The scheme provides 4-6 year old



More...

children with a free piece of fruit every day. Funded by the East of England and the South East Development Agencies, the study aims to encourage more local producers to supply the scheme and reinforce its environmental, health and social benefits. The scheme is already running in parts of the country, including London, where around 300,000 children benefit daily, and is due to be extended into East Anglia and South East England next year. EAFL would like to hear from all potential suppliers. Details: Tully Wakeman on 01953 889200 or visit www.eafl.org.uk.

Tesco eats Adminstore

The BBC News website reports that Tesco, Britain's biggest supermarket group, with about 25% market share, is to buy the family-owned convenience store chain Adminstore. The £53m deal will see Tesco take a bigger slice of the UK's fast-growing local store market, currently dominated by the Co-operative Society, which took over 600 stores of the Alldays chain in 2002. In the same year Tesco also took over 800 convenience stores previously under T&S. Adminstore's shops trade in London, mainly under the Europa, Cullens and Harts brands.

But the Big Food Group, owner of Iceland food stores, has said it will ask the government to block the deal. The Federation of Wholesale Distributors, which represents wholesalers supplying more than 75,000 independent local stores in the UK, also called on ministers to veto the deal. Tesco said the stores would undergo a rebranding to

become the supermarket's own Tesco Express outlets. However, it denied that the move would allow it to dominate the market. Tesco said that even after the acquisition of Adminstore, which is conditional on shareholder approval and regulatory clearance, it would only hold about 6% of the convenience store market.

Phil Evans, Principal Policy Advisor at the Consumers' Association, suggests that most Londoners would welcome a Tesco Express near them. Yet indicative research carried out in 2003 by Sustain's Food Poverty project found items to be more expensive in 'local' incarnations of multiples' stores than in their usual, supermarket guise. More recent coverage by Felicity Lawrence on supermarket pricing competition (www.guardian.co.uk/supermarkets) reflects Sir Don Curry's concerns about its effect on the fragility of recovery of British farming.

IGC Local sourcing guide

Prince Charles launched a new guide published by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) to help small local producers win contracts to supply food retailers and caterers. The guide details how large companies choose which products to stock and advises small producers on how to get listed with such companies. More details are available via www.igd.com.

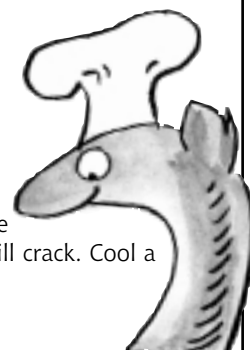
Beetroot Chocolate Cake

Supplied by Jill Dupleix, Cookery Editor of *The Times* and author of *Very Simple Food* (Quadrille, 2003)

This is an interesting new way to eat one's vegetables. The beetroot keeps the cake moist and helps it to last for days in the same way that carrots keep a carrot cake moist. It's great fun to serve to kids, because they're drawn to the chocolate side of it and repelled by the beetroot. The chocolate always wins. Serves 6.

- 75 g cocoa powder or powdered drinking chocolate (fair trade and organic, if possible)
- 180 g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 250 g caster sugar
- 250 g cooked fresh beetroot
- 3 large eggs
- 150 ml corn or sunflower oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- icing sugar for dusting

1. Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4 and lightly butter a 20 cm (8") round or square cake tin.
2. Sift the cocoa powder, flour and baking powder into a bowl. Mix in the sugar, and set aside.
3. Puree the beetroot in a food processor. Add the eggs, oil and vanilla and whiz until smooth.
4. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients, add the beetroot and lightly mix, using a rubber spatula. Pour into the prepared cake tin.
5. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until an inserted skewer comes out clean (covering with a loose sheet of foil if it starts to brown at about 30 minutes). It won't rise a great deal, and the top will crack. Cool a little before removing from the pan, and cool completely on a wire rack.
6. To serve, dust the cake with icing sugar. Serve with yoghurt or crème fraîche if you like.



Members News

2nd London Potato Fair

Don't miss London's second potato fair at Dulwich College on Sunday 22nd February from 9am - 2pm. Over 80 varieties of seed potato available for sale by the tuber (many organic), giving a good choice of earlies, seconds and main crop. Free advice available on all aspects of gardening as well as potato and vegetable growing. Displays of potato growing methods. Copper tools for sale. Competition for the best dressed celebrity potato (bring it with you). Refreshments provided by volunteers from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and all profits from the day go to NSPCC and Hope and Homes for Children. Details: www.mysite.freemove.com/potatofair04

CFE sweetener

The Community Food Enterprise (CFE) has been offered 1,000 sq feet of storage space and offices at the Silvertown works of Tate & Lyle, sugar giant and one of Newham's longest-established companies. This windfall is a vital development in realising the dreams of Eric Samuel, CFE's Chief Executive's dream of rationalising the delivery of produce to food access groups across East London.

Operations of the CFE, now a trading social enterprise, rely on a small team which buys food from traders at the New Spitalfields wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Leyton. Bread, milk and other produce is bought from wholesale suppliers. Other developments include a mobile shop service in West Ham, funded by the Local Strategic Partnership, and run by the CFE. As a way of improving access to affordable and healthy foods, it is perhaps appropriate that the mobile shop will be fitted with an ice-cream van style jingle playing 'oranges and lemons'.

The Silvertown CFE store, which contains refrigeration units and shelving, may help to serve as a distribution depot for smaller, more local or even organic food suppliers wishing to use CFE's distribution services to supply commercial markets in London, such as hotels and shops. Profits from such links could potentially help to cross-subsidise supplies to low-income groups and support moves out of grant dependence and towards financial sustainability. Eric was recently feted with the BBC Radio 4 Derek Cooper Award for Best Campaigner/Educator. More details from Eric or from Lita Webb on 020 8227 4348 or www.community-food-enterprise.org.uk

Slow Food

Slow Food is an attitude to living - it's a cultural response to the loss of genuine choice, to the loss of cultural and agricultural heritage and to bio-diversity, and to the dehumanisation of the food chain. Above all, it's a celebration of the cultural value of food. There are now over 75,000 members of Slow Food throughout the world, including 500 who are members of the London convivium. By joining Slow Food you can participate in a range of pleasurable and educational activities, including taste workshops, producer visits, seminars and dinners. If you would like more information on the London events please email: silvija@btinternet.com or wfogarty@compuserve.com

London Sustainability Weeks 2004

LSW2004 are taking place between 5 and 19 June 2004. LSW2004 will provide an opportunity for the media and the public to get to know the diversity and creativity of local action and community projects working to make London's communities greener, healthier and more sustainable places to live. To help you promote your work and take part in the Weeks, the LSW2004 Partnership is offering free training sessions on working with the press and communicating your project effectively.

Thursday 12 February

10.30 am till 1pm at the Islington Ecology Centre, 191 Drayton Park, N5 1PH.

Thursday 26 February

10.30 am till 1 pm at Vauxhall City Farm, 24 St Oswald's place, Lambeth, SE11 5JE.

These events will provide an opportunity to meet people from other groups and to swap ideas and contact information. We'll talk about defining sustainability, how to work effectively with the press and how to promote your event/project. Numbers are limited, so please reserve a place and do let us know what you're hoping to get from attending. This will allow us to tailor the event to your needs. We can help with travel expenses, and refreshments will be available at the events. To book, contact Tim Webb; Tel: 0207 359 9452; E-mail: info@lsw2004.org.

Lampreys back in the Thames

The eel-like sea lamprey was once common in the Thames and was an important food fish (Henry I is said to have died from lamprey overindulgence). However, pollution and water control development has seen the demise of most river spawning runs in Europe. Today, the lamprey is a rare species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

However, in the past two years, dead lampreys have been discovered on the Thames foreshore in the Hammersmith, Barnes and Kew areas. As eggs were found near the animals and a few were still carrying eggs, this would be the first reported spawning of this animal in the Thames in modern times. Experts assume that the real spawning population is much larger and there is cause to believe the lampreys have returned. Since they are also very sensitive to water quality, the presence of lampreys is a good sign for the health of the river and may impact on the future management of the estuary. www.thames-explorer.org.uk

Social enterprise networking event

London Metropolitan University is organising a free networking opportunity between social enterprises and the business sector, called *The long-term sustainability of community food social enterprises*. The event will introduce the Corporate Social Responsibility Directors of major food retailers, manufacturers and catering companies to what is taking place in the community-based food scene in London, to stimulate their interest in the projects that are showcased at the event and to find out what support large food companies might be able to offer.

The event will take place on Wednesday, March 24th from 6pm - 9pm at the Henry Thomas Room, Ground Floor, Tower Building, London Metropolitan University 166-220 Hollway Road, London N7 8DB. Speakers are yet to be confirmed but Jonathan Bland, the Chief Executive of the Social Enterprise Coalition, is expected. Only 70 places are available by invitation, so please contact the organiser direct: Frank Couling, Executive Officer, London Office, London Metropolitan University. Tel: 020 7133 5098, email: f.couling@londonmet.ac.uk

Out-of-hours service at Wimbledon

The Wimbledon Farmers' Market takes place in the grounds of the Wimbledon Park First School every Saturday. Some of the children (with their own Eco club) are setting up a box scheme, so that parents and teachers who can't get to the market on Saturdays can have a regular supply of the freshest fruit and vegetables. We're starting off with three different fruit and vegetable farmers from Surrey, Kent and Barnet, and, if it goes well, hope to be able to build it up to include other foods such as eggs and honey. A photographer from *The Standard* came to the school to take a picture of some of the children involved. No launch date yet, as we're still working out the logistics.

Future plans could include farm visits and cookery classes for children with our bakers. For more details call Cheryl or Mark on 020 7704 9659

Pressing for historical details

East London Organic Gardeners put their apple press into action in January at an evening on the history of fruit growing. LFL member and fruit farmer Andrew Tann from Colchester, whose seasonal varieties span July to February with Irish Peach to Sturmer Pippin, and scores of plums, pears and apples in-between, outlined his orcharding techniques and identified home-grown obscurities. More details from elgeditor@lineone.net

Croydon food co-op extended

Following the success of Foodlink Shrublands, Croydon's housing estate-based healthy eating co-operative, the Primary Care Trust is launching another scheme at the Fieldway Family Centre in New Addington on 12th February at 12.30pm.

Foodlink runs a weekly fruit and veg delivery scheme serving around 150 people. Plans include lunch clubs for young families and cooking classes for parents with young children. With the acquisition of a milk float, a mobile market stall will be trialled at the launch. Congratulations to Fiona Samuels, Croydon PCT's Community Officer and former London Food Link volunteer - 21 weeks pregnant as we go to print. For details of the launch contact fiona.samuels@croydonpct.nhs.uk or tel 07767 441611.

Learning through Landscapes (LTL)

LTL are running a Department of Health project working with 15 London schools to develop growing projects through extra-curricular clubs. Participating schools cover Harrow, Ealing, Hounslow, Wandsworth, Lewisham, Merton, Waltham Forest, Newham and Tower Hamlets. For more information contact Stephen Mozier on 020 8850 3112 x214.

Re-heat rice ain't twice as nice

On 16th January the Factory Community Project Refugee Women's Group was among a proud crowd presented with Foundation Certificates in Food Hygiene & Safety by Islington's Mayor, Doreen Scott. Around 100 people from Borough community groups attended training set up by the Community Kitchens Project. Some 98% rated the training as good/excellent. Highlights remembered were common causes of food poisoning, including the dangers of cooling and re-heating rice. The Refugee Group women are producing a recipe book, adding cultural and nutritional tips. Details from Gabriel Mackintosh on 020 7561 5281 or community.kitchens@virgin.net



What's on sale at London Farmers' Markets now?

Jan/Feb: cabbages, brussels, celeriac, beetroot, Jerusalem artichokes, bok choy, purple sprouting broccoli, celery, chard, kohlrabi, leeks, parsnips, radishes, potatoes, swede, turnips, carrots, varieties of stored apples and pears, crabs, oysters, hare, partridge, mallard, pheasant.

Mar/Apr: most of the above and onions, spring greens, salad mixes, herbs, bedding plants, early spinach.

A taste of things to come

The English Home Baker

This extract is taken from our report Bread Street, by Mel Barrett, to be launched at City Hall on 8th March, with Sara Hannant's photography exhibition:

'I wasn't expecting to find many English representatives when I started my search for home bakers from a range of different cultures. Although home baking in the UK is on the increase, with sales of bread flour booming, industry sources explain this is due to the rise in popularity of the bread machine, particularly amongst 'gadget-hungry' young men. In response to this demand, the flour milling companies have created a range of breadmixes containing flour, flour treatment agents and flavourings. This means that the only skills required by today's new breed of bread-makers are packet opening and water pouring.

It was with some delight therefore that I came across Mary Young, a model maker from Forest Gate. When I pay her a visit one chilly Monday morning, I am led straight into the warm kitchen that acts as office, library and general hub of the home. We sit at her small table, which is covered with oilcloth and layered with stacks of books, a vase of flowers, the tools of her modelling trade and general kitchen clutter. There is hardly room for the old fashioned weighing scales, flour shaker and the dough which she is shaping as we chat, and which will later be baked, then served to me as part of a delightful lunch.

Mary is of the generation who learned how to cook whilst growing up, picking up skills from her mother and also through her domestic science 'O' level (she distinctly remembers the pretty milk rolls they made using fresh yeast, complete with little plaits, knots and poppy seeds). Cooking comes naturally to her, but like most women who juggle work and home, she doesn't have the time to spend hours in the kitchen every day, so main meals are "meat and two veg and you're lucky if you get a dessert!" Cooking is her hobby, her therapy. She loves to experiment with food, always trying new spices found in nearby Green Street's ethnic stores, or recipes from colour supplements. Recent purchases include sumac, (which she gets me to taste, excitedly), juniper berries and vanilla. Mary bakes two or three times a week, so that there are always scones or a cake in the tin just in case - this is still a community where the neighbours drop by, to lend a hand with something, such as mending the fence, or just for a chat. Sure enough, whilst I am there her neighbour Stephen pops in. She's on a mission to teach him how to bake; she thinks the kneading will be brilliant physiotherapy for the chronic arthritis in his hands.

Bread is baked regularly, "when the mood takes her": it could be once a month, or five times a week. Mary

makes all sorts: wholemeal rolls for her husband's packed lunches; loaves made with spelt flour; chapatis, cooked on the hob and watched with fascination as they puff up; Bath Buns that look so difficult and are in fact so easy; pitta bread when she realises she's got olives and taramasalata but has "forgotten the blooming pittas"; Chelsea Buns; Cornish saffron bread; the list goes on. The idea of being a bit more self-sufficient appeals: she finds it sad that people may trek a few miles up the road to buy a packet of pittas when they are so quick and easy to make, with a little bit of know-how and a few basic ingredients. She recently did an evening class at a local school, and got talking with one of the CDT teachers there. It was a revelation to hear that children are being taught pizza-making, but not being shown how to make the base - they make the most wonderful arrangements of roast vegetables, then plonk them onto a pre-bought base. She thinks it's sad, because baking is so easy. It's all about confidence; getting stuck in; not worrying about it. People say she's a good cook, but she doesn't think she is. It's just having a go really and not getting too intimidated by things. This is why she wants to help Stephen make his bread rolls. And she thinks that baking breeds confidence - you realise you can do practical things. And you don't need to spend a fortune on equipment.

She's right. This is no fancy kitchen. The equipment is old (she still uses her mother's old Kenwood chef, in which she mixes dough and leaves it to rise, covered in clingfilm, propped up on a stool next to an ancient electric fire), and the storage space inadequate for housing the paraphernalia of a keen cook (Kilner jars of home-made marmalade; tons of empty jam jars; and piles of books and magazine cuttings tumble out of drawers and cupboards). Mary has grand plans for a new kitchen one day and above of all is dying to have sliding doors on her kitchen units, but in the meantime, still succeeds in producing all manner of delights.

And in doing so, Mary reminds us what real cooking is about, easily forgotten in this era of celebrity chefs and glossy cookbooks. For this bread maker, cooking is not about impressing, but about feeding, giving and sharing. While I was there she passed on tips ("Don't bother with greasing and lining cake tins - use Lakeland cake cases"); showed me recipes ('The Perfect Shortbread'; 'Baden Plum Cake'); and fed me, a perfect foccacia, baked whilst I was there using extra virgin olive oil and fresh rosemary from her garden. We ate it for lunch with English ham, and Dijon mustard.'

The full Bread Street report on the history and evolution of bread, including photos by Sara Hannant will be available from London Food Link from 9th March priced £15 plus £1 p&p.

Allotment Slot

The writing on the shed ...

To the plots for inspiration on a crisp winter afternoon, to find that a graffiti artist has paid a visit, a golden tag sprayed on a neighbour's shed, small footprints in fresh earth betraying the perpetrator's tender age. The tag is suggestive: 'Hemp' was here. Could this presage a whole new future for allotments? A little more demotion from Category C, scrap the requirement for weed free plots, and just watch a whole new generation find bliss in the garden.

In his history of rural allotments, Jeremy Burchard notes that labourers were once given vegetable gardens to help keep them at arm's length from the Victorian demon drink: milky tea. Today, people drink this quite shamelessly, in full view of passing infants, and build ramshackle dens on allotments in which they engage in little else - except potting up. But we are talking about an Englishperson's castle here, and in your own home you can do pretty much whatever you like, not least in the imagination. When my eldest was a toddler we'd hide from the weather in a rickety old shed with a rusty tin roof, and imagine the monsoon rains outside. I've marked exam papers in there, peed in a watering can (hint: don't aim for the spout) and hunted generations of mice, fattened for the dinner table on the potatoes that never seem to last the winter. I once held a shed together from the inside while the groundsman banged nails through the wall, and found myself crucified, through the wrists, on Good Friday. But then that's what happens when you go drinking tea - and it leads to stronger drugs,

like hot chocolate, aphrodisiac of the Andes, or ice-cool Coke. I built a shed for an old friend once, on impulse, as a surprise. Why not? Then he painted it sparkling white.

Tea again ...

Well, 2004 is the Year of the Shed, according to the 'Luxury Shed Calendar' that Santa brought, though he must have ordered it from the aesthetically challenged people at www.transglobal-emporium.com, home of the ruined cybershed. Every date that is important to the dedicated shedholder is inscribed here: February 3 (Rearrange trowel collection), April 10 (Hide Easter eggs in shed), May 23 (National sit in shed day), August 7 (Re-felt west wing). The year's part over, so maybe you can get it at a tumbled down price.

Next time: Some inappropriate uses for garden tools. If I can find them in there ...

by Richard Wiltshire
QED Allotments Group



Farm Gate

London Farmers' Conference - 6th April

Why is it so hard for London's handful of commercial farmers to reach Europe's largest consumer market on their doorstep? How can London farmers diversify faced with restrictive Green Belt land use policies? What can be done about vandalism and theft? What is the regional government sector doing to support London farmers? How can we link food manufacturers and producers in and around London?

This London Food Link conference will be fielding some heavyweight speakers to try to answer some of these questions and begin to draw out a plan for future action and positive engagement between farmers and the market.

Three London farmers operating under differing business circumstances will help set the scene. Sir Don Curry, Chair of the government's Sustainable Food and Farming Commission, will outline challenges and opportunities facing London's food producers and explain the current policy context. Honor Chapman, beef farmer and Chair of the London Development Agency, will help to explore practical ways forward in the capital. This event is free, thanks to funding from the London Development Agency and the National Farmers' Union. A central London venue is yet to be fully confirmed but contact Dan on 020 7837 1228 if you haven't yet received an invitation.

Stop press: Free e-mentoring service for SE farmers

An e-mentoring programme designed specifically for UK farmers has been launched. The service is free and operates by pairing farmers with experienced mentors so that they can learn new tactics to improve the strategic direction of their business. The service is initially available to farmers located in the south east of England. Funded by DEFRA to the value of £50,000, and supported by Small Business Service, the scheme will operate until March 2004. Register at www.mentorsbynet.co.uk

Join London Food Link Now!

The benefits of membership of London Food Link include:

- The Jellied Eel, our quarterly members' newsletter.
- A chance to influence policy-making on food issues including contributing to food and nutrition strategies, government and GLA consultations on food, farming, planning and the economy.
- Membership of an interactive e-mail group with news, events, jobs and developments around food issues in London.
- Events, conferences, seminars and publications.
- Free membership directory.
- A Free copy of **Growing Food in Cities** to new members and 50% off the **City Harvest** report.



To join London Food Link or for further details contact:

Daniel Keech, LFL Co-ordinator, c/o Sustain, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. Tel: 020 7837 1228. Fax: 020 7837 1141.
dan@sustainweb.org
www.londonfoodlink.org

London Food Link members and supporters include:

Academy of Culinary Arts, Adrian Audsley (individual), Alara Wholefoods, Patrick Andrews (business advisor), Barts & The London NHS Trust, Bexley Primary Care Trust, Camden Primary Care Trust, Celtic Bakers, City & Hackney Primary Care Trust, Community Food Enterprise, Community Kitchens Network (Southwark), Community Kitchens Project/Manor Gardens (Islington), Matthew Conrad (individual), W.H. Cragg Associates (farmers' network), Crapes Fruit Farm, Crisis Fairshare, Dalgarno SRB, Maria Davies (University of Westminster), East London Food Access, East London Organic Gardeners, East Thames Housing Association, First Fruit Co-op, Food Commission, Foodlink Shrublands, Jo Foster (Manager, Islington Farmers' Market), Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency, Greenwich Primary Care Trust, Greenwich Organics, Growing Communities, Haringey Primary Care Trust, Health Development Agency, Henrietta Green, Jenny Usher Organics, Kids' Cookery School, Learning Through Landscapes, the Learning Trust, Lighthouse Bakery, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Ealing, London Borough of Haringey, London Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens, London 21 (Sustainability Network), London Farmers' Markets, London Food Centre, London First, London Sustainability Exchange, Rachel McLoughlin (individual), Elizabeth Mitchell (individual), Newham Food Access Partnership, Newham Primary Care Trust, Newlon Housing Trust, Quality Environment Dartford, OrganicExpress (Caterers), OrganicLea, Reunite Edmonton, Roots & Shoots (community garden and horticultural training centre), Slow Food, Soil Association, South London & Maudsley NHS Trust, Sustain, Patrick & Katie Treherne (Organic Market Gardeners), Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust, Westminster Primary Care Trust, Women's Environmental Network, Lindsay Wright (London Potato Fair).

London Food Link is guided by a working party comprising:

Guild of Food Writers (Chair), Countryside Agency, Greater London Authority, Government Office for the South East, London Farmers' Markets, London Development Agency, London First, London Metropolitan University, National Farmers' Union, Newham Food Access Partnership, QED allotments group, Soil Association, Sustain.



THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF LONDON FOOD LINK.
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