

the jellied eel

Wild courses

Is foraging
the next
big thing?

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London Food Link runs a network of organisations and individuals with members as diverse as farmers, food writers, caterers and community food projects. Both London Food Link and its members run projects that help to:

- increase the availability of sustainable food in London
- tackle the barriers preventing access to sustainable food for all Londoners
- celebrate and protect London's diverse food culture

Editorial

I would like to say that I'm relaxing with a glass of English wine as I write this piece. Alas it's Spanish, although I'm pleased to announce that I've heard along the metaphorical grapevine that some branches of Waitrose in the capital are now stocking Chapel Down from Sussex which, for those of us still (despite wrestling with our consciences) buying some things from supermarkets, will be the closest we get to 'local' wine without taking a day trip to the home counties.

Onto slightly more serious issues (!), June saw London Food Link's television debut with BBC2's screening of *The Urban Chef*, where we helped Oliver Rowe to find ingredients and transport to realise his dream of using only food grown within the M25 for his new restaurant *Konstam* at the *Prince Albert*. This project was also featured on Radio 4's food programme, and is still available at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/foodprogramme_20060618.shtml

Also in June we were amazed by the success of the first ever network meeting. Yes, we've had meetings on specific issues, like our regular London food access meetings held jointly with Sustain's Food Poverty Project (contact me or lisa@sustainweb.org for more information), but this was the first time we'd brought everyone together with the focus on our network. The feedback from our event shows that our attempts to be the number one "food dating agency" in the capital have been well received and, as a result we're planning to have two network events each year. At this meeting, we were pleased to welcome Mathew Castle to the team. Mat will be working with Emma Hockridge on the extended hospital food project (see p. x for more details). While we are sad to announce that Dan Keech, founder of London Food Link, is leaving Sustain to join the New

Economics Foundation, we are delighted that we'll continue to work closely with him in his new role.

Many of you have been in contact with us about the Big Lottery's Wellbeing fund. By the time you read this, the first phase bids will have been submitted. We have been involved in Sustain's national bid as well as one with London Sustainability Exchange, led by the London Health Commission. We hope that if either or both of these bids are successful we will be able to give even more practical help - i.e. cash! - to support the hard work that many of your groups are putting in to improve Londoners' well-being.

Finally, just to give you an idea of some of the things we have in the pipeline here at LFL, we have been discussing with London Libraries Development Agency their plans to promote books about food and drink in libraries all across London. We will be advising them on books they should be including, as well as hopefully pointing punters their direction at the local level. We are also exploring the possibility of setting up a research "dating agency" where we would link up willing researchers (generally students) with food initiatives needing some research expertise. You should hear more about this in the autumn... ■

We would like to thank the following volunteers for all their help over the past few months:

Maria Baltazzi, Rachel Beebe, Sian Burr, Ida Fabrizio, Tamarind Falk, Naomi Mead, Hadija Mohamed, Pierre Morand, Paul Rosenbloom, Felicity Smith, Lucie Wanctin.

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AROUND TOWN

Zeenat entertains the Springwatch crowds *Credit: Ben Reynolds*

Central Springwatch

On Saturday 3rd June, Londoners descended in their thousands to Bernie Spain Gardens on the South Bank for the Springwatch Fayre, organised in conjunction with the BBC. London Food Link (pictured) had a stall in a prime location and was spreading the good word to the public and pointing them in the direction of local projects. Also attending the Fayre were London Farmer's Markets, the local City Farm, caterers Feast Your Eyes, and the Greenwich Co-operative Food Initiative.

Community Garden Organic Market

Check out the Eostre Organics market stall at the Calthorpe Project Community Garden on Grays Inn Road. The fruit and vegetables are supplied by Eostre Organics, a farmers' co-operative from East Anglia, with extra produce supplied by linked co-operatives in France and Italy. The produce is all fair-trade and organic, a lot of it freshly picked the day before.

They hope to expand to include other food stalls, and eventually to provide subsidised organic produce to local families to complement our work with healthy eating and cooking.

Profits from the stall contribute to running our community garden, which holds children's playschemes, classes ranging from Salsa to sewing, and regular events, as well as gardening classes and allotments for the local community.

THE STALL IS RUN EVERY FRIDAY FROM
10AM - 5PM. 258-274 GRAYS INN ROAD WC1



Central Sheep Drive Through London

Until the 19th century the streets of London were occasionally clogged with livestock, as farmers drove their sheep to market. On Saturday 17th June there was a re-enactment of such a sheep drive to celebrate the historic droving rights of the Freeman of the City of London and to kick off the events of London Architecture Week.

About thirty Herdwick sheep were herded from Borough Market, down the South Bank, across the Millennium Bridge and past St. Paul's Cathedral on their way to Smithfields Market. Architects Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano accompanied the sheep, along with ten butchers from the Worshipful Company of Butchers, several shepherds, and mounted police. A jostling crowd, including several animal rights protesters, gathered to watch the bizarre spectacle. After the drive, the sheep were taken back to the farm for butchering.

East Redbridge Food Futures Project

East London Food Futures is a partnership between five East London boroughs, including the London Borough of Redbridge, which aims to improve local access to good quality, affordable and fresh food. There are three projects being developed in Redbridge: Forest Farm Community Garden, Redbridge Night Shelter, and Woodbine Clubhouse.

Forest Farm Community Garden is a large green space in Hainault which aims to involve local people growing their own food in a communal setting. Many projects operate out of the garden, including the Peace Garden, which provides a haven for refugees and asylum seekers to grow fruit and vegetables.

Redbridge Night Shelter is a community project that provides services to the street homeless in Redbridge. Guests are able to work on an allotment site to provide fresh fruit and vegetables

for the Night Shelter café.

Woodbine Clubhouse is a day centre for people with learning disabilities. Members of Woodbine can opt to work on a local allotment site to grow fruit and vegetables. All the food grown is taken back and used by the Woodbine café.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ADAM HICKMAN AT LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE ON 020 8708 2036 OR AT ADAM.HICKMAN@REDBRIDGE.GOV.UK

Hackney Multicultural Environment Fair

London 21's fourth annual Multicultural Environment Fair was held on 13th June at Hackney Town Hall. The event is a gathering of black, asian and minority ethnic environmental groups, activists and the public sector. Enthusiastic and vocal



Herdwick sheep driven through London *Credit: Mark Riddaway*

delegates addressed topics that covered ethnic community environmental participation in Greater London. London Food Link contributed expertise on food issues and our workshop sought ideas on how to get members of diverse communities with horticultural and agricultural skills participating in growing food. Suggestions included incorporating more food growing space in London's parks, and a scheme to get urban ethnic communities working with small farmers wishing to diversify their income, either through learning skills to grow exotic vegetables or renting out land.

South Croydon

Foodlink Croydon has just completed the successful Tuck in for Change Project. This project facilitated the changeover to healthy snacks and meals in a Family Centre and a Youth Centre based in New Addington. Service users were encouraged to try fruits, vegetables and cooked dishes that were not normally included in their family diets.



The project was funded by Croydon Primary Care Trust through their Community Budget. As well as healthy tuck shops, families could enjoy a structured exercise programme with Tumble Tots for the under 8s, Street Dance for young people aged 8 - 13 and Stretch and Tone for over 13s.

In April a Tuck in for Change Fun Day was attended by over 300 people who had the opportunity to try a variety of exercise activities including trampolining and circus skills. A healthy buffet was provided which included 121kg of fruit and vegetables!

This was a very worthwhile project which we would like to continue if funding can be secured.

SUE ORCHARD
CROYDON FOODLINK CO-ORDINATOR
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West Chiswick House Kitchen Garden

In 2005 the folks at Chiswick House decided to spruce up some over grown land by starting a project with local school children and helpful neighbours to create

a traditional kitchen garden. After much effort the garden is thriving and it has become a community space for learning about horticulture and growing food.

There are gardening sessions for school children throughout the week and there is a gardening club. Tuesdays are for teenagers working toward their Duke of Edinburgh awards. Other projects include working with Hounslow Council's Pupil Referral Unit and the Detached and Outreach Team. They have also welcomed into the gardens artwork created by participants in the Connect Foundation for Mental Health.

The Kitchen Garden is run completely by devoted volunteers whose fund raising plant sales are just one way they support the project and bring members of the community together around organic gardening. Every month there are open sessions where everyone is invited to join in and get their hands dirty. There's no need to bring tools or previous experience - the only requirement is willingness to help out and enthusiasm for gardening!

Open work sessions coming up:

- Thursday 3rd August, 6-9pm
- Sunday 13th August, 2-6pm
- Sunday 3 September, 2-6pm
- Sunday 17 September, 1-5pm

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
INFO@KITCHENGARDEN.ORG.UK OR SEE
WWW.KITCHENGARDEN.ORG.UK



Foodlink co-op in Croydon

Bulletin

Truly sustainable fish

UK farmers could be raising herbivorous, organic fish to meet the demands not only of those who care about over-fishing but also of London's Afro-Caribbean and African communities, who have a culture of farming and eating tilapia. Researchers at Stirling University's Institute of Aquaculture are developing a sustainable and environmentally friendly production method for farming tilapia in rural areas.

Tilapia is a family of small fish that originated in Africa. It is a cheap fish, traditionally farmed for subsistence.

Tilapia can be fed an herbivorous diet, so there is no need for expensive and highly unsustainable processed fish or meat in the fish feed. And tilapia is also hardy, adaptable and grows fast in warm water.

Tilapia's white flesh is firm, mild in taste and a good substitute for white fish. Some of the most popular white fish in the UK - like Atlantic cod and haddock - are being fished near to extinction. Sustain's report Like Shooting Fish in a Barrel summarises the environmental damage caused by both industrial scale sea-fishing and fish farming. Farming tilapia has the potential to be a more sustainable source of white fish.

Farming also means that there could be a consistent supply of tilapia all year. The research project is looking at potential markets for farmed tilapia, including ethnic communities, ethical consumers and gastro-pub chefs searching for adventurous, sustainable fish.

Would you like to be involved in the future of sustainable fish production in the

UK? If so, you can join one of the focus group discussions across the country. If you would like to join in, please contact Kathleen Grady.

KATHLEEN GRADY

KATHLEEN.GRADY@STIR.AC.UK

WWW.AQUA.STIR.UK/SYSTEMS/

TILAPIAPROJECT.HTM

Good Food Up North

"All food is ethnic, it depends on where you're sitting," observed Geoff Tansey at Good Food Up North in Bradford, an event hosted by The Ethnic Food Action Group and the Food Ethics Council. Over 50 delegates heard speakers explore the question "Local, ethnic and ethical?" and discussed food issues facing ethnic consumers at home, and small producers abroad. Cheryl Cohen (London Farmer's Market) shared a platform with Lord Haskins (of Northern Foods and Marks & Spencer's) gamely challenging his view that we should all jolly well be grateful for supermarkets and their bounty!

Gillian van der Meer, chair of the Rural Cultural Forum and ex-president of the Women's Farming Union (WFU), spoke about the need of the mainstream farming community to meet the cultural needs of England's changing demographic profile. She recently asked members of the WFU in Oxfordshire, many of whom run B&Bs, "What do you do if you are asked for a vegan meal and which direction is Mecca?" Needless to say, her question caused quite a stir!

London Food Link's Zeenat Anjari gave a short presentation to publicise our projects and met with restaurant owners who provide a market for fenugreek and coriander leaves grown outdoors on arable land in the South Pennines.

Considerate Hoteller of the Year Award

Building on our work with the "eating out" sector in London, we have been developing an award with the considerate hoteliers group to promote seasonal British food on menus. As one of the four categories in this annual award, the Oxford Brookes Hospitality/Sustain challenge will be awarded to the hotel or guesthouse that has done the most to promote the best that food from Britain has to offer. This challenge will be presented to the hotel that can demonstrate that it promotes seasonal British products on its menus and has the greatest commitment to food from Britain. The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday November 24th.

WWW.CONSIDERATEHOTELIERS.COM

Two new farmers' markets have opened!

Clapham farmers' market opened on June 25th at Bonneville Primary School located on Bonneville Gardens, just off Abbeville Road. The Clapham market is open 10am - 2pm every Sunday.

Turnham Green farmers' market opened on July 8th at Belmont Primary School on Belmont Road between Turnham Green and Chiswick Park Station. The Turnham Green market will be open Saturdays from 9am - 1pm.

WWW.LFM.ORG.UK

Government to investigate grocery market

Thanks in large part to demands from The Food Poverty Project at Sustain, Friends of the Earth (FoE) and other voluntary organisations, the Government has agreed to investigate - yet again - the impact supermarkets are having on UK consumers. The Government announced in May that the Competition Commission (CC) will be carrying out a Government Inquiry into the grocery retail market based on evidence from various stakeholders, including the Food Poverty Project.

Supermarkets stand accused of: manip-



Tilapia - truly sustainable fish

ulating local planning policies and preventing local communities from deciding on retail development in their area; unfair pricing strategies that disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities; buying and holding land (in "land banks") to prevent other retailers from setting up shop.

The CC has so far treated consumers as an homogenous group without attending to the specific problems faced by disadvantaged consumers. But they have now agreed to consult the Food Poverty Project to ensure that the voices of disadvantaged communities are heard.

WWW.TESCOPOLY.ORG

WWW.COMPETITION-COMMISSION.ORG.UK

Food access training program

The National Training Program for Community Food Workers is running various training units from June to September designed for anyone who has an interest in community food work. The courses are accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN) and include starting and developing a community food initiative, food poverty, health and community development, working in/managing a food social enterprise, and growing vegetables and herbs, among others.

KATE SYERS

NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME MANAGER.
020 7511 9014

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Local food is miles better

The Farmers Weekly magazine has launched a national campaign 'Local Food is Miles Better' to raise awareness of the environmental and economic benefits of buying local food. The campaign aims to spread the message to over five million members of the public. For information and advice on how producers can back the campaign visit the dedicated food miles website via www.fwi.co.uk/gr/foodmiles/index

Fish and Kids - Getting sustainable seafood onto school menus

Fish and Kids is a project supported by the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (MSC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). It encourages schools and family restaurants in England to promote and serve sustainable seafood. The project aims to increase awareness among kids,

teachers, parents, and caterers about sustainable seafood issues, increase the availability of sustainable seafood menu options, and provide a credible way of tracing the products from boat to plate.

The project has produced a pack for schools that is full of colourful photographs, discussion ideas, debate questions, and class activities. By spreading information about the importance of choosing sustainable fish and encouraging people to choose fish marked with the MSC's eco-label, Fish and Kids is getting schools and families involved in saving the seas.

LAURA STEWART

020 7350 4000

LAURA.STEWART@MSC.ORG

WWW.FISHANDKIDS.ORG

The Mayor's London Food Strategy

London's Mayor, Ken Livingstone, launched his London Food Strategy, on 22nd May, followed by a formal event on 23rd May attended by London Food Link (LFL) staff, many LFL members and a host of others. This represents the culmination of months of research and preparation, and consultation (undertaken for the London Development Agency (LDA) by LFL) and should mark an acceleration in efforts to make London's food system contribute positively to sustainable development. A budget of around £3million has been allocated to implement elements of the strategy, and we look forward to being able to play our part in turning all the policy commitments in the report into real change. An action plan for delivery will be published by Autumn 2006.

LONDONFOOD@LDA.ORG.UK

WWW.LONDONFOODSTRATEGY.ORG.UK



L to R: Eric Schlosser, Ken Livingstone, Jenny Jones

Just how good are we?

Dr Kemal Ahson of Lifeworld Ltd has been awarded a £7,000 contract to evaluate how well London Food Link is doing, and how we can improve. Kemal won the contract after a tendering process. He is an economic development consultant with commercial, project and research management experience gained from local, regional, national and international assignments. He has extensive experience and knowledge of evaluating business support projects, working with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

Eric Samuel awarded MBE

Congratulations are due to Eric Samuel - a London Food Link member - who founded Community Food Enterprise (CFE) in 2003 and was awarded an MBE at this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. The awards were announced on June 17th. CFE runs food projects in East London to improve the health of residents in some of the most deprived wards in the UK.

WWW.COMMUNITY-FOOD-ENTERPRISE.ORG.UK

Teaching school kids about British food

British Food Fortnight runs from 23rd September to 8th October. Sponsored by Aramark, Budgens, Londis and Nationwide and now in its fifth year, British Food Fortnight is an established date on the school calendar. Hundreds of schools in England and Wales use the event as an opportunity to teach young people about food: about the diverse and delicious range of British food available, the benefits of healthy eating and about the pleasures of eating quality, fresh, seasonal and regionally distinct produce.

The theme of this year's event is 'Are You Cooking In?' All schools in England and Wales are invited to teach children how to prepare simple meals during the Fortnight using the best of Britain's in-season produce. Cooks and chefs across the country are signing-up to work with schools during the event to help teachers organise practical cookery activities. Organisations representing over 3,000 chefs have already volunteered their support.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT **ALEXIA ROBINSON** OR **JEN STUBBINGS**. T. 020 7840 9292 INFO@BRITISHFOODFORTNIGHT.CO.UK, WWW.BRITISHFOODFORTNIGHT.CO.UK

Funding round up

In Adventure Capital Fund (ACF)

ACF aims to strengthen local communities by investing in organisations that work in and for those communities. By helping organisations to become stronger and more self-sufficient through enterprise, the fund aims to help them become sustainable in the long term and so better able to control their own destinies by becoming less reliant upon short-term grants.

ACF provides organisations with a combination of finance and support, and works with them to become more self-sufficient through using enterprise, without losing their core mission.

WWW.ADVENTURECAPITALFUND.ORG.UK

Awards for All

The expected surge of new applications for this award has not come since the £10,000 maximum was introduced in March, so success rates are still extraordinarily high and it is seldom necessary for Awards for All to apply their published regional priorities. There is usually enough money to go round for everyone. But applications are still being rejected because many have asked for money for running costs such as salaries or rent. As the form says, applications must be for specific activities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.AWARDSFORALL.ORG.UK

Fundraising information and advice for community environmental projects

Finding money to develop projects transforming communities into healthy and pleasant areas for the benefit of local people can be a big challenge. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) offers free information, advice and training about how to obtain funds for groups in London who are trying to improve the environment, particularly those who find themselves at a disadvantage compared to the 'mainstream'. For help and advice contact David Strachan, London Development Manager at d.strachan@btcv.org.uk.

Social Enterprise Training

Only Connect is a bursary scheme, which enables voluntary and community organisations to visit other groups and explore their ideas for generating income by trading goods and services (the ethos of

social enterprise) in a fun and practical way. If you have any idea for trading, but are unsure of how to go about it, this scheme offers you the opportunity to learn from an organisation that has gone down this track. It will pay up to £100 travel expenses for employees or volunteers from your organisation to visit another which is already trading goods or services. It will also give you £150 to pay your host organisation a consultancy fee for their time. Five bursaries will be awarded every three months, and Only Connect will also publish reports so that other organisations can benefit from these experiences. The next deadline for applications is Friday 8th September 2006.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.NCVO-VOL.ORG.UK

UnLtd

UnLtd supports "social entrepreneurs" who have ideas about how to make a difference in their communities. They provide funding and support to help individuals start up and run projects that make a positive impact on their communities. There are two levels of awards from UnLtd. Level 1 awards range from £500 - £5,000 and are aimed at individuals who want to set up new projects in their spare time. Level 2 awards are between £10,000 and £20,000 and they are aimed at individuals whose projects are already in progress. Please note that UnLtd only award money to individuals, not organisations.

WWW.UNLTD.ORG.UK

Futurebuilders England

Futurebuilders England (FBE) is the government backed £125 million investment fund to help the voluntary and community sector provide better public services. The fund provides a combination of grants and loans for organisations that provide public services and earn revenue by forming contracts with public sector agencies.

WWW.FUTUREBUILDERS.ENGLAND.ORG.UK



Shopping at the co-op





Tower Hamlets

Co-operative Development Agency



What does Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency do?

Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency was launched over 22 years ago to support local disadvantaged communities in starting their own worker co-operative, community-based businesses. Today that remains a focus of our work, but it is by no means the sole target.

We have broadened our businesses support work to include community businesses, charities, voluntary sector organisations - and even a few full profit firms started by local unemployed people!

Tower Hamlets CDA has also used its community outreach skills to encourage local people to understand and think about the importance of recycling. While undertaking this work we knocked on over 20,000 doors and spoke to over 10,000 families.

Who set it up and when?

Our first venture into food was around 1997 when we helped a local community centre to establish the first food co-operative in Tower Hamlets. We then took a rather extended lunch break and it was not until about six years later that we assisted in the formation of a second co-op. The number grew to around ten co-ops and we are still helping six of them with their weekly food orders and general development.

Who is involved in your work?

Most of the food co-ops that we support are based on deprived housing estates and over 70% of the shoppers are Bangladeshi women who are purchasing for large extended families.

The project developed significantly after we obtained a grant to purchase a van from the Primary Care Trust. Recently, though the Primary Care Trust funds have dried up, we have been awarded a

significant grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

Whilst we have some grant income, it is never sufficient. The demand for us to launch new food co-ops far exceeds our available funded time.

What have you been working on recently?

We have just been awarded a contract from the local authority to supply all the fruit and veg to 20% of the local schools and this contract is likely to be extended in three years time. We are excited, as this will bring us into contact with schools and provide many new healthy eating opportunities, including supporting schools launching their own healthy eating tuck shops. We are working with Newham's Community Food Enterprise who purchase on our behalf. This is great because they now have greater buying power and can negotiate better discounts. It also reduces the number of vehicles going to market and it means no more early morning alarms for us!

What are next steps/projects?

We plan to consolidate our achievements to date and support the existing co-ops and also to launch new tuck shops and participate in many more healthy eating events in the local community. We also have our eyes set on the high-rise office blocks like those in the Canary Wharf complex, including landmark skyscrapers like the Gherkin, where we want management to purchase fruit from us for their staff. We'll keep you posted!

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WWW.CO-OPERATION.COOP

FORAGING: WILD C



Foraging on the forshore *Credit: Ben Reynolds*

Not many people know you can eat this. This is the mantra of forager Miles Irving: a man to whom a grassy verge represents a veritable feast and to whom eating fresh food takes on a whole new meaning; a man I was lucky enough to follow for a day in his line of work. Miles believes "there is nothing more natural than picking and eating. It is a basic unmediated action." I think anyone there on the day would find it hard to disagree. From foreshore to woodland, he demonstrated the rich pickings available to anyone with a keen eye and a taste for strange flavours. Although, as we were surprised to find out, some flavours are not as strange as some might think. Amongst the amazing range of discoveries in our day in Kent, I took home oysters, mushrooms, sea kale and other plants that would be gracing the tables of many of London's top flight restaurants the next day. We were also treated to the more exotic dittander (a mustardy leaf), the sweet-citrus flavoured alexandrus flower, and his latest discovery on one of his patches - wild salsify root.

"I've been coming to this spot for the last three years, and every year I discover something new - something else that can

be eaten." Miles admits this is more to do with his increasing knowledge than any increase in biodiversity. However he is very keen to stress the importance of balance in the habitats he works in, and the importance of not over-harvesting a crop. In his recent discussions with conservationists, he is slowly turning them around to the idea that the best form of management is not to preserve something in aspic but to create a working landscape, where both 'weed' and protected species are carefully managed/cultivated, with the bonus of providing an income for local community and helping maintain the site. In turn, he hopes this will help connect people with their landscape so they understand the plants and their properties around them. This issue of reconnection with one's food is at the heart of Miles' outspoken views on the problems with modern food system. One of his many plans for the future is to cater for educational visits, providing similar trips to the one we had that day. This may be more of a hit with adults and foodies than with hoardes of cola-fueled school kids, but stranger things have happened! ■

Ben Reynolds



Knotweed and custard anyone? Miles harvests a Japanese relative of our rhubarb family *Credit: Ben Reynolds*

Forager foods are available from the Goods Shed, Canterbury and many of London's restaurants including St Johns, Spitafileds and Fifteen, Hoxton.

COURSES



ists the invasive
dit: Ben Reynolds

Allotment Slot Culinary community fuels the plot

This past summer has seen London allotments at their best, despite the hosepipe ban. I refer not so much to what we have produced, as to the culinary delights available with the barbecue, in all shapes and sizes, finally coming into its own.

My own site in East Acton, West London, has never been that good at the outdoor life, preferring to make tea in the shadow of a shed. But in this high heat summer things began to stir, led by Paolo, ironically our only Italian, who has never been a chef. (Although as I write I seem to remember when, in Italy, she did have a sandwich-cum-deli business.) However, she invited various other Italians, used to eating al fresco, to a series of Sunday lunches, accompanied by a welcome bottle of Italian red wine. One of her delicious flat and thin omelettes was made from the courgettes, eggs and stinging nettles that were no more than 20 feet from the table where we ate. Eating in a space beneath a trellis, with grapes growing above us, it was more like the Italian countryside than East Acton.

On a similar theme over the other side of London, as part of their campaign against being concreted over for the Olympics, the Manor Gardening Society allotments in Hackney Wick held an open day for us all to realise this beautiful piece of British heritage can be saved with a compromise. The two Sam Clarks, who own and cook at Moro restaurant in Clerkenwell, have a plot there, and produced a wonderful paella in the open air. A Turkish family cooked Sunday lunch, and before I was asked to speak I ate a truly Cypriot

meal of (home made) dolmades and haloumi. Back in West London the Brentside plots in Brentford, coolingly beside a branch of the Thames, held another get together complete with Thai cooking by Tim (a highly talented lady).

While in Brentside I actually sold three copies of my book. There is a reason for me mentioning this book (not just embarrassing self promotion), as it records the launch of the Green Party London allotment initiative in 2004 to link us all up across the capital. Believe it or not, something like this hadn't existed before, as it seems to have foundered on a pile of talk and bureaucracy that should have been put straight into the compost bin! A far more positive approach has come from the London Boroughs Allotment Managers' Forum, guided by Allotment Regeneration enthusiast Geoff Barber, and given strong backing from Ealing's allotment boss Stephen Cole. Having been to the first two meetings, it seems to be more than just a talking shop, and at last we will find out just how many plots the councils control in London, how many councils actually employ a full time person to run their allotments, (Hounslow is the latest disaster - outsourcing the running of its allotments) and how we can meet the deluge of requests for a plot. The next meeting is in September in Camden - watch this space... ■

Michael Wale

VIEW FROM A SHED. FOUR SEASONS AS AN
URBAN FARMER, BY MICHAEL WALE IS
PUBLISHED BY ALLISON AND BUSBY 5TH JUNE
2006 £9.99P

Thank you to Arthur Potts-Dawson for arranging the visit. If you are interested in arranging a foraging trip please contact Miles Irving at maninhisplace@hotmail.com.

A Victory for Queen's Market

June 15, 2006 marked a great day for local Newham campaigners Friends of Queen's Market. After over two years of fighting the redevelopment of the Queen's Market site by the local council, who were planning to allow the construction of a 46,000 square metre ASDA superstore, the efforts of the campaigners have paid off: ASDA has withdrawn their plans to build on the site.

The struggle between Friends of Queen's Market and the owners and managers of the market, Newham council, typifies the battle going on all over Britain between supermarket chains that make bids for council land, and local shops and markets that are threatened by them. In September 2004 Newham council agreed to enter into a partnership with St. Modwen property developers and to sell them the lease of the market. Under the conditions of this partnership St. Modwen is responsible for regenerating Queen's Market.

and goods on sale are closely linked to the local patrons who shop there; their diversity reflects the diversity of the community. It is this diversity of products, the affordable prices, and the open communal public space of Queen's Market that make it unique and hugely valuable to the community. In September 2005 Friends of Queen's Market sent a petition against the development proposed by Newham council and St. Modwen to the mayor of London, Ken Livingston for which Friends of Queen's Market collected 12,000 signatures. The opposition from

the community was loud and clear.

The case for Queen's Market was made indisputable in a report published in May 2006 by the New Economics Foundation (nef) entitled *The World on a Plate: The Economic and Social Value of London's Most Ethnically Diverse Market*. According to the report, customers spend, in total, an average of more than £200,000 each week at the market, with over £150,000 spent on food. Importantly, this revenue then filters back through the local economy.

In addition, the nef survey finds that

The importance of independent markets

The proposal for regeneration put forward by the developers included plans to reduce the space available for trading in the market, tear down the market structure and replace it with an indoor 'market in a mall', build an ASDA superstore and a block of luxury flats, and build a library. The main focus of the campaign led by Friends of Queen's Market has been to oppose the construction of the ASDA superstore, which was a clear threat to the independent shops and market stalls in and around Queen's Market.

The importance of maintaining and promoting London's independent shops and markets is set out in the Mayor's London Food Strategy, published in May 2006. The strategy makes recommendations for London's food infrastructure including ways of making it more sustainable. It stresses the importance of local food networks, which strengthen regional economies, and of having a range of affordable food for all Londoners, particularly for poor communities. Queen's Market is precisely the kind of enterprise celebrated in the Mayor's strategy and yet it still found itself under threat. It took the efforts of the dedicated campaigners at Friends of Queen's Market to save this vibrant traditional street market.

Making your voice heard

Queen's Market has been a thriving site of local commerce for a century. The food



Credit: Ruth Potts

the market generates more jobs than the proposed ASDA superstore would have done. Unlike the majority of part-time, low paying jobs that would be available at the superstore, the market provides full-time skilled employment and supports whole families of entrepreneurial business owners.

Value for money

Although there is little diversity in the products sold at stores like ASDA, it is generally assumed that the prices are



Credit: Ruth Potts



significantly lower than local shops. However, nef's research contradicts this assumption, noting that "a shopping basket exercise found that items bought at the market were on average 53 per cent cheaper than at a local ASDA Wal-Mart supermarket." This research, paired with the fact that 80 per cent of the customers surveyed by the report said that the market sold goods unavailable anywhere else, prove what was clear to local campaigners from the beginning: that Queen's Market is integral to the health of individuals, the economy, and the community in Newham.

Even though ASDA has pulled out of the deal the market is not safe from demolition. The site could still be redeveloped in a way that would have a negative impact on small business owners in and around Queen's Market. The challenge now is to make a plan for managing and improving the market, which badly needs refurbishment. Newham council and Friends of Queen's Market are still locked in a debate about what will be a good development. The only certainty for the future is that the people who depend on the market and who have worked to prove its value will continue fight to ensure that it remains and flourishes. ■

Rachel Beebe

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CAMPAIGN
LED BY FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S MARKET GO TO
WWW.FRIENDSOFQUEENSMARKET.ORG.UK

Shop window

A Local Food Store for Shoreditch

Rachel Beebe visits a new independent food store that has just opened in the centre of Shoreditch.

The Grocery offers a range of products that aim to satisfy the everyday needs of local shoppers. But this is a grocery with a difference, as their product range focuses on locally produced, healthy food and goods. Seventy per cent of their food is organic but their buying strategy also covers issues relating to origin, the environment and seasonality that organic certification alone would not satisfy.

The Grocery aims to be a local store that represents local producers. The emphasis on locality is reflected in the name of the store. Joff Goodman, one of the co-proprietors, told me that they considered a number of names before settling on 'The Grocery'. They chose it because it makes you think of a traditional food store where you'd do all your shopping and where you'd be able to have a relationship with the people selling the goods you want to buy. Joff flinched when I referred to his store as a 'supermarket', telling me that he prefers to call his shop a 'food store'.

Despite shunning the 'super' label, this independent aims to satisfy through choice. They currently offer 7,500

different products and aim to increase that to 10,000. Their 3,200 square foot space is stocked with bread, meat, fish, dairy, vegetables, fruit, wholefoods, household items, pet supplies, natural remedies, baby products, and newspapers. They will soon be introducing alcohol as well. Plans for the future include a café/restaurant where shoppers can relax and have a snack and, in the longer term, possibly therapy rooms.

This seems like an ambitious and risky enterprise. Joff told me that he doesn't consider the giant chain stores his competitors, but consumers do have to choose between the two. Certainly prices are an issue that will test shoppers' loyalty. Everything at The Grocery is priced at the recommended retail price, which means that there isn't a huge mark-up on the items for sale. But more importantly, perhaps, shoppers at The Grocery can be sure that what they are paying for are quality products and that their money will support local producers.

THE GROCERY

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The Grocery - Shoreditch Credit: Joff Goodman

LFL ev

The Extended Hospital Food Project

There has been a great deal of interest in getting involved in the new phase of the extended hospital food project. We are now starting to try to develop local networks of public sector caterers so that bulk orders can make purchasing cheaper and involve less transport.

A meeting for new hospitals, care homes and schools, along with existing and new suppliers interested in getting involved in the project was held on 6th July. The meeting was hosted by the Government Office for London (GoL), and attracted a wide range of delegates. Speakers included Mike Duckett, from the Royal Brompton Hospital, and Paul Winter, from the South London and Maudsely NHS Trust. Having taken part in the pilot phase of the project they enthused the audience, outlining the practical steps they took to improve the sustainability of food in their institutions. Paul also discussed the international aspect of his work, as part of the transatlantic project 'Food for Health and Livelihoods'. A presentation from Douglas Wanstall from Bank Farm that set out the current, difficult situation for UK farmers gave delegates powerful reasons why they should buy more local produce.

A lively question and answer session followed, with time for both suppliers and procurers to state what they required from the project. A networking session to link suppliers with public sector buyers followed the meeting, lubricated with wine produced in Kent!

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vents

Networking Event for Members

Sixty LFL members attended our first ever network meeting at City Hall on 7th June. In her welcome speech, our chair, Anne Dolamore, spoke about the recent launch of the Mayor's food strategy where LFL members were recognised for their contribution to a sustainable food system. Anne celebrated the breadth of members' activities and then introduced twelve speakers from specific projects to share their work. Members from local authorities, business development agencies, Government Office, Primary Care Trusts and local food initiatives shared their triumphs, challenges, insights and, in the case of Hackney's Growing Communities, their freshly harvested lettuce!

The feedback from members was very positive, with requests that the event happens twice a year with specific themes and visits to projects. Many members were pleased for the chance to network, hear about all the projects and understand the range of work going on in London.

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Research & publications

Community Food Mapping

The Food Poverty Project at Sustain has succeeded in getting access to good nutrition and community mapping mentioned in a new report, *Malnutrition Among Older People in the Community: Policy Recommendations for Change*, written by the European Nutrition for Health Alliance. The report recommends that all local authorities, planners, Primary Care Trusts, community and voluntary organisations have a role to play, particularly through community mapping, to highlight areas where access to healthy food is poor.

To download the report please visit www.european-nutrition.org, www.bapen.org.uk or www.ilcuk.org.uk.

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by Newham council, which would have severely damaged the traditional street market by allowing the construction of an ASDA superstore. The report makes a case for the value of Queen's Market for the health of individuals, the community, and the economy and analyses the threat posed by the development planned for the Market site.

VISIT WWW.NEWECONOMICS.ORG TO

DOWNLOAD THE REPORT OR CALL

020 7820 6300.



Credit: Common Ground

Markets and Market Places



Common Ground has published a new pamphlet as part of their *Producing the Goods* series called *Markets and Market Places*. The pamphlet discusses the historical and cultural importance of markets and their

place in the community. It warns against the decline of local markets, provides examples of campaigns that have revived markets, and gives ideas for keeping markets vibrant, distinctive, and local. The pamphlet discusses Queen's Market in Newham and the struggle against development by Friends of Queen's Market as well as other markets and the issues they face around England.

THE PAMPHLET IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.ENGLAND-IN-PARTICULAR.INFO OR BY CALLING COMMON GROUND ON 01747 850 820.

No superstores 'means prosperity'

Shops, employment and the countryside in England all flourish if plans for superstores are refused, a new report says. The findings, published in *The Real Choice* by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the Plunkett Foundation, are based on the area around Saxmundham in East Suffolk. Since planning permission for an out-of-town superstore there was refused in 1997 the area's butchers, bakers, fish shops and greengrocers have all prospered. Benefits of rejecting the supermarket included small stores doing well, an increase in farm shops and markets, and local stores helping to keep communities alive. In the area around Saxmundham, the number of food suppliers rose from 300, in 1997, to 370. And the number of shops - 81 - remained constant, bucking the national trend. It says the evidence should inspire UK-wide action.

VISIT WWW.CPRE.ORG.UK TO DOWNLOAD THE REPORT OR CALL 0800 163680.

Queen's Market and the Local Community

A new report published by the New Economics Foundation (nef) reveals how street markets offer a better choice of fresh fruit and vegetables than supermarkets at half the price, generate substantial benefits for the local economy and create twice as many jobs per square metre of retail than supermarkets. *The world on a plate: Queen's Market. The economic and social value of London's most ethnically diverse street market* was commissioned by Friends of Queen's Market (FoQM). FoQM is a local group campaigning against the re-development of the market, supported



Credit: Campaign to Protect Rural England

Diary

August

- 13th Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Open Day, 2-6pm (info@kitchengarden.org.uk, www.kitchengarden.org.uk)
- 14th - 20th National Allotments Week www.neildixon.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk call 01752 363379 or email naw@nagtrust.org for information about events in your area.
- 27th International Kitchen Garden Day www.kitchengardeners.org/kitchengardenday.html contact info@kitchengardeners.org for events in your area

September

- 3rd Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Open Day, 2-6pm (info@kitchengarden.org.uk, www.kitchengarden.org.uk)
- 2nd - 17th Organic Fortnight (www.soilassociation.org or call Mary Holt at the Soil Association on 0117 987 4582.)
- 10th London Vegan Festival at Kensington Town Hall (www.veganfestival.freereserve.co.uk)
- 16th - 17th Thames Festival Riverside Market on the South Bank (www.thamesfestival.org)
- 17th Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Open Day 1-5pm (info@kitchengarden.org.uk, www.kitchengarden.org.uk)
- 20th British Food Fortnight www.britishfoodfortnight.co.uk contact 020 7840 9292 info@britishfoodfortnight.co.uk for events in your area.
- 23rd London Farms & Gardens Show, Capel manor, Enfield, 10am - 4 pm
- London Farms and Gardens Association annual agricultural show organised by Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (www.farmgarden.org.uk)
- 26th Conference: The influence of Agriculture on Health and Wellbeing, Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London NW1. (www.rcplondon.ac.uk/event/details.aspx?e=237)

October

- 1st Apple Day Festivities at Fenton House (National Trust), Windmill Hill, Hampstead, 11am-4:30pm. Adults £2, children free. Contact: 020 7435 3471, fentonhouse@national-trust.org.uk or see www.fentonhouse.org.uk
- 6th - 13th Seafood Week www.seafoodweek.co.uk contact seafoodweek@seafish.co.uk for events in your area
- 16th World Food Day for information see the Food and Agriculture Organization website at www.fao.org/wfd
- 21st Apple Day for information see www.commonground.org.uk/appleaday or call 01747 850820

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.
- Discounts off London Food Link events, conferences, seminars and publications.
- Access to an online members' area with membership directory.
- A free copy of Growing Food in Cities to new members and 50% off all London Food Link publications.

To join London Food Link or for further details contact:

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ben@sustainweb.org www.londonfoodlink.org

London Food Link members and supporters include:

Primary Care Trusts, London boroughs, business associations, retailers, farmers, environment and community groups, food access partnerships, allotment groups and food writers. Our work is guided by a working party of key London-wide agencies and groups representing food issues from farm to fork.



OUR WORK

To represent over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

OUR AIM

To advocate food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity and enrich society and culture.

The Jellied Eel is the newsletter of London Food Link coordinated by Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming. It aims to keep readers abreast of developments in the food and agriculture policy arena that have an impact on London. Sustain takes every effort to summarise and reproduce accurately the information in *The Jellied Eel*. Inclusion of any material does not imply that it forms part of the policy of Sustain.

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