

wwoof uk news

worldwide opportunities on organic farms

issue 226

spring 2010

feeding the five thousand



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www.wwoof.org.uk

editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of the WWOOF UK newsletter!

This issue is packed with all sorts of action to get the sap rising! We hear from Scarlett Penn about a high profile campaign to address the massive issue of food waste – Feeding the 5000. If you want to get involved in the campaign see www.feeding5k.org

There are lots of opportunities for WWOOF hosts in this issue – The Permaculture Association's LAND project is looking for demonstration sites for their network so if you are a WWOOF host practising permaculture why not consider applying? There are loads of great benefits. Also, Sustain's national Food Co-ops project are looking

for WWOOF hosts who may be looking to develop new markets for their produce. See page 4 for details and the contact for your region.

Finally, WWOOF needs YOU – Emma Goodwin explains what drew her to becoming a director of the organisation and encourages you to get involved – see page 8. The UK's sister organisation WWOOF Independents is looking for a co-ordinator. This is a very exciting role so do think about whether you know anyone who might be interested.

Right, time to get busy in the garden. See you in the Summer!

Alissa Pemberton, Editor

write to us!

We're looking for interesting host features, WWOOFing stories, your letters, international news, Transition Initiatives news from food and farming groups, seasonal stories – recipes, customs, food storage, book reviews and classified ads!

Please send contributions to editor@WWOOF.org.uk or by post to the office, by the following dates:

30th April for Summer 10 issue

31st July for Autumn 10 issue

31st Oct for Winter 10 issue

31st Jan for Spring 11 issue

Please note the new classified advert payment rates - see page 11 for more details.

Don't forget you can always post adverts, questions and comments on the forum at www.lowimpact.org

what is WWOOF uk?

WWOOF UK holds a list of organic farms, gardens and smallholdings, all offering food and accommodation in exchange for practical help on their land. These hosts range from a low impact woodland settlement to a 600 hectare mixed holding with on-site farm shop, cafe and education centre. Hosts do not expect you to know a lot about farming when you arrive, but they do expect you to be willing to learn and able to fit in with their lifestyle.

The list of hosts is available by joining WWOOF UK for a membership fee. Once you have the list you can contact hosts directly to arrange your stay. Your host will explain what kind of work you will be expected to do, what accommodation is on offer and will discuss the length of your stay.

WWOOF is a charity; WWOOFers do not pay to stay with hosts and hosts do not pay WWOOFers for their help. Charity number: 1126220



**Follow us on
<http://twitter.com/WWOOFUK>
and tweet about
your WWOOFing
experiences!
Share the love of
WWOOF with other
tweeters!**

news from the office

great new online feature!

A brilliant new function has been added to our online membership; mapping. This will enable you to see a hosts' whereabouts at the touch of a button.

Start by logging on in the normal way and searching for hosts - all hosts in the Northeast for example. When the search has been completed, you will see the words 'map these contacts' at the top of the page.

If you click on these words it'll take you straight to a screen showing you all the selected hosts. If you click on any of the pointers, it'll bring up the name and address of the host at that location (you can even get directions at this point). If you then click on the name of the host it will take you straight through to that host's listing.

A word of caution though - the pointers are not exact as they are based solely on postcodes. This means that in rural areas they can be a good few miles out.

Hosts

All hosts should now also be able to view the online listings and mapping features mentioned above in the same way as WWOOFers can. Please contact us on hosts@wwoof.org.uk if you have trouble doing this.

small is practical!

At last! Just what you've been waiting for!

WWOOF U.K. now have available an A4 mini-exhibition to help you with your WWOOF promotion needs at fairs, student gatherings and any other public event that takes your fancy!

The exhibition package contains:-

- A selection of A4 laminated and velcroed coloured photographs of WWOOFers and hosts and other WWOOF stuff like fruit, vegetables, animals, cheese etc.
- Small flyers entitled 'Get to the Root of the Matter' with basic outline of WWOOF plus how to make contact.
- A mini album of relevant photographs to use when in conversation with interested people. Also useful for 'guerrilla leafleting!'

Please contact Edward Acland (mini-exhibition distributor) to discuss your needs so a pack of goodies can be sent to you.

All material loaned must be returned to Edward. Phone 01539 725168 or email edwardacland@freeuk.com

Why WWOOF?

- ⇒ *reconnect to the soil, get your hands dirty and get grounded*
- ⇒ *re-skill and help revitalise ancient knowledge*
- ⇒ *gain first hand experience of organic and biodynamic farming, growing and animal husbandry*
- ⇒ *find inspiration in like minded people*
- ⇒ *rediscover the relationships between local food production, social community and spirit*
- ⇒ *taste totally fresh produce*
- ⇒ *acquire a wealth of experience for a relatively small financial outlay*
- ⇒ *walk the talk - try it out for yourself*

organic news

Wwoof host farms – are you looking for additional markets for your produce? Could you supply a local food co-op?

This would generally mean a bulk delivery to one location of a variety of fresh produce and could provide a very reliable market.

Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming has appointed a dedicated adviser in every region in England to help people set up food co-ops.

By forming a food co-op and pooling their buying power, and ordering direct from local growers and wholesalers, communities can improve their access to a wide range of good food, save money, help the environment, and improve their health and well being.

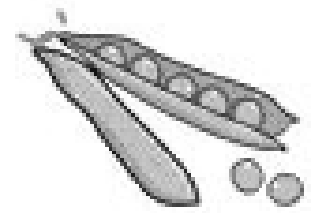
Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery via the Making Local Food Work programme FREE advice is now available on everything you might need to know about setting up a food co-op, such as finding suppliers, buying equipment or recruiting volunteers.

Community-run food co-ops come in all shapes and sizes including buying clubs, bag or box schemes, stalls or shops, and can provide a variety of different foods such as fruit and vegetables, wholefoods, home-made bread or local meat and dairy produce.

Sustain have produced a food co-ops toolkit which is FREE to local groups and is also on-line at www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit Support such as 'How to' workshops, training days, exchange visits to other food co-ops, and regional networking events is also available.

You can search for your nearest community food co-op on our website at <http://www.foodcoops.org/> or if you run a food co-op and are not already listed then you can

add your details to our map. Existing food co-ops can also get support and advice from our project so please get in touch.



To find out more about food co-ops and how to set one up where you live, or if you are a Wwoof host farm and would be interested in supplying food co-op(s) please contact your regional adviser:

www.foodcoops.org

- South East - Sara Osman – sara@sustainweb.org
- South West - Alison Belshaw – alison@sustainweb.org
- North West - Ruth Kelly - ruth@sustainweb.org
- North East - Kirstin Glendinning - kirstin@sustainweb.org
- Yorkshire & Humber - Lizzie Fellows – lizzie@sustainweb.org
- East of England – Gemma Sayers - gemma@sustainweb.org
- West Midlands - Pete Norton – pete@sustainweb.org
- East Midlands - Alissa Pemberton - alissa@sustainweb.org

For all other queries contact: foodcoops@sustainweb.org or call 020 7837 1228



Case Studies for Micro Enterprise Supply Chains

The Welsh Assembly Government wants to help build sustainability into micro-enterprise supply chains (more on the project at www.sustainablesupplychains.org.uk). One of these projects is to develop 'micro-hubs' - modest scale collaborations between producers. For example, six neighbouring producers of different commodities working jointly and informally on marketing and distribution.

They are seeking case studies for similar schemes, and in particular, any experience of developing software to track delivery needs and offers to help producers share van space.

If you have any such examples in mind, please email simon.michaels@localfood.org.uk

Green Up!

The Community Development Foundation has just published a free guide, Green Up! It provides community and volunteer groups with everything they need to work productively with their councils on environment and sustainability issues. It is a plain English guide that explains how volunteer groups can use everything from Local Area Agreements to Sustainable Community Strategies to get their work supported.

Green Up contains several hands-on examples from groups such as local Transition Towns, civic societies and faith groups. It also has tips from local group members who are successfully working with their council on issues relating to sustainability and the environment. <http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/publication?id=142955>

feeding the five thousand

Scarlett has looked after the WWOOF UK main office for nearly 3 years, and came to us from a waste management background. Until recently though, the scale of food waste in the UK was relatively unknown to her...

Under grey skies one snowy lunch-time in mid December, 5000 people ate a delicious, fresh, wholesome vegetable curry in Trafalgar Square. What's so unusual about that? The answer is they all ate free, tasty, nutritious food that would otherwise have been thrown away by nightfall. What was wrong with the food? It was all rejected by the supermarkets for being cosmetically imperfect. The celery wasn't straight enough. The potatoes had a tiny blemish. The carrots were a bit comedy. The cauliflowers were.... wait for it...too big. Goodness, isn't it lucky we were saved from these culinary horrors!

When Tristram Stuart - long time food campaigner and author of *Waste: Uncovering the Global Food Scandal* - first told me about his plan to highlight the amount of food thrown away in the UK, I was amazed – then sickened - by some of the facts. All the world's nearly one billion hungry people could be lifted out of malnourishment on less than a quarter of the food that is wasted in the US, UK and Europe. 4600 kilocalories per day of food are harvested for every person on the planet but only 2000 actually eaten. 10% of rich countries' greenhouse gas emissions come from growing food that is never eaten. He showed me photos of a pile of 'outgraded' bananas lying in a ditch in Costa Rica. A field of perfectly healthy-looking spinach, rejected by retailers in the UK and left to rot. Slices of bread thrown away by sandwich makers simply for being 'too close to the end of the loaf'.

All this was enough to convince me I should be part of the Feeding the 5000 project. Many other people clearly felt the same way because soon there were lots more volunteers, and it wasn't long before the event began to take shape. We planned to get vegetables and herbs for a curry, some fresh bread discarded by the sandwich makers to go with it and fruit for a vitamin-packed smoothie.

I remember at one stage of the preparations asking



Tristram how sourcing the food was going. He waved a dismissive hand at me and said 'Oh that was the easy bit, I've had it sorted for ages. I could have done those quantities several times over'. So hang on a minute – nutritious food for thousands of people, that would otherwise be dumped, could be sourced several times over, on any given day of the week? Now that really does make you realise the scale of the problem.



And so it was that, after quick stint at publicity (spreading the word by Facebook, twitter and the WWOOF forum) I found myself one freezing Tuesday morning at Bhaktivedanta Manor Farm, a Hari Krishna temple and new WWOOF host near Watford. Here in this beautiful setting, a motley crew of Feeding 5K supporters chopped and peeled all day long, preparing veggies for the generous and talented Krishna volunteers to transform overnight into a delicious freegan feast.

Early the next morning the goodies were loaded into a van and taken to Trafalgar Square, where the queues quickly began to form. The next two hours went by in a blur of media attention, satisfied diners, high profile speakers (including the Bishop of London and top chef Tomasina Miers) and cries of 'but what was wrong with it?'. By 2.30pm, we had successfully fed over 5000 people and given away tonnes of surplus vegetables and fruits on the freegan stall.

The event made the TV news, Radio 4 and the papers. A huge majority of the people we talked to were genuinely on side with the message of the day and agreed it is unacceptable that 20-40% of UK fruit and vegetables are rejected even before they reach the shops because of our perceived need for cosmetic standards. John Craven on Countryfile has since run a feature about food waste, so it feels like the ball has started to roll and it is up to us all to keep it moving. Let's make sure the supermarkets know won't faint if a stem of purple sprouting exceeds the bounds of their micrometers. Let's celebrate comedy carrots - they're funny! Let's revel in wonky fruit – it's natural! Because, quite apart from anything else, wouldn't life be dull if everything was perfectly the same?

Scarlett Penn

the LAND project

What is the LAND project?

LAND is a four year project funded by the Local Food scheme which aims to create a publicly accessible England wide permaculture learning and demonstration network. We want to prove to more people that permaculture works and we can do it with your help!

What are the aims of the LAND project?

The best way to understand permaculture is to see it in action, and that's why the LAND project was set up - to give more people the chance to see for themselves. Projects who join the LAND network will be helping to get permaculture recognised and valued by more people. In addition our funding means we can support projects in the LAND network and make sure that what you do is understood and recognised.

The main aims of the LAND project are to:

Support and enhance the food growing, land design skills and knowledge of permaculture practitioners and the general public through the network.

Enable more people across England to

- Access and afford high quality local food
- Learn the underlying principles and techniques of food production
- Learn the underlying principles and techniques of ecologically sound land design.

What are the outcomes of the LAND project?

There are five main outcomes for the LAND project which have been agreed with our funders. To allow us to continue from year to year we need to demonstrate good progress against these outcomes.



**Permaculture
ASSOCIATION**

NETWORK: Create a publicly accessible permaculture based learning and demonstration network with at least 80 land-based member projects by end of year four.

LEARN: Host 25 regional and national skill sharing and training events for new and existing practitioners by end of year four.

OUTREACH: Enable and support practitioners to deliver 40 introductory courses and 40 local presentations, with at least 800 attendees by end of year four.

VOLUNTEER: Enable and support member projects to provide at least 1125 volunteer opportunities for local people and itinerant learners by end of year four.

VISIT: Support 25 groups to visit LAND learning centres in year 2, year 3 and year 4, totalling 75 groups over three years.

How many LAND Learning Centres are there?

There are currently 17 learning centres who are part of the LAND project, our target is 80 projects by the end of year 4, but we are hoping to exceed this number!

How does the LAND project compliment WWOOF?

LAND learning centres are projects which have been recognised by the Permaculture Association as places where visitors and volunteers can really learn how the ethics and principles of permaculture have been used, and gain an insight into practising a permaculture design approach.

LAND learning centres are different to permaculture projects as they are recognised centres affiliated with the Permaculture Association. This



means that we promote each of our learning centres as examples of permaculture in practice, through our website, newsletter, office, ebulletin and to the network as a whole. If you are new to permaculture or have been practising for years, you can be confident when visiting or volunteering at a LAND learning centre that you will come away having learnt something new!

How can WWOOFERS find out more about LAND projects?

If you are itching to learn more about our LAND learning centres take a look at our website www.permaculture.org.uk where all of our centres are listed.

To visit, volunteer or WWOOF at one of the centres give them a call or write them an email, to talk about the exciting possibilities!

Being a volunteer or a visitor at a LAND learning centre means that not only will you be learning how permaculture is used and practised at that particular learning centre but you will be directing contributing to the association's 'in kind' targets set by our funders (The Local Food Fund), which means that we will get access to the funding we need to get the project to move forward.

LAND

Permaculture Demonstration Network



How can WWOOF hosts get involved?

If you are a WWOOF host and are practising permaculture (we know there are a lot of you out there!) then why not apply to become a LAND learning centre? There are many benefits involved including:

1. A profile space on the Association website
2. Publicity - website, newsletter, e-bulletin and office
3. More volunteer opportunities and visitors
4. Can be paid to host group visits
5. Support – from other members and LAND team
6. Access to funds for special design needs

7. Access to training and skill sharing events

If you are interested in applying to become a LAND learning centre then check out the Permaculture Association's website: www.permaculture.org.uk, follow the Quick Links to Land demonstration network and you will be able to download an application form and supporting documents.

Alternatively you could call or email Louise the Network Coordinator for the LAND project by telephone on 0845 458 1805 or email network@permaculture.org.uk



Send us your pics!

We want give people an idea of what WWOOFing in the UK is like by showing them all the different ways in which people are WWOOFing. So we need your photos for the website please!

Please make sure that you get the permission of the hosts and WWOOFers in the photos.

Photos can be emailed to michaelmcandrew@WWOOF.org

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those held by WWOOF or LILI

wwoof needs you!

When my first-born at the age of three requested that I open the front door so she might go visit her friend Tilly, I realised we weren't living in the right place. Nursing her baby sister, I was desperate to just open the door, let her explore and 'knock on' at the neighbours, for some peace.

Peckham in southeast London doesn't have the most rosy reputation, but in the Goose Green playground there is a huge mural after one of William Blake's poems, about the trees of Peckham Rye, gracing the wall, reminding us how much we need them: the trees. The families we met are arty, crafty, sharing, community minded folk, there is even a wild life centre where we bought bare rooted trees for a pound a piece, celebrated birthdays and had picnics. We loved it there, we loved the peace and friendliness, we loved the allotments, we loved our neighbours but we couldn't open the door and let the children out to play.

My husband Stuart and I had been inspired, before their arrival, by the joys of living off grid for a week each year in the craft field of the Big Green Gathering, a festival sometimes held in the Mendip Hills near the Cheddar Gorge. We saw toddlers with a label pinned to their back, giving their name and where they were camped on site, ambling in a contented daydream across the grass with no sign of their grown up guardians. Quite happy, they seemed, and folk would leave them to it.

Our candle-lit stumblings in the field to dance at pedal powered sounds systems or take tea in mystical magical field kitchens reformed my perceptions of the world around. Meeting organisations like Permaculture, WWOOF, LILLI and learning to weave, make felt booties and turn a rounders bat on a pole lathe made me feel useful and, dare I say, powerful. Practicing Capoeira or Yoga at dawn and sweating it out in the sauna, cleansed and resensitised my jaded self and coming out of the field into the 'real' world was quite a shock to the senses.

Arriving back in London we would invariably turn to each other and say we'd like to go back – immediately – and live in the field. Never mind about no running water and did we miss the flick of a switch convenience? – hell no – people seemed gentler, softer and not so cross by lamplight. We all trod carefully, together. "Let's get back to the LAND" we'd say. But we'd lived in town all our adult lives, had careers in utterly un-land related spheres. Friends and family began murmuring of mid life crisis. We began to wonder ourselves. So how do we get back to the land? With no experience, no way of earning a living, basically no idea?

Joining WWOOF Independents in 2007 gave us a list of possible farms in Spain and France which might accept a family of 4 with a yurt. I figured if we took along our own home the children would have a sense of continuity and if we liked a place we could conceivably stay long term, maybe even relocate. Both France and Spain now have their own national organisations.

April 2007. Our 3 bed home rented out, our lives packed in boxes in the loft, we departed on our big adventure. First stop Arco Iris community in Odemira, Portugal. The spring grass was lush and Billie Blue our 9 month baby girl rolled around in the calendula, clover and camomile, eating flowers, as Stuart helped lime plaster a new shower block and I got used to domestic life in the yurt.

We blogged the experience at <http://web.mac.com/goodwinsworld/iWeb/Site/Blog/Archive.html>

By June 2008 we decided that the continent was not for us. We missed this green and pleasant land, land of our forefathers, land of our language, colloquialisms and celtic roots; despite the outrageous prices they were asking for land. We timed our return with a plea in the WWOOF newsletter for new Directors to come forward and help run the organisation. I felt a calling. It was WWOOF that had enabled our escape from the city, to taste the fresh air, to feed the pigs and take pumpkins to market in Lot et Garonne. It was WWOOF that had enabled us to ride gypsy ponys in Andalucia, pluck fresh oranges in the Sierra Nevada, to bring spring water up the hill on Senior Romeo the donkey's back in Portugal, and countless other amazing and invaluable experiences.

WWOOF is run for people who want to tread lightly on this earth, who care passionately about careful husbandry and respectful stewardship of the land, about human scale farming, about working with nature not against her. WWOOF is for anyone who wants the chance to work side by side with their inspirational and forward thinking fellow man.

I put myself forward to promote this fantastic organisation and became a Director in July 2008. There are currently 5 of us, we could do with 12. WWOOF needs new blood. WE NEED YOU!

The old guard are taking a back seat now, it's time for the youth to step up to the mark. Do you feel passionately that WWOOF provides an invaluable service and that more people could benefit from it? Become a Director of WWOOF: email your interest to emma@wwoof.org, we'll send a description of the position, you'll see if it's something you think you can do. Submissions by end May 2010.

P.S. We are now living at Hoathly Hill in West Sussex: a 27 dwelling community based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. There is a Hall and a Barn for communal use. There is a 15 acre small holding with 2 cows, a small flock of sheep, some chickens and a community assisted agriculture plot. Cars are relegated to the periphery, you walk down the gravel paths in between the houses to your front door and my 3 year old is now 6 with a little 3 year old sister who can pretty much come and go as she pleases.

Emma Goodwin

'the practical guide to wwoofing'

an update from Adam Greenman

In October of last year I met the WWOOF founder Sue Coppard and presented her with a copy of my pocketbook, for fresh and experienced WWOOFers alike.

I was thrilled when some weeks later Sue had this to say about it: "A delightful and informative read, accessibly and humanly written - it almost reads itself to you"

Soon, LILI (The 'Low Impact Living Initiative', that manages WWOOF in the UK) began to stock my book and promote it on their website - www.lowimpact.org

At the beginning of December I left for the Greek island of Crete to find out if it is a place that I would like to begin a small holding. After WWOOFing and working myself around the world over the last decade, I finally sense urges to settle - perhaps even host WWOOFers myself. This is how I came to be nursing sunburn on Boxing Day, instead of battling the English snow.

In January I took on an old stone house to be a base for a few months, nestled on the side of a mountain in an ancient olive grove. A donkey lives in the garden in the shadows of a closed up chapel and across the gorge rests an imposing monastery. So when the firewood is collected and the water is warming I walk amidst thyme filled mountain air and learn a little of the local edible plants.

January also saw the launch of the 3rd edition of 'The Practical Guide to WWOOFing' and it became available on www.amazon.com. A full size textbook version was also born and is available to order at bookshops worldwide. Both are peppered with illustrations and spiced with humour throughout. The e-book is also becoming increasingly popular- at half the price and downloading with all its images in full colour.

So after WWOOFing in England, Scotland, France, Portugal, Spain and Hungary and working in Brazil, New Zealand, India, Latvia and the Ukraine, we approach February 2010 and my quest to be led to a spot of land in Crete where I may settle continues. As I move about this enchanting place, where olives seem to be present at every step of my way and kings of mountains rise from the sea to snow capped peaks, I absorb the wonder of sleeping in caves, on beaches and stand in awe as huge numbers of goats pass by - supplying the cooling cheeses that I enjoy on my more luxurious days.

Most recently I have met my first potential WWOOFer, who travels with me nearly all the time. Her name is Cassey and she was born in Crete - unfortunately abandoned at a young age. After 3 or 4 weeks of being with me, she stopped eating and drinking and of course her talk of WWOOFing also declined. I obtained some medicine and soon she became much better. Now she WWOOFs a little. The vet said that she will make a full recovery.

In preparation for the continuation of our search, I am restoring an old bicycle now, where upon I will attach a fruit basket (organic of course) so that Cassy the young puppy can sit on the front of the bike as our journey to find potential WWOOF land continues.

Adam Greenman, Crete

Author of 'The Practical Guide to WWOOFing'

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More information at www.WWOOFbook.com

The Practical Guide To Wwoofing

A Beginners Pocket A-Z to

**Volunteering on Organic
Farms Worldwide**

By Adam Greenman

"Very accessibly and humanly written, it
almost reads itself to you!"

Sue Coppard Wwoof Founder

the classifieds

Please note that a flat rate of £10 for up to 50 words will be applied to all adverts in the classified section. Please send adverts to editor@wwoof.org.uk and cash or UK bank cheque to the main office: WWOOF UK, PO Box 2154, Winslow, Buckinghamshire, MK18 3WS. Payment must be received by the copy deadline in order for your advert to be printed. WWOOF accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of advertisements and does not endorse the products and services offered. You are advised to check before availing yourself of what is offered.

Semi-retired professional male, USA, healthy, WWOOFer, vegan; seeks worldwide placements. Love animals. Do all types carpentry, painting, plumbing, some electricity, barns, garages, decks, small bridges, rockwork, concrete, landscaping. Build hand-hewn log cabins, set up springs; do passive solar, small hydro; operate and repair most types light and heavy equipment. Do layout and building of roads. Will work for room and board, small wage if long term. Email - Ldfranklinxx@yahoo.com

Retired professional male, green, seeks travel companion for camping and training Europe and wherever. Email - Ldfranklinxx@yahoo.com

For sale 28ft living caravan, build 1950 so doing well on the recycling front!! is now open plan with bath & double patio doors. fantastic space. I've been living in her for the past 6 years, needs some TLC but who wouldn't @ that age!! good dry condition, sadly loss of space forces sale £2,500, located in Bedfordshire call Su 07882 604654

Stone Camping Barn, Wales. Cambrian Mountains. Teifi Valley. Available for Spring/Summer holidays, small group workshops. Also large yurt, tent space and house rooms. Self-catering. Beautiful, peaceful location in hills with permaculture gardens, orchard, ponds, stream, meadows, woodland. Very reasonable rates. Occasional volunteering opportunities. Email: info@courtofcircles.org.uk or visit www.courtofcircles.org.uk

Help Required - April to October. Come and see stunning scenery on the west coast of Scotland while learning to grow organic veg! We would love to hear from couples or single people who would be interested to visit for 1-2 weeks. See our profile: Ardfarn Organics on the

WWOOF website for more details. Contact us at lix.armstrong@virgin.net or 01852 500240.

Wanted - Accommodation Exchange / Host Near Oxford or Brighton. We are a couple with our two preschool boys looking for accommodation in exchange for work. My husband is a carpenter and all round generally handy person. My skills are more administrative and domestic but I am very willing to learn. We are currently living on a smallholding in Wales but are looking to return to near Oxford or Brighton in the spring, to be nearer my family. Please email or phone if you think we might be able to help you willingvolunteer@gmail.com / 07765402362

Lower Shaw Farm. Affordable Courses & Weekends. Yoga and Massage, Crafts, Jewellery-making, Willow Baskets, Knitting, Spinning, Wildflowers, Music and Singing, Family Breaks, Circus Skills, Cycling in Wiltshire, Women's Creativity, and more. Winner of 2009 Observer Ethical Garden Award! Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, SN5 5PJ. 01793 771080. enquiries@lowershawfarm.co.uk www.lowershawfarm.co.uk

English Language Summer School, at Lower Shaw Farm. Friday 23rd July – Friday 6th August. An intensive two-week course. For beginners, and improvers. Enjoy the farm at work and play! This course is fully residential, and includes all meals. £380. enquiries@lowershawfarm.co.uk www.lowershawfarm.co.uk

Small farm in beautiful location, needs motivated longer-term WWOOFers to help with polytunnel, herb and veg growing, construction of timber-framed buildings and other farm and woodland work. Individuals/couple/small family invited. Carpentry experience especially welcome!

Accommodation in caravan with woodburner. Devon. Call Rosie 07814 052742 or e-mail rosiewibberley@hotmail.com

Low Impact / Green Building Projects. I would very much like info on any cob, strawbale, round timber frame, earthship or roundhouse projects in progress or planned. I am looking to volunteer in exchange for gaining experience and knowledge. I have a broad range of practical experience and own a van which I could use for accommodation if necessary. Contact Mike on 07733 337565 or f3michael@yahoo.co.uk

Easter Week - WWOOFers urgently needed to help us work to clear tree surrounds in beautiful organic woodland at South Devon farm near Totnes - Easter period between 27th March-7th April 4-8 days negotiable. We'd love to hear from you. Call Clio 07808 771 466 or email clio.david@lineone.net.

Fantastic opportunity - live off-grid house/chicken/dog sitting. Remote but busy canal/forge/house. Make bread, crafts, grow produce to sell to boaters. From end April to end July/beg August. North Oxfordshire. Phone Phoebe 01295 690048 or email phoebe.shaft@virgin.net

6 acres organic farmland for lease Hertfordshire CM21 0HH: 2.5 acres agricultural with permission for 3 polytunnels. 1.5 acres fruit/flower gardens. 2 acres additional farming. Storage & accommodations. Lakes for irrigation. All/part available for lease, long/short lets. Available 1st April. future.living@hotmail.com 01279 722862

Single or couple WWOOFers required: Starting April for months to develop growing of organic fruit and veg on one and a quarter acre

plot at Nursery of Wast not Want not. Also growing summer bedding, shrubs and perennials. Some remuneration plus use of vehicle may be possible. Phone 01438 820154 or email isobelbarnes@aol.com for details

Websites/online shops, £250
www.ethicalinternet.co.uk 0845 4582658

Land girl wanted, any age, to help me set up a recreational smallholding for a little work, rest and play. South Somerset. Also interested WWOOFers mail me alps500@tesco.net or call 01202 732436

Long term WWOOFing opportunities, on established organic vegetable farm in South-West Wales. Organics To Go have had WWOOFers for over 10 years on our co-operatively owned farm. We grow veg in polytunnels and on a field scale for Wales largest

organic box scheme. Contact Roger 01558 668088 or organics2go@goodlemail.com

Stone camping barn, Wales, Teifi Valley. Available for Spring/Summer holidays, small group workshops. Also large yurt, tent space and house rooms. Self catering, beautiful, location in hills with permaculture gardens, orchard, ponds, stream, meadows, woodland. Very reasonable rates. Occasional opportunities. Email info@courtofcircles.org.uk or visit www.courtofcircles.org.uk

Opportunity for individual (and/or friend) who may like to start a small nursery garden in Pembrokeshire (nr Tenby) Accommodation available. Details: 01834 810157 or 07977 210250

Help required: March - November on 2 acres (100 species) medicinal herbs. Great opportunity to learn about herbs, herb production and

processing. Own caravan and £60/week (food not supplied). Contact Sarah: sarahw@organicherbtrading.com. The Organic Herb Trading co, Milverton, Somerset, TA4 INF.Tel: 01823 401205

Apprenticeship on working herbal medicine garden, with dispensary and classroom, March - October for competent gardener keen to learn more about herbal medicine. Salad cultivation and work in garden for 3 days in exchange for accom in yurt/bow top/chalet and tuition in herbal medicine. Frances, Althaea Herbal Healing Garden Totnes TQ9 6NG 07720 440866.

Long stay, short stay, Experienced/Inexperienced Cheerful non-smoking Male/Female WWOOFers any age any sex welcome on small Welsh Hill Farm. Write Dol-Rhanog Isaf, Cilgwyn, Trefdraeth, Sir Benfro, Wales, SA42 0QH

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR WWOOF INDEPENDENTS?

WWOOF Independents (WWIND) is looking for someone to take over the co-ordination of its administration. WWIND lists hosts in countries that do not have a national WWOOF organisation (currently over 50 countries), so this is an interesting part-time role with an international dimension.

You would be co-ordinating a small team of people dealing with WWIND memberships (hosts and WWOOFers), email queries, payments, complaints etc. This is flexible, distance working - you could be based anywhere, as long as you have a computer and an internet connection to liaise with a dispersed team of colleagues and our members all over the world.

What do you need to fulfil this role?

- **Flexible working hours:** You need to be able to work a couple of hours each day (six days a week), initially totalling about 12 hours a week (a little more during training period).
- **Admin experience:** Knowledge of basic software (such as Word, Excel, email clients etc) plus the aptitude to learn WWIND's specific IT software.
- **Good communicator:** As well as heading a dispersed team, you'll be communicating with people of different nationalities, cultures, levels of English etc, via email and Skype.
- **Experience of WWOOF:** Someone who knows what it means to be a host or WWOOFer!

The role may expand in time into further international development work (such as, liaising with new national WWOOF organisations starting up), so we would ideally be looking for someone who could commit to the role for at least two to three years and whose time could expand to take on up to 18 or 20 hours a week.

Would you like to know more?

To get more detailed information about what we're looking for (and how to apply), contact Richard Hazell: richard.hazell@wwoolf.org

next copy deadline: 30th april 2010 editor@WWOOF.org.uk
WWOOF UK, P.O. Box 2154, Winslow, Bucks, MK18 3WS

spring's seasonal delights

wild harvest

As the weeds begin to outgrow our precious seedlings in their first tentative days of spring, there's really only one thing to do - eat the weeds.

Here's a slightly different take on a hedgerow staple, the delicious nutritious nettle, from Dennis Cotter's excellent book 'Wild garlic, gooseberries and me'. This is one for all of us who believe that risotto is the ultimate comfort food (followed closely by a baked potato of course). Follow the usual foraging codes of conduct (which can be found in any good book) and take some gloves, a pair of scissors and a bag.

nettle risotto

(serves 4)

- 1.2 litres vegetable stock
- 300g nettle leaves (pick only the youngest, greenest nettle tips)
- 60g butter
- olive oil
- 320g risotto rice
- 1 bunch spring onions, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 120ml dry white wine
- 60g parmesan (or other hard cheese), grated
- salt and pepper

Bring the stock to the boil in a large pan and drop the nettles in for about 30 seconds. Remove, drain and chop quite finely. Lower the heat under the pan to a simmer.

Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter with 1 tablespoon of olive oil in another large pan. Throw in the rice and stir it well to coat the grains with oil.

Cook the rice gently for 10 minutes, stirring often, then add the spring onions, garlic and nettles and cook for a minute more. Pour in the wine and simmer until it is absorbed. Now add a ladle of stock and continue to simmer, stirring often, until all but absorbed.

Keep adding stock by the ladleful and stirring whilst it is absorbed until the rice is just cooked (about 20 minutes). Stir in the rest of the butter and most of the cheese.

Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately with the remaining cheese sprinkled on top.

Enjoy!

Kath Hallewell

signs of spring

The nesting season for birds has begun in earnest. Hedgehogs will be coming out of hibernation. Their populations seem to be declining fast, and need all the slugs they can find, so don't put down slug pellets (or similar) as they can kill them. If you wish to give them additional food, try non-fish cat/dog food, but not bread and milk as it gives them diarrhoea.

Most toads will have started spawning by now (but take care when you turn your compost heap as they like to hibernate in them), their eggs are laid in long strings as opposed to the great gelatinous cauliflower-like clumps that frogs produce. Herons lay their eggs early so that their young can benefit from the accumulation of single-minded, amorous frogs that are gathering in their ancestral and garden ponds.

Look out for the first spring flowers – wood anemone / wind flower, celandines, primroses, violets dog's mercury, cuckoo flowers...

daffodils

Their Gloucestershire name 'Lent lilies' indicates their moment. There are many organised walks to see wild daffodils in fields and woods. The Wildlife Trusts organise walks by the River Teign in Devon, in the Dove Valley in North Yorkshire, and many more. In the Lake District, Glencoyne Bay the daffodils are conserved as a 'historic feature of Ullswater' by the National Trust.

www.commonground.org.uk

