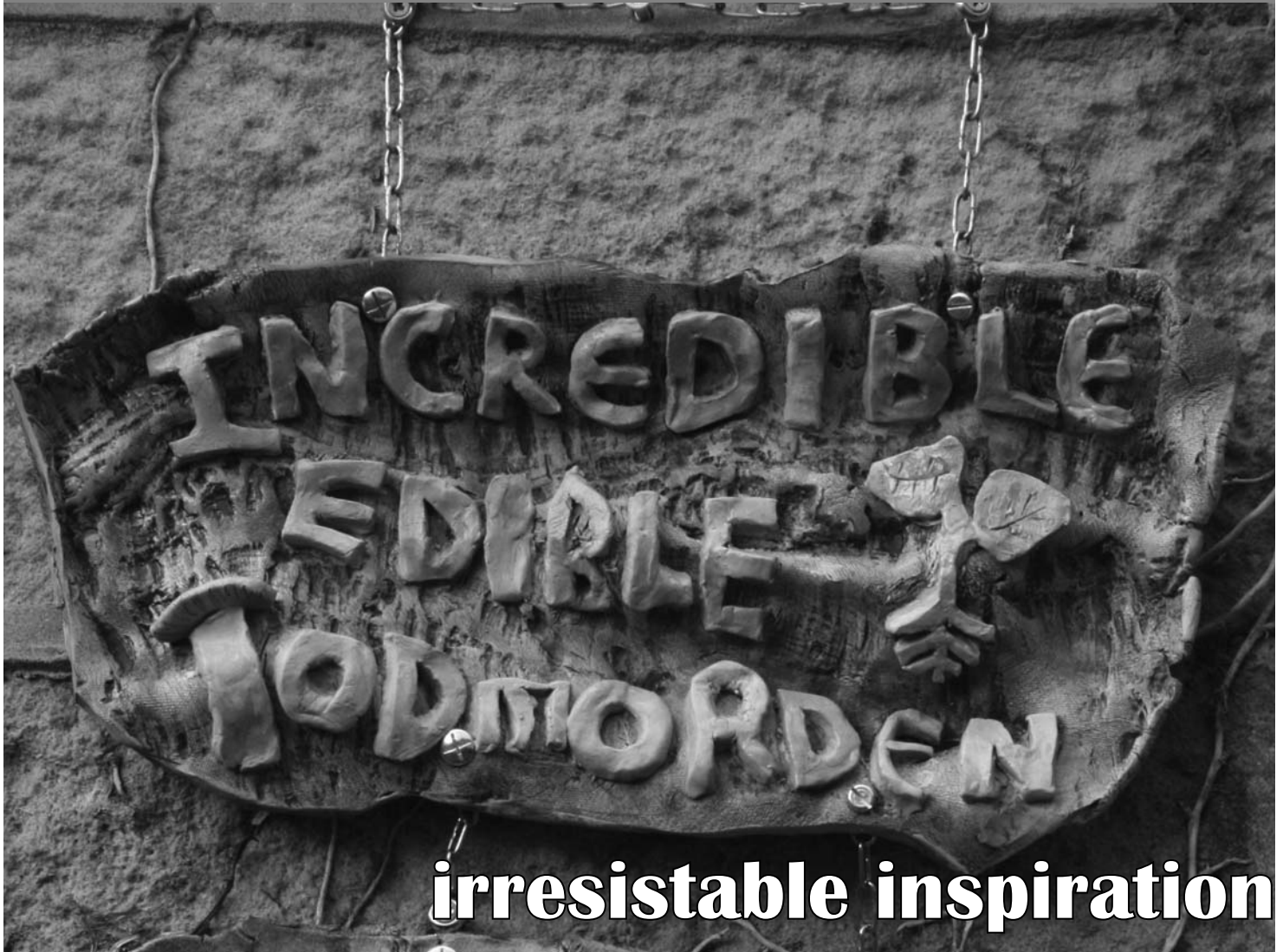


wwoof uk news

world wide opportunities on organic farms

issue 229

winter 2010



irresistable inspiration

inside:

**WWOOFing in the land of the
midnight sun**

Grow2Grow

WWOOFing and Tweeting

WWOOF AGM

www.wwoof.org.uk

editorial

Welcome to the Winter edition of the WWOOF UK newsletter -

There is much to celebrate in this season of quiet reflection and planning. We hear from Paula Conway about an exciting WWOOF supported project called Grow 2 Grow, which is making a real difference to the lives of young people experiencing difficulties. Page 8&9.

We also have a wonderful report back from the AGM in October from Kath Hallelwell who shares some of the amazing tales from Incredible Edible Todmorden (the location for the AGM) and feeds back on the thorny issue of a WWOOF feedback system. Turn to pages 6&7.

At the AGM, long time directors Edward Acland and Craig Priestly stepped down from their roles having given an amazing amount of time, skill and love to the organisation. I would also just like to thank them both here for all the support and encouragement they have given me over the past few years I have been involved. I can honestly say I have never worked with kinder nor more compassionate people. Thank you guys!

Wishing you a warm festive season and a fruitful new year,

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, of course, your classified ads.

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

3 1st Jan for Spring 11 issue

30th April for Summer 11 issue

3 1st July for Autumn 11 issue

3 1st Oct for Winter 11 issue

Please note the 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

WWOOF UK is administered by LILI - the Low Impact Living Initiative. www.lowimpact.org

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

letters

Dear Editor

I have just been reading the WWOOF newsletter and noticed your request for interesting stories and I think we have one.

My son has just got engaged to one of our WWOOFers, they met on our WWOOFing farm in January and they plan to get married on 10th September 2011. Also, they plan to get married here at the farm in a marquee and we are planning to provide all the flowers, food and drink for the wedding from the farm, (with the help of more WWOOFers!) There will be approximately 100 guests and we are currently making cider from our orchard to serve that many people.

We are all so excited and challenged by it all. Is this the first WWOOF wedding that you know of?

Kind Regards,

Gill Richmond

Ed - It is the first WWOOF wedding we've heard of - congratulations Tom and Claire!

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the idea of having an online feedback system for WWOOF.

I invite people into my home and my life when they come and WWOOF.

If they have problems they are free to tell me, tell the organisation or take themselves elsewhere, but they are not free to make a public statement about their experience which can be read by anyone who looks at the site, regardless of whether they know who I am or who the WWOOFer is.

The experience they have will be dependent on a lot of factors, not least the state of mind of both host and WWOOFer; if they were coming with the idea that this system existed, this would already alter the relationship we would have with each other.

I find the idea of feedback for something so personal absolutely abhorrent and if it becomes the norm it will not be inviting people to come into my home to live with me and my family as WWOOFers.

If it seems there are a lot of people in favour of the idea I suggest an opt out system so that those who chose not to be part of it are guaranteed their privacy.

Vivien Ray

Ed - Thank you for your letter Vivian. On page 7 you will find further info on the feedback system as discussed at the recent AGM.



Send us your pics!

We want to 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 editor@WWOOF.org.uk

Follow us on <http://twitter.com/WWOOFUK>
and tweet about your WWOOFing experiences!

Share the love of WWOOF with other tweeters!

WWOOFing in the land of

It's the most sparsely populated country in Europe - it has 187,000 lakes, 180,000 islands and 1.8 million saunas; it is 75% forested and was ranked this year as the 'best' country in the world by Newsweek; it is home to Nokia and has 20 WWOOF hosts. Where is it..?

It's Finland, sharing its borders with Sweden, Norway and Russia in the far north-east of Europe.

We thought it was time we took a closer look at WWOOFing in Finland and we've been in touch with our hosts there, trying to find out more about their activities in this less-well-known part of Europe. With a quarter of the country above the Arctic Circle but the majority of the population in the South, concentrated round Helsinki, it is a country

of great variety, although with a total land mass of 330,000 sq. kilometres it is slightly smaller than the American state of Montana, or 16 times the size of Wales, which seems to be used as an international standard of measurement.



Finnish hosts are a hardy bunch! Like hosts everywhere, of course, they are immensely varied in their activities and interests but they seem to have in common a tremendous commitment to hard work, absolute respect for the environment around them and, sometimes, a determination to do without non-essential artefacts and luxuries. Lasse and Maria and their children, for example, live on a 36-hectare farm in central Finland, without car, tractor or chain-saw, using only hand tools and traditional methods. They put a high value on re-using, re-cycling and minimising their impact on nature. When possible during the summer months they like to cook outdoors and they have a tipi. They live and work according to the sun rather than the clock, which means long days in the summer months. WWOOFers visiting Lasse and Maria will experience living very close to nature, therefore, and some may find it difficult without the constant stimulus of phones, internet and assorted media. But this is also a house with music (flute and violin), handicrafts, reading and writing. Accommodation for WWOOFers is in the tipi, house or tent depending on time of year and preference, and food is mainly vegetarian. Expect to work seven hours a day, six days a week.

By contrast, Kustafi is the south west of Finland where the land and the sea merge into each other, in a region called the Archipelago Islands. In the summer the population swells from 800 to 8000 because of the summer cabins which most Finns have as retreats from the cities. It is here on the Itatalo estate that an ambitious new project is launching and looking for volunteers to develop permaculture farming, eco-architecture, greenhouse building, therapeutic gardens and more. The Estate's story is a living example of how a historically significant cultural element is being designed for new purposes, cherishing its own traditions. Itatalo's goal is to create a self-sufficient, well-being- and therapeutic-centre, which honours and nurtures the diverse nature around us. During 2011 and beyond there are many volunteer opportunities covering a wide variety of skills and opportunities to learn and contribute towards this project, and I know that because this is a new and extensive initiative, the organisers will welcome offers of involvement. Michael writes: "Now for the winter we will be restoring and designing mainly indoors. February and March will be wood harvesting months from the forest, and of course the garden season already starts by pre-planting in March. From April on there will be very much to do in the gardens, as we are looking forward to being self-sufficient in food for next year."



On a smaller scale, but also in Southern Finland, on one of the many islands on the coast, east of Helsinki, Ossian and his family have forestry and a garden that they require help with in the summer months. No roads here (but boats) or running water (but sailing and swimming).

From the south to Lapland, and sitting on the Arctic Circle are Jorma and his family. With one hectare, they concentrate on growing good organic vegetables and eat a lot of fish. Jorma tells me that he has three sons and three saunas, one of them down by the lake (one of the saunas that is)! They also grow a lot of willow and in autumn collect berries and mushrooms. Jorma is a new host and looks forward to receiving his first WWOOFers after the winter.

Also in Lapland, Cornelis and his family fish all year round,

the midnight sun

have animals, an organic garden and are kept busy collecting firewood and renovating buildings. Volunteers who are prepared to help in the house as well as doing outdoor work are appreciated.

Long-term hosts Pjotr and his family have hosted over 150 WWOOFers over the years, from Israel, Austria, India, USA, Holland, France, Italy, Japan, Taiwan, Czech Republic, England, Germany and Finland. Running a busy farm and market stall, there's always plenty to do and with room for five WWOOFers there is plenty of company and opportunities to make new friends. Pikkunuppu is about 500 kilometres from Helsinki, north-east towards the Russian border.

These are just a few of our Finnish hosts. You can see by their descriptions how integrated they are to their environment. If you would like to experience their lifestyle as a WWOOFer and are prepared to work hard (and perhaps do without some of your usual comforts!) you will be well-rewarded by the warmth of your host's hospitality, the wide-open spaces, water, forests and spectacular seasonal changes. With an independence of spirit which perhaps is in part explained by their historical struggles with their Swedish and Russian neighbours, and their affinity and closeness to the land and what it can provide, Finns seem particularly well-suited to develop sustainable models of living and offer examples from which we can all learn. There is a Finnish term - 'sisu' - which might be translated as 'quiet determination' and which sums up their approach to life.

Before making arrangements to visit Finnish hosts, make sure you check the costs of travelling there and visa arrangements with your country of origin. The only negative feedback from Finnish hosts we received about their experience of WWOOFers was that quite a high number didn't come as arranged and let down their hosts with last-minute cancellations or simply not showing up. That's disappointing. So let us both, as hosts and volunteers, respect each other and follow best WWOOF practice.

Ian Baird, WWOOF Independents Coordinator - www.wwoof.org

Wassail!

The word 'Wassail' is derived from the Old Norse 'Ves heill', from whence came the Old English salutation 'Wes Hal', meaning 'Be In Good Health'. The ancient rite of wassailing trees was well known in Devonshire, Herefordshire and in other parts of the West Country of England. It generally took place on Twelfth Night (January 5th), or sometimes on 17th January, known as Old Twelfth Night. Farmers and their families would feast on hot cakes and cider, then they would go into the orchard with more "supplies."

A cider-soaked cake is laid in the fork of a tree and then more cider is splashed on it. The men fire their guns into the tree and bang on pots and pans while the rest of the people bow their heads and sing the special "Wassail Song." This custom is said to ward off bad spirits from the orchard and encourages the good spirits to provide a bountiful crop for the following year.

In other traditions, the men of the village went out to the orchards carrying the wassail bowl, to alternately serenade and browbeat the apple trees. There were songs, dances and libations (for tree and man alike) until finally, in frustration, the trees would be threatened with the axe if they did not produce well in the coming year.

Here's to thee, old apple tree,
That blooms well, bears well.
Hats full, caps full,
Three bushel bags full,
An' all under one tree.
Hurrah! Hurrah!

It was only later that these traditions became associated with "luck visits" made around the neighborhood, together with general merry-making (and, as Rev. Bradley pointed out, "fortified by copious quantities of alcohol"). Soon, these traditions would merge with the waits who traveled the streets of the cities (and who were paid to sing and play during the holidays). And voila! we have a tradition: wassailing.

Serves 8

8 small eating apples
32 cloves
1.5 litres brown ale
300ml sweet sherry
Pinch ground cinnamon
Pinch ground ginger
Pinch ground nutmeg
Grated zest of 1 lemon
2 slices bread toasted

Slit the skin around the centre of the apples and stud them with cloves. Put them in a baking tin with 150ml of the brown ale and bake in a 200 degree c oven for about 30 minutes, basting occasionally. Heat the remaining brown ale with the sherry, spices and lemon zest and simmer for about 5 minutes. Cut the toast and the baked apples into small pieces and serve the punch very hot, in a punch bowl with the pieces floating on top.

From Henrietta Green's Festive Food of England

WWOOF UK AGM

I come to compost Caesar...

This year's AGM had a slightly different feel to those of the recent past. We went on an urban(ish) expedition for a tour of the Incredible Edible Tdmorden project, where local food production has taken to the streets.

The market town of Todmorden is set in the beautiful and steep-sided Upper Calder Valley, where land for growing food is scarce. The town has a glorious past of anarchy and resistance and the people involved with Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) are operating with this same feisty spirit. For the past 2 and a half years, they have been pioneering a no-nonsense approach to urban food growing, putting fruit and vegetable beds on every piece of public land available.

At the same time, alongside the beetroot, the kale and the sweetcorn, they've been cultivating community spirit by the spade-ful.

IET is the town's response to the climate change/peak oil double whammy. Inspired by the Transition Town movement, the group chose to focus on the single issue that has the power to bring everyone together – food. Everyone eats, for preference 3 times a day. And getting as much of your food as you can as locally (and organically) as possible is one of the best things you can do for the planet.

A rash of vegetable beds have sprung up around the town, on any spare inch of available land – and, in some cases, on the unavailable land too. Many have been built using wood donated by B&Q. Some have simply 'popped up' amongst existing municipal plantings. Anyone that is interested can adopt a bed as their growing space and often people do this in pairs or small teams. The beds are in very public spaces – in front of the community centre, outside the police station (the best protected veg in town), opposite the entrance to the train station. The produce you grow is for anyone and everyone to harvest – except you. There are signs in each bed inviting people to help themselves, and explaining what is being grown and how to use it. This is the beautiful, heart warming nub of it; it's a huge act of community generosity that seems to be bringing out the best in the whole town. Vandalism in Todmorden has reduced dramatically since IET began. They haven't had one single vegetable bed destroyed.

Estelle from IET gave us a tour of the impressive beds that have been started by the project – some legitimately (like the herb and fruit apothecary garden at the new PFI health centre), others more covertly. They are beautiful to look at and must be great fun to work on (you'd always be chatting to folk passing by). They are also unendingly cheeky in their location. A personal favourite was the cherry trees planted in the Lidl carpark – purchased from Lidl, then planted





after hours in their very own beds.

IET is working with schools, the local council, private businesses – anyone and everyone – to truly embed local food production in the fabric of the town. School children are annexing any land they can to get growing. One school has even built raised beds in a neighbouring deconsecrated cemetery, as there was no land available on site. And the veg do seem to grow extremely well there...

Pop-up beds are appearing everywhere in Todmorden. Sage, lovage, fennel and rosemary are nudging out the municipal 'prickly plantings' that make up the usual beds. Brambles and rosebay willowherb are being gradually eased back by fruit trees along the canal. It's a true fruit and veg renaissance. At the moment, any surpluses generated are given away. The project is considering ways to begin selling them in the future to raise money that will support the project.

As an outsider, it's easy to imagine that the whole town is busy turning over their front or back yard to vegetables and fruit and herbs. In reality I'm sure that there is plenty of work still to be done. But I can't imagine anyone could hold out for long against the energy, enthusiasm and practical genius that we saw during our visit. It's the getting on and doing-ness of it, the sheer common sense-ness of it all, and the not-taking-no-for-an-answer approach that sometimes seems to have been squashed in England by ever-increasing piles of bureaucratic nonsense. It's irresistible!

I came away from our AGM feeling inspired, enthused, and ready to set some vegetables free in my own town. Huge thanks go to everyone from Todmorden who gave us such a warm welcome and made our AGM so special.

Kath Hallewell

AGM report

This year's AGM was attended by many hosts, WWOOFers and volunteers from the surrounding area. This meant we had a lively and well-informed debate around the issue of a 'feedback' system for hosts and WWOOFers. It seems clear that people want an effective route for airing constructive criticism and a way of effectively monitoring standards of both hosts and WWOOFers. We are still exploring the ways this is already done in other WWOOF organisations (WWOOF Portugal for example uses a 'reference' system, where hosts invite WWOOFers to recommend them).

Edward Acland and Craig Priestley both stepped down as directors of the organisation. We would all like to thank them for contributing their time, energy and passion to WWOOF and wish them both well in their new endeavours. Here's a photo of Edward in full flow, telling tales in Cumbrian dialect at the evening do.

Next year is WWOOF's 40th birthday, and the AGM will be held at Bore Place in Sussex, not far from where the first WWOOF in the world took place!



Grow2Grow (a WWOOF

Grow2Grow offers therapeutically supported vocational and education placements for 16-25 year olds on Bore Place Farm in Kent, part of the Commonwork Land Trust. Grow2Grow is now 8 months old and achieving all developmental milestones! We have recruited a staff team including a Gardener/Horticultural Therapist, an Occupational Therapist and myself a Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist. Next year we plan to recruit someone to help us market and sell our produce. All the staff working on Grow2Grow work directly with the young people attending our project combining their core skills with therapeutic work.

We have four young people “clients” regularly attending the project two-three days per week, with several new referrals in the pipe-line. All our clients have significant social difficulties and have struggled at school and/or sustaining employment. Together we are working to develop a new market garden which will feed the 10,000 visitors who attend conferences, workshops and events at Commonwork each year. We also look after Commonwork’s chickens and clients are involved in milking the two hundred cows. We have breakfast and lunch together cooking lunch from the produce we are growing. For example we have had some delicious leak and potato soup this week and very fresh scrambled eggs! Whilst engaged in the work the young people talk about their struggles and we support them to understand and make some sense of their situation. They also have a private one-to-one space each week with their key worker (one of the team) to talk about both their difficulties and their achievements.



We have a very clear model for working with emotional and social issues that takes into account both the healthy, positive part of each person, and the part that communicates distress and disturbance through behaviour. For example, we expect that after a good start on the project many people will begin to find it difficult to attend, feeling unmotivated or that they are coming only because of us. They may start to think “they don’t really like me there” or “why am I doing all this work for nothing” or “I’m not really learning anything new”. It is easy to forget the part of themselves that wanted to come here for their own good reasons, feeling they are only coming for us, or for their parents or their social worker. We work very actively with this part of the person, phoning, emailing, going to pick them up from home or the nearest station. Alternatively they may come regularly to the project but then find it difficult to work productively, instead showing (rather than telling) us about the difficulties they have in group settings, (such as school or work); spending the day on their mobile phone, avoiding the task. They may expect us to respond in similar ways to their parents, teachers, the police etc, and we may find ourselves unwittingly falling into these roles!

We talk in the one-to-one meetings about this part of the self that needs to be understood but can get in the way of them making progress in their lives. We help them identify repeating patterns and slowly try to make sense of



project for young people)

their origin and what they are trying to communicate. This is slow work, but like growing fruit and vegetables in fertile ground, over time we see the results of our labour.

Supervision for the team and our team discussions are crucial to help us (the staff) make sense of our feelings and experiences with the young people. Here we can explore the roles we find ourselves in and think about how we can respond differently to the young person, so that we don't blindly repeat the more negative experiences in their lives.



Alongside this relational/psychological work we also have the daunting task of developing a market garden from scratch. What was just eight months ago a large field of grazing cows is beginning to take shape as about an acre of structured fruit and vegetable beds. We have built a cabin on site using about 80% reclaimed materials from the farm. The cabin is a shared space for Grow2Grow and other Commonwork projects. We are also very grateful to have won a bid for a free "edible hedge" from the Woodland Trust.

The site has been divided into a number of large beds which are being developed using permaculture methods of laying cardboard and then mulching with farm manure. This has provided fantastic physical work for our clients and ourselves and it is very satisfying to see the beds take shape over time. This year we grew a good crop of potatoes, spinach, chard, beans, fennel and lettuces, with plans for much more next year. We are hoping to put in a large polytunnel, pending planning permission.

What is most important to stress here is that we couldn't do any of this alone – partnerships are vital to our success and sustainability. As well as the happy and successful partnership with between WWOOF and Commonwork, we have developed a partnership with the Ridgeway Centre in Tunbridge Wells. The Ridgeway Centre offers educational qualifications in functional skills (English, Maths and ICT) and vocational qualifications in construction trades, horticulture, catering and hospitality. We have one young person working two days per week with us and attending the Ridgeway Centre two days per week. We are hoping to offer more placements like this. We also are extremely grateful to Big Lottery and Ecominds for the funding to get Grow2Grow off (or should I say into) the ground.

Of course there are all the usual ups and downs of gardening life, combined with the stresses of funding and keeping the project alive in the current financial climate. We need to grow the project to offer more young people educational, vocational and therapeutic placements. We are currently bidding for more funding from the Big Lottery to upscale Grow2Grow to include young people leaving youth offending institutions. In spite of the current climate, we are seeing interest and getting referrals from local mental health services, leaving care services, youth offending institutions and others. We are optimistic Grow2Grow will keep on growing.



Paula Conway
Grow2Grow Manager
PaulaC@commonwork.org

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.

WWOOFing on the Isle of Eigg. Help is needed on traditionally run organic croft in beautiful location to widen a track and build a new chicken house. No experience is necessary for track work but you do need to be fit and healthy. Some building and/or joinery skills required for building chicken house and longer term help preferred. Work will also involve routine crofting jobs - cows, chickens, fencing and vegetable garden etc. We lead busy lives so you need to be happy to work independently at times. Accommodation in heated bothy or caravan. All meals provided and weekends time off. Email suehollands@talk21.com.

Dorset: Rare opportunity to join cohousing group by purchasing 2 bedroom cottage £130,000. Many benefits beyond an independent home include carpool, shared laundry, guest rooms, workshop, office, on-site energy generation, and community veg garden/orchard. Visit www.thresholdcentre.org.uk for info. on site. Tel 01392 211794 for details of cottage.

Housesitter/s required for Christmas/ New Year period to look after 2 ponies, cat, house and Rayburn in beautiful Highland glen. Wonderful walks, and bike rides locally. Will have to have own transport. Tel Juliette on: 01349 884440

Experienced riders wanted for bringing on young thoroughbred horses. Must have good riding ability and not be too heavy as most horses are backed at the age of either 2 or 3 years old. Six month stay or longer welcome. Non smokers only. Great for someone wanting experience handling/showing/riding quality horses. Stable management will be taught

including information on diet etc. There should also be a few chances to go to the races to watch the horses racing during your stay. Five days working with two clear days off. Transport into local town available, cycles also provided. Clean, warm comfortable accommodation plus great food. Please apply to Coombeshead Farm. Assistance needed for food preparation and cooking. Would suit someone aspiring to have a career in this field. Full training given to enthusiastic helper. You can learn how to grow the produce, harvest it and then cook it! Includes some butchery and preserving. Minimum stay six months.

I am a WWOOF host in Portugal, and sadly have to sell my property in Alentejo. It's a 500-year-old watermill on 1/4 acre, with a stream and a 1.1 kW solar array providing monthly income. There is flat ground for veggies plus mature citrus, olive, nut and fruit trees. €90,000. More info at www.pisao.org

Shared grazing, co-workers, investors sought for new free range hen project in the south east. Traditional system, small colony with high welfare, low impact suited to variety of skills, knowledge and land use. Info from www.eggsfromscratch.com or call 0207 9239622

Websites, intranets and online shops: 250 inclusive of design, setup, personal tuition, domain name, web & email hosting and support. Full featured sites with unique cms system to enable easy DIY amendments. Great value and great service from a small, ethical, green company established 2003 with dozens of happy customers (read customers' comments at www.ethicalinternet.co.uk). If all you require is a domain name

and hosting, this is also available at just £35 per year. Contact peter@ethicalinternet.co.uk, 07729 103263

Vineyard near Hastings, 6 Ha vineyard near south coast resort of Hastings offers long or short-term self-catering working holidays in large mobile home. Wide variety of 'hands on' vineyard tasks all-year-round, as well as wine making and processing of fruit juices on site. Free use of facilities such as shower, washing machine, local phone-calls, and on-line computer. Visit www.EnglishOrganicWine.co.uk for more details. Location: 8 miles north of Hastings. Roy Cook, Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard, Hawkhurst Rd, Cripps Corner, Roberstsbridge E. Sussex, TN32 5SA Tel: 01580 830715, or freefone 0800- 980-2884 Email: roy.cook@englishorganicwine.co.uk

Free to WWOOF workers, small hut in wood for rest and peace. Stove, crockery provided. Single mattress available, loo and tap 100 yards, solar shower (weather allowing). North Cornwall coast, 6 miles. 01208 812603

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

**advertise here!
very good rates!
very large
readership!
see above for
details!**

Sustainable Travel while WWOOFing?

Has anyone hosted volunteers that have been trying to travel sustainably on their visit to your farm? Volunteers - Have you found good ways to travel sustainably between hosts in the UK?

Hello to all you hosts in the UK. I am a host in France and I have been looking into different ways for volunteers to sustainably travel from my place to other hosts in the area. I feel quite lucky, as here in France there are many old communal paths as well as all the longer public footpaths and bridleways etc. But then public transport is not great once you get into real rural France.

I used to live in the UK. In the summer of 1993 I walked the 200-odd miles from Manchester to Colchester, mainly using public footpaths, canal tow paths etc. It was a great adventure and I found that the UK seemed to have good long-distance and local walking networks. However, information about these paths seemed not to be common knowledge.

I have been wondering if anyone in the UK has been thinking about promoting the idea of sustainable travel between host farms in the UK.

When I lived in York, I used to use Sustrans cycle paths. I now see their site has an online map of routes between all towns in the UK. Please have a look (see below) and let me know if you find their services useful. I wonder if anyone knows of similar networks and organisations who promote sustainable travel in the UK - whether it be by train, by donkey, by bicycle or on foot. I wonder if we could create a resource for promoting sustainable travel to our volunteers. I would be interested in hearing any information about projects, local or national, that could be a useful contact/resource. I would really like to hear from anyone who has an interest in this type of project.

Please do not email the WWOOF UK office about this - they already have a lot of emails to handle. This is a personal project so you can email me directly: cdp.rogers@live.co.uk

Carl Rogers

For more information on Sustrans check out their website: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk>



5th Organic Producers' Conference (17-18th January 2011) Facing current and future challenges

The last two years have been particularly challenging to producers of organic food. Market conditions have been mixed, with some sectors holding up, others suffering reduced demand, and yet others where prices have held up despite large increases in supply, but at the expense of a disappearing premium. At the same time, public expenditure cuts pose a real threat to future support payments. Environmental sustainability comes at a price.

If you are concerned about how to cope with these challenges, perhaps even thinking about giving up, or still convinced and looking for new ways forward, then this conference is for you. This event is where producers meet with each other and with advisers and researchers to debate ideas and be inspired.

More information and booking at <http://www.organicresearchcentre.com/> or call 01488 658298

**next copy deadline: 31st Jan 2011 editor@WWOOF.org.uk
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