



## Newsletter No 28 – June 2015

[www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk](http://www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk)

**Transition Town Bridport** - a project working to bring together the people of Bridport to plan a life beyond dependence on oil, to reduce the carbon footprint of the town and to make it resilient to change.

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### From the Editor

I was in India recently for the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations of a remarkable man on whose rural development project I worked as a volunteer in the 1980s. Of course many things have changed in India in 30 years: and some changes are for the better, like fewer children dying of malnutrition or dehydration, fewer cases of leprosy, better and more widespread education and health services. Some changes, however, are less welcome: for example, the huge growth, affordability and availability of factory-made consumer goods has created a big disposal problem. When rubbish mainly consisted of paper, rags, banana leaves and other compostable waste, it was absorbed into the ecosystem (or eaten by pigs, crows, chickens and so on). Now towns and villages are surrounded by huge rubbish heaps of foil, plastic bags and other packaging that will never break

down; and although the dogs, pigs and other scavengers pick through it, and people pick up and recycle everything possible, the only 'solid waste management' system practised is occasionally to set fire to these heaps, releasing who knows what toxins into the atmosphere. Progress? I am not sure.

Another example: I used to cook with firewood, brought to the village in 'headloads' – that is, the amount of wood a woman could carry on her

head down from the forests in the surrounding hills. It was hard and dangerous work for the women, at risk from accidents, wild animals, and forest guards who would demand bribes if they caught them. Now even the most modest huts have a two-ring gas burner and few people rely on firewood for domestic cooking. The state government has subsidised (or even given free) the stoves, and one gas bottle per month is available at a subsidised rate.

So whilst I was dismayed that a renewable energy source had been replaced by one dependent on fossil fuel extraction, a complex supply chain and government subsidies (so less resilient in Transition terms), I had to remember the streaming eyes and choking coughs I suffered whilst cooking on my wood stove, the chore of cleaning the smoke-blackened pans, and the problems of keeping wood dry in the rainy season, and agree that the gas stove was a real improvement in women's lives. It is also true that although wood is technically a renewable resource, no-one was actually replanting the forests from which the firewood came, and the denuded hills were vulnerable to flash floods and landslides. So many pluses and minuses! So difficult to decide what's best – and for whom?

I was reminded of this when reading, in the June issue of Yarn magazine, that, as the headline put it, according to a [survey](#), residents of Marshwood Vale 'would prefer fracking to wind power'. Apparently 25 out of 101 respondents thought that fracking 'did least damage to the landscape'! (They obviously hadn't Googled 'images of fracking sites'.) Well, it's all pretty confusing, and there isn't space here to get into detail, but on the subject of energy choices, I think of Peter Harper (one of the founders of the Centre for Alternative Technology) who remarked that it takes a very long time to decommission a nuclear power station, but if you want to take down a wind turbine, you only need a spanner ... CW

## **St Mary's School Edible Garden Celebration 12 June**

TTB organised an afternoon to celebrate the edible garden and healthy eating. First the children years 3-6 had tasters in mosaic work, learning a song, dancing, storytelling and planting a sunflower seed. Martin Maudsley held the children spellbound with his seasonal tales, while David Powell entertained us all with his song:

At St Mary's School we dig and sow  
We plant and rake and water and hoe  
As time goes by we watch our seedlings grow  
As we garden in our school today

Chorus

For we like to dig when the sun is shining, early in the morning  
We like to watch our seedlings blossom, merrily in the sunshine  
And hurrah for St Mary's children who go gardening at our school today

Our fruits and veg in the kitchen we drop  
Our hero cooks begin to slice and chop  
Into the oven pies and pasties pop  
When we garden in our school today

Chorus

Then the gates were open, the cob oven was lit, and parents, children and members of the public were invited in to make a pizza, sample homemade lemonade and bruschetta, buy the St Mary's cookbook.

The event, part of the Bridport Food Festival, was an opportunity to welcome the community into their edible garden, organised by HOME in Bridport and TTB to teach children and families about growing and cooking food. This work is all about building trust and friendship through cultural work – film, photography, music, literature, theatre, fine arts, agriculture, growing food and helping people to learn about preparing healthy inexpensive meals. You can see more of Robert Golden's photos and read more [here](#).

Helen Farmer, head teacher at St. Mary's, said "This shows everyone what volunteers, parents and staff can achieve in order to give children what they deserve". Parents and the school's cooks Amanda Downes and Mel Haytor volunteered their time to help at the event, and fresh produce from the garden was added to the do-it-yourself pizzas prepared by children and parents under the guidance of local chef Aaron Brown, and cooked in the school's clay pizza oven by head gardener Tia. Sarah Wilberforce, who organised the event was very pleased that these skills of cooking and gardening were being shared, and that families could enjoy the fantastic space that can be used for both educational and social occasions. Aaron, who has a daughter in the school, said "It is great to do anything we can do to get kids growing their own food that is not pre-packaged. Local food and reducing our carbon footprint are so important".

In the summer holiday the work in the garden will continue; please [contact us](#) if you have gardening, food or practical skills to volunteer. We plan to pick all the produce as it ripens and find ways to distribute it to school kitchen, families and the community, as well as process to freeze or preserve for the winter.



*Making Pizzas. Photo R Golden*



*Tia wields the pizza scoop. Photo R Golden*



Becks and Bob making mosaics. Photo R Golden



## TTB at the Food Festival

We had a busy time on the Transition Stall in the producer's marquee – it was good to talk to so many Bridport people about our campaigns. We added a good number of names to our mailing list, and sold well over 100 raffle tickets. The sale of tickets made £88 for TTB funds.

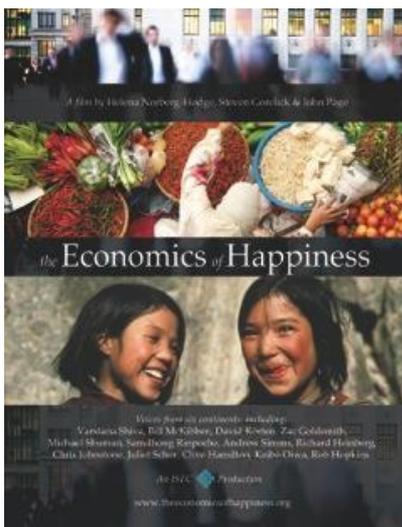
The winner of the hamper of local food was Rosemary Blyth from West Bexington.



Rosemary receiving her hamper from Sam

## TTB Talks

### 'Economics of Happiness' film screening



The film was commissioned by the non-profit organisation 'Local Futures', and narrated by Helena Norberg-Hodge, the author of 'Ancient Futures: Lessons from Ladakh for a Globalising World'. Local Futures believes that "modern societies have taken a fundamentally wrong turn: policymakers, mainstream economists, and business leaders have consistently pushed us in the direction of ever more growth, while ignoring

the ecological destruction and spiritual poverty that have been the price of rampant consumerism, massive scale, and escalating speed. Rather than attempting to solve every problem by 'growing the economy', we need to focus instead on meeting real human and ecological needs through awakening to our spiritual ties to community and nature – through an 'Economics of Happiness'."

Most of the discussion after the film was about building a local economy, and getting away from a growth model to a steady state. Many of us felt very inspired by the film and enthusiastic reception.

Some useful resources on this can be found at <http://steadystate.org/>.

### David Boyle: People-Powered Economics



David is a fellow of the New Economics Foundation, and the author of a range of books about history, social change, politics and the future. All his books are devoted to one broad theme: the importance of human-scale institutions over centralised ones, human imagination over dull rationalism, and the human spirit over technocratic reduction. Titles include 'Money Matters: Putting the eco back into economics', 'The Little Book of Money' and 'The Human Element'.

His talk focussed on why the government has taken little interest in local economies and building up small businesses, as well as the inability of banks to lend money to local start-ups. Because a totally local

economy would not serve the country's needs it has tended to be ignored completely. He said that when he writes his next book on localism, he will come to Bridport for inspiration!

### Dorset Community Energy launch



Pete West, secretary of DCE, came to talk about the launch of a new fund to install PV panels on public buildings, initially three schools and three village halls. Anyone can invest between £100-10,000 in the Community Benefit Society. The schools and halls get free electricity when the sun shines, and the lenders get

good rates of interest with tax breaks, with the money paid back over 20 years. Further details [here](#).

Can you think of a school or hall with a large roof facing roughly South which might be suitable for PV panels? Or would you like to be involved in the next round of Community Energy? [Email us](#).

## West Dorset Open EcoHomes

This year we have 20 homes opening on the weekend 10-12 September, around Bridport, Dorchester, Beaminster and Lyme Regis. You can get a preview from the website <http://bridport.greenopenhomes.net/>

Some of these homes are new builds but others are retro-fits on leaky houses. Talk to the owners (or tenants) about the decisions they have taken to reduce their energy and resource use, and what has been successful. These range from lifestyle changes to more technical installations, pellet boilers, straw bale, self-build, heat recovery ventilation etc.

Five of the homes require booking, and you can get in early by visiting [this site](#). We need helpers to steward people in the homes or to support the hosts. If you can give half or a whole day, or wish to be involved in publicity, [please get in touch](#).



## STIR Workshops

There are still some really good workshops coming up, including 'Worker Co-ops for Young People: Create Your Own Work' 4 – 5 July and 'Community Co-ops' 5 September.

For more details [click here](#)

## Transition International Conference

This to be held in Newton Abbot, Devon, on 18-20 September this year. For more details visit [this website](#). If you are thinking of going please contact [Sam](#) – perhaps we can arrange lift sharing.



## Green Drinks!

Come to our monthly gathering (third Thursday of the month from 8pm) in the back room at the Tiger Inn, Barrack Street, Bridport, and enjoy the wonderful beers and free sandwiches while talking over local, national and international green issues. Solve the problems of the world one sip at a time.

**Next date: 16<sup>th</sup> July**

## GETTING INVOLVED

**Contact** <mailto:admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk> and you will be added to our mailing list and/or put in touch with the group or activity you would like to join. If you are receiving this you are already on the mailing list, but if you'd rather not be, just [unsubscribe](#)

**Join:** From the website, [www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk](http://www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk) you can [download a membership form](#) and sign up as a registered/voting member.

[Join our group](#) on Facebook and chat with us. Our Facebook page contains links to local events and interesting videos.

Come along to any event /workshop. Check out the 'What's On' section [on our website](#).

If your local group wishes to collaborate with TTB on any project, or has ideas and energy for a new project, just let us know.

We are very keen to expand the pool of active people for the above projects and to get other strands going. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to help.

We expect our next newsletter to be published in September. If you have any events of a local and eco-friendly nature that you would like us to advertise on our website or here, please contact us and we'll see what we can include.

NB We do not use our mailing list other than for our own regular mailings.