

RECONNECTING WITH THE LIVING PLANET

Resurgence & ECOLOGIST

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November/December 2020

Life in the dark



DIVINE RAGE • NIGHT SAVER • BECOMING FUNGUS



Artwork by Linda Scott
www.lindascott.me.uk

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Night life

In many senses of the phrase, we are living in dark times. In the United States, a potentially life-on-Earth-changing election takes place. In the UK, Brexit trade deals threaten the health care system and farmers' livelihoods. Across the world, fires burn and ice melts. Almost in tune with this mood, in the northern hemisphere we enter the darkest period of our annual journey around the sun. Leaves fall and dormice and hedgehogs curl up into balls to survive the winter in hibernation.

Darkness can be a time of anxiety and fear of the unknown. Outside the mind, under the star-studded sky, however, something else is happening: life. In the soil, earthworms emerge above ground to feed. In the air, moths and owls take flight, and in the sea, zooplankton, pursued by a retinue of predators, rise to the surface in the largest migration of animals on the planet.

In this issue of *Resurgence & Ecologist* we enter this living darkness with a celebration of the night sky. Lynn Houghton meets two scientists collecting data in Svalbard on climate change during the polar night, Matt Gaw warns us why we need to protect darkness from light pollution, and astrophysicist Krystal De Napoli tells us how dark sky constellations have informed Aboriginal astronomical traditions across millennia. We also hear some tips from grower Claire Ratinon on gardening by the moon, and Tiffany Francis-Baker takes us on a night walk.

Elsewhere in this issue, we look at other kinds of light in the darkness. In Keynotes, American civil rights lawyer Valarie Kaur shares how she turned her rage about social injustice into revolutionary love. In the Ecologist section, Emmanuela Shinta tells Zion Lights how the Dayak people are defending their land in Indonesia, and in Arts, Carolyn Mazloomi introduces a group of women who are telling the story of racism in the United States through a powerful medium – quilting. These unsettling artworks are a reminder that, as darkness falls, we lie in beds of our own making.

Darkness is coming, but reaching beyond our own fear, we find life – incredible, beautiful, connected – and most wonderful of all, we are part of it. R

Marianne Brown
Editor of *Resurgence & Ecologist*

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Life in the dark

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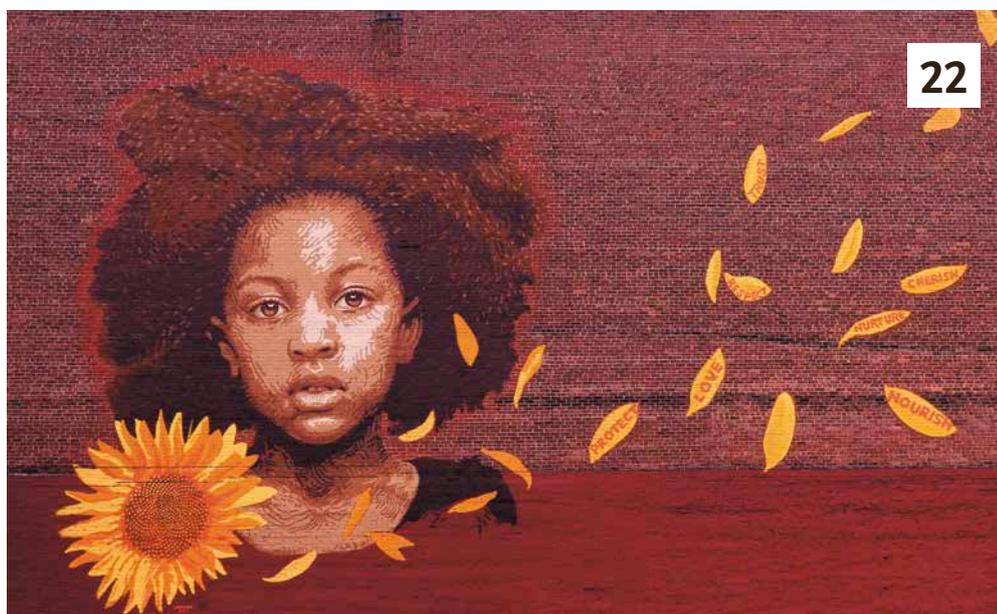
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OBITUARY

The Rev. John Papworth

Herbert Girardet remembers the founder of *Resurgence* magazine

Another flame of the peace and green movements has gone out. John Papworth has died aged 98. He was truly one of a kind.

Having been brought up in an orphanage in Essex, he went on to lead a truly colourful life – as cook, communist, conscientious prisoner, magazine editor, presidential adviser, and priest. However, most importantly for this obituary, he was also the first editor of *Resurgence*.

As an 18-year-old exposed to the horrors of war, he joined the Communist party, but he soon objected to its rigid authoritarianism. In 1955 he tried his luck as Labour party candidate in conservative Salisbury. Eventually he became convinced that remote, monolithic party organisations couldn't meet people's needs.

Papworth became a passionate and vocal peace activist. After one CND demonstration he was imprisoned alongside Bertrand Russell. For him nuclear weapons were the ultimate manifestation of the 'big state': small-scale societies wouldn't ever want such horrendous weapons.

In the 1960s he became close friends with the Austrian economist Leopold Kohr, originator of the 'small is beautiful' concept and of societies where direct democracy and face-to-face communication were the norm. Papworth was the de facto originator of the concept of localisation.

In 1966 he became founding editor of *Resurgence*, collaborating with Leopold Kohr, E.F. Schumacher and Herbert Read. Soon afterwards, president Kenneth Kaunda offered him a position as his personal assistant in Zambia, and Papworth handed the editorship of *Resurgence* to Satish Kumar.

In Zambia Papworth was ordained as a priest in the Lusaka diocese, but in Britain he fell out with the church establishment. Among his controversial actions was his rewriting of the Ten Commandments, including the statement "Thou shalt enjoy the gift of sex, but thou shalt not procreate excessively."

In 1968 he started a new magazine, *Fourth World Review*, devoted to promoting "small nations, governed by small communities". It sponsored several Assemblies of the Fourth World, bringing together people



John Papworth (circa 1960) © Fox Photos / Hulton Archive / Getty Images

from around the world who envisioned new, small-scale societies. He even ran for the UK parliament as a Fourth World candidate.

Papworth was close to Teddy Goldsmith, founding editor of *The Ecologist*, who shared his passion for small-scale democratic societies.

At his house in St John's Wood Papworth started regular events called Councils for Posterity, where people discussed our legacies to future generations, and which later expanded into larger London venues. Once again he had generated an idea that had barely been considered previously.

Papworth's personal charisma was noticed by the media, particularly after he staged several one-man demonstrations against busy and polluting traffic on London streets. Such initiatives are reflected in the theme of his book *Small Is Powerful: The Future as if People Really Mattered*. He eventually became the subject of two BBC documentaries.

Papworth ended his days in the Wiltshire village of Purton. He was still a vocal member of the local community. I wonder what he'd say about Brexit Britain. He may have been in favour of leaving the EU, but hardly of a country cherishing its status as a nuclear power.

His wife Marcelle predeceased him. They had three children.

Herbert Girardet is a Resurgence Trustee, an author and an international consultant on regenerative development.



Rainbow over Druridge Bay © Violaman / Shutterstock

Druridge Bay saved from open-cast mining

Plans to build an open-cast mine near Druridge Bay, a popular beach in Northumberland, England, have been rejected following a seven-year campaign by local residents and environmental groups. In a written statement, the office of secretary of state Robert Jenrick said the proposal was “not environmentally acceptable”. Banks Group had wanted to extract 2.765 million tonnes of coal at the site. “It was really important for global action on climate change that

the decision went this way,” said Anne Harris from the Coal Action Network. “We need to stop extracting coal globally and stop burning it anywhere. The government’s decision to stop the mine was the only one that serves the needs of the local, national and international populations and ecosystems.” The UK government is now planning to phase out coal by 2024 rather than the original date of 2025.

tinyurl.com/druridge-bay-rejection

Bid to protect cloud forest in Ecuador

Environmental groups have filed a legal brief urging the Constitutional Court of Ecuador to halt all mining concessions in the Los Cedros protected forest, an area famed for its exceptional biodiversity. The court could use Ecuador’s constitutional provision on the Rights of Nature to protect the forest. Two-thirds of the reserve is now covered by mining concessions. The brief includes concerns from 1,200 scientists, who note that the forest is home to 207 different species of plant and animal included on Ecuador’s Red Lists. The Center for Biological Diversity has launched a petition urging mining officials to pull mining permits in the country’s protected forests. The move came as WWF published its *Living Planet Report 2020*, which showed a 68% decline in animal and plant populations over the last 50 years – up from 60% two years ago.

tinyurl.com/ecuador-cloud-forest livingplanet.panda.org



Los Cedros River Valley © Gerry Ellis / Minden / naturepl.com



Photograph courtesy of Lufa Farms

The world’s largest rooftop greenhouse

Organic growers Lufa Farms have opened the world’s largest rooftop greenhouse in the heart of Canada’s second-largest city, Montreal. The greenhouse covers an area of 15,000m², about the size of three football pitches. Its location on the rooftop allows the company to capture rainwater and recover a lot of energy from the bottom of the building, which helps during the harsh winters, according to the company. Lufa has a total of four greenhouses in the city, and harvests enough vegetables to feed around 20,000 families each week.

montreal.lufa.com/en



Beaver at river Otter © David R. White / Devon Wildlife Trust

Dam good news for beavers

Devon's 'ecosystem builders' are here to stay, reports **Sophie Yeo**

Devon's beavers are here to stay. In August, the government officially declared that a five-year reintroduction trial run by Devon Wildlife Trust had been successful. Suddenly the precarious presence of these mammals, which appeared mysteriously in the river Otter over a decade ago, is secure.

Beavers were hunted to extinction in the UK around 400 years ago – they were treasured for their fur and for the oil known as castoreum, which was used in medieval times to treat headaches and later as an ingredient in perfumes. Conservationists have long desired to see the beaver return to Britain's waterways, restoring a sense of wildness that has all but vanished from England's mostly agricultural countryside.

During the trial, Devon Wildlife Trust confirmed that beavers are valuable not only for their own sake, but also for the multitude of ecosystem services that they bring. Beavers are famed for their tendency to construct dams, which transform rivers into diverse wetland habitats. Academics saw this in action during the trial, and found that it helped to tackle local flooding by reducing peak flows through vulnerable human settlements. The beavers also helped to clean water supplies by filtering pollutants from the river.

"It's really exciting. We've worked hard for five years to get it to this point," says Mark Elliott, who led the beaver project at the trust. "We were able to produce some very detailed evidence on what the benefits were of beavers but what the issues are as well."

While the trial was ongoing, the beavers were restricted to the river Otter catchment area. Now that the animals have the government's blessing, they are free to roam the nation's rivers as they please, with the expectation that they will settle in new areas as they breed and populations expand.

For the last five years, the Devon beavers have been in a privileged position as the only group officially living wild within England. More beaver families exist across the country, however, either unofficially or within enclosures. While the government's approval applies to the river Otter beavers only, there's a good chance that it could be extended in the future. Natural England is consulting on a beaver strategy that will determine a national approach to reintroductions, and potentially lead to a gradual rewilding of England's waterways.

"We've worked hard for five years to get it to this point"

Beavers haven't always been welcomed with open arms by rural communities: farmers in particular fear the loss of productive agricultural land as damming floods the surrounding land. But a change in government policy, following Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, may help to overcome these fears, as legislation in the Agricultural Bill currently progressing through parliament could mean that landowners will be financially rewarded for having beavers on their land.

"In our new system of environmental land management, those with land will be paid for delivering services, such as flood management and increased biodiversity," said Rebecca Pow, under-secretary of state at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. "Using beavers in a wider catchment sense, farmers could be paid to have them on their land."

Sophie Yeo is a freelance environmental journalist and runs Inkcap, a newsletter on Nature and conservation in the UK. www.inkcap.co.uk

France bans glue traps for birds

The French government has banned hunters from using glue to trap birds, more than 40 years after the practice was outlawed by the European Union.

Until August this year, the government used a loophole in the 1979 Bird Directive, which abolished the practice in European countries but allowed it in “limited quantities”. To satisfy this restriction, French hunters were permitted to catch certain species of songbird in five departments in the south-east.

Glue trapping is a centuries-old tradition in France, supported today by a powerful hunting lobby. But the European Commission is no longer willing to countenance the ritual, which conservationists have condemned as the “barbaric torture of birds”, as well as damaging to the ecosystem. The country’s environment minister said that the ban was “good news for the law and for biodiversity”.

However, the celebrations may not last for long. The

suspension is temporary, and a statement from the Élysée Palace said that the decision would be reviewed following a response from the European Court of Justice. France’s agriculture minister, Julien Denormandie, has already signalled his enthusiasm to reinstate the practice. “We are a country full of traditions. They will not be taken away from us,” he said.

Good news for the law and for biodiversity

Soon after the ban on glue trapping, the French courts also outlawed another controversial practice: turtle dove hunting. A judgment noted that the species is in decline and the government had failed to justify the hunt. Again, the ban only applies to the current season. *Sophie Yeo*



Mangrove forest © Sunphol Sorakul / Getty Images

Research makes Nature-based solutions more accessible

In Zimbabwe, protected forests provide honey to supplement food and income when crops are lost to droughts. This is one of hundreds of ways in which Nature-based solutions can help bolster our ability to thrive in a warmer world, according to new research published by the University of Oxford’s Nature-based Solutions Initiative.

A variety of solutions were investigated, from restoring degraded mangroves in eastern India to prevent coastal erosion and damage to villages and agricultural land by cyclones, to fencing forested areas in Burkina Faso to enable the regeneration of trees for food, construction and medicines. It’s an approach that’s finally gaining political traction, but the researchers were concerned that real-world efforts might have been held back by a lack of accessible information.

While thousands of studies have been published about Nature’s ability to mitigate climate change, there was no easy way for policymakers to access this knowledge, so the researchers investigated hundreds of scientific papers and real-life projects, hoping to better understand how Nature can protect communities against impacts like flooding, soil erosion and loss of food production, and made the evidence available via an interactive online tool.

In 59% of cases, Nature-based interventions reduced the impacts of climate change. But the benefits didn’t stop there: many studies also reported social and economic advantages, such as empowerment, equity and livelihood diversification. However, the researchers urged caution: not all Nature-based solutions led to positive outcomes. They found that, for instance, creating non-native forests in some regions could diminish water availability. A truly resilient world demands the right tree in the right place. *Sophie Yeo*

www.naturebasedsolutionsevidence.info



Hathersage Swifts by Alison Ingram www.alisoningram.co.uk

A swift return

Anna Feeney shares a project mapping a migrant's journey

Swifts, with their characteristic scream as they careen around the rooftops, are a beloved sign of spring to many in the UK, but where do they go in winter? Well, it's a bit of a complex story, to which the short answer is, somewhere in Africa, but we're still learning where and why. For a slightly longer answer, read on.

Between 2010 and 2016 the British Trust for Ornithology attached tiny geolocators to adult swifts to see where they go when they leave the UK. (Swifts only weigh 50g or less, so they had to be as small as possible!)

While not all swifts take the same route, following one bird's journey gives an idea of just how intrepid they are. This particular swift left Cambridge on 23 July and travelled all the way down and around the west coast of Africa to make it to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by 17 August. It stayed in the DRC until 9 December before flying all the way to the east coast of Africa, its home for the rest of December and most of January. It then began to make the journey back north, this time crossing the Sahara Desert on its way back to Cambridge for the spring.

This information raised the question of why swifts travel so much once they reach Africa. They may be following flying insects, but they are also known to respond to weather systems and use areas of warm and/or turbulent air, which may carry insects upward.

We don't even know whether swifts come to land

at any point during this time. We know that they nest during the summer months, but they can eat, mate and even sleep on the wing – it's possible they are airborne for the whole of winter.

More than half of UK swifts have been lost since 1995, but without more data it's hard to know why. Spending most of their lives in the air probably means they're safe from deliberate human trapping, but whether their decline is mostly due to changing food sources or disappearing nesting sites (or something else entirely) is still a matter of debate.

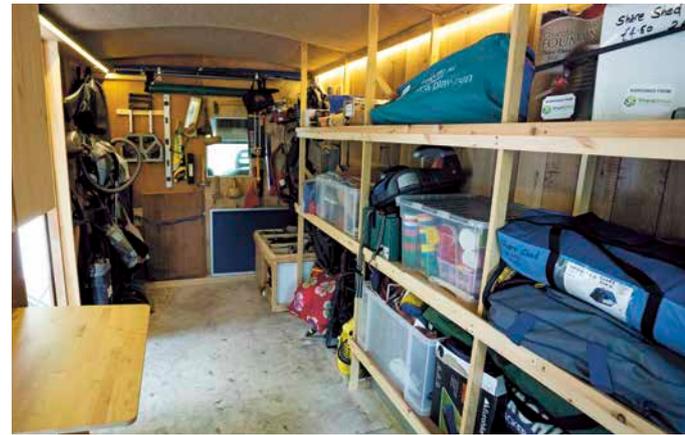
A new mapping tool developed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and partners is seeking to address this. Launched this year, the Swift Mapper app uses information provided by the public to identify where nest sites are. The data collected is then shared freely with a range of different organisations, from local councils to conservation groups. It details the locations of existing nest sites for protection, and it also suggests new nest site opportunities.

By adding your sightings, you can both help protect existing nest sites and show where we need more. You can also help by putting up a swift nest box.

Together we can learn why swift numbers are falling and how to lift them up once more.

swiftmapper.org.uk

Anna Feeney is PR Executive for the RSPB.



Photographs courtesy of Share Shed

RESURGENCE COMMUNITY

Share Shed goes on the road

Devon-based project Share Shed has set up a mobile library to enable more people in the county to borrow things they don't use regularly, from camping equipment and household appliances to baby clothes. More than 350 items are currently on offer for loan. "This is a growing global movement, which acknowledges the importance of a different way of being and consuming, whilst fulfilling the

need of those who want to access things rather than own stuff," the group said in a press release. "Such a shift is supporting people and communities to become much more resourceful and sustainable. After all, why buy when you can borrow?" Over 800 people have signed up as Share Shed members since 2017.

www.shareshed.org.uk

RESURGENCE

Good leadership in a time of crisis

We're running an online event and series of skill-sharing workshops for the leaders of tomorrow on 24 November. We have gathered together a panel of young and emerging visionaries to discuss 'good leadership' in the time of climate crisis – what it entails and how it can be cultivated. www.resurgence.org/leadership

RESURGENCE

Fundraising auction goes online



pocket-friendly options available. www.resurgencetrustauktion.com

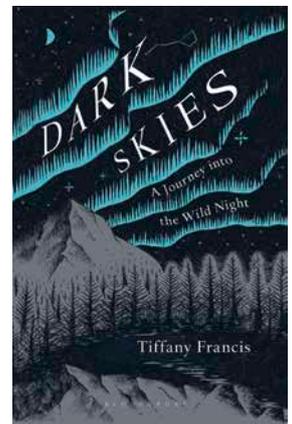
In the light of social distancing restrictions, our annual fundraiser in aid of The Resurgence Trust is going online this year from 12 November until 3 December. We have a wonderful range of artworks and experiences, with many

RESURGENCE

Book club

For our November Book Club we enter a world of darkness with Tiffany Francis-Baker.

In *Dark Skies*, Tiffany journeys through Europe unpicking our relationship with the night sky and how it has changed over time. From the Northern Lights in Norway to a haunted yew forest in Kingley Vale, the book investigates how our experiences of night have permeated human existence.



Join Tiffany and Marianne for a Q&A on Wednesday 25 November at 7pm, followed by a book club chat. We welcome questions both for the Q&A with the author and the discussion afterwards.

Please email your questions in advance to bookclub@resurgence.org with the subject line QUESTION FOR BOOK CLUB. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions during the meeting via the online chat on Zoom. You can read more from Tiffany in this issue of *Resurgence & Ecologist* (Pregnant Pause, page 36).

www.resurgence.org/magazine/book-club.html

Share your story

Do you have a project that you want to share with the Resurgence community? Our Community News pages in Frontline are a space to feature transformative and regenerative projects that you're involved with. Send your suggestions via editorial@resurgence.org

Judgement day in the US

Whoever wins the presidential election, understanding why will help us prepare for the future, writes **Jonathan Neale**

The result of the vote on 3 November to decide the president of the United States for the next four years will have serious consequences for all living things. Not only is Donald Trump a climate-change denier, but he has also been doing everything he can to sabotage action on the climate crisis. It might seem surprising, therefore, that on the surface this election has not been fought over environmental matters – even Democratic hopeful Joe Biden has said little about the environment – but it has focused on the coronavirus epidemic, and this is certainly an environmental event. (See *The Virus Is Capitalism* by Brendan Montague, Issue 320.)

The failure of Trump and his government to cope with the epidemic has been on public display, and the economic consequences of that failure are escalating all the time. Trump's steady electoral support had been dependent on the healthy state of the economy. For the first time in decades, almost anyone who wanted a job could have one. Now mass unemployment is growing to levels not seen for 80 years. In the last congressional elections, in 2018, the impact of #MeToo led women to turn away from Trump in large enough numbers to swing the House of Representatives to the Democrats. With Covid-19 and unemployment on top of that, at the time of writing in September Trump was well behind in the opinion polls.

Popular discontent over Covid-19 and the state of the economy has also fed into the Black Lives Matter protests. It is important to understand how popular, and how large, these protests are. Opinion polls report that two-thirds of all Americans and 60% of white Americans support the protests. Polls in mid-July reported that between 18 million and 26 million adults had attended Black Lives Matter protests by that time. If you add to these the large number of protesters under the age of 18 and all the people who have joined protests for the first time since then, at least 30 million have protested. And something quite new in American anti-racism: about half the protesters are white.

These protests matter a great deal to the future of the Earth. The school climate strikes and Extinction Rebellion have made achingly clear the size of the popular mobilisation that will be needed before

governments will act to halt climate change. The American movements of the 1960s began with civil rights and moved on to the anti-war movement, women's liberation and LGBT rights. More recently, Americans have moved from Occupy Wall Street to Black Lives Matter, to Me Too, to the school strikes against guns, and back to Black Lives Matter.

Large-scale protests reflect and reinforce underlying changes of heart and politics in a new generation. The current protests in the US make a mass climate movement possible. Because of the international importance of the US, and the scale of pollution there, this is good news for all of us.

The current protests in the US make a mass climate movement possible

The size of the protests, the size of support, the size of the Trump vote in 2016, and the extent of support for the Jew-baiting fantasies of QAnon (a far-right conspiracy theory) all point to one underlying reality. Most Americans, of all politics and races, are agreed on two things: there is something very seriously wrong with the country, and they are very angry about that. People differ about whom they blame, and about possible solutions, but on that central matter they are in agreement.

This agreement springs from a reality. Of all the industrial countries in the world, the US is the only one where the median hourly wage has not increased over the last 50 years. For more than a century the majority of Americans believed that their children would have better lives. Now most Americans expect their children and their grandchildren to have worse lives.

This means that support for the traditional mainstream is falling, and support for radicals on both right and left is rising. Biden represents the mainstream.

Biden also represents all the people who want American influence and global power to remain strong. That power has been weakening. The defeat in Afghanistan, now being ratified by negotiations with the Taliban, is one sign. But

Sinking Liberty
by Shepard Fairey





Mother Nature on the Run by Shepard Fairey
obeygiant.com

the Covid-19 debacle was the moment when the balance of global power shifted towards China. Trump's supporters will not mind. They regard globalisation as destructive of American jobs, and overseas wars as a waste of American lives. The people now protesting in the streets will not mind much either, for similar reasons.

But the people who run the banks, the large corporations, the military and the intelligence agencies mind very much. Months before the election, Biden was raising far more money than Trump, a clear sign that he had the support of the very rich.

If Biden does win, that will be a return to business as usual – no better and no worse. There will be a return to the previous levels of environmental

regulation. In the midst of what looks like mass unemployment for a long time to come, the argument for a serious Green New Deal will gather force.

A final reflection is in order. Climate activists like me often say that climate change will produce unrest, upheaval, and social and economic chaos. Runaway climate change will raise the possibility of both serious action to save the Earth, and brutally repressive regimes. What we are seeing now in the United States is the effects of an environmental crisis – Covid-19 – on a much smaller scale. This is a warning of what is to come. **R**

Jonathan Neale is a writer and climate jobs activist. He tweets at @NealeSayles

NO NEW WORLDS

This November is the 400-year anniversary of the sailing of the vessel *Mayflower* to North America from Plymouth, England. The people on board went to settle in what they called the 'New World', but it was in fact a world where Indigenous people had been living for thousands of years. *Speedwell*, companion to *Mayflower*, was in poor repair and was unable to make the journey across the Atlantic. Some of *Speedwell's* passengers who remained in England had to find ways to make peace with the place they sought to escape.

To mark how this historic event sits in the present and the future, three artists have created an installation named after the ill-fated vessel. It consists of a 67-metre-long sculpture made of 3,723 LED lights on 219 aluminium discs mounted on scaffolding. It uses the simple and alluring language of illuminated signage to ask difficult questions. By using combinations of the three words 'NO', 'NEW' and 'WORLDS', *Speedwell* asks

us to think about our world, this damaged planet, and to reflect upon the impact of the ongoing process of colonisation. It offers multiple readings questioning the historical conceit that there ever was a New World, and asks us to imagine new worlds of living, caring and dying well together. The sculpture uses modular, recyclable technology that has the capacity to be rewritten in the future. The real-time, randomly generated sequence of nine iterations enables it to embody an intuitive voice of its own.

Speedwell is a light that joins the constellation of other navigational beacons within Plymouth Sound, which illuminate paths to the ocean and to safe harbour. The Sound is a wide canvas on which boats and warships come, linger and go, tracing an iconography of commerce, attack and defence. Onto this backdrop the illuminated words play with the impact of their ever-shifting messages. *Speedwell* sits on the horizon, which is an imagined metaphorical location for our future, something that we can change through our behaviour. The sculpture works with the epic scale of its surroundings, and its message aims to reach across the ocean and beyond. It invites a response from its audience, who can visit the site and write on a metal tag that they can tie to the sculpture, or go to the website www.speedwell.live to leave a message.

Installed until 29 November, the sculpture will begin its final phase to mark Thanksgiving/Day of Mourning and accompany a sharing of stories and ceremonies to shed light on the wider perceptions that shape our multicultural, diverse world.

Léonie Hampton is an award-winning photographer and co-director of the *Speedwell* project, alongside Martin Hampton and Laura Hopes. www.stillmoving.org



Photographs © Martin Hampton of Still/Moving

From NGO to social justice network

Catherine Early speaks to Dhananjayan (Danny) Sriskandarajah, chief executive of Oxfam GB

In the early autumn of 2019, Oxfam brought two high school students from Malawi to the UK. During their trip, they witnessed the student climate protests, where 300,000 people took to the streets around the country to call for stronger climate action.

The teenagers, Jesse and Isaac, noticed placards that said ‘Save our Future’. “They said, ‘But we need to talk about saving our today,’” recalls Danny Sriskandarajah, Oxfam GB’s chief executive. “The communities they live in are already seeing the impact. Their school has been closed several times by extreme weather events. That was such a poignant wake-up call that this is happening already to people around the world.”

This issue of *Resurgence & Ecologist* should have coincided with the United Nations COP26 climate negotiations in Glasgow. Delayed 12 months by the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference will be critical, as countries will be expected to bring forward renewed national emissions reduction strategies under the Paris Agreement.

Amplifying the voices of the global south in climate campaigning was challenging even before Covid-19, Sriskandarajah says. “One challenge is in raising awareness of the impact climate change is already having right here and now,” he explains, “especially on the poorest people. We have been trying to communicate that reality, particularly to people in the global north.”

As well as campaigning on climate justice, Oxfam has programmes to make interventions on the ground. “A lot of our programming in the global south has a climate change element to it; it is about building resilience. We have had to incorporate climate-related challenges that often overlay other serious issues around poverty and livelihoods,” he points out.

For example, an Oxfam project in Zimbabwe helps farmers understand climate change and identify seeds that can withstand the variability of climate, while another in Bangladesh works with communities on the impacts of flooding. Other projects in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East focus on water stress.

Sriskandarajah is cautiously optimistic about the likelihood of the green economic transition. “Momentum is building, and lots of people are talking about the idea that this is our generation’s opportunity to really invert how we think about sustainable development,” he says. “We’ve been thinking about development with a bit of

a sustainability lens on it, but this is an opportunity to start with the sustainability question and really think about what that means.”

Since he took the helm at Oxfam in January 2019, Sriskandarajah has been struck by how debates about inequality have become much more mainstream. But he also worries that the pandemic will exacerbate the uneven playing field that developing countries face. “Unless we put adequate pressure on governments in the rich world, the worry is that they’ll ignore their pledges for a just green transition,” he says.

He began the role months after the charity had been rocked by the crisis following claims of a cover-up of staff using prostitutes in Haiti. “What happened was scandalous. There is a responsibility for organisations like Oxfam to do much more to prevent the abuse of power in our own organisations, so what happened is a wake-up call, not just for us, but for the whole sector. I wanted to be part of that journey to transform Oxfam to taking safeguarding more seriously, but more generally to build a culture that shares power, and that aspires to be more inclusive,” he explains.

“One challenge is in raising awareness of the impact climate change is already having right here and now”

Sriskandarajah’s own background has heavily influenced his career, and his thinking around the issues of inequality and sustainability. Born in Sri Lanka in the 1970s, he spent his childhood in a rural community without electricity or running water. At the onset of the civil war, his family was displaced, and he moved to Papua New Guinea and Australia, where he went to school and university. He moved to the UK in 1998, where he completed a masters and doctorate in International Development at Oxford University, and became a British citizen in 2010.

“The memories, not just of where I grew up, but the fact that my family was directly affected by the civil war in that country, were never far away from my life – poverty, conflict and displacement are all things that I’m

familiar with, that I've lived through. I hope that gives me a really important perspective on things I do in my public life," he says.

His parents were academics, and after moving to Australia his father became involved in the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, part of Western Sydney University. "All around me people were talking about farming systems and sustainable development, and that's been another hugely important part of my growing up," Sriskandarajah says.

He strongly believes that the best way to act on poverty, including the vulnerability brought about by climate breakdown, is to build the power of people. To that end, Oxfam is restructuring its international network with the aim of becoming "less like an NGO, and more like a social justice network", he explains.

This strategic change is partly born out of necessity. Like those of most charities, Oxfam's finances have been battered by the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw all 200 UK shops closed for many months, delayed fundraising, and stemmed the flow of government aid to the organisation. Consequently, the charity is to lose nearly a third of its UK staff and will be pulling out of 18 countries.

But though Covid-19 has exacerbated the need to change Oxfam's operational footprint, Sriskandarajah says that the changes were happening anyway. "In the rest of the 21st century, we don't necessarily need an Oxfam office with a logo outside it to support our mission: there might be local actors who are just as good, if not better placed to achieve our aims," he says.

Oxfam will increase its investment in the most fragile parts of the world, especially where civil society is weak or under pressure, while it sees itself becoming a facilitator in building systemic change in middle-income countries with a more mature civil society, he explains.

"We need to show why big is beautiful in civil society. At the bigger end of the NGO system, we need to ask ourselves really important questions about how we shift power to the global south and create a network that more resembles our aspiration to be more diverse and balanced across the world," he says. "Our ethos is now also about giving everyone the wherewithal to survive economic shocks. Whether you're a care worker in the UK or a small-scale farmer in Zimbabwe, you should be able not just to survive, but also to thrive." 

Catherine Early is chief reporter for the Ecologist.



A Tribute to Kerala by Eshana Ebrahim

“We speak our voice
from the ground up.
Please be our echo”



An Indonesian firefighter tries to extinguish a peat land fire at Karya Jaya district in Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia on 22 October, 2019
© Muhammad A.F / Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

Standing up for the land in Indonesia

Zion Lights speaks to Dayak leader Emmanuela Shinta

Twenty-seven-year-old Emmanuela Shinta is a Dayak leader, activist, film-maker and writer. In 2016 she founded the Ranu Welum Foundation, through which she has trained more than 100 young Indigenous people to tell their stories. She often speaks on behalf of her community about the public misconception of Dayak people.

Shinta's work is both inspiring and crucial during the climate emergency the world faces. Research has found that handing over care of the land to Indigenous people who have managed it for generations is the best way to protect the land and biodiversity and therefore help to protect us from the impacts of climate breakdown. This has been found to be true even when comparing Indigenous knowledge with other land-management methods. For example, legally protected large territories in Brazil are crucial for the protection of biodiversity. Yet Shinta states, "Indonesia still does not recognise the rights of the Indigenous people and it makes the fight to protect the forest more difficult.

"Indigenous people are the guardians of the forest, and the local communities are at the frontline of environmental battle. Climate change is the fight that belongs to all of us. However, if you learn more about Borneo forest fires and their relation to the palm oil plantations, everyone can relate to the issue and has some responsibility. Indonesia is the biggest exporter of palm oil, and more than half the plantations are located in Kalimantan."

According to the United Nations, Indigenous people occupy a quarter of the Earth's land surface. They share this land with most of the world's biodiversity, as around 65% of the land is undeveloped, unlike the 44% of lands owned by non-Indigenous populations.

Indigenous people are on the frontlines of environmental protection. Persecution, displacement and even killings are common all over the world, with the highest rates occurring in South America, where more than half of the murders in 2018 of environmental defenders took place. In Colombia, more than 700 Indigenous leaders have been killed in just two and a half years.

Shinta doesn't see an option besides speaking out. "Indigenous people in Indonesia are much respected by the government because of their culture, but are



Emmanuela Shinta speaking at the Ubud Writers and Readers festival, 2018
Courtesy of UWRF18

ignored for their rights. The discrimination is still very strong, especially toward the Dayak and Papuan. Many Indigenous activists are also arrested because of their resistance against the corporations, mostly mining and palm oil."

She tells me: "We stand for the rights of the Dayak communities. We preserve the culture and protect Nature. Specifically, we fight to put an end to the forest peat fires and toxic haze, which have happened every year since 1997. Massive fires in 2015 released millions of tonnes of carbon to the atmosphere. Biodiversity is under threat and the Dayak people are facing displacement, especially now, when the capital of the country is being moved to Kalimantan."

Shinta's current focus is on a food estate project in Central Kalimantan, a province of Indonesia and one of five provinces in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo. The aim of this project is to open 900,000 hectares of land to development for farming, but Shinta says that 165,000 hectares of the land is peat, which



Wood is scattered in a devastated peat swamp © Ulet Ifansasti / Getty Images

would be turned into rice fields. Peatlands are a type of wetland that is essential for preserving global biodiversity and minimising flood risk.

According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, peatlands are also the largest natural terrestrial carbon store, and damaged peatlands are a major source of greenhouse-gas emissions. Countries are encouraged to restore peatland as part of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

So, why is this happening in Indonesia? There is a conflict between the need for development to grow food, and preserving the local environment. However, Shinta is not against solutions. “My organisation Ranu Welum Foundation is combining Indigenous wisdom and modern technology as the tool to achieve our vision,” she tells me. “The problem is that the current solutions are damaging, without having positive results.”

Regarding the new project, she says: “It repeats the history of the previous failed Mega Rice Project (MRP) on 1 million hectares of peat in 1995, which then led to 23 years of forest fires and the damage of the peat ecosystem in Central Kalimantan. The project is already in tender and will be started in October 2020.”

In fact, the MRP was abandoned after four years, after 187 kilometres of a central canal were dug connecting three main rivers – Kahayan, Kapuas and Barito – and canals in a total area of 1.4 million hectares, resulting in peat drainage and damage.

Shinta is determined that this time the damage will be prevented. “Civil organisation coalitions and our movement Kalimantan Climate Strike are against this project.”

I ask her how she keeps up her energy in the fight.

She tells me, “There is a Dayak philosophy, which we call *Huma Betang* philosophy. *Huma Betang* (‘Large House’) is the traditional house of the Dayak communities, where there are many families living together in one house. It can consist of up to 40 families, and hundreds of people live together. Each family has its own room. If one family’s room is caught in the fire, it’s impossible for others only to stay and watch. They have to help to stop the fire. Otherwise the whole house will be burning and everyone will suffer the loss.

“The same thing is happening right now. Kalimantan, Amazon, Australia – many places are burning. We can’t only watch. This planet is our home. We must actively be involved in stopping the fires and protecting our home.”

What can we do to help? “First, share this issue to your network through conversation, social media or publication. There are things that we can never understand unless we listen to those who are on the ground. We speak our voice from the ground up. Please be our echo.

“Second, support the local communities with encouragement and resources. The fires are starting to happen again around us. They are burning our planet, the place that we call home. We cannot spend forever talking about tackling climate change and saving the Earth. We need to act now.” R

www.ranuwelum.org

Zion Lights is the author of *The Ultimate Guide to Green Parenting* and the poetry collection *Only a Moment*. She is a former spokesperson of Extinction Rebellion UK.

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I know some people call
me a crank, but it's worth
remembering that a crank is
a device used by engineers
to create revolutions

– John Papworth (1921–2020)

Lessons in destruction

Factory schools threaten the survival of Indigenous culture, writes Gladson Dungdung

“They fill up their stomachs only with the forest products and cover their bodies with the leaves of the plants. There are 13 primitive tribes in Orissa. They live and sleep on the branches of the tree like monkeys. They understand nothing.” These derogatory racist remarks were made in a public forum by Achyuta Samanta, founder of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), current member of the lower house of the Indian parliament and ex-parliamentary standing committee member on coal and steel. Referring to Adivasi children being schooled at KISS, he says that the institution has been transforming liabilities into assets, and tax consumers into tax payers. The underlying message is clear: KISS intends to civilise the uncivilised.

Others, like frontline Adivasi activists and academics, see this as cultural genocide.

KISS claims it is the world’s largest ‘anthropological laboratory’. Its boarding school in Bhubaneswar is exclusively for Adivasi children – 30,000 girls and boys from Adivasi communities in Odisha and other states. KISS is a ‘factory school’ funded by several extractive corporations, including Adani, Tata, Vedanta, Nalco and NMDC, which are exploiting Adivasi land and its mineral resources for profit. Adivasis have a symbiotic relationship with Nature. Their culture, language and worldviews are completely embedded in their territory and resources. Activists believe factory schools like KISS act as a medium to promote cultural apartheid – a policy design similar to the ‘stolen generation’ model of boarding schools for Indigenous children, now acknowledged as a national crime and cultural genocide by countries such as Canada, Australia and Norway.

With several government-run day schools being closed, KISS entices parents into sending their children to its boarding school. This happens through recruitment agents throughout Odisha and beyond, including

political brokers, principals of local schools and even police officials. These persuade parents to send their children to KISS for a free education, with extravagant promises. Children at the school are allowed home only once a year.

“KISS delinks Adivasi children from their spiritual identities and our connections to land, forests and spirits”

Damru, a Kondh ex-student, recalls an incident showing what KISS thinks of Adivasi people and culture: “At KISS we have to stand in a queue, push and pull to get food. Once, I was standing near the gate, and some parents had come to visit their children, bringing with them *kusum* fruits (which most Adivasi village children grow up eating). Officials at the gate checking the bags threw these fruits away, saying they are poisonous and not good for health. Can you imagine a parent giving her child a poisonous fruit? We also use the fruit to make our own oil. They don’t understand anything Adivasi and yet call themselves an Adivasi school.”

Pandu, a Gond ex-student of KISS, describes his horrible ordeal there: “Since they think we are cheap people they use cheap things for us – cheap food, supplies, everything. We belong to poor families, that is true, but the food we eat in our homes is far better and more nutritious than they provide at KISS.”

The KISS education model stigmatises children’s Adivasi identities. Children have to speak and read in Odia rather than their mother tongues. The school does not allow children to celebrate any Adivasi festivals, but indoctrinates them into celebrating mainstream Hindu



Photograph © REUTERS / Rupak De Chowdhuri

festivals such as Saraswati, Ganesh and Vishwakarma Puja. Mako, another ex-student, says: “KISS delinks Adivasi children from their spiritual identities and our connections to land, forests and spirits.”

KISS has invested heavily in manufacturing an artificial image, portraying its founder as a messiah of hope. The proposal for the 2023 World Congress of Anthropology to be hosted by KISS feeds on this. Understanding the ground realities, Adivasi leaders, academics, activists and international Indigenous rights organisations such as Survival International call on the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, the Indian Anthropological Association and the World Anthropological Union to sever ties with KISS.

I would say that the cultural annihilation faced by Adivasi children in factory schools like KISS is every bit as harmful as the land alienation we have faced since Independence. Frankly speaking, if we lose our land,

we still have some chance of purchasing a small patch of land to build a home after earning some money, but once we lose our identity, culture, languages and traditions, we lose them forever.

I have observed many such instances. Among Adivasis illegally dispossessed of their lands, a few have survived by purchasing a small plot. But the city-dwelling Adivasis, who have lost their traditional values, identity and culture, are struggling to regain them. Factory schools like KISS are playing a crucial role in advancing Adivasis’ cultural annihilation. This process must be stopped immediately in order to safeguard our identities, which are inextricably linked to our land, languages and cosmological worldviews. R

You can support Survival International’s campaign Help Stop #FactorySchools in India here: www.survivalinternational.org/factoryschools
Gladson Dungdung is an Adivasi activist, researcher and writer.



In the case of ongoing social injustices, expressing outrage is often the only way to be heard, writes **Valarie Kaur**



Divine rage and revolutionary love

We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest Until it Comes
Mural in Rutland, Vt, USA by LMNOPI

Neurobiologists call oxytocin the love hormone: the more oxytocin in the body, the more care and nurturing mammals show for their babies. Oxytocin decreases aggression in a mother's body overall, with one exception – in defence of her young. When babies are threatened, oxytocin actually increases aggression. For mothers, rage is part

of love: it is the biological force that protects that which is loved.

When I learned this, I thought of my mother and the ferocity in her eyes when she had fought for me. I did not know that she had that kind of rage roaring inside her. She couldn't access it for herself. But she could access it for me. Now I was learning how to access it for myself.

I thought of all of us who have been trained to suppress our rage – women, especially women of colour. Rage is a healthy, normal and necessary response to trauma. It is a rightful response to the social traumas of patriarchy, white supremacy, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and poverty. But we live in a culture that punishes us when we show our teeth – we are called hysterical when we raise our voice; we are less likely to be believed when we tell our story with fury; and, if we are anything other than deferential with an officer, we might get hurt or shot, and even then, our deference might not make a difference. Black and brown people have been schooled in the suppression of our emotions as a matter of survival. “We learned when we were very little that black people could die from feeling rage and expressing it to the wrong white folks,” says bell hooks. “We learned to choke down our rage.” We now have the data to prove what community healers know well: repressing anger comes at a cost to our health. It results in high rates of autoimmune diseases. It amplifies our perception of physical pain.

Step away to rage, return to listen, and reimagine the solutions together

The opposite of repression is also dangerous. Too many men have been socialised to unleash rage without apology. For men, rage is often a secondary emotion that masks sadness or shame. Violence is the socially conditioned default for male rage, and the proliferation of guns has made male aggression deadlier than ever: mass shooters are typically men, and the majority of these men have physically abused the women in their lives. We might think that the solution is teaching our boys not to show aggression. But suppressed anger always finds a way to explode. For women and girls, it is more likely to explode internally as self-hatred or stress or illness. For men and boys, it is more likely to erupt as violence against others.

The solution is not to suppress our rage or let it explode, but to process our rage in safe containers – emotional spaces safe enough to express our body’s impulses without shame and without harming ourselves or others. Safe containers take many forms: shaking, weeping, venting, writing, art, music, dance, drama, meditation, trauma therapies, rituals, and ceremonies of all kinds. Only when we give rage an external expression outside our bodies can we be in relationship with it. We can then ask, what information does my rage carry? What is it telling me? How do I want to harness this energy?

I thought about the origin story of the Hindu goddess Kali. According to one famous story, all the gods were in battle against a great demon who could not be defeated, so they poured their energies together to create the goddess Durga. When Durga went to battle with the demon, her ferocious energy concentrated in her forehead and out sprang Kali. She was the fiercest form of the goddess, clad in a tiger skin, wearing a garland of skulls, mouth agape, tongue rolling out as she drank the blood of life. Kali in her many forms was most beloved as the Divine Mother, to be revered and feared and loved, because she protected us. The rage of Kali made me wonder, can we see our own rage as animal and divine?

Divine rage is fierce, disciplined and visionary. It is the fearsome wrath of Ekajati, or Blue Tara, when she fought demons in Tibetan Buddhist legends. Or the fury of Jesus when he overturned the tables of the money changers in the temple in Christian scripture. The aim of divine rage is not vengeance but to reorder the world. It is precise and purposeful, like the focused fury projected into the world from the forehead of the goddess. It points us to the humanity of even those we are fighting. Kali is clad in a tiger skin: it is only through accessing her ferocity that divine rage can take form in the world. Perhaps our task as human beings is to find safe containers for our raw reactionary rage – and then choose to harness that energy in a way that creates a new world for all of us.

Now I see instances of divine rage everywhere. I see it in the activists who storm the stage at political rallies, disrupt confirmation hearings, and confront senators in elevators. I see it in the Indigenous rituals that appear in the wake of atrocities, like the fierce Maori haka dance that erupted across New Zealand spontaneously in the wake of the white supremacist mass shootings in the mosques of Christchurch: students beat their chests, grimaced and cried out, not with “thoughts and prayers”, but with the kind of rage that demands action. I see it in people who stand up to tell the truth at school board meetings, in workplaces, on social media and at their kitchen tables. There are many ways to confront one’s opponents without anger. But in the case of ongoing social injustices, expressing outrage is often the only way to be heard.

Divine rage can make people uncomfortable: it can feel disruptive, frightening and unpredictable. There are those who wish to police such rage in the name of civility. But civility is too often used to silence pain that requires people to change their lives. Rather than taming public expressions of moral outrage, perhaps it is up to the rest of us to train our ears to “hear beyond hearing”, in the words of theorist Judith Butler, so that we can discern the truth of the pain of injustice and confront our own complicity and



Requiem for Paradise by LMNOPI
lmnopi.com

Perhaps our task as human beings is to find safe containers for our raw reactionary rage – and then choose to harness that energy in a way that creates a new world for all of us

responsibility. Just as we need accomplices to hold protected spaces where the most traumatised among us tend to our grief, so, too, do we need accomplices to stand by us when we express our rage, and help others to understand it.

“Anger is loaded with information and energy,” says black feminist Audre Lorde. “Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change.” Lorde asks us to tend to the rage within us as a symphony, “to listen to its rhythms, to learn within it, to move beyond the manner of

presentation to the substance, to tap that anger as an important source of empowerment”. It is a rhythm: step away to rage, return to listen, and reimagine the solutions together. It becomes a kind of dance – to release raw rage in a safe container, in order to send divine rage into the world, like focused fury. The way of the warrior-sage is not only loving-kindness but loving-revolution, or revolutionary love. R

This is an edited extract from *See No Stranger* by Valarie Kaur, published by Random House (2020). Valarie Kaur is a civil rights activist, a lawyer and the founder of the Revolutionary Love Project. revolutionaryloveproject.com



The Meaning of Blue, 2010 (oil on canvas)
© Emma Haworth / Bridgeman Images

Into the night

Kate Blincoe finds connection in the dark

Tonight, take a moment to step outside and look up, or, better still, lie back on the ground. Focus on the dark night sky. You'll feel the pull upwards, vertigo in reverse. Let the endless depth engulf you, swirling larger than thoughts. How insignificant we are against the vastness of the universe! But look again, and from the nothingness you'll see detail emerge. The orange glow of the city, the moon, constellations, shooting stars, satellites, and so much more – the night sky is no longer a blank canvas.

Darkness covers almost every facet of human existence. It is fear, it is evil, it is the unknown, it is death. Yet it is also peace, rest, excitement and mystery. Its representation in art, literature and music is immense, starting in earliest childhood with 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and Jill Tomlinson's *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark* through to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Gustav Holst's dramatic orchestral suite *The Planets*.

At this time of year, days are short and often gloomy, but the night stretches out. We can feel trapped in our homes, or we can take the opportunity to seek inspiration and discover the nocturnal life that thrives in the dark.

You might see foxes, whether you are urban or rural, but there are tinier creatures too. Winter moths, fragile and delicate, emerge into the coldest season. Most insects diapause, similar to hibernation, but not this species. Illuminated by car headlights or drawn to the glow of street lamps, the males seek the flightless females for mating. This strategy of timing means they avoid bats, and then their caterpillars hatch ahead of the competition, just as the first leaves of springtime grow.

Sometimes I take a torch and part the ivy on trees after dusk to spy on the intimate roosting world of small birds such as house sparrows. Tucked away, wary of the tree trunk from which climbing predators may spring, and avoiding the exterior where an owl may attack, they balance their way through the night, feathers fluffed up to stay warm.

Snug in bed, you can listen for owls. A pair of tawny owls punctuate my sleep with their calls. I've never seen them, but at around midnight I will hear their conversation: 'Ker-wick' the contact call, and 'Hoo-hooooo' the response.

Nature knows what to do, but artificial lights can mess it up. We fail to respect the dark with our phones on, sending that last email and checking social media before bed, shops open 24/7, and the constant glare of our electric lives upsetting our circadian rhythm. Light pollution has wide-reaching impacts on our health and wellbeing, but it also disrupts the natural world, which is forced to adapt.

The night is vast and complicated, but this issue of *Resurgence & Ecologist* will draw it to you like a rich, velvet blanket embroidered with stars. From the polar night in Svalbard to Aboriginal astronomy, we are connected across the globe and through time by the gentle rhythms of this planet. R

Kate Blincoe is a Nature lover, author, writer and mother.



Science in the polar night

Lynn Houghton
meets the first
women to overwinter
alone in Svalbard

Svalbard is an archipelago of Arctic islands situated halfway between Norway and the North Pole. During winter this region is battered by fierce storms and ferocious winds and pitched into the freezing black of the polar night. The king of the Arctic, the polar bear, roams the sea ice, not hibernating, but prowling for seals, and the aurora borealis unveils breathtakingly beautiful neon lights, which streak across the sky.



Wilhemina Bay No.2, Antarctica, November 23, 2018
Soft pastel on paper, 58 3/4 x 74 1/8 inches, 2020
Courtesy of the artist, Zaria Forman
www.zariaforman.com

“They are following in the footsteps of early Nordic pioneers, not hunting for fur and skins but for knowledge and wisdom”

Two women recently endured this region’s harsh conditions for an entire year completely alone. Their mission: to collect weather and wildlife observations and data as part of a project that seeks to engage as many people as possible across the globe in a conversation about the climate crisis. Their project is named Hearts in the Ice.

Hilde Fålun Strøm has lived in the frigid north for over two decades. A keen photographer, hunter and adventurer, she knows from first-hand experience that her beloved Svalbard is in the grip of a climate emergency. It is in fact the fastest-warming place on the planet. In the words of Kim Holmén from the Norwegian Arctic Institute: “Partly due to Svalbard being at the end of the Gulf Stream, the archipelago’s west coast fjords no longer freeze in winter. The consequence of warming here is that there are more storms, more avalanches and, for fauna, the very real possibility of extinction.”

Strøm was joined by Canadian Sunniva Sorby – a participant in the first all-female Antarctica skiing expedition and a polar expert in her own right. The two women planned to spend nine months on one of the archipelago’s remote islands, much like the first female Norwegian trappers Wanny Woldstad and Helfrid Nøis would have done. Unlike these figures of the past, though, Strøm and Sorby were the first women to stay there without men.

As Børge Damsgard, director of the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS), said, Hearts in the Ice is “more than a project, more than two brave women managing on their own during a polar winter. They are following in the footsteps of early Nordic pioneers, not hunting for fur and skins but for knowledge and wisdom.”

Experiments taking place in this, one of the harshest environments on Earth, have seldom been attempted before.

The pair were based at a trapper’s cabin, Bamsebu (‘bear’s hut’) on a bay named Ingebrigtsenbukta on Van Kuelenfjorden. Located 140km from Longyearbyen, the northernmost settlement on Earth, Bamsebu has no electricity, no running water, and no heating except for a stove.

There were significant safety issues to consider. Polar bears number nearly 3,000 in Svalbard and, due to a multilateral treaty signed in 1973, cannot be hunted. They are fearless and unpredictable. Unlike their cousins in the Canadian Arctic, Greenland and Russia, bears here do not hibernate, though females find a den to have their cubs. With the sea ice no longer freezing as quickly as in previous years, their hunting platform for snagging tasty seals comes later and later. The bears are hungry.

The impact of the polar night was significant when Svalbard was plunged into darkness for three months. The tilt of the Earth on its axis creates this unique phenomenon and means the far north endures incredibly cold temperatures in winter, with no heat from the sun. For humans, this extended night can be mentally difficult.

The journey began on 13 September 2019, when I and nearly 100 family members, media representatives and friends, plus a malamute named Ettra, boarded MS *Nordstjernen* to escort Sorby and Strøm to Bamsebu. The hut sits on the shore of a bay near Cap Fleur de Lys, where there are still mounds of beluga whale bones from hunting that took place a century ago.

After two days of unloading everything from electric snowmobiles and fuel to food, clothing, water and more, we sailed away, leaving the two women on their own.

Everything was now in place for them to perform daily research tasks for Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the Norwegian Meteorological Institute and the Norwegian Polar Institute. MetOcean Telematics provided equipment for them to stay in contact with the outside world, including giving remote classroom lessons. One of the critical experiments was for NASA and took place during the depth of the polar night.



Photographs courtesy of Hearts in the Ice

The other side of fear

We have lived for roughly 100 days in complete utter darkness with no external light whatsoever. None, except for the awe-inspiring northern lights. Otherwise, pitch black. We have felt fear to the bone. The very fact of being here so far away from anyone for those many days of darkness with literally nowhere to go brings out all of our deepest and darkest fears as we are faced with real visible threats in the way of a polar bear or the invisible threats that exist in our heads – everything you cannot see yet you are certain is there.

Somewhere. Out. There.

We have learnt much about ourselves through those long arduous 100 days of what is referred to as the Polar Night. We have danced with our fears and insecurities – allowed them to visit us



on the mental and emotional inside, never letting them stay too long.

We are deeply connected to the cycles of life and death here around Bamsebu. This very connection to the natural world around us brings us to the truth that nothing is permanent and nothing is guaranteed. It brings us to other truths as well – that life is a profound gift and every single breath we take is a privilege.

Now that the light has returned, it has shed another truth. Things are out of balance.

Question for all of us. Why do our reactions not invoke a sense of fear around things we see as it relates to climate change? Is it that we choose not to see? Plastics in the oceans, wildfires and forest fires, increases in temperature, floods, decreasing icecaps, imbalance in biodiversity of species, our very soils starving for water, lives lost, species lost, communities of people displaced. Some of these impacts are visible and some are invisible but the facts remain. Our natural world is in a pattern interruption that it cannot sustain any longer.

Without a dramatic move beyond 'business as usual' the current severe decline of the natural systems that support modern societies will continue – with serious consequences for nature and people. We must not let that happen under our watch!

The communication we have with each other, with Ettra, the wildlife in our backyard, the spaces we explore, the tundra we walk on and all that we observe daily – our connections are key to us living in harmony and alignment. We are part of this and this is part of us. We all thrive in alignment!

We have been reduced and stripped as we have melted into the landscape. We understand how very minuscule we are in this grand world. We have also been strengthened by engaging and trying to understand our place in this 'big picture'. We understand how very powerful we are. We know that we all have the power to create lasting change for the sake of our environment, for the sake of humanity.

Edited extract from Hilde Fåln Strøm and Sunniva Sorby's blog on 1 June, 2020. www.heartsintheice.com/9621/

The daily routine began with lighting the stove, followed by answering emails and reading, having breakfast, exercising, and carrying out assignments. Insects were collected for Damsgard's UNIS facility, ice core and phytoplankton samples were retrieved, and a drone was activated to take thermal images.

As the sun dipped below the horizon on 26 October 2019, not to return until February, the two women held a ceremony to honour the occasion. They lit a small fire sprinkled with tobacco from British Columbia and sage from California.

They sent this report: "We are in total darkness here at Bamsebu. Dark, save for the brilliant display of the night sky, fast moving satellites, shooting stars and those many magical auroral displays that feel like they shine just for us. It is too dark to see any land features or even a step in front of us so we use our headlamp – the strongest one beams at 12,000 lumens. We also have night vision binoculars. We swipe the area full circle with our lights before we head out on our short walk in this Long Polar Night. We look for the glow of distant eyes."

The duo were on standby from 25 November for the NASA experiment, and the big day arrived on 10 December. Special equipment and cameras were at the ready to record an important event, when one of two rockets associated with the Cusp Heating Investigation project would be launched from Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard.

"We look for the glow of distant eyes"

The poles are the only two places on the planet where the mysterious cusp aurora phenomenon occurs. Three types of tracer were expelled from the rockets, like smoke from a fireworks display. Their drift allowed scientists to see the unseen. Through observing, measuring and photographing the tracers, more could be learned about the structures, densities and irregularities of the 'winds' that create the aurora. The chemicals used emit different properties and colours; some will drift into the upper atmosphere, and others elongate along the Earth's magnetic field. The release of tri-methyl aluminium at lower altitudes lights up white or blue-white, like a glowstick. It was the task of Strøm and Sorby to record this.

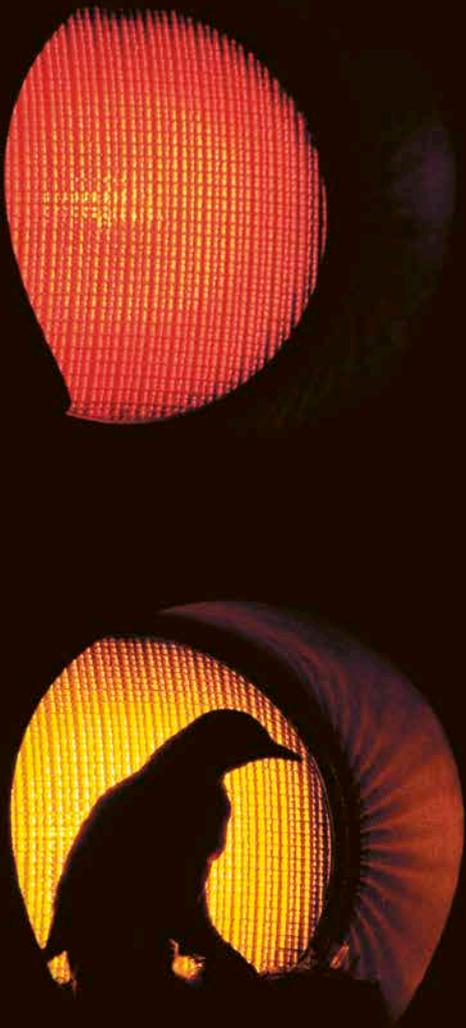
After months surviving alone and isolated in this challenging environment, the two women felt the wind abate and saw the sun begin its return. The landscape was bathed in a soft, pastel light known as *Kåre Tveter lys*, named after the Norwegian painter famous for capturing the light in his work.

At the beginning of March, the pair began to plan their return to Longyearbyen in May. But there was an unexpected snag: the cancellation of the MS *Nordstjernen's* summer itinerary because of the coronavirus pandemic meant they would have to stay at Bamsebu until September.

Undeterred by this news, and always upbeat, they continued to explore this magical landscape while enjoying the warmth of the midnight sun. They picked up plastic, recorded data and collected samples as part of their continuing routine.

The Hearts in the Ice project will forge ahead as this unique frozen land continues to reveal its secrets. This incredible natural environment is worth saving. Just ask Strøm and Sorby. R

www.heartsintheice.com www.gofundme.com/f/hearts-in-the-ice
Lynn Houghton is a writer and photographer.



Migration, breeding, life and death were all found to be directly influenced by artificial lighting

Silhouette of adult mistle thrush nesting in a traffic light, Glasgow, Scotland © Andrew Walmsley / naturepl.com

In a bad light

For the sake of the planet, we have to protect the night, writes **Matt Gaw**

For aeons, humans have tried to push the night away. As the sun lowers and darkness begins to rise at a minute-hand tick from valley and meadow to crag and peak, we seek shelter and light. First, it was through simple flames, the burning bodies of oily seabirds, fireflies gummed to toes. Then came the thin flicker from rushlights, the splutter of fatty candles, followed by the steady, brightening glow of gas light and electricity.

Little by little, light has grown, becoming not just a means of navigation and a source of comfort, but also a beacon of civilisation. Contemporary pictures of the UK taken at night by weather satellites show an archipelago that is rashed with light. The major cities – London, Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool – stand out like welts, while even the darker spots are webbed with lurid knots of lamp-guarded roads. The nights of stars and moonlight, sources of myth, magic and meaning, a way of giving ourselves scale within the enormousness and beauty of the universe, have largely been replaced by a sickly veil of human luminescence. Night, with its slow rhythms and subtle shades, has become little more than a darker, duller kind of day.

A study by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, based on night-time images taken in 2015, found that just 21.7% of England has what could be considered to be pristine, unpolluted skies. In 2016, research published in the journal *Science Advances* by an international team of scientists revealed that the Milky Way, described by John Milton as “a broad and ample rode whose dust is Gold / And pavement Starrs”, was no longer visible to 77% of the UK population. Speaking at the time, the report’s lead author, Fabio Falchi, said the situation was a “cultural loss of unprecedented magnitude”.

As Falchi suggests, the chance to stare up at starlight, at light that is older than us, older than our gods, to have an experience that has been shared across millennia, is fundamentally human. But there are other reasons why dark skies are

important. In short, the way we light up our world is having a huge impact on wildlife.

Writing in the introduction to their groundbreaking 2006 book, *Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting*, Catherine Rich and Travis Longcore posed a question. “What”, they said, “if we woke up one morning only to realize that all of the conservation planning of the last thirty years told only half the story – the daytime story? Our diurnal bias has allowed us to ignore the obvious, that the world is different at night and that natural patterns of darkness are as important as the light of day to the functioning ecosystems.”

The collection of papers that followed seemed to suggest just this possibility, examining how light affected mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates and plants. Migration, breeding, life and death were all found to be directly influenced by artificial lighting.

Then, in 2019, a comprehensive review of 150

scientific studies of artificial light’s impact on ecosystems painted the clearest picture yet: the electric light we use to chase away the dark is affecting every aspect of insect life – luring moths to death from exhaustion, changing breeding patterns, obscuring mating signals, spotlighting prey for predators, and disrupting the entire ecosystem up and down the food chain. A statement from the lead authors, published in the journal *Biological Conservation*, said: “We strongly believe artificial light at night – in combination with habitat loss, chemical pollution, invasive species, and climate change – is driving insect declines.”

The impact of artificial light on insects is particularly significant given the importance of invertebrates to ecosystems. A global review on insect declines, following on from studies of population collapses in Germany and Puerto Rico, stated that an absence of insects would have “devastating consequences” for life on Earth. Given



Nature reserves of the sky

In 2011, Exmoor National Park in the UK became Europe’s first International Dark Sky Reserve – an area of land possessing exceptional sky quality and natural darkness. Every year the park organises a Dark Skies Festival to celebrate the night sky, with between 2,000 and 3,000 people attending events organised by the park and local communities. There are now 16 reserves across Europe and North America.

tinyurl.com/exmoor-dark-skies-festival
darksky.org

Dunkery Beacon, Exmoor © Richard Presley

Night saver

To take action on light pollution in England, there is a very useful tool to hand. An interactive map developed by CPRE, the countryside charity, and consultants LUC allows people to look up light pollution and dark skies in their local area. "They are based on satellite data captured throughout September 2015 at 1.30am, so the light spilling up into the night sky," Emma Marrington, Rural Communities Enhancement Lead for CPRE, told *Resurgence & Ecologist*. "They were published in summer 2016 and remain the most comprehensive maps of England, with detailed maps of English counties, districts, national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The maps and data are very much used by councils, community groups, consultants and people who want to understand more about the night sky in their area."

The maps can be used to protect and enhance dark skies in a variety of ways: as evidence to shape future development projects, to lobby councils or raise awareness among MPs, and as educational resources for schools. They can also be used to locate the nearest area of dark skies to help people escape light pollution for some unadulterated stargazing.

tinyurl.com/cpre-light-pollution

North 50° 37' 22", East -04° 64' 34" (30/09/12 – 12/01/13)
from *The Tin-can Firmament*: a series of months-long-
exposure pinhole photographs of the sky by William Arnold
williamarnold.net

that around half of the millions of species of insects on this planet are nocturnal (with diurnal species also impacted by artificial light when they are resting), it is not overstating the case to say that how we are illuminating our world is playing a part in its destruction.

It wasn't until I was researching and writing my most recent book, *Under the Stars*, that I really noticed just how many lights there are in the UK and how hard it is to avoid them. Walking at night close to where I live in Suffolk and hankering for a scrap of darkness, I experienced a little of what it must feel like to be a nocturnal creature in a modern landscape. Empty offices, shops and supermarkets glowed, creating light domes that went far beyond their earthly boundaries. Car-free roads, verges and hedgerows were lit with street lamps whose light spilled like floodwater into green spaces and areas set aside as wildlife corridors. Further afield, in small, once dark villages, my footsteps were marked by the flash-gun flare of security lights, while gardens were lit by sunlight-strength LEDs. For me the transformation of a nightscape into something orange-hued and dull was frustrating, but for nocturnal species the night has become a fearscape: a matrix of glow and glare that makes natural behaviour and navigation all but impossible.

However damaging artificial lights are to the circadian clocks of humans, they are normal. We have grown up in a world of light. It clings to the nocturnal hours like a second skin. The baseline for what we expect at night (starlight, moon shadows)

has over time warped and fallen to new lows. While this means we do not notice the brightness, we are also unused to the darkness; we think it is darker than it really is. Longcore's latest research involves trying to demonstrate how animals see nightscapes. By taking photographs at night and increasing the exposure, he creates an image that represents what creatures capable of seeing in low light experience. During a conversation on Skype, he showed me several pictures he had taken from the Hollywood Hills. The first showed a dark landscape with a view over a sea of lights. The second, enhanced in line with the visual capabilities of a mountain lion, was a glimpse of a bright, new world. The city was no longer a twinkling in the distance but an impenetrable, blazing wall. The mountain, the trail, both invisible in the first shot, were lit up as if it were day.

It is easy to be downbeat, to think of the glow of artificial lights that cover so much of our country, so much of the globe, as the searchlights of the Anthropocene; the sparks from the starting gun of ecological collapse. But unlike plastic or radioactive materials, light doesn't linger in the bellies of whales or lodge in the Earth's strata. Turn off a light, and it will simply disappear. Of course, this doesn't mean all lights need to be turned off at night, but rather that we need to re-evaluate how and where light is used. What's more, we need to do it quickly, because we are losing night at the speed of light. R

Matt Gaw is a writer and journalist. He is the author of *The Pull of the River* and *Under the Stars*.



DARK DEPTHS

Every night under the waves, a vast diversity of creatures from single-celled organisms to fish larvae and molluscs take part in the largest animal migration on the planet. Known collectively as zooplankton, they rise vertically to the surface to feed, accompanied by hungry predators. The daily movements of zooplankton help remove carbon from the atmosphere by transporting it down to the bottom of the sea. Some scientists believe the movement created by this vertical migration can have as much impact on ocean circulation as tides and winds.

This photograph is from a series by Magnus Lundgren, who captured the images at night by placing a 'downline' with light stations for 40 metres under the surface to attract plankton. Below him the sea stretched between 200 and 2,000 metres.

Photograph © Magnus Lundgren / naturepl.com

Pregnant pause

Tiffany Francis-Baker finds respite in darkness

One winter, we flew to the western shores of India to escape the lethargy of Britain in late February. Each day the temperature climbed to 30°C, and we spent our time slicing through the streets on a dusty moped, past stray dogs, and cows adorned with flowers, our senses consumed by sunlight and spiced turmeric. It was a beautiful and chaotic place, but every night, almost defeated by the noise and heat of the day, we would wander down to the shore and swim in the wild Arabian Sea.

The waves pushed down in an endless rhythm, arriving and departing, embracing and withdrawing. We tried to stand against their force, running to meet them as they swept up and crashed down onto the shore, but resistance was pointless. We were thrown into the water and carried back to the sand like driftwood. Trying to stand against the tide was like trying to stop time; better to float through it, uncontrolled, and embrace the rhythm of the moon-powered water. We relaxed our bodies, and the sea lifted us high into the air and back down to Earth, ready to repeat that eternal cycle again and again.

I still think of those darkling sea swims on warm nights. This summer, I walked into the garden to bring the dogs in and felt as though someone were shining a spotlight on me. I looked up and met the gaze of a full moon, white and round, pouring down onto the Earth. To stumble upon a full moon when you're not expecting it is one of Nature's greatest tricks – a double-take moment – the genuine shock that something not powered by electricity can be so potent and compelling. It becomes difficult to leave, to step out of the moonlight and retreat indoors to your brick and mortar bed. Something in that milky light calls out to our wilder selves.

In 2019, my book *Dark Skies* was published, inspired by a year exploring the landscape at night to see how we connect with Nature after dark. (See *The Tranquillity of Darkness*, *Resurgence & Ecologist* Issue 316.) The idea came to me after spending an evening walking over Butser Hill, one of the highest and darkest points of the South Downs National Park, where I live. I loved the peace and solitude of being alone in the wild at night. In our anthropocentric world, to walk beneath the night sky reminds us of our place in the universe, and that we are only one species in an ecosystem of billions. We may be largely diurnal, but to spend time outdoors after nightfall is a natural behaviour we can all benefit from. It's a chance to break out of our comfort zones and liberate ourselves from the idea that the nightscape is a place for other creatures to enjoy without us.

This year, my relationship with the night took a different turn. My third trimester of pregnancy began around Beltain, the Celtic May Day festival that takes place halfway between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. The pandemic put an end to the usual Beltain celebrations I enjoy at Butser Ancient Farm on the Hampshire/Sussex border, where each year I watch, cider in hand, as a 30-foot wicker man burns to the ground. But at least the lockdown weather was joyful. In fact, we were treated to a week or two of such high temperatures that I imagined I was back in India again. As lovely as it was, my usual afternoon dog-walks became impossible with increasingly squashed lungs, raised body temperature and a growing belly, so instead I waited until after sunset to stretch my legs and feel my heart pulsing down to the new human growing inside me. The night was cool against my skin, a welcome respite from the heat of the day. And there in the sky, caught in a glittering veil of stars, the moon lingered on to light my path.

Something in that milky light calls out to our wilder selves

There has long been a connection between women and the night sky, whether it's in mythology, folklore, medicine or astrology. The moon itself is a feminine symbol, representing the rhythm of time and the eternal nature of life's cycles, as well as encouraging us to embrace the darker side of the universe. In pregnancy, I felt connected to Nature in an entirely different way – the sensation of life passing through me, of growing something new. But at night, without the noise and chaos of modern life to distract me, my late-pregnancy nightwalks became a source of energy. There in the dark, I could absorb the sound of invisible bats over my head, the scent of damp grass, the velvet slip of shadow on my skin. And when I finally returned home and left the darkness at the door, I felt refuelled, recharged. A creature of night and day, nurturing both and recoiling from neither. R

Tiffany Francis-Baker's book, *Dark Skies* (Bloomsbury) is the subject of the Resurgence Book Club on 25 November. An author Q&A will be followed by a book club chat. www.resurgence.org/magazine/book-club.html
www.tiffanyfrancis.com



Heather by Laurie Hastings www.lauriehastings.com

A beginner's guide to nightwalking

- Remember to wrap up warmly no matter the season. It's surprising how quickly the temperature drops after the sun goes down. A flask of hot chocolate or coffee will also help keep the cold at bay.
- If plunging into pitch darkness alone sounds unnerving, start small. Invite a friend and visit your nightwalk location in daylight first to make sure you know your way around. Landscapes change in the dark, so look out for landmarks that will still be visible by starlight.
- Take a fully charged smartphone if possible, as you never know when you might need a map or a built-in torch. You can download a stargazing app to identify constellations, or a birdsong app to identify different owl calls.
- Nightwalks are the perfect way to get closer to Nature, so to avoid scaring away more elusive species tread softly, whisper quietly and keep artificial lights to a minimum.



“The work of artists and poets has always been to awaken our attention, to show what is unseen, to love what is unloved. That work feels urgent now. Modern life is brightly lit but our attention to the lives of so many creatures has largely slept and the damage has been enormous. Since 1914 there have been around 60 moth extinctions in Britain alone. In the last 35 years, the overall number of moths on these islands fell by a third. Some, like the well-known Garden Tiger, whose caterpillars are the main food of our much-missed cuckoos, have fallen by 80% or more.

We have to start by opening our eyes. To quote Rachel Carson, ‘The more we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.’ So, this is my response – my rebellion.”

– Sarah Gillespie

Artwork and text from the limited edition artist’s book *Moth*, mezzotints by Sarah Gillespie with a poem by Alice Oswald. www.sarahgillespie.co.uk/editions/moth

The Dark Emu in the Sky

Dark sky constellations have informed Aboriginal astronomical traditions across millennia, writes Krystal De Napoli



The Giant Emu in the Sky by Ivan Slade
ivanslade.photography

For tens of thousands of years, Indigenous astronomers have used the night sky to inform their complex cultural knowledge systems to communicate science and lore. These knowledge systems rely on the visual cues of the night sky in order to set the stage for Dreaming stories, while also informing us of the weather forecasts, food economics and seasonal calendars of the land that we are on. These cues come from various celestial phenomena, including star positions and their variability in brightness, meteor sightings, haloes, eclipses, and a curious feature known as a dark sky constellation.

Unlike their star-based counterparts, dark sky constellations make use of the darker regions in the night sky to form their shapes. These regions are the result of the blocking of light from dust lanes within our galaxy and feature heavily in the astronomical traditions of Indigenous Australians. This is due to both the southern hemisphere's direct view of the Milky Way and the abundance of pristine dark sky areas suitable for observation prior to colonisation.

The Emu in the Sky is known by different names depending on the community from which the knowledge comes. These names include *Gugurmin* for Wiradjuri knowledge holders, *Tchingal* for the Boorong, and *Gawarrgay* to both Euahlayi and Kamilaroi communities.

Euahlayi Senior Law Man Ghillar Michael Anderson has provided insight into the significance of *Gawarrgay*'s position in the sky for the Euahlayi and Kamilaroi communities, sharing how this celestial feature functions as a calendar for the *bora* male initiation ceremony performed in spring when *Gawarrgay* is perpendicular to the horizon at sunset.

Gawarrgay also informs the Euahlayi community

about the lifecycle of the emu on the ground, with an emphasis on the process for emu egg harvesting.

After sunset in autumn, *Gawarrgay* will be seen running across the sky with its head pointed high, indicating the commencement of the egg-harvesting season.

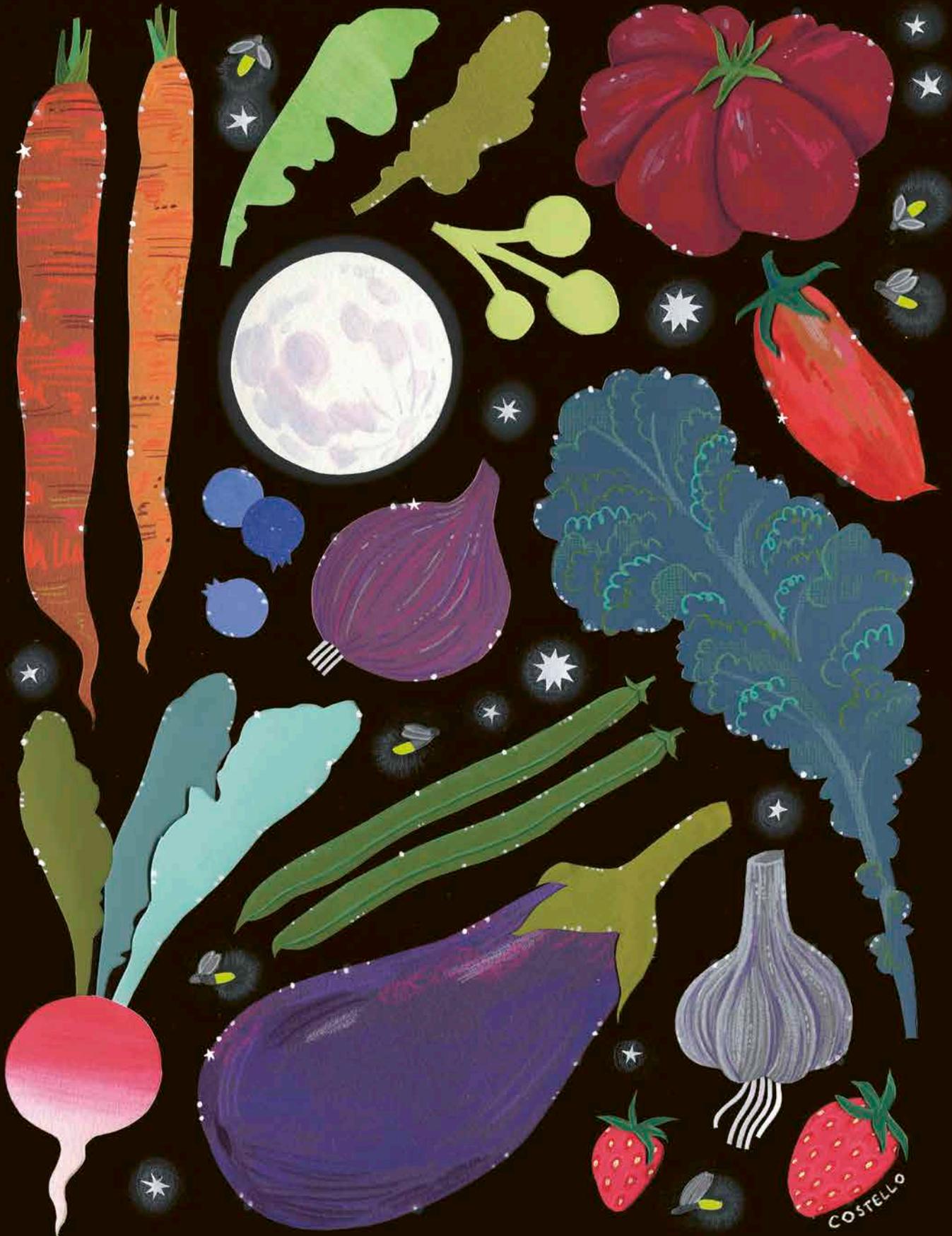
Winter is the nesting season for the emu on the ground, and observing after sunset will show us that *Gawarrgay* is similarly directing itself towards the ground, preparing to sit down to incubate the eggs. This is the time of year where we would see the chicks begin to hatch, and the harvesting of emu eggs would cease for this cycle.

Dark sky constellations make use of the darker regions in the night sky to form their shapes

Following ongoing collaboration with traditional owners, knowledge holders and academics, in 2020 the Royal Australian Mint released 5,000 uncirculated commemorative AU\$1 coins of the Emu in the Sky. This coin highlights the traditions of the Wiradjuri emu, *Gugurmin*, through the featured artwork of Wiradjuri artist Scott Towney. The coin has three main features: the Celestial Emu, an emu nesting on his eggs, and three Wiradjuri men dancing in a *bora* ceremony.

This coin is the first of a series, with the next coin to be released telling the Yamaji tradition of the Pleiades, otherwise known as The Seven Sisters. R

Krystal De Napoli is a Kamilaroi astrophysicist, dedicated to the promotion of Indigenous sciences. @KrystalDeNapoli



The Garden at Night II by Molly Costello www.mollycostello.com

Nurturing plants by the lunar calendar

Organic food grower **Claire Ratinon** shares some tips

I'm a relative newcomer to the world of Nature-noticing and Nature-worshipping. As a child, I didn't pay much attention to the cherry blossoms arriving in spring or the arc of the sun's trajectory on a midsummer's day. Yet in my early thirties I became an organic food grower, and learning how to nurture plants from seed to harvest – and the right relationship with the ecosystems that make that possible – changed everything for me. Growing food has been the gateway through which I have uncovered how connected I am – we all are – to the natural world and its cycles and seasons and patterns.

To garden by the moon is to pay attention to where we are in the lunar cycle and to act (or not) accordingly

I am a compulsive note-taker. I fill notebooks with scraps of half-recalled dreams and nuggets of Buddhist wisdom, alongside optimistic lists of books I want to read – eventually. I organise my life by scribbles and spreadsheets, my food-growing with calendars and weather forecasts. I'm drawn to any principle that I can organise my intentions and plans around, and if it deepens my awareness of Nature's rhythms, all the better.

The moon holds a sacred place in spiritual traditions and Indigenous belief systems. Its force exerts influence over the movements of the natural world as it circumnavigates the Earth. Following the footsteps of ancient agriculturalists, some farmers and gardeners coordinate their growing efforts with the cycle of the moon. And since I've blamed many a turbulent night's sleep and foul mood on the lunar pull over my emotional ocean, I readily took up the invitation to organise my seed-sowing and salad-harvesting around the moon's monthly dance.

To garden by the moon is to pay attention to where we are in the lunar cycle and to act (or not) accordingly. The notion, at its most straightforward, proposes that just as the moon exerts a gravitational force that moves the tides of oceans and seas, so too does it influence the water-laden bodies of plants and the moisture in the soil. When the moon is waxing – growing towards fullness – water is being pulled up towards the sky, and when it is waning – retreating into newness – water is being drawn down into the earth.

There are more engaged approaches that consider the moon's distance from the Earth or which astrological sign it's passing through, but I haven't yet explored the depths of those practices. Transcribed from one of my soil-encrusted growing journals, the descriptions below outline the directions that I do follow.

The New Moon Phase: this is the time to sow or transplant leafy annuals. Seeds easily absorb water and germinate quickly then, but leaves harvested during this time will not keep for long.

The First Quarter: this moon phase sees an increase in light, so plants and seedlings easily take up moisture from the soil at this time, and their ability to grow flowers and fruit increases. This quarter is best for sowing, planting and transplanting seedlings of fruiting plants, as well as trimming, pruning and mowing to encourage growth.

The Full Moon Phase: this quarter is the time to sow or plant root crops and perennials. It is also a good time for taking cuttings and dividing plants, as water is being pulled down into the earth for strong root growth. Medicinal herbs and plants are most potent when harvested in this phase.

The Last Quarter: this is the time to avoid sowing and planting and instead to work on weeding, mulching, making compost and improving the soil. Produce harvested at this time stores well, and pruning and mowing now decrease growth.

Opinions are understandably divided as to whether following lunar cycles has a notable effect on plant growth and the harvests they produce, but I've read enough affirmative anecdotes to at least attempt to grow like our ancient ancestors did. It wasn't really possible when I was growing food in London, working one day a week on different sites, doing all the week's jobs in one day.

Yet now, in the countryside, with a garden of my own, I'm with my plants every day and I've embraced the lunar guidance wholeheartedly this season. Against the blackness of the rural night skies, the moon throws light so bright across the garden that it casts deep-blue shadows, and the weight of its force is palpable. But I'll have to wait until this time next year, when I can compare that season's harvest to this year's, before I can tell my own tales of tidal successes and failures. **R**

Claire Ratinon is an organic food grower and writer based in East Sussex. Her first book, *How To Grow Your Dinner Without Leaving the House*, is published by Laurence King Publishing (2020).



A tale of two martyrs

The Pilgrims' Way can be a path to the future as well as the past, writes **Nick Robins**

It's dusk in winter, precisely 849 years since the murder of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury. Becket had defended the church against King Henry II, who wanted to subject it to his will. Hearing of the king's frustration at Becket's refusal to bend, four of his knights burst into Canterbury Cathedral and killed the archbishop in cold blood on 29 December 1170.

I'm standing with hundreds of others in the cathedral's crypt, near to where Becket was once buried. We're each holding a lighted candle, listening to the current archbishop, Justin Welby, as he recalls Becket's martyrdom, his willingness to stand up to tyranny and put aside fear. As prayers echo off the low ceiling of the undercroft, I think of another martyr, Berta Cáceres.

Cáceres was killed in Honduras on 2 March 2016. She was an Indigenous Lenca woman who had stood up for her people and her land against the DESA energy company, which wanted to build the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam. Seven men were convicted of her murder, two of them DESA employees.

Across the distance of time and space, I was struck by what united these two martyrs

At the time of his death, Becket was one of the most powerful people in his country; when Cáceres was assassinated, she was one of the most marginalised. Becket was hacked to death in the sacred space of his own cathedral by a ruler's soldiers; Cáceres was shot dead in her own home by hitmen hired by a corporation. Across the distance of time and space, I was struck by what united these two martyrs: their willingness to uphold a greater good against brute power.

Becket's murder caused outrage in Europe's Middle Ages. The king was forced to do penance, walking barefoot from outside the city walls to the crime scene. Becket was soon made a saint, and his tomb became a popular place of pilgrimage. The Pilgrims' Way from Winchester to Canterbury was one route along the chalk spine of the North Downs. Another started in London, and this is what Geoffrey Chaucer chose as the frame for his unfinished 14th-century masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*.

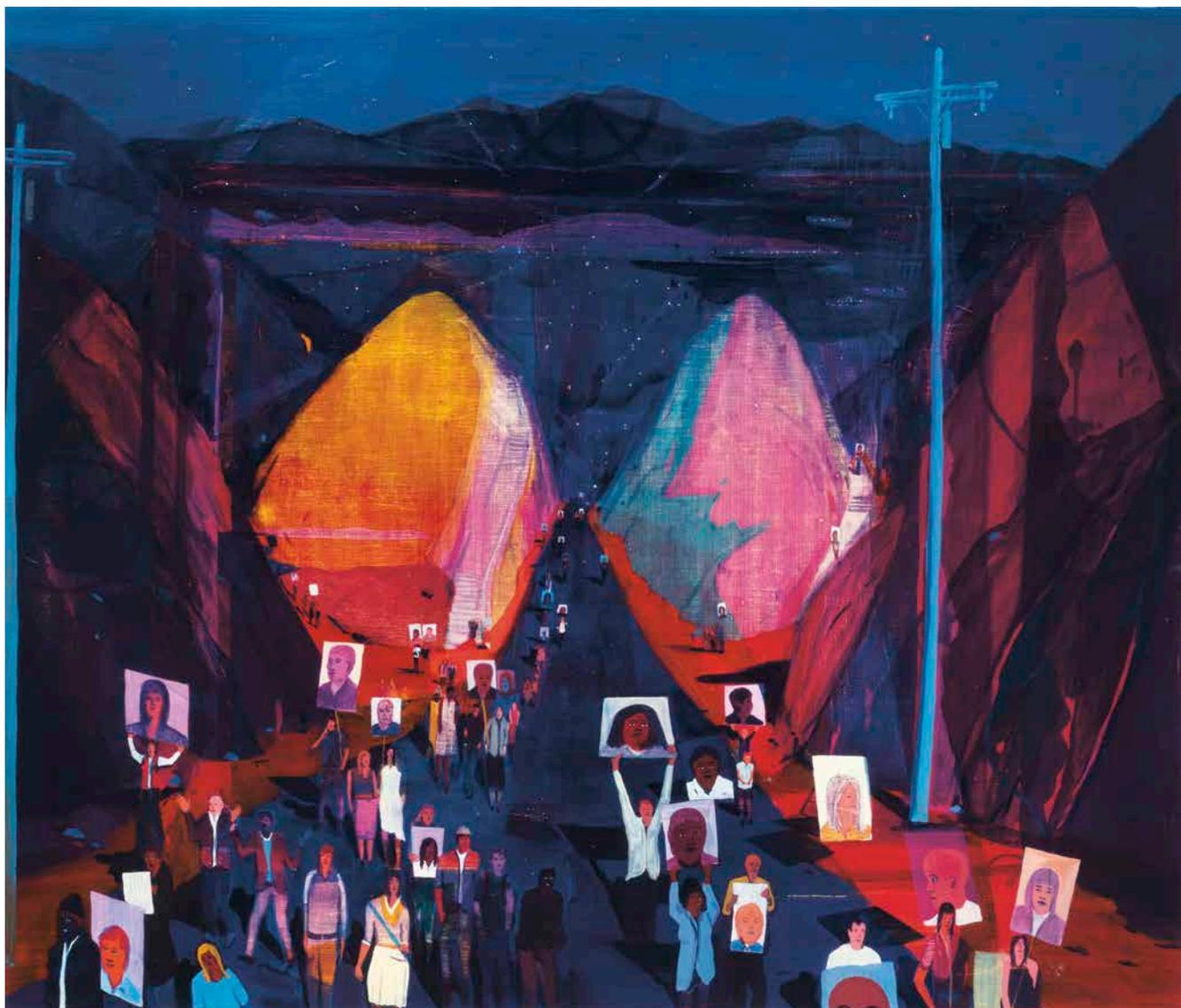
In our own times, Cáceres' assassination also spurred grief and revulsion. Tragically, she was not alone: in 2019, more than four environmental defenders were killed each week, according to Global Witness. But, like Becket, she is not forgotten. On 14 April 2019, Extinction Rebellion activists hauled a bright pink yacht named the *Berta Cáceres* into the heart of London, blocking Oxford Circus. The boat became a centre of protest, holding out for almost a week before being towed away in solemn procession to rejoin the rebellion another day.

As I walked out of the cathedral's great west door that day, a question was burning in my head: could the timeless practice of pilgrimage be reinvented for our time of ecological emergency?

Currently more than 330 million people go on pilgrimage each year from all faiths and none: Buddhists, Christians, Daoists, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and many more. The numbers are growing. In the UK, The British Pilgrimage Trust has actively promoted this reawakening. Its new guidebook, *Britain's Pilgrim Places*, is a wonderful catalogue of more than 300 places sacred in the Christian tradition, and a pointer to locations treasured in other traditions too.

The connection between pilgrimage and the fate of the planet is also becoming increasingly strong. Editor emeritus of *Resurgence & Ecologist* Satish Kumar is a self-professed "Earth pilgrim". He is famed for the 8,000-mile pilgrimage he took with his friend Prabhakar Menon from New Delhi to Moscow, Paris, London and Washington DC, campaigning for peace and the end of nuclear weapons. For him, "The significant realisation of a pilgrimage is in the consciousness that the whole of the Earth is a sacred site." This link is nothing new. Indeed, in the opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer makes clear what impelled his band of pilgrims towards the shrine of St Thomas. "So priketh hem nature in her corage / Than longyng folk to gon on pilgremage," or, in my rough translation, "So Nature stirs them in their hearts, a pilgrimage then to start."

In our own age of ecological emergency, pilgrimage could once again become a crucial part of our lives. This could be done through entirely new journeys to places of ecological significance, or by reviving ancient routes. It doesn't require long-distance travel and can start close to home: the old Pilgrims' Way is about 15 miles from my front door. Dedicating time to walk through the



We Come Together at Night, 2017. Oil on panel by Jules de Balincourt www.julesdebalincourt.com

pampered hills of Hampshire, Surrey and Kent might seem like a soft diversion. But if done with reverence it could help rebuild our relationship with Nature.

This is particularly important in Britain, one of the world's most denatured countries. Here, the Pilgrims' Way has much to offer: Surrey is England's most wooded county, and Kent is top for ancient woodland. At a time when tree planting in England is only a tiny fraction of what's needed, inspiration can be drawn from the natural reforestation on Hucking Estate in Kent. Yet the Way can also be a raw encounter with our brutal culture of over-consumption. Ever-present motorways – the M25, M23, M26, M20 and M2 – slice and strangle the route with noise and pollution. At one point, trudging alongside the M25, I dreamed of a time when this ring road would be rewilded into a circle of green.

Remembrance also lies at the heart of pilgrimage, and along the Pilgrims' Way are examples of those who have loved Nature and defended justice in the past. These range from Farnham-born radical campaigner William Cobbett to Mary Watts, who established an artistic settlement in the woods at Compton with her husband,

George. Fritz Schumacher also lived in Caterham, just north of the Way, and it was here that he wrote his 1973 classic, *Small Is Beautiful*.

Pilgrimage eventually comes to an end, the outward journey completed, hopefully with old burdens lifted and souls recharged with both the beauty of Nature and the stories of the rebels and martyrs met along the way. For me the special secret of this Pilgrims' Way is how it helps us grasp the long arc of time we're called upon to cherish the Earth. Many still commemorate Thomas Becket 850 years after his martyrdom. Can we cast our minds forward 850 years and act today to protect the world of 2870 from climate catastrophe and planetary extinction? Perhaps we can. And perhaps one December dusk a pink yacht with a Honduran name might sail down the nave of Canterbury cathedral in celebration of the martyrs who stand up for creation. R

berta.copin.org

Nick Robins is a historian and sustainable investor and works at the LSE's Grantham Research Institute. www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute

Let us wake up! Let us wake up, humankind!

We're out of time. We must shake our conscience free of the rapacious capitalism, racism and patriarchy that will only assure our own self-destruction. The Gualcarque River has called upon us, as have other gravely threatened rivers. We must answer their call.

Our Mother Earth – militarised, fenced-in, poisoned, a place where basic human rights are systematically violated – demands that we take action. Let us build societies that are able to coexist in a dignified way, in a way that protects life. Let us come together and remain hopeful as we defend and care for the blood of this Earth and of its spirits.

*Berta Cáceres' acceptance speech,
2015 Goldman Prize ceremony*

Protest, protect, build

Satish Kumar welcomes a global movement for change

Millions of people around the world are engaged in actions for change. For the want of a better name I call it the holistic environmental movement. I include the adjective 'holistic' to indicate that this global movement is and needs to be committed to enhancing the natural environment, the social environment and the spiritual environment.

I bring these three environments together because if the ecosystem is not in good health there can be no social wellbeing, as it is not possible to have healthy people on a sick planet. Similarly, without social justice there can be no ecological justice, because if large numbers of people are oppressed and struggling for survival they will not have the capacity, the energy or the opportunity to be mindful of planetary wellbeing. And without spiritual values underpinning and informing our worldview, ecological sustainability and social solidarity will remain superficial and skin-deep.

We, the activists in this holistic environmental movement, act at three levels simultaneously: we protest, we protect and we build.

First of all we protest. We stand up against the unjust order and against the forces that destroy the fragile ecological network and benign social systems.

All great movements of the past and present have used the way of protest to highlight the unsustainable exploitation of the natural world and the unjust subjugation of vulnerable people, which has been and still is practised in the guise of class, caste, race, religion, economic growth and other labels. The actions of Extinction Rebellion and the school strikes of Greta Thunberg and thousands of other young people around the world are two of the recent examples of eco-activism using the way of protest. Similarly, worldwide demonstrations organised by Black Lives Matter are examples of protest as social activism.

Of course protest movements, in order to be inclusive of all ordinary citizens, must be carried out nonviolently and peacefully. History shows that through nonviolent activism and passive resistance great changes have been and can be accomplished. The movements led by Mahatma Gandhi for India's independence and by Martin Luther King for racial harmony in the US are two of the many shining stories of nonviolent resistance that applied the method of protest against unjust social orders.

But protest alone is not enough. We also need to protect existing cultures and systems that are good, decentralised, regenerative and sustainable, such as local economies, Indigenous cultures and human-scale organic farms. We need to protect biodiversity and cultural diversity. Tried and tested social traditions and practices are constantly being destroyed in the name of progress and development. Indigenous communities are treated as backward and are forced to adopt the ways of so-called civilisation. In this speedy urbanisation large numbers of thriving villages and rural communities are being devastated. In the process of rapid industrialisation and mechanisation, arts, crafts and cottage industries are being eliminated. Self-sustaining small farmers, who still produce at least 60% of the world's food, are increasingly marginalised and their livelihoods are threatened. In pursuit of rapid globalisation local economies are rendered ineffectual. Of course we protest against these trends and against energy-intensive production, wasteful consumption and limitless carbon emissions, which are causing global warming. But we do more than protest: we also work to ensure that these coherent communities and ancient cultures are respected, cherished and protected.

Yet this stride towards the protection of existing, durable cultures is still not enough. We also need to build alternatives. We need to build decentralised local economies, sustainable, small-scale



Unite by Sadhvi Konchada @drawocado

businesses, and regenerative farming projects based on systems such as agro-ecology and permaculture. We also need to create new educational institutions and programmes to teach both young and older people how to live well without damaging the integrity of our precious Earth and without undermining the wellbeing of all life, human and other-than-human. We need to build community-owned energy systems utilising wind, water and sun. We need to build new and resilient communities of people who are committed to a way of life rooted in solidarity, cooperation and mutual aid. Such successful alternative examples can and will inspire and persuade others to engage in constructive activities leading to a more resilient and regenerative future.

The trinity of protest, protect and build is not limited to external transformation only. To complement external transformation we need internal transformation that nourishes the spiritual environment.

In order to protest successfully against materialism, consumerism, greed and lust for power and money, we need to embrace non-materialistic values. And in order to protect community cohesion and social harmony, we need to cultivate altruism and go beyond the egotistical chase for name, fame, recognition, status and position. For such inner transformation we need a change of heart, a change of attitude, a change of values and philosophy, a change of our worldview and ultimately a change of consciousness. External transformation has to go hand in hand with internal transformation.

Our actions of protest and protect need to be rooted in a deep recognition of the unity and dignity of life and in a profound conviction that all life is sacred. By embracing a sense of the sacred we cultivate compassion and reverence for all life. We cultivate frugality, simplicity, moderation and restraint. We become the embodiment of change while demanding that external systems change. Personal transformation and political transformation become a simultaneous process, like walking on two legs.

The global holistic environmental movement goes beyond the dualistic trap of capitalism vs. socialism. Both these 'isms' are anthropocentric, whereas the holistic environmental movement is biocentric.

Capitalism puts financial capital and the profit motive at the centre of all human activity. In capitalism people become instruments of profit, and Nature becomes a resource for the economy, whereas in the holistic environmental movement money and the economy are merely means to an end, and the end is to create wellbeing for people and for the Earth. Nature is not a resource for the economy, to be exploited for financial gain: it is the source of life itself.

Socialism, as the word implies, puts social interest above the interest of the natural environment. Historically socialism has turned out to involve large-scale, centralised and industrialised state capitalism. Democratic socialism is of course better than capitalism, but the word 'socialism' is anthropocentric. Holistic environmentalists advocate social solidarity and social justice, but they do not adhere to any one particular political philosophy. Moreover, social justice and Earth jurisprudence are integral parts of each other.

Holistic environmentalists put quality of life above quantity of production and consumption

The holistic environmental movement promotes local, decentralised, human-scale, pluralist and bottom-up economics and politics through participatory democracy. Holistic environmentalists put quality of life above quantity of production and consumption. They focus on the growth of the wellbeing of people and the Earth rather than on economic growth. In the view of deep ecology, economics and politics should serve the interest of Mother Earth as much as the interest of people. The rights of Mother Earth are as fundamental as human rights. There is no contradiction between the two.

We may never accomplish a perfect state of natural harmony or social solidarity or personal enlightenment, but we keep striving towards such a balanced way of being. Transformation is a lifelong journey, not a destination. Transformation is a process, not a product. Transformation is continuous evolution, not a static state. R

Satish Kumar is the author of *Elegant Simplicity*, available from www.resurgence.org/shop

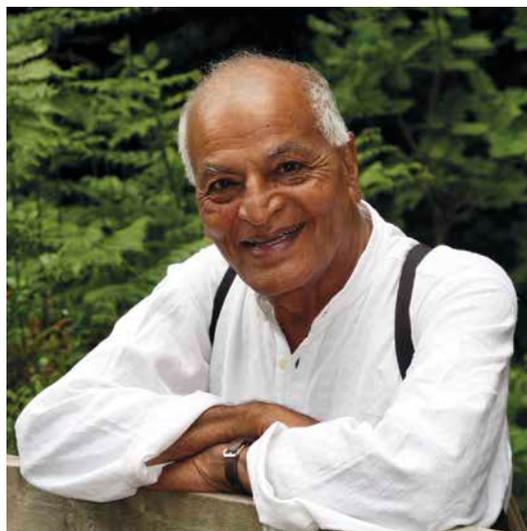




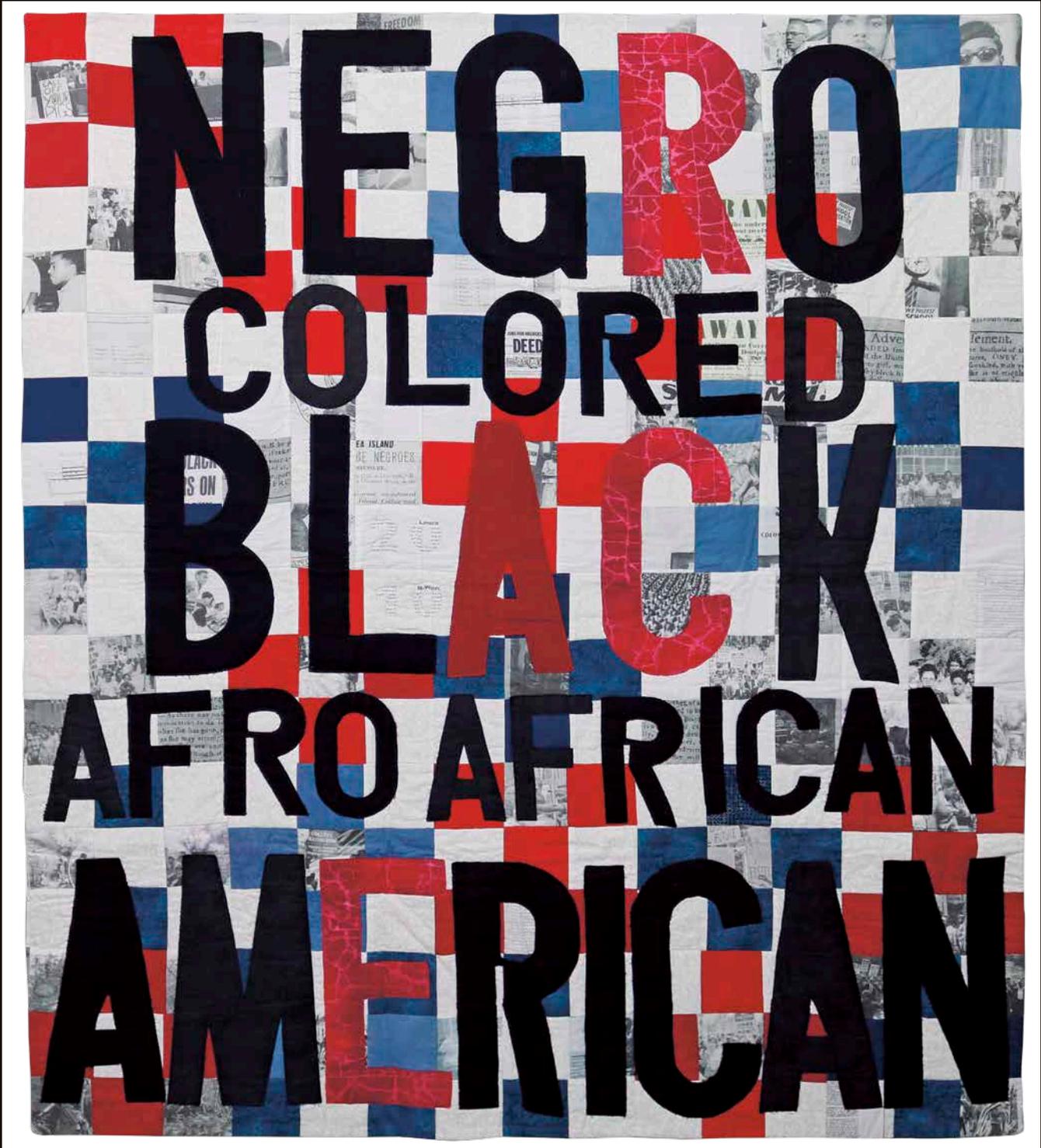
Illustration by Timothy David Cooper
@timothydavidcooper

Tea time

Thich Nhat Hanh shares a moment of connection

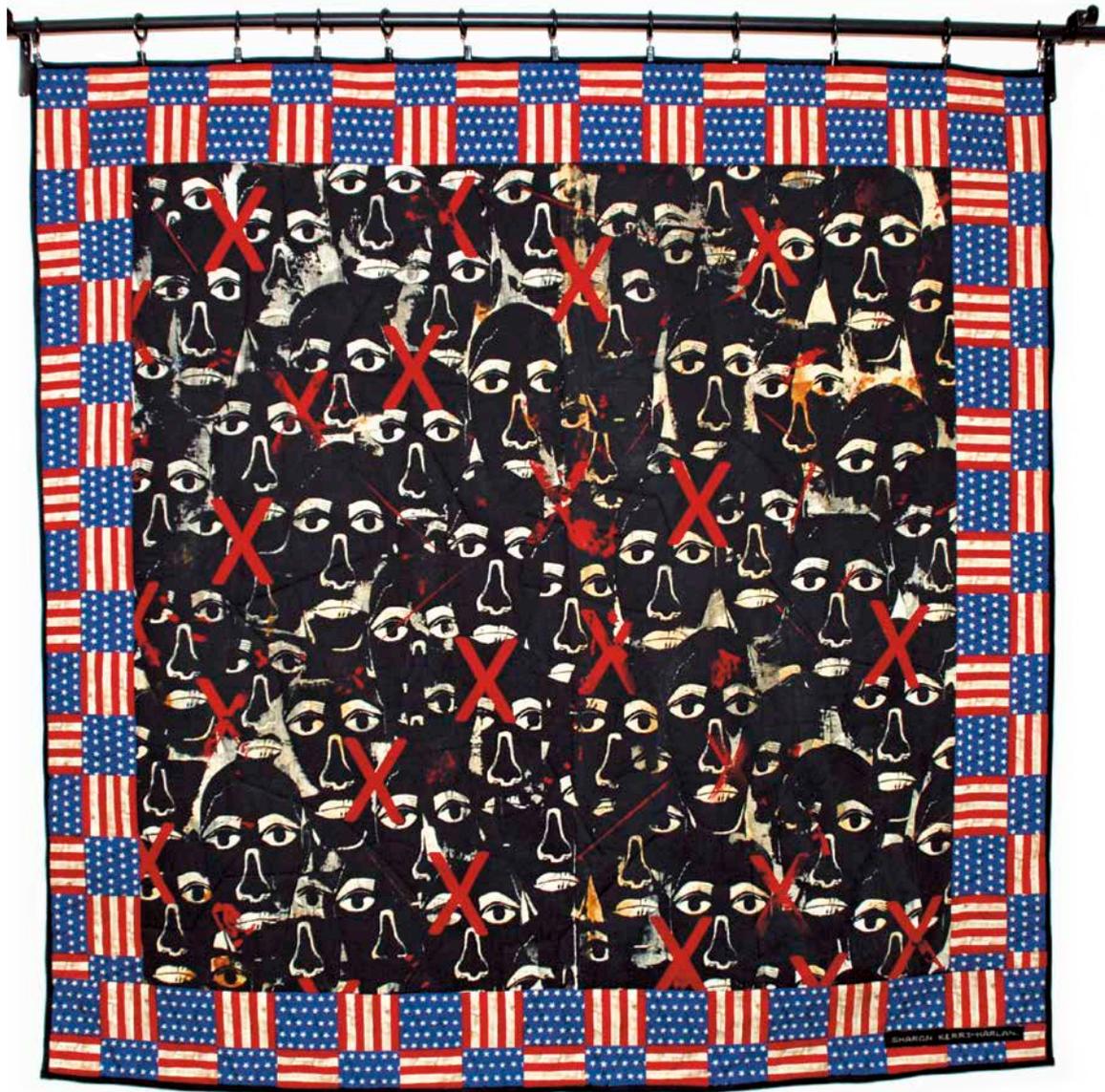
Drinking tea is a wonderful way to set aside time to communicate with yourself. When I drink my tea, I just drink my tea. I stop all my thinking and focus my attention on the tea. There is only the tea. There is only me. Between me and the tea there is a connection. I breathe in, and I am aware that my in-breath is there, I am aware that my body is there, and I am aware that the tea is there. It's wonderful to have the time to drink your tea, to be there, body and mind together, established in the here and the now. When you are truly present, you become real, and the tea becomes real.

This is an extract from *How to Connect* by Thich Nhat Hanh, published by Ebury Publishing (2020).



History Lesson by Michelle Flamer

Quilts and quilt making are especially important to African American culture



Bloody Sunday by Sharon Kerry-Harlan

Quilt-making for social justice

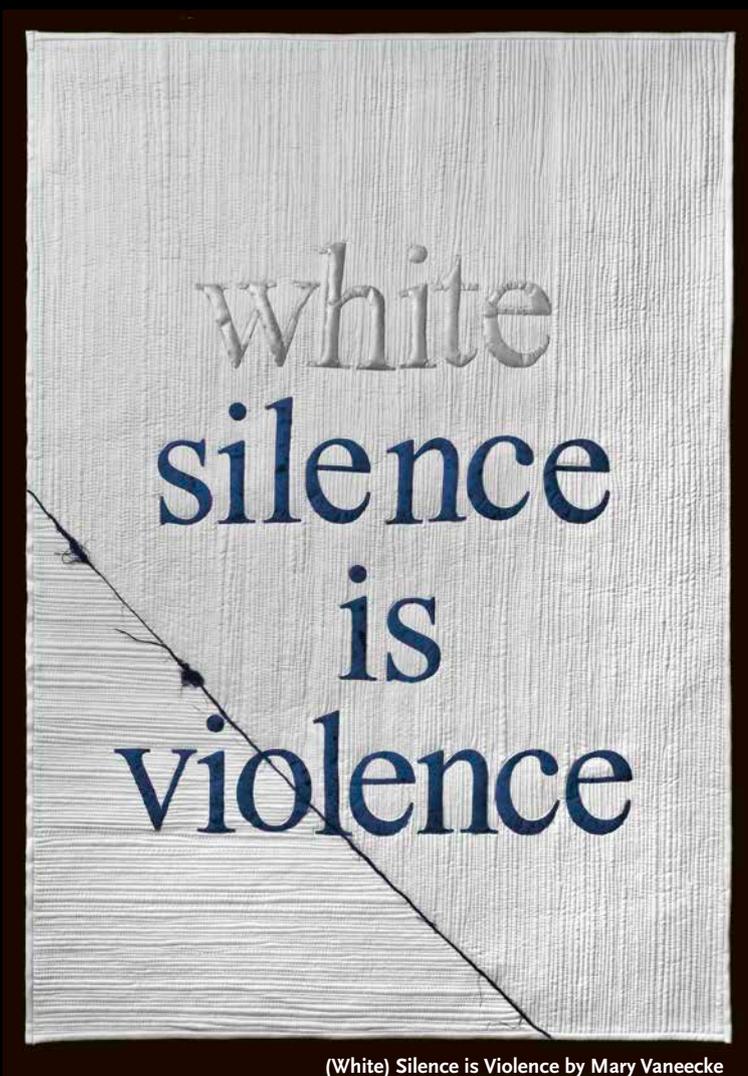
Women are telling the story of racism in America through a powerful medium, writes Carolyn Mazloomi

“Mama! Mama!” There is nothing more powerful to mobilise a collective of women than the cries of their children. Such cries serve to herald a call to arms for such a time as this. George Floyd’s dying words ignited this call on behalf of every child who has suffered and succumbed to the evil trinity of brutality, inequity and racism in America. A mother’s first instincts are to protect, to comfort, and to teach. These are her counter-trinity tools. Historically, quilting has long been deployed as the mother-art evoking those tools as a maternal

response to a child’s cry for protection and comfort, and to their need for learning.

I am an African American woman born in the Jim Crow segregated south, and I continue to survive the psychological and physical violence of white supremacy. I grew up seeing African Americans treated poorly by whites, killed by whites, and denied access to proper housing, education and health care. Racism in America is on the rise, and it’s ‘open season’ on Black folks.

I cried for days after seeing the video of Floyd’s murder. Floyd’s cry to his mama for help mirrors a symbolic guttural cry for help from the belly of



(White) Silence is Violence by Mary Vanecke

People must hear our stories,
feel and understand our pain

our nation. African Americans are crying out for fairness, justice, equality, and for protection from brutal police. In response to that cry, and to help educate the public on brutality, inequities and racism in America, I was inspired to curate *We Are the Story*, a series of quilt exhibitions on racism and police brutality. The exhibits will take place at various venues in Minneapolis, the city of Floyd's murder. As an artist and curator, I firmly believe art has the capacity to touch the spirit, engage, educate and heal in ways that words alone cannot.

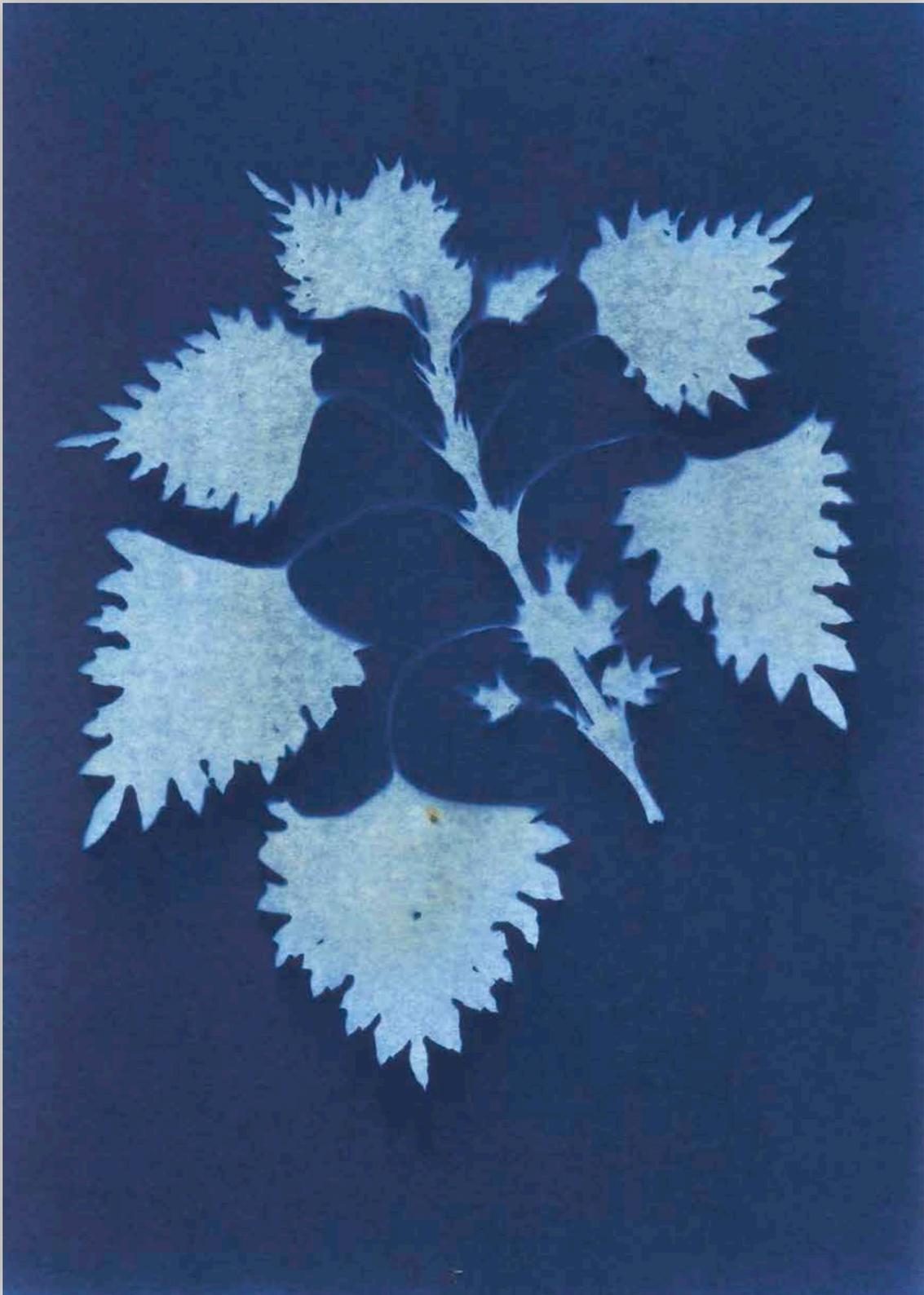
Why use quilts to tell this story of issues of race in America? Because quilting is one of America's most powerful art forms, with its widespread appeal and its association with comfort, warmth and healing. Quilts and quilt making are especially important to African American culture, because the art form was historically one of the few mediums accessible to marginalised groups to tell their own story, to provide warmth for their families, and to empower them with a voice. Through cloth, people can relate to history visually (story quilts), as opposed to reading about history, in ways that reach our hearts. We as human beings have a cradle-to-grave affair with cloth. Cloth is the first thing we are swathed in upon birth, and the last thing that touches the body upon our death. Most people are familiar with cloth. Telling a story, regardless of the subject, seems more palatable in cloth form.

The quilts as visual media pose an alternative and non-threatening approach to topics of social issues, about people and events that are embedded in the American memory as sensitive cultural parameters of race, class and gender. The artwork prompts a dialogue between the artist/interpreter and the viewer, challenging existing notions and posing questions that serve to move the discussion of racial reconciliation forward into the next generation of problem-solvers.

Art matters. I cannot be silent. Each exhibited quilt indispensably enriches us all, has potential to advance the conversation on racism and equality in the United States, and works toward shaping human potential. Does the viewer 'get it'? Viewers are mesmerised by the beauty, the ingenuity, and the stories the quilts convey. I have actually seen viewers walk away in tears. I have received letters from viewers profoundly touched by the quilts, vowing to educate themselves on African American history and culture. People must hear our stories, feel and understand our pain. I will not be protesting in the streets; however, I will let the artwork do the talking. **R**

Carolyn Mazloomi is an artist, writer and curator. carolynlmazloomi.com

We Are the Story is presented by Textile Center and Women of Color Quilters Network (WCQN) until 12 June 2021. textilecentermn.org/wearethestory



Stinging Nettle by Wendy Barrett

QUARANTINE HERBARIUM is an ongoing project that encourages people to collect weeds from their garden or immediate locality and take photos using cyanotype sunprints for online and physical exhibition. The project was launched by three photographers, Gem Toes-Crichton, William Arnold and John A. Blythe during lockdown as an antidote to 'plant blindness', our cognitive bias of animals over plants.

For more information on how to make a cyanotype and the project visit linktr.ee/quarantineherbarium



Becoming fungus

Camilla Nelson asks whether art can bring us closer to empathising with other species

How is a mushroom like a human? Unlike plants or mushrooms, humans have no roots. (That's almost too obvious.) But the distribution systems by which we share information and nutrients are no less tangible. We're just not in the habit of noticing them – until they break. Instead of roots we have roads, rails, shipping lanes and flight paths via food, materials and other resources, which are distributed on cars, lorries, planes and trains to shops or homes for human consumption. Our nutritional networks are enabled by transport routes of various kinds. What about information? The mycelial 'wood wide web' transports not only nutrients, but also electrical and biochemical signals, analogous to neural pathways. The wood wide web suggests itself as a mass biotic brain.

So, where is *our* shared brain? Whereas information used to principally be distributed by word of mouth or written in books stored in libraries, needing roads and rails to transport them, the majority of information is now sent digitally via satellite signal or electronic cable. Our collective brain is buried in the earth, suspended between buildings or vibrating through the air around us. We humans are the fruiting bodies of these networks: the mushrooms to their mycelium. We are the elements that generate and reproduce these systems of transportation and information. These systems feed us and we feed them in return. But the connection between fungi and humans doesn't stop there. Like plants and trees, humans not only couldn't survive, but also would never have evolved without fungi. Fungi are our metabolic enablers.



Mycelium Matrix: Fruiting Bodies II by Greg Allen

Just as they facilitate the uptake of nutrients for plants and trees, fungi enable human digestion too. Without the right balance of fungi, bacteria and digestive enzymes in our gut, we wouldn't be able to break down and absorb our food. But who is feeding whom?

Might the incorporation of these other-than-human strategies help us better work *with* rather than *against* the rest of life on Earth?

During the height of the coronavirus pandemic a slew of calls went out from arts organisations

across the UK calling for creative work that would help us imagine a better way of living in harmony with the world around us rather than constantly hindering it and, by natural extension, ourselves. I drew up a proposal for *BECOMING*, a series of one-hour radio essays for Soundart Radio to weave poetry, non-fiction, theory, sound art and performance together in a shamanistic effort to become other in order to envision a better way of becoming human. My logic at the time was that, as government responses to the coronavirus had shut human activity down, the rest of the world had thrived. Unmown verges had flowered and seeded, animals had moved into urban centres, air and waters had cleared, bird and fish populations had begun to recover. Each episode in the series of six was designed



to suggest a more sustainable way of becoming human, inspired by what it meant to be fungus, plant, insect, bird and animal respectively. Might the incorporation of these other-than-human strategies help us better work *with* rather than *against* the rest of life on Earth and help mitigate the climate crisis? Could art and imagination bring us closer to empathising with other species in order to feel the threat our behaviour poses to them, more urgently? Of course it's more complicated than that. Even though couched in world-saving sensitivity, the anthropocentric bias is still there: humans have messed things up and we need to make it better. But as I began making the first episode, 'Becoming Fungus', I began to wonder whether that mess is exactly what the mushrooms want.

I interviewed biologist Merlin Sheldrake about his new book, *Entangled Life*. One of the things Sheldrake references is that long, long before the Earth enjoyed even a sniff of chlorophyll, it was inhabited by mushrooms. Not just a small carpet of fungi spread beneath trees. There were no trees, but just giant mushrooms. Now look at them: small, for the most part, but no less influential. As Sheldrake's book details, fungi make up one of life's six kingdoms, but over 90% of this kingdom remains undocumented. We are largely ignorant when it comes to the wide-ranging capacity of fungi, but what is already evident is that despite being small they are powerful. Fungi influence the planet's atmosphere through the release of spores. They can break down oil spills, nuclear waste, glyphosate and even TNT. They are, as Sheldrake



Mycelium Matrix: The Wall by Greg Allen
www.slategallery.ca/greg-allen

notes, prodigious metabolisers. And so are we. We are living through the sixth mass extinction, largely fuelled, we think, by the change human activity has initiated within the ecosystems of this planet. But if, as many scientists are increasingly witnessing, our brains are in our guts, maybe it's the fungus that's been running the show all along. Maybe humans are just puppets inhabited by mushrooms in order to bring about the end of our species (and others with it) for fungi to be the uncontested giants once more. Too far?

In an effort to develop a better kinship with mushrooms, the podcast includes interviews with a number of artists and writers about their fungal contributions. Among them, eco-poet Helen Moore reads her poem 'Mycelium and the Mental Dance of Fruiting Bodies', which is

about stinkhorns, and we discuss John Cage's mushroom-inspired haikus. Secondary to his fame as a poet and composer, Cage is well known for being a devoted amateur mushroom hunter. Perhaps it was the joy of the unexpected, chance encounter that he enjoyed, in both mycelial and musical terms.

A similar enthusiasm for the unexpected surfaces in poet and academic Sharon Kivland's account of Sigmund Freud's mushroom-hunting practice. In her book *Freud on Holiday: Volume IV – A Cavernous Defile, Part I*, Kivland quotes Martin Freud describing his father, "when he spotted a fine mushroom, flinging his hat over it and blowing on a flat silver whistle he carried in the pocket of his waistcoat. [...] The children would run up to admire the mushroom when it was revealed with a flourish as the hat was removed."

Stephen Emmerson's fungi-inspired poetics is similarly unusual and no less exciting. His fungal translations of poet and novelist Rainer Maria Rilke grew from mushroom spores pasted between the pages of the book: the mushrooms translate the text. This practice of multimodal translation is also modelled by Sheldrake. As part of a collaboration with the sound artist Michael Prime, he uses this same practice to translate *Entangled Life*. Oyster mushrooms emerge from the text, and Prime records audio from the electric signalling of this "mushroom book" that Sheldrake then free-styles with on the piano. Sheldrake then literally eats his words, by eating the mushrooms.

When concluding my interview with Sheldrake, my final question was, "What fungal strategies could humans most benefit from adopting?" He suggested that a decentralised infrastructure might be more mycelial. Decentralisation – not only in terms of food and resources, but also in terms of digital information sharing – might improve our resilience in times of crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic. All very sensible. He then went on to talk about revising the idea of the self. Fungus, he says, "pours itself" into its host. It inhabits the other in order to feed itself. Perhaps, if we understood better what it was to be other, such an extended sense of self might increase our compassion and bring our activity better in line with the rest of the organisms with which we share this planet. It all sounded very convincing, and perhaps the mushroom-infused poetry, music and prose will indeed help us to develop an improved fungal compassion. But, when you put it all together, it does begin to feel a little suspicious... Maybe he's on their side. Maybe I am too. Maybe we are all already giant mushrooms. R

Camilla Nelson is a British language artist, small press publisher, creative programmer and freelance academic. www.camillanelson.co.uk

A kind of hope

Jane MacNamee is encouraged by a more optimistic take on human nature

Humankind: A Hopeful History

Rutger Bregman

Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020

ISBN: 9781408898932

Should we believe Hobbes, or Rousseau? Are we innately selfish, or inherently kind? Key questions in our understanding of human nature for centuries, these are the starting points of Rutger Bregman's revolutionary approach. It's time, he argues, for a "new realism", and to challenge the entrenched views rooted in Hobbes, which still underpin modern society and perpetuate its cynical forces. It's time, in short, he says, to "Turn society on its head."

The culmination of seven years' working at De Correspondent news website and rigorous multi-disciplinary research, his radical idea is apparently simple: "That most people, deep down, are pretty decent." In championing human goodness, he's prepared to meet with cynicism and even ridicule, particularly from the powers that be, but is undeterred: "To believe people are hardwired to be kind isn't sentimental or naive. On the contrary, it's courageous and realistic to believe in peace and forgiveness."

There is, of course, a significant body of literature and research stacked up against his defence of human kindness: Machiavelli, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Gustave Le Bon's *The Psychology of Crowds* and the findings of social psychologists like Stanley Milgram, to name a few. All offer varying endorsements of veneer theory, maintaining that if we scratch beneath the flimsy surface of civilisation, all hell breaks loose. Bregman suggests that by accepting this as the dominant theory, we overlook substantial evidence in support of our innate sociability and friendliness as descendants of what he calls "Homo Puppy".

The obvious question arises that if Homo Puppy is so friendly, how can we also be capable of any



Group Hug (Riso print) by Mina Braun
www.minabraun.com @minabraunillustration

number of cruel acts from bullying and abuse right up to the most heinous crimes against humanity? The truth appears to be not in a straightforward answer as to whether we are good or bad, but in our paradoxical nature.

Our sociability, we learn, has a flip side. We tend to be 'groupish'. Whilst this didn't seem to pose too much of a problem for our nomadic foraging ancestors, when we started to settle and appropriate it triggered a heightened sense of external threat. It is a paradox that can be exploited by those in authority to pit us against each other at all levels of society from education to business to national and international relations.

Bregman's alternative view explores what can happen if we shift our focus from the flip side back to our sociable self with its innate capacity for kindness. He offers countless examples from across the globe where people didn't fight,

but found a way to make peace, didn't vanish when someone needed help, and didn't descend into chaos during a crisis, but came together. He shows just how powerful believing the best rather than the worst in people can be, through a range of case studies: the employee-led Dutch health care organisation Buurtzorg; the inno-

“Think as carefully about which information you feed your mind as you do about the food you feed your body”

vative school Agora, where children learn to be autonomous and engaged, with “minimal but vital structure” in place; and the reduction in rates of recidivism among former inmates from Halden maximum-security prison in Norway through the adoption of more humane prison management.

Humankind offers a realistic and compelling argument for communication, trust, seeing things from different perspectives and training our compassion as forces for positive change and real democracy. Traditionally, however, such good news doesn't sell. Apparently, the media tell us, we're more interested in the sensational and the divisive, with a taste for bad apples. But the more we learn about how news and social media can stir up negative bias and skew our view of reality, the more we are asking for the truth. “Think as carefully about which information you feed your mind as you do about the food you feed your body,” advises Bregman. Written by a genuine seeker of truth, and published when we need as much well-founded hope for the future as we can find, *Humankind* couldn't have come at a better time. **R**

Jane MacNamee lives in Aberystwyth and writes on Nature, food and life by the sea.

Ecovillage people

Nat Dyer enjoys a short documentary but is left wanting more

Communities of Hope: Discovering the Ecovillages of Europe

Directed by Diego Ruiz Hidalgo & Lou Salomon

The Great Relation Films, 2020

Industrial society is killing the living world. We are part of that society. These two facts play tug-of-war in the heart of many an environmentalist. How can we reconcile them in our lives? *Communities of Hope*, a documentary available for free online, looks for answers among those who have chosen to live in intentional, ecological villages.

It's a passion project of two newbie filmmakers, Diego Ruiz Hidalgo and Lou Salomon, who two years ago traded in their jobs and apartments for a campervan in search of wisdom in some of Europe's one hundred eco-villages. The core of the film is interviews with members of the Tamera community Portugal, Damanhur in Italy, and others from Iceland to Russia.

The message is broad and holistic: it's all about connection and cooperation. The transition to the regenerative society we need requires a personal, inner transformation. The way we relate to ourselves shapes how we relate to

others and the rest of the world. We need to wake up to our connection with all living things – and to the urgency of now. Ecological solutions are built on healthy social relationships. All excellent and essential.

Ecovillages, we are told, are “laboratories for the future”

It's not just about ideas, either: there's a focus on practical action. Deeds, not words, count. We see community members planting and harvesting, cutting wood, building outdoor toilets, and digging soil to manage water. Ecovillages, we are told, are “laboratories for the future”. They are spaces where innovations can be trialled and spread into the world. The film's release was aptly timed during the Covid-19 pandemic, which

has shown the startling change possible when world leaders recognise an emergency.

Despite this, the film-makers don't make the time in the thirty-minute film to craft a human story or make us feel for the interviewees. We end up knowing little about the community members and experts. The film shows new horizons, but at times it feels like a well-shot promotional film for the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) Europe. It never really goes for the audience's heart.

I wanted to know more about Diego and Lou's adventure behind the camera, along the lines of *Enquête de sens* ('A Quest for Meaning'), the refreshing French documentary from a few years ago. What inspired their journey? What setbacks did they have? What moved them? What did they learn about the tug-of-war inside us between ecology and industrial society? Hopefully there will be more films, so that we can find out. **R**

communitiesofhopefilm.org/watch
Nat Dyer is a freelance writer based in London. @natjdye

Listening to rocks

Myra Connell enjoys an unusual journey of connection



Stones by Moonlight by Melvyn Evans www.melvyn.evans.com

Stone Talks

Alyson Hallett

Triarchy Press, 2019

ISBN: 978191193555

Through transcribed lectures, poetry and prose, this “small book of wonder”, as described by the publisher, reveals something of Alyson Hallett’s extraordinary way of living and working.

Hallett is a poet and a mystic. Stones speak to her, starting with a pebble picked up on a beach when she was 19. It had a white cross on it, which moved and intrigued her, and it changed the course of her life from that moment.

She tells us how she has learnt to listen, particularly but not only to stones. Soon after his death, her father appears in a dream and says she must learn obedience. Grudgingly, because she is a rebel, she investigates the derivation of the word and finds that the Latin word *ob* means ‘to’, and *audire* means ‘to listen’: obedience, she concludes, means ‘to listen to!’ She will learn to be obedient to what she hears, from stones, and in her own being.

Walking up Cader Idris, in Wales, she pauses before

a solitary stone. A man stops to talk, and tells her it’s an ‘erratic’, a stone that travelled inside a glacier. This is a revelation to her: stones move. Rock is not solid and immovable. Since that moment, following various promptings, she has travelled across continents, carrying stones inscribed with a line from one of her poems: “And stones moved silently across the world.” These mysterious stones are placed, without plaque or explanation, in woodland or on city street, open to all of Nature as well as to humans.

“To do the work I do, the sacred connecting,” she writes, “I have to have days deeply alone where my own company appals me.” She must have “enough time and space to enter the place of Not Knowing”, while she makes a writer’s journeys to the underworld, in search of she knows not what.

Hallett’s achievements in terms of residencies, awards and publications are formidable, and I hope that she continues to find enough time and space to listen. In this quiet and powerful book, she amply demonstrates both the importance and the rewards of doing that. **R**

Myra Connell is a poet and psychotherapist. Her collection *House* is published by Nine Arches Press.

Teaching facts with new stories

Avi Brisman reviews a genre-busting collection

Tales of Two Planets: Stories of Climate Change and Inequality in a Divided World

John Freeman (ed.)

Penguin Books, 2020

ISBN: 9780143133926

I used to have a propensity for mistaking the lyrics for songs. “Ooh, baby, do you know that’s right! / Ooh, heaven is a place on earth” – correct lyrics: “Ooh, baby, do you know what that’s worth? / Ooh, heaven is a place on earth” from Belinda Carlisle’s ‘Heaven Is a Place on Earth’ – for example. My mistakes rarely made much sense and I was often embarrassed when I learned the correct words, although I do think that heaven can be a place on Earth – if we treat it right. (More on that later.) But every once in a while I found myself preferring my versions. Such was the case with INXS’s ‘Don’t Change’. Instead of “Don’t change for you / Don’t change a thing for me” – which Michael Hutchence actually cooed – I favoured “Don’t change the Earth / Don’t change a thing for me.” I still do.

Were future generations – assuming that future generations of humans exist – to look back at how we treated the planet and responded to the challenges of the climate crisis, they might summarise our modus operandi by invoking the pithy words of Roger Stone, disgraced henchman of US president Donald Trump: “Admit nothing, deny everything, launch counter attack.” Such has been the chorus to our approach.

The poetry and prose of the 35 writers in John Freeman’s *Tales of Two Planets: Stories of Climate Change and Inequality in a Divided World* offer a different refrain. Rather than echo the lyrics of corporate malfesants and political miscreants, the contributors have offered new hymns. Rather than change a few words, they have composed new songs. And boy, do we need them! For, as Freeman writes in his introduction, “This is not a book about policy or about statistics. We are swimming in facts, but a fact does not fully obtain the depth of a fact, the power of a fact, until it becomes part of a story.”

Tales of Two Planets takes us on an emissions-free journey around the world – from Argentina to Bangladesh, Colombia to Denmark to Egypt, Sierra Leone to Turkey to the United States. Some of the stories are memories, others vignettes; some mournful, others vexed. While we process the message of Lauren Groff’s ‘Dusk’, we encounter the futuristic Tokyo of Sayaka Murata’s ‘Survival’ (which evokes Andrew Niccols’ 1997 film *Gattaca*), the chilling allegory of Daisy Johnson’s ‘Everything’, and the blunt force of Joy

Williams’s excoriation of the moral vacuousness of big-game hunters in ‘The Psychopaths’. Fiction bleeds into creative nonfiction, which leaches into poetry. Genre distinctions disappear like the “great dome of smog” in Krys Lee’s ‘The Imperiled’.

Freeman claims that too many of our stories about climate change are about fear – “fear felt from the north for what is coming. Not enough are about how the climate crisis is being experienced across the globe.” *Tales of Two Planets* certainly helps fill that void. Readers hoping for a more buoyant vision of the future will experience more fear and should grab a life jacket for the rising tides. If we follow the wisdom and prescience of the writers here, we will need to change tune – our acts and omissions. R

Avi Brisman is a professor in the School of Justice Studies at Eastern Kentucky University and Editor-in-Chief of *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*.



Global Climate Strike, New Delhi, September 2019
Photograph by John Paul Jose @johnpauljos

Rising up from history

Fenlanders of the past have a lot to teach us, writes **Natalie Bennett**

Imperial Mud: The Fight for the Fens

James Boyce

Icon Books, 2020

ISBN: 9781785786518

To step out around the North Lincolnshire village of Epworth in summer, through large fields of industrial monoculture, with soil pulverised and depleted to a summer state of concrete, the idea that this land might – only a couple of centuries ago – have been as biologically rich as the Amazon requires a truly vivid imagination.

To see it and the neighbouring village of Haxey with their neat but rather dull suburban homes as a hotbed of radicalism, the heart of a sometimes violent struggle against central authority, producing a stream of martyrs and heroines, requires a similar leap.

In neither town will you find much reference to this history. Epworth trades entirely on its place as the birthplace of John Wesley, and reading Haxey's account of its own history on an information panel in front of the church you'll find no reference to the long-famous 1359 charter from John de Mowbray that granted the people a giant commons, a 60,000-acre wetland below the Isle of Axholme, though the charter was held in an iron-wrapped chest in the church below a stained-glass window depicting the benefactor holding it.

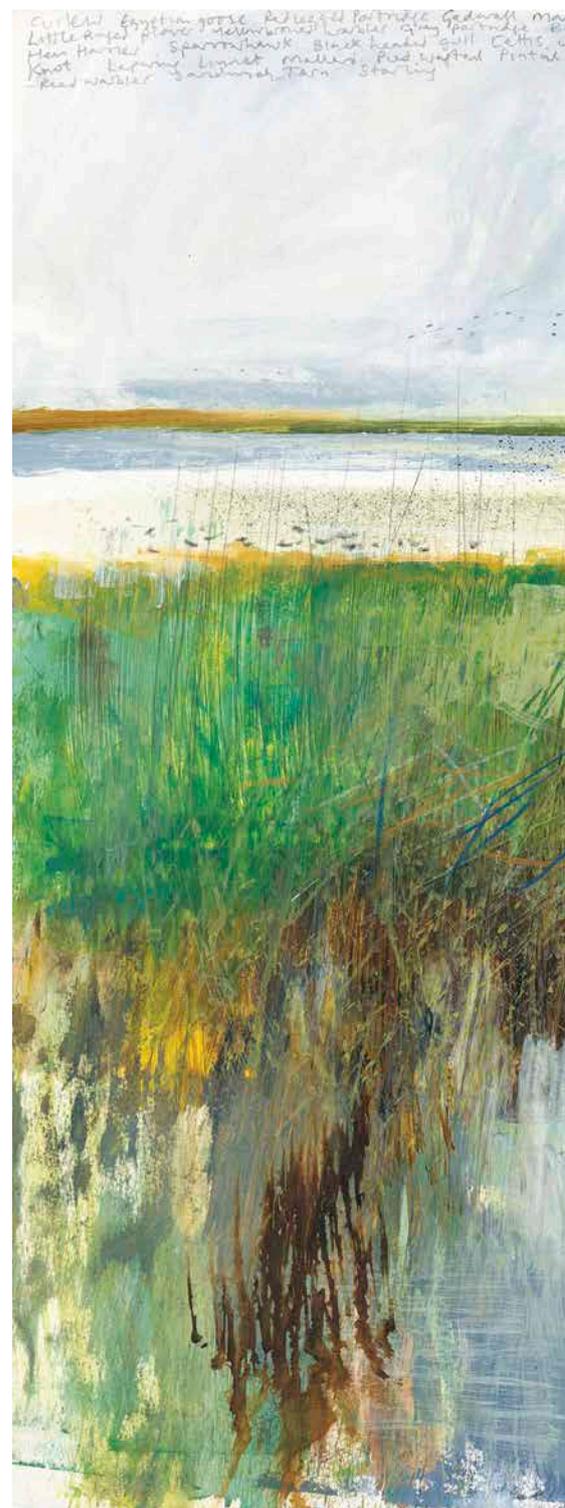
Perhaps it is because James Boyce, author of *Imperial Mud: The Fight for the Fens*, was an outsider to this area, an Australian and primarily a historian of that continent, that he saw so clearly the importance and uniqueness of the fact that the Isle (really a slightly raised

area of land above the fenland that also takes in Owston, Belton, Althorpe, Luddington and Crowle, and Wroot) was responsible for perhaps the only successful peasants' revolt in British history.

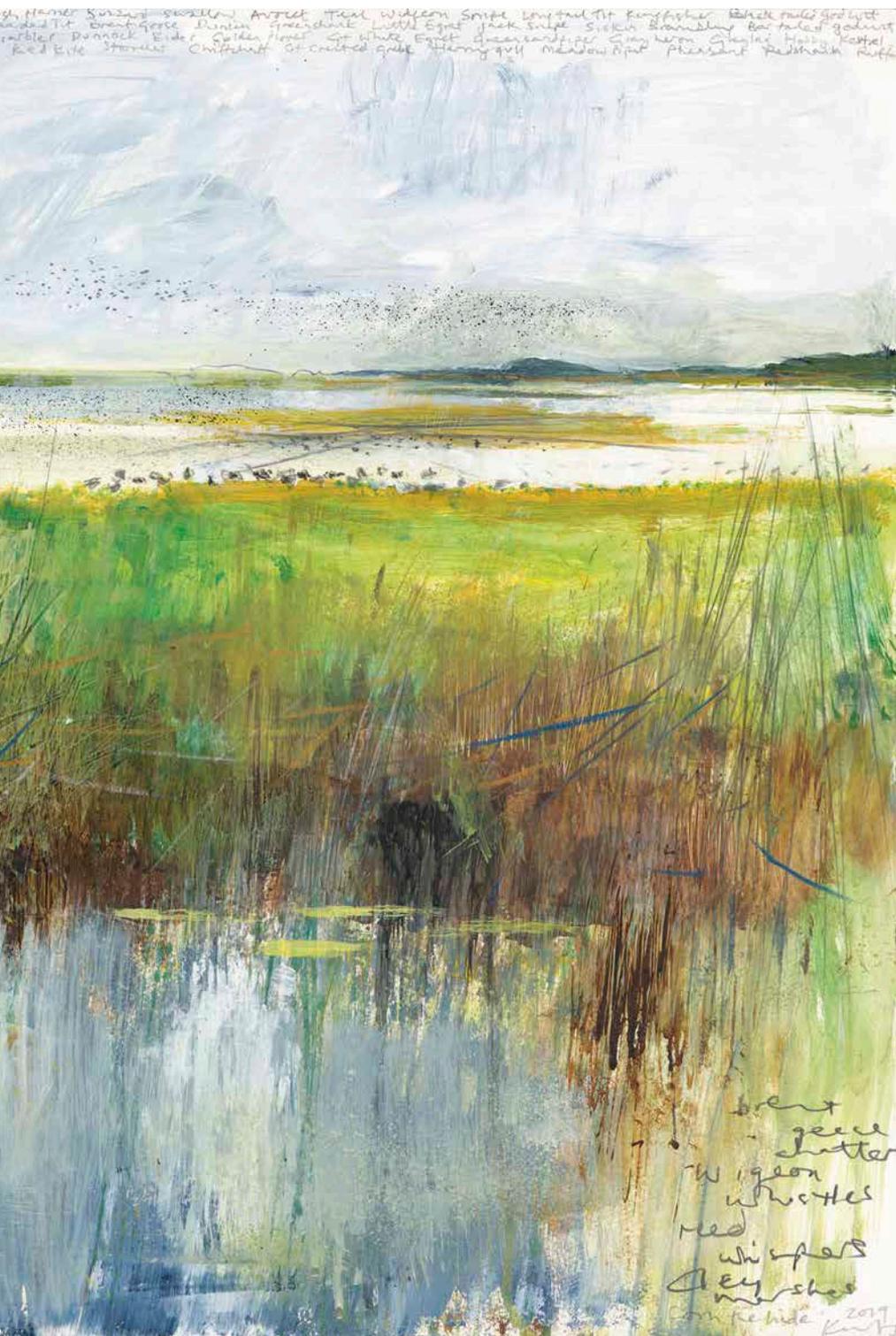
That for more than a century, up until the late 1700s, the fenlanders here, united in their relatively equal landholdings, militant and determined, held off the destruction of the source of their relative wealth and independence, the rich natural resources of the fen, is truly remarkable against the forces of monarch and aristocrat-backed engineers. That historians have made so little of it is surely a reflection of the narrow, urban and often London-centric perspective that blights so much historical perspective.

But this isn't just subaltern history, recovering the triumph and victories of the poor. There is also a global perspective, that as an award-winning historian of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), Boyce is well-equipped to capture.

For *Imperial Mud*, barring the temporary victory of the Isle of Axholme, is an account of outside conquest, of the destruction of thriving economic and social systems and cultures that has huge similarities with – and would provide models for – the ravages that the British Empire would roll out around the world. It's a reminder, as I've recently been hearing in the Pax Britannica podcast reflecting on Irish plantations and Scottish repression, that most tactics rolled out with such cost in blood and suffering around the



... the outcome of drainage works was not increased productivity, but rather the redirection of the results into the pockets of large landowners



Painting by Kurt Jackson www.kurtjackson.com

red-tinted parts of the globe had benefited from honing at home.

But this isn't, mostly, big-picture 'tides of history' writing. It's a lively, affectionate, colourful account of individuals from all walks of life living their lives and particularly standing up for themselves with passion, control and careful planning. So, imagine this:

"At 2pm on 13 August 1628 in a field south of Haxey, a group of women

distracted drainage workers with verbal abuse while the men ambushed them from behind and started throwing volleys of stones. Some of Vermuyden's men were thrown into the dyke and held under with long poles. According to the official report, threats were made to break limbs and burn the men who did not leave the Isle ... although the intent seems to have been only to frighten the conscripted workers

since no one was maimed or killed. Once the work site had been captured, drainage works were destroyed, and wheelbarrows and other implements burned. It was estimated that between 300 and 500 people were involved in the action."

And these were individuals who had a lot to defend. When I took a walk from Epworth (No. 11 in the *Lincolnshire and the Wolds Ordnance Survey Pathfinder Guide*) through the Turbery Nature reserve (turbery being the medieval right to collect peat, heather and gorse for fuel), the richness of this tiny preserved pocket reminded me of a statistic I once heard, that an African savannah in its natural state is 100 times more biologically productive than farmland. The figure for the fens is surely in the same ballpark.

Boyce writes: "Peat, eels, game, feathers, hay, and dairy products ... found a ready market. The demand for reed (it was much longer-lasting than straw as a roofing material) grew fast during the population growth of the 18th century. In the deepest fen grew the particularly valuable giant saw-sedge *Cladium mariscus*, highly sought after as a capping ridge as it could keep out rain for generations. Various other wild plants were harvested and sold for bedding, baskets and clogs. Pollarded willows were cut and sold for poles, baskets, wood and firewood..."

Boyce notes that Robert Carter, a disaffected landowner who wrote an anti-drainage pamphlet in 1772, saw clearly that the outcome of drainage works was not increased productivity, but rather the redirection of the results into the pockets of large landowners.

There is growing interest in the fens and the possibility of wetland restoration as Britain reconsiders, with 'public money for public goods', its land use, carbon storage in our climate emergency, and state as one of the world's most Nature-depleted nations. We can learn from Boyce's work.

And if you want help with the imagination part, Michelle Paver's typically intensively researched and beautifully told *Wakenhyrst*, a gothic horror tale set in the fens, is a good place to go. R

Natalie Bennett is a member of the House of Lords and a member of the Green Party.

Rock against Racism

Catherine Early reviews a documentary about the 1970s movement

White Riot

Directed by Rubika Shah, 2020

Rubika Shah's documentary *White Riot* opens with archive footage of clashes between police and black and minority ethnic people on the streets of 1970s Britain, sound-tracked by The Clash's 'London Calling'. The scenes clearly set the backdrop for her story – a nation divided by high unemployment and the rise of the National Front, its supporters egged on by the right-wing press.

Over the next 80 minutes, the film charts the Rock Against Racism (RAR) movement, formed in 1976 after a racist outburst by blues and rock guitarist Eric Clapton at a gig in which he encouraged fans to vote for Tory MP Enoch Powell and declared that Britain must stop itself from becoming a "black colony".

Though Clapton has apologised in the years since, the tirade was the spark

that led Red Saunders, a performer and music photographer, to found RAR. He was joined by a small group of mainly white, left-wing anti-racist campaigners, including an office manager, a photographer and a graphic designer.

“Peeling away the Union Jack to reveal the swastika”

RAR had its own fanzine, *Temporary Hoarding*, and in the absence of social media and the internet used posters and tireless letter writing, replying to “sackfuls” of mail from like-minded people to recruit supporters from all over the country, turning the organisation into a huge movement. As the National Front recruited children outside schools, RAR helped its members to set up multicultural punk and reggae gigs to act as rallying points for the resistance.

White Riot blends fresh interviews with the leaders of RAR and musicians who supported it with archive footage and montages of newspaper headlines of the day. Revelations of the extent of racism in the TV of the day and support for the National Front among the ranks of the police make uncomfortable viewing.

The film concludes with a huge antifascist carnival in Victoria Park in 1978, featuring X-Ray Spex, Steel Pulse, and The Clash giving a raucous rendition of 'White Riot' – a song that had been hijacked by white supremacists who “clearly hadn't read the lyrics”, band member Topper Headon observed wryly, referring to the song's real meaning as a rallying call to white people to protest against racism.

Saunders describes RAR's aim as “peeling away the Union Jack to reveal the swastika”. The film discusses “all-round family British racism” and “the idea that we are still living, consciously or unconsciously, with the legend of colonialism” – a point that brings the debate right up to the minute, with the recent Black Lives Matter protests. The film has potentially missed a trick here by ending abruptly in 1979 – some comment from RAR's founders on the intervening years could have been very insightful.

The parallels with recent British history are striking, including the rise of far-right populism and social unrest. Saunders concludes the film with his reflection that “One of the wonderful things about RAR was it was just ordinary people thinking, ‘We can do this, we can change the world.’” As the climate emergency and Covid-19 continue to expose continuing inequality around the world, let's hope that today's protest movements can follow suit. R

Catherine Early is chief reporter for *The Ecologist*.



Coventry, 1981 © Syd Shelton

Taking back the land

Adam Weymouth reviews a book that seeks to break boundaries

The Book of Trespass: Crossing the Lines That Divide Us

Nick Hayes

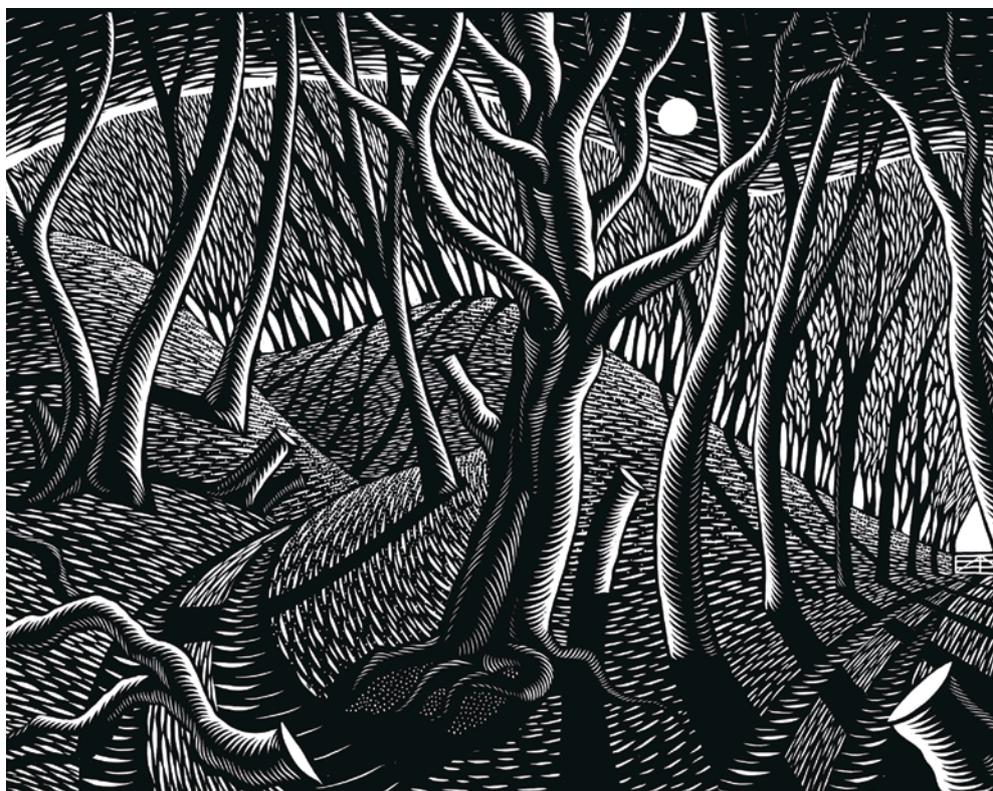
Bloomsbury, 2020

ISBN: 9781526604699

We have been asleep. We take our weekend walks down permissive footpaths, hemmed in by barbed wire. We have been excluded from 90% of England's land and 97% of its waterways. 'The commons' has become a romanticised notion of an almost mythic past. Even the free parties of the early nineties have morphed into the boutique festivals of today. On whose watch did 1% of England's population end up owning half the country? And how might we take some of it back? At the end of the first chapter of *The Book of Trespass*, Nick Hayes finds himself at the closed gates of an estate close to his childhood stomping grounds. "I put my hands on the flint wall," he writes, "and climb over." It is that simple. And as he does this, he lifts the veil upon this other, hidden England.

Trespass and moral failure have long been spoken of as two sides of the same coin: we talk of crossing the line, being on the straight and narrow, straying from the path. Hayes embraces this, roaming the estates with a merry cheekiness, rolling joints, cooking bangers over his campfires and skinny-dipping in the ornamental ponds. But the act of trespass itself is legally slippery, and as the book unfolds, and as Hayes strays across the country, he simultaneously walks us through the philosophical and judicial developments that have come to allow an individual to assert ownership over what once was common heritage. It is a story that goes back to the Norman Conquest and unfolds through the enclosures of England's own common land before we exported the model to the colonies.

And as the boundary walls went up, they went up also in our minds, "a



Artwork by @nickhayesillustration

manmade spell". This most glaring of injustices is right beneath our noses but goes mostly unheeded – it is just the way things are. The commons, a model that would have been familiar to our ancestors, now sounds ludicrously utopian. In his gentle acts of deviance, Hayes smashes down these walls. Tramping through these vast estates, he invariably sees no one; his transgressions start to put paid to the ideology that England is a country running out of space. And, as he reminds us, each of his trespasses would in Scotland be legitimised under the right to roam. Rather than a crime, these walks and campfires are his birthright. Once one has seen the land another way, he writes, it cannot be unseen.

Nothing that Hayes proposes is particularly revolutionary. An expansion of the Countryside Rights of Way Act that would allow us to camp and roam more widely exists not just in Scotland but also in much of Scandinavia and Austria. A less murky version of the Land Registry,

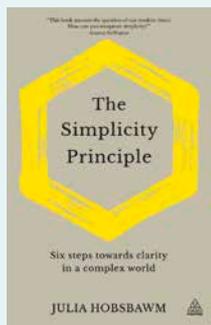
where you could find out, for free, who owns the land around where you live, is present in many European countries, but not in England. A land value tax, whereby landowners would pay a tax to the people, was supported by both Adam Smith and Winston Churchill and exists in countries from Russia to Taiwan, and a version was used to raise revenue for Crossrail.

Hayes makes a convincing case that improved access to land underpins many other battles, from poverty reduction to food security, affordable housing to tackling climate change. Yet any mooted reforms are typically framed in a certain section of the press as Marxist garden taxes and Zimbabwe-style land grabs. There is a lot still riding on maintaining the illusion that an Englishman's home is his castle. But in Hayes' work, and in other publications of recent years, there is a growing feeling that the commons are stirring once again. **R**

www.righttoroam.org.uk

Adam Weymouth is a freelance writer.

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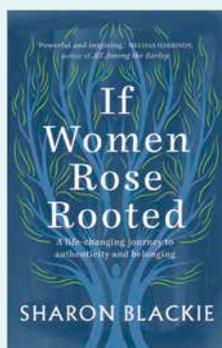
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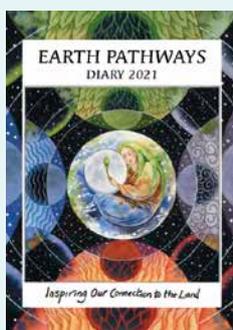
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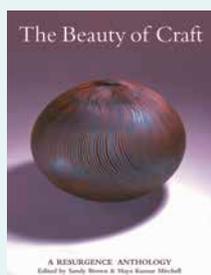
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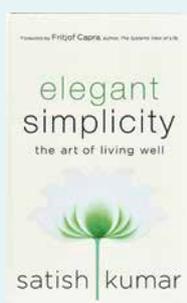
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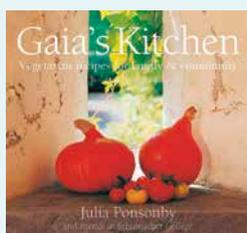
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Letters to the editor

VICTIMS OF POWER

Rosanna Wiseman is quite right (History Lessons for a Liveable Future, Issue 322): British wealth and British culture were built on the exploitation of the victims of empire. We perpetuate that crime by continuing to swallow the myths of our great imperial adventures at school, in popular literature, at the cinema and on trips to museums and stately homes. We should remember that slavery is an ancient abuse, common since since the beginning of civilisation: classical Athens was more than half slave, Islamic armies and traders captured slaves from all over the Middle East and Africa and as far away as the British south coast, India is still scarred by caste, the United States is warped by the hangover from slavery both physical and psychological, and the UK is slowly becoming aware that its dreadful past is still with us.

What is common to all these cases isn't race or nationality: it is power. While a few people have the power to control and benefit from the work of others, the great majority of us, black and white, are victims.

Richard Frost
Cumbria

CHOICES FOR THE FUTURE

The article by Zion Lights entitled Rethinking Parenthood (Issue 321) brings up the issue of the growing number of people who don't plan to have children because they see the planet facing such a bleak future. When I was born in 1959 the world's population was just under 3 billion. By the time I get to my 90th birthday (if I am lucky enough to do so) in 2050, the population is predicted to be nearly 10 billion, 2 billion more than today.

In a very simplistic way one can say that the damage currently being done to the planet is caused by the combination of the huge numbers of people and the resources we consume. The average resource use of those of us living in the 'developed' world is many times greater than that of those living in developing countries.

There are 89 countries in the world that already have a fertility rate below replacement, and that number will increase over the coming decades. Their governments need to push policies that

make their people lead more sustainable lifestyles. I'm hopeful that this can be achieved, and combined with a falling population in these countries, great strides can be made for a more sustainable way of living.

It's a very different scenario in Africa, where some forecasts predict that the current population of around 1.2 billion will become as high as 4.8 billion by 2100. Most of the current population of Africa dream of a lifestyle more like that enjoyed by people in the west, and who can blame them for wanting to have a better quality of life?

The reason why Africa's population is going to grow so rapidly is that in many African countries there is an enormous unmet need for family planning. CHASE Africa works in rural areas of Kenya and Uganda to give women the opportunity to choose family planning. For little more than the cost of two cups of coffee for us in the west, women in those two countries are able to have family planning for a year. When a woman can choose how many children she has, her daughters have a much better chance of attending school. In large families, boys are often sent to school in preference to their sisters. Education can lead to wonder, and we need more people wondering how we can protect this beautiful, fragile planet.

Robin Witt
www.chaseafrica.org.uk

GRIEVING TOGETHER

Every issue of *Resurgence & Ecologist* raises my spirits and saves me from feelings of despair. Dealing with the highs and lows of living in this challenging world is like being on a roller-coaster ride.

Through your pages Nature is celebrated, valued and respected, and if this feeling and experience were shared by all of humanity, I believe we would be living in a very different world.

I don't know where love and respect for Nature come from. What I do know is that too many people have never been given the opportunity to learn about and value the natural world, either from their families or through education. Our true spirit is being suppressed by living in a materialised society, and our mental health suffers as a result.

I have seen and spoken to 'grounds maintenance' workers employed by my local council whose job it is to spray, chop and leaf-blow our urban landscape into submission. They neither see nor understand the harm they are doing to Nature, or the needless squandering of carbon. They are just grateful to have a paid job.

On one of my regular walks I took pleasure in a self-seeded sunflower getting ready to bloom, but it never got the chance. It was cut down during an over-zealous tidy-up along the footpath. Seeing its shredded stump made me feel low in mood, frustrated and powerless. I wrote this poem to mark its passing:

RIP sunflower

*Please don't cut the sunflower
It only wants to shine,
To raise its golden petals
To the sun
And give the bees a nectar run.*

*Please don't cut the sunflower
It only wants to grow,
To fill its glorious head
With seeds
To give the birds a fill of treats.*

*Please don't cut the sunflower down,
It gives joy to people passing by
Out strolling in the sun.*

Christine Mackay
Scarborough

WE ARE FAMILY

Can I just say a massive thank you to you and the team for organising last Friday's Resurgence Readers' Group session.

Such positive discussion, valuable debate, So enlivening being able to share ideas and be in conversation with like-minded individuals from around the world.

I very much look forward to future sessions and to building more positive and affirming links through the Resurgence family.

Matthew
(via email)

TWITTER

Dan O'Hare
@edpsydan



Excited to receive my first @Resurgence_mag – discovered this on holiday recently and signed up for a year!

TWITTER

Lynn Houghton
@roaming_scribe



Am now subscribing to @Resurgence_mag and can't recommend it enough to people interested in ecology, climate change and all sorts of other issues. And you can get a free sample copy to peruse if you aren't sure it's for you!

TWITTER

Dave Flitcroft
@Artfrombikeshed



Sunday morning sourdough crumpet experiment, recipe from @Resurgence_mag worked a treat. #sourdoughseptember

TWITTER

Simon Leadbetter
@OurSacredGrove

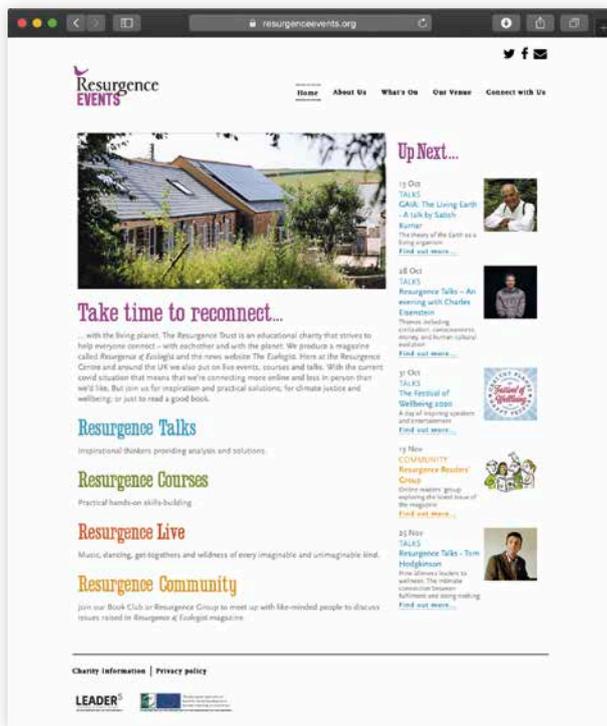


@TansyHoskins @Resurgence_mag

An excellent thought-provoking, and beautifully illustrated article. For years I have been a shoeman as it were – I have 3 @Fostershoes bespoke pairs which I refuse to discard. Now I will only buy vegan shoes & have some DMs. Any suggestions on ethical options for my next pair?

We welcome letters and emails commenting on *Resurgence & Ecologist* articles and issues. These should include your postal address. Send your letters to The Editor, *Resurgence & Ecologist*, The Resurgence Centre, Fore Street, Hartland, Bideford, Devon EX39 6AB or email editorial@resurgence.org. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

Resurgence Events website goes live!



Things may still be quiet at the Resurgence Centre, but there's a lot going on in the Resurgence community. Whether you'd like to discuss the latest issue, hear an inspiring talk, or learn something new, head over to our new Resurgence Events website... and then sign up to our newsletter to make sure you're the first to hear about the latest events. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

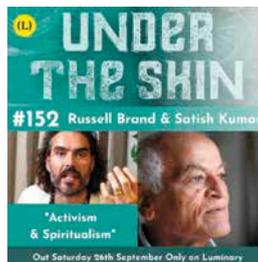
Launch date: 1 November 2020.
www.ResurgenceEvents.org

How are we doing? We want to hear your views...

There is still time to take part in our online survey. We want to know what you think. What do you love? What could we do better? What stories should we cover? Please take a few minutes to complete our online questionnaire: www.resurgence.org/feedback

Resurgence Talks online

If you've missed a Resurgence talk you can catch up on the Resurgence Vimeo channel. Available talks include the full series of Satish Kumar's Spiritual Talks, Richard Dunne on Nature's Principles of Harmony, Kirsty Schneeberger on Synchronicity Earth, and more. www.vimeo.com/resurgencetrust



Don't miss...

Russell Brand interviewed Satish Kumar in his podcast, *Under the Skin*, now available at Luminary: luminarypodcasts.com (Free trial available.)

Resurgence readers meet up online



Please join us for the next meeting on Friday 13 November via Zoom. This is an opportunity for you to share ideas and come together with fellow readers to discuss ideas within the magazine. This month we will be discussing rich connections on the theme of the dark night sky.

For more information on taking part, visit www.resurgence.org/groups

Satish lifetime achievement

Congratulations to Satish Kumar on being the awarded the *Kindred Spirit* magazine Lifetime Achievement Award 2020. Satish was delighted to receive this richly deserved award given in honour of his ongoing work in the environmental movement and educational work in the field of environmental issues and spirituality.

Resurgence & Ecologist Institutional Subscriptions

Did you know that students and staff can have free access to *Resurgence & Ecologist* and its timeless, 50+ year archive if their workplace, university or school takes out an institutional subscription to this publication? Head to www.resurgence.org/outreach to find out how this can be arranged.



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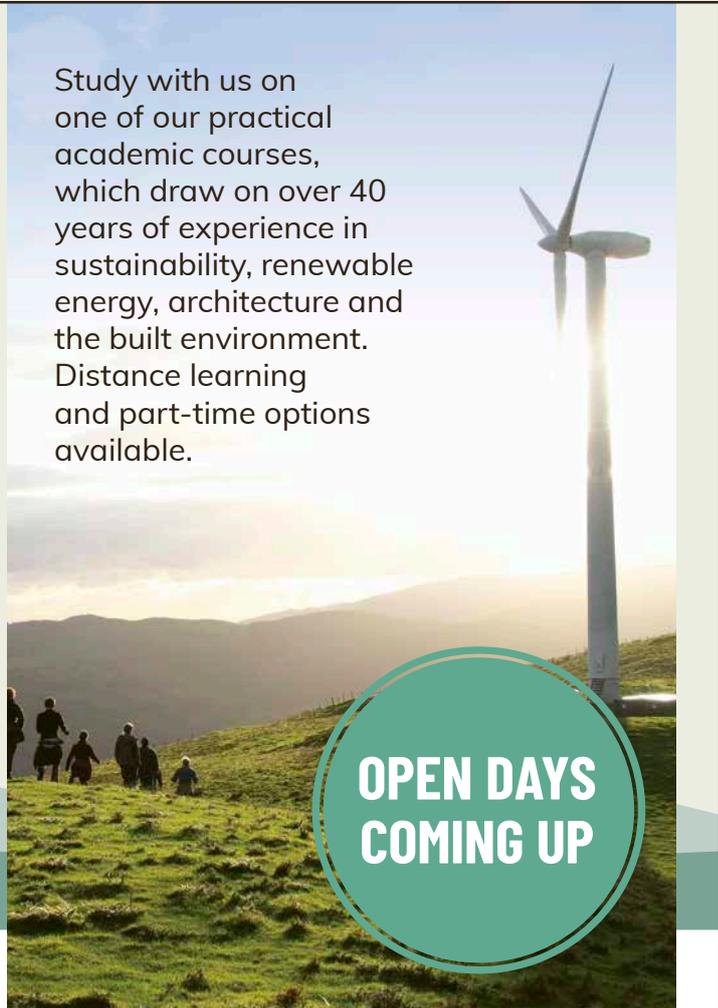
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**OPEN DAYS
COMING UP**

catherinegrace

biodynamic course

This innovative biodynamics course helps you to develop a therapeutic relationship with the Earth and the human being.

The course works out of Ruskin Mill Trust's pedagogical method of *Practical Skills Therapeutic Education* and will be of interest to educators, potential teachers and other interested persons. The new course will be held once a month on a Saturday. The course is drawn from the very rich BD training that has been on offer for several years to staff, guests, volunteers and BD apprentices.

Faculty: Pieter Van Vliet, *Biodynamic Land Manager*, and colleagues from Ruskin Mill Trust

Dates: 2020: 26 Sep, 17 Oct, 28 Nov
2021: 09 Jan, 20 Feb, 27 Mar, 24 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jun, 10 July

Venue: Helios Medical Centre, 17 Stoke Hill
Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JN

Fee: £230 (incl. VAT and refreshments)

biodynamic forestry

trees in a changing world

The aim of this one-year course is to highlight the importance of forest for the future of the Earth.

Through the *Seven Fields of Practice*, we will combine biodynamic, close-to-nature forestry principles and Goethean scientific observation with ideas and data. This course is largely held outdoors encouraging an awareness of woodland health and diversity, how to regenerate, protect and tend wooded land in tune with planetary rhythms using biodynamic preparations. It is open to all staff as well as to external participants but would be especially recommended for those who work with wood and the woodland and/or source their material from the woodland.

Faculty: Nick Raeside, *expert in Biodynamic Forestry*

Dates: 2020: 18 - 20 Sept, 9 - 11 Oct, 6 - 8 Nov
2021: 22 - 24 Jan, 12 - 14 Mar, 23 - 25 Apr, 21 - 23 May, 25 - 27 June

Venue: The Field Centre, Gloucestershire GL6 0QE

Fee: £650 (incl. VAT, refreshments, lunch and supper)



ruskinmill

Course information and application:

email: info@rmlt.org.uk web: thefieldcentre.org.uk

RESURGENCE TALKS

via ZOOM

A regular programme of online talks, inspired by the ideas within *Resurgence & Ecologist*, covering a range of issues including the environment, arts, meditation and ethical living.

All talks begin at 19:30 via Zoom.

Tickets:

All talks £5 each
(plus Eventbrite booking fee)

For further information, please email sharon@resurgence.org

Please visit www.resurgence.org/talks for up-to-date information and booking details on all talks.



29
Oct

Charles Eisenstein

Author and speaker

An evening with Charles Eisenstein

Charles is a teacher, public speaker and writer focusing on a range of themes including civilization, consciousness, money, and human cultural evolution. He is the author of many essays and books including *Sacred Economics*, *Climate: A New Story* and *The Ascent of Humanity*.



25
Nov

Tom Hodgkinson

Founder of The Idler

How Idleness Leads to Wellness...

... The intimate connection between fulfilment and doing nothing. Tom is a British writer, and founder of *The Idler*. His philosophy, in his published books and articles, is of a relaxed approach to life, enjoying it as it comes rather than toiling for an imagined better future.



27
Jan

Jo Hand & Liam Jones

from Giki and OLIO

Embracing Technology for Sustainability

Jo Hand set up *Giki* in 2017 to encourage sustainable, conscious consumption in order to cut our UK environmental impact. Liam Jones is responsible for *OLIO's* Food Waste Heroes programme, where volunteers collect surplus food from local establishments and share it with fellow 'OLIOers' in their local communities.

This event is a fundraiser for The Resurgence Trust, an educational charity registered in England and Wales (no. 1120414).

*a Journey of the Soul
into*



Colour

the human being as a work of art in time and space

OVERVIEW: This course addresses the theme of the human being as a work of art in time and space through three lenses of colour:

- *Biography* as a work in time
- *Art therapy* as a new sacred space
- *Creating pigments* from plant and earth substances

COURSE FACULTY: Dr Susanne Hofmeister, Karin Jarman, Anna Willoughby, Richard Mace

DATES 2021: 29-31 January, 16-18 April, 18-20 June, 3-5 September, 26-28 November and **2022:** 28-30 January

COURSE FEE: £900 (inc. course materials, meals & refreshments)

INFORMATION: www.thefieldcentre.org.uk

BOOKING: info@rmlt.org.uk

VENUE: The Field Centre, Gloucestershire, GL6 0QE

Holistic Science in dialogue

*The Legacy of
Bortoft, Colquhoun
and Goodwin*

This conference revisits the lasting contributions to holistic science made by Henri Bortoft, Margaret Colquhoun and Brian Goodwin.

In the seventies, physicist Henri Bortoft, biologist Margaret Colquhoun and mathematician turned biologist Brian Goodwin began a dialogue about wholeness in their respective areas of research. Taking the scientific studies of the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as their model, they developed a language for expressing the living relationship between the whole and the part, and thereby established a new interdisciplinary field of research. By revisiting their legacy through presentations and discussions we will carry forward the dialogue they initiated.

Hosts: Philip Franses and Dr Troy Vine

Dates: 12-14 Feb 2021

Venue: The Field Centre, Nailsworth, Glos GL6 0QE

Fee: Free to attend

RMT Introduction to Goethean Science

This five-day introductory course offers the opportunity to engage in the theory and practice of Goethean science.

Goethean science recognises that knowledge of the world and knowledge of ourselves cannot be separated because they are codetermining. Through Goethean science the observer and the observed can be brought together through a new way of seeing. The course facilitates this process and works with practices that develop the capacity for rigorous observation of phenomena, exact sensory imagination and morphological thinking through collaboration. The course works with the *genius loci* of the place it is delivered. After an introductory day, one day is dedicated to each kingdom of nature: the inorganic, plant, animal, and the human being.

Faculty: Dr Judyth Sassoon, Dr Troy Vine, Simon Reakes MSc

Fee: £300 (incl. VAT, refreshments and meals)

Dates and venues:

- The Field Centre, Nailsworth, Glos GL6 0QE 26-30 Oct 2020
- The Life Science Centre, Nr. Gifford, East Lothian EH41 4FH 31 May - 4 June 2021



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Course information and application:

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web: thefieldcentre.org.uk

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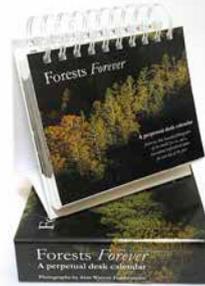
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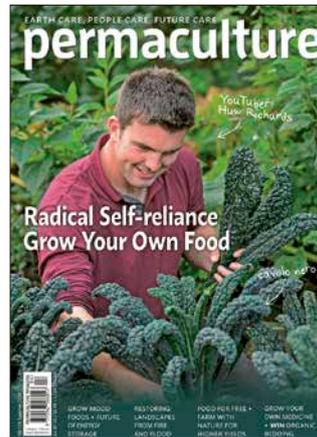
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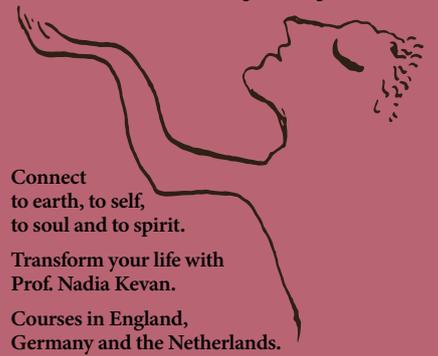
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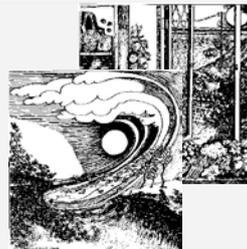
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The successful candidate will have at least 5 years experience, a firm grounding in print design and a commitment to our aims and values. Applications by 23 November 2020.

For job description and details:
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AN ODE TO GAIA

A fundraising auction in aid of The Resurgence Trust

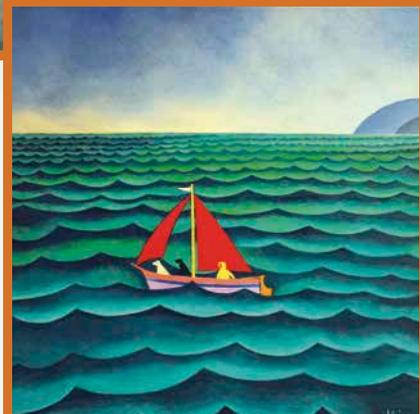
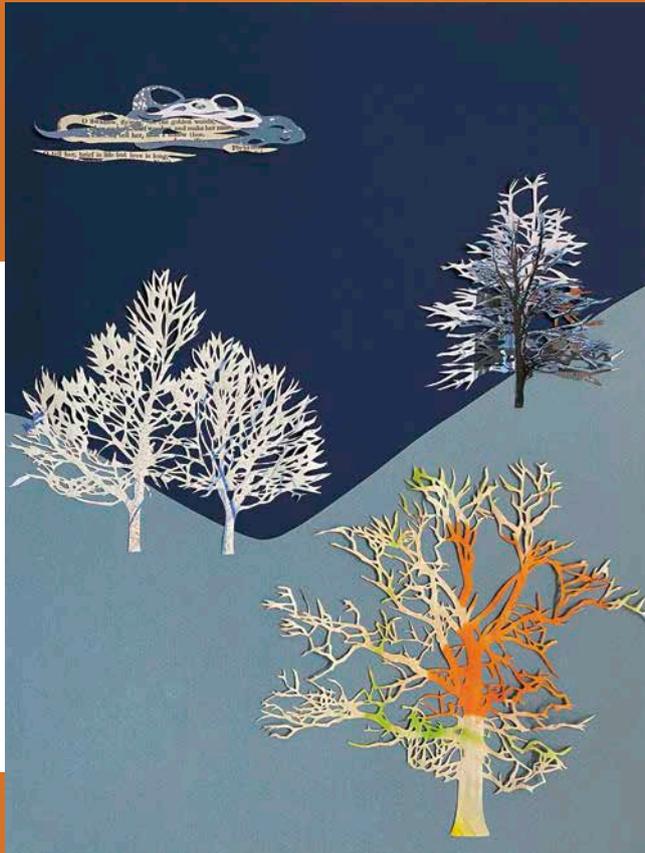
This year's auction, will take place online, meaning that wherever in the world you live you can make a real difference to the charity, especially at this uncertain and difficult time.

Money raised from the online auction will enable The Resurgence Trust to continue and develop its various projects in the forthcoming year, so please support it in two ways:

1. Make a donation via www.resurgence.org/auction2020
2. Bid for a range of exciting auction items via the event website – www.resurgencetrustauction.com which will be live from 12 November until 3 December 2020.

Please tell your family and friends about this website so that they can bid for paintings, prints, holidays, experiences and many other unique items.

For further information on this event, please email sharon@resurgence.org



The Resurgence Trust is an educational charity registered in England and Wales. Registered charity no. 1120414.

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Resurgence Groups

Resurgence groups exist for everyone who finds *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine nourishing and inspiring. They offer a space for people to meet together, unwind, enjoy seasonal food, and share ideas on environmental issues, climate change, sustainability, art, ecology, and more. To check if there's a group near you or find out how to start your own group, visit www.resurgence.org/groups or call us on 01237 441293.

We've joined IMPRESS

Resurgence & Ecologist magazine and *The Ecologist* are now regulated by IMPRESS: the independent monitor for the press. www.impress.press

We can look into complaints about items we have published that are in our control. We adhere to the Standards Code adopted by IMPRESS and can only deal with complaints that relate to an alleged breach of the standards set out in the Code. www.impress.press/standards/

We can only deal with your complaint if you are

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We are also regulated by IMPRESS, but initial complaints must be made to The Resurgence Trust in writing at the following address:

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We will acknowledge your complaint by email or in writing within 7 calendar days and will normally respond to your complaint with a final decision letter within 21 calendar days. If we uphold your complaint, we will tell you the remedial action we have taken.

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