WUM

LAND

DEVELOPMENT

The Cabiners Association, Forest of Dean.

**Reviving the ancient traditions of the Forest of Dean Cabiners,
by bringing low-impact development to the Forest of Dean.**

WUM LAND DEVELOPMENT

An introduction to low-impact development planning policy and ideas for implementation in the Forest of Dean.

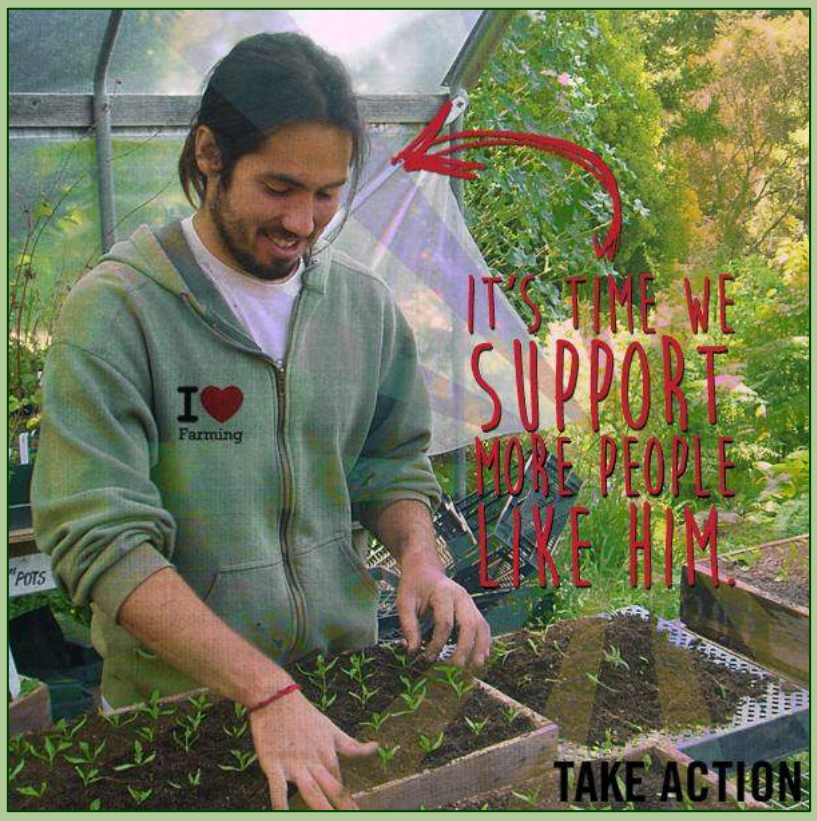
Wum Land Party 'Independence Betwixt Severn and Wye'.
http://wum.land

The Cabiners Association
Forest of Dean, 2018.
http://fb.com/Cabiners

WUM LAND DEVELOPMENT.

Low-impact planning policy for the Forest of Dean.

The 'One Planet Development' (OPD) policy, has already functioned for a number of years under the Welsh Assembly Government, with support from the One Planet Council. We propose that the FODDC use OPD as a starting point, and engage in a collaborative process, involving a broad spectrum of interested parties and organisations to adapt the OPD planning framework to the very unique conditions of the Forest of Dean, in order that Low-impact development (LID) may better serve our communities. LID is a parallel planning system which permits a variety of developments (usually farm co-ops or self-built family homes) that are linked with viable 'land based livelihoods'.



Permission is granted on the condition that the development is deemed capable of providing two thirds of the household's basic needs from the land within 5 years. The business plan would need to be tailored to the land, ensuring that habitat & environmental factors are protected and ideally enhanced by the development, whilst also demonstrating that a viable livelihood can be drawn 'from the land'.

The two thirds of the household's 'basic needs' must be provided through a mix of produce from the land and other forms of income generated on the land (sustainable industry, educational courses, etc). All developments must have a minimal visual impact and at all stages of their design and implementation must work to improve the surrounding area, ecologically as well as economically. Resources must be sourced as locally as possible with preference given to local businesses and sustainably sourced or recycled building materials.

In Wales, all applicants must demonstrate a commitment to the Welsh language. As much as I'd like to do the same for the pre-Shakespearian Anglo-Saxon Old English of my forefathers, I have opted instead to offer some of my thoughts on 'heritage and cultural inheritance', suggesting that developments should seek to 'preserve and celebrate' the narratives of place and cultural history of the landscape and community where the developments are to be sited."

Thom Forester, the Cabiners Association.

Wum Land Developments would permit simple, well functioning dwellings tied into land based livelihoods in -for example- farming or forestry, these livelihoods would provide people with liveable incomes whilst also having many other environmental, social and economic benefits for the surrounding community and the Forest as a whole.

Low-impact homes are resourceful in their use of local and recycled materials, they are highly energy efficient and much less expensive to build and maintain, whilst meeting conventionally accepted standards and building regulations.

WHAT IS LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT?

AFFORDABLE SELF-BUILT HOMES LIVELIHOODS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HELPING NEW ENTRIES TO FARMING AND OTHER LAND BASED INDUSTRIES RESILIENT HOMES SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITIES AGROECOLOGY SOIL HEALTH SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY LIFE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEALTH LABOUR-INTENSIVE FARMING SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCER LED MARKETS LID TRADITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT REVIVING LOCAL MARKETS RURAL REGENERATION A NEW WOODLAND ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY SOIL EDUCATION TRAINING APPRENTICESHIPS LIVELIHOOD TAKING PRIDE IN OUR LOCAL PRODUCE HUMAN SCALE ECONOMIES BACK TO THE LAND HOME

Low-impact development means affordable self-built homes...

A 'third-way' planning policy...

The modern planning system has its origins in the industrial revolution of the 1700s. It was intended to prevent the 'urban sprawl', ensuring the countryside wasn't entirely swallowed up by industry and housing. It has been pretty successfully in protecting rural areas from unscrupulous developers, and is probably the only reason why much of the countryside isn't now an urban patchwork of failed housing & industrial developments.

Likewise the 1947 Town & Country Planning Act was designed to stop ribbon development from nibbling away at 'green spaces' around our cities and towns. It ensured urbanites had somewhere convenient to walk their dogs, and also created an artificial scarcity of development land for homes & businesses. This worked to a certain extent to protect green spaces from built developments, although it offered little protection against the destruction of our natural heritage by industrial agriculture and forestry- which can often be just as devastating to the land.

The shortage of development land drastically raised its price, forcing low income families from much of the countryside and making 'rural England', in the words of one Cabinet Office report "the near exclusive preserve of the more affluent sections of society." (Low Impact Development, Simon Fairlie, Jon Carpenter, 1996).

Low-impact development walks a 'third way' between conservation & development land, which protects the environment, whilst permitting certain developments providing they have a positive environmental impact. LID applicants *must* demonstrate that they are capable of protecting and enhancing the existing bio-diversity, they must have a minimal visual impact on the land-scape and support the local economy and communities.

LID is a part of an emerging economic model which has a big emphasis on small scale sustainable forms of production which conserve the planets resources whilst also providing quality livelihoods in primary industries which are beneficial to both the planet, and its people.

LIVING AS A PART OF THE ECOSYSTEM.

AFFORDABLE SELF-BUILT HOMES LIVELIHOODS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HELPING NEW ENTRIES TO FARMING AND OTHER LAND BASED INDUSTRIES RESILIENT HOMES SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITIES AGROECOLOGY SOIL HEALTH SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY LIFE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEALTH LABOUR-INTENSIVE FARMING SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCER LED MARKETS LID TRADITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT REVIVING LOCAL MARKETS RURAL REGENERATION A NEW WOODLAND ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY SOIL EDUCATION TRAINING APPRENTICESHIPS LIVELIHOOD TAKING PRIDE IN OUR LOCAL PRODUCE HUMAN SCALE ECONOMIES BACK TO THE LAND HOME

The Forest of Dean is at a cross-roads. Either we are going to continue the same old development patterns, slowly nibbling away at ecologically important sites and replacing them with concrete & over-priced housing developments with no means to ensure the basic needs of the household are met. Or, we are going to help to create another model, one which attempts to meet the housing and economic needs of the area in ways designed to benefit not only (certain) people but the Forest as a whole.

"We're not talking about living on managed nature reserves - the fact is that high-impact land use (intensive housing and chemical farming)- combined with a lack of public access (scrutiny) leads to practices far more detrimental to biodiversity. The point we're trying to make is that responsible people manage land for the benefit of all species - not to the exclusive benefit of man. Biodiversity [has to] form a part of any management plan. That is to say "if you ain't gonna improve biodiversity you can't have your planning permission".

"The problem is the current attitude to land which so many farmers have which is that they see it as their factory floor and don't look at WHY it is necessary or lucrative for them to use chemicals and force land into monoculture. The reasons for this have a lot to do with EEC subsidies* & modern distribution networks."

Tony Gosling, independent/ former BBC journalist

*EEC = European Economic Community.

LOW-IMPACT LIVING...

AFFORDABLE SELF-BUILT HOMES LIVELIHOODS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HELPING NEW ENTRIES TO FARMING AND OTHER LAND BASED INDUSTRIES RESILIENT HOMES SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITIES AGROECOLOGY SOIL HEALTH SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY LIFE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEALTH LABOUR-INTENSIVE FARMING SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCER LED MARKETS LID TRADITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT REVIVING LOCAL MARKETS RURAL REGENERATION A NEW WOODLAND ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY SOIL EDUCATION TRAINING APPRENTICESHIPS LIVELIHOOD TAKING PRIDE IN OUR LOCAL PRODUCE HUMAN SCALE ECONOMIES BACK TO THE LAND HOME

A future in the Forest, for our young people.

I can tell you from personal experience, trying to find a way to grow food, traditionally manage a woodland or develop any kind of land based livelihood in the Forest of Dean is next to impossible, without having £50,000 to buy a suitable acre or two. At the same time the Forestry Commission is massively under-staffed, our woodlands are neglected or used for unsustainable monocultural production and our local food markets are almost non-existent due to a lack of local producers. As the Dean Forest Food Hub said in the Forester “we desperately need more local veg growers!”

Our Forest once provided thousands of livelihoods. Much of that industry is now gone, but a new generation of sustainable land based livelihoods can provide the same levels of employment whilst improving the environment and the economy of the Dean.

We need to find innovative ways to link people, especially young people & families wanting to produce food, fuel, timber and fibres – with land on which to grow. Transitioning into a self-sufficient woodland economy, as we strengthen local markets, invest in local industry & support our producers. This is critically important right now and will become even more so in the near future.

Local authorities would be wise to look towards a future where success or failure is linked to their ability to ensure local families can afford to feed, clothe and house themselves. Rather than attempting to provide for these needs directly, local authorities are better placed to regulate, monitor & support people as they find ways to provide for themselves, through sustainable land based livelihoods & low-impact development housing solutions.

“‘Feeding the world’ suggests that someone will take responsibility for feeding someone else, and therefore make them dependent. Under those terms, there can be no food security… ‘keeping the world fed’ suggests that people will be empowered to feed themselves. That is essential to long-term food security.” *Fred Kirschenmann, distinguished fellow at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.*

Agroecology is a traditional way of using farming methods that are less resource oriented, and which work in harmony with society. New research in agroecology allows us to explore more effectively how we can use traditional knowledge to protect people and their environment at the same time.

LAND-BASED LIVELIHOODS.

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ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT.

Small farms are the majority, when we look at land distribution in Europe…

2.7% are larger than 100 ha (250 acres).
97% are smaller than 100 ha [1].
75% are less than 10 ha (25 acres)
69% are less than 5 ha (12 acres) [2].

In 2000 the average UK farm was 169 acres, by 2010 it was 226 acres – an increase of one third. The average for the whole of Europe is 36 acres. Over the same period, 47,000 UK farms disappeared, a 20 per cent decline.

With only 30 to 50% of the total arable land, small farmers feed the people of Europe, producing slightly less than 90% of total European agricultural output.

This is because small farms tend to be significantly more productive per unit of land.

Small or 'human-scale' agricultural production, when tailored to local distribution networks & markets, disproportionately generates employment when compared to industrial agriculture. Larger farms only generate 5% of total agricultural employment across Europe [3].

An industrial-scale farm (vast acreage, high capital investment and based on infinite expansion) needs 1.9 labour units to produce 1 million kg of milk. In the 'peasant agriculture' economy the same amount of milk needs 3.3 labour units to be produced 74% more than the entrepreneurial farming model[4] this exemplifies the efficiency of job creation through smaller capital investment, prior to any quality and sustainability factors. The difference in terms of Energy inputs is equally damning. The pertinent question is, do we want finances going to the people that feed our communities, or to international chemical corporations seeking to maximise their profits.

In 21 countries the smaller farms have a higher Standard Gross Margin (difference between total output and cost of inputs) per ha than the larger farms. In nine of those countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom) the SGM/ha of the smaller farms is more than twice the SGM/ha of the larger farms" [5]. Small farms also create more employment opportunities, with larger farms generating only 5% of total agricultural employment [3].

Low-impact development makes it economically attractive for large landowners to sell small parcels of their estates to people who wish to build a home and engage in land based industries like farming and forestry. It will lead to a more 'traditional' settlement pattern, as large farms diversify, thus becoming more productive. Most waste in the food system comes from distribution, whereas 'human-scale' agriculture ensures both quality of output & efficiency of distribution. Local producer-led markets also recycle money within the local economy.

[1.] European Commission, 2013. How many people work in agriculture in the European Union? Eurostat data sources. Available at: www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-area-conomics/briefs/pdf/08_en.pdf
[2] Van der Ploeg, J.D. 2016. Family farming in Europe and Central Asia: history, characteristics, threats and potentials. FAO working paper 153. Available from: www.ipc-undp.org
[3] EUROSTAT. 2011 supra note 5
[4] Oostindie et al. as referenced in Van der Ploeg, 2016 supra note 2
[5] EUROSTAT. 2011. Statistics in Focus, 18/2011. Brussels: European Commission.

AGROECOLOGY-AGROFORESTRY

AFFORDABLE SELF-BUILT HOMES LIVELIHOODS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HELPING NEW ENTRIES TO FARMING AND OTHER LAND BASED INDUSTRIES RESILIENT HOMES SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITIES AGROECOLOGY SOIL HEALTH SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY LIFE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEALTH LABOUR-INTENSIVE FARMING SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCER LED MARKETS LID TRADITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT REVIVING LOCAL MARKETS RURAL REGENERATION A NEW WOODLAND ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY SOIL EDUCATION TRAINING APPRENTICESHIPS LIVELIHOOD TAKING PRIDE IN OUR LOCAL PRODUCE HUMAN SCALE ECONOMIES BACK TO THE LAND HOME

Forest gardens are probably the world's oldest form of land use and the most resilient agroecosystem.[1][2] They originated in prehistoric times along jungle-clad river banks and in the wet foothills of monsoon regions.

Agroforestry i.e. mixed-output (food, fuel, timber, fibres, craft-items, medicines, resins, charcoal) or 'food forests' will likely form a large part of many land management plans- due to their high levels of productivity and ability to 'hedge bets' in terms of what they produce, being a diversity of crops rather than just the one. A key element of agroforestry is structural diversity in terms of species, age, root depths & root exudates, which work to stabilise and build extremely fertile soils. There are often many community, education, health and research benefits found in the peripheries of agroforestry systems.

Food Forests emulate the ecological functions and 'biotecture' of naturally occurring ecosystems, whilst providing for human needs. A succession of 'support species' is planted, designed to do the same job as plant successions within natural systems (i.e. to stabilise soil bacteria, establish fungal communities, build soil life and soil Carbon, fix atmospheric Nitrogen and aerate the soil) these species are then cut incrementally and replaced with productive crop species. Eventually creating a fully functioning forest eco-system in-which over 90% of the plant species produce an edible (or otherwise) crop. Well designed agroforestry systems are the most advanced & productive systems of land management we have, capable of sustainably producing food forever. 'Food Forests' established around the world have already been producing food continuously without inputs (bar maintenance/ harvesting) for -in some cases- thousands of years. [3].

Agroecology and agroforestry are based on an advanced scientific understanding of soil life & the cycling of available soil nutrients, emulating natural processes essential for maintaining healthy and productive soils. Agroecologists seek to understand how soil fertility is maintained within natural systems and develop techniques which apply this knowledge within man-made systems of production, often improving on natural cycles by creating opium 'biologically intensive' soil conditions for effective nutrient retention and absorption by specific plant crops, boosting not only fertility but bioavailability of nutrients to plant roots. Quality of soil translates directly into nutritional quality of the produce grown, and all the many health, environmental & social advantages that come with communities based around the production and consumption of healthy, nutritious foods from local producers & markets.

"Our ancient arboreal-pastoral systems, managed by the Forest Commoners since 'time out of mind' are now lacking appropriate grazing, many of these ancient systems have been left to the Bracken and Briar.
I know of no community coppice schemes in the Forest in-fact no community involvement in the management of what is supposedly 'our forest'. The entire 25,000+ acres of PFE in the Forest of Dean provides next to no employment opportunities, nor facilitates any kind of sustainable land based industry what-so-ever. "

"Forestry Commission claim to 'manage' some 1.7 million acres nationally and >25,000 acres in the Forest of Dean alone -but as the Telegraph recently reported they "plant so few trees that the entire year's planting could have been done by three people" and that is across the entire country. Private-Public partnerships between local authorities, the Forestry Commission and low-impact industries can be mutually supportive and beneficial to all parties, and to the Forest itself."

"Driving a timber harvester is NOT sustainable Forestry, nor does it provide good employment opportunities. No matter what the Commission may say. Sustainable Forestry is labour intensive, and produces diverse-outputs with a focus on value-adding to raw materials instead of selling wholesale (retaining more wealth locally) and usually depends on having people living and working on the land." Thom Forester


Foresters Cabin.

[1] Hart, Robert A. de J. (1996a), p.124: "Forest gardening, in the sense of finding uses for and attempting to control the growth of wild plants, is undoubtedly the oldest form of land use in the world."
[2] Douglas John McConnell (2003). The Forest Farms of Kandy: And Other Gardens of Complete Design, p.1, "Forest garden farms are probably the world's oldest and most resilient agroecosystem."
[3] Moroccan 2,000 Year Old Food Forest with Geoff Lawton, Permaculture Research Institute (PRI) Managing Director

ONE HUNDRED HARVESTS...

SOIL ORGANIC CONTENT DEPLETION DESERTIFICATION FINITE FRESH WATER DENUDED SOIL-LIFE AND CROPS CHEMICAL LADEN LACKS ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS UNECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICALLY DEVASTATING FERTILISER AND OTHER AGRICIDAL CHEMICALS INSECTICIDES HERBICIDES PESTICIDES UNEMPLOYMENT AND A LACK OF HUMAN-SCALE RURAL INDUSTRIES SOIL ORGANIC CONTENT DEPLETION DESERTIFICATION FINITE FRESH WATER DENUDED SOIL-LIFE AND CROPS CHEMICAL LADEN LACKS ESSENTIAL ORGANIC NUTRIENTS UNECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICALLY DEVASTATING FERTILISER AND OTHER AGRICIDAL CHEMICALS

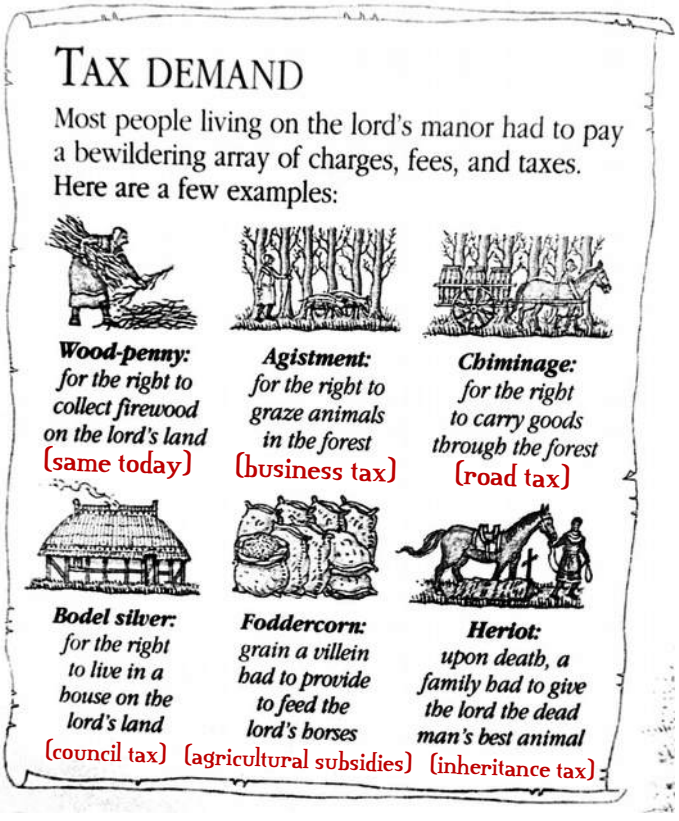
THE STATE OF MODERN AGRICULTURE

RESISTANCE IS FERTILE

The party political, ideological and civic disputes of today will soon seem absurd and inconsequential. We are about to be reminded, that for all our intellect, cunning and technological innovations- we still owe our lives to a few inches of living soil; and without the humility to recognise this fact, human civilisation will not likely survive the next century.

SOAP-BOX WARNING...

Understanding the historical processes which dispossessed our ancestors of their ancestral land-base and thus the ability of local 'human-scale' economies and communities to feed, clothe and house themselves within their own bioregion and without state involvement; and how this process still effects our economies and societies today, is crucial if we are to effectively navigate the difficult times ahead. That is why a '*short, angry history of land*' has been included in this document...



TAX DEMAND

Most people living on the lord's manor had to pay a bewildering array of charges, fees, and taxes. Here are a few examples:

Wood-penny: *for the right to collect firewood on the lord's land* (same today)

Agistment: *for the right to graze animals in the forest* (business tax)

Chiminage: *for the right to carry goods through the forest* (road tax)

Bodel silver: *for the right to live in a house on the lord's land* (council tax)

Foddercorn: *grain a villein had to provide to feed the lord's horses* (agricultural subsidies)

Heriot: *upon death, a family had to give the lord the dead man's best animal* (inheritance tax)

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THE STATE OF MODERN AGRICULTURE

THE AGE OF AGRICIDE.

Industrial agriculture is essentially an unsustainable soil-mining operation, wholly dependent on land monopolies, state subsidies and the availability of cheap synthetic fertilisers. Large scale 'Agribiz' has **failed to feed the world**, whilst lobbying for biased policies and taking 'legal' actions to restrict competition from labour-intensive models of production which are **ecologically sound** and **socially responsible.** This model of chemical-intensive cultivation has turned great swathes of the Earth into desert, and uprooted countless millions from a life of **agrarian self-sufficiency**.

When understood in context, the only possible justification for the status-quo in the UK is that it effectively maintains a millennia-old land monopoly designed to keep 'peasants' off the land. If you're unfamiliar with the history of land, this may at first glance sound absurd, but give me a chance and I shall attempt to demonstrate that this *is* the case.

Firstly, it is important to recognise that having 'peasants' (or people, as commonly known) engage in labour-intensive **land based industries** and **agroecological production**, makes much more sense in terms of every economic, social and environmental indicator under the sun. From calories produced per-acre, energy/ resource efficiency, cost per unit of production, through to social security factors, employment and thus taxable income generation… which you'd think the government would be all too keen to increase... right? Well, they've more important things to 'sustain' than taxes!

52% of all soils globally are now classified as degraded – a process which ultimately turns at more than 30 million acres of food producing land into desert every year, an area half the size of the UK. The soil that we depend upon is eroding at the rate of 24 billion tonnes every year, equivalent to 3.4 tonnes for every adult and child on the planet. Much of this soil is washed into rivers, where it devastates fish populations, and eventually ends up in the Sea – as seen in the satellite photo of the UK on the cover of this document.

MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE.

"Britain has only 100 harvests left in its farm soil as scientists warn of growing agricultural crisis." **The Independent, 2014.**

"The UK only has 100 harvests left in its soil due to intensive overfarming." **Farmers Weekly, 2014.**

"With a growing population to feed, and the nutrients in our soil in sharp decline, we may soon see an agricultural crisis." **Dr Nigel Dunnett, University of Sheffield**

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Fertility and futility...

Within the industrial agricultural model, NPK (nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus) are thought of as 'consumable' inputs, rather than renewable resources to be **generated** and **sustained** by maintaining the **complex biological** and **biochemical processes** which occur naturally in **healthy soils** (those not already sterilised by industrial agriculture.)

60% of the air we breathe is Nitrogen, **Nitrogen-fixation** is a process whereby certain plants take in Nitrogen from the air and via '**mycorrhizal**' relationships, in which root-exudates in the form of starches are exchanged with **bacteria** and **fungi** in the soil in return for **nitrogen from the air being fixed into the soil**. These bacteria & fungi are destroyed by intensive ploughing and the chemicals used by industrial agriculture, the chemical Corps can then sell the 'solution' (NPK fertiliser). It is a racket, they create their own market by 'encouraging' farmers to become dependent on a system which will, in the end, fail us all. Expanding this model, turning more & more fertile lands into deserts is high profitable. … and yes, over the short-term it is very productive, of nutritionally inferior, chemically adulterated food commodities designed to make profits from subsidised global markets whilst ensuring certain people have enough food to waste.

High-skilled, **high-labour** models of food production are the only long-term sustainable solution capable of feeding local communities when the bubble bursts. For them to be effective, we must look at how we **produce** & **consume**, we must **invest** in our local producers and find ways to support new entrants into farming and other land based industries.

If we do this now, before the expansionist industrial model of production peaks, then we can buffer the effects of the collapse by transitioning to local markets and local means of food production, incrementally. If we allow the super-market/ agribusiness model to continue to lead us like lemmings, into increasing dependency on a system that is destined to fail - then we are going to be left without any means of providing for our most basic needs at a time when the 'developing world', which currently feeds us, will certainly employ more isolationist policies to 'look after its own' first.

PEOPLE LIVING & WORKING ON THE LAND MIXED-OUTPUT ORGANIC THINKING IN CYCLES LOCAL MARKETS LOCAL CONSUMPTION CYCLES DIVERSIFY FARMING PRACTISES TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE LABOUR-INTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE LOCAL VARIETIES LOCAL PRODUCE TRADITIONAL GRAZING AGROFORESTRY FRUIT AND NUT ORCHARDS

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RESISTANCE IS FERTILE!

CAP = Common Agricultural Policy, E.U. land subsidies.

Currently, most UK land is CAP funded lawn, owned by a tiny minority of extremely wealthy individuals, corporations and government agencies that are paid to restrict economic activity and access to the land. These antiquated estates, many of which were established during the Norman invasion, provide **zero** net benefit to the economy, let alone to people and communities and they are of questionable benefit to wildlife. Meanwhile, we depend on the importation of foods from abroad, helping to foist our systemically dysfunction model of land distribution and production onto rural communities the world over. This erodes traditional, sustainable farming practices which have fed rural communities since time immemorial. Agricultural 'progress' within this model almost invariably results in land-workers and their families being violently dispossessed of their ancestral lands and their own ability to feed their families & communities.

The main achievement of our current model of land distribution and agricultural production is that it has converted countless self-sufficient rural communities the world over, into yet more wholly dependent urban consumers whose lives hang in the balance of an inherently flawed global-system of subsidised production, distribution and supply, that will inevitably collapse- and take most of the world down with it when it does.

This may sound like the script from a Hollywood film, but unfortunately there are innumerable academics, government agencies and environmental organisations all over the world, which more or less agree with that prognosis. You cannot have a system based on destroying soil and infinite expansion, on a finite planet with finite soils (and not much left).

Global agribusiness, is an extension of the exact same model of land-grabbing which historically deprived our ancestors in the UK of the ability to provide for themselves and their families many centuries ago.

"Over the course of a few hundred years, much of Britain's land has been privatized — that is to say taken out of some form of collective ownership and management and handed over to individuals. Currently, in our "property-owning democracy", nearly half the country is owned by 40,000 land millionaires, or 0.06 per cent of the population, while most of the rest of us spend half our working lives paying off the debt on a patch of land barely large enough to accommodate a dwelling and a washing line."
A Short History of Enclosure in Britain – The Land Magazine.

'CIVILISATIONS RISE AND FALL, ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR SOIL..'

ONE HUNDRED HARVESTS...

SOIL ORGANIC CONTENT DEPLETION DESERTIFICATION FINITE FRESH WATER DENUDED SOIL-LIFE AND CROPS CHEMICAL LADEN LACKS ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS UNECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICALLY DEVASTATING FERTILISER AND OTHER AGRICIDAL CHEMICALS INSECTICIDES HERBICIDES PESTICIDES UNEMPLOYMENT AND A LACK OF HUMAN-SCALE RURAL INDUSTRIES SOIL ORGANIC CONTENT DEPLETION DESERTIFICATION FINITE FRESH WATER DENUDED SOIL-LIFE AND CROPS CHEMICAL LADEN LACKS ESSENTIAL ORGANIC NUTRIENTS UNECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICALLY DEVASTATING FERTILISER AND OTHER AGRICIDAL CHEMICALS

THE STATE OF MODERN AGRICULTURE

SELF-SUFFICIENCY = SOCIAL/ ECOLOGICAL HARMONY.

We have become so desensitised to this model of 'economic development' and the resulting social, cultural and ecological devastation, that we are seemingly unable to imagine a world in-which communities are once again able to feed themselves, on their own terms, using local methods and local crop varieties which have proven themselves to be effective within specific bio-regions for generations. Despite the many trillions of dollars poured into industrial 'agribusiness', small farms and traditional peasant agriculture still provides over 70% of the worlds food today- and largely without any help from government subsidies, beneficial (biased) policies or predatory legal departments.

"Empirical and scientific evidence shows that small farmers feed the world. 70% of food we consume globally comes from small farmers" Prof Elver, UN Food & Agricultural Organisation .

We have one of the most inefficient models of food-production and distribution conceivable, hence it needing to be propped-up (at least 50%) by governments doling out money they've borrowed (at interest) in the form of subsidies- which *are* necessary to prevent food shortages, but ultimately a short-term patch, not a solution to the coming crisis. Dependence on mechanization, labour saving polices and unthinking commitment to extreme land concentrations are among the main causes of rural-urban migration, depressed rural economies and massive rural unemployment.

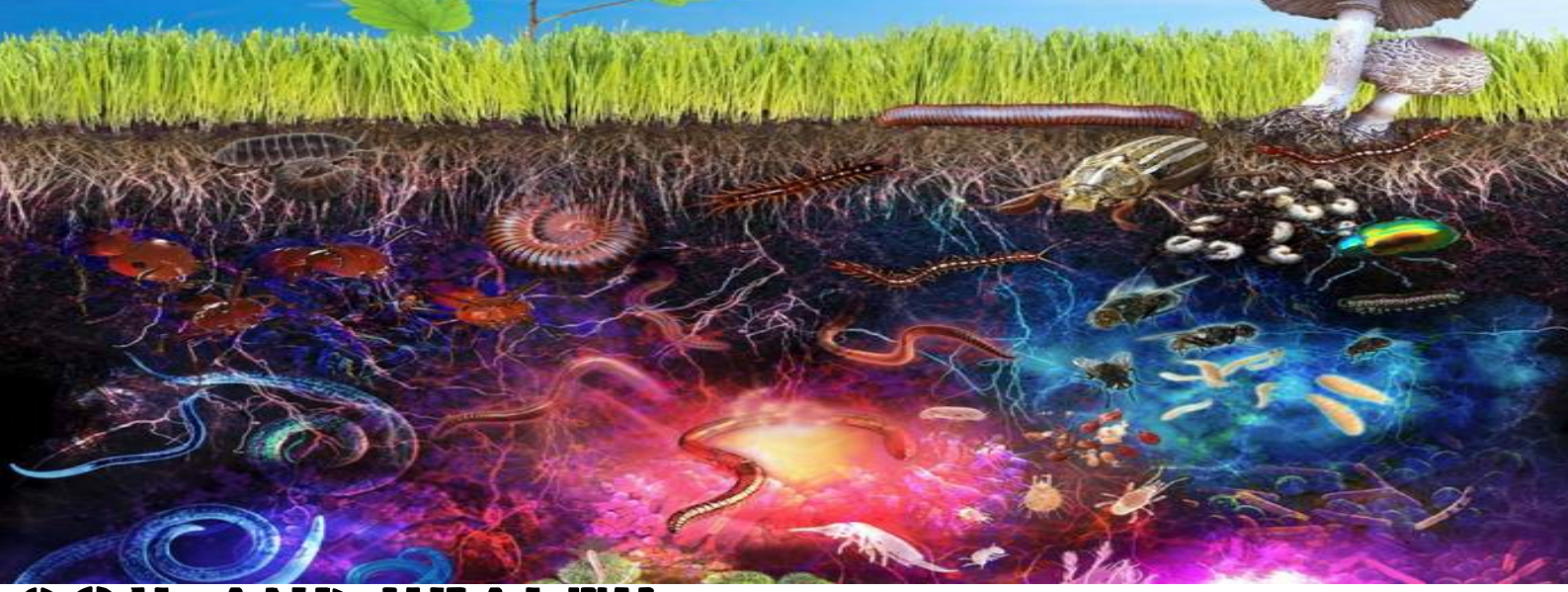
If our model of food-production made sense economically, then it would function economically.

As we will further elucidate in our '*short, angry history of land*', the unfortunate fact of the matter is that industrial agriculture is both a result and a sustainer of extreme inequalities within land-distribution and use. Our current model of food-production was designed to fit into a world in-which land is used primarily as a mean of storing of wealth.

The 'real-world' concerns of **production**, **sustainability** and actually **feeding people**, *always* come second to maintaining the positions of differential political and economic advantage that come with extreme concentrations of land-ownership, market speculation and 'land-banking'. We have more than our fair share of these problems locally!

Unless large land owners are planning to establish a new feudal system, which I would suggest, will not end well for them. We need to adjust our economic and political systems to accommodate a new generation of land workers and producers, so that we can maintain some semblance of social security in the very near future. The average farmer (tractor driver) in the UK is pushing 60 years old, manages hundreds of acres and doesn't even break-even due to the increasing costs of fertilisers, fuel and other chemical inputs. Agroecological systems can be economically viable on relatively small parcels of land, and are many times more effective contributors our local economy & communities.

Anyone with two brain-cells to rub together can see that this system is not going to last much longer.
Food is a primary resource and we need to find ways to provide for our own needs, immediately!



SOIL AND HEALTH.

A spoonful of healthy soil contains more living organisms than there are people on the planet.

The more fertile the soil is, the more organisms it has living in it. These organisms include bacteria and fungi, as well as larger soil creatures like nematodes, protozoa, earthworms and ants. All have important roles within healthy soil. However, the majority of soil science and agricultural innovations have focused on food and agriculture through the lenses of the chemical and physical properties of soil, while the complex biological aspects have largely been sidelined. This has resulted in soil fertility management being reduced to a mining operation, with nutrient supply maintained through imported chemicals (mostly in soluble form) and pest, weed and disease control achieved through the application of insecticides, herbicides and fungicides.

The good news is that amble scientific evidence now shows that soils can be regenerated through practices that nurture and support soil microorganisms.

"The predominant approaches to food production, distribution, retailing and consumption are causing significant damage to the environment, to soil, to the climate, to biodiversity, to rural communities and to public health. We are either paying for this damage in hidden ways, for instance through water charges which include the cost of removing pesticides in drinking water; taxes which fund misdirected agricultural subsidies and environmental clean up costs, including many of those relating to flooding. We are also paying the costs of diet-related disease. These costs are often deferred on to future generations or other countries, as is currently the case with pollution and soil degradation, rainforest destruction and species extinction. So although food appears never to have been cheaper, when we look beneath the surface, we are actually paying far more for it than we might possibly imagine."
The Sustainable Food Trust.

"Each farm has its own ecosystem and flora and the food that comes from it is uniquely from that place and for local people, it's local food. But nowadays, the reality of most people's lives…very little of the food that people eat is actually local food. Years ago, [people] would have had their own milk, their own eggs, their own vegetables; [these] would have come from the local area and would be carrying local antibodies." ~ *Darina Allen*

> "We know more about the stars in the sky than about the soil under our feet," world famous microbiologist, Elaine Ingham.

Mainstream soil scientists are now beginning to present us with a new and clear message that microorganisms are crucial for soil health – and we are only just coming to realise how important they are for our own health, too. After all, we are essentially soil with legs. We are 70% by weight, microorganism with different DNA than us, the contents of our guts is basically a type of soil life that has adapted to the unique conditions of our digestive tract, we cycles nutrients in the same way as healthy biologically active soil does. The layer of healthy topsoil, thriving with microorganisms, which still covers much of the land's surface, is in effect a vast digestive system – the collective stomach of all plants, breaking down soil nutrients into bio-available forms that plants can absorb.

Public Health...

"There is now increasing evidence showing the direct links between the intensification of our agriculture and food systems and the rapid rise of a range of diseases which are now resulting in increasingly unaffordable treatment costs. These include diet-related illnesses such as obesity, type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, allergies, some cancers, and diseases of the immune system, many of which are being directly linked to the way food is currently produced and consumed." The Sustainable Food Trust.

A short, angry history of land.

There is a surprising amount of continuity, in ‘open field systems’ from the fourth millennium BC up until the Norman invasion. Communal land management originated centuries, perhaps millennia before the Anglo-Saxon era. In Anglo-Saxon land law or ‘folkland’, as it was called, land was held in allodial title by the group, individual ownership did occur but it was limited to ensure the needs of the group were met.

450 to 1066 - Anglo-Saxon Charters grant land to ‘lay people’ (commoners), set-up the administrative areas that correspond closely to our modern parish boundaries. The earliest surviving charter of King Hlothhere of Kent was drawn up in AD 670.

1066-7 Norman invasion displaces Anglo-Saxon commons/ land ownership model. William the Bastard declares that all land, animals and people in the country belong to him personally. This was as alien to the Isle’s customs as the colonial land-grabs were to the First Nations of America. Still today, the monarch’s land monopoly remains, in theory *and* practise, a legal reality. Land is parcelled up and given as payment to Williams forces. We go from a country in which >90% of people owned land, to a country of landless serfs, themselves owned by foreign lords.

1066-70 The ‘Greenmen’ resist the Norman invasion. Wearing camouflage, they run guerilla warfare campaigns against the invaders who called them the ‘silvatici’ (the men of the woods).

1069–70 the ‘Harrying of the North’, William burnt down every building between York and Durham, and killed by starvation or sword over one hundred thousand people. Many of the largest land owners in this country still today proudly trace their family tree back to ancestors who were involved in this bloodbath.

1135 – 1154 Civil war during the reign of Stephen saw the strength of the regional lords/ barons rise relative to the Crown as they established political and judicial arenas other than those defined by the Crown- creating a degree of regionalisation.

England's population more than doubled during 12th and 13th centuries stressing the economically inefficient land monopolies.

1215 Barons forced King John to limit his own power by signing Magna Carta which restated certain ancient, customary rights. Some of which were pre-Norman, and likely echoed back to our ancient oral traditions, existing long before the Roman invasion.

1217 Charter of the Forest re-established rights for Freemen to access and make use of the Royal Forests without persecution.

1235 - Statute of Merton encouraged landowners to convert arable land into pasture, as demand for British wool increased. Displacing traditional peasant agriculturalists and farmers.

Commons Act 1236 allowed lords to enclose common land.

Wool was the backbone and driving force of the medieval English economy between the late thirteenth century and late fifteenth century the trade (a primary driver of enclosure) was called “the jewel in the realm” or 'half the wealth of the kingdom'.

Statutes of Westminster 1275/ 85/ 90- restrict subtenure/ sale of parcels of land (a threat to state land monopoly) other than to the direct heirs of the landlord. It was prompted by certain lords who were dissatisfied with increasing amount of subtenures.

These restrictions gave rise to ‘livery and maintenance’ or ‘bastard feudalism’, i.e. the retention and control by the nobility of land, money, soldiers and servants via salaries, land sales and rent. In-effect, this was the start of modern wage-slavery, and still works today, to ensure the regions remain economically dependent on the core, via state subsidised and enforced land monopoly to restrict regional economic and thus political power.

Image: Charter of King Hlothhere of Kent AD 679

Rising European merchant class capitalised on mass production of wool being facilitated by displacing agrarian communities. British wool became very sought after in Europe. Increasing demand for British wool, led to more mass displacement of peasants–generating an landless ‘class’ of urban dependents.

Great Famine 1315 and the Black Death 1348 killed >1/3 of the population, forcing the landed classes to value the productive members of their society (the peasants) who grew all the food.

1337-1453, Hundred Year War vs France, financed by merchant capital to gain control of the Flemish wool industry and weavers.

1340-1380 purchasing power of rural labourers increased 40%.

1351/ 49 The Labourers Acts were the nobilities reaction to the rising bargaining power of peasants, they fixed wages to ‘pre-plague levels’, restricted free movement and price-fixed foods.

1377 John of Gaunt imposed a new tax, the Poll (head) Tax.

1381 Peasants Revolt : Kentish rebels joined by many towns-folk, entered London. They destroy gaols, burned down Savoy Palace (Gaunts home), plundered Lambeth Palace, burnt books and buildings in the Temple, killed anyone associated with the royal government. The following day, Richard met the rebels at Mile End and acceded their demands, including the abolition of serfdom & poll tax (the only promise not reneged soon after)

1400-1409 Owain Glyndŵr last native Prince of Wales (Tywysog Cymru) viewed as a de facto King, led the ‘Welsh Revolt’ rapidly gaining control of large areas of Wales. Eventually his forces were overrun by the English, but despite the large rewards offered, Glyndŵr was never betrayed. His death was recorded by his kinsman in the year 1415, it is said he joined the ranks of King Arthur, and awaits the call to return and liberate his people.

1450 - Jack Cade led an army of Kentish peasants (described by ‘Shakespeare’ as “the filth and scum of Kent”) the rebels persuaded first army dispatched to pack up & go home, skilfully evaded a second of 15,000 men led by Henry VI, defeated third army in battle, killing two of the king’s generals in the process.

1450–1451 John and William Merfold's Uprising centred around Sussex, mostly comprised of artisans pillaging and killing local gentry and clergy. “[The rebels wished] as lollards and heretics, to hold everything in common.” – the King's Indictment, 1451

1489 Depopulation Act ‘agaynst pullying doun of Tounes’, Kings introduce anti-enclosure acts, due to widespread clearances, and the depopulation of entire villages. There were to be 11 similar Acts & eight commissions of enquiry over next 150 years.

Henry VIII legislates against early cloth factories & enclosures, a primary source of wealth for the emerging ‘middle class’ of land owners, but lacked the strength to fully implement his changes.

1515 Henry VIII orders all pasture be converted back to arable in an attempt to reign in fortunes being made by the merchants.

1536 and 1541 - Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII privatising church lands (then 1/5th of the land), generating even more landless people, wholly dependent on urban wage-slavery.

1549 Kett's anti-enclosure rebels 16,000 strong, took Norwich. Kett was 57 years old and one of the areas wealthier farmers.

Erection of Cottages Act 1588 “against erecting and maintaining of Cottages" by people with less than four acres of freehold land. Prevent people building homes, farming remaining common land

A short, angry history of land.

1607 the agrarian changes (depopulation, enclosure) in the Midlands had produced mass armed revolts of the peasantry. 1607 to 1636, Government pursued an active anti-enclosure policy. Charles I, the ‘Commoners' King’ was ‘re-commoning’ lands enclosed by lords and merchants, just before Civil War.

1620 Sir Edward Coke ‘greatest of English judges’, and a keen opponent of enclosure, declared depopulation against the laws of the realm ‘the encloser who kept a shepherd and dog in place of a flourishing village community was hateful to God and man.’ Ethnically cleansing ‘peasants’ is a clear violation of our ancient Common Law of Tort which is ‘cause no injury, harm or loss’

1626–1632 The Western Rising was a series of riots in the Dean and other Forests against disafforestation of royal forests “In 1633-4 we find a proposal that all inclosures made since James I. should be thrown back into arable on pain of forfeiture” Enclosers still prosecuted in the Star Chamber as late as 1639.

1638 in the Forest of Dean “The deer were to be disposed of, as demoralizing the inhabitants and injuring the young wood; the commissioners recommended ejecting the cottagers who had established themselves in the Forest, as often before, in defiance of authority, and who numbered upwards of 2,000, occupying 589 cottages, besides 1,798 small enclosures containing 1,385 acres. As to defraying the cost of executing the above works, the commissioners recommended the sale of about 440 acres of detached Crown land adjoining the Forest”

Charles I gave a short break in enclosures, he’s then beheaded. Post civil war enclosures accelerated by a largely landowning Parliament, blighting our entire population to this present day.

1642-1651 English Civil War, old feudal v.s. merchant powers. 1649 mass-redistribution, Cromwell sells 1,677 Royalist Estates

1649 Gerrard Winstanley with a peasant army, called the ‘True Levellers’ (later diggers) declaim the Earth a Common Treasury. The Diggers print radical protestant literature, aimed at reforming the social order with an agrarian lifestyle based on the creation of small egalitarian, self-sufficient rural communities, an ecological interrelationship between humans and nature, "true freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the Earth."

1659, Forest riots ‘probably excited by the efforts which the Government had recently made for the re-afforesting of 18,000 acres; to effect which 400 cabins of poor people, living upon the waste, and destroying the wood and timber, were thrown down.’

English nationalist discourse in the mid-17th century spoke of throwing off the ‘Norman yoke’ - i.e. feudalism, land monopoly.

1671 Game Act made it illegal to hunt wild animals, considered a common right since time immemorial. Also illegal for farmers to protect crops from rabbits, other animals. Starvation or crime. Around now modern banking arrived in England from Holland leading to a century of boom and bust bubbles, expensive wars in which banking families made huge profits funding both sides.

1680 in the FOD “there were remaining about 30 cabins, in several parts of the Forest, inhabited by about 100 poor people, (The Crown) had taken care to demolish the said cabins, and the enclosures about them.” These were not the Forest “free miners”, although “they had been born in it, and never lived elsewhere,” but as “cabiners,” who had to work seven years in the pits before they could become “free.” Freedom=Slavery.

Glorious Revolution of 1688 leading to the Bill of Rights 1689.

1700-1850 Parliamentary Enclosures, no longer held back by sections of the Church, nor the power of Monarchs- enclosures increase exponentially in speed and size, urban slums grow too.

Wool prices fall due to ‘foreign labour’ & importation of cotton. Lands enclosed for sheep must find a new purpose, early forms of mechanization allow landholders to still exclude peasants, at the expense of productivity, so land-monopolies are sustained.

Burden of tax transferred from land (merchants/ manufacturers) to goods consumed. The remaining commons are enclosed, the final nail in the coffin of self-sufficient rural economy. Starvation. By 1700 half all arable lands enclosed, by 1815 nearly all farm land was enclosed, hunting, grazing, gleaning rights all but lost.

From 1750 to 1820 desperate poachers were ‘hanged en-mass’

1790-1830 a third of rural population migrates to urban slums. Where they are put to work in factories, workhouses called by Blake the “Satanic Mills” of modernity, i.e. ‘Industrial Revolution’.

1788 Mr. Miles Hartland, assistant-deputy-surveyor stated to the Dean Forest Commissioners, “cottages and encroachments in the Forest have nearly doubled within the last forty years.”

1811 – 1816 Concerned that machines would replace their high-skill labour, the Luddites smash machinery, threaten industrialist. Luddites were not anti technology, they were pro-workers rights.

Early 1800’s Industrialist Robert Owen talks of a ‘moral rebirth’ and sets about improving the living conditions of his workers.

1800-1850 Highland Clearances led to the displacement of up to 500,000 Highland peasants and crofters, tens of thousands of which died in the early-mid the 19th century, to be replaced by sheep. A member of the British Aristocracy noted ‘It is time to make way for the grand-improvement of mutton over man.’

1808 Dean Forest Timber Act 1814-1816 11,000 acres enclosed 1831, Warren James with 100 Foresters, demolished enclosures at Park Hill, between Parkend and Bream. 50 unarmed Crown Officers were powerless to intervene. Soon a party of 50 soldiers arrived from Monmouth, but by now the number of Foresters had grown to around 2000 and the soldiers returned to barracks. squadron of heavily armed soldiers arrived from Doncaster and the day after, another 180 infantrymen from Plymouth James was sentenced to death, later transportation to Tasmania.

1845 - 1852 Irish Potato ‘Famine’, as British troops seized foods, to be exported at gun-point leaving the Irish population to starve.

1845 and 1849: 616 major landlords owned 95% of the British Isles and rented marginal lands to land-workers (peasants).

1849 Forest of Dean ‘a general feeling prevailed against the deer, on the ground of their demoralising influence as an inducement to poaching, and all were ordered to be destroyed, there being perhaps 150 bucks, 300 does. “if once men begin to poach, we can never reckon upon their working afterwards.” Mr. Nicholson’s statement before Lord Duncan’s Committee

1872 the British Government published ‘The Return of the Owners of Land’, only the second audit of land to have taken place in British history, the other being the Domesday book. After 2 years of gathering all the information the returns found that 1 million people owned freeholds, about 5% of the population. 10 Dukes owned over 100,000 acres each with the Duke of Sutherland owning 1,350,000 acres, 1/50th of the entire country.

Return of Owners of Land, confirmed that 0.6 per cent of the population owned 98.5% of the land. Half of Britain was owned by 0.06% of the population. Findings still well hidden till this day.

Late 1800 industrialists build villages for workers, in anticipation of higher productivity. Strict, religious ‘rules’ concerning drinking, dancing, singing or fraternising with opposite sex were common.

Late 1800s - early 1900s land reforms start making headway, allotment acts, numerous attempts to introduce a land value tax- to return tax burden to large land owners. Landowners fear land may soon become a liability, so they sell >1/2million acres in a short space of time- though mostly to other large landowners.

1899 Commons Act permits district councils, national park authorities to manage commons for 'exercise and recreation'.

1900-1946 ¼ of a billion Europeans die from war, famine or as a result of war. Enables land-grabbing on an unprecedented scale.

1920-47 Plotlands were the first chance for workers to own land and build dwellings on it – they lead to the invention of Planning Laws to prevent poor people building houses in the countryside.

1925 Law of Property Act s.193 gave the right of the public to "air and exercise" on Metropolitan commons, but not rural commons.

1925 Land registry begins, to-date about 50% of land registered.

1930's 'Green Revolution', a euphemism for the petrochemical based agriculture of the (post-)war period, has succeeded only in finding and expanding new 'markets' for the petrochemical corporations who became incredibly wealthy and politically influential by selling fuel & chemical weapons during the wars. In fact, many of the insecticides and herbicides sprayed on our foods today are modified or sometimes even just 'rebranded' chemicals originally designed as weapons of war. Of course, the exact same chemical corporations also manufacture and sell pharmaceutical drugs, which make additional revenue 'treating' the 'diseases of civilisation' which so often result from exposure to these chemical. As the head of I.G. Farben infamously said…
"we intend to make the human-body, our market place."

Currently more than 70 per cent of UK land is owned by fewer than two per cent of the population. Much of which is directly traceable to Guillaume (William) the Bastard/ Conqueror whose 22nd great-granddaughter sits upon the 'English' throne still today. Meanwhile, Britain's 16.8 million homeowners account for barely 4 per cent of the land, about the same as that owned by the Forestry Commission. Today, Britain has the second most unequal distribution of land ownership on Earth, after Brazil.

1962 start of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), largest political bribery structure ever conceived by man.

1981, The Foresters won an exemption from Forestry Act's land sales. Then MP Paul Marland quickly changed his mind about supporting the sale saying... "Today's Forester is of the same independent mind and rugged character as were his forefathers. It is our duty to preserve his ancient rights and traditions". Take note!

1986 Inheritance taxes finish off remaining Anglo-Norman landed gentry, well, those not already in-bed with 'globalist' financiers.

1996, 500 'The Land is Ours' activists occupied 13 acres of derelict land on the banks of the River Thames in Wandsworth. In 1999, the British activist group 'The Land is Ours' celebrated the Digger movement's 350th anniversary with a march and reoccupation of Saint George's Hill, site of the first Digger colony.

CROW Act 2000 recognised 'freedom to roam' on common land.

2008, first low-impact development granted planning permission to Tony Wrench & 'that round-house', after attempted eviction failed.

2009, nearly a hundred activists converged on a piece of derelict land at Kew Bridge in south west London to create an 'eco-village'.

2010 HOOF successfully fought nationwide forest sell-off from public bodies bill, leading to the government backing down and setting up the Independent Panel of Forestry, which concluded that, "

2012 Wilderness Centre reopened in Spring, Yorkley Court's 'disorderly settlement' begins in the Autumn of that year.

2012 "Runnymede Eco-Village started by 'the Diggers 2012' who are modelled after Gerald Winstanley' Diggers of 1649.

Successes of Low-impact development planning policy in Wales, under the 'One Planet Development' scheme -the flagship project is Lammas eco-village in Pembrokeshire.

Oxford University produces a DNA map of Britian which reveals that "most people in Great Britian still live in the tribal teritories which existed over 1000 years ago." Geneticist Professor Sir Walter Bodmer of Oxford University said: "What it shows is the extraordinary stability of the British population. Britain hasn't changed much since 600AD.

The law locks up the man or woman,
Who steals the goose off the common,
But leaves the greater villain loose,
Who steals the common from the goose.
~ Unknown Poet.

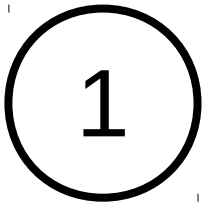
DNA MAP OF BRITAIN

"I have persecuted the natives of England beyond all reason. Whether gentle or simple I have cruelly oppressed them; many I unjustly disinherited; innumerable multitudes perished through me by famine or the sword……I fell on the English of the northern shires like a ravenous lion. I commanded their houses and corn, with all their implements and chattels, to be burnt without distinction, and great herds of cattle and beasts of burden to be butchered whenever they are found. In this way I took revenge on multitudes of both sexes by subjecting them to the calamity of a cruel famine, and so became a barbarous murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of that fine race of people. Having gained the throne of that kingdom by so many crimes I dare not leave it to anyone but God." William the Bastard's death bed confession according to Ordericus Vitalis c AD 1130

"Now this sweet vision of my boyish hours.
Free as Spring clouds and wild as summer flowers
is faded all – a hope that blossomed free.
And haft been once no more shall ever be.
Inclosure came and trampled on the grave
Of labour's rights and left the poor a slave."
~ John Clare (1793 – 1864)

"The power of enclosing land and owning property was brought into the creation by your ancestors by the sword; which first did murder their fellow creatures, men, and after plunder or steal away their land, and left this land successively to you, their children. And therefore, though you did not kill or thieve, yet you hold that cursed thing in your hand by the power of the sword; and so you justify the wicked deeds of your fathers, and that sin of your fathers shall be visited upon the head of you and your children to the third and fourth generation, and longer too, till your bloody and thieving power be rooted out of the land."
A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England:

The 12 Principals.



Low-impact construction.

Developments must be constructed from locally sourced, sustainably produced and/ or recycled materials. Preference must always be given to locally sourced, natural and non-toxic building materials and methods which have a low ecological impact. Both the construction and the finished development must have a minimal environmental and visual impact, and must at every stage of the design and implementation work to improve the surrounding area, economically and ecologically. All efforts must be made to conserve and enhance the existing biodiversity, cultural heritage and the development must fit into the cultural and physical landscape. Being a celebration of place and people.

Land Based Industries.

Planning applications submitted under the Wum Land Development policy framework require an attached business plan, designed to meet the basic needs of the household. Permission is granted on the condition that the development is deemed capable of providing in excess of two thirds of the household's basic needs from the land within 5 years. These basic needs are **food, water**, **energy**, **waste assimilation** and surplus **capital** for technological items, services, council tax, clothing and transport. Planning permission is dependant upon this level of self-sufficiency being achieved and maintained into the future.

Affordable Housing.

Low-impact Developments are simple, well functioning dwellings tied into sustainable land based primary industries which provide people with viable livelihoods. Land based livelihoods provide a high-quality, liveable incomes as well as many other social and economic benefits for both the household and the surrounding community.

Low-impact dwellings make resourceful use of materials, are highly efficient and much less expensive to build and maintain, whilst still being constructed to conventionally accepted standards and meeting building regulations. Low-impact development will make 'self-built' family homes affordable to individuals and families who wish to pursue a sustainable land-based industry.

Land and Wildlife.

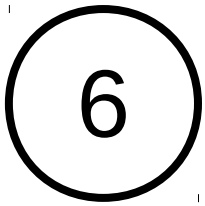
Wum Land Developments must be designed to conserve and enhance biodiversity, soil-fertility and habitat. Existing species must be protected, their habitat enhanced by planting productive hedgerows, orchards, wetland or water-systems where appropriate. Produce must be grown without chemical-inputs, making use of advanced land management practices like permanent-cover, bio-char, companion planting, soil-care and encouraging natural predators of pests (habitat).

A **'Land and Livelihood'** plan must be submitted to demonstrate economic feasibility and to show how the development will have a positive impact on the **ecology**, **economy** as well as the cultural and physical **landscape** of the Forest of Dean.

The 12 Principals.

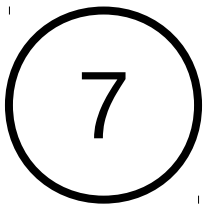
Recycling and Resource Efficiency.

Using our resources locally avoids the huge energy costs involved in mass-transportation, ensuring that more of the wealth generated in the Forest's stays in the Forest -where it directly and disproportionately benefits our communities and economy. Low-impact development works towards ending our dependency on an import/ export economy, in-which all the financial benefits flow to the monopoly owners and fuel corps. Supporting small scale resource cycles, distribution networks and local forms of production that are far more energy efficient. Low-impact developments can also upcycle much of the 'waste' now being sent out of the Forest (at cost). LID's ensure biodegradable waste is composted on site, non-biodegradable waste is minimised, reused where possible & only recycled off site as a last resort.



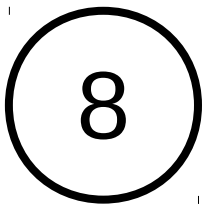
Increased Land Productivity.

One of the benefits of permitting people to live and work on the land, is that labour-intensive farming becomes economically viable. This minimises energy costs and removes dependency on chemical-inputs. Labour-intensive farming is more productive per-acre than chemical-intensive farming whilst producing much higher quality products, suitably scaled for local markets. In addition, an entire secondary market would add-value to our produce. Small-scale industries can make more efficient use of resources and lead us to an thriving local economy of scale based on producer-led, and community-oriented production. Low-impact development will also open-up a new market for eco-educational-tourism. The Forest may well become a hub for green education, tech and construction.



Energy and Water Sovereignty.

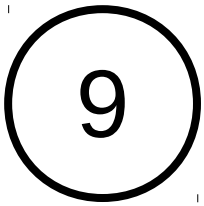
Energy and heat requirements must be at least partially met from the land itself, involving a combination of renewable resources like wood fuel and technologies like solar panels. Water is sourced from the land itself (or as near of possible). This will involve restoring many local springs and other natural water-sources which are currently in a state of disrepair, as well as building new ones and sinking wells at the development locations across the Forest. Additional water collection comes from efficient rain water collection systems. All wastewater is processed on site with nutrients recycled to encourage woodland biodiversity and soil fertility.



Woodland Expansion.

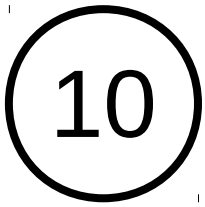
Low-impact livelihoods by their very nature propagate and plant lots of trees, and future developments will be perfectly placed to assist reforestation initiatives by propagating native saplings and providing temporary or permanent homes for forest workers. Residential planning is one of the main obstacles which prevent people from engaging in agroforestry, traditional forestry and orchard management. Appropriate planning reforms will return the Forest into the patchwork of productive orchards & woodland landscapes it was once famed for - producing a huge variety of food, fuel and innumerable woodland products.

The 12 Principals.



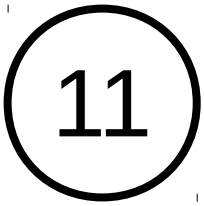
Transport and local economy

Living and working on the same land drastically reduces household transportation needs and costs, and the burden on our transport systems and roads. Sites would ideally be located within walking or cycling reach of public transport. Easy access to local community centres and markets reduces fuel costs and dependence on long-distance transportation of goods. Many land-based livelihoods are uneconomical for those living in ‘conventional’ housing, because of these energy/ transportation costs and the financial burden of mortgages and rent. LID relieves these costs, allowing for small-scale industries to thrive and reinvest surpluses into the local economy and land.



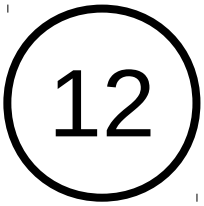
Good for the local community

Wum Land Development has the potential to reinvigorate the local economy, providing both affordable homes and viable livelihoods. This can secure a future here in the Forest for our young people and enable families to have quality of life without having to commute for work. Surplus food and other products are sold locally, generating income whilst providing affordable, fresh and heathy food to local markets. Open days and educational events share the necessary skills and inspire others to help us transition to an ecologically harmonious and economically self-sufficient future. Employment opportunities and apprenticeships may also arise from various land based livelihoods.



Accessibility

Wum Land Developments aim to be accessible to all. By valuing the productivity of future labour, land share schemes and community land exchanges could make land available to local families and groups wanting to apply for planning permission under the Wum Land Development Policy.
A diversity of approaches to land acquisition and to meeting the targeted planning policy requirements will encourage the development of replicable models for others to learn from. Indeed, much can already be learnt from developments under the low-impact ‘One Planet Development’ policy in Cymru (Wales).



Cultural inheritance.

All land is imbued with historical narrative and comes with its own particular and unique cultural inheritance. Developments must be sensitive to this and ensure continuity by celebrating and advocating for the land, it’s cultural inheritance and the stories of place. The cultural narrative and heritage of the site must be demonstrated to be valued and preserved. This could take the form of retaining or reconditioning pre-existing structures, making available and promoting the stories and history of the site in question, appropriate naming of developments to uphold the historical value of the site, or collecting oral and written histories, demonstrating respect for local history & identity.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT...

Perhaps unsurprisingly, low-impact development has its roots in radical environmentalism and land-rights activism, although it represents a clear departure from more reactionary forms of 'activism' instead focusing on productive projects which aim to house and feed people long-term, rather than just for a temporary 'campaign'. It was started by people who sought to 'practise what they preach', to live in accordance with their economic and environmental convictions and to create 'proof of concept' models for others to learn from and be inspired by. Grand designs with Ben Law's A-frame was one incursion into popular culture, but it was not the first...

Some of the remotest parts of Wales have become host to projects established by various 'back to the land' movements. Several of these projects were started in the 60's and early 70's and have become home to three generations of people, all living and working the land over -in some cases- many hundreds of acres. Many of these communities still exist in legal 'grey areas' and therefore remain somewhat obscured from the public-eye.

If one was to write a 'folk-history' of low-impact development, it would not be complete without Tony Wrench, of 'www.thatroundhouse.info' infamy. Certainly, Tony's round-house was how I first became interested in the idea of low-impact development as an alternative development model and solution to the housing and agriculture crisis. Tony's run-in with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park planning officials in 2008 catapulted the narrative of low-impact development into mainstream awareness after someone spotted solar panels on his green roof (seen below) from the air. This led to the Daily Mail reporting that a "Lost tribe has been spotted" living in an eco-village in Wales. In reality, the Brithdir Mawr community was started in 1993 and there had been on-going 'planning issues' regarding low-impact dwellings since they were first noticed in 1998.

Brithdir Mawr was the brainchild of architectural historian Julian Orbach, and his wife Emma. However, in 2008 it was Tony's roundhouse which the planning officials had determined to demolish which kick-started a popular campaign, the popularity of which resulted in the planning department's enforcement officers being physically unable to enforce their injunctions. This, combined with a lengthy legal case, eventually convinced the planners to change their minds and allow, in principal, 'low-impact development' into the planning policy.

This was a crucial moment in the history of low-impact development, a *de facto* victory for the dispossessed peasantry wanting to return to the land over the central planners and it drove a wedge of possibility into an otherwise rigid and maladapted system, making space for the next generation of 'pre-approved' eco-villages like Lammas to begin to engage in a process of collaboration rather than conflict with the local authorities.

Tony Wrench's roundhouse, Pembrokeshire.
Above: stages of roundhouse construction.