



World Veganism

– past, present, and future

By John Davis, former IVU Manager and Historian
A collection of blogs © John Davis 2010-12

Introduction

This PDF e-book is about 8mb, 219 pages A4, (equivalent to 438 page paperback book), so I strongly recommend that you save a copy to your own disk, then open it in the Adobe Acrobat Reader. That way, you won't have to download it all again if you want to read more of it sometime later.

Creating this as a PDF e-book has several advantages, especially if you are reading this on a device connected to the internet. For example:

- in the blog about interviews on SMTV, just click on the links to watch the videos
- in the bibliography click to read a complete scan of an original very old book.
- on the contents page click a link to go direct to any item, then click 'back to top'.
- you can also, of course, use other features such as search, zoom etc. etc.
- a great advance on printed books...

It should work on any device, though an ipad/tablet is ideal for this as there are lots of big colour photos, or on smart-phones try rotating for best results, on a larger computer monitor try *view/page display/two up*, to read it like a book.

The blogs were posted weekly from February 2010 to December 2012 and each is self-contained, with the assumption that readers might not have seen any of the others. So feel free to start anywhere, and read them in any order, no need to read from the beginning.

They were deliberately written in a style that is more journalistic than academic, so references, and some links, are within the text, and there are no footnotes. However a full and extensive bibliography of about 200 veg-related books is being added for those who want to do further research.

The blogs are grouped into a few sections:

1 – History: It is impossible to consider a history of veganism without putting it in the wider context, so there is a lot that is 'nearly vegan' along the way. The word vegan was invented in 1944, but for a long time before that there were many people holding similar, though not necessarily identical views. The real beginning is from 1806, where see a movement that could be considered vegan by today's standards. Before that there are some thoughts about people moving in the right direction.

2 – Regions and IVU – with histories: Deals with various regions of the world, and includes brief histories of those areas. Most inevitably start out as ovo- and/or lacto-vegetarian, but end up vegan, hence the use of veg*ism, or just veg, as a shorthand. IVU from 1908 and some highlights along the way – that is also all vegan by the end of the 20th century.

3 – World View: Some recent veg activities and events around the world.

4 – Activism: Ideas for local groups, based on some in the UK which could be adapted.

5 – Directions: A collection of thoughts about where we're at and where we're going.

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Blog of blogs

November 7, 2012

I've been posting these blogs for almost three years now, putting up one a week on all sorts of things. The stats show some getting ten times more hits than others – but of course that doesn't tell me how many people actually read them all the way down, or whether they liked them.

The Facebook link in all the blogs gives a different perspective as it shows how many found the blog interesting enough to just click 'like' or to share it with their friends. So I put together my own quirky way of combining those, to get a better idea of what others might want to read about in the future. I know I have some regular readers, amongst those who read them now and then when the topic is of personal interest. So for anyone who is curious, this is my all-time 'top 20' blogs, in order of my combined hits and 'likes/shares' count.

1 - Bronson Alcott - American pioneer vegan

Amos Bronson Alcott was an abolitionist vegan in a way that few today are emulating – in the 1830s he was taking a stand against human slavery in the USA.

2 - World Veganism - FREE e-book!

- you're reading it...

3 - Vegetarian equals vegan!

The first people who called themselves 'vegetarian' were in fact vegan. This has now been established conclusively with resources not previously available.

(photo below: Alcott House, where the 'vegetarians' began)



4 - Veg*ism in China

Westerners often seem to be surprised to hear that there are millions of vegetarians, indeed vegans, in China, but this is nothing new.

5 - Gandhi - and the launching of veganism

Gandhi is not the first name that vegans might think of as helping to launch the movement, and yet he did, on November 20, 1931, in London to be precise.



6 - Veganism from 1806

Dr. William Lambe FRCP, in London, England, changed his diet at the age of 40 – and gave us the first known unambiguous statement [for plant food only].

7 - Henry David Thoreau and the Roots of Plantism

Well, everyone else is inventing words... by plantism I mean eating only plants – and ideally wearing plants, growing your own plants for food and conserving plant habitats for other species – vegan self-sufficient environmentalism if you like.

8 - Flexitarian and Plantatarian - 21st century dimensions

If I'm right then the number of consistent secular ovo- and/or lacto-vegetarians is not just reducing – more significantly they are getting older, and not being replaced. Which would inevitably mean it is only a matter of time before they die out.

9 - Dr. John Snow - a vegan of genius

In a poll of British doctors in 2003 John Snow was voted as the greatest physician of all time. Though probably few of them would have known he was what we now call vegan.

10 - The Vegetus Myth

You've all read it somewhere: "*The word vegetarian has nothing to do with vegetables, it was derived from the Latin 'vegetus' meaning whole, fresh, lively, vigorous*" etc...

11 - Will there ever be more veg*ns?

For those who have been active in the veg movement for any length of time the above title must seem almost heretical - but it is actually an interesting question...

12 - Were there Vegans in the Ancient World?

We seem to be getting an increase in those silly lists of 'famous historical vegans', nearly all just nonsense and wishful thinking.

13 - The Invention of the Vegans

The word 'vegan' was invented in November 1944 by Donald Watson in England. But the origins are not how many vegans today might imagine.

14 - Medieval Mindsets - 'vegans' in the middle ages

There were people who didn't eat meat in Medieval Europe, and in Asia, but mostly for very different reasons to what we associate with veganism today.

15 - Vegans are Vegetarians too

The man who invented the word 'vegan' in 1944 was very clear that this was a part of the vegetarian movement, and Donald Watson remained clear about that up to his death in 2005, at the grand age of 95.

16 - Veg*ism in Africa

I was once asked "Why do Africans go vegetarian?" - it was an unexpected question but the reply was simple enough: "For the same reason as everyone else, health, animals, environment or religion, according to their personal priorities".

17 - Are you a positive or a negative veg*n?

If we ask meat-eaters what they think 'vegetarian' means, most would probably say 'someone who does not eat meat' - but that is not at all how I see it (*right: positive/negative images*).

18 - Why some restaurants don't do vegan food - and why they should

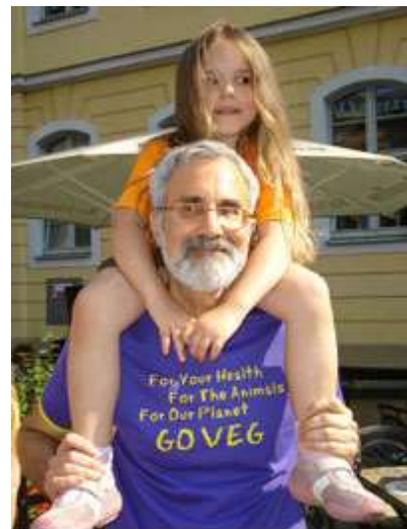
A couple of weeks ago I mentioned encouraging more restaurants to offer vegan meals, and was asked for some ideas about doing that. So here are just a few thoughts.

19 - Divided by a common language

"Do you have anything vegetarian?" "Yes, *do you eat fish?*"

20 - Was Vitamin B12 a problem for 19th century 'vegans'?

B12 was discovered 1948, the word 'vitamin' having first appeared in the early 20th century. So if 19th century vegans had vitamin deficiencies they had no way of knowing it, and would have diagnosed it as something else.



Fast Food? – it's just distorted jungle food

May 16, 2012

Whether you subscribe to Eve and Adam or Evolution, it is clear that our distant ancestors lived entirely on fast-food. It was growing all around them in the jungle/garden – they just reached out, grabbed some fruit, nuts, berries, leaves, shoots, herbs (and a few bugs) – and ate it. Even with some occasional peeling or cracking, it was about as fast as it gets.

I took the photo on the right on Bali, Indonesia, 2010.



At some point our ancestors moved out of the jungle/garden and, with less easy food to hand, they dug for roots, and gradually expanded their bug eating to bigger prey, though probably very little of it until they discovered how to cook it, and even then far less than many flesh-eating anthropologists just assume. The ability to eat anything is valuable when food is scarce, but humans have never actually needed to eat other animals at times of plant-food plenty.

So we went through some thousands of years of culinary complications, some of it designed to make the flesh look a little less erm... fleshy, but most people still ate mostly plant-foods. Until very recently it was only the rich that could afford to eat much meat, and the symbol of wealth and power became far more important than any nutritional value. Meat eating became the equivalent of big houses and flash cars, hence the city-dwelling Chinese wanting more of it these days, and for the same reasons.

The culinary complications were fine for those with chefs to do the cooking, but it was always really too time consuming for most other people, only a minority really enjoy complicated cookery (beyond watching TV chefs). And modern fast food is taking the rest back to the jungle, though in a very unhealthy form.

The modern equivalent of the jungle trees are the supermarket shelves, just reach out and grab whatever fatty, sugary food you feel like eating. The difference now of course is that the humans take it back to the nest, then put it in the microwave.

And if even that's too much hassle, then the fast-food 'restaurants' make it easier still. You can get a beef-burger in a bun in a couple of minutes, and it is similar in size and shape to a large piece of fruit, just minus much of the nutritional value.

So no knives or forks needed, and no table manners, our primeval fruit grabbing hands are fine. A hot dog is just a junk version of a banana, and a slice of meat pizza is nothing more than a large leaf with some tasty bugs on it.

All those sugary snack bars fit the banana shape too, simply peel back and eat. This also reflects something of a return to the continuous grazing pattern of the jungle, but with dangerous health consequences in some of these modern substitutes.

Some people really are trying to return to the original healthy fast-food – just grab some fruit, nuts and leafy greens and eat them raw, though most of us still prefer a few beans and whole grains in the mix too, and those do need some basic cooking.

In many countries all branches of Burger King and McDonalds do bean-burgers, and they would be adequate (minus cheese, plus wholewheat bun...) – if they didn't come from BK and McDeath. Though personally I'm pleased they do them anyway, not so much for the existing vegetarians, more to encourage their meat-eating customers to at least try something different – and someone must be buying them...

Right: top - how a healthy bean burger can look, and below a rather sad BK 'bean burger meal'...

So will humans eventually evolve beyond this processed imitation phase, and return to the original fast food of the jungle?

Back in the 1980s I remember Margaret Thatcher being asked if she would encourage people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. She was totally against it, her priority was to reduce unemployment (hence improve her election prospects) so she was promoting 'value-added' (i.e. processed) food, because that created jobs in the processing factories.

And of course when the customers get ill from eating all that junk, it creates even more jobs in the medical and pharmaceutical industries. A win-win for the big businesses and their political puppets (When Thatcher left office she joined the board of British-American Tobacco . . .).

But yes, we should all get back to more of the original fast food. That's some of ours below, all from our own garden, but there is still plenty of it everywhere else.



Were there Vegans in the Ancient World?

January 4, 2012

We seem to be getting an increase in those silly lists of 'famous historical vegans', nearly all just nonsense and wishful thinking. I've seen some recently claiming Pythagoras, Plato, and many others from ancient Greece and Rome were vegans, blindly copied around the internet.

For those of us who take history seriously it is worth trying to understand what people were really doing, and why they chose their lifestyle, even if it's not what we now see as ideal.

Some biologists say that the human body craves fat and sugar because those things were difficult to obtain in early human times, and small amounts of the right sort are beneficial. Perhaps that's why in the Jewish/Christian Bible (Exodus 3:8) Moses promised a land flowing with (full cream) milk and honey.

Of course that promised land of fat and sugar had to wait until the fast food of cheeseburgers, cheese stuffed pizzas and sugary cola. It seems that Moses didn't anticipate obesity, diabetes and heart disease...

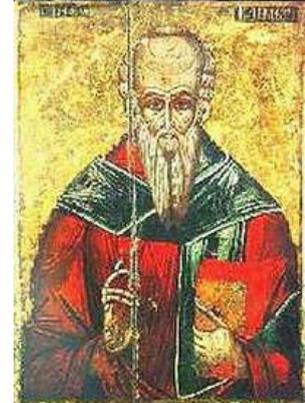
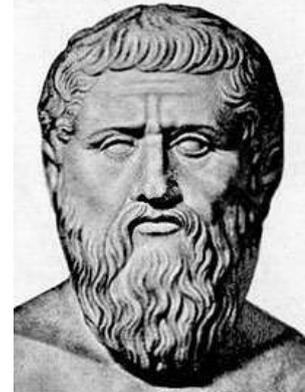
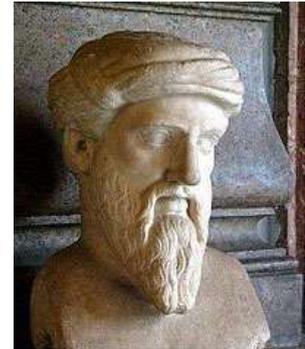
It is interesting that Moses did **not** promise endless quantities of animal flesh, maybe he knew they didn't need that, and we do have a lot of examples of people in the ancient world cutting out the flesh, but keeping milk and honey. That happened in India at around the same time the Pythagoreans and Orphic Communities appeared in ancient Greece, all about 600BCE.

[pictures right, from the top: Pythagoras, Plato, Ovid, St. Clement, Porphyry]

They were all surprisingly similar, suggesting some contact and exchange of ideas, maybe via the Zoroastrians in Persia, but there is no clear evidence of how it came about. The basis was metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls. In simplistic terms, if people can come back as animals in the next life, then you could be eating your grandmother. But that argument didn't apply to milk (goats, sheep or cows were all used) and honey, or wool.

Nothing that Pythagoras wrote or said has survived, so we only have accounts from hundreds of years later. For example the Roman, Ovid (43BCE - CE17) in his *Metamorphoses* said that Pythagoras ". . . was the first to forbid animals to be served up at the table" but also claimed Pythagoras as saying: "Nor is the milky juice denied you; nor honey . . . there is milk; and clover-honey. Earth is generous with her provision, and her sustenance."

Porphyry (233-304 CE/AD) wrote: of Pythagoras: "As for his own diet, he was satisfied with honey or the honeycomb, or with bread only . . . his principal dish was often kitchen herbs, cooked or uncooked. Fish he ate rarely." – by that last comment he



wasn't even vegetarian, though other accounts vary, but the milk and honey are always there.

Plato (c.427-c.347 BC) in his *'Republic'* seemed to point to an ideal future without flesh-eating, but there is no evidence that he made any attempt to put it into practice himself.

Several early Christian leaders also abstained from flesh out of desire for simplicity and self denial. One example was Saint Clement of Alexandria, who died around 220AD. In his second treatise, the *Instructor or Tutor*, Clement argues against flesh-eating, and adds : "For is there not, within a temperate simplicity a wholesome variety of eatables - vegetables, roots, olives, herbs, **milk, cheese**, fruits, all kinds of dry food? . . . those who feed according to the Word are not debarred from dainties - such as honey combs."

In all these early texts there is no reference to eggs. They just seem to have been included within 'flesh', as in the predominant tradition in India.

We see something different in Porphyry (234-305CE/AD - an anti-Christian Greek philosopher within the Roman Empire) in his three-volume *'On Abstinence from Animal Foods'* - quoting arguments put to him by others:

"If, however, someone should think it is unjust to destroy brutes, such a one should neither use milk, nor wool, nor sheep, nor honey. For as you injure a man by taking from him his garments, thus also, you injure a sheep by shearing it. . . . Milk, likewise was not produced for you, but for the young of the animal that has it. The bee also collects honey as food for itself; which you, by taking away, administer to your own pleasure."

But Porphyry then rejected these arguments, stating that the animals and bees benefitted from humans caring for them, so it was a fair exchange to use their products, whilst abstaining from their flesh. It is extraordinary to see this level of debate taking place at all, more than 1,700 years ago, and it had moved on to an ethical discussion instead of the earlier purely religious matters.

It may have been just the meat-eaters accusing the 'abstainers from flesh' of hypocrisy by continuing to use other animal products. However, we do know that there were quite a lot of 'abstainers from flesh', and in a big enough group it is always likely that a few would indeed have taken things to the logical conclusion of not using any animal products at all, and it looks like Porphyry might have been debating with them too.

There is no evidence that any of the people we know about took the 'vegan' route of eliminating milk, honey and wool - but we only know about people who wrote books, or were important enough to be written about. All the others just vanish and we will never know who they were.

Those lists of 'famous vegans' from ancient history really are nonsense, they were all what we would now call 'lacto-vegetarians', but that doesn't mean there were no 'vegans' around, just that they weren't famous enough ...

Medieval Mindsets – ‘vegans’ in the middle ages

February 1, 2012

There were people who didn't eat meat in Medieval Europe, and in Asia, but mostly for very different reasons to what we associate with veganism today.

In the western world the time after the fall of the Roman Empire - 'the dark ages', or Middle Ages or Medieval period, usually defined as about 500-1500CE. - was dominated by religion in both Europe and Asia, and many of those religions demanded various levels of abstinence and self-denial, even self-punishment.

For some this meant abstaining from eating flesh, not because they thought it was bad, but because it was good, so they would suffer by denying themselves. Inevitably some took this further than others, trying to eat almost nothing in order to feel more holy - they abstained from sex for the same reason, and some in the West wore hair-shirts which were deliberately itchy, while some Asian monks whipped their own backs.

It is difficult to see this as having much to do with what we now call veganism. They kept their milk and honey and, especially in Europe there was rarely any concern for animals, or for human health.

Some monasteries demanded inverted thinking of flesh as a 'health food', and 'mercy' that didn't extend to animals:

"[in English monasteries] Meat, once provided only for the sick, was now enjoyed by all in the infirmary; and when this was forbidden by papal statute, a 'misericorde', 'the chamber of mercy', between the infirmary and the refectory, where meat was freely allowed on the table. This, too, was prohibited by papal statute; but in 1339 the pope, recognizing that the prohibition was unenforceable, conceded that the monks might continue to relish their meat in the 'misericorde' provided that only half their number did so at a time, the other half maintaining the vegetarian rule elsewhere. [C. Hibbert, *The English, a social history*, 1989]



Most of these abstainers continued to eat fish, so Mr. Hibbert was misusing the term 'vegetarian'.

We've also seen claims that the Japanese Samurai, from the 11th century, were 'vegan', but again all available references show them as routinely eating fish.

In 1655 Roger Crab published his '*English Hermit*', an account of his life in a cottage near London. In the introduction he specifically mentions not eating butter or cheese leading some to see him as 'vegan'. But he also mentions his only clothing as sack cloth, and before long he is claiming to extend his self-punishment by living entirely on dock leaves and grass . . . [the picture is from his book]



In the USA in the 18th century there were some groups such as the Ephrata Cloister and Dorrelites, which have also been claimed as 'vegan'. But these too were based entirely on self-deprivation to feel holier.

Howard Williams, *The Ethics of Diet*, 1883, on Medieval Europe:

. . . we look in vain for traces of anything like the humanitarian feeling of Plutarch or Porphyry [late Greek philosophers].. . . In those terrible [medieval Europe] ages of gross ignorance, of superstition, of violence, and of injustice - in which human rights were seldom regarded - it would have been surprising indeed if any sort of regard had been displayed for the *non-human* slaves. . . Chrysostom [347-407CE] seems to have been one of the last of Christian writers who manifested any sort of consciousness of the inhuman, as well as unspiritual nature of the ordinary gross foods . . . in the days of expiring Greek philosophy, Olympiodorus [5th century] and six other Pythagoreans determined, if possible, to maintain their doctrines elsewhere; and they sought refuge with the Persian Magi . . .

Their refuge didn't work out and they returned to Greece, but it is in the Middle East that we find an unexpected example of humanitarian thinking. During the time many call the 'Islamic Golden Age' (c.750CE-c.1258CE) philosophers, scientists and engineers of the Islamic world contributed enormously to technology and culture, and this was all based in Baghdad where Greek philosophy and science survived. The Europeans re-'discovered' it from the Arabs centuries later.

An unusual poet, Al-Ma'arri (973-1057CE) arrived in Baghdad from Syria. He wrote:

Thou art diseased in understanding and religion. Come to me, that thou mayst hear the tidings of sound truth.
Do not unjustly eat what the water has given up, [*i.e. fish*] and do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals,
Or the white (milk) of mothers who intended its pure draught for their young, not noble ladies.
And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking their eggs; for injustice is the worst of crimes.
And spare the honey which the bees get betimes by their industry from the flowers of fragrant plants;
For they did not store it that it might belong to others, nor did they gather it for bounty and gifts.
I washed my hands of all this; and would that I had perceived my way ere my temples grew hoar! [*i.e. hair became grey – the poem continues on injustice...*]

From: '*Studies in Islamic Poetry*' by R.A. Nicholson, 1921 (on archive.org). Mr. Nicholson says there are 'many passages' of a similar nature, and discusses how Al-Ma'arri says he adopted what we now call veganism at the age of 30 (early grey hair...).

We have books about Al-Ma'arri, but there is some debate about where he got these ideas, and whether there were more like him. Various religious sources are suggested, but he objected to all organised religion, and left us guessing. A few more of his lines, converted into poetic English in 1904, but written almost 1,000 years ago:

Hunt not the beast; O, be thou more humane,
Since hunter here nor hunted long remain;
The smallest grub a life has in it which
Thou canst not take without inflicting pain.

The wooden shoes I do like best because
That skin did once live, aye, and even think.

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Veganism from 1806

May 25, 2011 (updated November 2011)

This is a brief summary of a talk I gave at the International Vegan Festival in Malaga, Spain, June 4-12, 2011, and at the Midlands Vegan Festival, Wolverhampton UK, October 29, 2011

1806 – Dr. William Lambe FRCP, in London, England, changed his diet at the age of 40 – and gave us an unambiguous statement: *“My reason for objecting to every species of matter to be used as food, except the direct produce of the earth, is founded on the broad ground that no other matter is suited to the organs of man. **This applies then with the same force to eggs, milk, cheese, and fish, as to flesh meat.**”*



DR. WILLIAM LAMBE (AGED 82).

1811 – John Frank Newton, a patient of Dr. Lambe, in his book *'Return to Nature'* expanded Lambe's medical ideas to include ethical values towards all animals.



1813 – Percy Bysshe Shelley (*right*), poet, joined a 'vegan commune' which alternated between Newton family homes in London and Bracknell.



1830s – Sylvester Graham (*left*), in Boston USA, had been promoting the 'vegetable diet' – generally 'with or without' eggs/dairy. In 1837 he exchanged letters with Dr. Lambe, and his 1839 book clearly claimed that 'without' was more effective for health.

1830s – Dr John Snow (*right*), was 'vegan' since reading Newton's book when he was 17. Moved to London in 1838 and eventually achieved fame for discovering the way in cholera was spread. In 2003 British doctors voted him the greatest physician of all time.



1838 – James Pierrepont Greaves opened 'Alcott House Academy', a school near London run entirely consistent with the ideas proposed by Lambe and Newton. It ran for the next ten years.

1842, April – the first confirmed use of the word 'vegetarian' in the Alcott House journal. All other early uses were by people close to Alcott House, and all using it for what we now call 'vegan'.

1842 June – Bronson Alcott (*left*), from Boston USA, already veg*n thanks to Sylvester Graham, visited Alcott House, named in honor of him and his earlier school in Boston. In 1843, with new English friends, he ran the short-lived 'Fruitlands' near Harvard, MA – again run on totally ethical 'vegan' principles.

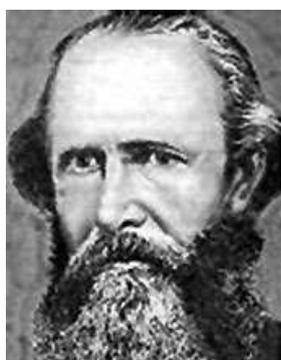
1845-6 – Henry David Thoreau (*right*) lived by Walden Pond, near Concord MA, living solely on plant foods plus some fishing – but wrote about how much he regretted the fish...



MR. WILLIAM HORSELL.

1846 – William Horsell (*left*) moved the hydrotherapy institute from Alcott House to Northwood Villa, in Ramsgate, Kent, England. This again followed Dr. Lambe's principles of plant food plus purified water.

1847 – The Vegetarian Society was founded at a meeting in Ramsgate, launched jointly by Alcott House and the (ovo-lacto) Bible Christian Church from Salford near Manchester. The compromise was to set the objective as merely 'abstaining from the flesh of animals' – and the confusion over everything else has continued ever since.



1874 – Dr. Russell Trall (*left*) had been running a hydrotherapy institute in New York City since 1850. This changed to exclusively plant food plus water in 1862 – and in 1874 produced the first known 'vegan' cookbook.

1887 – John Harvey Kellogg (*right*) privately removed eggs/dairy from his diet, though his books and sanitarium, in Battle Creek, Michigan, continued to use them. 40 years later he returned to using yogurt – but then discovered soy milk...

1910 – Rupert Wheldon in England, published 'No Animal Food', the first British 'vegan' cookbook. This was reprinted by Dr. Elmer Lee in New York. A 1910 article about Lee in the NY Times included the first known use of the phrase 'plant foods'.

1909-14 – The Vegetarian Messenger, journal of The Vegetarian Society, carried much discussion about the use of eggs/dairy. There seemed to be a possibility of significant change, but all momentum was destroyed by the First World War.



1931 – Mahatma Gandhi spoke at a meeting of the London Vegetarian Society (*left*), making it clear that he objected to the use of milk and milk products. Such high profile support must have emboldened the minority who called themselves 'non-dairy vegetarians'.

1944 – Donald Watson and friends coined the word 'vegan' and founded The Vegan Society – the first issue of their journal was subtitled 'the journal of the non-dairy vegetarians' – and made it clear that they had not wanted to separate from The Vegetarian Society, they just wanted a distinct section within it. Most retained their memberships of both societies, as many do today.



WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

BY HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS"



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as circumstance will permit upon the bonanzas of great freedom, health, and peace, as they come upon me. — Page 50.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1849.



1947 – Watson was a speaker at the IVU World Veg Congress (*he is front-middle right*) – The Vegan Society had joined IVU soon after being founded, and has been a member ever since.

1957 – The first Indian Vegan Society joined IVU. We don't know how long it lasted, but the new society is also prominent member.

1960 The American Vegan Society was founded, joining IVU from the outset. This included a smaller group started in California as far back as 1948.

1960-90s – many new vegan organizations were formed, and the word gradually spread.

1995 – records of printed media show a significant increase in the use of the word 'vegan' – this appears to have come from the rapid expansion of vegan websites, leading to a market for vegan books, especially recipes.

1997 – The IVU website started a recipe collection – agreed to be entirely vegan from the outset. We now have over 3,000 in English with more in other languages.

1998 – IVU agreed that all food at IVU Congresses would in future be completely vegan.

21st Century – most veg organizations around the world now promote veganism as the ideal, regardless of whether they are called 'vegetarian' or 'vegan'.

- by 2009 more books had 'vegan' in the title than 'vegetarian'.
- 2009/10 surveys in the USA showed that 66% of vegetarians exclude eggs/dairy
- by 2011 there were as many Google searches for 'vegan' as for 'vegetarian'
- 22 organizations with 'vegan' in their title are now members of IVU

Will all vegetarians eventually be vegan? We have no way of knowing, but the continuing trend seems inevitable.



Footnotes, added a couple of days after the blog was posted:

- it will be seen from above that there has been a significant change towards veganism within IVU over the last 15 years. This is mostly due to the work of The Vegan Society (the original one in the UK). Such changes inevitably take time, and TVS deserves credit and respect for the manner in which they have promoted their cause - and they won't give up...

- the day after the blog was posted, I went back to the 'Truth Tester' journals edited by William Horsell at the Ramsgate Hydrotherapy Institute. The winter 1846/47 issues contain a recipe for 'Sago Pudding' - normally made with some animal products - this one ended by proudly proclaiming what can be done 'without milk, eggs or butter'. So far this is the earliest deliberately vegan recipe that I've found, and in a vegan journal. There were plenty of earlier recipes that didn't happen to need animal products, but none I've seen that deliberately substituted them.

- the question of the lack of women above was raised. There must have been some, but the men of the time didn't bother to write about them, so we don't have any details. If anything comes to light another update will be posted.

- alongside the vegan Dr. Lambe above, the founder of the ovo-lacto Bible Christian Church in 1809 was the Rev. William Cowherd... honest! Hollywood couldn't have named them better :-)

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Dr. William Lambe - father of vegan nutrition, and his vegan biographer

September 20, 2011

Our understanding of vegan nutrition has come a long way in the last 200 years, but it had to start somewhere, and William Lambe (1765-1848), Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, was the first to be specific about it way back in 1809.

In 1806, age 41, Lambe was concerned about his own state of health, and changed his diet to exclusively plant foods and distilled water. The word 'vegetable' in those days included all types of vegetation (as in 'animal, vegetable or mineral'), so the 'vegetable diet' as it was commonly known, included fruits, grains, nuts, beans etc.

Most people following this diet included cow's milk, but Dr. Lambe did not – and he kept to his strictly vegetable / vegan diet for the rest of life, still looking good near the end 41 years later - the photo right was taken not long before he died.



DR. WILLIAM LAMBE (AGED 82).

Amongst his many writings, Lambe left us two books of particular interest: "*Reports on the Effects of a Peculiar Regimen in*

Scirrhus Tumours, and Cancerous Ulcers" (1809), followed by his 'Additional Reports', more fully titled "*Water and Vegetable Diet in Consumption, Scrofula, Cancer, Asthma, and Other Chronic Diseases*" (1815) – both of these were primarily reports on his own condition and self-treatment, but included case studies from some patients.

In his now famous (since I found it last year) quote on p.89-90 of the 2nd book he said: "*My reason for objecting to every species of matter to be used as food, except the direct produce of the earth – as maybe seen in my last publication - is founded on the broad ground that no other matter is suited to the organs of man. **This applies then with the same force to eggs, milk, cheese, and fish, as to flesh meat.***" [emphasis added]

On the IVU website we now have the full text of the only known biography of Dr. Lambe (see bibliography). This was written in 1873 by Edward Hare (1812-1897), who was a former Director-General of Hospitals in Bengal, India. There is currently little further known about Mr. Hare, except that in 1881 he was living in the City of Bath, and by 1891 he had become a Vice-President of the Vegetarian Society. However, from expressions of his own views in the book, it becomes clear that he too shared Dr. Lambe's view of what we now call a 'vegan' diet.

William Lambe was strongly promoting the use of distilled water as the only healthy drink for humans – partly due to the awful condition of the public water supply in early 19th century England. His biographer went to some lengths to support this idea, stating at one point: "*Dr. Lambe also shows that the beneficial effects of drinking milk, and especially whey, acknowledged by all the old physicians, and called 'The Whey Cure,'*

were not due to the use of these animal fluids, but to the abstinence from impure water for which these drinks were substitutes."

Mr. Hare also says that Dr. Lambe only used small quantities even of distilled water: "*He said that man was not a drinking animal, his erect form showed it. In a state of nature man could not conveniently stoop to drink out of streams, etc. – and if we lived upon fruit and vegetables we should not have thirst.*" This argument against the need for any drink at all appears from time to time among 19th century vegetarians, and was used against milk drinking in particular (note the change to 'fruit and vegetables' as the meaning of 'vegetable' was changing in the late 19th century).

Lambe's books were widely read on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1850 the second of his books mentioned above was published in New York, with 'notes and additions' by Joel Shew M.D., who was a Vice-President of the new American Vegetarian Society founded the same year. The bibliography includes a link to a complete copy of that edition on Google Books.

In 1883 Howard Williams wrote his '*Ethics of Diet*' – the first book on the history of vegetarianism, which was hugely influential and which included substantial quotes from Mr. Hare's biography of William Lambe. However, Williams, like all vegetarian historians, simply avoided any mention of the eggs/dairy issue. It is only now that we are beginning to re-discover the significant minority within the vegetarian movement who kept to the stricter version of the 'vegetable diet'.

Dr. Lambe's Rural Roots

September 28, 2011

Dr. William Lambe did his groundbreaking work on the vegan diet 200 years ago, whilst living in London, but his roots were in the countryside, where he grew up and eventually retired.

The biography I put online last week mentioned that his family's estate was near the village of Dilwyn in Herefordshire, and with some more research I found that the estate was Henwood, quite close to the village. That is only about an hour from where I live today, so last week Hazel and I took a ride down there to look around.

There is some confusion about where William was born, but we know his father was an attorney, and that his parents married in 1762 in St. Peter's church in the nearby city of Hereford. Their first two children were also christened there. *Right is St. Peter's today.*

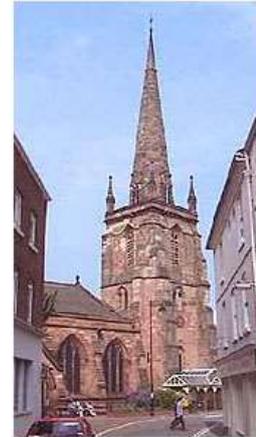
William was their third child, born 26th of February, 1765. One record says he was also born in St. Peter's parish, but another says he born in the town of Warwick, some distance away. The latter is quite plausible if his father was working there at the time, and we do have later connections with the town.

Either way, we know that by 1768, when William was three years old, the family had moved to the Henwood estate near Dilwyn, presumably on his father inheriting it. Soon after they moved there Mr. Lambe snr. rebuilt the house, probably on the same site as the earlier house which had been in the family for at least a hundred years. The photo right is the same house as it is today, little changed.

Right is a photo I took last week from the driveway, showing the setting of the house surrounded by extensive farmland:

As a child William would have been familiar with the nearby village of Dilwyn, at least from his weekly visits to the church. Below is my photo of the village green (there is still some green off-camera to the right of the modern tarmac), on a rather dull day, with a row of cottages and the Crown Inn at the end:

Below is the village school seen from the churchyard. The cottage would have been there in William's time, but the schoolhouse was built by the church in mid-19th century. Before that the land-owners' children, like William, would have been educated at home, and the others were not educated at all.



William moved on to the Hereford Grammar School, now known as the Cathedral School and dating back to the 13th century. From there, in 1782, age 17, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge and stayed on a few years for further medical studies.

In 1790 he moved to Warwick to take over a medical practice from a doctor who was retiring. This was almost certainly through family connections, and would be consistent with William having been born in Warwick. Whilst in Warwick he became interested in the spring water from the nearby village of Leamington. His promotion of the medicinal qualities of this water led to a huge expansion of the village, and to it eventually being dubbed 'Royal Leamington Spa' by Queen Victoria.

A few years later Dr. Lambe added his ideas about a pure plant-food diet to the pure water, and what we now call the vegan diet got its first write up in his books. In 1828 Dr. Lambe inherited the Henwood estate on the death of his older brother. He continued to live and work in London, with his son's family living on the estate.

Around 1840 he retired from his medical work, at age 75, and returned to the countryside for his last few years, eventually passing away in 1847. He was buried in the family vault inside Dilwyn village church.

Right is the interior of the church, dating from the 12th or 13th centuries, which has many memorials to the Lambe family, including all of those in the photo. One of them reads: The remains of WILLIAM LAMBE. M.D. born in ST PETER'S PARISH, HEREFORD. He died in this Parish at HENWOOD June II [2]. MDCCCXLVII [1847]. Aged LXXXII [82].

I took a couple more photos of the church interior – first towards to the altar, with the organ on the left. Then looking back from the altar, across the choir stalls and along the nave:

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John Frank Newton - and the 'vegan' commune of 1813

January 25, 2012

John Frank Newton was a pivotal character in an extraordinary group of people who challenged almost every social convention of the rigid-minded early 19th century England.

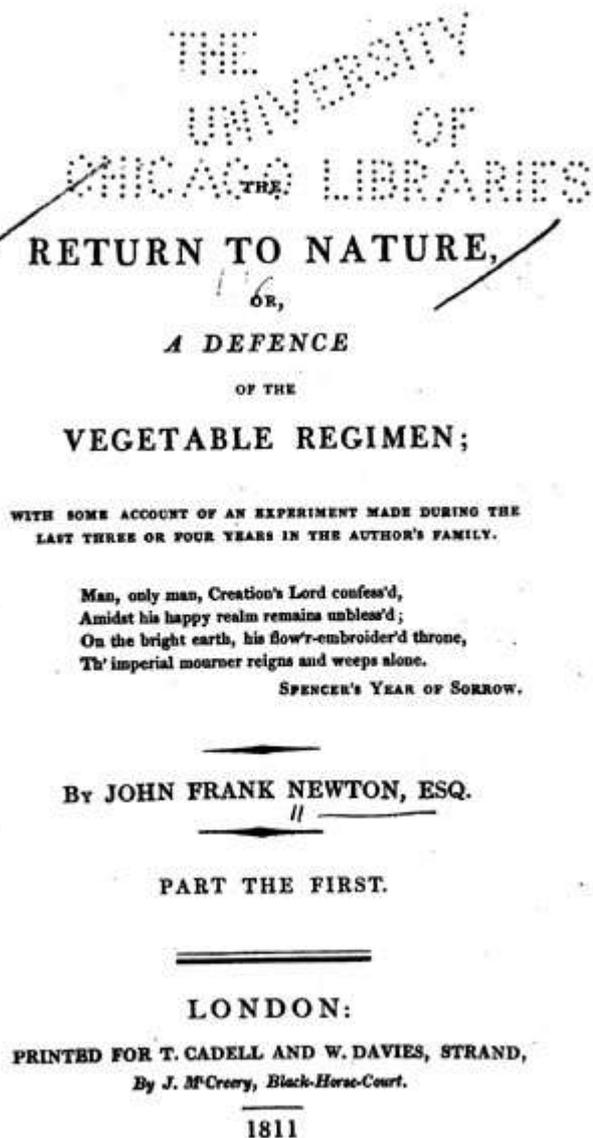
He was born about 1770 and was educated at Harrow, one of two leading schools in the country. From there he went on to Christchurch College, Oxford, where he was friendly with the future Prime Minister, George Canning.

During one his college vacations, in the late 1780s, he went to the West Indies (Caribbean), where he said he met his parents for the first time since starting school as a child. They were running a sugar plantation, and Newton was shocked to be confronted by human slavery. He wrote to Canning urging him to oppose the slave trade when he went into politics, and there is indeed a later record of George Canning supporting abolition. (The Atlantic slave trade was banned by the British Parliament in 1807, but existing slaves in the Caribbean remained legal until abolition in 1833. The USA followed in 1865.)

By 1807, John Frank Newton had become a patient of Dr. William Lambe in London. There seems to have been some earlier connection as Newton's daughter was christened in 1804 in a small village just five miles from Lambe's home village, in the west of England.

Lambe had been promoting his new diet consisting entirely of plant foods plus distilled water, and the whole Newton family adopted a version of this at their home in Grosvenor Square, London. In 1811 Newton published his book : *'Return to Nature, or a defence of the vegetable regimen'*, which was dedicated to Dr. Lambe, and attracted considerable interest across the country.

Newton also promoted the diet of plant food and distilled water, but took matters further in raising ethical issues about the use and treatment of animals, along with descriptions of his family life. In these pre-Darwinian times, the 'nature' of the title was the



Garden of Eden, and the family took this to the extent of leaving off their clothes, as well as the meat. Visitors reported being taken aback to see naked children disappearing as they arrived.

In 1812 Newton was holding a bonfire night party (old English tradition on November 5th), when he received a young visitor - Percy Bysshe Shelley, age 20, was a budding poet. He was sent round to Newton's house by William Godwin, a writer on social justice, and supporter of the French revolution. Godwin's wife, Mary Wollstencraft, was the author of '*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*' in 1792 (yes, seventeen ninety two...). She died in childbirth in 1797 and their daughter, Mary, eventually eloped with Shelley, and went on to write *Frankenstein*. This was not an average family . . .

Shelley and his first wife, Harriet, had adopted the vegetable diet the previous year, whilst in Dublin, possibly from Newton's book, or perhaps from reading the original Greek and Roman writers, or both. He soon became a regular visitor to the Newtons' household in London.

Meanwhile, Newton's widowed sister-in-law, Harriet de Boinville, was running a similar household in what was then the village of Bracknell, near London. For a few months in 1813 Shelley moved into that large country house, along with a few others who were passing through, and established an early attempt at a 'vegan' commune. Most of what we know about it came from Shelley's friends who wrote biographies after he died young in 1822. Thomas Jefferson Hogg, his old university friend, recalled the events of 1813 (slightly edited for brevity):

"I conformed, not through faith, but for good fellowship. Certainly their vegetable dinners were delightful. Flesh never appeared; nor eggs bodily in their individual capacity, nor butter in the gross: the two latter were admitted into cookery, but as sparingly as possible, under protest, as culinary aids not approved of, and soon to be dispensed with. Cheese was under the ban. Milk and cream might not be taken unreservedly; however, they were allowed in puddings, and to be poured sparingly into tea, as an indulgence to the weakness of neophytes."

We have to remember that this was decades before the invention of margarine, and long before anyone in the West ever heard of tofu or soya milk, so the change cannot have been easy for them. But it was not just about health matters as Shelley's writings show us his concern for animals.

The group remained close for several years, William Lambe's daughter eventually marrying Mrs de Boinville's son, her daughter married William Godwin's young friend, and Godwin's daughter was Shelley's second wife, but they gradually scattered.

John Frank Newton moved to Weymouth, on the south coast of England, and died there in 1837. His book had been re-published in 1822, and exerted a considerable influence during the first half of the 19th century. We have no pictures of him or his family.

Shelley - the first celebrity vegan

January 5, 2011

Percy Bysshe Shelley, known as Byshe to his friends, was the rock star of his day - glamorous, controversial, fought over by teenage girls, loathed by their parents, and died dramatically before he was thirty.

At times he was also vegan, lived in a hippy-style commune, wrote about 'free love', had friends who were nudists, probably joining in that too, and was thrown out of Oxford University soon after he arrived.

All of that was 200 years ago, and during the last ten years of his short life he wrote what was arguably some of the finest poetry in the English language.

In 1811, when he was 19, Shelley married 16 year old Harriet Westbrook. They moved around for a while and were in Dublin in March 1812 when

Harriet wrote to some friends that they had adopted the '*Pythagorean system*'. Shelley was a classics scholar and had probably read the original texts in ancient Greek and Latin suggesting that Pythagoras had been lacto-vegetarian.



Later that year they returned to London where Shelley met John Frank Newton, author of '*Return to Nature*' and a patient of Dr. William Lambe, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and author of the '*Water and Vegetable Diet*' - both of them advocating what we now call veganism, in ethics as well as in diet. Shelley soon joined them, as testified by his friend William Hogg in his later biography.

This was decades before any dairy or egg substitutes were commonly available, so it must have been hard for them to adapt, but the accounts show they were serious in their attempts. Shelley's first major poem 'Queen Mab' published 1813, included as a preface his essay on '*A Vindication of Natural Diet*', and in the poem the lines:

. . . No longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh;

In 1814 Shelley left Harriet, now 19 and expecting their second child, and eloped with 16 year old Mary Godwin who later became the 2nd Mrs Shelley after Harriet committed suicide. Not surprisingly all this didn't go down too well in respectable society of the day and they had to spend most of their time living overseas.

During the summer of 1816 Shelley and Mary met up with fellow poet Lord Byron and a doctor friend on the shores of Lake Geneva, Switzerland. They shared a cottage for a while but the weather turned bad, and as there wasn't much on TV in 1816 they decided that each of the four should think of a story to tell the following night.

With two of the four being Shelley and Byron, something special might have been expected - but it didn't come from them. It was Mary, a few days before her 19th birthday, who told a story a man who created life - and she called him Dr. Frankenstein.

In 1818 the full story was published as a novel, and the rest is history, with it being generally credited today as the first of a new genre - science fiction. But what is not so well known is that the nameless 'monster' (a gentle giant until provoked) that Dr. Frankenstein created was also vegan.

At one point in the story he says: *"My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment."* The illustration of the monster, above, is from the 1831 edition of the book, rather different to the Hollywood version 100 years later.

Shelley and Mary ended up living in Italy, where he drowned at sea in 1822 – below left is a later imagined painting of his funeral pyre lit by Byron on the beach, and right a portrait of Mary in later life.



During the rest of the 19th century Shelley's reputation was somewhat whitewashed by the Victorians who liked some of his poetry but not his lifestyle. In 1886 George Bernard Shaw became secretary of the Shelley Society in London, and used his first meeting to announce: "I am, like Shelley, an atheist, a socialist, and a vegetarian." Shaw's close friend, Henry Salt, then wrote a series of articles on Shelley over the next few years, putting the record straight.

For full details of the Shelleys, with links to all original sources, see www.ivu.org/history/shelley

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Lewis Gompertz – Jewish ‘vegan’ and co-founder of the RSPCA in 1824

December 20, 2011

Lewis Gompertz (1783/4–1861) appears on the scene in 1824, at the age of 40, as the author of a significant book promoting an early prototype of what we now call animal rights and veganism; and in the same year he was a co-founder of the world's first *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (SPCA, later RSPCA).

His 1824 book *'Moral Inquiries: on the situation of man and of brutes'* was quite unlike anything before it, and there was very little of a similar nature after it until Henry Salt's *'Animal Rights'* of 1892.

His first principle was a fundamental objection to killing or harming any animal, or any living being, for any purpose whatsoever including food, clothing, labour, research or entertainment.

Oddly however, he considered human health to benefit from eating meat, and if an animal died of natural or accidental causes, he had no objection (at least in principle) to eating it, and using its skin for clothing. We see something of that in modern 'roadkill' debates. But Gompertz argued that any benefits could still never justify deliberate killing. He also acknowledged his own imperfections, particularly in clothing, due to social pressures and the lack of suitable alternatives. And we have to keep in mind that many modern vegan foods (e.g. soy and margarine) were completely unknown in London in 1824.

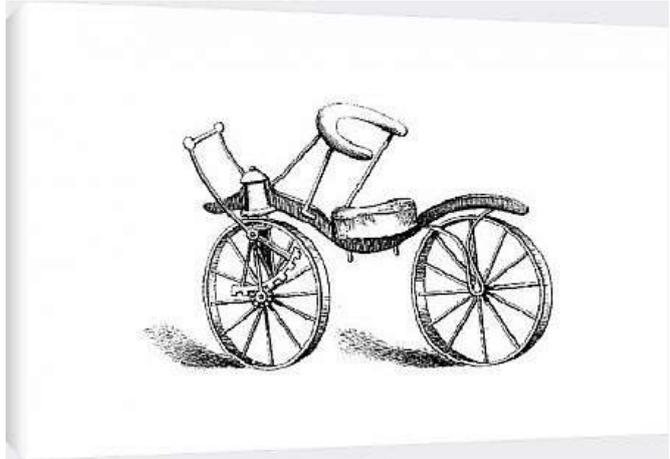
Gompertz also devoted a complete chapter to the use of eggs and dairy products. He stated that cows' milk was for calves, and it was wrong to take a calf away from its mother. However, if a calf died naturally or accidentally then he saw no objection to humans using the surplus milk (in 1824 most people still lived on the land, not in cities).

He had a particular concern for horses, easily the most abused animal in London at that time as they were the primary means of transport, hauling all manner of wheeled vehicles. He very directly equated their use to human slavery, and argued for their freedom. He considered whether some land in England should be set aside for their natural use, or whether they could be transported back to 'Arabia' where he imagined they could live in the wild. But he was realistic enough to know that this 'abolitionist' approach was not going to happen, and devoted much of his life to improving the welfare conditions of the animals.

The rest of Gompertz' time was spent as an inventor, producing a wide variety of devices, many of them aimed at improving animal welfare. One was an attempt to improve a very basic bicycle which was just beginning to appear – it had no pedals or brakes, just pushed along by feet on the ground. Gompertz added the gear mechanism on the front wheel in the picture. For him this was an attempt at an alternative to using horses (*see below right*).



All of this was many years before Darwin, but Gompertz argued that there was no significant difference between "humans and other animals". He didn't use the word 'rights' but he clearly wanted animals to be given a similar legal status to humans - apart from the oddity of skinning and eating them after they died... (would he still accept that today, with all the alternatives now available?)



His book also considered human issues, as summed up by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (1917)*: "Gompertz lauded the reforming influence of education, decried the evils of capitalism and of female subjugation, praised Owenite [socialist] co-operation, and speculated boldly upon a future state shared by man and other animals."

The legal rights of animals became an issue in 1822, when the British Parliament passed a law against the abuse of 'cattle' (which included any large quadruped, particularly horses). But the police and magistrates largely ignored it, much as they do today with the anti-foxhunting law.

Two years later, 1824, the same year that Gompertz' book appeared, a meeting was convened on June 16 at Old Slaughter's Coffee House in London (named from the owner). The 12 men present became the founding members of the world's first *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)*, with the initial object of recruiting their own inspectors to enforce the new law. One of the 12 was Lewis Gompertz but, as far as we know, he was the only one who objected to slaughtering and eating some of the animals they were trying to protect.

The others included two members of parliament, and two Church of England ministers. After two years of the new society struggling, Lewis Gompertz took over as the Secretary and developed it successfully for the next six years.

However, there were tensions with the Christian meat-eaters and Gompertz was accused of 'Pythagoreanism', effectively being a member of heretical religious sect, which he denied. The rest of the committee decided that the society must be run on 'Christian principles' (ie meat-eating) – apparently pretending not to notice that Gompertz was Jewish... he left and founded a new group, *The Animals' Friend Society*, which for a few years outstripped the SPCA in recruitment and effectiveness.

In 1835 the SPCA attracted royal patronage from Princess Victoria, and when she became Queen two years later, they became the RSPCA. They have ever since continued to enjoy the patronage of one of the most animal abusing families in the UK.

Gompertz ran his alternative animal welfare society and journal until 1846. In the 1850s his books were re-published by William Horsell, first Secretary of the Vegetarian Society (1847-50) and subsequently leader of the (vegan) London Vegetarian Association.

He died, aged seventy-seven, from bronchitis on 2 December 1861 at his home in Kennington, London.

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Sylvester Graham – the original American Vegan Baker

February 29, 2012

In 1850 a British vegetarian, living in India, wrote to a journal in England mentioning that his diet included 'Graham bread'. Such was the worldwide fame that the American Sylvester Graham had achieved in his promotion of whole-wheat brown flour, to replace the refined white flour that had become common by the early 19th century.

Most Americans today are familiar with 'Graham crackers', though Graham himself never mentioned them in any of his books. They seem to have been a later invention by commercial bakers, originally using what had become popularly known as 'Graham flour'. But there was much more to Sylvester Graham than just his baking skills.

He had a difficult early life, a sickly child growing up on a Connecticut farm and largely self-educated. But by 1826 he became a Presbyterian minister and, as Rev. Graham, joined the temperance (anti-alcohol) campaign. This took him down thru Rhode Island and New Jersey, then in 1830 to Philadelphia.



At that time the only organization in North America promoting the 'vegetable diet' was the Bible Christian Church in Philadelphia, where members of the BCC from England, led by William Metcalfe, had migrated in 1817. Graham didn't join their church, but he did adopt their diet, with reservations about their use of eggs and dairy products.

We know he was also studying the 1815 book by Dr. William Lambe, from London, on the '*Water and Vegetable Diet*'. Lambe's biographer claimed in 1873: "A People's Edition has been published in America, and it forms the basis of *Graham's Journal*, and of *Graham's Lectures*."

Dr. Lambe promoted a diet entirely of plant food plus distilled water, to which Graham added more ideas of his own, especially on bread. In his 1835 book '*A Defense of the Graham System of Living*', he refers to Dr. Lambe briefly (limited by the anti-British feelings at that time), but took a more flexible approach by acknowledging that most people would continue to use eggs and dairy products, even when they stopped eating animal flesh. He insisted that milk, if used at all, should very fresh, direct from the cow - not very practical for city-dwellers. But he made his own views quite clear:

p.125: "It has been customary from time immemorial to speak loudly in praise of milk . . . nevertheless, I am firmly convinced that it is by no means a wholesome article of diet."

p.128: "As an article of diet, butter is decidedly pernicious, even when fresh..."

p.131: "As a general rule, all kinds of cheese are difficult of solution in the stomach."

p.133: "Honey . . . like other concentrated forms of aliment, is improperly used as food."

He makes similar objections to any animal food, including eggs, along with tea, coffee, chocolate, tobacco, opium, salt, sugar, pepper, mustard, ginger, salad oil and alcohol,

insisting that the only acceptable drink is pure water. He also promoted the importance of exercise, sound sleep and cleanliness – all way ahead of his time for 1835.

Sylvester Graham's next book was the one that perhaps brought him the most attention: '*A Treatise on Bread and Bread-making*', 1837. He went into great detail about the history of bread and how refined white bread was unhealthy. Whilst insisting on the use of whole-wheat flour he again accepted that most people liked their bread made with a mixture of milk and water, but still made his personal views quite clear:

pp.88/89: "... the very best and most wholesome bread is that which is mixed with pure soft water."

This was another reference to the distilled water promoted by Dr. Lambe and his followers in England. We have details of some correspondence between Lambe (now in his 70s) and Graham in 1837, including the full text of Dr. Lambe's letter of March 20, repeating his insistence on pure water.

By this time Graham's fame was spreading from his lecture tours, and 'Grahamite' boarding houses were being set up in New York and Boston by some of his followers.

In 1839 Graham published his major work "*Lectures on the Science of Human Life*". This had a series of numbered paragraphs, and #1291 says: "...*though they do better on a milk and vegetable diet than one of flesh and vegetables, **yet they do best when they confine themselves to a diet of pure vegetable food and pure water.***"

This came to the attention of William Horsell, secretary of the first Vegetarian Society, founded in England in 1847. Horsell was also a publisher and in 1849 he brought Graham's book to the much larger number British vegetarians, where it made a significant impact.

Back in the USA the leaders of the (very ovo-lacto) Bible Christian Church in Philadelphia promoted the idea of an American Vegetarian Society, which was launched in New York in April 1850, with Sylvester Graham one of several Vice Presidents.

In London, Horsell had also been publishing his own journal, the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which had not gone down well with the Bible Christian President of the British Society, due to its strong 'vegan' leanings. In August 1850 his last issue ended with a lengthy article by Sylvester Graham entitled '*Butter and Cheese*', not surprisingly arguing against the use of these products.

The London 'vegans' and the Manchester-based ovo-lacto Bible Christians continued to differ. In 1854 the Manchester journal derisively suggested this was all caused by Sylvester Graham:

"Mr. Graham, in his *Science of Human Life*, has been the leading advocate of the adoption of the Vegetarian system in dependence upon fruits, farinaceous [starchy] substances, and vegetable products alone, without the addition of animal substances, such as milk, butter, eggs, or cheese . . ."

They don't seem to have been aware that Graham had died in 1851, or that much of his original inspiration had come from the highly respected Dr. William Lambe FRCP.

Taking the Waters - transatlantic pioneer plant-food doctors

April 5, 2011



Dr. William Lambe FRCP (1765-1847)

Back in 1815, in London, Dr William Lambe, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP), published his *'Water and Vegetable Diet'* in which he stated: "*My reason for objecting to every species of matter to be used as food, except the direct produce of the earth, is founded on the broad ground that no other matter is suited to the organs of man. **This applies then with the same force to eggs, milk, cheese, and fish, as to flesh meat.***"

Nothing ambiguous about that! Lambe had adopted this diet himself in 1806 as a result of his own medical condition, when he was 41, and kept to it for the rest of his life. It must have worked as he lived to be 82 – a ripe old age by early 19th century standards.

He gained initial fame in 1797 by promoting the mineral waters that made a town in the English midlands into Royal Leamington Spa. He always insisted that water should be the only drink for humans.

In his later years he was able to visit the 'vegan' school at Alcott House, near London, and see his principles fully put into practice. We know that by September 1837 Dr. Lambe was exchanging letters with Sylvester Graham in America.



Rev. Sylvester Graham (1795-1851)

Sylvester Graham was promoting health foods in the Boston area in the 1830s, particularly brown whole-wheat bread, which became known as 'Graham bread'. His name lives on today in 'Graham crackers', though the modern version, made with white flour and sugar, is far removed from the healthy original produced by commercial companies using 'Graham flour'.

His major work was *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* (Boston, 1839). This had a series of numbered paragraphs, and #1291 says: "*...though they do better on a milk and vegetable diet than one of flesh and vegetables, **yet they do best when they confine themselves to a diet of pure vegetable food and pure water.***" Many of his ideas were developed from Dr. Lambe, but in the anti-British era, following the 1812-15 war, he knew he would have more success presenting them as 'all-American'.

Through most of his books, he argues against the use of eggs and dairy products, but accepts that most people will use them, so merely insists on good quality, with milk ideally 'fresh from the cow'. This was a pragmatic approach as he knew he would have little impact otherwise.

In 1849 his *'Science'* was published in London by William Horsell, where it attracted a lot of interest from the larger number of British vegetarians.



DR. WILLIAM LAMBE (AGED 82).





William Horsell (1807-1863) and Northwood Villa

The modern Hydrotherapy revival began in Germany in the early 19th century, with the first British establishment being within Alcott House in 1842, the school near London based on Dr. Lambe's dietary principles.

William Horsell moved that to Northwood Villa, Ramsgate, Kent at the end of 1846 – and this was the venue of the meeting which founded the world's first Vegetarian Society on September 30, 1847.



MR. WILLIAM HORSELL.

Meanwhile Horsell published *'Hydropathy for the People'* in 1845 – that and the hydrotherapy institute both followed Dr. Lambe's principles, and were both what we now call vegan.

Horsell was also a London publisher, specialising in veg-related books, such as Sylvester Graham's.

In 1850 Horsell's book was published in the USA by Russell Trall.



NORTHWOOD VILLA, RAMSGATE.



Russell Trall M.D. (1812-1877)



In 1850 Sylvester Graham helped start the American Vegetarian Society, which lasted about 10 years. One of his co-founders, and a Vice-President was Russell Thacher Trall, a naturopathic physician who ran a hydrotherapy establishment in New York.

His book of 1854 contained a lot of recipes using eggs and dairy products, but this changed in 1862. His 1874 book: *'The hygeian home cook-book; or, Healthful and palatable food without condiments'* - stated that *'for a dozen years'* they had left these out of the diet.

This is, so far, our first known 'vegan' cookbook - long before that word was invented of course.



DR. R. T. TRALL'S WATER-CURE ESTABLISHMENT IN NEW YORK.



Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943)

Kellogg took a much more pragmatic approach on behalf of the Seventh Day Adventist Church – all his 50 books included the use of eggs and dairy products. The famous Battle Creek Sanitarium, also making much use of hydrotherapy, used milk products as well, especially yogurt in the later years.

But privately Kellogg had abandoned them, spending about 40 years as a 'dietary vegan'. However his main biographer says that by 1917 he had gradually gone back to using milk products, again yogurt in particular. Then we are told he discovered soy milk.

Kellogg was in his 70s by then but made good use of it, probably replacing cow's milk to an increasing extent. Had he known about soy 50 years earlier our vegetarian history might have been different as Kellogg was undoubtedly a major influence – cornflakes with soy milk could have been the norm from the outset. . .



Rupert Wheldon

In 1910 we have the first British 'vegan' cookbook: "*No Animal Food and Nutrition and Diet with Vegetable Recipes*", by Rupert Wheldon. The introduction included both medical and ethical reasons for the diet.



Elmer Lee M.D.

Wheldon's book was soon re-published in New York by the Health Culture organization which inserted a few quotes, including: "*Plant diet with butter, cream, milk, cheese, eggs, lard, fat, suet, or tallow added to it, is not vegetarian; it is mixed diet; the same in effect as if meat were used.* --Elmer Lee, M.D., Editor, Health Culture Magazine."

Around the same time, November 6, 1910, the New York Times printed a report headlined: '**Dr. Lee pleads for better foods**' which went into greater detail about his plant diet quoted above.

As well as '*plant diet*' as above, that NYT report also contains our currently first known use of the phrase '*Plant-Foods*' – this appears to be an American view of replacing the negative British '*no animal food*' with a more positive view of the diet.

Notes:

There must have been some of this happening in Germany as well – if any German speaking historians can fill in the gaps it would be most welcome.

Russell Trall's 1874 vegan cookbook: www.archive.org/details/hygeianhomecookb00tral
 The New York edition of Rupert Wheldon's book: www.ivu.org/history/no-animal-food.pdf

New York Times 1910, on Elmer Lee: www.ivu.org/history/elmer-lee.pdf

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The vegan school that invented vegetarians

March 7, 2012

We now know that the people closely connected with the Alcott House Academy, near London, were the first to call themselves 'vegetarian'. This is how the school began.

James Pierrepont Greaves (*right*) was born in 1777, and for his first 40 years he did nothing of any great interest to us. He ran the family drapery business in London, but in 1815 it was bankrupted by trading problems during the Napoleonic wars.



In 1817, he read '*Return to Nature, or a defence of the vegetable regimen*' by John Frank Newton, published in 1811. The book was in his library inventory, he used parts of it in subsequent articles, and it was consistent with everything he did for the rest of his life.

The 'nature' that Newton wanted to return to was the Garden of Eden, he quoted the Edenic diet in Genesis 1:29 – "I have given you every herb yielding seed . . . and every tree, in which is the fruit . . . to you it shall be for food". He also wanted non-human animals to share the garden as equals.

Newton wrote about how his four young children adapted to this new Eden at the family home in Grosvenor Square, London – and this seems to have made a particular impact on Greaves. Soon after this Greaves says he read about the work of the reforming educator Pestalozzi, and in 1818 he moved to Yverdon in Switzerland to study with the master. For Greaves the route to Eden was by educating children from a very early age.

In 1821 Greaves' sister sent a letter of introduction to a friend in Germany that he was visiting, she said: "... *he has few needs, eating only soup and potatoes and drinking only water.*" We know he did actually eat other plant foods but 'only water' was straight out of Newton's book (ie no milk), which was dedicated to the highly respected Dr. William Lambe FRCP who was giving this 'vegan' diet some scientific credibility.

Greaves returned to England in 1825 and co-founded the *Infant School Society*, becoming its secretary. Pestalozzi's approach eventually became the educational standard throughout the western world, but Greaves had a hard time persuading 1820s Londoners to understand it, and gave up after a few years.

During 1832 Greaves was helping his sister with some social work in a deprived village in the west of England, and became acquainted with Sophia Chichester, the wealthy owner of the nearby Ebor Park estate. Her support was later crucial in funding his school.

Back in London, by 1836 Greaves began calling himself a 'Sacred Socialist', and held weekly meetings of his 'Aesthetic Society' at his home in Camden. He attracted some very devoted followers, and we know that some of them adopted his diet as well as his particular version of religious mysticism (which then seems to have backdated to 1817). Meanwhile... over in Boston, USA:

In 1830 a Boston publisher printed a book containing a series of letters from Pestalozzi to 'a Mr. Greaves in London'. This was read by Bronson Alcott, one of the Transcendentalist group in nearby Concord. Alcott was sufficiently inspired by this to open his own Pestalozzi-style school in Boston, which ran successfully for a couple of years in 1835-36. The picture, right, shows the informal 'conversational' arrangement of Alcott's classroom – very different to the traditional rows of desks.



In London, Greaves was also thinking of opening a school, when a friend returning from America in 1837 gave him two books about Alcott's school. Recognising a kindred spirit he immediately wrote to Alcott at some length – but he had no way of knowing that by the time he read the books Alcott's school had already closed due to objections from local religious groups.

Greaves' letter (which we have in full) was entirely about educational matters, as he also seems to have been unaware that Alcott had adopted the 'vegetable diet' after attending a lecture by Sylvester Graham in Boston in 1835. But Alcott had become rather depressed after his school had closed, and failed to reply.

Despite this initial lack of response, Greaves went ahead and opened his school on Ham Common near London, naming it the 'Alcott House Academy', funded by his wealthy patron, Sophia Chichester.

The school was in a large building surrounded by four acres of land, and pupils were expected to help with extensive fruit and vegetable gardens to make it largely self-sufficient in food. Dr. William Lambe, now in his 70s, was still working in a London hospital, and we have reports that he visited the school to see his 'vegan' ideals put into practice. All animal products were excluded, as well as food.

Greaves remained living London, and was one of several visiting teachers at the school. The 1841 UK census shows that the only people living at Alcott House were teachers and pupils – 31 people in all, the pupils aged 2-14 with some 15 year olds listed as teachers. In the early years it was purely a school, only later becoming a 'community', though there were many members of the support network who seem to have stayed occasional nights without living there.

Contact was eventually established with Bronson Alcott, and in 1842 he was able travel to England to spend four months at the school named for him. Unfortunately James Pierrepont Greaves had died a few months earlier, so they were never able to meet.

Alcott House remained open until 1848. For more about how they became the first people to call themselves 'vegetarian', and launched the Vegetarian Society, see below.

Vegetarian equals vegan!

July 7, 2010

The first people who called themselves 'vegetarian' were in fact vegan. This has now been established conclusively with resources not previously available.

We have now shown that until 1847 *all* uses of the word 'vegetarian' came from people associated with Alcott House School, on Ham Common, south west of London. And they used it to mean a 100% plant food diet - a 'vegetarian' was simply someone who lived on vegetation. There were, of course, many other people following variations of the 'vegetable diet', most of them adding eggs/dairy products. But we can find no indication of any of them using the word 'vegetarian' before 1847.

So what was Alcott House?

The Alcott House School was opened in July 1838 by James Pierrepont Greaves, a radical educator who had discovered that Bronson Alcott had already had a similar school in Boston, USA. Greaves was sufficiently impressed to open a correspondence with Alcott and to name his school for him. Greaves had adopted the 'vegetable diet' in 1817, and Alcott in 1835, so the school used it from the outset.

In 1841 the school was re-invented as 'A Concordium, or Industry Harmony College', still in Alcott House. The earliest confirmed use of 'vegetarian' was in the April 1842 issue of their new journal, and used in a way which showed that it was already familiar, at least to readers of that journal.

In July 1842, Bronson Alcott arrived from America to stay for four months, and when he left at the end of September he took two members of the Concordium with him to found a short-lived community near Harvard - Fruitlands. He was joined there by his family, including his 10-year-old daughter, Louisa May Alcott, and they continued to follow a wholly plant-food diet. *[right: Alcott House and garden - they were largely self-sufficient in fruit and veg]*

So why was this research never done before?

The difference now is simply down to being able to search more than 10 million online books in a matter of seconds. In the past it required a visit to one of the great libraries, then searching thru every book to find any mention of the V word anywhere in the text, and it was rarely in the indexes. It's difficult to imagine a smaller needle in a bigger haystack.

We can now easily see who was using the word, and exactly what they meant by it, and we have found *every* use of the word up to 1847.

So why did the meaning of the word appear to change?



We know there were plenty of other people by the early 19th century who were following a - *mostly* - plant food diet. But we can now clearly show that NONE of them used the word 'vegetarian', in any surviving printed works, before 1847.

Foremost amongst these others was the Bible Christian Church (BCC), founded in Salford in the north of England in 1809. In 1817 some members migrated to Philadelphia, USA, and opened another branch - and were all very clearly using eggs/dairy in significant quantities.

In 1847 Alcott House promoted the idea of a Vegetarian Society, but they were struggling by then and closed in 1848. Its members continued in the positions of Secretary and Treasurer in the new society, and ran it from London for the first two or three years. Meanwhile the Salford BCC had considerable political and financial influence, and one of their members was elected as the first President of the new Society. Without them the Vegetarian Society would almost certainly have folded by 1850. They soon took over completely and moved the Society to the Manchester area, where it is still going strong today.

But they imposed their own definition of the new society: ***"The objects of the Society are, to induce habits of abstinence from the flesh of animals as food."*** - which left a lot of things that were not 'flesh', such as eggs/dairy. They didn't specifically re-define the word 'vegetarian', but the name of the society combined with that objective, and soon followed by some strongly ovo-lacto cookbooks, caused endless confusion.

Just 3 years after the Vegetarian Society was founded, in 1850, a serious London medical journal did a 22 page analysis of a typical meat diet vs the heavily eggs/dairy recipes in the new VegSoc cookbook - and concluded ***"...we find that the so called vegetarian positively consumes, according to his own diet-scale, as much animal food as the avowed flesh eater. ... it is not true Vegetarianism, being nothing else than the substitution of one form of Animal food for another."***

The Vegetarian Society debated changing its name for the rest of the 19th century - at times considering names such as 'VEM Society' - vegetables, eggs and milk - and 'Food Reform Society', but none of these were adopted.

In the late 19th century there was still much confusion. Anna Kingsford MD, writing in the Preface to her 'Dreams and Dreams Stories' of 1886, stated: ***"For the past fifteen years I have been an abstainer from flesh-meats. Not a vegetarian, because during the whole of that period I have used such animal produce as butter, cheese, eggs, and milk."***

Maybe we are beginning to see a return to the original, and obvious meaning of 'vegetarian' - as one who lives on vegetation. When I flew with Emirates Airlines last year there were a lot of food options, of which the three most relevant were:

- 1 - ovo-lacto-vegetarian
- 2 - lacto vegetarian
- 3 - vegetarian

- so if the last one is not 'ovo' or 'lacto' then what is it? It duly arrived with a sticker saying 'vegan'.

For the much longer and more detailed version of everything above, with links to all original sources, see: www.ivu.org/history/vegetarian.html

Update (Feb 2011): in the above blog I failed to mention that the Alcott House community also adopted all the same ethical values as modern day vegans. They clearly wrote that they objected to the use of animals for any purpose, not just food - one reason the Fruitlands community failed was because they refused to use horses for the hard farm work. They were totally ethical vegetarians.

Google Books appears to show some uses of the word 'vegetarian' before 1842 - however checking the original texts, instead of just looking at the scans, shows that **all** of these are scanning errors.

I was invited to expand this into a double page article for the winter 2010/11 issue of The Vegan magazine, published by The Vegan Society based in the UK. This is a PDF of the resulting article (623k): www.vegansociety.com/feature-articles/prototype%20vegans.pdf

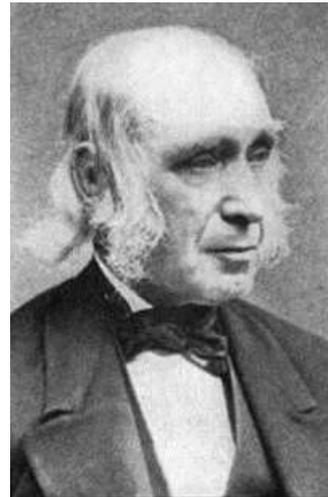
I've also been giving an even more detailed version of this as a powerpoint lecture - available to anyone who wants to pay my expenses... :-)

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Bronson Alcott - American pioneer vegan

March 22, 2011

Amos Bronson Alcott was an abolitionist vegan in a way that few today are emulating - in the 1830s he was taking a stand against human slavery in the USA. In some parts of the world human slavery is still very much with us of course, and I'd hope that modern day 'abolitionist vegans' are just as active in campaigning against that too.



Bronson also argued for women's rights even, for a while at least, helping them in the kitchen. We know he had stopped eating meat by 1836, but it appears to have been during his visit to England in the summer of 1842 (age 42) that he became an 'ethical vegan' and expanded his anti-slavery views to include all non-human animals.

Soon after his return to the US, with two new English friends, he started the Fruitlands community on a 90 acre site near Harvard. No animals of course, and even refusing to use horses for slave-labor - but with tractors not yet invented, that was part of the reason it didn't last long.

Bronson was no gradualist, he wasn't going to wait for human equality before demanding it for the animals as well. He wanted it all and he wanted it now. He didn't get it of course, idealists never do, but that doesn't mean the ideals are wrong. He lived long enough to see the end of slavery in the USA, though nowhere near long enough for Civil Rights, or for the women's movement to make some progress in western countries. The animals are still waiting.

But Bronson was so far ahead of time in his attitude to non-human animals that we have to fast-forward at least a hundred years before we can clearly identify other Americans with the same views. That doesn't necessarily mean they weren't there, just that we don't know about them because in such a big country it was all too easy to simply ignore the 'extremists'.

The main reason we know so much about Bronson is because his daughter, Louisa May Alcott, age ten at Fruitlands, later wrote a book called *Little Women*. Naturally everyone wanted to know about her childhood and she obliged by writing about that too – some of it distorted by later biographers into accusations of child-abuse by her father for not feeding her meat.

We know there were many others in 19th century America who abstained from eating flesh, the first American Vegetarian Society was formed in New York in 1850. But they were dominated by medical men with only a secondary interest in animal concerns and, as far as we know, they were all strongly ovo-lacto-vegetarian.

Dr. William Alcott (Bronson's 2nd cousin) was elected the first President of AVS. Unfortunately two recent veg historians have hopelessly muddled the two of them, one rolling William and Bronson into one person, and the other citing Bronson as AVS president. These mistakes seem to be copied by other writers and spread around the internet.



Bronson had no direct involvement with the American Vegetarian Society, partly because they had adopted the form of ovo-lacto-vegetarianism promoted by the Bible Christian Church, through their branch in Philadelphia – looking forward to the '*promised land flowing with milk and honey*' (and eggs). Not at all how Bronson saw things.

Some vegans today argue that armed with modern nutritional knowledge and faced with the horrors of factory farming and climate change - if those ovo-lacto-vegetarian pioneers could come back today they would be vegan. Maybe so, we'll never know of course, but by the late 19th century in both England and America we do have people clearly writing that the acceptance eggs/dairy was merely a 'first step' in dietary reform, but it's never easy to clearly identify any who actually took the next step.

I have seen claims that there were some American cookbooks in the late 19th and early 20th century that were entirely plant food. On the IVU website we have links to more than a dozen American ovo-lacto-vegetarian cookbooks from that period – and we have now found a couple that were 'vegan' (see bibliography).

There probably were Americans eating only plants, and going further with ethical values towards animals. But most of the vegetarian histories were written by ovo-lacto-vegetarians who just ignored that minority, at times even deliberately writing them out of history. Later vegans have just assumed this wasn't their history so they didn't investigate it – but scratch below the surface and it is just possible to find some.

But be warned – most of the early 'vegans' that are claimed on the internet turn out to be not any sort of vegetarian after all – but always worth investigating as they must have been around, we just need clear evidence.

I've avoided giving much of a biography of Bronson Alcott as we already have an excellent summary on the IVU website, from Karen Iacobbo in 1999, as part of the preparation for the equally excellent '*Vegetarian America, a history*' (2004). The page below has a link to that book, and several older books by and about Bronson. Less than 1,000 words and well worth reading: www.ivu.org/history/usa19/bronson-alcott.html

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Henry David Thoreau and the Roots of Plantism

March 30, 2011

Oh no, not another -ism...

Well, everyone else is inventing words... by plantism I mean eating only plants – and ideally wearing plants, growing your own plants for food and conserving plant habitats for other species – vegan self-sufficient environmentalism if you like.

And plantists do have roots – in the historical sense that is.

There have probably always been some people doing all this, but the first to give us a really eloquent account of *why* he was trying to do at least some of it was Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). He was a close friend of Bronson Alcott and visited the 'vegan' Fruitlands commune (see *above*).

Thoreau's version was to go solo, living alone for a couple of years, 1845/6, in a small wooden hut by a lake in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts. He left us his remarkable account as '*Walden- or, Life in the Woods*'.

Thoreau lamented the felling of so many trees around his pond for the ever expanding railway lines – "*How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?*" He also mourned the reduction of many species due to the growing number of humans using guns for 'sport'. In the mid 19th century few other people ever thought about such things.

He told us about his food too: "*Like many of my contemporaries, I had rarely for many years used animal food . . . The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of experience, but is an instinct.*"

And he went further about his time at Walden: "*I did not use tea, nor coffee, **nor butter, nor milk, nor flesh meat***". He grew beans and vegetables near his hut, and gathered wild berries and nuts, but his one weakness was fishing in Walden pond: "*I did not pity the fishes nor the worms. This was habit.*"

But even here he was re-thinking his habits: "*I have found repeatedly, of late years, that I cannot fish without falling a little in self-respect. I have tried it again and again. I have skill at it . . . which revives from time to time, but always when I have done I feel that it would have been better if I had not fished.*"

His conclusions were dramatic for a mid 19th century writer: "*Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals.*"

Throughout this time Thoreau followed Bronson Alcott's example of refusing to pay taxes to a government that was condoning human slavery. And like Alcott had been a few years earlier, he was arrested and spent a night in jail before his tax was paid by a well-meaning but misguided friend. Neither man wanted to be released - they wanted to stay



WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an account of the life of the author, but to give a description of the manner in which he lived, and to show the result of his experiments. — Page 11.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1849.

in jail to make their point whilst continuing to refuse to pay their taxes. Thoreau later wrote his views on all this in an essay: *'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience'*.

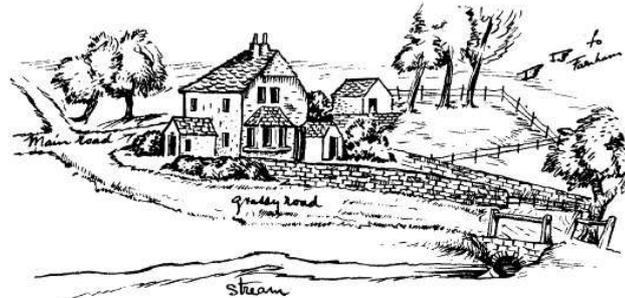
We have suggestions that Thoreau was influenced in this by Percy Bysshe Shelley's political poem *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819). In 1813 Shelley had also spent some time as part of a 'vegan' community. Whilst Thoreau never directly mentions Shelley, we do know that he was very well read in English poetry so could have seen this and there do appear to be some similarities.

In 1890 another remarkable man, Henry S. Salt (1851-1939), over in England, wrote a biography of Thoreau, introducing him to people in Britain.

Not the least of those was a young law student in London – Mohandas K. Gandhi, who also then read Thoreau's essay on non-violent protest – and told a reporter: *"[Thoreau's] ideas influenced me greatly. I adopted some of them and recommended the study of Thoreau to all of my friends who were helping me in the cause of Indian Independence. Why I actually took the name of my movement from Thoreau's essay 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,' written about 80 years ago."* (photo 1931, Henry Salt with Gandhi).



Henry Salt had begun a promising career as a master at Eton College, the most prestigious school in England, but in 1884 he followed Thoreau's example and 'dropped out'. For eight years he and his wife Kate lived in a country cottage where they grew their own plant food and he began writing on a wide range of



Sketch by Henry Salt of his cottage at Tilford, where he lived with his wife Kate after resigning his post at Eton
Stephen Winsten, *Salt and his Circle*.

humanitarian issues, including the first book on *Animals' Rights*. Salt's total of forty books included several on Shelley, also comparing him to Thoreau.

One of his early articles, *A Plea for Vegetarianism*, had been picked up by the young Gandhi in 1890, convincing him to become a vegetarian for its own sake, instead of just from religious doctrine. It also led him to get to know more about Salt, Thoreau and Shelley, and their ideas about simple living in tune with nature, which in Gandhi's case included spinning his own cotton for his clothes, and of course spending time in jail for peaceful civil disobedience.

Footnote: there are claims that Thoreau was pro-hunting, but he was working through his ideas on this like everything else - and his ideas were a long way ahead for 1840s North America where shooting anything that moved was considered normal. This is from *Walden*: *"As for fowling, during the last years that I carried a gun my excuse was that I was studying ornithology, and sought only new or rare birds. But I confess I am now inclined to think that there is a finer way of studying ornithology than this."* (that sounds like the 'science research' whaling today) Thoreau was no saintly perfectionist, as can be seen from everything above, he re-thought about a lot of things, sometimes going backwards, but always thinking instead of just following the crowd.

Compare with his friend Bronson Alcott, who was a rigid perfectionist and achieved very little - without his daughter's fame, and her diaries, he would have been largely

forgotten. Thoreau said he was expecting "gradual improvement", and he has been celebrated in his own right by a wide range of people with very diverse views - though the things he wanted improved got a lot worse over a long time before many others even recognised the problems... He certainly does **not** belong on those simplistic lists of 'famous vegetarians', but he should be celebrated by vegetarians for the direction he was trying to take, and for his broad vision of seeing the environment in a way that few of the more consistent vegetarians did at that time.

Footnote 2: eight lines from Shelley's long *'The Masque of Anarchy'* (1819):

'Ye who suffer woes untold,
Or to feel, or to behold
Your lost country bought and sold
With a price of blood and gold -
'Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that ye
Are, as God has made ye, free -

Another section of the same poem was read by Gandhi to a gathering in India. Full text and details at: www.ivu.org/history/shelley/masque.html

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Dr. John Snow - a vegan of genius

April 20, 2011

In a poll of British doctors in 2003 John Snow was voted as the greatest physician of all time. Though probably few of them would have known he was what we now call vegan.

He grew up in the North-East of England, always a tough area of the country, and still not the easiest place to be vegan today. But Snow was born almost 200 years ago, and at the age of 17, in 1830, with no apparent support from anyone else beyond a book he read, he changed his diet to plant foods and pure water (preferably distilled water, though probably more often just boiled). He kept close to that diet, and teetotalism, for the rest of his life.

His refusal to prescribe alcohol to his patients, considered routine at the time, brought even more ridicule from fellow doctors than his strange diet.

The book he found was *'Return to Nature'*, by John Frank Newton, first published in 1811. Newton was a patient of Dr. William Lambe FRCP, who had adopted a pure plant-food and water diet back in the second week of February 1806 (Lambe was very precise about these things!). In 1828 Lambe published a pamphlet which argued that the drinking water taken from the River Thames was causing illness to the people of London. He was ridiculed then ignored. We have no record that Snow ever met Newton or Lambe, but their influence was considerable.



Requirements for 'genius':

- 1 – dare to be different – argue your case even when 'conventional wisdom' else says the opposite.
- 2 – stick to it whilst being ridiculed or ignored by all the 'experts'.
- 3 – eventually be proved right. This last part being rather crucial to the process!

John Snow certainly did all of those.

He moved to London in 1837 to continue his medical studies, and became particularly interested in anaesthetics. He started experimenting on himself, promoting new ideas that others dismissed, eventually succeeding to the extent of administering pain-reduction to Queen Victoria during the births of two of her children. His book on the subject became required reading. Not bad for a boy from a humble working family, but that was just the beginning.

During the 19th century the world was being rocked by cholera epidemics, starting in India but spreading across Europe and over to North America. All the top medical brains were desperately trying to find the cause, but they were getting nowhere because of their pre-conceived ideas about disease being spread by 'vapours' in the air.

Dr. Snow did his own research and in 1849 wrote a pamphlet showing how cholera was spread by infected drinking water (just as Dr. Lambe had predicted 21 years earlier). Some other doctors ridiculed him, most just ignored him.

During the next London cholera epidemic in the 1850s he carried out large scale research into which houses were supplied by the two main water companies – virtually inventing the science of epidemiology in the process. The companies refused to help because of their commercial interests, so he walked around all the affected areas, knocking on doors to find out which houses were supplied by which company. He then wrote an expanded version of his pamphlet showing that all the houses affected by cholera were being supplied by the same water company.

He also focused on a particular outbreak in Soho, London, and narrowed the source down to one street-pump. With some difficulty he persuaded the local authorities to remove the handle.

The medical establishment still ignored him, still being convinced that it was something in the air. A couple of friends corroborated his research from their own investigations, but they were ignored too. In 1868, 10 years after Snow died, another cholera epidemic hit London – this time his friends were finally able to prove that he (and Lambe) had been right all along.

Unfortunately Snow's self-experimentation on anaesthetics damaged his health, resulting in kidney failure and an early death in 1858. The other doctors around at the time didn't understand renal failure either, and naturally blamed all his ill-health on both his strange diet – and even his refusal to drink alcohol! There are some anecdotes that towards the end he gave in to the demands of other doctors and was persuaded to take some wine, and even a little meat. The real cause of his death was only understood later.

The Truth Tester 1846-48 - a vegan journal

July 27, 2011

The Truth Tester was first published in England in 1845, as a temperance (anti-alcohol) journal.

In **August 1846** a new editor, William Horsell, based near London, took over and incorporated *'The Healthian'*, first published in 1842 by the strictly vegan Alcott House Academy.

In his first introduction to the combined journal the new editor stated it would advocate "...*entire abandonment of alcoholic drinks, animal-food, tea and coffee, drugs, tobacco and snuff, and condiments*".

Following are some extracts and comments from the next two years:

September 1846 - RECIPE FOR A PLAIN BIRD'S NEST SAGO PUDDING (*the earliest known deliberately vegan recipe*)

Soak half-a-pint of sago in three pints of water, stirring it occasionally until it is uniformly swelled. Pare and core ten or twelve apples, fill the holes in the centre with sugar, and put them, without piling them one over the other, in a nappy or pudding dish, of such size that the sago will just cover them. The sago, which may be seasoned with spice or sugar to suit the palate, may then be poured on, and the pudding baked until the apples are quite soft. It may be made thicker or thinner at pleasure, by using more or less sago. We sometimes boil the sago before baking, and pour it while hot upon the apples. We think the pudding no better, except that it may be baked much quicker. It must be set in a cold pure air when done, and may be eaten cold or hot.

Who ever heard of a pudding without butter, eggs, or milk? Try it – try it; and may you like it as well, and eat less of it than does A VEGETABLE EPICURE.

May 1847 - A letter from a reader in Hampshire suggested: ". . . *has seemed to me desirable . . . namely the occasional or periodical meeting together of vegetarians - or the formation of societies for mutual instruction and encouragement.*"

This was the first time anyone had proposed forming a Vegetarian Society, and it was quickly followed up by William Oldham, the business manager of Alcott House Academy (at this time the word 'vegetarian' meant what we now call 'vegan'). In the **June 1847** issue the lead article was a letter from Mr. Oldham announcing a 'Physiological Conference' at Alcott House on Thursday the 8th of July. We were told later that about 50 people attended.

By 1847 Alcott House was struggling financially, and eventually closed the following year. Meanwhile they had made contact with the Bible Christian Church in Salford, near Manchester, which included some very wealthy and influential people and banned the eating of animal flesh. All very useful to Alcott House at that point – but with the problem that the Bible Christians did not ban the use of eggs and dairy products, making things awkward for the cash-strapped, but strictly vegan, Alcott House.



MR. WILLIAM HORSELL.

August 1847 – THE VEGETARIAN TABLE

This was an article, apparently by Hannah Bond, the matron of Alcott House, giving full details of the food served at the 'Physiological Conference'. She included a 'Herb Pie' made with eggs and milk, stating that it: ". . . *participates to some degree of the animal secretions, though not of their substance, it is well qualified to become a popular dish in helping passengers over the stream from the carnivorous to the herbivorous region.*"

We can almost hear Hannah gritting her teeth as she accommodated the preference of their wealthy new friends. But it didn't work, the Bible Christians never did get more than half-way across the stream to veganism.

A second meeting was held on September 30, 1847, at the Hydropathic Hospital in Ramsgate, Kent, which was managed by William Horsell. During this the world's first Vegetarian Society was formally launched, with its objective being merely to '*abstain from the flesh of animals*'.

The Truth Tester included occasional viewpoints from eggs/dairy users and even meat-eaters, but the editorial emphasis was clear, as can be seen in a letter from a British reader in India, in the **November 1847** issue:

"Sir, - I am a subscriber to the *Truth-Tester*, and a vegetarian. I address you from this distant part of the world, to enquire whether you know of any such work as a treatise on domestic cookery, for the use of those who confine themselves strictly to a vegetable regimen? . . . I have seen a book on 'Vegetable Cookery, by a Lady,' and suppose it to have been published under the patronage or countenance of the Society of Bible Christians. But it recommends the use of eggs, milk, butter, and all manner of injurious spices, *all* of which are known by pure vegetable-eaters to be hurtful to human health and happiness. What I wish to know is, whether there be any work on the subject for the use of exclusive vegetarians in the strictest sense? . . . If there be no such work, I think there should be, and a fitter person than the editor of the *Tester* could not be found, perhaps to cause one to be written. . . *Calcutta, June 23, 1847.*"



Joseph Brotherton



James Simpson

The lady who wrote the cookbook was Martha Brotherton, wife of Joseph Brotherton who was the Member of Parliament for Salford, a very prominent Bible Christian, and chairman of the meeting that founded the Vegetarian Society.

No reply to the letter was printed. By the time it was published, the editor, William Horsell, still in the London area, was also the Secretary of the new Vegetarian Society – and James Simpson, the wealthiest of the Bible Christians, was the first President.

Within a couple of years the cracks in this uneasy alliance split completely. Simpson moved all operations of the Vegetarian Society to the Manchester area, where it has been based ever since.

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The Curious Affair of The Vegetarian Advocate (1848-50)

October 5, 2011

In September 1848 the pro-‘vegan’ journal previously known as *The Truth Tester* was renamed as *The Vegetarian Advocate*. The editor and publisher, William Horsell in London, was also the first Secretary of the one-year-old Vegetarian Society, but this was a privately published journal which reflected some uneasy compromises within the new society.

In 1849 the society’s President started publishing *The Vegetarian Messenger* from Manchester, and for the next year the two journals were effectively in competition. The *Advocate* ceased in August 1850, and Mr. Horsell stepped down as Secretary.

The compromise was the usual one – the idea for the Vegetarian Society had come from the ‘vegans’ at Alcott House and Mr. Horsell’s Hydropathic Hospital, both near London; but the only way it could survive was with the considerable support of the strongly ‘ovo-lacto’ Bible Christian Church in Salford, near Manchester.

William Horsell accepted the compromise on becoming secretary, and the first issue of the *Advocate* dutifully reported the banquet at the first AGM – including full details of the omelets and cheesecakes. But he couldn’t resist slipping in the alternatives.

October 1848 *Advocate*, p.39, included an article on diet and cookery (probably by his wife, Elizabeth), stating:

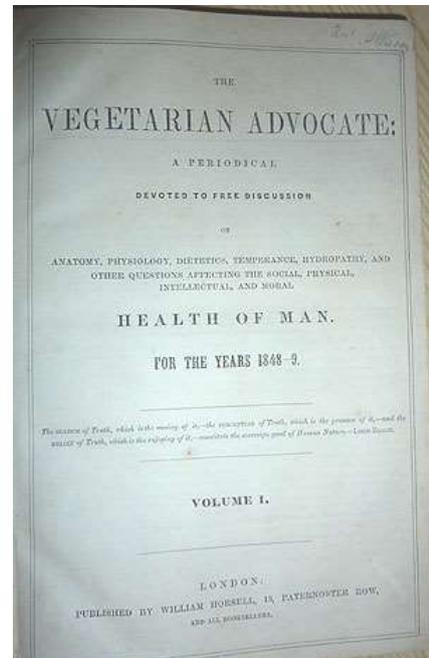
“. . . Pound cakes and tea-cakes are also extremely good made with oil (instead of butter and eggs), and cheese-cakes are well imitated by means of mashed potatoes mixed with oil and sugar put into a crust. . . a very good and nutritious diet may be obtained from them [*vegetables*] without animal substance of any kind, or of eggs, milk and butter.”

We have no record of the response from the President, but nothing like this appeared again in the *Advocate* for almost a year. However, when the *Messenger* started appearing from Manchester, Mr. Horsell seems to have decided to more actively promote his own views, and his other publications, in his own journal.

September 1849 *Advocate*, p.10: review of ‘*Kitchen Philosophy for Vegetarians*’ published by W. Horsell, London. Quoting the book: “. . . butter and eggs are excluded . . .” This appears to be first known ‘vegan’ cookbook.

May 1850 *Advocate*, p.110:

“On Tuesday evening, the 2nd of April, a Vegetarian entertainment was given by Mr. Horsell . . . The treat was one in its nature purely Vegetarian. The repast consisted of barley, sago and apple, and carrot puddings, made according to the recipes in the Penny Domestic Assistant, Nos. 54, 55, and 37, without animal products.”



MR. WILLIAM HORSELL.

The '*Domestic Assistant*' was edited by Mrs. Elizabeth Horsell, who was also active in the movement in her own right. But they made a small concession to some of their guests: "This was followed by barley pudding made *with* milk." (the italics were his).

July 1850, *Advocate*, p. 140, a letter from a reader:

"Sir.- Several of your correspondents appear to be anxious to adopt ... a strict vegetarian diet; and, unfortunately for themselves find that their principle of not destroying animal life for the use of man, is ever and anon being assailed by the shoemaker, the harness-maker, the bookbinder, the furrier, the bed-maker, the brush-maker, the oilman, the chandler, the druggist, the bone-worker, the bug-killer, the rat-catcher, and fiddler, besides hundreds of others working and using an immense quantity of animal substances that have depended on animal life for their growth. **I would ask you whether the vegetarians do not render themselves ridiculous** by asserting a principle as a rule of action, which they can only maintain by a diet of purely vegetable matter; and not that which embraces the eggs of fowls largely, in omelets, cakes, and puddings..." [*bold added - continued at some length referring with equal concern to butter, cheese and milk.*]

At this point we get an intervention from another London journal, snappily titled: "*The British and foreign medico-chirurgical review or quarterly journal of practical medicine and surgery*". The July 1850 issue carried a 22 page review of the new cookbook published by the Vegetarian Society – all very heavily laden with eggs and dairy produce. They concluded:

"...we find that the so called vegetarian positively consumes, according to his own diet-scale, as *much animal food* as the avowed flesh eater . . . it is not true Vegetarianism, being nothing else than the substitution of one form of Animal food for another."

William Horsell had a background in the medical industry, and was now a publisher, all in the London area. It is tempting to wonder how much contact he had with the publishers of this particular London medical journal. They certainly expressed his own views very clearly . . .

The next issue of *The Vegetarian Advocate*, August 1850, was a mere four pages, and was the last available to us. The editorial said it would change to fortnightly, and appealed for more advertisers. There is a record of some 'supplements' over the next few months, but we do not have copies of them.

But Horsell went out with a flourish, printing a rather long and convoluted article by the American, Sylvester Graham, entitled '*Butter and Cheese*'. Not surprisingly arguing against the use of these products. The last issue also included a brief report from the Vegetarian Society for 1849-50, signed by the officers including William Horsell, secretary, still running the Society from his office in London up to July 1850. It appears that he was no longer secretary after that, and the Society's office was moved to the Manchester area, where it has remained ever since.

We know that William Horsell continued publishing books on veg-related topics up to 1859, some written by his wife, Elizabeth. In 1856 he was apparently at the RSPCA AGM in London, arguing that the society should embrace vegetarianism, 150 years later they still have not. Mr. Horsell died in 1863 and his widow apparently went on to open a vegetarian girls' boarding school. Further research on exactly what she fed them would be of interest...

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London Vegetarian Association, 1850s – the world's first 'vegan society'

October 26, 2011

There are always two main problems in researching vegan history in the 19th century – the word 'vegan' did not exist, and most of the records were published by ovo-lacto-vegetarians who avoided the contentious issue of eggs/dairy. So we have to do a lot of careful reading, especially between the lines...

The first secretary of the Vegetarian Society in 1847 was William Horsell who was a prominent 'vegan' running the Society from his London office. He came into inevitable conflict with the strongly 'ovo-lacto' president, James Simpson in Manchester.

In September 1849 Simpson began publishing the *Vegetarian Messenger*, in direct competition with Horsell's *Vegetarian Advocate*, and in the summer of 1850 Simpson won. Horsell stepped down as secretary and his journal ceased.



MR. WILLIAM HORSELL.

But wasn't the end of Mr. Horsell... the new Society had been encouraging members in towns and cities across the UK to form local committees, and London duly responded. The extract below is from *Fifty Years of Food Reform*, by Charles Forward in 1897, p.32:

"On November 6th, 1849, a meeting of London Vegetarians was convened at Aldine Chambers The meeting was adjourned to November 12th, at Aurora Villa, Hampstead, when Mr. Turley occupied the chair, and it was resolved that a local committee should be formed in the Metropolis, consisting of Messrs. Viettinghoff, Wiles, Hodgson, G. Dornbusch, Turley, Edwards, Umpleby, King, Evans, Pratt, Reed, Viessieux, and James Salsbury ; **Mr. Horsell being treasurer**, and Mr. J. Shirley Hibberd, secretary.

". . . Mr. Dornbusch had adopted Vegetarianism about 1843, and was an abstainer from tea, coffee, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs of every kind. Mr. Dornbusch's daughter was married to Mr. W. L. Beurle, an active Vegetarian, and one of the prominent workers in the movement against compulsory vaccination."

Getting precise details is never easy, but we do know that several of the committee, and other leading members, had been connected with the Alcott House Academy which ran from 1838 to 1848 close to London, and which had been responsible for all known uses of the word 'vegetarian' before 1847. And in Alcott House 'vegetarian' was in all respects what we now call 'vegan'. The above references to abstention from tea and coffee were typical of Alcott House (anti-vaccination was partly because of the egg whites used in the vaccine).

With the local committees underway the national Vegetarian Society began encouraging local groups to use the term 'Association' to avoid confusion. So in 1852 the London group announced that they were now the 'London Vegetarian Association'. But these were branches of the national society, not independent groups.

The *Vegetarian Messenger* (VM) began printing extensive reports from these Associations, usually running to many pages of speeches, and often mentioning the meals. At the end of 1854 we have some contrasting accounts, all from VM, Volume 5:

p.81: "The monthly meeting of the [London] Association was held on Thursday, September 7th, at the Vegetarian Depôt, 492, New Oxford Street. A crowded assembly of ladies and gentlemen enjoyed a repast of the fruits of the season, consisting of pears, apples, grapes, etc., and a supply of wheat-meal bread, oat-cakes, and buns." [The *Vegetarian Depôt* was run by William Horsell and his partner as a book, journal and pamphlet publishing and distribution base.]

p.84: [a further comment about the same meeting] "Indeed the fruits of the earth have something so pleasant in them that they must be acceptable, and if they were used more, the beauty of the Vegetarian diet would sooner be appreciated." [this was a thinly veiled sideswipe at the egg/dairy eaters – if the comment had been too obvious it would never have been printed in the VM]

p.113 [the meeting of October 5th] : ". . . almond, currant, and lemon syrups in iced water, formed very agreeable beverages." [they never used tea or coffee]

All these reports from London are in stark contrast with the Associations in the cities of the north of England. This one from the Leeds Vegetarian Association meeting of October 17 is typical:

p.116 : "...a delightful repast consisting of tea, milk, brown and white bread, biscuits, plum-cake, moulded rice, with preserves, barley, pudding, apples and pears." [the limited 'fruits of the earth' seemingly something of an afterthought]



James Simpson

The activities of the London Vegetarian Association were not going down at all well with the President in Manchester. It has to be taken into account that the majority of the Vegetarian Society members were in the north of England, and most of the leaders were closely connected with the Bible Christian Church. They did not merely accept the use of eggs/dairy/honey, they actively promoted it as God's given food – as in 'the promised land flowing with milk and honey' (Exodus 3:8). We still see something similar today from some Hindus in India who regard cow's milk as sacred, and therefore see vegans as 'heretics', treating them with some hostility.

The differences came to a head in early 1856, when William Horsell was elected secretary of LVA. James Simpson responded by replacing Horsell with a 'local secretary' of his own choice, more loyal to the Manchester viewpoint.

In a letter dated 5th May 1856, Simpson expressed his concerns that Horsell would bring the vegetarian movement: ". . . under the imputations and objections which ought carefully to be avoided." Referring to his action of replacing Horsell: ". . . any steps taken by the association at all unfavourable to the general interest of the movement being thus somewhat modified, as far as our control of the public influence of Vegetarianism in London will permit." [quoted from 'Of Victorians and Vegetarians' by James Gregory, 2007, p.48]

Exactly what happened after that does not appear to have been recorded by anyone, but the London Vegetarian (i.e. vegan) Association seems to have soon fizzled out in

disarray. A few years later a new London group opted out completely, but that's another story...

Further notes from VM: In its first five volumes, the *Vegetarian Messenger* only twice commented directly on the eggs/dairy issue. The works of the American Sylvester Graham (right) were being published in England by William Horsell from his *Vegetarian Depot* in London.



In the very first article of the first issue of VM (Vol.1, p.2, Sept. 1849) there was a mention of Sylvester Graham with an oblique reference to his 'simple' diet. The two-page article went on to make it clear the VM saw eggs/dairy as an integral part of vegetarianism.

The following summer saw the final issue of Horsell's *Vegetarian Advocate*, which included a two page article by Graham, arguing against butter and cheese.

VM made no further comment until late 1854 - Vol.V., p.4:

"Mr. Graham, in his *Science of Human Life*, has been the leading advocate of the adoption of the Vegetarian system in dependence upon fruits, farinaceous [starchy] substances, and vegetable products alone, without the addition of animal substances, such as milk, butter, eggs, or cheese . . ." [they don't seem to have been aware that Graham was heavily influenced in this by Dr. William Lambe from London, in his book of 1815.]

The VM claimed the Vegetarian Society took no view either way, leaving it for individuals to decide, 'however...' and they followed with a two page article by John Smith from Yorkshire (northern England), author of the most popular vegetarian diet book of the day. He warned against eliminating all animal products on various health grounds, ultimately seeing it as a risk of " . . . Vegetarian principles brought into disrepute."

On page 76 of the same volume (later in 1854) the VM printed an article on 'The Designation of the Society'. This acknowledged the confusion around the word 'vegetarian', without being very specific, and threw out the idea of replacing the word with 'Dietetic Reform', so potentially becoming the 'Dietetic Reform Society'.

This appears to have received no response at the time, but 20 years later it was London that took up that idea. But that is also part of the next story...

Prof. Francis W. Newman and the attempted 'vegan' revolution of 1871

February 22, 2012

Francis Newman was President of the Vegetarian Society (the original one in England) for about 12 years in the 1870s and 80s, and almost brought a dramatic change to the course of its history – if he had succeeded, the word 'vegan' would probably never have been invented all those years later.

He was well known in his own right, but even better known as one of the Newman Brothers. They came from a conventional Church of England family, but elder brother, John Henry, converted to Catholicism and rose to become a famous Cardinal. Meanwhile Francis W. went the opposite way becoming a Baptist and then a Unitarian.

He was also actively involved in many social causes, including the abolition of slavery; equal rights, and votes, for women; support for animal rights including opposition to hunting and vivisection; and he eventually took the step of becoming vegetarian in 1867, at the age of 62.

Newman joined the Vegetarian Society at the lowest point in its history. The first president, the wealthy James Simpson, had died in 1859 leaving the Society with a lack of funds and leadership, it came close folding during the 1860s.

Some new leaders tried to be more progressive and the magazine had been renamed 'The Dietetic Reformer', but against opposition they still added the original 'and Vegetarian Messenger'. The idea was to get away from both the exclusivity and the confusion of the word 'vegetarian' – dietetic reform was meant to include everyone interested in a plant-food diet, even if they weren't there yet. It also avoided the endless problem of whether 'vegetarian' included eggs and dairy products, an idea which had never been fully accepted.

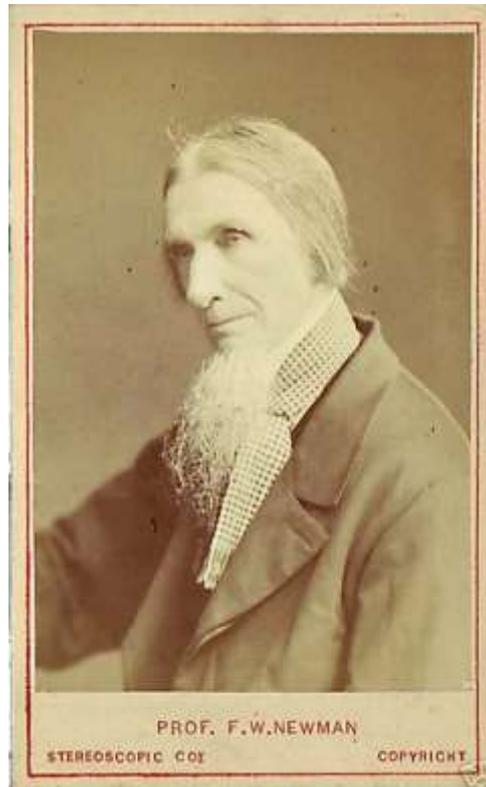
At the Society's 24th AGM, on October 18, 1871, Francis Newman read a paper suggesting radical changes. In a later presidential letter to *The Times* he summed up his position succinctly:

"...our aim is not to found a sect but to influence a nation."

However, the influential members of the Bible Christian Church, which had played a major role in founding the Society, were never happy with this – they did indeed want to be an exclusive sect – perfection in (ovo-lacto) vegetarianism or nothing.

What Newman proposed was firstly to allow the Society to enrol associate members, based on four categories of pledges:

1. to feed on the fruits of the earth only [pure vegetarian/dietary vegan]
2. to avoid the flesh of animals killed for food [ovo-lacto-vegetarian]
3. to avoid all flesh of land animals and birds [pescetarian/piscerian – fish eater]
4. to avoid flesh-meat so far as circumstances permit. [flexitarian or meat-reducer]



This was a remarkable list as it clearly put the plant-food-only-diet as the ideal, but the Bible Christians were insistent that their '*promised land flowing with milk and honey*' (and eggs) was the ultimate truth. Newman (deeply but differently religious himself) said elsewhere that there were 'a large number' in the Vegetarian Society who did not use eggs/dairy, but this was the first time the Society had officially even acknowledged they existed.

But Newman went even further – he also wanted to change the name of the Society to the 'Dietetic Reform Society'. As with the journal, this would have allowed the Society to support all those who were moving towards vegetarianism, as well as those who had arrived. If he had succeeded in that then the word 'vegetarian' would have been free to return to its original meaning of someone who just eats vegetation, or food derived from plants. There would then have been no need to invent vegans...

However, there were still enough Bible Christians in prominent positions in the Society to block these proposals. In 1874 Prof. Newman managed to get an agreement for simple 'associate membership', but that was all. Even in that he was proved right, there were soon twice as many associates as full members, and the Society's income more than doubled [for more on all above see *50 Years of Food Reform*, Charles Forward, 1897].

Francis Newman said that he used some eggs/dairy himself, but kept them to a minimum and looked forward to alternatives which he anticipated might be one day processed from nuts. In an essay '*On the Mission of the Vegetarian Society*' he wrote:

But whether we demand more milk or more meat involves the very same results. We cannot have much more milk unless more calves are born. The cows, I believe, have long since been kept in a milch state as long as possible. More milk must mean more cows and calves, more grazing land, more dependence on foreign corn.

. . . [on the use of eggs/dairy] We are in a state of transition. A future age will look back on this as barbarism; yet we are moving towards the higher and nobler development in becoming even thus partial vegetarians.

Just to be quite clear: This was the President of the Vegetarian Society describing eggs/dairy users as 'partial vegetarians', and the Society flourished under his leadership.

Soon after most of his proposals were rejected, a more radical group in London founded a Dietetic Reform Society, which then ran nationally in direct competition with the Manchester-based Vegetarian Society. Other 'Dietetic Reform Societies' soon followed, some as far away as in New Zealand and California. After he retired as President, Newman (a London Professor) took to referring to the 'Manchester V. E. M. Society' (=vegetable-egg-milk).

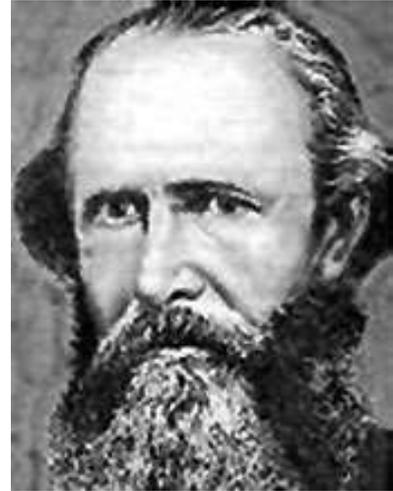
There were many changes of names and ideals, but the friction between London and Manchester continued for almost another 100 years, before they eventually merged in 1969. But by that time the Vegan Society had filled the gap in 1944.

The First Vegan Cookbook – New York 1874

March 14, 2012

We know there were some journals, published in London in the 1850s, which only included recipes entirely from plant foods and water, but the first known 'vegan' cookbook came from New York in 1874.

Russel Thacher Trall M.D. (*right*) was born in Connecticut, 1812, and was taken by his parents to western New York when he was a child, working for several years on a farm. He later studied medicine and settled in New York city in 1840, where he became a hydropathist.



In 1843 he opened a water-cure establishment, then expanded it in 1853 to include a medical school for both sexes, as the New York Hygeio-Therapeutic College, promoting totally drugless health.

In 1850 the first American Vegetarian Society was launched in New York, with Dr. Trall as the Recording Secretary, alongside his friend and mentor, Sylvester Graham, as a Vice President. Their mutual friend Bronson Alcott was a visiting teacher at Trall's school.

Around the same time he published his '*Hydropathic Encyclopedia*' in eight volumes – with some volumes promoting a diet exclusively of plant-foods and pure water, but others including eggs and dairy products, though with some hesitation.

In 1854 Trall published the '*New Hydropathic Cook-Book*', again with many recipes using eggs/dairy, even a section on meat for those demanding it, but describing the use of any animal products as a 'compromise'.

This was eventually resolved in 1862, when Trall came off the fence and changed the food at his establishment to consist entirely of plant-food plus water. He also settled on the term *Hygeian* (Hygeia was the Greek goddess of health), and this became a forerunner of the Natural Hygiene movement.



DR. R. T. TRALL'S WATER-CURE ESTABLISHMENT IN NEW YORK.

The change was explained in the Preface to his 1874 book '*The Hygeian Home Cookbook*' (see below for a link to the complete book). He wrote:

"More than twenty years ago the '*Hydropathic Cookbook*' was published . . . but for a dozen years past our table has been prepared without milk, sugar, salt, yeast, acids, alkalies, grease [butter], or condiments of any kind."

He also objected to substituting any other animal products for flesh-eating. A few sample recipes:

RHUBARB TOAST.

Peel, and cut the stalks in pieces, put them in a stew pan, add a little water, some stoned dates, and a few English currants well picked and washed; let them all cook until done, and then pour them over the toasted bread.

BERRY MUSH.

Pick and wash the berries; stew them in a little water, adding a few stoned dates, stirring frequently until well cooked; then stir in very evenly a little Graham flour or oat-meal. Blackberries, raspberries, or whortleberries may be used.

GRAHAM PIE CRUST.

Pour boiling water into wheat-meal and stir to a soft dough; roll out as thin as possible; sprinkle a little meal over the pie plate, and spread this as the bottom crust. Make the top crust by mixing wheat-meal with ice-cold water; add grated cocoanut if desired; knead as quickly as possible to a stiff hard dough; roll very thin; cover and bake immediately.

APPLE PIE.

Make a crust according to either of the above recipes except the last; spread the bottom crust on the plate; on this spread a few dates, stoned and cut into small pieces; sift a little meal over this, and lay on the apples in slices or stewed; if the fruit is very juicy sift on more meal; cover with the top crust; have the fruit extend close to the edges of the crust, which should be wet so that the top and bottom crust will adhere at their edges; with a knife roll the edges under so that they will be smooth; bake immediately, being careful not to have the top crust much browned. As soon as done, cover tight with a dish about two inches deep, and let it steam till cold, when the crust will be very tender.

HYGIENIC BROWN BETTY.

Prepare a quantity of apples for stewing, cleanse some raisins and currants, and stone some dates; the proportions may be according to taste or fancy; cut some Graham bread into thin slices; put into the stewing kettle a layer of the fruits; then a layer of bread, repeating and alternating until the kettle is nearly full, or until a sufficient quantity is prepared; then pour on cold water until it reaches within two inches of the top of the pudding; set it where it will simmer slowly without burning; cook until the bread and fruit are thoroughly soft, when the liquor will be very rich; serve warm or cold. Grated cocoanut may be added if its flavor is desired.

Trall also published at least 15 other books, and edited several journals on a wide variety of medical topics. Here's the link to the complete earliest known vegan cookbook:

[The hygeian home cook-book; or, Healthful and palatable food without condiments](#) – (on [archive.org](#)) by Russell Trall, New York, 1874

Gustav Schlickeyesen – 1875 German vegan, raw-foodist, fruitarian

February 15, 2010

In 1875 Gustav Schlickeyesen published a book called *Obst und Brod - Eine Wissenschaftliche Diätetik* – which was translated and re-published in New York, 1877, by M.L. Holbrook M.D. as: **Fruit and Bread – a scientific diet.**

The book (now on archive.org) follows very directly from the discoveries of Charles Darwin, his *'On the Origin of Species'* first appeared in 1859; and *'The Descent of Man'* in 1871.

Schlickeyesen lists only the later volume in his short bibliography and in his section on *'Application of the Theory of Evolution to Dietetics'* – he claims to be the first to follow through on Darwin's own suggestion that the earliest humans appear to have been frugivores, like the apes, which means they preferred to eat fruit, but not quite exclusively.

He gives a very detailed account of comparative physiology of human and non-human animals – teeth, digestive systems, embryo/placenta etc., but also goes on to morals/ethics and of course diet.

Schlickeyesen concludes that humans are naturally frugivorous (fruit, grains and nuts in his interpretation) – some of the details in his own words:

p.113: "Beans and lentils also are an exceedingly concentrated form of food . . . by the use of both fruits and grains in the right proportion, the body is supplied with all the elements of nutrition." (this was before the knowledge of vitamins, especially B12...)

p.114: "The present custom of cooking our food seems necessary only because it is customary."

p.125: "Among animal products much consumed by vegetarians, milk is one of the most common. This however, is not only entirely unnecessary, but in many cases, positively injurious." – he continues by stating that milk is just for the new-born, only humans use it as adults, and he describes butter and cheese as an 'excess of fat'.

p.127: "Eggs, also, are unnatural food. They are designed by nature only for the nourishment of the germ within it."

p.128: [referring to all the above] "... no one who is provided with an abundance of man's genuine food, namely, fruits, grains and nuts, will ever need to resort to them..."

p.180: "Of other articles injuriously added to our food, honey and sugar are as objectionable as they are popular."

- he also argues against pastry, tea, coffee, chocolate, alcohol, tobacco, as well as all flesh foods.

p.149: "... in a hundred cases of disease, over ninety will be found to originate in the consumption of improper foods."

The only exception to the ban on cooking was whole wheat bread made solely with unrefined flour and water, well kneaded, then baked.



Rather oddly, throughout the entire book, Schlickeysen makes no mention at all of vegetables. The question of whether to eat roots, greens and other vegetables is just avoided, even though many of them are fine eaten raw – salads were nothing new, even then.

Schlickeysen's book had a considerable impact around the world, the English translation crops up in veg histories of England, Australia and California. The President of the Vegetarian Society in the UK, Francis Newman, wrote a scathing review in 1877, saying it was too extreme. But the real problem for such a deeply religious man was of course the promotion of Darwin and evolution...

Among his fellow German speakers, some notable individuals adapted his ideas within more of their own, including August Engelhardt (1875-1919), Arnold Ehret (1866-1922), and Edmond Szekey (Hungary, 1905–1979) and many other raw-foodists and fruitarians soon followed worldwide

One of the most significant was Maximillian Bircher-Benner, who adopted a raw-food regime at his clinic in Zurich, Switzerland, though he did include raw vegetables and even small amounts of milk products.

In 1900 he invented a new breakfast of fruits, nuts, and grains – the perfect Schlickeysen combination - what we now know as muesli. The original had a lot more fruit and a lot less grains than the supermarket versions we get today, and there are some claims that it was originally eaten with orange juice, not cow's milk (though today there are of course plenty of plant milks available).

So next time you're munching your breakfast muesli, spare a thought for Gustav Schlickeysen who started it all way back in 1875.

Added later... received from Vegetarier Bund Deutschland (VEBU):

Schlickeyen was born on the 9th of September 1843 in Berlin, therefore he was German. He was born as the seventh child of the family, of premature birth, and was always weak and often ill. Only thanks to his vegetarian diet he was able to survive and lead a rather normal life. He published two books, besides "Obst und Brod" he wrote "Blut oder Frucht", in English: Blood or Fruit. We have both books in the VEBU library.



He emigrated to the US, where he hoped to find a paradise of liberty, but he had to work very hard, 10-12 hours daily, to earn a minimum of money for a rather miserable/poor life, and in the nights he wrote his books. As philosopher and sensitive man he felt very unhappy in the materialistic world of North America, and always hoped to be able to return to Germany, but in vain. In 1893 (no exact date known) he died in Jersey City, New York.

Was Vitamin B12 a problem for 19th century 'vegans'?

April 18, 2012

And other questions . . . B12 was discovered 1948, the word 'vitamin' having first appeared in the early 20th century. So if 19th century vegans had vitamin deficiencies they had no way of knowing it, and would have diagnosed it as something else.

All we know about most people from the 19th century is what has survived in print. The veg*ns wrote a lot of propaganda about the benefits of their diets, but rarely, if ever, made detailed records of any problems they experienced. Death records were very limited and, by today's standards, also often misdiagnosed.

A useful comment on Wikipedia: "Historically, it's been easy to get B12, because until recently we didn't live in a sanitized environment. Plants pulled from the ground and not washed scrupulously may contain remnants of B12 acquired from the bacteria present in the surrounding soil. B12 is also found in lakes, before the water is sanitized."

I've seen that view elsewhere, and it seems reasonable, but I'm not recommending eating unwashed vegetables or drinking dirty water! Those trying to follow a totally plant-food diet today should, of course, ensure an adequate source of B12, either through supplements or fortified foods.

The numbers of 'vegans' in the 19th century was probably very small, but if they were suffering from B12 deficiency they should have had enough contact with each other to at least realise they were getting similar symptoms, and we have no record of that.

The other likely reason we have no deficiency reports was just a lack of consistency in their diet. Many people today support the idea of veganism but, for whatever reason, are not very perfectionist about it, and it doesn't take much of an occasional animal product to get the very small amount of necessary B12.

But being 'vegan' in the 19th century was much harder than it is today, so a lower level of perfectionist consistency was inevitable, and we can see this in many that we know about. Some examples:

Dr. William Lambe changed to a diet solely plant-foods and distilled water in 1806, when he was 40. He lived to be 82 and was reported as being in very good health near the end. However, after he died his daughter told his biographer that the women, and presumably servants, in the family, could never manage to make cakes and pastries without any animal products. As Lambe knew nothing about cookery they just put in as little as possible and told him there was none. Whether he guessed this we'll never know, but it might have been enough for the very small amounts of B12 that were needed.

Percy Bysshe Shelley joined Lambe's circle of friends in 1812, and in the spring of 1813 spent a few months living in a 'commune' that was trying very hard to be completely vegan. They had the same struggle with some foods – margarine was not invented until decades later, and soy products were unknown – but they seem to have been determined to do the best they could. After a few months Shelley moved on and the records are not sufficiently detailed for us to know how long he kept to his 'vegan' diet, though given the endless difficulties it was probably not long. The body can store B12 for a long time, and just a few months without it are unlikely to cause long term damage.

Over in the USA Bronson Alcott also spent maybe a couple of years as what we would now call a strict abolitionist vegan in the 1840s. He probably never gave up

on his ideal, but the endless social pressures would have made it extremely difficult to maintain after his attempted commune failed.

His friend Henry David Thoreau also tried to give up all animal foods, but never quite managed to drop the fish, saying he felt guilty about eating it.

William Horsell, who did more than anyone to promote 'veganism' in London in the 1840s and 50s, eventually died in West Africa in 1862. He was buried in Lagos, Nigeria. It's hard to imagine him maintaining a perfect diet on that trip.

We can see similar patterns in all of our 19th century 'vegans' – some managed to keep close to their diet over a long time, but only rather inconsistently, others were deeply committed for a short period, but then drifted back to including some animal products.

So if we try to find a 'perfect vegan' in the 19th century, we will be searching in vain. Their historical value is not in what they were able to do – it is about where they were trying to go. They knew what they wanted, but struggled to maintain any degree of long term consistency in getting there.

This is in stark contrast to those whose vision was a promised land "flowing with milk and honey" (and eggs), and saw that as an essential part of their diet.

Of course we see exactly the same in many people who support the idea of veganism today. When I attend vegan events I often talk to people, quietly and privately, about how consistent they are in their veganism. My impression has been that a high proportion of them are not entirely consistent, not through any lack of shared ideals, but because of all the difficulties, and relentless social pressures.

The 19th century wannabe 'vegans' demonstrated that individual perfectionism is not the priority in the course of history. There are many routes to veganism and many people at different places along the route. Most of us today manage much better than they could in the 19th century, and future generations will do better again.

So if we want a vegan future it is not so important how perfect any individual manages to be. What matters is agreement about the ideal of a vegan world - where we are collectively trying to go is more important than where any of one of us is right now.

Some final notes:

Vegan nutritionists recommend that vegans either consistently eat foods fortified with B12 or take a B12 supplement. Vitamin B12 deficiency can potentially cause severe and irreversible damage, especially to the brain and nervous system.

The Vegetus Myth

June 1, 2011

You've all read it somewhere: "*The word vegetarian has nothing to do with vegetables, it was derived from the Latin 'vegetus' meaning whole, fresh, lively, vigorous*" etc... Whilst all the dictionaries simply suggest the derivation as 'vegetable+arian'. Most of us never really believed the 'vegetus' myth, but it was impossible to disprove it – until last year.

The issue arose because by the late 19th century the origins of the V word had already been lost, even though we now know it was first used by people closely associated with Alcott House, near London, around 1840 (see the footnote for full details of last year's research) – and the originators did indeed see themselves as just vegetable eaters.

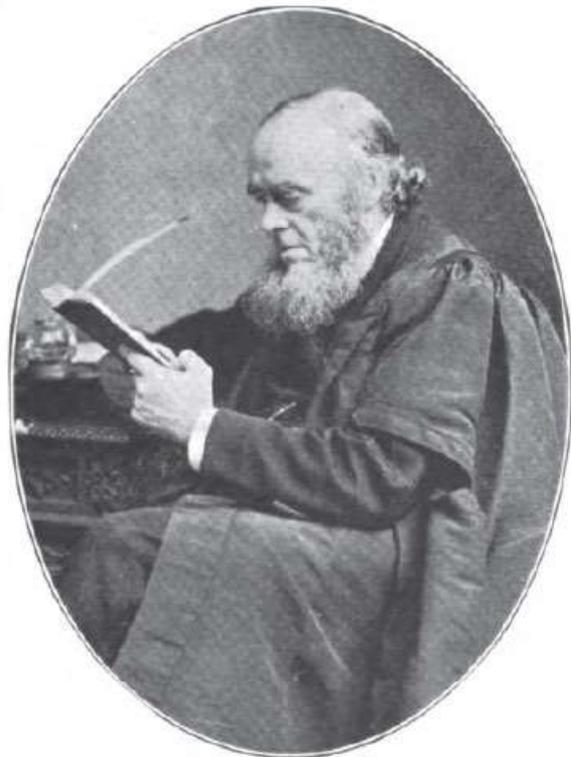
In the early 19th century the word 'vegetable' simply meant any type of plant food, including fruits, grains etc.. Over the last 150 years the meaning has reduced to just certain types of plants.

But the the origins of 'vegetarian' had been lost, and in his 1906 book '*The Logic of Vegetarianism*', Henry Salt wrote:

No-one has a better right to speak on this matter than Professor J.E.B. Mayor, the great Latin scholar, and he stated that, looking at the word etymologically, "vegetarian" cannot mean "an eater of vegetables." It is derived from vegetus, "vigorous," and means, strictly interpreted, "one who aims at vigour." Mind I am not saying that the originators of the term "vegetarian" had this meaning in view . . .

Salt's last line "**I am not saying that the originators of the term 'vegetarian' had this meaning in view**" shows the opposite of the claims from some that he supported the myth.

The first known use in print of 'vegetarian' was in 1842, and for almost the next forty years there is no reference whatsoever, in any of the vegetarian journals or books, to 'vegetus'. It first appeared in the *Vegetarian Messenger* 1879 in a translation of an article from Germany - the writer suggested 'vegetus' as the origin, but admitted he was merely guessing. Prof. Mayor would have read that and seems to have elaborated on it.



THE REV. PROF. JOHN E. B. MAYOR, M.A.
(President of the Vegetarian Society.)

Mayor was a Professor of Latin at Cambridge and, from the mid 1880s, the President of the Vegetarian Society. In his dual positions he was naturally taken seriously and it caught on. This was a convenient solution to the problem of eggs/dairy not being vegetables (plant foods), but it is obvious that even Salt, himself a later Vice-President, was dubious about it.

Vegetarian can equally be seen as derived from the late Latin *'vegetabile'* – meaning plant – as in *Regnum Vegetabile* /Plant Kingdom. Hence vegetable, vegetation – and vegetarian. But it's very unlikely that the originators went through all that either – they really did just join *'vegetable+arian'*, as the dictionaries have said all along.

We also have odd claims that the suffix *'-arian'* relates to some kind of belief system, so does that mean that an octogenarian merely believes in being 80? Or does a librarian merely have an irrational belief in books? Some people do seem determined to cling to their irrational belief in the vegetus myth.

Of course words change over time, and dictionaries do not decide the meanings of words, they merely reflect common usage.

The classic example of change is the word *'gay'* – which some younger people today might not even know used to mean just *'happy'*. Back in the 1970s I did a lot of sailing with a friend who had restored a 1930s boat, and he refused to change the name from its original *'The Gay Lady'* – which brought a few comments from other passing sailors...

So *'vegetarian'* today means whatever most people use it to mean – and in the west it has become synonymous with *'vegetable-egg-and-milk eater'* (at one time called the VEM diet – *vegetarian??*), or in India just *vegetable-and-milk*.

Changing common usage is extremely difficult. And as much as some of us today would like to change this one back we are now up against all the supermarket products labelled a *'suitable for vegetarians'* when many (but not all of course) contain eggs and dairy products. Maybe we'll get back to the original meaning one day, but it certainly won't be easy.

Meanwhile, whatever it now means, it definitely had nothing to do with *'vegetus'* – that was just a myth, and if you see anyone claiming it, send them this blog!

For the short version of the real origins of the word 'vegetarian', see 'Vegetarian equals Vegan!' above.

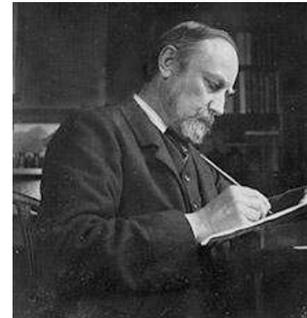
For the much longer version, with full details of the research into the origins of 'vegetarian' see: www.ivu.org/history/vegetarian.html

Henry Salt - the father of animal rights

January 11, 2012

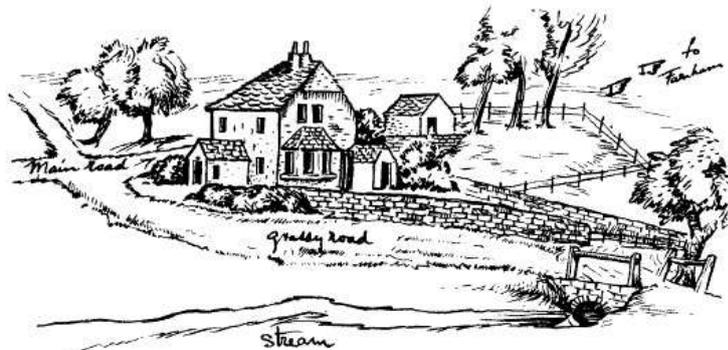
Henry Salt died in 1939, age 88, five years before the invention of the word 'vegan', but for his last 55 years he clearly and consistently promoted animals' rights, and what we now call ethical veganism.

He wrote almost forty books, mostly on veg-related topics which paved the way for the movement we know today – including his groundbreaking: *Animals' Rights, considered in Relation to Social Progress*, of 1894.



He was also a significant influence on Mahatma Gandhi, and his biographies of Shelley and Thoreau raised awareness of aspects of their lives which had been wilfully neglected by the meat-eating writers of his day.

In 1884, age 33, Salt was a master at Eton College, the most prestigious school in Britain, at the height of the British Empire (Princes William and Harry both went there more recently). But that year he and his wife, Kate, dropped out and moved to a country cottage where they grew their own vegetables and he started writing.



Sketch by Henry Salt of his cottage at Tilford, where he lived with his wife Kate after resigning his post at Eton
Stephen Winsten, *Salt and his Circle*.

One of his first articles was an essay 'A Plea for Vegetarianism'. It is not clear where this was initially published, but in 1886 the (ovo-lacto) Vegetarian Society published a collection of Salt's essays, with that one as the book title. In a much later book he quoted part of his original essay, which he said included: "...even dairy produce is quite unnecessary, and will doubtless be dispensed with altogether under a more natural system of diet." That section was missing from the 1886 edition.

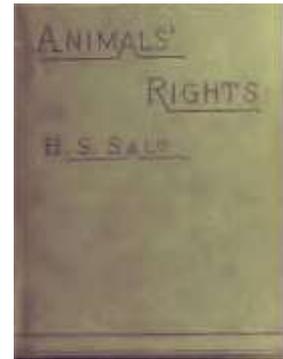
In 1890 the young Mohandas K. Gandhi, then a law student in London, picked up Salt's book, and many years later he wrote in his autobiography that he had made a slightly reluctant vow to his mother not to eat meat whilst away but: "I read Salt's book from cover to cover and was very much impressed by it. From the date of reading this book, I may claim to have become a vegetarian by choice."

Gandhi also read Salt's biography of Henry David Thoreau, which led on to reading Thoreau essay 'On Civil Disobedience', which also made a lasting impact. In 1891 the London Vegetarian Society held farewell dinner as Gandhi was returning to India. Henry Salt was there too, but it would be 40 year before they met again.

That same year Salt founded the Humanitarian League, which campaigned for the rights of underprivileged humans as well as all the animals. This led on to perhaps his most significant work: *Animals' Rights, considered in Relation to Social Progress*, published in 1894.

The book covered every aspect of the use of animals by humans, with chapters on:

- The Principle of Animals' Rights
- The Case of Domestic Animals
- The Case of Wild Animals
- The Slaughter of Animals for Food
- Sport, or Amateur Butchery
- Murderous Millinery [feathered hats were popular then]
- Experimental Torture
- Lines of Reform



The phrase 'animal rights' had existed for many years, but had been used in connection with animal welfare laws. There had been others, most notably Lewis Gompertz in 1824, who had argued whether humans should make any use of other animals at all. Henry Salt brought the two together, using the phrase 'animal rights' for an overall view that, whilst incomplete, was distinct from mere welfare reforms.

Many modern vegans are surprised to find that in Salt's chapter on 'animals as food', he makes no mention at all of eggs or dairy products, restricting himself to slaughter and just avoiding the wider issue completely. But we do have to remember that this was 1894, most of his potential readers were ovo-lacto-vegetarians, and most of his publicity would be via the Vegetarian Societies. If he alienated them he would have had almost no readers at all. The editing of his 1886 essay by the Vegetarian Society had already demonstrated that.

Salt consistently took the pragmatic approach of the acceptance of eggs/dairy as a 'first step'. His later book, *The Logic of Vegetarianism* in 1906, consisted of dialogues between vegetarians and various meat-eating characters. Naturally the vegetarians easily won all the arguments – until the last section where 'Mr. Consistency' debates the use of eggs/dairy with the Vegetarian.

By this time Salt was a Vice-President of the Vegetarian Society, and gave the standard arguments of why the word 'vegetarian' included those things that were obviously not vegetation, but added no personal comment of his own. Most readers would be left thinking that Mr. Consistency got the better of the argument...

He continued actively writing until the first world war intervened, he was 63 in 1914, and the debate about the use of all animal products had become much more open by that time. He produced more books after the war, but the conflict had decimated the vegetarian movement in Europe and it would not be until the late 1960s that it began a slow return to the earlier levels of popularity.

Meanwhile, in 1931, the now world famous Gandhi came back to London for talks with the British Government about Indian independence. Whilst he was there he gave a talk for the London Vegetarian Society, with Henry Salt, now 80, on his right hand side. During his talk, on *The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism*, Gandhi described his use of (goat's) milk as '*the tragedy of my life*'. A few years later the Vegan Society was founded.

Henry Salt was a major figure in the vegetarian movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it took many years before a wider animal rights movement emerged in the late 1960s. In 1975 Peter Singer took up the challenge in his *Animal Liberation*, and in the preface said of Henry Salt: "... a new generation ... discovered that it had all been said before".

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Why Dresden? The Origins of IVU

December 19, 2012

IVU was founded in Dresden, Germany, in 1908 which is not the most obvious location that we might think of today, so this is how it happened.

According to the *Vegetarier Bund Deutschland* the first Dresden Vegetarian Society was founded in 1881. There was also a sanitarium in the city at that time as this extract, from *The Vegetable Passion* by Janet Barkas (New York, 1975), show:

"Another influential figure in these early days of the movement was Dr. Heinrich Lahmann One of the first German physicians to use natural healing methods, Lahmann called animals his brothers and refused to use them for his experiments. Instead, he used himself as a guinea pig. His regime consisted of fruits and vegetables, and fresh air. Water was endorsed for its strengthening powers, and loose and porous clothing were recommended so that air might circulate freely. To provide goods that followed his progressive ideas, he designed shoes, boots, and clothing for all ages. He also recommended pillows filled with plants, rather than feathers."

An article for *The Vegetarian Messenger* (UK) in 1908 refers to four vegetarian restaurants in Dresden, suggesting quite a lot of local interest. In 1900, Dresden was the 4th largest city in the German empire, and a major centre for cultural activities. We also know that the Dresden Hygiene Museum was the main national centre for 'nature cure' therapies, and held an exhibition in 1911 which attracted thousands of visitors.

The International Scene

The first Vegetarian Society was founded in England in 1847, followed by the first German organisation in 1867. In 1888 the German vegetarian leaders suggested an International Congress of all the British and German groups. This was held in Cologne in September 1889 and became the first ever international gathering of vegetarians.

Some of the British groups had begun to create a 'Vegetarian Union' of the local British societies, and following the Cologne event declared that it would cover the whole world as the Vegetarian Federal Union (VFU). Groups in other English speaking countries, including the USA, Australia and Ireland soon joined. In 1892 the *Deutscher Vegetarier-Bund* (DVB) was created, connecting local groups in the German speaking region. The DVB did have some form of membership of the London-based VFU, but there was never any significant involvement.

Also during this time the newly formed French and Belgian Vegetarian Societies began publishing a joint magazine for all Francophiles. They eventually persuaded the British to hold the annual VFU Congress in Paris in 1900 (the others had all been in London, apart from Chicago in 1893). It was then agreed, so some thought, to hold the next one in Brussels in 1901 - but the VFU publicised the next Congress for London as usual. The arguments that followed saw the original Manchester-based Vegetarian Society support the Continental Europeans, and that was effectively the end of VFU.

Over the next few years there was some discussion about creating a more genuinely democratic international vegetarian organisation, with all countries having equal input. In 1907 the Vegetarian Society in Manchester, UK, celebrated its diamond jubilee (60 years) by inviting the leaders of all known vegetarian societies to an international gathering. At that meeting Dr. Danjou, Deputy President of the French Vegetarian Society, proposed a new International Vegetarian Federation, and that the 'mother society' should take the initiative in setting up a meeting.

So why Dresden?

The easiest option would have been to arrange another meeting in Manchester, but the British Society had also had some involvement with VFU and would have been very aware that the Europeans were sceptical about more British domination.

The solution almost certainly came from Mr. J. Arthur Gill, a prominent Esperantist at the diamond jubilee meetings. Vegetarians and Esperantists had quite a lot in common at a time when Europe was largely divided by linguistic barriers, both groups having an interest in universal brotherhood. It would have been Mr. Gill who mentioned that the Esperantists were holding their annual conference in Dresden the following year - which meant that many vegetarians would be in the city.

This was the ideal political solution, a Vegetarian Congress proposed by the French, organised by the British, and held in Germany. Albert Broadbent, the British secretary, wrote to all the Vegetarian Societies around the world inviting them to meet in Dresden on August 18, 1908, during the week of the Esperantist Conference.

Ultimately only the German, British and Dutch Societies were there in person, along with some locals and Esperantists, but groups from 14 other countries sent messages of goodwill and support. During the meeting they adopted the title of the International Vegetarian Union. The photo of the assembly:



The same week saw the creation of the 'International Union of Esperantist Vegetarians' - still active today as TEVA (Tutmonda Esperantista Vegetarana Asocio) and still a member of IVU. For the full reports published at the time see: www.ivu.org/congress/wvc08

This original version of this article appeared in The Vegetarian (UK), Winter 2007, and was the basis of a Powerpoint presentation at the opening ceremony of the Centenary IVU Congress, in Dresden, 2008. See below for the eventual veganizing of IVU.

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Gandhi - and the launching of veganism

March 16, 2011

Gandhi is not the first name that vegans might think of as helping to launch the movement, and yet he did, on November 20, 1931, in London to be precise. He didn't call it 'vegan' of course, but it wasn't long before others came up with the word to describe what he was talking about.

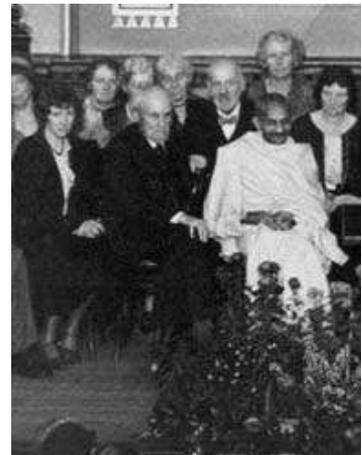
We need to go back a bit – in 1888 the London Vegetarian Society split from the original UK society, based in Manchester, to form a second national group. In 1891 Gandhi was a law student in London and joined their committee for a while, later describing this in some detail in his autobiography.

On leaving India the young Gandhi had made a religious vow to his mother not to eat meat while he was in London, and he kept to it with great difficulty. One day he found a vegetarian restaurant and on the way in picked up a booklet by Henry Salt entitled *A Plea for Vegetarianism* (1885) which persuaded Gandhi that being vegetarian was important in its own right – and in which Salt wrote: **"...even dairy produce is quite unnecessary"**.

Salt's next book, in 1892: *Animals' Rights, Considered in Relation to Social Progress* is generally recognised today as groundbreaking.

In 1931 Gandhi, now world-famous for his non-violent resistance in India, went to London to meet the government, and while he was there agreed to give a talk for the London Vegetarian Society, with the title of '*The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism*'.

The photo on the right is Gandhi at that meeting, next to his old friend Henry Salt who had founded the Humanitarian League and written 40 books to promote his ethical ideals. By 1931 Gandhi wanted something different, after some opening remarks he said:



"Forty years ago I used to mix freely with vegetarians. I notice also that it is those persons who became vegetarians because they are suffering from some disease or other - that is from purely the health point of view - it is those persons who largely fall back. I discovered that for remaining staunch to vegetarianism a man requires a moral basis."

Whether Gandhi was statistically correct in this claim is still the subject of much debate today. But he wanted to go further:

"I would give up milk if I could, but I cannot. I have made that experiment times without number. I could not, after a serious illness, regain my strength unless I went back to milk. That has been the tragedy of my life. But the basis of my vegetarianism is not physical, but moral. If any said that I should die if I did not take beef-tea or mutton, even under medical advice, I would prefer death. That is the basis of my vegetarianism."

Milk drinking a 'tragedy' - and this to an audience of mostly ovo-lacto-vegetarians. In his autobiography Gandhi says he gave up milk in 1912 (in South Africa) but six years later contracted dysentery (back in India) and was reluctantly persuaded to take goat's milk, which he then did on and off for life, but he never returned to cow's milk (a significant distinction in India) - soy milk was still largely unknown outside of East Asia at that time.

He also wrote elsewhere: "***Milk is an animal product and cannot by any means be included in a strictly vegetarian diet . . . I am convinced that in the vast vegetable kingdom there must be some kind, which while supplying those necessary substances that we derive from milk and meat is free from their drawbacks, ethical and other.***" (source below).

But Gandhi had been just warming up in this talk to the London Vegetarian Society, finally making his point: ". . . *the only basis for having a vegetarian society and proclaiming a vegetarian principle is, and must be a moral one.*"

But only a few years earlier in his 1925 autobiography Gandhi described an issue that arose back in 1891, while he was on the LVS committee. He objected to action against a particular member because: ". . . *it had nothing to do with the declared object of the Society, which was simply the promotion of vegetarianism and not of any system of morality.*"

He knew very well that all Vegetarian Societies kept the diet itself as their core function, and would not discriminate against any members just because they had different reasons for adopting the diet.

And yet he clearly wanted something which would bring together those who were motivated by morality, and who shared his objection to dairy products (and eggs of course). His talk was published in full in the various vegetarian journals where it was widely read by the minority of members who had always kept to their ethically-based plant-only diet. Gandhi certainly didn't invent that concept, but such outspoken support from a major world figure, with Henry Salt by his side, must have boosted their confidence enormously.

Within a few years they were arguing for a distinct ethics/morality based 'non-dairy' section within the Vegetarian Society, but with slow communications, and the 2nd World War intervening, it took until 1944 for that proposal to be rejected. They responded by creating a new society, on exactly the lines that Gandhi had proposed - inventing the word 'vegan' to name it.

- See also: 'The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism' – a compilation of articles by Gandhi, including the full text of the talk above, some others originally in Hindi, translated and published in 1959 – with the first section very specific about milk and eggs (PDF 144k): www.ivu.org/history/gandhi/the_moral_basis_of_vegetarianism.pdf
- Much more about Gandhi and vegetarianism at: www.ivu.org/history/gandhi
- More about Henry Salt at: www.ivu.org/history/salt
- Salt in turn was influenced by, and wrote several books about, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, see above.

The photo right shows the 1931 meeting coming together, just before Gandhi spoke (no chairs...) The December 1931 issue of Vegetarian News (London) printed the full text of Gandhi's talk, along with a descriptive article which stated that about 500 were present and that Henry Salt also spoke.



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The Invention of the Vegans

March 31, 2010, updated August 2012

The word 'vegan' was invented in November 1944 by Donald Watson in England. But the origins are not how many vegans today might imagine.

We know there were definitely groups of people in both Britain and America, as far back as 1806, which avoided the use of any animal products for food, clothing or labor. There may have been some earlier but precise details are rarely recorded as they had no specific word to describe themselves.

By the mid-20th century there were a number of members of the Vegetarian Society in the UK who wanted to form a distinct section, within the Society, of 'non-dairy vegetarians'. This was rejected by the Society as being too divisive, but in the end it was even more divisive as those promoting the idea were left with little choice but to form a separate society. Watson simply took the beginning and end of 'vegetarian' - and the world's first Vegan Society was born, initially with just 25 members.

Their journal was called '*The Vegan News (Quarterly Magazine of the Non-Dairy Vegetarians)*' - and the very first edition, November 1944, is on the IVU website at: www.ivu.org/history/europe20b/vegan_news_1.pdf . In it, Watson proposes the word 'Vegan' and says "*Should we adopt this, our diet will soon become known as a VEGAN diet.*"

The idea spread further and sooner than they might have thought - by 1948 we have a record that Dr. Catherine Nimmo and Rubin Abramowitz formed a Vegan Society in California which ran until 1960. During the 1950s there were also vegan societies in Germany and India, but they seem to have been short-lived.

Meanwhile the British group had joined IVU (International Vegetarian Union, of which I'm now the manager), and Donald Watson spoke on 'Veganism' at the 1947 IVU World Vegetarian Congress.

Over those first few years there was much discussion about the definition of the new word. Initially it was formally just about diet, but new rules were adopted by the Vegan Society in 1951. This went much further than mere 'non-dairy': "*The object of the Society shall be to end the exploitation of animals by man;*" and "*The word veganism shall mean the doctrine that man should live without exploiting animals.*" They continued: "*The Society pledges itself in pursuance of its object to seek to end the use of animals by man for food, commodities, work, hunting, vivisection and all other uses involving exploitation of animal life by man.*"

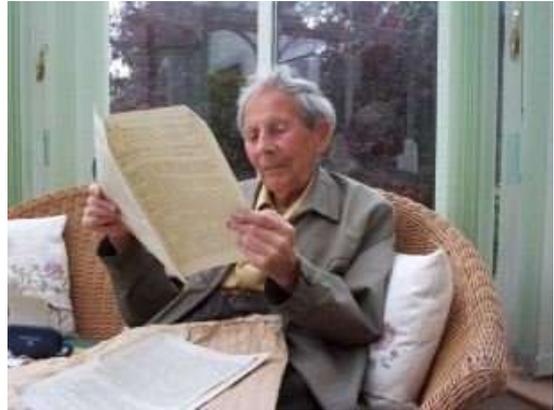
But . . . it is not clear whether the group in California agreed to all this, or were even initially aware of it. It is possibly a result of this that there has always been a significant group of 'dietary vegans' in the USA, whilst others regard themselves as 'ethical vegans'. The British Vegan Society, and many Americans, do not accept the distinction, insisting that ethics are an integral part of the definition. But it is always difficult to argue against common usage of any words.

The next major development was the founding of the American Vegan Society in 1960, and that is still very active today at: www.americanvegan.org . From the outset this group followed the same definition as the British Vegan Society, and has also been a member of IVU since it started.

1981 saw the first International Vegan Festival, held in Denmark. These have continued roughly every two years in many European countries as well as California, Australia, India and Brazil. For full details see: www.ivu.org/veganfest/history

The use of the word Vegan has expanded dramatically in the last 30 years, and there are now Vegan Societies in most parts of the world. To find these and other Vegan resources just use the database at www.ivu.org

Donald Watson, the man who invented the word, was vegetarian from 1924, then 'non-dairy' from 1940 (inventing 'vegan' in November 1944). He died in 2005 at the grand age of 95. The photo shows him in later life reading his first issue of 'Vegan News' (Picture by Joe Connolly - Veg News)



World Vegan Day is celebrated on November 1 each year in recognition of his invention.

More details of the origins of The Vegan Society (the British group has never added 'UK' to its name) and its membership of IVU can be found at: www.ivu.org/history/societies/vegansoc.html

IVU now has 27 full voting member organizations with the word 'vegan' in their title, and many more that are vegan in all but name - and another 112 called vegan in our public database.

The IVU members are below, all have websites, most have Facebook pages or groups, copy and paste into Google or FB to find them:

AUSTRIA - Vegane Gesellschaft Österreich
 CHINA - Hong Kong Vegan Society
 ETHIOPIA - Ethiopian Vegan Association
 FINLAND - Vegaaniliitto ry (Finnish Vegan Society)
 FRANCE - Société végane
 INDIA - Indian Vegan Society
 INDONESIA - Vegan Society of Indonesia
 ITALY - BioVeganFest
 KOREA - Korea Vegan Society & Diet and Climate Institute
 NETHERLANDS - Nederlandse Vereniging voor Veganisme
 NORWAY - Norwegian Vegan Society
 SOUTH AFRICA - South African Vegan Society
 SPAIN - Asociación Vegana Española
 SWEDEN - Veganföreningen i Sverige
 TOGO (West Africa) - Vegan Students Association of Togo
 URUGUAY - Unión Vegetariana y Vegana del Uruguay
 UK
 The Vegan Society
 Lewes & Hastings Vegetarian and Vegan Group
 London Vegans
 North Riding Vegetarians & VeganS
 North Somerset Vegetarian and Vegan Information centre
 Oxveg (Oxfordshire Vegetarians and Vegans)
 The Vegan Chef Network
 Vegetarian and Vegan Foundation
 USA
 American Vegan Society
 Sacramento Vegan Society
 Vegan Outreach
 (most US groups called 'vegetarian' are in fact vegan, and many now avoid either word in their title)

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Vegans are Vegetarians too

March 2, 2011

The man who invented the word 'vegan' in 1944 was very clear that this was a part of the vegetarian movement, and Donald Watson remained clear about that up to his death in 2005, at the grand age of 95.

In recent years some vegans have tried to claim that veganism is completely different to vegetarianism, sometimes with considerable hostility to other vegetarians – Watson would certainly be turning in his grave at that. Some extracts:

Vegan News – *subtitled: Quarterly Magazine of the Non-dairy Vegetarians - issue 1, November 1944, written by Donald Watson:* ". . . we shall, of course, say strongly why we condemn the use of dairy produce and eggs. . . there need be no animosity between ourselves and the 'lactos'. We all accept that lacto-vegetarianism has a well appointed place in dietary evolution . . . though our friends the lacto-vegetarians may reject our ideas if they wish, we hope they will not reject us for stating them."

THE VEGAN WAY OF LIFE – *by Fay K. Henderson, Secretary of The Vegan Society, in The Vegetarian (an independent journal) – issue 1, Spring 1947:* "The word Vegan has been brought into use since the formation of The Vegan Society in November, 1944, and it denotes a person who abstains from using animal products as food. Veganism is actually vegetarianism carried logically to a further stage."

The International Vegetarian Union was re-convened in 1946 after the war years, and The Vegan Society promptly joined.

VEGANISM – *a talk given at the 11th IVU World Vegetarian Congress, July 1947:* "Mr. DONALD WATSON (Leicester), said that the vegan believed that if they were to be true emancipators of animals they must renounce absolutely their traditional and conceited attitude that they had the right to use them to serve their needs." [*beyond just food...*]

Photo right: Watson front row middle. His co-founder Elsie Shrigley was in another part of the big group photo at the 1947 vegetarian congress. Immediately behind Watson is the President of the UK Vegetarian Society.



VEGAN VALUES *by Fay K. Henderson, VeganSoc Secretary, in The Vegetarian, issue 4, Winter 1947:* "There has been much conjecture as to the origin of the word VEGAN and its meaning. . . in the first instance it was an attempt to get beyond the rather negative phrase "non-dairy vegetarian" . . . being both the beginning and the end yet implying hopefully that what starts as vegetarian may finish as vegan."

[Ms. Henderson then explained how the group originally wanted to remain within the Vegetarian Society, as a non-dairy section, but this was not agreed so a separate society was reluctantly formed.] ". . . The Society has grown steadily in three years to a membership of about five hundred individuals . . . and has recently joined the International Vegetarian Union. . . . It is a matter of some concern and regret that the modern tendency among reform groups is to break away from main societies and work independently for some slightly varying ideal. . . . This condition must be remedied if

Vegetarianism is to develop the full force of its revolutionary powers. The closest co-operation and unity is therefore essential."

SHOULD THE VEGETARIAN MOVEMENT BE REFORMED? *by Donald Watson in The Vegetarian, Spring 1948:* "The movement should grant to the individual the right to judge how best to meet each personal problem as it arises, and there should be no inferior section reserved for those who cannot live consistently according to the movement's definition. Loyalty cannot be measured merely by the standard of consistent practice attained, nor can a person's value to the cause be assessed in this way. Difficulties are greater for some than for others. . . . The time has come to revise the definition of vegetarianism . . . **Vegetarianism, should mean the practice of living without food from animals.**"

In 1951 The Vegan Society changed its rules to clarify that veganism was about more than just food, specifically excluding any use of animals in any way at all. In practice this just codified their existing ethical values and the vegans remained firmly within the vegetarian movement.

Photos: top- leaders of The Vegan Society of India at the IVU World Vegetarian Congress in India, 1957.



In 1975 the first IVU World Vegetarian Congress to be held in North America, and the biggest outside of India, was masterminded by Jay Dinshah, founder and president of the American Vegan Society.

Photos bottom- Serena Coles, President of The Vegan Society, flanked by the Presidents of the International Vegetarian Union and the Vegetarian Society UK – IVU Congress, 1977. In the background is Brian Gunn-King, General Secretary of IVU and a member of the Vegan Society.



In 1997 the International Vegetarian Union started putting recipes on its website – now over 3,000 in English and many more in other languages. These have always been completely vegan, as is everything else on the website. In 1998 it was agreed that in future all food at all IVU Congresses must be completely vegan. Donald Watson lived long enough to witness that, and naturally approved of it. In 2010 we finally proved the real origins of the word 'vegetarian' – and that the first people to call themselves that were in fact vegan, in ethics as well as diet. Sadly Watson had passed away by then, but he would certainly have liked that one.

IVU currently has about 127 full voting member organisations, including 22 with the word 'vegan' in their title – and many more vegetarian groups now only promoting food derived from plants. Another 114 calling themselves 'vegan' have requested the free listing in the IVU public database, along with hundreds more only promoting plant foods.

Donald Watson never wanted to leave the Vegetarian Society, and never did. He never wanted to invent a new word, or create a new society. Initially he just wanted vegetarians to stop using animal foods – and the course of history is clearly going his way.

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Vegan Goes Global – the first ten years, 1944-54

March 28, 2012

The word 'vegan' and the Vegan Society first appeared in November 1944 in England, but it wasn't long before the idea spread to other countries. These notes are mostly from *The Vegan*, the journal of the Vegan Society, all copies of which are now available online, from 1944, via their website.

For the first couple of years the journal was entirely about the UK, but things were stirring elsewhere and the first glimpse we get was in the Autumn 1946 issue which stated that there were members "both in this country and abroad".

In the next issue, we get the first overseas letter from the Bircher-Benner Clinic in Zurich, **Switzerland**. There had been some discussion about feeding babies and the clinic said they had been successful making their own infant milk from almonds and fruit. A few years later the magazine ran a double page report from the clinic, described as 'near-vegan', with a collection of their vegan menus.

In the summer of 1947 there was a two-page article from the President of the Vegetarian Union of **Germany**, Herr W. F. Adolf Briest: '*Towards Veganism in Germany*'. In 1953 there was a new society - Deutsche Vegan-Gessellschaft – but it faded away again with a couple of years, certainly gone by 1955.

The major international event of the 1940s was the 11th IVU World Vegetarian Congress, held in England, and the new Vegan Society sent several delegates. The lengthy and enthusiastic report in the *The Vegan* for Autumn 1947 noted other delegates from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Eire and America (*right: the Congress hall*).



They reported: "*Special interest was shown in veganism, Mr. Donald Watson [President] having been invited to speak on the subject*", And a four page summary of his talk was added in the magazine. Apparently the talk generated some lively discussion which had to adjourned until they had all cooled down a bit . . .

The independent Scottish Vegetarian Society was also present, and it was noted that they had formed a vegan section, rather than a separate society. The vegans in England had originally wanted to do the same, but the Vegetarian Society had rejected the idea.

Several of the other speakers were mentioned as being of interest to vegans, especially the IVU General Secretary, Mr. Bolt from the Netherlands, who "*recommended that, as a practical measure, the I.V.U. should encourage the production of vegetable milk and non-leather shoes.*" The report concluded: "*At the Congress, The Vegan Society was formally accepted as a member of the International Vegetarian Union. It is most encouraging to realise that, as a result, we can now work in direct co-operation with the various vegetarian movements throughout the world.*"

The benefits seem to have already begun by the time the report was printed, further on in the same issue were letters from readers in California, New York, Singapore and South Africa. Including one from a Dr. Liber of New York, who had written a plant-food-only book in 1934, suggesting that "*the lacto-ovo-vegetarians should have had the trouble of finding another name for themselves, on the ground that we are the true vegetarians.*"

In Summer 1948 there was an article showing that in **France** there had been similar problems with words. Way back 1920 Dr. Jules Lefevre had invented '*végétalien*' for

people who ate a plant-food-only diet (distinct from *Végétarienne* for ovo-lacto) – but this was purely health-related, not concerned with animal ethics. By 1953 there was a monthly plant-food journal from Paris called '*La Vie Claire*', and some years later a chain of health food stores with the same name. Many further years on the French added '*Végane*' for an ethical vegan – so at least they have some clarity, whilst English speakers still argue about 'dietary' vs. 'ethical' veganism.

Interest from the **USA** developed further in the Autumn of 1948. There was some discussion printed between the Vegan Society and Rubin Abramowitz, of Oceano, California, on the question starting a local vegan group. There are reports elsewhere that this did happen, but it was never reported further in *The Vegan*. There were more letters from Mr. Abramowitz, with the Spring 1950 issue referring to him as "*acting as our representative in the USA*", but that was the last time he was mentioned.

The 1947/48 issues reported the Vegan Society Secretary giving talks in **Holland** and **Ireland**. Not long afterwards they heard that the Netherlands Vegetarian Society was proposing to form a vegan section.

1950 brought the 12th IVU World Congress in the Netherlands. This was reported as being very friendly for the vegans, but they also complained that they were given no opportunities to put their views. The report ended by stating: "*Having lost the opportunity offered by the 1950 Congress we must make the most of the next chance in Sweden in 1953.*" They clearly saw vegetarian gatherings as the best means of spreading the word about veganism, and they were quite open about wanting to 'veganize' IVU. That did indeed eventually happen, but it took another 50 years...

Between 1950-53 there were an increasing number of reports about doctors promoting plant-food-only diets, particularly the hygienists from the USA. This eventually led the editor to propose three classifications of motivations: health, religion and ethics – with only those ethically motivated being entitled to call themselves 'vegan'. In 1951 the Society had changed its rules to specify that veganism excluded any use of animals or animal products for any purpose.

In 1953 the vegan delegates to the 13th IVU Congress in Sweden were a lot happier with their participation, and gave considerable praise to the Swedish Vegetarian Society for looking after them so well.

A vegan dinner was arranged in London for some people on their way home from Sweden, including Scott and Helen Nearing from Maine, USA. They were the authors of '*The Good Life*' about their self sufficiency homestead, and they gave a talk at the dinner. They were described as 'near-vegan', but of particular interest as they were the first Americans encountered who gave their primary motivation as not harming any living creatures, rather than the usual concern for their own health.

The Winter 1954 issue was a bumper 10th anniversary edition, which included a lengthy report about the editor's recent tour of North America. He was given estimates of 3 million vegetarians in the USA, mostly from religious groups such as Seventh Day Adventists, and about 1,000 'vegans'. But this was the same editor who had insisted that very few of those 1,000 were really vegan as they were only health-motivated.

There had been more letters and articles from such diverse countries as Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Hungary, India, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, and even China. The word 'vegan' was spreading rapidly, whatever they meant by it.

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Hygiene cleans up – naturally of course

March 21, 2012

In 1998 the American Natural Hygiene Society, after 50 years, changed its name to the National Health Association (NHA), on the basis that most people didn't understand what 'Natural Hygiene' meant.

Quite right too, for me 'hygiene' has always been more about what I do in the bathroom than the dining room.

Hygeia, right, was the Greek goddess of health and cleanliness, While her father was more directly associated with healing, she was associated with the prevention of sickness. Her name is the source of the word hygiene (note the change of ei/ie spelling).

In the past, medicine men didn't think that food was anything to do with prevention of sickness, many still don't of course, which might be why most people never did understand the concept of 'natural hygiene' as a diet.

The NHA traces its (American-only) history back to Sylvester Graham (1794-1851). He does not appear to have used the word hygiene, though he certainly argued that a totally plant-food diet was crucial to health.



The first clear use of the word was by Russell Trall MD in the early 1850s, when he wrote his first book, and opened his 'Hygeio-Therapeutic College' in New York city. His 1874 '*Hygeian Home Cookbook*' was the first known 'vegan' recipe book.

In 1883 Susanna Way Dodds, cited by NHA, published her '*Hygienic Cookery*', which had a long section drawing on the works of Graham and Trall, fully supporting a plant-food-only diet. But the actual recipes included eggs, dairy and even a section on meat – presumably she thought that was the only way to sell it.

An omission from the NHA records is Dr. Elmer Lee, initially of Chicago, relocated to New York in 1897. He was the editor of the *Health Culture* magazine which strongly promoted a plant-food-only diet, and in 1910 he published an American edition of the first British 'vegan' cookbook '*No Animal Food*' by Rupert Wheldon. Lee was reported as both a hydrotherapist and a hygienist.

In 1916 J.H. Tilden MD, then aged 65 and cited by NHA as one of four major founders of natural hygiene, published a book on '*Food*' in which he insisted that some animal food was essential for human health . . . There seems to have been little agreement about the diet at that time, though they do all seem to have agreed with the basic principle that food and lifestyle, not drugs, were the key to health. Prevention not cure.

The major 'hygienic' character of the 20th century was undoubtedly Herbert Shelton, and it was him who first coined the phrase 'Natural Hygiene', with fasting central to his ideas. If he had called it 'Natural Health' maybe the rest of us might have understood it more easily.

Shelton read the works of Russell Trall and Sylvester Graham in 1911, and had apparently adopted some form of vegetarianism by 1913, age 18, and by the 1930s he was clearly writing against the use of eggs or dairy products, along with tea, coffee and other stimulants.

In 1948/49 Shelton became the first President of the American Natural Hygiene Society (ANHS), probably unaware that a small group in England had also invented their own new word, and started the Vegan Society in 1944.

By 1948 there was a small vegan group in California, and in 1956 a British Natural Hygiene Society (BNHS) began – apparently still going, but there is also a business in the UK today called 'Natural Hygiene', their tagline: - '*Providing solutions for all of your washroom needs*'.

Meanwhile, in 1951, the Vegan Society had clarified that veganism was about avoiding all uses of non-human animals, for clothing, entertainment etc., not just for food. The Hygienists were naturally solely concerned with human health.

By the late 1950s Jay Dinshah, a life-vegetarian from New Jersey, was a board member of the ANHS and went vegan in 1957. He remained totally loyal to Shelton and the ANHS, returning to a leading role 20 years later, but in 1960 he also wanted to do something for the animals, and founded the American Vegan Society (AVS).

Jay Dinshah played a major role in promoting veg*ism in North America for the rest of the 20th century. In 1974 he co-founded the North American Vegetarian Society, using that as a platform to mastermind the hugely successful first ever IVU Veg Congress in the region, in Maine 1975.

That event has been credited by historians as having kick-started much of the organized vegetarian/vegan movement in North America. In the early 80s he briefly returned to ANHS as acting Executive Director. Sadly we lost Jay in 2000, but his English-born wife Freya continues the work with AVS today (see:

www.americanvegan.org)

Many of the leading members and supporters of the NHA today are a significant part of the 'health wing' of the vegan movement in the USA.

For more about the (American) National Health Association see: www.healthscience.org – if you come to the IVU Congress/Vegfest in California later this year you'll get to hear, and meet with, many of the most prominent members of both NHA and AVS: www.ivu.org/congress/2012

I'm happy that NHA changed the name. I know a lot of people got used to it, but for me, and I guess for a lot others, 'natural hygiene' still sounds like taking a shower under a waterfall . . .



Jay Dinshah

How the Vegans landed in America

April 4, 2012

They could have come from the planet Vega for all most other Americans might have known. But they had been around for a long time, living quietly among the flesh-eaters, before more arrived in the big splash-down of 1975 . . .

How long they were there depends what you call a vegan. The dietary-only types had been munching their plant foods for 150 years, but the ethical species were very rare, even endangered, and needing outside help.

In 1957, 23 year old Jay Dinshah decided to be an ethical vegan. He was born in New Jersey to a lacto-vegetarian family of Jains, immigrants from India. By the late '50s he was a board member of the plant-food-only American Natural Hygiene Society, but they were solely concerned with health, and he wanted to do something more for the animals.

He had been reading the journal of the Vegan Society from England, and in a 1959 issue he put his name forward as a contact for the 'Vegan Correspondence Bureau'. The introductory note in the magazine said he "wishes one day to find a vegan wife!"

He found her in 18 year old Freya Smith from England, whose family were active members of the Vegan Society. In February 1960 Jay founded the American Vegan Society (AVS), and married Freya in August of the same year.

There had been some brief attempts to start vegan societies in California, Germany and India, but none had amounted to much and were soon gone again. *The Vegan* magazine in England recognised the potential of this one and devoted an entire editorial page to announcing the new AVS. They were right of course, it is still going 53 years later.

The Dinshahs set off across America to give talks and recruit members then, in 1965, they attended their first IVU World Vegetarian Congress. That one was held in Derbyshire, England, where they met members of the UK Vegan Society, including Freya's mother, Grace Smith, who was now assistant treasurer.

The 1967 IVU Congress was held in India, and the Dinshahs were there too, now in Jay's parents' home country. The official delegates for the UK Vegan Society were Brian Gunn-King and his fiancée Margaret Patching (they married the following year). In the photo right they were meeting Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India.



By the end of that Congress, Brian had become the IVU General Secretary, the first vegan ever to hold the post, and Jay Dinshah was co-opted to the Executive Committee. *The Vegan* noted the potential of having two members in such influential positions.

In 1971 the Vegan Society held its AGM in London close to the next IVU Congress in the Netherlands. The Dinshahs and Gunn-Kings were at both, and Jay was elected as a Vice President of both the Vegan Society and of IVU.

We don't know exactly when the idea of an IVU Congress in America was first discussed between the four of them, but at the 22nd IVU Congress, 1973 in Sweden, the delegates formally voted to hold the 23rd in the USA in 1975, with Jay Dinshah as the main organizer.

1975 – the vegans have landed – in Maine

"Arguably it was the most important gathering of vegetarians in the United States in the twentieth century." - *Vegetarian America, a History. Karen and Michael Jacobbo, Praeger, 2004*

And, of course, it was all being led by vegans . . . There were lots of individuals and small, city-based, veg groups across the region, so the North American Vegetarian Society (NAVS) was launched to bring them together and promote the Congress. Jay Dinshah was elected the first President. They hoped for 1,000 attending, but got 1,500 at the first ever World Veg Congress in America.

Freya was in charge of catering, and wrote a 'total-vegetarian' (i.e. vegan) cookbook for the event (original version top right), a version is still available today. The food for the Congress was also all-vegan - but with separate, clearly marked, small containers of milk and cheese for those that insisted on adding them (we don't bother with that these days of course).

Margaret Gunn-King (above right with child) was an official delegate for the UK Vegan Society, along with Grace Smith, Freya's mother, now their treasurer.

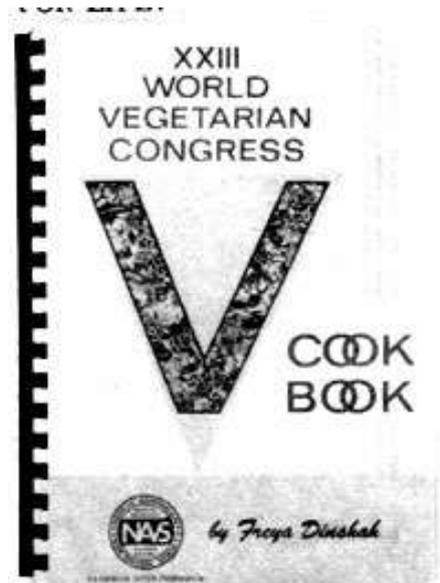
Right: the famous American comedian, Dick Gregory, with Brian Gunn-King and Jay Dinshah, handing over money collected for the charity VegFam.

So the women were doing the catering and child-care, whilst the men managed the business – well it was still 1975, and we have improved on that these days too . . .

Bottom right: Jay and Freya Dinshah at the 'Indian Night' during the Congress – which evolved into the annual NAVS Summerfest.

[Full details of the Congress](#) (link to ivu.org) – for some long term impacts of the 1975 event see the entries below on:

IVU and the NAVS Summerfest and **IVU and the American Animal Rights Movement.**



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The Veganizing of International Veg Events

April 11, 2012

By the late 1970s the situation for vegans on opposite sides of the North Atlantic was very different.

The 1975 IVU World Vegetarian Congress, held in Maine, USA, had been all plant-food, plus some small separate containers of milk and cheese for those that insisted on adding them. NAVS (North American Vegetarian Society) continued this as an annual event, but they soon dropped the optional additions and publicized it as 'total-vegetarian' – i.e. 'vegan', but that word was still very little known in the region. It was eventually renamed as the Summerfest that we know today, with the emphasis very much on health from plant-foods-only.

In Europe, especially in the North West, there had been many strong ovo-lacto-vegetarian societies for more than a hundred years, and their events could be problematic for the vegans. Eggs and dairy were an integral part of the menu, and any vegan items were often poorly labelled.

So in 1981, Kirsten Jungsberg, in Denmark, decided to organise a separate International Vegan Festival (IVF). The President of the British Vegan Society only heard about it two weeks beforehand, but went along and was delighted to find strong vegan groups from Sweden, and other countries, even France, among the 50 delegates.

That might have started as a one-off, but in 1985 Kirsten arranged a 2nd IVF in Denmark, then there was a third in Germany in 1987. After that some of the European vegans began an informal network known as 'Vegans International' – there was no formal committee, just a contact for each country who tried to keep the others informed of anything of interest (this was all pre-internet of course).

More IVFs followed - 1989 Sweden; 1990 Holland; 1992 England. By this last one the UK Vegan Society had finally caught up with the idea from the continent, and put on the biggest IVF so far, with 150 attending.

The 7th IVF was in Spain 1993, organized by Francisco Martin, using the occasion to launch a new society, and coin some new words for his language: – 'vegano / vegana / veganismo', hence his *Asociación Vegana Española*. The Festival was acclaimed as a huge success, but Francisco came in for some criticism from the more 'separatist' vegans because he was also on the council of the International Vegetarian Union (IVU).

Francisco had spent many years working in Canada, and preferred the NAVS style of veganizing from within, rather than screaming abuse from without. A few years later he was proved right, but things got worse in the meantime when the 1994 IVU Congress in the Netherlands became embroiled in yet more divisive arguments and food problems.

In contrast the 8th IVF, held in San Diego in 1995, was another huge success, attracting more than 400 visitors for the week. It was jointly supported by the American Vegan Society and VUNA – Vegetarian Union of North America (both members of IVU) – which was also completely vegan, just like almost all the 'vegetarian' groups in North America (though technically 'total-vegetarian' would be more accurate as veganism is an ethical lifestyle, not just a diet, and many American groups are not involved with animal ethics).

This was followed by the 1996 IVU Congress, rescued by NAVS at short notice and combined with the Summerfest. NAVS insisted on their usual 'total-vegetarian' menu, making it the first IVU Congress to be completely vegan. The result came as a surprise to some Europeans, and *EVU News* reported of the chef: "*His meals were even better than announced and probably made some lacto-vegetarians forget that the 'Vegetarian' Congress actually was a 'Vegan' one.*"

The point was well made, and the IVU Council, with Francisco Martin now as General Secretary, soon informally agreed that all food at all future Congresses should be *'entirely derived from plants'* (later formalized in the completely new IVU Constitution and Bylaws of October 1999).

Meanwhile 'Vegans International' (VI) ran into its own internal conflicts and effectively ended in 1997. The IVF planned for that year never happened. The Australians tried to keep it going with a small IVF in 1999, but that was the last for many years.

The former editor of the VI Newsletter went to the 2000 IVU Congress in Toronto, possibly expecting the worst, but wrote what can only be described as an ecstatic report for *The Vegan* back in the UK: "*This was really a World Vegan Congress.*" He reported all the speakers promoting a plant-food-only diet, and making his own contribution on animal rights.

Since then the requirement for food *'entirely derived from plants'* has been extended to regional congresses and any other events supported by IVU.

Meanwhile, back in Denmark, Kirsten decided to re-start the IVFs with the 10th in 2006. *The Vegan* reported an attendance of 'about 50', half from the UK and most of the rest from Denmark. But as the IVU Congresses were only held every two years, there was interest holding IVFs for the intervening years.

In 2007, Shankar Narayan, IVU Coordinator for India & SW Asia, held the 11th IVF in India (*Shankar 2nd right in the photo*).



Two years later Marly Winckler (*with yellow star behind the banner*), IVU Coordinator for Latin America, staged the 12th in Brazil. The latest was back to our old friend Francisco Martin, previously IVU General Secretary, who arranged the 13th in Spain in 2011.

There was now some confusion around all this as we had alternate years of entirely plant-food 'Vegetarian Congress' and 'Vegan Festival', with no difference between the two, especially when the 39th 'congress', in Indonesia, added a huge food fair making it more of a festival, and the 13th 'festival' in Spain consisted almost entirely of lectures.

In 2011 the IVU Council decided to resolve this by supporting an annual event 'combining features of congresses and vegfests'. 2012 will be in California; 2013 in Malaysia; 2014 in Africa; 2015 in Latin America, and so on, rotating around the six regions – and all completely vegan of course.

There is now a huge number and variety of 'VegFests' around the world, all vegan with some attracting visitors from other countries, IVU will be publicizing as many as we can.

Learning from the developing world

August 25, 2010

[A brief summary of the keynote speech I gave at the 39th IVU World Veg Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, October 1-6, 2010.]

The International Vegetarian Union is 102 years old, but it has achieved more in the last 6 years than the previous 96. This has been done by people in the developing world - where most of the world's population lives.

- In its first 50 years, 1908-58, IVU held 16 World Vegetarian Congresses - 15 of them in Europe.
- During the rest of the 20th century there were another 17 WVCs - with still over half of them in Europe.
- So far in the 21st century there have only been two WVCs in Europe, and there are no plans to return there until 2017.

So we have seen a gradual shift away from the Euro-centric view of the world that voted down a 1915 offer to host a WVC in San Francisco because it was 'too far to go'. The same objection was raised to India in 1957 but this time it went ahead and became the first outside of Europe.

As the graphic right shows, they initially didn't even cover much of Europe. The red dots are the locations of all IVU Congresses between 1908-55. The countries in green all had national Vegetarian Societies by 1908, though several collapsed during the First World War.

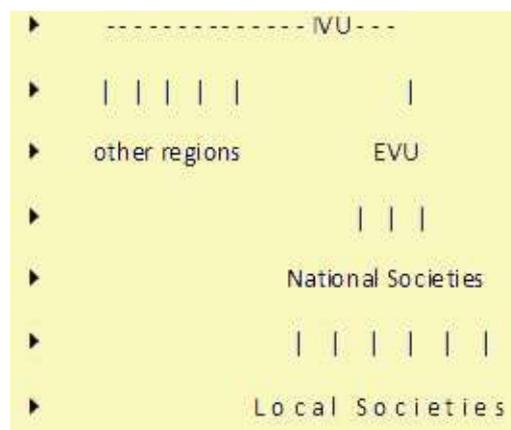


The 1957 Congress saw the first move outside of Europe, with a huge event in four Indian cities thousands of mile apart, and vast crowds at each of them. But the novelty soon wore off, and during the rest of the 20th century another three IVU forays into India showed gradually diminishing returns.

The next big leap forward came in 1975 when the first IVU Congress in North America had a major impact, it has been credited with kick-starting the entire organized veg movement in the region. There were then three more North America Congresses over the next 25 years, but again with diminishing results.

The underlying problem was the continuing Euro-centric structure of IVU. It assumed that the whole world would follow the European hierarchical system which was reinforced by the creation of EVU (European Vegetarian Union) in the 1980s (right).

Europeans seem to like that kind of structure in everything, but the rest of world just doesn't work that way. It took IVU so long to understand it that by the end of the 20th century an attempt to duplicate that structure in North America was already failing badly, and elsewhere nothing had changed.



The very last year of the 20th century saw the first ever congress outside of the big three (Europe, India, USA) when we went to Chiang Mai in Thailand. But what should have been another major leap forward failed to ignite the region, bogged down by infighting and personality clashes which had plagued IVU for the previous two decades.

With hindsight, we can see 1999 as the turning point, where the situation was just so bad that radical change had to happen. That year we re-wrote the entire IVU constitution, changed how everything would operate, and tried to figure out how to make it work. The first years of the 21st century saw North Atlantic congresses which were not going to set the world alight, but they did give us a crucial opportunity for calm reflection and time to regroup.

The real new beginning came in 2004, with the first ever IVU Congress in Latin America. We had learned the hard way that people in the developing world are perfectly capable of doing things themselves.

They just need support, not interference, from those of us in the richer countries. IVU provided financial support to launch the Brazil Vegetarian Society, and underwrote it in promoting the 2004 WVC, and it was a huge success, kick-starting more veg activities all over Latin America. This time we needed to find ways of maintaining the momentum instead of letting it fizzle out as before, and our new system of appointing Regional Coordinators (RCs) with the freedom to make their own decisions began to pay off.

It was also the beginning of IVU doing something more than just promoting World Veg Congresses every two years - up to then it had done little else.

Photos right:

top: International Vegan Festival in India, 2007. That and the next in Brazil 2009 were organized by the IVU Regional Coordinators, Marly and Shankar, standing behind the banner.

2nd: the unique cruelty-free fashion show during Marly's World Veg Congress, Brazil, 2004.

3rd: Susianto (from Indonesia), IVU RC for Asia-Pacific, on the IVU stall at the International Vegetarian Food Fair and Forum in Xiamen, China, 2009.

bottom: the 1st West Africa Congress in Nigeria, 2007 - Emmanuel, IVU RC for Africa with his hands up.



In 2006 we got the opportunity to rethink how we work in Asia, with enormous improvements - the first involvement in Indonesia, China and the Middle East soon followed, along with a very different approach in India. Then in 2008 we finally resolved the old clashes in Europe and EVU has also been rethinking how it operates.

Meanwhile 2007 saw the first ever veg congress held in Africa, in Nigeria, followed by another in Ghana in 2009. IVU did the global fund-raising for those, but otherwise everything has been done locally - and the Africans are developing new ideas that have lessons for all of us to follow.

IVU now supports a whole range of events, global, regional and sub-regional, all aimed at bringing people from different countries together. In the last six years, since 2004, we have for the first time been directly and actively involved in Brazil, China, Dubai (UAE), Ghana, Indonesia and Nigeria, soon to be followed by Bolivia and Kenya as well as more in China, India, Indonesia, Spain and the USA.

This has not come from any sort of top-down centralized control system. It has come from veg*ns in the developing world devising their own solutions to local problems, and being given the support to be able put their own initiatives into practice. It is just the beginning.

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Go Veg - and see the World!

August 3, 2010, updated September 2012

The main reason for the creation of the International Vegetarian Union, way back in 1908, was simply to help veg*ns in different countries communicate with each other. This was done mostly by exchanging newsletters, journals and personal letters - but there was no substitute for real face-to-face meetings with people of diverse cultures, languages and cuisines. IVU was founded at such a gathering and they have continued ever since.

For about the last 15 years we have seen a vast communications transformation. Thanks to the internet we can now have real-time, anytime, talks with anyone, anywhere in the world - even with live video links. And yet... there is still no substitute for actually meeting in the flesh. Sitting around a meal table where everyone comes from a different country is a unique experience, and for veg*ns there is a special significance in sharing our plant-based food (all congress food is always completely vegan).

However we do, of course, have to be aware of the environmental impact of travelling to other countries, and IVU today is reluctant to encourage large numbers to fly halfway around the world to attend global gatherings. The alternative is an increase in regional or sub-regional meetings, so that it becomes much easier to travel by more environmentally friendly means, such as rail or ship. There will, of course, always be those who want to visit far-flung places, and it has to be a matter for each individual to decide how to balance their own decisions.

The other approach that IVU has now taken is to hold the major world gathering every year, instead of every



two years as we have for the last 50 years. By rotating it around the regions, as on the map, we can ensure there will be one somewhere near you, sometime soon. It also gives the developing world a fairer share of the events.

Below - some photos from recent gatherings in **Brazil, China, Dubai (UAE), Germany, Ghana, India and Indonesia** (that's me top right, in China with Susianto, see below for more details):



Photo details: *top row: left:* a youth group performing at the opening ceremony of the Asian Congress in Indonesia

center: Shankar (India) Jowly and Susianto (Indonesia) and Prof. Jumsai (Thailand), same event

right: the IVU stall in Xiamen, China. Susianto and myself talking to leaders of an IVU member society from Mongolia.

2nd row: *left:* The beach resort venue of the world veg congress in Florianopolis, Brazil

center: musicians at the world veg congress in Goa, India.

right: Sandhya Prakash meets a local visitor the Middle East veg conference in Dubai (UAE) - and Sister Wako Ishikawa from Japan speaking at the IVU centenary congress in Dresden, Germany.

3rd row: *left:* some of the fabulous vegan food in Brazil

center: some of the audience at the 2nd West Africa veg congress in Accra, Ghana

right: a fire dancer in Brazil

bottom row: a speaker in the Chinese lecture room in Xiamen, China.

center: a day trip on a bus in Indonesia

right: some of the audience, with headphones, for my talk at the international forum in China.

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Veg*ism in India

[updated October 2012]

India can reasonably claim to be the spiritual home of vegetarianism, with an unbroken line of countless generations over thousands of years. There are currently about 300 million lacto-vegetarians in India, equal to the entire population of the USA, but the issues there are rather different to those facing us in the west.

There is a common misconception in the west that all the Hindus in India are vegetarian. Various sources suggest that less than half of the Hindus in India actually keep to plant food plus cow milk products.

In India vegetarianism has always been associated with religion, mainly Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Today many young people enticed away from their religion by the consumer-driven western lifestyle, including western style junk-food. Attempts to turn them back to traditional lifestyles have not made much progress, but what we have seen over the last few years is a remarkable rise in an Indian adaptation of western-style veganism, especially among young people.



There have long been Lacto-Vegetarian Societies in India, and IVU was represented by them for 50 years up to 2006 (right: Jayantilal Mankar, the first IVU Regional Secretary for India in 1957). The approach of these groups was traditionally to work within the Hindu and other smaller veg communities, offering valuable support to existing vegetarians and encouraging others Hindus to join them. It is difficult to get figures, but there are indications that the proportion of lacto-vegetarians is declining.

With one-third of the population still not eating meat the fast food businesses have had to adapt, so they do provide a lot more lacto-vegetarian food than we see from them in the west. But demographic changes could bring huge changes in the future.

Add to that about 150 million Muslims in India, along with many other minorities who are not likely to be attracted to what is mostly seen as a 'Hindu diet'. It is becoming clear that the only way to reach out to all those westernized young people is to use westernized arguments. And that increasingly means veganism.

As far back as 1889 there were vegetarian societies in India, run by Indians. Mahatma Gandhi recorded in his autobiography that in 1891, while he was studying law in London, he read a book by Henry Salt which persuaded him that being vegetarian was important in its own right, not just because of the religious vow he made to his mother when he left India. This did not negate his religious beliefs, it just gave his vegetarianism a separate identity. (photo: a young Gandhi in 1891)



In 1931 Gandhi returned to London, and while there gave a talk for the London Vegetarian Society (photo left) . During that talk he made it very clear that he would have preferred to live without any use of animal products at all. (see: [Gandhi - and the launching of veganism](#))

During his student days in London Gandhi had attended an International Vegetarian Congress, and just before he returned home he said he hoped that such an event would be held in India. Sadly that did not happen until nine years after his death. The first IVU World Vegetarian Congress to be held in India was in 1957, and they have been held there several times since then.

The photo right is a pioneer 'Vegan Society of India' at that IVU Congress in 1957. It was perhaps rather ahead of its time and doesn't seem to have lasted long, but it shows that this is not a new idea in India.



There were more huge IVU Congresses in India, in 1967 – opened by the Dalai Lama, below, who was vegetarian at the time – and 1977. All of these were organised by the extraordinary Jayantilal Mankar on the right of the photo. He was a leader of the Bombay Humanitarian League and took each of these Congresses to what were then Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras.



The Indian Vegetarian Congress, founded in 1959 and for most of its existence a very traditional lacto-vegetarian organization, now states as one of its objectives: "The IVC will spread awareness of the benefits of soy beans and endeavour to distribute soy milk whenever possible." – and they have recently gone even further by co-opting Shankar Narayan, founder and President of the Indian Vegan Society (IVS) onto their board.

Just four years ago this would have been hard to imagine, but things have been changing fast. In 2010 The Telegraph of India newspaper finally caught up with what is happening and ran a story about the increase in veganism: *'The temple priest was surprised. It's not often that devotees refuse the curd-based prasad - but here was Ritika Ramesh turning it down. "I thought of the documentary on Indian dairy farms that I had seen, and my resolve doubled," says Ramesh, a 25-year-old assistant film director in Mumbai. Ramesh is a vegan.'*

The last IVU World Veg Congress in India was held in Goa in 2006, organised by the great Jashu Shah who is sadly no longer with us. This was at the end of his 18 years as IVU Regional Coordinator, which included launching the Asian Vegetarian Union in 1999.

In the top photo, right, Jashu is with Shankar Narayan (*on the right*) who had just been elected to the IVU International Council. The lower photo is some of the excellent food being served at the Congress – the first major event ever held in India where all the food was vegan.



Shankar is the president of the Indian Vegan Society, which immediately puts him at odds with some Hindu and Jain vegetarians who see milk and milk products as an integral part of their religion. But it also sends a clear signal that future progress for the vegetarian movement cannot be entirely dependent upon religion.

Shankar follows Gandhi's principle of vegetarianism being important in its own right, and seeks to persuade more Indians to follow Gandhi in that decision, whether as lacto-vegetarian or vegan. Following his election Shankar agreed to take on the role of IVU Regional Coordinator for India and West Asia (aka the Middle East).

In 2007 Shankar organized the first International Vegan Festival to be held in India, and by October 2010 we were able to meet with a substantial group of vegan activists, and what he calls 'vegan sympathizers' from all over India. Bangalore has its own local vegan society and a vegan animal rights group. Perhaps it's not surprising in a city with so many western computer companies that the young people there are adopting these western ideas.

In October 2010 IVU supported a Vegetarian Congress in Bangalore – completely vegan of course as it was organised by Shankar and IVS. The photo right is Mohan Santhanam and friends providing some wonderful music during that Congress.



One of the older speakers told us that in his youth his community used milk products very sparingly, but today he is alarmed at the huge quantities being consumed by his fellow Hindus. The dairy industry is now just as industrialized and commercialized as everywhere else, and they use the same persuasive advertising.

For a cow to produce milk it must of course become pregnant every year, and the male 50% of the offspring are slaughtered in vast numbers as they are of no use to the industry – and all of this in 'the land of the sacred cow', and in the name of 'Ahimsa' – non-violence – or 'not consuming the products of slaughter'.



Above right, outside a vegan organic shop in Bangalore – myself, Marly Winckler (IVU Coordinator for Latin America) and Shankar, trying to spell out I-V-U...

In January 2012 the Indian Vegan Society celebrated its 7th anniversary with a gathering at its base in Karnataka. One recent survey estimated an increase from 2,000 to 20,000 vegans since 2006.



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Veg*ism in Africa

[updated June 2012]

I was once asked "Why do Africans go vegetarian?" - it was an unexpected question but the reply was simple enough: "For the same reason as everyone else, health, animals, environment or religion, according to their personal priorities".

Though many Africans are also more aware than most of us that vegetarianism, and especially veganism, can make a real difference to world hunger problems.

Many Africans of course do not have much choice, just finding anything at all to eat is their priority. But most of us know that far more people could be fed directly on plant food, than if it is processed through animals to provide meat. Add to that the fact that an alarming proportion of the food that is grown in Africa is exported to the richer countries, and we can begin to see the underlying problems.

The IVU Regional Co-ordinator for Africa is Emmanuel Eyoh, president of the Nigeria Vegetarian Society (NVS), founded in 1993 and a member of IVU since it began.

In December 2007 Emmanuel organized the first ever vegetarian congress in Africa - a West African Congress in Lagos, Nigeria, attended by many people from neighbouring countries in the sub-region. IVU launched a global appeal for funds and we were able to ensure that everyone attending, and some more local homeless people, were fed on entirely vegan food during the event.



In 2008 IVU launched another appeal to buy a computer for IVU-Africa - they are more expensive there, and incomes are much lower. Thanks to generous donations from around the world we were able to help Emmanuel work from the small and simple NVS office instead of having to use a local cybercafe. He sent the photo right:



Emmanuel is actively involved in programs to feed local homeless people, with veg food of course, and the 'world hunger' chart behind him shows his priorities clearly enough.

In October 2009 the Vegetarian Society of Ghana hosted the 2nd West Africa Vegetarian Congress in Accra, again with funds from an IVU appeal. As a part of this event they arranged a march to the government health ministry, and then held their meetings in a city park (apparently very hot hence the umbrellas...), as always in IVU supported events, all the food was completely vegan:



The next event supported by IVU was the 1st East Africa Congress, held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2010, I was able to go and help out a bit. Food distribution is an important part of African events and the top left-left photo I was helping serve rice and beans in one of the more deprived city areas, along with a children's choir, the street march and a pre-congress press conference:



At the end of October 2011 IVU was able to give further financial support to the Vegetarian Week in Accra, Ghana, along with some help to veg friends from neighbouring Togo and Nigeria to enable them attend.



The next plan is for a Congress/Vegfest in Lomé, the capital of French speaking Togo, between Ghana and Nigeria. We hope friends from vegan societies in Ethiopia, South Africa and veg friends from other countries will be able to join us in what could become the first ever pan-Africa Veg event.

Then, if all goes well then the next major objective will be the first ever IVU World Congress/Vegfest in Africa in 2014 – we have two possible countries interested in hosting it, more details soon on that one.

For more about veg*ism in Africa go to: www.ivu.org/africa - where you can join the ivu-africa email group.

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Veg*ism in China

July 6, 2011 [updated May 30, 2012]

Westerners often seem to be surprised to hear that there are millions of vegetarians, indeed vegans, in China, but this is nothing new. Way back in the 1880s the British and French Vegetarian Societies printed reports from Christian missionaries who were not themselves vegetarian. However found they had to stop eating meat while they were in China, because the Buddhists they met regarded the Christians as barbaric for eating animals. They also reported on the habit of eating soy beans, unknown in the west at that time, and how they made bean-curd which the French report called 'too-foo'.

Not all Buddhists are vegetarian, and both Buddhism and vegetarianism were suppressed in the more extreme communist era. Today China has become much more open and tolerant (though not completely so of course), with the result that we are now able to meet with vegetarians there.

IVU has had contacts for many years with ethnic Chinese vegetarians in Hong Kong and Singapore, due to the British connections. But somehow we missed the significance of Taiwan until fairly recently - and that country has the second highest concentration of vegetarians of any country, after India, with more than 1,000 veg restaurants.

That lapse was corrected in 2007 when the Asian Vegetarian Union held its 3rd Asian Veg Congress near Kaohsiung, in the south of Taiwan. The event was attended by 7,500 vegetarians, many from across Asia, but most from Taiwan - some of them are in the photo below.



Vegetarians in mainland China had always been more difficult to contact, but there too we have made major progress in recent years. Our main contact for many years has been our IVU Chinese webmaster in Beijing. He has been working on the site for about 12 years whilst local groups have come and gone. We had a group of 20 from China at the 2006 IVU World Veg Congress, but then lost contact again, however it is now much more stable and the 2007 veg congress in Taiwan helped with that.

Shortly after the Taiwan Congress the much-loved President of the Asian Vegetarian Union, Jashu Shah from India, passed away, and the resulting re-shuffle saw the election of Prof. Duo Li from Hangzhou, China, as Deputy-President, more about him below.

After the 4th Asian Veg Congress in Indonesia, November 2009, three of us made the first major visit by IVU to mainland China. We were invited to speak at a half-day International Vegetarian Forum in Xiamen (on the coast opposite Taiwan), part of a huge vegetarian trade fair and Buddhist Craft Fair. We also had an excellent IVU stall in the trade fair.

I was given the honour of being the first speaker at the first ever international veg event in China. The photo below is from that event, l-r: Dr. Susianto Tseng, IVU Asia-Pacific Coordinator, from Indonesia, myself, our local host 'Sandra' from Xiamen and SongMau Lee from the Singapore VegSoc:



Prof. Li offered to host the 5th Asian Veg Congress in his home city of Hangzhou, for November 2011 – the first Veg Congress to be held in China. The photo right is from a press conference held in Malaysia in early 2011 to promote the congress – Prof. Li is 2nd left, with representatives from Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia:



Meanwhile, the 2nd Xiamen Veg Fair was held in November 2010, and I was able to put the organizers in contact with Prof. Li in Hangzhou. He was the principal speaker along with others from Taiwan and Singapore. Below is Prof. Li addressing the 2010 Forum:



On November 8/9, 2011 the first ever Veg Congress in China was organized by Prof. Duo Li in Hangzhou, and was a huge success. For more detailed reports see the reports below at: [The First Ever Veg Congress in China](#) - and - [The China Congress - with pictures](#)

Below left: multi-national IVU breakfast in Hangzhou – l-r: Dr. George Jacobs (Singapore, IVU News editor and former chair of council), myself, Dr. Susianto Tseng (Indonesia, IVU Asia-Pacific Co-ordinator), Marly Winkler (Brazil, IVU Latin America Coordinator and now Chair of Council); and right, me getting on Chinese TV.



Since that first Xiamen forum we have been in contact with more veg trade fairs, businesses, forums, and local groups in several of the major cities in China, including the Shanghai Veggie Club which became a full member of IVU while we were in Hangzhou. Wherever possible IVU will be represented at future events in order to continue to promote East-West dialogue and mutual support.

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Veg*ism in the Middle East

December 22, 2010

Only a few of years ago the title of this blog would have seemed a contradiction, as we didn't know any veg*ns in the Middle East other than our friends in Israel. That has all changed now.

The earliest reference we have in the IVU records is for a visit by the General Secretary to Israel in 1953 and over the next decade there were mentions of at least two veg groups there that were members of IVU. On the right of the photo is Mr. Philip Pick, later founder and first president of the International Jewish Vegetarian Society, with the (Christian) President and General Secretary of IVU in 1955.



In the 1960s we have a mention of a vegetarian group in Iran, and an attempt to hold a veg congress in Israel, but all inevitably caught up in the political problems of the region.

By the mid 1970s IVU had a system of Regional Secretaries for various parts of the world. Philip Pick (in the photo above), was appointed for the Middle East - despite the fact that both he and IJVS were, at that time, based in London. Mr. Pick remained in the role until he died, age 83, in 1993.

Meanwhile, in 1990, there was another small Veg Congress in Israel, and another Israeli regional secretary for the Middle East was appointed, but by 1996 the IVU leaders seem to have finally realised that sadly Israel was never going to be a base for launching veg*ism across the region and the role lapsed.

The Middle East was merged into the rest of IVU Asia for ten years, then in 2006 we found a remarkable new coordinator for India & SW Asia (ISWA) in Shankar Narayan, president of the Indian Vegan Society. Shankar had worked in Dubai for many years, so he was very familiar with that part of his region.



Meanwhile Dan Arbel joined the IVU Council for a few years, as president of the International Jewish Vegetarian Society now based in Jerusalem [right, *Dan with a Spanish friend at the 2006 IVU Congress in Goa, India*]. In 2006 the Vegetarian Union of Iran also joined IVU though contact has since been somewhat sporadic. Dan said he managed to keep in contact with some veg friends in Iran, though inevitably they had to keep their communications rather low profile.



Our real breakthrough came in August 2008. Following the IVU Congress in Germany, Shankar stopped off in Dubai on his way home to India - on this visit he met up with Sandhya Prakash who had just begun to promote veg*ism there with a Middle East Veg Festival earlier that year. Sandhya was originally from India, but has been living in Saudi

Arabia and Dubai for many years, often travelling to other parts of the region on business, and very much at home in the Arab/Muslim world.

Shankar initially supported Sandhya by encouraging the IVU Council to agree a definition of 'Halal Vegetarian' for the IVU website. Halal simply means 'pure' and applies to a lot more than just the halal meat which attracts attention in the west. Now on the IVU website as: "a person or product complying with the generally accepted definitions of both Halal and Vegetarian."

In 2009 some more of us met Sandhya in Indonesia - and immediately realised that Shankar had found someone very special. She was soon co-opted to the IVU Council as our representative in SW Asia (Middle East). Below: Sandhya's talk on 'Arabian Flavor' in mostly-Muslim Indonesia:



Sandhya is the leader of an informal group called MEVEG (Middle East Veg Group - or just 'me vegetarian') - the group set up a stand in December 2009 at MENOPE (Middle East Natural Organic Product Expo) in Dubai [photo below left]. Apparently businesses there are now referring to the 'MENA' region (Middle East & North Africa, having obvious common cultural links) - the photo below right is Sandhya at the Middle East Network for Animal Welfare (MENAW) Conference in Cairo, Egypt in March 2010:



In October 2010 the Middle East connection was strengthened when Arash Rashidi from Iran gave a talk at the IVU Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, and unexpectedly found five young men from Afghanistan in his front row [photo right]. They were all students in Jakarta, but now planning the first Afghan VegSoc when they get home.



The culmination of all this came in December 2010 - at the first ever Middle East Veg

Congress, again within MENOPE, at the Dubai International Convention Centre. This was a huge success, bringing individuals together from across the region, including Arash from Iran again, and generating a lot of publicity across the media.

Below: Sandhya (on left of top left photo) giving an interview at a Dubai radio station during the congress; the Palestinian Farmers' stand at the adjacent organic expo; and Shankar Narayan giving a masterful lecture on the concept of 'Indian Vegan' - many vegans in the west could learn a lot from this.



Thanks to Sandhya and her team we are now seeing veg activities in the Middle East that were unimaginable only a few of years ago. In 2011 they organised a 2nd Meveg Congress for the region (*photo right*), and there will be a 3rd Meveg Congress in December 2012.

We're also expecting an important visitor from Iran to the Health Expo, as part of the IVU Congress, in Los Angeles in October.

The talk now is about holding the first ever IVU World Congress/Vegfest in the Middle East, with Dubai being the obvious location – watch this space.... There are Israeli businesses in Dubai, so we hope to have the whole of the Middle East represented. The Middle East peace process might even be a little smoother if vegetarians were running it, we just all want to be friends.



Veg*ism in Australia

December 5, 2012

Some of those going to the 41st IVU World Vegfest in Malaysia, 2013, will have family and friends in Australia, and it's very easy to get to from Kuala Lumpur, so you might like to go on down see them afterwards. There are also a lot of veg events there in late October, or maybe you just want to see some of this great country.

Back in October 2010, I did all of the above, met up with some long lost cousins, and gave a couple of talks to some veg groups (self-funded, not paid for by IVU!)

Before leaving I was looking through some stats for the IVU website, which showed an unexpectedly high number of visitors from Australia. When I broke it down into the cities that were sending the most visits to ivu.org it showed that four of the top ten were in Australia. So there were clearly a lot of people down under finding something useful on the website, but we needed to improve our contact with them.

My general impression, as an outsider, was of several vegetarian societies around Australia which had been operating for many years, but some were now just 'ticking over'. The more dynamic action seemed to be coming from the vegans, both groups and individuals, and I wanted to find out more about them.

I had a week of meeting veg groups in Sydney and Canberra, giving talks in each city, but first I was invited to a vegan party, over a pub in Sydney. I went with Mark Berriman, President Australian Vegetarian Society (www.veg-soc.org), who had kindly accommodated me during my stay there, and I met up with a lot of other great people.

These included Greg McFarlane, President, NSW VeganSoc (www.vegansocietynsw.com) – the two societies have frequent joint gatherings which is great to see happening as we're all on the same path. Also Katrina Fox, vegan journalist (www.katrinafox.com), Aaron Scheibner, vegan film-maker (www.adelicatebalance.com.au), and so many more that it's difficult to remember them all. One common link was the excellent Vegan Voice magazine, sadly now gone, but replaced by 'Living Vegan' – (www.livingvegan.com.au)

The next evening I gave a talk, followed by some lively discussion, organised by Greg in a yoga centre with most people sitting on the floor. This was the one about how the first vegetarians were actually completely vegan.



At the vegan party I had briefly met Sundara DeSilva, but we met up again a few days later in Canberra where he was setting up the projector for my talk on 'Veg*ism from a World Perspective' for the ACT (Canberra) vegsoc (www.vegetariansociety.org.au) – this one in a co-operative food store, they do seem to like unusual venues.

That gave us more time to get to know each other, and I realised that Sundara could be just the guy we needed to help IVU keep in touch with what was happening in the region. A couple of days later we met again, with a group of others, at the AuLac Chinese vegan restaurant in Canberra, and I persuaded the IVU Council to co-opt him as soon as I got home. (*that's him on the right, with some friends*).



Canberra has something of a track record in helping IVU – our first Facebook group was set up by Edgar Crook, author of the History of Vegetarianism in Australia (www.ivu.org/history/australia); and we were put on Twitter by long-time IVU Patron, Andrew Freeman. I had the pleasure of meeting them both.

Sundara is, in my experience, unusual among Oz veg*ns in taking an equal interest in veg events all over the country. It is difficult for others as the big cities are separated by vast expanses of emptiness, and it's just as easy these days for someone in Melbourne to communicate with London or New York as it is with Sydney.

But in Sundara we have someone who travels around the country a lot on his IT business interests, and has made a point of getting to know veg activists everywhere he goes, and makes a lot of use of the internet to bring people together in many ways. The most successful recently being his 'Vegans in Australia' facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/VegansInAustralia . A couple of months back Sundara was finally able to meet other members of the IVU Council in California, and brought a great bunch of other Aussies with him.

So if you want to visit Australia after the Vegfest in Malaysia, we're putting together a page on the website with some travel info, and we're compiling a list of all the late-October veg events (www.worldvegfest.org). You can even have your 'photo by the bridge' – just like San Francisco.... Here's mine from the ferry:



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Latin America leads the Veg World

December 7, 2011

For the first time in its 103 year history, the International Vegetarian Union has a Latin American Chairperson - or chairman, chairwoman, or just chair, as you prefer: **Marly Winckler from Brazil**. In Portuguese these all translate as 'Presidente', though IVU doesn't actually have a 'President' in the English version, not that it really makes much difference.

Marly is first known to have attended an IVU World Vegetarian Congress way back in 1994 in the Netherlands, we have some photos, but I won't embarrass her with those.

Later in the 1990s Marly started an email group - veg-latina - which was the first time vegetarians and vegans in the Spanish and Portuguese speaking world had been brought together online (that still continues today as ivu-latina with hundreds of subscribers). It was around that time that I got know Marly online, and in 2000 the IVU Council accepted my suggestion to appoint her as IVU Regional Coordinator for Latin America.



We finally met in person at 2002 IVU Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland. I took the photo on the right there. The following year Marly and some friends were in the process of forming *Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira (SVB)* - the Brazil Vegetarian Society. The 2004 IVU Congress had run into problems (as they often do...) and I asked Marly if they could do it in Brazil. It was a huge leap in the dark, there had never been a World Veg Congress in Latin America, and we had no idea whether they could do it, they didn't know either, but they were willing to pull out all the stops and give it a go.

IVU gave SVB a grant to help get the Society up and running, so that they could then organise the Congress, and they promptly elected Marly as SVB President and put her in charge of it all. The end result, in November 2004, was arguably the best Congress any of us had ever been to. It was held on a beach resort with all the usual talks, lectures, workshops, etc., plus some great Brazilian style entertainment, and the added highlight of a huge cruelty-free fashion show, with hundreds more people coming in by bus to join us for that. Marly got her own touch of fashion when a friend from Japan gave her a Kimono, and of course insisted she try it on:



That first Latin American Congress kick-started a whole range of activities across the region. Since then we've had Regional Congresses, several National Congresses in Brazil and Argentina, and a variety of other events in Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile, and more. We also got to know Manuel Marti, President of UVA - *Unión Vegetariana Argentina*, and he has also now joined the IVU International Council.

In 2009 Marly was the main organiser for the 12th International Vegan Festival, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The most noticeable aspect of these Latin American events was the large numbers of young people turning up - we had seen too many events elsewhere in the past that looked like they could literally all die out before too much longer, so this has been a real breath of fresh air.

Right is the big group photo from that 2009 vegan festival – considering the high travel costs for the rest of the world to get to Rio, this was an impressive attendance:



One of the recent achievements from SVB has been to persuade all the city run schools in Sao Paulo to adopt 'Segunda Sem Carne' (Meat Free Mondays) – so now all 3,000 schools are serving 2 million meatless meals every week.

A few weeks ago the Asian Vegetarian Union held their 5th Congress in Hangzhou, China (completely vegan as always these days) – that was the first ever veg congress in that country, and Marly was there too. It's a long way from Brazil, she had to fly via Frankfurt in Germany, but made the most of her trip by visiting more veg friends and IVU supporters in Beijing and Tokyo.



George Jacobs, President of the Singapore Vegetarian Society, had been Chair of the IVU Council for the last three years. He was an excellent chairman who I appreciated working with very much, but he had always said he only wanted one term in office, and had already extended that. Shortly after we all returned from China, George proposed Marly as his successor. The IVU Council expressed its strong gratitude to George, then unanimously supported his proposal by electing Marly as the new chair.

Right is Marly at the Congress in China, with some of our great friends who are making such an impact in East Asia.



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The Vegfest Phenomena

August 9, 2011 (updated June 2012)

Before the 1980s it was all more serious – vegetarians and vegans had congresses and conferences. Then it all began to change:

1981 – International Vegan Festival – started in Denmark. In the smaller European countries you don't have to go far to be 'international'.



The idea seems to have arisen from music and other arts festivals which go back a very long way in Europe. We have a record from 1948 that the German Vegetarian Union held what was formally called a 'Vegetarian Week', featuring a high proportion of music, literature and art – and they informally referred to it as a 'festival'.

There was a similar tendency in British and American vegetarians, as far back as the 19th century, to refer to an event informally as a 'festival', though the official title was always a more formal conference or congress.

1985 – Toronto Vegetarian Food Fair – this seems to have been the first of this kind of event, more recently renamed as a Festival, joining the trend.

By the mid 1980s – the North American Vegetarian Society had been running an annual North American Vegetarian Congress for ten years, then they renamed it as the '*Vegetarian Summerfest*' – subtitled '*Annual Conference of the North American Vegetarian Society*'. It was almost certainly the Americans who began the general word shortening process.



In the age of the keyboard, and more recently the mobile phone keypad, it took too long to write all those formal titles. So these vegetarian and vegan festivals became Veg Fest, then VegFest, the just a new single word: Vegfest.

This doesn't seem to have made it into any of the bigger dictionaries yet, though Wikipedia has a Vegfest page and some online dictionaries are beginning to absorb that.



We have a definite record of a Washington DC VegFest in 1997, it would interesting to know about any earlier uses of the name.

I found below some vegetarian/vegan festivals around the world, with a lot of variations in the official titles, but many of them known locally as 'the vegfest' – how long before that becomes a standard?

Meanwhile IVU now has a series of World Vegfests rotating around the world, especially in developing countries, partly in the hope that where we help to launch the idea it might continue as an annual event in the same place.



This year, 2012, we're in San Francisco and Los Angeles, California; 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; 2014 in Africa; 2015 South America; 2016 India or the Middle East; 2017 Europe – often combining with local events.

Some current variations of local annual Vegfests – the logos on this page are borrowed from many of them. No doubt there are a lot more that I’ve missed:

Australia

[Adelaide Vegan Festival](#)
[Melbourne World Vegan Day Festival](#)
[Sydney Cruelty Free Festival](#)

Canada

[Ottawa Veg Fest](#)
[Toronto Vegetarian Food Festival](#)
[Veg Fest Vancouver](#)

France

[Paris Vegan Day Festival](#)

Finland

[Tampere Vegfest](#)

Japan

[Tokyo Vegefesta](#)
[Kyoto Vegetarian Festival](#)
[Nagoya Vegefes](#)

Thailand

[Phuket Vegetarian Festival](#)

UK

[Brighton Vegfest](#)
[Bristol Vegfest](#)
[Cardiff Vegetarian Festival](#)
[East Midlands Vegan Festival](#)
[London Vegan Festival](#)
[Manchester Vegan and Vegetarian Festival](#)
[West Midlands Vegan Festival](#)

USA

[Asheville Vegfest \(NC\)](#)
[Bethlehem VegFest \(PA\)](#)
[Boston Vegetarian Food Festival](#)
[Central Florida Veg Fest](#)
[DC VegFest](#)
[Denver VegFest](#)
[Indy Veg Fest \(Indianapolis\)](#)
[Michigan VegFest](#)
[New Orleans Vegan Food Festival](#)
[North East Florida Veg Fest](#)
[Northwest VegFest \(OR\)](#)
[NYC VegFest](#)
[Richmond Vegetarian Festival \(VA\)](#)
[San Francisco World Veg Festival \(CA\)](#)
[VegFest Houston \(TX\)](#)
[Worcester VegFest \(MA\)](#)
[Washington Vegfest \(Seattle\)](#)
[Vegfest \(redirects to VegNews magazine\)](#)

World : [International Vegan Festival](#) (biennial since 1981)



The Chair of the IVU International Council, Marly Winckler, writes: "We have in Brasil since 2008 a kind of Vegfest - we call it Salao Vegetariano, and we have many smaller Vegfests in different cities organized by SVB (Brazil VegSoc) Groups and we are planning now a big annual Vegfest - with this very name. This is the trend."

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A New Dawn for European Veg*ism?

July 25, 2012

The European Vegetarian Union held its AGM last Sunday, and elected a new board which could bring in major changes on a scale never previously seen in the veg world.

The key is the election of four professional CEOs/Directors of the four biggest Euro vegetarian societies – if they are able to persuade their own boards to contribute some of their staff time, and other resources, to a joint European project then we have the beginnings of a radically different EVU. The new President, Francesco Maurelli, Italian living in the UK, is fully behind the 'big four' to revolutionize how everything operates. He is from the Esperantist Vegetarians (TEVA), which helped to found IVU back in 1908.

The big four societies also go back a long way – three of them, from Britain, Germany and the Netherlands - were co-founders of IVU back in 1908. The fourth, in Belgium, is the successor to an earlier Belgian Society that joined the other three in promoting all the early IVU World Veg Congresses, before the First World War interrupted things for a while: 1908 Dresden, 1909 Manchester, 1910 Brussels, 1913 The Hague.

For its first 50 years IVU remained almost entirely European, then it gradually spread out to other parts of the world. This resulted in Regional Secretaries for the rest of the world, assisting the General Secretary who was always in Europe.

It was not until the mid-1970s that a distinct European Regional Secretary was appointed and this immediately led to discussions about forming a Regional Committee for Europe, but the first attempts were repeatedly delayed by airline strikes.

In 1979 Christopher Fettes, from Ireland, another leader of the Esperantist Vegetarians, was appointed as the European Regional Secretary. In 1980 he finally put together the first meeting of the leaders of the European Vegetarian Societies, held in Luxembourg – though inevitably all from just western Europe at that time.

In 1982 a new IVU constitution promoted the idea of Regional Committees organising Regional Congresses in the years between the World Congresses. Europe was the first to take up the idea, but their first attempted Euro Congress, in Italy 1983, didn't work out.

They did succeed in 1985 with the first European Vegetarian Congress held in Cervia, Italy. The records show it as coordinated by the 'European Regional Council of the IVU' – with Jaqueline Andre of Belgium now as the Regional Secretary.

The first informal mention of the name 'European Vegetarian Union' came in 1986 but it was still not used for the 2nd Euro Veg Congress in Ostend, Belgium in 1987. During that event, Rob Snijders of the Nederlandse Vegetariërsbond became the Regional Secretary. Then, on April 5, 1988, EVU was legally registered in the Netherlands.

Two more Congresses followed - 1989 3rd Congress in Strasbourg, France and 1991 4th Congress in Chester, UK. The next would have been in 1993, but that was skipped as the IVU World Veg Congress was in the Netherlands in 1994.

My personal involvement began in the spring of 1995, when I worked with Rob in Amsterdam to create the first EVU website. Naturally I didn't need to go to Amsterdam, by this time email was already becoming routine for a few of us.

At the 5th Euro Veg Congress in Bratislava, Slovakia, 1995, Sigrid De Leo, from Switzerland, was appointed as EVU General Secretary. She immediately made her mark by producing an excellent quarterly magazine, assisted by Renato Pichler who did the layout. He also sent the whole of each issue to me for converting to the format of the primitive website.

EVU took a major step in 1997, at the 6th Euro Veg Congress in Bussolengo, Italy – by voting to become a fully independent organization, instead of a sub-group of IVU.

The 7th Euro Congress, in Widnau, Switzerland, turned out to be the last EVU Congress - many of us would really like to see them return as they played a valuable role in bringing people together. The photo below is from that 1999 Swiss Congress:



The other significant development of the late 1990s was the EVU 'V-label' – as in the graphic on the right. This was registered in 16 European countries, and licensed to food producers to show that their products were approved by EVU as suitable for vegetarians.

The British, of course, did their usual opt-out of European affairs, and continued using their own V symbol, which had already been running very successfully for some years. It is even more successful these days, and it remains to be seen if any degree of future integration is possible.



The Italians organized an independent Euro Veg Congress in 2005, to celebrate 20 years since their first one.

In 2006 EVU started 'EVU Talks' with the first being held in Germany in 2006. These were much smaller than the Congresses, just a couple of days, with primarily group leaders attending. Further talks followed annually, with subsequent years in Austria, Switzerland and Croatia.

In 2008, at the IVU Congress in Dresden Germany, we finally resolved the old IVU/EVU problem left by EVU's independence eleven years earlier. During that time European Veg Societies had to decide whether to join EVU, or IVU, or both – and if both they had to pay twice. The new agreement simply allowed for free membership of IVU to any group which joined EVU – buy one get one free!



The new 2012 EVU board now has the potential to transform it into a professional organization, capable of launching Europe-wide initiatives, backed up by real resources. The 'big four' societies could lead the way into a vision that their predecessors could only dream of, way back in 1908. We look forward to more at: www.euroveg.eu

The Vegan Food in Vegetarian Paradise

December 12, 2012

While we were in Los Angeles recently, Hazel and I were privileged to stay at the home of our friends Zel and Reuben Allen. Zel has been writing great vegan cookbooks for many years, and between them they run the website 'Vegetarians in Paradise'. The site is a combination of local LA info, general veg news, and of course Zel's great food – as with most vegetarian organizations and websites in North America these days, it only promotes foods entirely derived from plants (ie suitable for vegans).

Zel and Reuben invited me to contribute an article based on the talk I gave at the Vegsource Healthy Lifestyle Expo in LA, part of the 40th IVU World Vegfest. That is now on vegparadise.org – and begins:

This website is called "Vegetarians in Paradise," and I do hope that Zel and Reuben keep it like that, and do not change it to "Vegans in Paradise" -- but to explain that I have to go back about 170 years.

To read the full article, go to:
www.vegparadise.com/otherbirds.html

Below: at the Vegsource Healthy Lifestyle Expo - me doing my bit on vegan history - Hazel and Zel looking shocked at someone not wearing yellow - and Reuben keeping warm against the hotel air-con. LA must be the only place on earth where you have to wrap up warm to go indoors.... and Zel's latest great cookbook at the bottom.



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IVU Vegfest/Congress - coming near you soon . .

August 30, 2011

The formal name will take a while to evolve, but the IVU International Council has just made an historic decision about our major event.

The International Vegetarian Union began at a Congress in 1908, in Dresden, Germany, and for about the next 50 years held an '**International Vegetarian Congress**' which settled into a routine of every **three** years, apart from the war years as these were nearly all in Europe. The photo above is that first Congress, all 22 of them, in 1908.

- 1 - 1908 Dresden, Germany
- 2 - 1909 Manchester, England
- 3 - 1910 Brussels, Belgium
- 4 - 1913 The Hague, The Netherlands
- 5 - 1923 Stockholm, Sweden
- 6 - 1926 London, England
- 7 - 1929 Steinschönau, Czechoslovakia
- 8 - 1932 Berlin/Hamburg, Germany
- 9 - 1935 Daugaard, Denmark
- 10 - 1938 Hurdals Verk, Norway
- 11 - 1947 Stonehouse, England
- 12 - 1950 Oosterbeck, The Netherlands
- 13 - 1953 Sigtuna, Sweden
- 14 - 1955 Paris, France
- 15 - 1957 Delhi/Bombay/Madras, India
- 16 - 1960 Hannover/Hamburg, Germany



The Congresses began to spread beyond Europe – so the name changed to '**World Vegetarian Congress**' and increased to every **two** years for about the next 50 years. The Congress visited more parts of the world, right up to the centenary, back in Dresden in 2008.

- 17 - 1963 Barcelona, Spain
- 18 - 1965 Swanwick, England
- 19 - 1967 Delhi/Bombay/Madras, India
- 20 - 1969 Jerusalem, Israel
- 21 - 1971 The Hague, The Netherlands
- 22 - 1973 Ronneby Brunn, Sweden
- 23 - 1975 Maine, USA
- 24 - 1977 Delhi / Bombay / Calcutta / Madras, India
- 25 - 1979 Loughborough, England
- 26 - 1982 Neu-Ulm, Germany
- 27 - 1984 Baltimore, USA
- 28 - 1986 Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia
- 29 - 1990 Tel Aviv, Israel
- 30 - 1993 Madras, India
- 31 - 1994 The Hague, The Netherlands
- 32 - 1996 Johnstown, PA, USA
- 33 - 1999 Chiang Mai, Thailand
- 34 - 2000 Toronto, Canada
- 35 - 2002 Edinburgh, Scotland
- 36 - 2004 Florianópolis, Brazil
- 37 - 2006 Goa, India
- 38 - 2008 Dresden, Germany – *right:*
it was a lot bigger back in Dresden 100 years later . . .



. . . and the food at all Congresses has been completely **vegan** since the mid 1990s so that everyone can eat together in total harmony.

In 2010 we held what was still called the 39th Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, except it wasn't a traditional congress as the formal representative/delegate meetings had been moved online over the previous two years.

In reality Jakarta was much more like a Vegfest – with a huge food fair as well as lots of high quality speakers, entertainment, and all kinds of other things going on - with about 5,000 people visiting the food fair, and hundreds attending the lectures.



Right: some of the crowds in a small corner of the Jakarta 2010 all-vegan Food Fair:

So . . . the IVU Council has now taken the major decision to move ahead into the next 50 years – there will now be an event **every year** – and the name will change again. It will combine aspects of **Congresses**, such as just gathering everyone together (there are always informal meetings going on) and lots of great speakers – and aspects of **Vegfests**, like the food fairs and entertainment. A lot of these things overlap anyway and there is often not much difference between events called conference, congress, expo, festival or just fest.

The annual event will rotate around the six IVU regions: - Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, India and SW Asia, Latin America and North America. So each region will host this major event every six years instead of the previous twelve years.



. . . and before anyone says 'that's twice as much to organize', there were actually **nine** international veg events in 2010 alone, eight of them run by IVU member organizations, so we're already doing far more than this anyway.

We want to move away from the idea of encouraging people from all around the world to meet in one place – instead the annual event will move around and now you won't have to wait so long before there's one near you.

The primary focus will be on bringing together people in neighbouring countries, and reaching out to the local community. But of course everyone will be welcome to all of them, and it is always great to meet people from the other side of the world – everyone will just have to balance their own conscience about the carbon emissions of long haul flights.

Beyond 2012 it could be different depending on the events . . .

More about IVU at : www.ivu.org

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East Meets West and West Eats Meat - Veg*ism and Music

Updated September 19, 2012

As a musician myself, I had often noticed that there seemed to be a lot of other veg musicians around. So a couple of years ago I did some historical research and put the results online. I called it 'East Meets West and West Eats Meat' which is borrowed from a 1969 Indo-Jazz album featuring Indian sitar-player Ravi Shankar and some American jazz musicians.

No doubt there have been countless Indian veg musicians for centuries, but it's not easy for me to find individual names before Ravi Shankar became famous in the west. If any Indians reading this can help then do get in touch.

Meanwhile our trail begins with European classical music in the 19th century, and the first name that comes up is the inevitably controversial Richard Wagner. Before anyone hits the comments button with the usual hysteria, please read the article about him on ivu.org - just click on his name from the page linked below. It shows that he was never vegetarian himself, but a lot of other musicians were because he said they should be... Whatever conclusions you come to, we can't just ignore him in this historical survey.

On the website I've tried to look at the connections between all these people - who knew who, and how they influenced each other. Later classical composers and musicians were influenced towards veg*ism by Theosophy and eastern religions, along with all the usual reasons we have today. *(photo top right is American composer Philip Glass)*

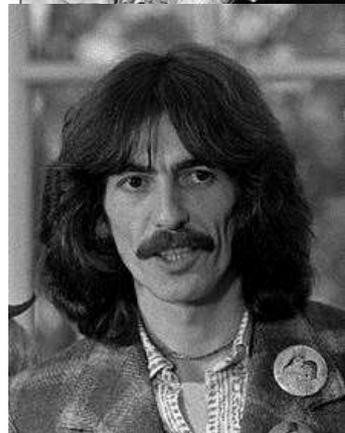
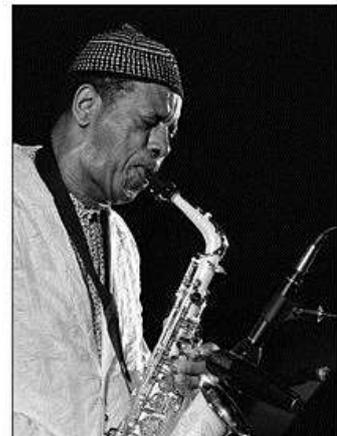
The second section deals with Jazz musicians - Texas in 1949 seems an unlikely place for a long-haired African-American vegetarian, but that's where Ornette Coleman came in, age 19. Many more 'modern' jazz veg*ns soon followed, reaching a peak in the 1960s, after which it gets increasingly difficult to separate all the musical genres, with a lot of fusions going on. *(photo right: Ornette Coleman)*

The third group is blues, country, rock, pop etc. - we can trace veg*ism among those musicians back to 1940s USA as well, but most of the early veg rock musicians were in England. Very soon there were huge numbers of them on both sides of the Atlantic. The biggest problem with this group is their inconsistency, many were veg*n at some point but didn't always stick to it for long. *(photo right: George Harrison)*

This is meant to be a historical survey, it doesn't deal much with current pop/rock stars as they come and go much too frequently - you can find plenty of those on many websites. To read all the details go to:

www.ivu.org/history/music.html

More below about one musician below - **Cecil Sharp - veg folk hero:**



One of the biggest problems in researching vegetarian history is that biographies are too often written by meat-eaters. Probably the worst example in recent years was the movie 'Gandhi' which won 8 Oscars in 1983 - in the entire 3 hour epic there was not even the slightest hint of Gandhi's vegetarianism. Despite him stating many times that his reverence for *all* life was of central importance in everything he did.

Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) is not as famous as Gandhi of course, but still suffered the same treatment. The original biography, written by his friend of 22 years in 1933, just about managed to mention his vegetarianism twice. The revised edition, re-written by his former assistant in 1967, left out one of those - making it look like his vegetarianism was merely an inconvenient necessity for his health. The comment that was deleted stated quite clearly that he was 'vegetarian by conviction' - which makes far more sense when we see what else he was involved in.



So who was Cecil Sharp? If you've ever heard folk music on either side of the Atlantic, then you'll have heard the results of his work. In the early years of the 20th century he travelled through many villages and small communities, in both England and the American Appalachian mountains, collecting traditional folk songs and dances, just in time before they died out. (*the sign below right is in Hot Springs, North Carolina*)



The tunes he collected initially inspired many classical composers to write pieces based on them. But they also inspired a generation of folk singers, culminating in the likes of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez in the folk boom of the 1960s. Without Cecil Sharp that might never have happened, and today the English Folk Dance and Song Society is still based at Cecil Sharp House in London.

Sharp was probably vegetarian from his university days, and remained 'vegetarian by conviction' until he died. The earliest influence probably came from Richard Wagner's promotion of veg*ism, and Sharp later gave two of his children the middle names of Tristan and Isolde - from one of Wagner's operas.

Then he became friends with George Bernard Shaw, probably the most famous vegetarian of the day, and he was also close to other vegetarian musicians like Percy Grainger and Gustav Holst. Sharp was involved with Theosophy, the Fabian Society and many other pro-veg organizations - it was clearly a central part of his life and influenced everything he did. Not that you would get any idea of that from reading the biography.

Right (l-r): George Bernard Shaw (Irish dramatist & music critic), Percy Grainger (Australian composer), Gustav Holst (British, Swedish parents, composer) - all vegetarian, living in London and personal friends of Cecil Sharp.



For a much more detailed account of Cecil Sharp's vegetarianism see the newly expanded page at:
www.ivu.org/people/music/sharp.html

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The Beatles and IVU

October 12, 2011

A story of convergence between a pop group and the International Vegetarian Union . . .

1957

July 6 - the centre of Woolton village has changed little since the day when John Lennon, 16 going on 17, and Paul McCartney, 15, met at the church fete. They had probably never heard of vegetarianism, let alone thought anything about it.

November 9 - the 15th IVU World Veg Congress was held in India, organised by a remarkable man named Jay Mankar (*more about him below*). One of the speakers was the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (*photo right from 1973, more about him below too*).

1960

August 17 - the Beatles arrived in Hamburg, Germany, very early in the morning to begin a few months of club sessions.

August 26-28 - the 16th IVU World Veg Congress arrived in Hamburg after a few days in Hanover. It was probably in a rather more upmarket part of town than the infamous red-light district where the Beatles were still playing. Jay Mankar was at this Congress too (*more about him below*).

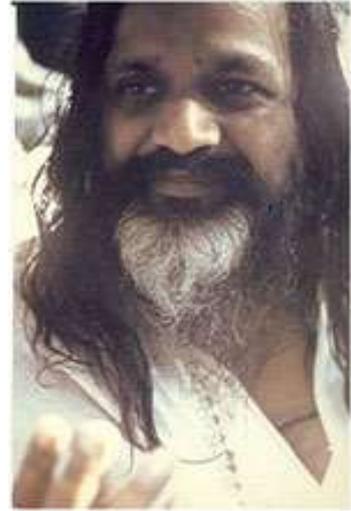
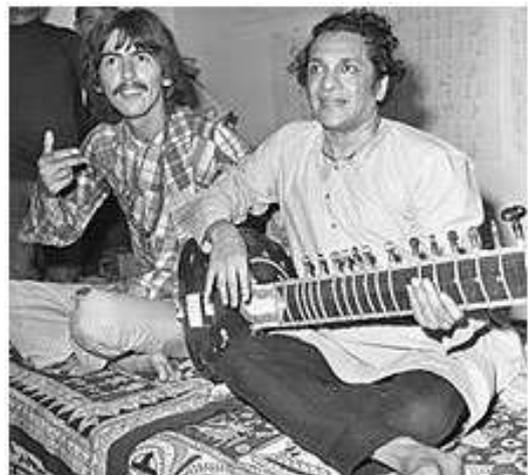
1962 - *November* - Little Richard had mostly retired from rock and roll in 1957 to become a vegetarian Seventh Day Adventist Minister. He made one of his occasional returns at the Star Club in Hamburg, where the still little known Beatles were also on the bill. This was possibly their first encounter with vegetarianism, and from one of their musical heroes. (*the photo right is from 1963 when they were becoming famous*) Little Richard has remained vegetarian.



1965 - *April* - George Harrison began to develop an interest in Indian music and culture while they were filming *Help!* in the Bahamas. Later that year George first used a sitar on *Norwegian Wood*, on the *Rubber Soul* album. Below: *with Ravi Shankar in 1967.*

1967

August 24 - all four Beatles met the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in London. They planned to go to his ashram at Rishikesh, near Delhi, in October/November, but Paul wanted to finish filming the *Magical Mystery Tour* so their trip was delayed to the following February.



November 18 – the 19th IVU World Veg Congress arrived in New Delhi, India, and was opened by the Dalai Lama (*photo below - he was vegetarian for about 18 months at that time, but on and off ever since*). This was again organised by Jay Mankar (*on the right of the photo*). Not many records from this Congress have survived, so we don't know whether the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was present again, but it is quite possible. It was exactly the time when the Beatles originally planned to be at nearby Rishikesh – if they had kept to that plan the IVU Congress might have had even more illustrious visitors . . .



1968

Mid-February - the Beatles arrived in Rishikesh, via Delhi.

from *The British Vegetarian*, May/June 1968: **Hard Days Yoga** - Even *The Times* (19.2.68) condescended to reporting that the Beatles had a vegetarian diet while meditating with their Maharishi in Rishikesh. (*photo right*)



Later that year we have reports that Paul & Jane Asher were still veggie back in Scotland but then split up and both seem to have drifted back to meat-eating. George remained consistent for the rest of his life, John seems to have drifted in and out of various diets, and Ringo eventually returned to veg*ism permanently.

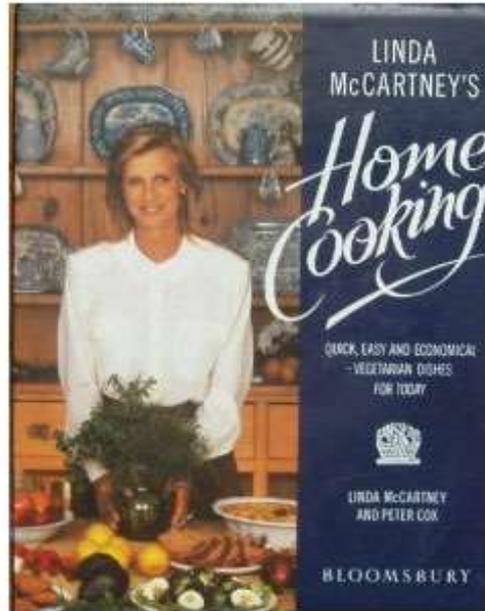
1973 – George donated Bhaktivedanta Manor, in Hertfordshire, to the vegetarian Hare Krishna movement.

1970s - Paul & Linda became vegetarian together at some point in the 70s, though there seem to be different accounts of exactly how or when.



1977 - Jay Mankar (*left*) died, age 82, just before yet another huge IVU Congress he was organising in India. The Mankar Memorial Award was created, to be given for services to the veg movement.

1989 - Linda's first vegetarian cookbook, cover right.



1991 - Linda's vegetarian food range introduced in the UK.

1995 - Paul and Linda became Patrons of the Vegetarian Society UK, one of the founder members of IVU way back in 1908.

In an interview, Paul said, ""We all turned out to be veggie. Ringo's walking around with, like, a bag of seeds, so healthy".

1999 - the Mankar Memorial Award was given posthumously to Linda, who had died the year before. In December some IVU leaders met Paul in London where he accepted the award on Linda's behalf:

Left to right:

- Sir Paul McCartney
- Tina Fox, then CEO of The Vegetarian Society UK, IVU membership secretary, and later chair of the IVU council.
- Francisco Martin, President on the Spanish Vegan Society, and then IVU General Secretary.
- the late Maxwell Lee, Chair of the IVU Council and President of VSUK.



2002 - the 35th IVU World Veg Congress was held in Edinburgh, Scotland. Paul made a personal donation to fund delegates from developing countries in attending. It was used to bring some African veg group leaders to the Congress.

Paul and Linda's daughters, Stella and Mary, took their mother's place as Patrons of the Vegetarian Society UK, and in recent years Paul has been actively promoting veg*ism, especially through his 'Meat-free Mondays' campaign.

It would have been hard to imagine all that back in 1957.

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IVU and the NAVS Summerfest

June 29, 2011

How the Summerfest was founded by the President of the American Vegan Society, and eventually became completely vegan.

Way back in 1975 IVU played a major role in launching the annual event that eventually became the Summerfest, this is how it started, and how it could be a model for other parts of the world.

In 1975 the 23rd IVU World Veg Congress was held in North America - the first time in that region of the world. It was masterminded by Jay Dinshah, founder of the American Vegan Society back in 1960, who had been visiting other congresses, in Latin America and India, as well as Europe. Some extracts from *Vegetarian Voice* (NAVS Journal) Sep/Oct 1975:



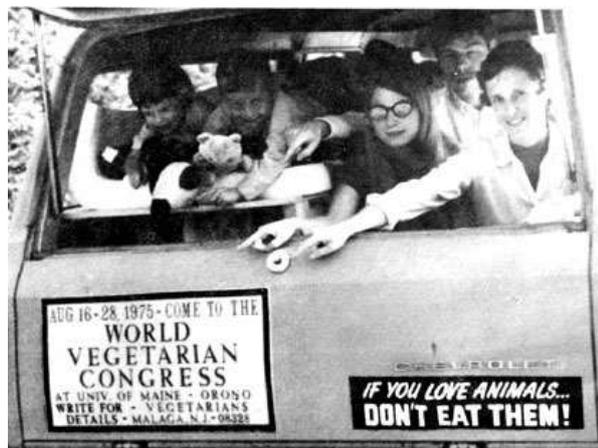
Jay Dinshah

"Serious planning for the 23rd World Vegetarian Congress actually began at the 22nd Congress, held in Sweden in the summer of 1973. Recognizing the growing interest and tremendous potential for vegetarianism in North America, as well as the conspicuous lack of effective leadership and coordination above the local levels, five American vegetarian groups issued an invitation to the International Vegetarian Union to have the next Congress in N. America.

"An *ad hoc* committee was formed on the spot in Sweden, from the Americans and Canadians at the Congress. [. . . after a brief delay for Jay Dinshah to return from India] . . . the new non-profit organization (North American Vegetarian Society) received its validated Constitution from the State of New Jersey, and was officially "in business" as of Jan. 2, 1974.

"Exactly one month later, a joint meeting of the IVU Council and the board of Trustees of NAVS, was held on the campus of the University of Maine in Orono."

Right - taking supplies to the Congress , the original caption read: "*Children's Committee Members Anne & Daniel Dinshah, with Ling-Ling Panda & Melanie Bear (representing the synthetically stuffed animal kingdom); Sharon Niblett (Mrs. Brian Graff, as of Jan. 31, '75), Brian Graff, and Freya Dinshah*". - Jay Dinshah is sadly no longer with us, but Anne and Freya are both speakers in 2011, and Brian is still in there organizing things.



The 1975 Congress was hugely successful, with over 1,500 in residence for the two weeks in Maine.

In 1976 NAVS decided to hold a North American Veg Congress in Ithaca NY, continuing in 1977 in Arcata, CA - from there on it became an annual event.

In 1984 NAVS combined their event with the 27th IVU World Veg Congress in Baltimore, attended by about 400 delegates from around the world.

From the mid-1980s onwards the annual event was renamed 'NAVS Summerfest', moving to Allentown and Lewisburg, PA, between 1986-91.

From 1991-95 the Summerfest was held in Smithfield, Rhode Island.



In 1996 IVU needed help – the IVU World Veg Congress ran into problems and NAVS came to the rescue by combining it, again, with the Summerfest. This was the first IVU Congress of the Internet age and the banner below was used to promote it on websites:



This worked so well that the Summerfest has continued at the Johnstown Campus ever since. NAVS insisted on their usual 'total-vegetarian' (i.e. vegan) menu, making it the first completely vegan IVU Congress, and we've kept to that ever since.

One of the many speakers way back at that 1975 IVU Congress was Dixie Mahy, now president of the San Francisco Vegetarian Society. That's her on the right in Maine, 1975.

Over the years SFVS has developed a different way of attracting the crowds with its annual VegFest, attracting 4-5,000 visitors to the Golden Gate Park.

For the 2012 IVU World Veg Congress we'll be back in North America and we talked to NAVS about combining with the great Summerfest again. However the IVU Congress has never been to the West Coast and we felt it was time to boldly go... so join us in San Francisco in October 2012. It will be an interesting experiment to try a very different format for the IVU Congress.



NAVS has kept to the well-established format, and we know it has a very high reputation with all those who have attended over the years, including great speakers and a high standard of vegan food.



IVU and the American Animals Rights Movement

July 13, 2011

The USA's annual Animal Rights National Conference kicks off next week, coordinated by FARM (Farm Animal Rights Movement) and supported by a host of other AR groups from across the country.



Despite the title there are always people from other countries, this year with speakers from Australia, Brazil, Ethiopia, France and Vietnam – and several US speakers from groups with activities around the world, plus at least three sessions about global interests. The International Vegetarian Union (IVU) is represented by Deputy Chair Saurabh Dalal, who will be on several panels, as well as leading a workshop.



Many of those attending will be unaware of the role that IVU played in making all this happen. Way back in 1975 the 23rd IVU World Veg Congress was held in Maine, USA – the first time the event had reached North America after 67 years in Europe and a couple of visits to India.

One of the visitors to that Congress was a young Dr. Alex Hershaft, like the other 1,500 spending the two weeks in Maine this was his first experience of a major vegetarian event. It was all put together by the newly formed North

American Vegetarian Society (NAVS), which continued the following year with their own annual conference, eventually becoming the Summerfest.

There were several other spin-offs from that IVU Congress, including a boost for the newly launched Vegetarian Times – the cover of the post-Congress edition is on the right.



Another was the the 'Vegetarian Information Service (VIS) founded in 1976 by Alex Hershaft, which was, like NAVS, a member of IVU. But Alex's primary passion was for the animals and, in 1981 he organized an 'Action for Animals' conference in Allentown, PA, which led to the launch later that year of FARM, also a member of IVU from the outset, as it still is today. That conference is seen today as the beginning of the organized animal rights movement in the USA.

The FARM-led Animal Rights Conferences continued annually until later that decade, then took a break for some years as another group was doing something similar. They restarted in 2000 initially every year in DC, then more recently alternating with LA, and are now a major fixture in the national calendar.



Meanwhile, back in 1984, both VIS and NAVS offered to host the IVU World Veg Congress, with the members deciding to accept the offer from NAVS to hold it in Baltimore, MD – and it was during that Congress that Dr. Alex Hershaft first joined the IVU International Council. He remained on the council until 1999, and the following year was elected a Fellow of IVU in recognition of his 15 years of service.

Left: Alex speaking at the IVU World Veg Congress in Johnstown, PA, USA, 1996 (it was combined with the NAVS Summerfest that year).

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We're going to San Francisco . . .

Originally posted May 12, 2012; updated August 8, 2012

The 40th IVU World Congress/Vegfest will be in California, October 2012 - starting in San Francisco, October 5-8, then on to Los Angeles Oct 12-14.

The first IVU Congress was in Dresden, Germany, in 1908 and they've been held every 2 or 3 years since then. They will now be every year and California 2012 is the first of our new-style annual events which are as much Vegfest as Congress.

At the 1913 event, in the Netherlands, a visitor from San Francisco invited the delegates to hold the Congress in conjunction with the SF World's Fair in 1915. But the Europeans thought it was too far to go and voted for Paris, France, in 1916 . . . which of course was cancelled due to the first world war. So almost 100 years later we are finally going to San Francisco, and as Scott McKenzie sang about the hippies in 1967:

If You're Going... To San Francisco... Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair
If You're Going... To San Francisco... You're gonna meet some gentle people there

Appropriately enough the 2012 IVU Congress/Vegfest will begin next to the botanical gardens, at the San Francisco County Fair Building in the Golden Gate Park.

1968, the year after that song was #1, saw the founding of the San Francisco Vegetarian Society, which has been a member of IVU from the outset. The SFVS president, Dixie Mahy was a speaker at the 1975 IVU Congress in Maine, so they go back a long way with all this.
[photo right is Dixie at the 1975 Congress]



This year we begin with a reception dinner at The Millennium, one of the world's leading vegan restaurants, on Friday Oct 5. Over the weekend there will be a wide range of events in the park, with all-vegan catering, including:

Children's Corner ; Green Lifestyle Film Festival ; Healthy Food Demos with Recipes & Samples ; International Speakers & Workshops Live Entertainment ; Vegan Cuisine to sample or buy ; Veghealth Awards Ceremony by Vegetarian Health Institute ; Catered Vegan Dinners: Saturday & Sunday, 6:30 p.m

We conclude the SF sessions on Monday, Oct 8, with a rooftop reception at the VegNews office.

Right: my photo of cable-cars heading out of Union Square, Feb 2010:



More info about the San Francisco events at www.sfvs.org/wvd - see the link to the 'four day package' for more details. More will be added soon.

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IVU and Vegsource - together at last!

January 18, 2012

In October 2012 the 40th IVU World Veg Congress will join with the Vegsource Healthy Lifestyle Expo in Los Angeles, California.

We'll still be in San Francisco as well, the SF Veg Festival is the previous weekend – October 6-7 for that one, then a short flight down to LA for the weekend of Oct. 12-14 for those that want to go to both. We also expect both events to have some extra days, maybe more talks and workshops, visits to local animal sanctuaries, and other sightseeing trips.

Here's Jeff and Sabrina, who set it all up in LA, and the 2011 Expo in full swing:

The link between IVU and Vegsource goes back to 1998, when we were looking for somewhere to put the IVU website. Jeff and Sabrina offered us free space on their Vegsource.com server, and we've been there ever since. Along the way we've also been able to provide space for some of the smaller local groups that are members of IVU, and Vegsource has hosted a whole bunch of other veg groups and individuals.

The International Vegetarian Union was already 90 years old in 1998, and Vegsource was still in its infancy but, as so often happens, the youth are more up to speed with new technology than us oldies ...

A few years later the first Vegsource Health Expo was held in Los Angeles, and as the IVU Congresses rotate around the world, we soon started talking about combining them for one year. We even talked about moving both of them over the border to Mexico at one time, but never quite seemed to be able to tie it down. Until this year.

When we realised the Expo would be the weekend after the San Francisco Festival it was a no-brainer. We're on our way!

A couple of years ago Hazel and I managed to get over to LA to stay with Jeff and Sabrina for a few days, then took the short flight up to San Francisco. We stayed there with Jeff's parents, an amazing couple, and met up with everyone from the SF Vegsoc.

That's Hazel about to walk all over Duke Ellington on Hollywood Boulevard...

We went over to Santa Barbara for a day, just along the coast, to meet up with our



friend Gabriel from England. Below is the Mission, the oldest building in the city, where we did the tour and sat in on part of a Mass:

We also went down to Venice Beach one day, where we met up with Eric from Happycow.net - that's Hazel and Eric on the beach below, looking towards the hills of Malibu:

There are plenty of other attractions in the Los Angeles area of course, anything from Disneyland to a wolf sanctuary - rescued from being shot in Alaska apparently. We should have some visits to all kinds of places.

And don't forget about San Francisco the previous weekend - the SF VegSoc's World Veg Festival is on the weekend of October 6/7 and we'll be there too.

The details for California so far = both San Francisco and Los Angeles - are at: www.ivu.org/congress/2012 - more to come soon...



And if that's not enough... the IVU Congress/Vegfest is now an annual event, and for 2013 we'll be joining with the Asian Veg Union for their 6th regional Congress.

This one will be in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - I stopped there for a few days in 2010 and took the photo of the famous twin towers on the right - now the world's 3rd tallest building since Dubai and Shanghai went higher...

And there will be optional extras in Penang (Malaysia), Phuket (Thailand, for the huge Vegetarian Festival), and Bali (Indonesia, for any who didn't make it in 2010, or just want to go back again). Do come and join us!

For the latest details of everything follow the:

IVU Facebook page - www.facebook.com/InternationalVegUnion



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International Vegetarian Union and the Venerable History of Vegetarianism [Videos]

April 27, 2011

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then how much is a video worth?

Last year a friend sent me a link which she said had some info I was looking for. It turned out to be a young woman talking to a camera for about 45 minutes, the bit I wanted was somewhere in the middle . . . I suggested it would have been easier if she wrote it down, I could read the whole thing much quicker than watching the video, but more usefully I could skim thru to find the detail I wanted.

My friend said that young people these days don't like reading, they would rather watch a video. Apart from making me feel rather old, I found that an alarming comment – are the next generation really losing the ability to read more than a few words?



Well . . . if you've had enough of reading my blogs, you can now watch some instead. The programs below are mostly edited from an interview I did at the 1st Middle East Veg Congress in Dubai last December – partly about veg history, and going on to what IVU is doing these days.

Photos right:

Top - how Jun, the interviewer, and Sam, the cameraman, looked from where I was sitting – we used a Dubai conference center café which was fortunately not busy at that time.

Bottom – the whole congress was broadcast live, then an edited version was re-broadcast in five episodes a couple of months later.



The program title is: **OUR NOBLE LINEAGE
International Vegetarian Union and the
Venerable History of Vegetarianism**

The links below go to YouTube.com:

Part 1: - the early days of veg*ism on the internet; the earliest vegetarians, thru to the beginnings of veg organizations in the 19th century, and the launch of IVU in 1908.

Part 2: - the origins of the words 'vegetarian' and 'vegan'; the expansion of media and veg restaurants, and the impact of environmental awareness.

Part 3: - what IVU has been doing around the world in recent years, and the Middle East Veg Congress in Dubai.



Each episode is about 16 minutes.

For another veg history interview, from the 2008 IVU centenary in Dresden, Germany:
www.facebook.com/#!/video/video.php?v=10150167943639475

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Vegan Views – the interview

November 28, 2012

A few months back, the editor of Vegan Views magazine (a member of IVU) asked me if I'd like to do an interview about my blogs, and the e-book compilation of them: 'World Veganism – past, present and future'.

I assumed he meant the usual brief questions, so was a little taken aback when he wanted a total of 3,000 words – but "no problem, we've already written the first thousand words in the questions" - yikes!

The questions were indeed impressive, and a lot of homework had been done on everything I had written, so I rose to the challenge of answering them. This is all unpaid of course, as Vegan Views is available for free download, or a tiny sub to cover printing and postage if you want it that way.

The magazine was started in 1975 to offer more in depth articles and discussions about vegan topics – hence 'views' not 'news'. The fact that it is still going after 37 years says a lot about the quality of those articles, so I was honoured to be asked to contribute.

Among the other articles in the latest issue, many of worldwide interest, is one on the recent 'Vegan Café 4 the Day' in South Wales. I went to one North Wales last year and thought it was a great idea.

The stunning cover photo of a red squirrel was taken during the Vegan Camp, in the English Lake District this year. I went along to that for a couple of days and would have loved to see that squirrel – they are increasingly rare now the greys are taking over.



To read the whole of the latest issue, go to www.veganviews.org.uk – download it for free or take out a sub for the print version – the full online version is 4.9mb PDF.

If you just want to read my interview, I have been kindly allowed to upload those three pages at: www.ivu.org/history/John_Davis_interview.pdf (a mere 725k PDF)

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10 days that changed everything (for me) – Singapore, Indonesia and China

May 9, 2012

I had been to Asia before, to Thailand and a couple of trips to India, so I didn't expect this one to East Asia to be dramatically different, but it was.

In November 2009, the Indonesian Vegetarian Society (IVS) hosted the 4th Asian Veg Congress, on Batam Island near Singapore. I had tried to persuade them to combine it with the World Veg Congress which they were also hosting the following year. It seemed too much to do two, when they had never done one before – but I was wrong of course.

I wanted to go to Batam, but it was too far from England for just a weekend event. Then our Chinese webmaster in Beijing told us about a Veg Food Fair being planned in Xiamen, on the south-east coast of China. This would be the first major veg event on mainland China and George Jacobs (IVU Chair in Singapore) and Susianto Tseng (IVS President and IVU Regional Coordinator) were interested in going.

The Xiamen event was just two days after Batam, which would be perfect for me to go to both and justify the long haul flight. The usual problem was how to pay for it all, when IVU doesn't have the funds to help any of us for these things.

The Indonesian VegSoc generously offered to cover my costs on Batam, George would look after me in Singapore – and to our surprise the Chinese organisers offered to cover all expenses for three of us to go from Singapore to Xiamen and back. So I just had to pay for the return flight to Singapore myself, and the trip was on.

What made this so different was the unexpected scale and quality of what the veg*ns in Indonesia and China were able to do, way beyond anything I had seen in the west.

Thursday Nov 5, 2009 – to Singapore via Dubai. I was met by George at airport, then to Raffles Hotel for a drink at the historic hub of the eastern British Empire.

Friday Nov 6 – met up with Shankar Narayan, IVU Coordinator for India & SW Asia. George took us on a whistle-stop tour several of veg restaurants (they have a lot of them in Singapore), and the city museum. *Right: a sculpture in the museum contrasting old and new...*



We took the ferry to Batam Island, checked into the hotel, then a bus ride to the venue for the opening ceremony. Just seeing what was happening at that opening made it obvious that the Indonesians were perfectly capable of handling two huge events in successive years.

Sat/Sun 7/8 – the 4th Asian Veg Congress got under way in the hotel, and I was given the honour of the opening talk, with an estimated audience of about 1,000. For the rest of the weekend we had single sessions in the big hall in the morning, then parallel sessions with four speakers in smaller rooms in the afternoons. The food, all vegan of course, was outstanding, and there seemed to be no problem feeding so many people at the same time.

Right: the question session after my talk (with a translator) and the view from near the back.



In between listening to some of the other talks I was drafted into a round media interviews and endless photo calls. The involvement of local media was impressive, the word about this event went well beyond those lucky enough to be there in person.

Monday 9 – we were taken a bus tour of Batam Island, where I was the only European on the bus, apart from Katharina who has lived in Thailand for years anyway. I felt totally at home with a bus full of people from all parts of Asia, there is something about their temperament that suits my laid back approach to life perfectly.

Tuesday 10 – back to Singapore on the ferry, and a bus tour of the city. In the evening George had put the word out via the local veg meetup group and we had a great gathering at yet another veg restaurant.

Wednesday 11 – a four hour flight to Xiamen, my first visit to China. George decided not go himself and asked Song Mau Lee to represent the Singapore VegSoc, which he did extremely well. Our Chinese webmaster, Genggeng, was setting up an IVU stall at the huge veg food fair, but needed some leaflets in Chinese. The Singapore group donated a big batch which we stuffed into our bags, hoping the security people didn't see them as suspicious (we were on tourist visas). The guy on the scanner commented on me having 'a lot of books' in my bag, but didn't bother to check.

We were met at Xiamen airport by two young ladies from a professional PR agency, complete with a driver and a people carrier, and were taken to an amazing 5-star hotel. As soon as we'd settled in, it was down to the auditorium for a full rehearsal of the talks planned for the following day. We had five speakers from five different countries, and we ran thru everything to check the timing, sound and visual equipment, even the lighting.



Thursday 12 – I was on the platform with a group of businessmen for the opening ceremony of the event. It was a combined Buddhist Craft Fair and Vegetarian Food Fair – with attendances expected in 'tens of thousands'. We had a tour of the vast exhibition hall, and found the IVU stall which had been superbly created. *Below: the IVU stall in full swing.*

Lunch was with the translators, everyone in the audience would have headphones so they wanted a briefing of what we would be saying. In the afternoon I gave the opening talk at the forum, as far as I know this was the first talk ever given at a large international veg event in mainland China. *Right: my talk at the forum:*

Friday 13– we were taken on a tour of the nearby university, and into the temple next door for an amazing lunch (see next blog below). **Sat 14**– more local sightseeing. **Sun 15** – back to Singapore and home via Dubai.



Those ten days left me with a lot to think about, and changed my views of the way we do things in the west.

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Food as Art in China

January 12, 2011

The photos below are from my visit to Xiamen, China in November 2009. This was for a Vegetarian Food Fair which ran for several days, and included an International Vegetarian Forum on one afternoon.

For anyone interested in such matters I'll just repeat that my various travels are NOT funded by IVU (except for IVU World Veg Congresses) - for this one I paid my own air fare to Singapore, initially to attend the Asian Veg Congress, and our wonderful Chinese hosts met all the costs for three of us from there to and in Xiamen.

The Chinese have a way with food-art which others might like to see, starting with some that were exhibits in the food fair, entirely made from plant food of course. Some of the designs are traditional, but others are more recent - see the second one which is based on the 2008 Beijing Olympics, with the Great Wall and the Olympic flame and rings, all in a plate of vegetables.

The day after the forum we were taken to a nearby temple for a 12 course (!) lunch, and each course

was a work of art in itself. Above is a side dish of mushrooms which reminded me of the Terracotta Army, several dishes like this were placed on the revolving glass table for all to share.

The bigger dishes below were revolved for all to see - and photograph - then taken off to be cut up and re-served as individual portions:



On the right is a Buddhist soup, based on the poem being held up by Susianto Tseng, IVU Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific:



The dish right was (to me) the most astonishing, a mountain covered in snow, with trees on it, and 'fish' swimming in the sea below. Then we ate it...



Even the simpler dishes were created highly artistically:



See below for more about the 2011 Asian Veg Union Congress in Hangzhou, China.

For details of the next Xiamen VegFood Fair, see: www.vffair.com/indexen.asp

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From England to California

February 24, 2010

[updated July 2012] A couple years ago Hazel and I went to Los Angeles and San Francisco. This is an update of the blog I wrote at time as it might provide some ideas for those heading for the IVU events in California in October.

This was mainly a personal trip for our anniversary (ie not paid for by IVU!), but we always meet up with lots IVU friends wherever we go - here's what we did....

Thursday February 11, 2010 - left Birmingham in the snow for a short hop to Paris - the plane stopped in the middle of the airfield and we had to get off and walk across to a bus - it was minus 3C and snowing... then we had to go through the miles of security checks again. With that and the snow everything was running late so we were able to make the connection as that was late too.

Arrived in Los Angeles and met the Nelson family - Jeff, Sabrina, Nina, Randa and Willie, who looked after us amazingly well for the next few days. See Jeff's VegSource blog for lots more about this great vegan family - www.vegsource.com/jeff-nelson. I've been working with Jeff for 12 years as the IVU website is hosted by VegSource, but we had never been able to meet before, so this was a very special occasion.

Friday 12 - Jeff gave me a lift to pick up a rental car in the morning and I tried to remember to drive on the wrong side of the road while following him home again.

Lunch was at the home of Zel and Reuben Allen (of VegParadise: www.vegparadise.com) in Granada Hills - joined there by Eric and Diana (of HappyCow: www.happycow.net) and Dorit & John (of Serenity Foods: www.serenityspaces.org and the Green Lifestyle Film Festival www.greenlifestylefilmfestival.com) - great food and company for the afternoon, and in the evening an entertaining trip with the Nelson family to a local vegan restaurant.

Sat. 13 - to Santa Barbara to see our old friend Gabriel Buist (buist.org/gabriel) who moved there from England last year. Lunch in a mostly vegan cafe then down to the beach to meet Gabriel's son and his family who also live in the area, then to the



Mission - the oldest building in SB - where we did the tour and sat in on a mass for a while. Above - the view from Gabriel's balcony.

On the way back we used HappyCow and the GPS system the Nelsons lent us to find a vegan restaurant in Ventura, Mary's Secret Garden, which turned out to be a delightful place.

Sunday 14 - to Santa Monica to meet up with Eric of HappyCow again, walked along Venice Beach and lunch at yet another vegan cafe.

Right - a wave on the rocks at Venice Beach:



Took the scenic route back via Malibu and over the mountains through Topanga Canyon. In the evening recorded a video interview with the Nelsons twin daughters Nina and Randa. Below - San Fernando valley from Topanga Canyon:



Monday 15 - to Hollywood to see the 'walk of the stars' etc, - and discovered a new vegan cafe that the locals hadn't found yet (myveganhouse.com) then over to Dorit & John in West Hollywood for a taste of Serenity Foods, and very good it was.

Tuesday 16 - to Burbank airport for the one hour flight to Oakland - picked up another rental car, with completely different controls.... and drove to Marin County, north of San Francisco, where we stayed with Jim & Mary-Armour Nelson - Jeff's parents who are in their 80s and a wonderful couple (Jim is a writer: [www.amazon.com/Killing-Henderson-Etc-James-Nelson/...](http://www.amazon.com/Killing-Henderson-Etc-James-Nelson/)). A delightful Dinner in the evening with more of the Nelson family from the bay area.

Wednesday 17 - to the Haight-Ashbury area of San Francisco for some sightseeing before our meeting at the Red Victorian where there was a vegan buffet followed by myself with a presentation on '*Vegetarianism from a World Perspective*' - a good audience who seemed to be very interested, mostly from the San Francisco Vegetarian Society (www.sfvs.org).



Also met Isaac Dikeocha for the first time - our former IVU Regional Coordinator for Africa (www.ivu.org/members/council/isaac-dikeocha.html), who was in SF for a while.

After the talk I did a radio interview with Bob Linden who does a vegan radio show (www.goveganradio.com), which went out in SF on Saturday morning, and syndicated in LA on Sunday.

Thursday 18 - a visit to the Marin County farmer's market in the morning.

Afternoon down to San Francisco for more sightseeing, China Town, Union Square, drove down one of those absurdly steep streets etc., then to the Millennium vegan restaurant

(www.millenniumrestaurant.com), very upmarket and considered by many to be the best in SF. We had dinner with Larry and Ann Wheat, the owners, and Dixie, Stan and JC from SFVS - Larry and Ann did a superb 'family style' spread of almost everything on the menu.

Right at the Millennium: l-r - Ann, Larry, Hazel, JC (Joseph Cadiz, SFVS treasurer), me behind Stan (Dixie's husband), and Dixie Mahy (President of SFVS)



Friday 19, to the (vegan) True North Health Clinic in Santa Rosa (www.healthpromoting.com), to meet another old friend and IVU councillor, Gerry Coffey, who was being treated there (www.ivu.org/members/council/gerry-coffey.html).

We were also able to sit in on some therapy sessions, attend a talk by one of the doctors, and chat to several of the doctors during the day. A great place.

In the evening back to San Francisco for another SFVS meeting at the Maharani Indian restaurant - a vegan buffet followed by a Bollywood film. I gave a short intro about our visit to the Bollywood studios in Mumbai back in 2004.

Saturday 20 - a slower weekend ... took the scenic tour around Marin County: Muir Woods to see the giant Redwood trees, then to Stinson Beach and back through more redwoods.

Sunday 21 - to the mostly-raw-food Cafe Gratitude (cafegratitude.com) in San Rafael for lunch, one of their eight locations in California.

In the evening we had a party for Mary-Armour's 83rd birthday. Lots of the extended family were there and it was a real privilege to share this time with them all. Right: Mary-Armour at the farmer's market:



Monday 22 - back to the Cafe Gratitude in San Rafael for an all-too-brief meeting with eco-feminist writer Marti Kheel, who sadly passed the following year.

Then on to San Francisco airport for the long-haul home, via Paris again. We drove the last hour and a half home from Birmingham in the snow and it was snowing even more heavily by the time we arrived. Quite a change from sunny California....

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If it's Thursday it must be Australia...

Updated October 2012

... or Indonesia, Malaysia or India... by the time this blog originally appeared I was on my five-week trek around all these countries, giving talks to many veg groups along the way, and then on to Africa and the Middle East. This is roughly what happened:

1 – **to Jakarta, Indonesia**, for the 39th IVU World Veg Congress (www.wvc2010.org) – opening ceremony on October 1 (World Vegetarian Day) then four days of talks, workshops and other activities. I gave a keynote speech and another talk along with many great speakers. Attendance was around 5,000 including the food fair. *[right: The critically endangered Sumatran Orangutan, edemic to Indonesia.]*

NOTE: nothing below here was funded by IVU! Whilst IVU was, for the first time ever, covering my expenses to go to the World Congress, everything below is at my own expense - with very much appreciated accommodation from friends. And in case anyone thinks IVU must be paying me megabucks, I am actually paid for one and a half days per week, the rest is done in my own time and with my own rather limited finances.

2 – **to Bali, Indonesia**, Oct 7-11 – *I was grateful to the Bali branch of the Indonesian VegSoc for sponsoring me on this visit (www.ivs-online.org).* We stayed for few days with a Veg Seminar and cultural evening at the Bali Arts Center. I was one of three speakers for the seminar. *[left: some Bali wildlife – the spider was the size of my hand....]*



3 – **to Tumbi Umbi, north of Sydney, Australia**, Oct 12-15 for a few days with some long lost cousins *[right: The iconic Koala]*

4 – **to Sydney**, Oct 15 to 18, for a weekend with Mark Berriman, President of the Australian Vegetarian Society (www.veg-soc.org), and to speak at a joint meeting with the New South Wales Vegan Society (www.vegansocietynsw.com)

5 – **to Canberra, Australian capital**, Oct 18-21, to finally meet my long-time history colleague Edgar Crook, author of 'Vegetarianism in Australia – a History' (www.ivu.org/history/australia), and to

give a joint talk with Edgar at the Canberra VegSoc (www.vegetariansociety.org.au). I also got a brief chance to keep up with my wildlife photography at a nearby nature reserve – real wild kangaroos...



6 – **back via Sydney** up to **the Gold Coast near Brisbane** , Oct 22-25, for a weekend with lots more long lost cousins.

7 – **to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia** to stay with Mohana Gill (fruitastic.net/home.html), Oct 25-28, author of some impressive veg cookbooks, her latest two being for children, and to meet more members of the Malaysian VegSoc, giving a talk at the loca Loving Hut restaurant.

8 –**to Bangalore, India**, with Mohana, for the IVU ISWAVeg Congress (= India & South West Asia - www.vegansociety.in/ivu-iswavgongress) where I was also a keynote speaker. From Oct 29 to Nov 2 – including World Vegan Day, Nov 1, as it was organized by the amazing Shankar Narayan, IVU Regional Coordinator, and President of the Indian Vegan Society (paid nothing, not even expenses). *My thanks to the manager of the all-veg e-inn hotel www.e-inn.in for a half-price room during the congress. Right a heron in a local park.*



IVU India is desperately in need of funds to help people on low Indian incomes to get more of these events. You can make a donation via at www.ivu.org/asia-pacific/jashu-shah-fund.html - please help!

9 – **go home...** on November 4 to see if Hazel still remembered who I was (she was visiting her cousins in Spain while I was off on all this). A committee meeting for the Vegetarian Society UK (www.vegsoc.org) - I had recently been co-opted - but soon off again...

10 – **to Nairobi, Kenya**, (via a brief stopover in Dubai) November 30 to December 5, to help in promoting the first ever East and Central Africa Veg Congress (www.ivu.org/africa/nairobi), run mainly thanks to the huge effort by Emmanuel Eyoh the IVU Regional Co-ordinator for Africa (in Nigeria, also paid nothing, not even expenses).

My first ever visit to Africa - in fact after 102 years, the first ever official IVU visit to Africa (other than those who live there of course!) I managed to get out for half a day for more photography at the nearby wildlife reserve. *[right: my photo of a corner of the Nairobi National Park, close to the city.]*



IVU Africa your help to make more of this possible – please donate at www.ivu.org/africa/donations.html

11 – **back to Dubai (UAE)**, December 5 to 8 – a few days, and another talk, at the veg congress in MENOPE (Middle East Natural and Organic Products Expo - www.naturalproductme.com). A great new area for IVU thanks to the tireless work of Sandhya Prakash (also paid nothing) and MeVeg (Middle East VegGroup - www.meveg.info)

Then finally home for a few months... More details of everything below.

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Jakarta Jamboree

October 5, 2010

The main part of the 39th IVU World Veg Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, has now ended. So this is just a personal view of the last five days.

I've had the privilege of staying at the home of Susianto, IVU Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, leader of the Indonesian Vegetarian and Vegan Societies, and that's just between holding down a full time job, studying for a PhD, and raising a family. Someone asked what he does in his spare time...

The Congress began on Friday, October 1, World Vegetarian Day, with a gala dinner, completely vegan as always, sponsored by the Indonesian Government Ministry of Tourism - the minister is veg, and several other high ranking government officials were also present, even a veg*n from the USA embassy joined the politicians.

The ceremonies continued with displays of dancing from local young members of the IVS. All of this against the Congress backdrop used in every room:



Everyone present was then given a traditional Indonesian Angklung, tuned to different pitches, which we were taught to play as a mass orchestra - and we kept them to take home
Right: UK, India and Brazil keeping in tune.



A special feature of this Congress was the activities for children, this is just a corner of a room where hundreds of amazingly well-behaved very young children had an art competition. They were followed by a children's parade in the main hall, wearing fruit and veg costumes they had made themselves:



Another unusual feature was the huge vegan Food Fair, much bigger than anything we've seen at any previous IVU Congress. It attracted equally huge crowds as can be seen below, 8,000 visitors has been estimated. At peak times it took a while getting through the crowds from one room to another.



At times the crowd was even bigger thanks to visiting parties from two schools, one Catholic and one Muslim, and a local university sent all their nutrition students for one day of the lectures. Right is Susianto welcoming pupils from the Muslim school in one of the side rooms:



Indonesia's population is about 86% Muslim and this gave us a very special occasion when Arash Rashidi, from Iran, found five young men from Afghanistan in the front row for his talk about vegetarianism in Iran (*photo right*). It's hard to imagine that happening anywhere other than Indonesia. The guys are studying in Jakarta for a while but will hopefully set up the first Afghan Vegetarian Society when they go home in a few months.



We also had visitors from the Philippines and expect an announcement soon about the launch of the first veg society in their country. On the wider Asian level we reached a constructive agreement about the best way of promoting the first ever vegetarian congress in China, which is inevitably politically sensitive.

The media interest in this congress has been enormous. We had a TV studio on site where I did two interviews myself, as well as joining in a TV chat show with Susianto and George Jacobs, chair of the IVU Council. below is a cookery show:



Tomorrow most of the overseas visitors have a bus tour around Jakarta, then on Thursday we head of to the island of Bali for a few days. Meanwhile I couldn't resist putting in one last photo with a small group of the huge army of volunteers who have kept everything running smoothly:



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Bali Beautiful

Updated October 2012

The Jakarta IVU Congress was a huge success, one of the best ever, then some of us went on to the beautiful island of Bali.

We flew from Jakarta to Bali on Air Asia, then to the evening seminar, where Susianto - IVU Regional Co-ordinator for Asia-Pacific and myself were speakers, along with a local speaker, and a cultural event which included some traditional Balinese dancing on the right.

The next two days were a bus trip visiting temples and other tourist attractions. But we also took in a monkey sanctuary and a turtle hatchery, where turtle eggs were rescued from potential predators and the young turtles returned to the beach.

Right is one of the lunch stops, a view:

Below - some of the group at breakfast - by the last day at the Ramada hotel we finally got our own vegan buffet.



This little group includes friends from Australia, UK, Ireland, Brazil, Hong Kong and Malaysia. The two day tour also included more from India, Germany and Indonesia. I stayed on and gave a talk about IVU at a Maitreya Buddhist Temple, filmed by SMTV:



On my last day I was taken to a high school to give a talk to about 100 children, all non-veg, and they asked some intelligent questions. After lunch at one of many vegan cafes, I was taken to a hilltop site in the east of Bali, little known to the tourists. The trek up the 'jungle' path was great, and the view from the top was amazing, across mountains and the sea to other islands. Unfortunately we hit heavy rain on the way down and were totally drenched, but it was still a good end to Bali before heading off to Australia.

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A visit to Malaysia

November 14, 2012

If you are thinking of making the trip to Malaysia next year, for the 41st IVU World Vegfest, October 3-9, 2013, you might be interested in some views of Kuala Lumpur from my visit a couple of years ago.

On Monday October 25, 2010 – I was up early to take the eight-and-a-half hours Air Asia flight from Gold Coast, Australia, to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where I was staying with the veg writer Mohana Gill and her family. The flight time made me realise just how far away Australia is from anywhere else.

Below: the eminent Dr. Satwan Gill getting down to some gardening, and one of his palm trees. This was just on the edge of the city, but for me it sums up how I generally think of a country like Malaysia.



I met up with some more friends from the Malaysian Vegetarian Society, and had a brief visit to the famous Twin Towers (many people will remember Sean Connery dangling from the bridge between them...).

Right: - for some time the tallest building in the world, now overtaken by Shanghai and Dubai. Note the size of the people at the bottom of the photo.

- and below, a more human scale view looking back from the base of the towers:





The MVS had arranged for me to give a talk in the room upstairs at the local Loving Hut restaurant, all videoed by SMTV. We got a good audience who responded well.

Right: the Loving Hut run by Tracy Wong, the lead organiser for the combined 41st IVU World Vegfest and 6th Asian Veg Congress next year.

Those who were at the 40th Vegfest in San Francisco or Los Angeles, California, 2012, or the 5th Asian Congress in Hangzhou, China, 2011, will have met Tracy - she will be putting all that experience to good use back in Malaysia.



Right: the SMTV crew busy with more interviews after my talk:



Mohana Gill is the author of 'Fruitastic' and 'Vegemania' cookbooks, and has now added two books for children on a similar theme - and a 'Fruitastic Express' (below), a shop/cafe/juice bar inside a local hospital and used mainly by patients, visitors and staff. Everything in the shop and the small cafe at the far end, are based on fresh fruit and vegetables, with the emphasis on health and nutrition.

What a contrast to hospitals in west, sponsored by McDonalds, KFC and the like, where patients are likely to come out more ill than they went in after eating all that junk food. Mohana has set a great example that should be followed by hospitals everywhere.



I was invited to extend my trip by visiting Penang, in the north of Malaysia, but with only three days available it would have been too much to fit in. However - the IVU World Vegfest will be going there - and it really is worth the trip.

Apart from being a beautiful part of the country, very popular with tourists, it also had a very active veg scene. A major part of the Malaysian Vegetarian Society is based there, led by Pishu Murli Hassaram, who also promotes the International Meatless Day, every November 25th.

The 41st IVU World Vegfest promises to be a great experience - details, as they become available, are being added to:

www.worldvegfest.org/index.php/blogs/congress-vegfest-updates/71-41st-ivu-congress-vegfest-malaysia-october-2013

Do come and join us!

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The last leg - India and home

November 21, 2012

Just before the 41st IVU World Vegfest, Malaysia, 2013, will be a Vegan Festival in India. Anyone thinking of making the stopover might like to see the one I went to in 2010:

Thursday, October 28, 2010 - back on AirAsia again, from Malaysia, to Bangalore, India. Next day a few of us went to a press conference across the city, we were a little early so we convened an outdoor international meeting. Standing in photo is Shankar Narayan, President of the Indian Vegan Society, and IVU Regional Representative:



Then we went into the Press Club of Bangalore, on the multi-national panel were Colin (New Zealand), Marly (Brazil), Shankar (India), Sandhya (Dubai,UAE), Mohana (Malaysia) and me (UK).

The Veg Congress itself was for two days, Sat/Sun October 30/31. We had a great range of speakers from many countries, on a wide variety of topics, all of it at the superb E-Inn - a completely vegetarian and very high quality hotel. They laid on a special vegan buffet for the two days, though most of the food in the main dining room is vegan anyway.

I did my talk to start things off, followed by Sandhya Prakash (below left) from Dubai UAE, a member of the IVU Council looking after the SW Asia (Middle East) part of the Congress. She gave an enlightening talk about the activities in the region. On the right are Mohan Santhanam and his musicians, who gave a truly inspiring performance at the end of the afternoon, they had me totally engrossed for one and half hours:



Monday, November 1 - World Vegan Day – some of us from the congress took a tour in a bus. In the morning we went to the Botanic Gardens where we found a new recruit for the group, along with more wildlife:



Then to the Green Path eco-hotel for lunch, as most of us were staying there that night. In the afternoon to an organic farm, out in the countryside an hour to the west of Bangalore.

The plan was to have a vegan day party, with music dancing and dinner in a small outdoor amphitheatre, but it rained... so we got wet looking around the farm and squeezed into a covered balcony for the music and dancing.

The highlight was the young lady on the right who performed several traditional dances, despite the small space she had available.

Tuesday November 2 - the end of the five week trek through Jakarta and Bali, Indonesia; Central Coast, Sydney, Canberra and Gold Coast; Australia; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and finally Bangalore, India.

Then the long haul back home for a few weeks with my ever-patient wife Hazel - it felt like going home for a holiday before setting off on the IVU trail again to Nairobi and Dubai in December.

So if you want to visit India, consider a few days *en route* to the 41st IVU World Vegfest in Malaysia.

The Vegan Festival in India will be Fri-Sun, September 27-29, 2013, plus a local day tour on the Monday. One of the accommodation options is a great looking beach resort, so you might want to go earlier and spend a few days there. More details of everything at:

www.worldvegfest.org/index.php/blogs/congress-vegfest-updates/71-41st-ivu-congress-vegfest-malaysia-october-2013

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Out of Africa – and the Middle East

November 28, 2010

The International Vegetarian Union celebrated its centenary in 2008, and if anyone had said to me then that in a couple years I would be speaking at international veg congresses in East Africa and the Middle East, I would probably have said that we'd done nothing in either for the last 100 years, so why should it suddenly change?

But, by the time you read this, I will be on my way to Nairobi and Dubai to do just that. And this will not only be my first visit to Africa – it will be the first time in 102 years that any non-African member of the IVU International Council has ever made an official visit to sub-Saharan Africa.

It was only three years ago, December 2007, with generous help from donors around the world, that we held our first ever African veg congress - in Lagos Nigeria, West Africa. The photo below shows the IVU Regional Coordinator for Africa, Emmanuel Eyoh, also President of the Nigerian Vegetarian Society, raising his hands at the end of that congress.



My visit will be doubly significant as it will also be the first time that any non-African in IVU has actually met the man who has done so much for IVU in Africa. It will be an honour to meet Emmanuel after years of only being able to talk by email. Since that first event we've supported another Veg Congress for West Africa, in Accra, Ghana, in 2009 – see the photos below:



In December 2009 our member group MEVEG (Middle East Veg Group) held their first forum within MENOPE (Middle East Natural Organic Product Expo). Below is Meveg leader Sandhya Prakash, now a member of the IVU International Council, giving a talk and meeting visitors:



Sandhya overlaps a little with North Africa, and was a delegate at the Middle East Animal Welfare Conference in Cairo, Egypt, a few months ago. Next week she will be leading the first full-scale Middle East Veg Congress, for two days on December 6 & 7, again as a part of MENOPE, and I will have the privilege of speaking at this highly professional event.

And it's not just in those regions that we have been making this extraordinary progress.

The first ever international veg congress in Indonesia was the 4th Asian Congress, November 2009, and that was soon followed by two more in Indonesia, for South East Asia in Medan, March 2010, then the hugely successful IVU World Veg Congress in Jakarta in October. Even that world congress had much stronger connections with the Middle East than we've seen before, the photo on the right, in Jakarta, is our good friend Arash Rashidi from Iran, and the five young men in his front row are all from Afghanistan.



And we supported the first ever international veg forum in China, in Xiamen, November 2009, to be followed by the first ever international veg congress in China next year, November 2011. The photo right is the IVU Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, Susianto Tseng, at the forum in Xiamen, China – he is also Chief Operations Officer of the Indonesian Vegetarian Society, and the prime motivator for all the congresses held there.



In the same three years IVU has supported International Vegan Festivals in India and Brazil, along with several other events in Latin America, and most recently the India & SW Asia Congress in Bangalore. All these events have been inspired by Marly Winckler and Shankar Narayan, our Coordinators for those two regions, and we look forward to our newest member of the team, Sundara DeSilva, helping us to support similar events in Australasia.

So why has all this happened just in the last few years?

For IVU's first 100 years we did very little outside of Europe and North America and what we did elsewhere mostly not very effective, often hampered by trying to over-control everything from Europe. This recent progress in the rest of the world has certainly not come from any sort of top-down command and control from IVU – we really do not have the money or power for that! We have simply tried to support events that local people have planned whilst giving them the space to implement their own ideas – and we have been very fortunate in finding the right local people who have been willing to put in huge amounts of effort for the global cause.

But most importantly they have been willing to do all this in close cooperation with others, they have put aside their own egos to share their efforts. All too often in the veg*n world we find individuals promoting their own rigid views rather than the movement as a whole, and IVU has had plenty of that in the past, but we have moved on and the results are becoming clear.

So I'm now setting off to Nairobi, Kenya – unfortunately the first East & Central African Veg Congress had to be put back slightly to December 18 and I can't be there for that, so I'm going to be giving some talks and interviews to help promote the congress during the few days I will be there.

On the way out I'll be stopping for a few hours in Dubai, then on the way back I'll have 2 or 3 days there at the first Middle East Veg Congress.

More about those next week. Meanwhile, as I write this in England, it is snowing – the photo below is the view from my office window on Saturday, November 27, with long winter shadows across the snow - quite a difference from Nairobi and Dubai at this time of year . . .



To Nairobi and Dubai

December 10, 2010

Monday Nov. 29 - left England in the ice and snow, the first November snow for 17 years

Tuesday Nov. 30 - arrived Dubai about 1.00am, met by Sandhya Prakash, IVU Middle East Co-ordinator, and taken to her home to get some sleep. In the morning met her family over breakfast, then to downtown Dubai for a press conference to promote the first ever Middle East Veg Congress the following week. Below is the view across the road from the entrance to the hotel:

- and the press conference, as part of the organic expo, with me (in rather casual dress as my suitcase was waiting for me at the airport) next to a senior official from the UAE Ministry of Health, and Sandhya 2nd right:



After lunch at the hotel, Sandhya took me back to the airport for the 3.00pm flight to Nairobi, Kenya. Met there by Satwinder Singh Sian, chair of the Vegetarian Society of Kenya; Liladhar Bharadiar, VSK secretary - and most importantly Emmanuel Eyoh from Nigeria, the IVU Regional Coordinator for Africa, who I had worked with online for many years but never been able to meet in person - that's him on the left the next day (we were having lunch at the Hare Krishna Temple).



Wednesday Dec. 1 to Saturday Dec. 4 - in Nairobi. During these four days I met all the leaders of the VegSoc of Kenya, helped to feed people in the slums; joined another feeding session for disabled and disadvantaged people; joined a press conference to promote the first ever East and Central African Congress to be held on December 17/18; met with many members of the local veg community in temples and cafes, gave a talk about world veg*ism - and even managed four hours for some of us to see the wildlife in the Nairobi National Park (a sort of mini-safari).

Below, some scenes from the first food distribution day in one of the slum areas, with me having a go at serving rice into any containers they brought along, and Emmanuel with some boys after the beans were added from another vat:



- and four of us at the press conference on the Saturday, not quite as glamorous as the one in Dubai but we got good press coverage from it. l-r: Emmanuel, Satwinder Singh Sian, VSK chairman, me, and Liladhar Bharadiar, VSK secretary:



After the press conference I gave a talk about IVU and World Veg*ism for the local group, then on **Sunday Dec. 5** it was back to Dubai.

Monday Dec 6 - the Middle East Veg Congress was opened by His Excellency Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim, Minister of Health for the United Arab Emirates, seen below lighting the lamp with congress organiser Sandhya (blue scarf) looking on:



The Congress itself was a great success, with many new ideas that the rest of us can learn from. Over the two days there 16 speakers from many countries around the world, workshops for children, fabulous vegan food provided by sponsors, the organic food expo taking place alongside, and all of it video'd by SMTV who brought in 14 people from East Asia to do the job. The grand finale was a live interactive satellite link with Supreme Master Ching Hai from the climate change conference in Cancun, Mexico:



Wednesday Dec. 8 - back to the ice and snow in England. It was minus 2 degrees C when I landed.

This is just a brief overview of the activities in both countries, I'll be coming back to more about them over the next few weeks. Meanwhile some items from the media about each of these amazing events:

Nairobi: vegsources.com/.../nairobi-to-host-first-ever-veg-congress-in-east-africa.html

Dubai: vegsources.com/.../first-ever-middle-east-veg-congress-held-in-dubai.html

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The Global Veg Explosion

May 4, 2011

A few years ago we rarely had more than one international veg event per year, and nearly all in Europe or North America – last year [2010] there were at least nine of them, on every continent of the world (well, maybe not Antarctica yet....).

By '*international veg event*' I mean public events which deliberately encourage attendance by visitors and speakers from more than one country. There will, of course, be many other national or local events that happen to have an occasional visitor or speaker from other countries – I gave several talks to groups in other countries myself last year, but this is about something bigger.

The first ever international veg event was way back in 1889 when the German societies invited vegetarians from other countries to a few days in Cologne. They had talks, lectures and boat trips on the Rhine, and a similar mixture has continued ever since.

The International Vegetarian Union was founded in 1908 with the primary aim of bringing together vegetarians from as many countries as possible. The cultural exchange and networking opportunities proved invaluable, and a lot of fun. By the 1970s the idea of regional events had begun to take off, attracting many more visitors who were unable to travel the longer distances. But nearly all were still in Europe and North America until quite recently.

The IVU Facebook page now has a collection of photo albums covering every international veg event since 1908 – have we missed any? Do you have more photos? See the link at the bottom of this page.

By 2010 these veg gatherings were being held all over the world. All the photos on the right were taken between October and December 2010 – *from the top: Indonesia, India, Kenya, United Arab Emirates and China.*

This is what IVU member organisations did in 2010, and where the participants came from:

Southeast Asia Veg Congress, Medan, Indonesia
Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand (March)

EVU 'summit' meeting, Switzerland
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (April)

Southern South-America Veg Congress, Asunción, Paraguay
Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay (July)

NAVS Summerfest, Johnstown PA, USA
USA, Canada (July)



39th IVU World Veg Congress, Jakarta, Indonesia

Dozens of countries, people from almost every continent (October)

India & SW Asia Veg Congress, Bangalore, India

India, UAE, Malaysia, Thailand, New Zealand, Brazil, Germany, UK (October)

2nd International Veg Food Fair and Forum, Xiamen, China

China, Taiwan, Singapore (November)

1st East Africa Veg Congress, Nairobi, Kenya

Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, UK (December)

1st Middle East Veg Congress, Dubai United Arab Emirates

UAE, Iran, Palestine, Tunisia, India, Pakistan, Singapore, UK, USA (December)

As recently as 2003 there was just one international veg event in the whole year – assuming some Canadians made it to the NAVS Summerfest that year - NAVS has always set out to be North American not just USA.

So why has this idea suddenly gone global?

Six of the above events were the direct result of work by our amazing team of IVU Regional Coordinators. Below are the people doing all this work – and all unpaid, they don't even get expenses:

- **Marly Winckler** – IVU Latin America, President of the Vegetarian Society of Brazil
- **Shankar Narayan** – IVU India & SW Asia, President of the Indian Vegan Society
- **Sandhya Prakash** – IVU Middle East, based in Dubai, UAE, leader of Meveg, Middle East Veg Group
- **Dr. Susianto Tseng** – IVU Asia-Pacific, Chief Operations Officer of the Indonesian Vegetarian Society
- **Emmanuel Eyoh** – IVU Africa, President of the Nigeria Vegetarian Society

Below – our great IVU team in action – in the last few years they have organised at least 16 public international veg events between them:



Top left: Emmanuel in Nairobi, Kenya - - - Top right: Sandhya in Dubai, UAE

Middle: Marly and friend, Bali, Indonesia

Bottom left: Shankar in Dubai, UAE - - - Bottom right: Susianto in Xiamen, China

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Festival Vegano Español

June 15, 2011

The 13th International Vegan Festival ended last Sunday after eight days in sunny Spain. Everyone attending came away with very different personal highlights – mine were giving a couple of talks on the history and geography of veganism, and having the opportunity to sit in with one of the bands playing bass (that’s me on the right):



Hazel and I rented a car and took some trips with friends from the festival – north over the mountains to Granada backed by the snow-capped Sierra Nevada; south down the Costa del Sol near to Gibraltar; and east along the coast where the mountains and sea create some spectacular scenery.

Below are some photos from the week:

The Venue



Entertainment



Excursions



Food



Lectures



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The First Ever Veg Congress in China

November 8, 2011

I'm writing this from the 5th Asian Veg Union Congress in Hangzhou, China. Just a text summary for now, photos will follow next week as there are too many to sort through and no time here.

The story so far for me : -

Sunday Nov. 6 - drove four hours to London, then usual couple of hours hanging around the airport, ten hours flight to Beijing, another couple of hours changing flights, boarded the plane to Hangzhou and sat on the tarmac for an hour and half ('rush hour' they said...), then the two hour flight. Arrived Hangzhou 5.30pm Monday, local time, about 24 hours after leaving home.

The vegan food on the flights was OK as airline food goes, the airlines all seem to get it from the same catering contractors. My first experience of Air China was OK too, I've flown with plenty worse.

Met Dr. George Jacobs, chair of the IVU council, arriving from Singapore a few minutes later and we decided to eat before going to our rooms. If I laid down I might not have got up again...

The hotel(s) are superb, we have a 5 star and a 4 star next to each other in the same parkland setting, with most of us, and the Congress, in the 4 star section. The food is also outstanding - provided you like authentic Chinese food (which I do), very different to the sort of thing we get in Chinese restaurants in the west. There is a vast variety of very high quality - I have no idea what some of it is, but we're assured it's all vegan so I'll try anything, and looking forward to more.

Having eaten we were then persuaded to attend a meeting of the Asian Veg Union, still without having seen our rooms, and I was feeling considerably the worse for wear by then. But they are a great bunch and we had a good meeting. The main topic was the venue for the next, 6th, Asian Veg Congress, which was agreed to be in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2013. The KL team are showing great enthusiasm and it promises to be another outstanding event. The plan is to combine this with the annual IVU Congress/Vegfest, so the whole world will be invited.

Finally to my room and some sleep - but up again at 6.30am to get breakfast, sort out a few things, and get to the opening ceremony, where the 'leaders' had bright red roses pinned on our jackets by Chinese girls in traditional costume.

The Congress itself inevitably started a little late as opening speeches in Asia are always taken seriously. The several hundred participants had a choice of two conference rooms with parallel sessions, George and myself chairing the first sessions, under orders to get things back on time again.

Many of the speakers were highly academic nutritionists - some with talks where I struggled to even understand the title... but there were also many other topics, including one from me on world veg*ism, and there seemed to be something for everyone during the day.

Dr, Susianto Tseng, from Indonesia, IVU Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, and now Vice President of AVU, also chaired some sessions and gave a talk. And Marly Winckler, IVU Coordinator for Latin America, came all the way from Brazil to take an equally active role

(IVU does NOT pay for any of this). Most Asian countries were represented, with the largest delegation naturally from China.

The conference sessions were just for one day, we're out for all day for day 2, so it was decided to have the 'closing ceremony' at the end of day 1. On the way in we went through a very large foyer area with a huge, and quite extraordinary, exhibition of vegetable carvings. What the Chinese chefs can do turning vegetables into works of art has to be seen to be believed – photos next week...

The ceremony consisted of more speeches, handing the flag over to Malaysia, and a very grand banquet. I've been to many countries around the world but none do banquets like the Chinese. Photos of that next week too.

After dinner we boarded busses and were taken to see some Chinese music and dancing – which turned out to be in a vast auditorium, with dozens singers, dancers, acrobats, and an array of technological wizardry. All on a gigantic scale, way beyond anything I've seen before. Photos of that to come...

Today we're visiting veg businesses in the morning, an interesting innovation for a Congress, and an afternoon of sightseeing at a temple by the lake (rain is forecast...). Thursday I'm on the flight back to Beijing for a one night stopover with more veg friends up there. Then home on Friday to start sorting through all those photos.

This is an historic occasion. Just three years ago at the IVU Congress in Germany, we discussed how we had so few veg contacts in China, and whether we could find a way to improve that. Susianto and I went to Xiamen the following year, to speak at the first international veg forum in mainland China. But none of us imagined that we would be here at a full veg congress so soon. The waking of this sleeping dragon will have just as much impact on the veg*n world as on the rest of the world. This is just a beginning for organized veg*ism in China.

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The China Congress - with pictures

November 16, 2011

These are some of my photos from the three days of my second visit to China, the first two at the first ever veg congress in that amazing country, in Hangzhou, then a brief visit to Beijing. There are a lot more (and bigger) photos on the IVU Facebook page, see the links at the bottom.

The first photo was as we were about to start the opening ceremony, 9.00am Tuesday Nov. 8. To my right are two nutrition professors from Austria and Australia, the chair of IVU Council (Singapore) and the president of AVU (Thailand). Bottom photo: one of the two lecture rooms in action, where I was given the honour of chairing the first session, with the two professors as the first speakers:



Below: a view of the hotel entrance during a tea-break outside the other lecture room, and the all-vegan self-service lunch in an elegant restaurant. For me this was some of the best-ever food at a veg Congress:



After a day of lectures in both rooms we returned to the main hall for the closing ceremony – but on the way in we walked through an extraordinary exhibition carved entirely from vegetables, there must have been a hundred of these works of art on display (don't miss the frog, bottom right):



Below – the closing ceremony – 2nd right in the group is Prof. Duo Li, from Hangzhou, who masterminded the whole event, and was elected President of the Asian Vegetarian Union during the Congress. On the left is Dr. Susianto Tseng, from Indonesia, now AVU Vice-President (also IVU Coordinator for Asia-Pacific). Next to him is Marly Winckler, Brazil, IVU Coordinator for Latin America, and they are joined by some more great friends from Indonesia.

On the right – handing over the AVU flag to Malaysia for the 6th AVU Congress in Kuala Lumpur, 2013:



The hundreds of delegates then sat down to the vegan banquet, the other meals were all self-service, but this one was brought to us – a seemingly endless flow of exotic vegan dishes placed on the revolving tables.

Below: top right photo – on the left Dr. George Jacobs, President of the Singapore Vegetarian Society and Chair of the IVU International Council. Middle – Prof. Maitree Sutajit, Thailand, outgoing President of the Asian Vegetarian Union:

Below: the first dish of many. Inside the golden bowls the girls above brought to us, after opening the lid – a small squash filled with a clear mushroom soup; and right the remains of a plate on the revolving table after we'd eaten almost everything except the exquisite decoration.



After the banquet we were taken on busses to a vast auditorium somewhere in Hangzhou, for a spectacular stage show – dancing, singing, acrobats, and amazing technical effects, all on a stage the size of a football pitch with many thousands in the audience. Some scenes from it below, these were just the central part of the huge stage:



Day 2 – visits to veg food factories and veg Buddhist temples:

Up bright and early for a bus tour – first stop, the tofu factory in Hangzhou:



Then to the famous Pagoda, and up to the top for a view over West Lake – on a very dull and rainy day, but a great view anyway:



Then to a temple in the mountains, with stunning carvings inside and beautiful gardens outside – the vegetarian Buddhist monks just happened to be in one of their chanting sessions while we were there which added to the atmosphere:



Then on to another temple where we had dinner, they explained that all their meals are normally vegan, except for a few desserts which can have dairy products in them. Then an after-dinner tea ceremony with rather more traditional music than the extravaganza of the night before:



Day 3 – to Beijing

I flew from Hangzhou to Beijing in the morning, and did the political tourist bit in Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City in the afternoon.



In the evening we had a great meeting with a dozen or so Beijing veg activists in a room over the excellent 'Veggie Table' vegan restaurant, run by Laura, an expat American in the middle below:



Later in the evening there was an environmental film show in the main part of the restaurant, and I was invited to use the equipment to give my talk of world veg*ism for all the customers. Laura very kindly offered me a room in her apartment for the night, and then it was off to the airport early in the morning, and home again. It was a long way to go for just three days in China, but worth every minute of it.

More photos on IVU Facebook:

Day 1 (122 photos):

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.273452652697921.69084.180899291953258&type=3

Day 2 (70 photos):

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.273641039345749.69119.180899291953258&type=1

Day 3 (Beijing – 43 photos):

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.273641039345749.69119.180899291953258&type=1

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The Year of the Veg

December 27, 2011

2011 was the Year of the Rabbit in the Chinese calendar - but for IVU it was the year of the first ever veg congress in China. A brief look back at some international veg events of the year:

The 5th Asian Veg Congress was held in Hangzhou, China in November, with hundreds of delegates from at least a dozen countries.

Right:

- 1 - breakfast in China, IVU Council members from Singapore, UK, Indonesia, Brazil.
- 2- one of the dozens of all-vegetable carved artworks on display at the end of the first day.
- 3 - musicians in a veg Buddhist temple at the end of day two.

In June IVU supported the 13th International Vegan Festival, held near Malaga, Spain, with visitors from almost every country in Europe, plus Brazil, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and the USA. Below, some of the music, lectures and the beach during the Festival:



There are several major annual events in the USA and one that always attracts overseas interest is the Vegsource Healthy Lifestyle Expo every October in Los Angeles, which has had recent visitors from China, UK, Switzerland, Australia, and France.

Also in October this year the Vegetarian Society of Ghana held their 2nd international event, with visitors from other West African countries, including IVU Council members Emmanuel and Erick, from Nigeria and Togo.

December saw the 2nd Meveg Congress in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, mostly for Middle East countries. All led by IVU MidEast Liaison Officer, Sandhya Prakash.

Below: Los Angeles, USA - Accra, Ghana - Dubai, UAE:



IVU developments

In February we migrated to a Facebook page instead of the old closed group, and already have almost 2,500 followers. We look forward to more than doubling that next year.

In May all the IVU member organisations around the world voted, by a 95% majority, on a new definition of 'vegetarian' – emphasizing the positive of 'foods derived from plants'.

In August it was decided to update a century old tradition. For the first 50 years the IVU Congress met every three years, for the next 50 it was every two years. Now we're moving on again and we'll be supporting an event combining elements of a Congress and a Vegfest every year, there will be one near you soon!

In November the IVU International Council elected its first ever chairperson from Latin America, after 103 years Marly Winckler from Brazil is now leading the way.

Right: Marly in China, with Susianto Tseng, IVU Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, Vice-President of the Asian Veg Union, head of the Indonesian Vegetarian and Vegan Societies, more about him below...



Back in the UK

I've spent a lot of time in far flung places in recent years, so I wanted to get back in tune with what's happening in the UK. Some of it:

Altrincham (near Manchester) – lots of meetings at Parkdale (*top photo next page*) the HQ of the Vegetarian Society UK as I'm a member of the Council, but I also use the library for historical research as we have all the journals going back to 1847. I took Susianto on a very useful 'state visit' in June as he was staying with us for a few days on the way to Spain.

Birmingham – to the office of The Vegan Society with Susianto to meet CEO Nigel Winter who did a great job there for many years, but has now moved on (*2nd photo*), replaced by Jasmijn de Boo from the Netherlands (*on the right of the bottom photo*).

Bristol – to the offices of Viva! and a meeting with co-director Tony Wardle.

Dilwyn, Herefordshire – the birth and final resting place of Dr. William Lambe, as part of my historical research of early 19th century vegans.

Godalming, Surrey - to Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), partly to visit their new offices, and a chat with an old friend, now CEO, Philip Lymbery. Plus lunch with Josphat Nkonyo, Executive Director of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (*3rd photo*), who was working there for four months and offering to help IVU in back Nairobi.

Ham Common, Surrey – for historical research on the all-vegan Alcott House Academy (1838-48).

Liverpool – to the Viva! 'Incredible Veggie Roadshow' and very good it was, a great opportunity for me to catch up with a lot of people I hadn't seen for a while, including Juliet Gellatley (*4th photo*) and Justin Kerswell from Viva!

Portsmouth – a very pleasant time with some old veg friends

Shrewsbury – Cruelty Free Christmas Fair, organised by the Montgomery Voice for Animals.

Wolverhampton – a vegan barbecue in June; an animal sanctuary open day just out of town in August; and the amazing Midlands Vegan Festival in October (*bottom photo, Vegan Society stall*), where I gave a talk on vegan history.

Wales:

Cardiff – the opera house with Hazel (our anniversary trip)

Four Crosses, Powys – 3 course vegan dinner with 15 members of the Montgomery Voice for Animals, quite an achievement in that rural area.

Llangollen – a highly successful 'Vegan Café for a Day'

Machynlleth – the Center for Alternative Technology, and their veg café, with Susianto in June.

Early in the year I had the rather strange experience of watching myself over three episodes on SMTV, from interviews we did in Dubai a few months earlier. And throughout the year I did a lot more research on the early history of veganism, from 1806, all going into the blogs of course.



In between all that I do my bit for local history in the village where I live, which generated some interest as I was invited to give talks about it in three nearby towns, and contribute an article for the local mag. Plus a few reflections on rural trains and boats and roads that ended up amongst the weekly blogs, this being #97, and the end of another year.

2012 is the Chinese Year of the Dragon – time to bring on Herb, the Vegetarian Dragon...

Happy New Year!



Going Dutch

June 27, 2012

I spent a couple of days in Amsterdam last week, at a joint meeting between the Vegetarian Society UK and the Nederlandse Vegetariërsbond (NVB, founded 1894).

They were two of the three founding members of the International Vegetarian Union in 1908. The British, German and Dutch Vegetarian Societies met in Dresden, Germany, and received letters of support from 13 other groups around the world which were unable to attend in person.

Since then NVB has hosted four IVU World Vegetarian Congresses, in 1913, 1950, 1971 and 1994 – only the Germans, Indians and British Societies have hosted more, so NVB has made a major contribution to the development of IVU.

IVU has never existed as a separate organisation, right from the start it was simply a Union of the member societies, meeting together and sharing resources where they could. It still works in basically the same way today, though now with about 120 member groups on every continent of the world.

On the right is Hugo Nolthenius, President of NVB, and therefore President of IVU for the three years leading up to the 1913 Congress. When IVU activities resumed after the First World War, he was elected as IVU treasurer. His colleague, Mr van Borrendam, became the first long term IVU President in the 1930s.



Below is the group photo of the 1913 IVU Congress at The Hague:



In 1987, Rob Snijders, Director of NVB, oversaw the full legal establishment of the European Vegetarian Union. He became the General Secretary and led EVU from the NVB office in Amsterdam (I worked with him to build the first EVU website) until 1995 when it moved to Switzerland.

The meeting I attended was funded by the (political) European Union as part of a project to encourage community groups from EU countries to provide cross-border adult education opportunities. It was a good chance for me to visit the NVB offices, meet some of their staff, and learn a lot about the work they do today.

Most of our time was taken up with the two days of meetings, but naturally we got out and about a little in between. We tried a couple of the many veg restaurants, and I particularly liked the one run by some people from Suriname, a former Dutch colony in South America.

One of the major campaigns run by NVB is their National Vegetarian Restaurant Week – apparently there is a tradition in the Netherlands of restaurants taking different themes for a week, offering extra menu items and discounts. NVB have made use of this to attract a lot of interest for their annual vegetarian week.

Part of our discussions were about the significant increase in the number of people who like eating more vegetarian food, but do want to ‘be vegetarian’ – now often known as ‘flexitarians’. Apparently the Dutch language has the advantage of two separate words for ‘vegetarian food’ and ‘vegetarian people’ – that would be useful in English too!

At the end of day two we had some spare time before the flight home, so I took a ride on one of the tour boats going around the canals – Amsterdam is built on dozens canals and most buildings are next to one. The tour took us past all the major landmarks, including Anne Frank’s house. Below is a photo from the boat, near the heart of the city, showing a succession of bridges along one of the canals, and below that is a typical skyline thru the glass roof of the boat:



California here we come!

October 3, 2012

The first ever IVU World Congress/Vegfest to be held on the West Coast of North America is about to begin. We start in San Francisco from Friday, October 5, then down to Los Angeles for October 11-14 – the 40th such event held all around the world in 104 years, since 1908.

Up to a couple of years ago it would be fair to say that most veg*ns in California had never heard of IVU. No doubt some will still miss our arrival, but the publicity will already have helped to raise awareness among many there.

We have two main objectives for the next couple of weeks:

1 – to help local veg*ns in their efforts to promote our way of life, by generating some publicity and increasing the noise level. A bunch of foreigners arriving in town can often attract interest in the local media.

2 – to make North Americans generally more aware of what is happening in the veg movement around the rest of the world. There will be speakers from all over the world in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, and we'll be looking to put lots of reports online so that that unable to attend will still get to know something about them.

*Note: the word 'vegetarian' refers to food 'with or without' eggs/dairy - *everything* below is the 'without' version...! - i.e. suitable for vegans.*



The program is very flexible, with everyone putting their own schedules together. Here's what Hazel and I will be doing over the next couple of weeks:

Thursday, October 4 – drive down to London for a direct flight to San Francisco, pick up a rental car and drive over the Golden Gate Bridge to stay with our Vegsource senior friends near San Rafael in Marin County.

Friday 5 – a lazy jet-lag morning, then down to the city for a stroll around Chinatown, before heading to the world-class Millennium vegan restaurant for the evening registration and dinner with our global friends. Thanks to Green Earth Travel for helping to get them there – I'll be on the door with Marly and Hazel to welcome everyone.

Saturday 6 – to the Golden Gate Park for the San Francisco VegSoc’s annual veg festival – www.worldvegfestival.com - this year with IVU members and supporters on the program, joining more than 6,000 locals that went along for all the fun last year.

The Green Lifestyle Film Festival is also moving up from LA for the weekend this year. Around midday I’ll be giving a presentation on IVU and veg*ism around the world, along with colleagues from the IVU International Council.

There will be a lot of people around that I’ve talked to online for many years, but this will be the first opportunity to meet in person, so it should be a great weekend.

There will also be some time out to take a look around the park and the botanical gardens next door – and a wander over to the Bluegrass Festival that Hazel found online. Hopefully we can persuade some of the music fans to drop into the Vegfest too.

Sunday 7 – day two in the park, with a huge variety of activities. I’ll be giving a brief talk on vegan history in the evening, as a warm-up act for John Robbins, the famous author of the multi-million selling *Diet for a New America*, and the founder of Earthsave International. He is just one of many great speakers over the two days.

Monday 8 – a slow morning planned... In the afternoon it’s back down to the city for a rooftop reception at the office of VegNews magazine. Then maybe over to the Loving Hut vegan restaurant in the evening, where GoVegan Radio will be hosting a dinner for the SFVS volunteers.

Tuesday 9 / Wednesday 10 – Hazel and I will be taking the small coastal road down to LA, taking in the scenery and stopping a night in San Simeon, along the way. Then arriving in LA to stay with our friends Zel and Reuben who run the *Vegetarians in Paradise* website, and produce some great vegan cookbooks.

Thursday 11 – the bus tour around LA. There is nothing quite like a bus full of people from many different countries. We’ll be meeting some rescued wolves, dropping into the Getty Museum, Venice Beach, Hollywood and Universal Studios – and eating at some outstanding vegan restaurants along the way.

Friday 12 – the IVU International Seminar – deliberately smaller than the many thousands we’re expecting in SF. This will be an opportunity to interact with speakers from all over the world, on a wide variety of topics. I’ll be giving the opening presentation, with a panel of IVU speakers, and keeping an eye on things thru the day.



Some of the IVU members and supporters in SF and/or LA:



In the evening there will be a pool-side dinner at the Warner-Marriot Hotel to begin the VegSource Healthy Lifestyle Expo - www.healthylifestyleexpo.com

Saturday 13 – up early as I’m on first at 8.30am, kicking off the Expo on the beginnings of veganism. Then I can sit back and listen to some of the top American experts in veg health and nutrition.

In the evening we’re over to a nearby high school for a (vegan) fundraising comedy pro-celebrity basketball match - PCRM Food Fighters vs Harlem Wizards - www.pcrm.org/about/events/events/pcrm-food-fighters-harlem-wizards-basketball



Sunday 14 – day two of the Expo, more great presentations expected - Jeff Novick MS RD. ; Michael Klaper, MD ; Neal Barnard, MD ; Caldwell Esselstyn MD ; John McDougall, MD ; Brenda Davis, RD ; John Robbins and more amazing fun and serious speakers over the weekend.



Monday 15 – to LAX in the afternoon, arriving back in London on Tuesday morning, and a leisurely drive home to the cold damp English countryside.

We’re looking forward to a great experience, and a lot of fun in the sun.

For the entire program see: www.vegetarianvegan.org/index.php/blogs/congress-vegfest-updates/58-40th-ivu-congress-vegfest-california

Vegetarians in Paradise



sfvs.org

San Francisco Vegetarian Society

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healthy lifestyle expo

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Congress is dead - long live the Vegfest

October 10, 2012

I'm writing this from California. The first part of the 40th IVU 'big event', in San Francisco, is now over, and a lot of us are heading for Los Angeles for part two.

For the last 104 years IVU has been promoting a World Vegetarian Congress every two or three years, but this one is the 'game changer' – I borrowed that phrase from George Jacobs, editor of IVU Online News, and he is right.

What we are seeing this week is a completely new approach for IVU, and so far it is working well. We had big crowds in San Francisco, as they do every year with local visitors, but for me there was a surprise on Sunday evening...

I had expected the attendance to be nearly all Americans, and mostly Californians, with a few from other states, and fewer from other countries – but during the last big session Dixie Mahy, SFVS President, asked for a show of hands of how many came from Europe, Latin America, Asia, etc., and there were a huge number from overseas, and many more from other US states.

The SF sessions started on Friday evening at the very high-class Millennium vegan restaurant, near Union Square – there were too many of us to all eat at the same time, so a rota system had to be used – leaving plenty of time for drinks, nibbles and catching up with old friends in between eating.

On Saturday and Sunday we were in the County Fair Building, in the Golden Gate Park – admission to everything was a mere \$10 per day for anyone not on the 'four day package' (ie locals and those arranging their own accommodation). The main hall had a trade fair with entertainment, and there were three rooms for lectures and workshops. The main auditorium was huge, and by Sunday it was packed, with standing room only, for talks by top speakers like Drs. McDougal, Klaper and Goldhamer.

Lunch was available from a wide variety of stalls in the trade fair, all vegan of course, very different to the conventional congress dining hall. Dinner on Saturday and Sunday evenings was in the re-arranged auditorium, with more after-dinner speakers, including John Robbins as the grand finale.

On Monday we had a 'rooftop reception' at the VegNews office in the Mission district, with some great vegan snacks and drinks, including an extraordinary variety of vegan 'cheeses'. Some were then going on to one of the Loving Huts for a meal celebrating all the SFVS volunteers.

The accommodation was in many different hotels and hostels. Some used the 'official' hotel, but many others found cheaper alternatives, including basic hostels from \$23 per night – combine that with the \$10 daily entrance and it was possible to put together a very low-cost weekend.

How this is all so different....

This was the first IVU event to use multiple venues across the city – and we even have another city still to come. It was also the first to be shared with a pre-existing annual

event, the first where volunteers were out on the street bringing in passers-by, and the first of the new annual IVU Vegfests....

In the past we've had many Congresses that had everything in one venue, a hotel, a university campus or a beach resort. Being so self-contained meant that very few local people knew it was happening, and very few came in. At the most extreme introverted event recently, it became clear the even other people in the same hotel didn't know it was happening.

There was also very little flexibility in the costs, but that began to change in Dresden, 2008, where we were offered variety of hotels or a hostel.

The isolated exclusivity changed at the 2010 Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia, where there was a huge vegan food fair which attracted about 5,000 people, mostly local, along with a good overseas contingent. That also offered a choice of hotels – and it was the first ever 'congress' with no politics involved.

For most people, the word Congress sounds like something to do with government, and it was, until recently, where the IVU Council was elected, rules were made, the International Council met, and other business conducted. However, for a global organisation with limited funds, it was always difficult to get everyone together, so the 'democracy' was just an illusion – reaching a low point in Goa, 2006, when just 11 out of 120 member organisations were present. Decisions made by those few were supposed to be binding on all the others unable to be there.

In the 21st century, the obvious solution was to move everything online and, despite some opposition, that has now happened. All 'political' issues affecting IVU are now decided by email, giving everyone an equal opportunity to debate and vote, even if they don't have the time or money to fly around the world.

The grandiose title 'congress' also led some to imagine that IVU ruled the vegetarian world – and we still do get people demanding to know why we aren't doing that. Since the 1980s the veg movement has expanded dramatically – and inevitably has become even more diverse in the process. No-one is interested in a self appointed few deeming themselves to be a 'world council' –vegetarians, and even more so vegans, will just do whatever they want to do, and disagree with each other endlessly about how to do it.

Dixie said at one point that she likes IVU because 'it brings people together' – which very neatly sums it up, especially when the people are from different countries. What they do together is largely up to them, but we hope they share ideas and experiences, learning from each other as much as from the speakers. There are many routes to a vegan world, and no 'council' can decide which route anyone should take.

So the word 'Congress' is now redundant. The isolated introverted venue is outdated, and the same-price-for-all approach is just plain wrong.

California 2012 is the major transition to the future events – they will now be every year and called 'IVU World Vegfest' – and the 41st IVU World Vegfest, joint with the 6th Asian Veg Congress, will be in Malaysia, starting with a weekend in Kuala Lumpur, then up to Penang for a different few days. We look forward to lots of local participation and lots of sharing of experiences.

Meanwhile we're on our way to Los Angeles for the rest of this one...

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. . . and then to something completely different

October 17, 2012

I'm writing this at about 33,000 feet, somewhere over the North Atlantic. The first major IVU visit to California is now over, next year we're off to another first in Malaysia.

San Francisco and Los Angeles were very different events – SF having a big food fair and three lecture rooms, in a simple building in the park, with a huge number of people wandering in and out. LA was a professional conference setting, in an upmarket hotel, and all participants together in the one large hall. Here's what we did in LA:

Thursday October 11 - before the talks, we had a day out on a bus, visiting some of the tourist attractions of LA. First stop was the Getty Museum, an outstanding art collection in an amazing setting – a stunning building on a hill overlooking the whole city.

Our tour guide was Chef AJ, a well known LA vegan chef and former stand-up comedian. She made good use of her entertaining skills with a quiz whilst we sat in the inevitable LA traffic between venues. The questions were all about American health professionals, American books, American chefs . . . so I did a bit of heckling from the back of the bus, asking if she had any non-American questions. AJ didn't seem to understand the concept of 'not American', so she got some more heckling, but all in good fun and it passed the time to the next attraction.

The second stop was for lunch at 'Native Foods' – great food in huge portions, just a bit of delay feeding 61 people from a dozen different countries, From there we went on to Venice Beach, then Hollywood Boulevard for the walk of the stars, and eventually to 'Follow your Heart', another great vegan restaurant not too far from the base hotel. We were met there by some tame rescued wolves and musical entertainment.

There were hitches with the volume of traffic and getting everyone fed, but they all seemed to enjoy themselves, and for a first attempt by the Vegsource team it was a highly successful day – so much so that they're now thinking of doing it again next year.

Friday October 12 – 9.00am to 3.15pm was an IVU Seminar with a dozen speakers from many different countries, and an audience of about 70 that had paid specifically for that session. This was a feature of the whole program in LA - each part could be booked separately – one woman from France only booked the LA bus trip (though was in SF) . . . another from Japan just booked the Sat/Sun Expo below.

Our Seminar speakers were from Australia, Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, UK and USA – with the audience from those plus Canada, India, Israel, and Spain, with a wide variety of topics being presented, and ending with a useful panel Q&A session. Keeping the same audience in one room all day was very different to the usual IVU parallel sessions, and the feedback from those present was very positive.

We had a three hour break, then to the opening dinner of the Vegsource Healthy Lifestyle Expo, a very grand seated and served affair, with quality food, musical entertainment, and followed by a highly entertaining talk by Jeff Novick RD on the nutrition of nuts.

Saturday/Sunday October 13/14 – I had the first speaking slot for my talk on *Veganism from 1806*, which generated some interesting comments afterwards. The two days consisted of talks by some of the leading North American health professionals – Drs Klaper, McDougal and Barnard; Brenda Davis from Canada, and many more. I was told

the audience of about 400 was 30% up on last year, thanks to IVU being involved, and we were glad to help promote such a great annual event.

The food over the weekend was an optional (separately priced) buffet at the hotel, or a range of nearby vegan eateries for lunch and dinner. The overall flexibility, with some people also using alternative accommodation, was very different to the traditional all-in-one IVU Congress. Some might have preferred the simple package-style event, but most seemed to appreciate being able to make their own arrangements according to personal preferences and budgets.

This flexibility was a continuation of how it worked in SF – there were many different possible combinations, including what to do for the two spare days between the two cities, and different ways of making the journey between them. Many just booked parts of the whole, and those attending everything had a fair amount of individual planning to do. The wide variety of photos posted on Facebook suggested they enjoyed doing their own thing.

FB rules OK

Facebook was one of the big differences from the last IVU Congress, two years ago. The way veg*ns are using it seems to have expanded dramatically over those two years since we were in Indonesia.

I was asked about media coverage in California, but that was never going to be very much. In Indonesia the government ministry of tourism paid for the opening banquet, and the minister came along to perform the opening ceremony. Can anyone imagine the USA government doing that...? The issue with the media is much the same – ‘vegetarians/vegans have meeting’ is just not news in Europe or North America.

But we are now generating our own news on Facebook, and no doubt other social network sites. Many of the visitors to California were posting photos and comments, and getting lots of ‘likes’ and appreciative comments from their friends back home. IVU has been a part of this expansion – our FB page was set up soon after Indonesia, now with 4,500 fans, and we’ve since added a useful group for ‘IVU Members and Supporters’.

This visit by IVU to California was a turning point – the transition from old-style Congress to the new-style Vegfest. We look forward to seeing how it develops next year in Malaysia, where we start in Kuala Lumpur, then move on to Penang in the north.

There will also be optional extra events in India the previous weekend, and in Thailand the week after – it looks like becoming another grand mix-n-match opportunity.

If you’re interested in what IVU is doing around the world, join our FB group – we now have a huge collection of photos from California:
www.facebook.com/groups/IVUMembers

Brighton - veg capital UK?

Updated October 2012

For about the last 20 years I've bought my shoes from 'Vegetarian Shoes' in Brighton, a small city on the south coast of England. It was developed by the Victorians as a seaside escape from London, and now has about 8 million visitors per year. But even before the Victorians arrived, Brighton had a quirky history - the Indian-style Pavilion, below, was built by the Prince Regent over 200 years ago.



We used to live along the coast and I could go in to try on the shoes, but since we moved further north I buy them online (www.vegetarian-shoes.co.uk).

When I was in China, with my friend Susianto from Indonesia. I showed him the logo in my shoes - "I don't suppose you get these in Indonesia" - "no, but I buy mine online from them too" - which kinda put me in place, the age of the internet knows no boundaries...

Hazel and I went back down for a few days a while back. The photo on the right was the view from our window looking across the end of the pier. As we live in the countryside, and a long way inland, when we want to get away we usually head for a town, preferably by the sea. Our hotel is not totally veg*n, none of them are, but they nearly all offer a full vegan breakfast and this one was excellent.



Above is a slice of Gardener Street, Vegetarian Shoes on the left - and here's Laura selling me some new shoes.

Then after a hard morning shopping, over the road to Infinity Foods, veggie organic wholefood, where we sat in the upstairs window watching the world go by over lunch.





A couple of years ago Brighton elected the first ever British Green Party MP (Member of Parliament) - Caroline Lucas who has represented Brighton at the European Parliament since 1999. They have lots of Green politicians in Europe but the antiquated UK electoral system is designed to keep the establishment in power, and they have clung on to it.

Caroline got elected because of the significant 'alternative community' living there. As one national newspaper reported: "After the eight-hour count to victory, the exhausted new MP sat with supporters to toast their victory with fair-trade champagne and a vegetarian fry-up."

But they have top quality veg cuisine too, as this 5-star review by a non-veg food critic from *Times Online* shows:

"... We were here to eat at Terre à Terre, which has picked up a hand-made reputation for good food cooked by Amanda Powley with Philip Taylor. ... Nothing on the menu is anything you've eaten elsewhere. ... I was so intrigued by this food that I bought the cookbook,... And it's vegetarian!



Yes. Didn't I mention? This was meatless and fishless. Quite a lot of it actually vegan, ... it's incredibly good food, and I mean that in a credibly defying sense. This is most probably the best vegetarian restaurant in Britain, but it's also better than that ghetto accolade. It is singularly and eccentrically marvellous." - www.terreaterre.co.uk

The more usual image is summed up in this extract from a Brighton City Guide, from a non-veg band called '*Blood Red Shoes*' :

"... THE COWLEY CLUB is a venue but more important an all-round cultural centre, it's run by an anarchist co-operative and has all kinds of shows, club nights, protest meetings and more. It sells books and has lots of free courses, for example English courses for asylum seekers or meetings about breaking up BNP rallies or electoral plans. It's also a super-cheap vegan cafe in the daytime. It rules basically, and pretty much summarizes what I like about Brighton. ...Blood Red Shoes is not even remotely vegetarian, which actually makes us the minority in a town like Brighton.

... HAND IN HAND is up around an area called Kemptown - which is generally worth checking out anyway as it's pretty cool - this place is tiny and brews its own ales in the basement. It also sells cheap pies which are freshly made by a local muso, the thai vegetable ones are ace.

...get on the BIG LEMON eco-friendly vegetable-oil fuelled bus and get into town [*photo right: the bus ready for a wedding*]. ... a town with a rich history of insane, hippy, lefty, drug maniac, eco-warrior, nocturnal, organic vege, oh-so-bohemian ridiculousness."



One evening Hazel and I were able to meet up with some of the local veg group in one of the many veg*n eating places. This one was the Aloka, a 'weigh your own' place - you help yourself from the great variety of food, then put your plate on the scales and print out a price ticket. A good incentive to avoid too much heavy food! After eating I gave a brief talk about IVU, and got them to wave to anyone reading this:



Naturally I have to do some wildlife photography - the one on the right is a Herring Gull, it was sitting on a post above an open-air pub on the beach. They are very big, very bold, and dive down for any food which is not guarded closely enough, not bothering to wait for left-overs.



On our last night we went to Terre a Terre, the very upmarket veg restaurant I mentioned above - we managed to visit several other veg places before going home, but it would need longer to go to them all...

If you want to take a look around, then one of the best times is in March, when you can take in one of the biggest Vegfests in the UK: brighton.vegfest.co.uk - meanwhile here's my photo of the pier at night:



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Throwing the lion to the Christians - Veg*ism and Religion

August 18, 2010, updated September 26, 2012

I have absolutely no religious inclinations at all - which might have made me an odd choice for a speaker at a conference of the Christian Vegetarian Association UK (CVAUK) back in August 2010.

As IVU Manager, I try to treat all religions with equal respect as they are an inevitable, and indeed essential part of promoting veg*ism worldwide. My research into the history of vegetarianism has countless crossovers with the history of all religions, so I try to have some basic understanding of them all. Among the current IVU member organizations we have veg groups representing various sub-sects of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Hare Krishnas, Muslims, some spiritual groups that don't fit easy labels, and others that make a point of being strictly non-religious.

I am also very aware that there are millions of people around the world who would not consider going vegetarian without the blessing of their religious leaders. So we need to find ways of helping those leaders to see veg*ism as an opportunity, not a threat. Historically some have seen it as a threat - in the middle-ages the Christian Church burned vegetarians at the stake as heretics... Fortunately they don't do that now, but there are some leaders whose underlying views don't seem to have changed very much.

Religions generally change very slowly, which allows the IVU collection of articles about many religions to go back 60 years or more, and still be relevant today. See: www.ivu.org/religion

The photo below right sums up for me how vegetarianism can bring religions together. I took this in Indonesia, November 2009. The young woman on the left is Muslim and her friend was a Seventh Day Adventist Christian - they were inseparable throughout the time we were there. The rest of that lunch table was made up of Buddhists, Hindus, and odd bods like me, all there for the Asian Veg Congress.

I was initially attracted to attend the UK Christian Veg Conference by the academic quality of the speakers - mostly veg*n theologians who had taken historical topics for their talks. So I offered a talk on 'The religious origins of organized veg*ism'. If these guys can persuade other Christians that veg*ism is a positive step then IVU will do whatever it can to support them - as we will for all religious groups.

It turned out to be very worthwhile, and enjoyable, with 30-40 of us on the Leeds University campus, jointly organised with the Theology Department. Despite my own lack of any religion, my previous visits to Leeds, in Yorkshire in the north of England,



have also been to Christian Churches, researching my family history - churches and graveyards are usually the only old buildings still standing, so I'm beginning to get certain associations with the place.

The Saturday was made up of some fairly serious, and very interesting, talks from academic theologians - the last one speaking about Hinduism for comparison - and all rounded off in the evening with a lot of fun at Hansa's Gujarati veg restaurant a mile or two down the road.

The photos on the right are - top: the meeting place where the University has taken over a row of old houses, with Father John on the steps. middle: Matthew Barton, from the Leeds Theology Department, getting the sessions underway with Cambridge theologian David Grumett about to speak. bottom: some of the group at Hansa's Gujarati veg restaurant.

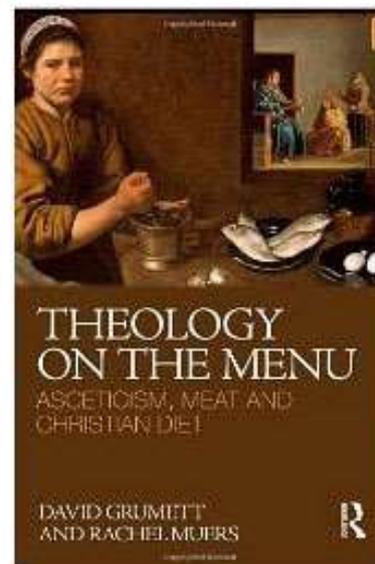


Sunday began with a Mass, which I skipped, but it was followed by the slightly inappropriate timing of me addressing a meeting of Christians on a Sunday morning. I gave a presentation about the origins of organised vegetarianism, and the important role that 19th century Christians had played in it.

After some further lively talks from Father John and the wonderful 80 year old CVAUK president, Don Gwillim - all much more light-hearted than the Saturday sessions - we divided into groups for some productive workshop discussions, including some disturbing accounts of the open hostility they often receive from flesh-eating Christians in their home churches.

It was a very useful weekend, I learned a lot and hopefully was able to contribute something to the group in return. For anyone with an interest in all this, check out '[Theology on the Menu - asceticism, meat and the Christian diet](#)' ([link to amazon.com](#)) by David Grumett and Rachel Muers, who both spoke on the Saturday.

And see the Christian Vegetarian Association UK at: www.cvauk.org (a member of IVU)



Maybe one day I'll go to Leeds for something other than churches, graveyards and Christians - but I do hope that CVAUK organises more conferences like this one, and indeed it would be great to see veg*ns from other religions around the world doing something similar. We do all have a lot to share.

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The Vegetarian Society and me

Updated October 2012

In 2010 I joined the Board of Directors of the Vegetarian Society UK – the world's oldest, founded in 1847, and still going strong today. Sadly I don't get paid anything other than expenses - no doubt if I was a director of a junk-food firm I'd be paid millions, but such is life when you'd rather do something useful.

The photo right is 'Parkdale' the HQ of VSUK, near Manchester.



I go back a long way with VSUK, to sometime in the 1980s when I was running a local group which was part of the 'nationwide network' of more than 100 similar groups. Hazel and I were also running a veg B&B at the time so we got to know a lot of veg*ns around the country.

Veg in cyberspace

In 1994 I got onto the primitive version of the internet, heard about the 'world wide web' and downloaded one of the first web browsers. It was mostly plain text with very limited options for pictures, similar to the screenshot of the 1995 Mosaic browser on the right.



Some veg*ns at three UK universities had started the world's first veg website, running on a server owned by one, the website managed by another, and the third started putting single pages on it for each of the major veg groups in the UK – all done within the academic world as few people outside of educational establishments had any access to the internet.

Which was where I came in – I took over the single page for VSUK and started expanding it. During the month of January 1995 we got 500 page views – by that summer it was 10,000 per month, and by the end of the year it was 40,000.

The photo right is from the cybercafé at the IVU World Veg Congress of 1996, in the USA. The machines have downsized a little since then!



It was a unique experience being involved right at the beginning of something so revolutionary. We all thought this was going to have a major impact in the future, but were always up against those who wanted to keep their mindset firmly in the 20th century. It was hard to get any funding as the usual response was "what about those not online". They didn't believe that very soon most world would be online.

By the end of 1996 the VegSoc website was up to 100,000 page views per month, and by then I had also set up new websites for some other groups, including EVU, Viva!, and the first IVU website in December '95. But I decided to leave VSUK and the others, so that I could concentrate on IVU – I saw the future of the veg internet as global, and wanted to be a part of all that.

A couple of years later, in 1999, the VSUK website was struggling a bit, and I took it on again, now at www.vegsoc.org, and was even paid a small amount now that more people were beginning to realise it might be useful after all. It was still a struggle to get it taken really seriously, especially as few of the full-time staff could access the web from the office. By 2002 it was up to 300,000 page views per month, the staff could now use it at work, and the revolution was underway. This time we did a handover session with some training so that the staff could run it themselves, I dropped out again, and have been delighted to see it go from strength to strength ever since.

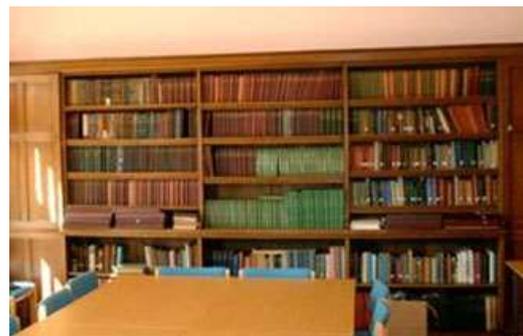
Meanwhile a lot of work had gone into the 2002 (all vegan) IVU World Veg Congress, being hosted by VSUK in Edinburgh, Scotland. I had put up a website and spent the week at the congress trying to make it as interactive online as possible, for those unable to attend.

The photo right is Jeff Freedman from Toronto in the 2002 cybercafé, with rather smaller machines by then. He wrote daily articles about congress, to which I added some photos and put it all online, along with lots more photos, articles and forums.



Veg timetravel

During that Congress it was agreed to hold the centenary IVU Congress in Dresden, Germany, in 2008 – and I was asked to provide some historical info in time for that one. The biggest source of veg history is the library at Parkdale – so I made the hour-each-way drive one day per month for the next six years.



On the right is part of the library, with bound volumes of all the society's journals from 1847, and other books back to 1819. In 2008 I was commissioned to catalogue all this, naturally doing it as more webpages. It was from here that I eventually began to discover a very different history from a vegan perspective.

At the 160th AGM, in 2007, I gave a talk about how the Society's Diamond Jubilee, in 1907, led to the founding of IVU in 1908. VSUK has been a leading member ever since.

My latest incarnation as a 'Trustee' of the Society is a result of the elected board members deciding there was a gap in their knowledge of historical and international aspects of vegetarianism, and I was honoured to be asked to fill the gap.

I took the photo below in June 2010 when we rounded up 11 of the great bunch of 33 staff to wave to anyone reading this blog:



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Living on the Front Line

January 19, 2011

Last Friday Hazel and I were in a group of 15 sitting down to a vegan meal together. Nothing unusual in that you might think, but in this little corner of the world it was probably unique. This is livestock farming country, with hunting, shooting, fishing and any other form of animal abuse you can think of somewhere nearby.

The sparrow-hawk on the right was sitting on our garden bird feeder. We hadn't intended the smaller birds to be the food, but I have watched a hawk tear one apart in the tree. So some people just think of it as normal for them to behave the same way, but of course humans have a choice, sparrow-hawks don't.



We do have crops growing around here, but the farmers don't waste their time growing food for humans when they can make far more money from animal feed, and one of the biggest animal feed firms in the country is just down the road. We have small scale factory farming in our village, and more around the area for beef and poultry. The farmers' market in the nearby town is almost all meat and dairy, very few commercial growers bother with fruit or vegetables, despite the good quality land. And the slaughterhouse is about five miles to the east.

Right, from my office window, a mile north, animal sheds and feed silo:



The first problem of arranging a vegan meal for 15 people is simply finding somewhere to hold it. Most of the pubs and restaurants offer ovo-lacto-vegetarian options - just replace the



meat with large quantities of eggs or cheese and the local dairy and egg farmers don't mind too much. But take out even that and you meet with suspicion and even open hostility. *Above*, pheasants bred by gamekeepers for shooting, photo from my office window.

So the local 'Voice for Animals' group only attempt it once a year, for their Christmas Dinner - a little late this year in January. They are based some distance away, and have members from a very wide rural area. They've held these dinners various places over the last few years, some good, some awful. This year they were at a pub called the Golden Lion just over the border in Wales, which laid on a three course completely vegan menu, with three choices for each course. But this is not a very conventional pub, the landlord gives guitar lessons at the back, has his friends round to provide live music gigs, and the whole pub doubles as a musical instrument shop. So we had our vegan meal surrounded by guitars for sale:



Here's the menu, all vegan, even the ice cream:

- 1- Caramelised Onion Soup; Roasted Roots Paté or Creamy Mushrooms on garlic Bruschetta
 - 2- Vegetable Bolognese with spaghetti ; Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables and Spiced Rice or Mushroom and Tarragon Pithivier
 - 3- Homemade Cherry Ice-cream, Served with a hot cherry compote; Forest Fruit Crumble or Crepes with a Toffee and Nut Sauce
- so it can be done, even here. But why would people like us want to live in a place like this?

Because it is beautiful countryside and it needs to be reclaimed as the natural environment that it once was. It wasn't always like it is now - not so long ago most ordinary people around here didn't eat much meat simply because they couldn't get it. They grew their own vegetables, and gathered from the wild, including some animals and fish, though mostly through poaching which brought harsh penalties if they were caught. They would not have understood anyone actually choosing to eat only plant food, but not because of nutritional concerns - to them flesh-eating was a symbol of wealth and power and their descendants today do not want to be seen eating 'peasant food'. *Right:* from my office window, a mile east, sheep grazing and the feed silo for dairy cows.



These days we all want to live in the beautiful countryside, and recent plans to expand the factory farms and the slaughterhouse have all met with fierce opposition from local meat-eating residents. They'll still buy their cheap meat in the supermarkets of course, but they just don't want to be reminded of where it comes from, preferring the advertisers fantasy-land of cows grazing happily in the green grassy fields.

We do have cattle in the field at the back of our house from time to time - but it doesn't take much to see that there are no cows (i.e. females). These are all-male herds, fattened up for a couple of years between the arable crops which end up as animal feed. We get the lucky ones in our field - the majority spend their entire short lives in the big sheds before being hauled the five miles for slaughter. *Right:* even being outside doesn't guarantee much grass (from my office window).



In this area our little gathering of 15 sharing a vegan meal won't go unnoticed, and the 'Voice for Animals' group will be taking their stall anywhere they're allowed to set it up. So if you're finding life a little too easy in a veg-friendly town or city, come and join us on the front line.

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National Veg Week - does your nation have one?

May 23, 2012

The idea for a National Vegetarian Week (NVW) originated in the UK - following a successful national veg day in 1992 it was expanded to a week in 1993. Both of those were at the beginning of October, but subsequent market research showed that the campaign would be more effective in the UK in the late spring - to tie in with fresh local produce in season - so it moved to May in 1995 and has been there ever since. See: www.nationalvegetarianweek.org



This is coordinated from Parkdale (*photo right*), the HQ of the Vegetarian Society UK, where they have lots of staff turning it into a major national event. There are hundreds of businesses and local groups running activities up and down the country, with the big advantage of far more media coverage on a concentrated week.



In 2007 the Australian Vegetarian Society decided to run their own NVW, and also agreed that it would be best in the spring - which of course in the Southern Hemisphere means back to October. For last year's OzWeek see: www.vegetarianweek.com.au (should be updated soon, ready for next October). More recently another has started for the USA, running in April, see: usvegweek.com



The original UK national veg day was probably arranged to tie in with World Vegetarian Day on October 1. That was invented in the USA in the 1970s - proposed at the IVU World Veg Congress in Maine in 1975, and formally launched by NAVS (North American VegSoc) in 1978. However, it didn't really take off outside the US until the age of internet made it so much easier for the whole world to share these things - see: www.worldvegetarianday.org

As a result of discussions around the IVU World Veg Congress in Germany in 2008, Centro Vegetariano in Portugal launched International Vegetarian Week. This is for the first seven days of October, to turn the world veg day into a week, and they say that 18 countries joined in last year. You can find that one at: www.vegetarianweek.org



The whole of October is sometimes known Vegetarian Awareness Month, and in 1982 the IVU World Veg Congress passed a resolution "that October of each year henceforth shall be known as Reverence for Life Month."



In 1994 The Vegan Society (UK) rounded off the month (and celebrated their 50th anniversary) by launching World Vegan Day on November 1 - www.worldveganday.org - and some groups are now expanding that into a week and The Vegan Society is now promoting November as vegan month.

So whether you want your national veg week in the Spring, October or November, or all together if you're in the southern hemisphere, they do have an impact, so how about getting your nation to join in?

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Vegan Wolves

July 20, 2011

A couple of weeks ago Hazel and I went to the annual BBQ organised by the Wolverhampton Vegans and Veggies – a really nice laid-back afternoon, in some hot sunshine for a change. The city's football team is called The Wolves, though I don't think they've been attracted to the barbie yet...



It was well publicised across the city, plenty of sign-boards to the 'free veggie BBQ' – in fact it was all-vegan with a list of small 'suggested donations', and plenty of tables with leaflets etc. From the look of the buckets people were donating far more than the suggestions.

We've seen a lot of changes in local groups across the UK in recent years, a typical example is a group that ran from 1967 as the 'Oxford Vegetarian Society' and continued as that until recently – but is now known as Oxford Vegetarians and Vegans – or just OxVeg for short. These local groups, as in Wolverhampton, have not only dropped the formal structure, they have also made a point of including both vegetarian and vegan in their names, and most are now affiliated to both the national vegetarian and vegan societies, with many also affiliated to other groups like 'Viva!'.

Below: a few scenes from the 'Vegan Wolves' free public BBQ:



The end of the formal societies has come very rapidly. In the 1990s the Vegetarian Society UK had about 100 affiliated groups, almost all called 'society' – a quick survey of the current 106 shows that 100 of them are now just informal vegetarians / vegans / veggies / veg or some combination of those. Only 6 actual local societies remain.

The UK Vegan Society also lists around 100 local groups, many of them the same as above as they affiliate to both – and only 2 'societies' among them.

The change is due to the internet of course – local groups mostly needed formal structures to look after the money they had to collect to print and post newsletters. Now everything is done on websites and email, so no costs involved, and no formal society needed.

Meanwhile the national societies are looking less and less like the 'social network' clubs that they were before the age of the internet. Memberships are declining, and attracting trustees is getting harder.

On the new version of social networking, facebook, the most popular vegetarian page now has over to 150,000 fans – traditional societies could only ever have dreamt of numbers like that. And most societies around the world now have far more Facebook followers than real-life members.

So where does this leave the future for local activities? My impression is that they are getting much stronger, and we are now seeing major events organized locally, and independent of any of the national organisations. The big VegFests such as Bristol and Brighton are typical of that – and there is one of those in Wolverhampton too, on October 29 this year, organised by the Midlands Vegan Campaign. They had over 1,500 visitors last year, which is impressive for a relatively small city.

Right: the scene in the main hall at a recent Wolverhampton Vegan Festival, this year's prediction is "80+ stalls, 20+ talks/workshops, vegan caterers from across the UK, live music all day, late night party & much more!"



This appears to be following from what has happened increasingly in North America over the last 10 years – there are now variations of VegFests attracting thousands of visitors in San Francisco, Toronto and Boston. We know of at least 20 more in that region, and growing numbers in other parts of the world.

The older of these City-based VegFests, like the three named above, are run by traditional local societies, but others are increasingly being run as separate organisations in their own right. There are many variations with an endless mixture of trade & info stalls, guest speakers and entertainment, but always in the same place and about the same time every year. It looks like there will be one near you soon - if not, maybe you should try filling the gap . . .

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Vegan Café 4 the Day - could your group do this?

September 6, 2011

Last Saturday Hazel and I went just over the border to Llangollen in North Wales to visit the 'Vegan Café 4 the Day' in one of the old halls in the middle of town. The FREE Café tours Wales, setting up for one day in towns where there are no other vegan places to eat.

The leaflet right was being handed out in the streets as we arrived:

Vegan Café 4 the Day
 @The Memorial Hall, Market Street,
 Llangollen, LL20 8PS
 Today 10am - 4pm

Serving FREE breakfast, dinner and desserts
 for 1 day only (Welsh inspired menu)

10am-12pm Fried breakfast
 12pm-2pm Choice of hot meals
 2pm-4pm Desserts and cakes
 Plus ALL DAY FREE Buffet

- Literature stall
- Guide to vegan North Wales, where to eat and shop
- Diabetic friendly food stall
- Friendly people on hand for information and advice

Contact eatoutveganwales@yahoo.co.uk
www.eatoutveganwales.org

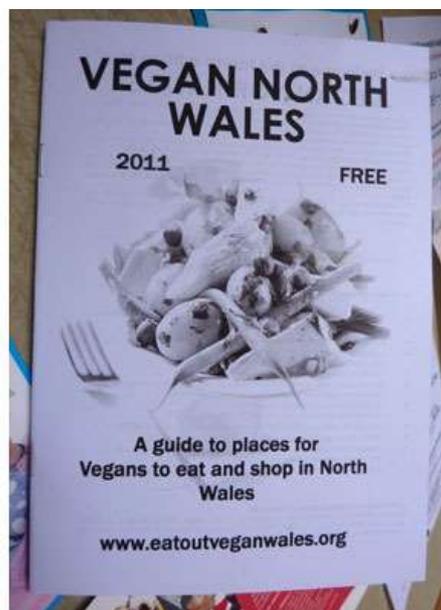
The group take the event all over Wales, and have been getting great responses everywhere they go. Llangollen (pronounced *Thlangothlen*) is a tourist town and it was full of visitors on the first Saturday of September, which made it an ideal venue for the vegan event.



Left: signs in English and Welsh outside the old building.

The old hall was packed, with a mixture of vegans glad of somewhere to eat and meet other vegans – and a lot of curious locals and tourists who came in just to try what was on offer. The atmosphere was good too, all very relaxed and friendly, with more of a sense of community than normal cafes where people often don't talk to those on the next table.

It was all run by volunteers, with funding mostly from donations plus a small grant from the Vegan Society.



This touring café is an idea that other groups around the world could use, especially those away from the bigger cities.

Left: Inside the main entrance – a menu board, partly in Welsh, and the local guide leaflet.

Below: some of the happy eaters with their free food, about 1.00pm - it had been full since opening at 10.00am, with lots of visitors coming and going:



Below: part of the buffet (waiters were also serving the from the menu), the hard-working (and mostly young) volunteer staff in the kitchen, a rack with some free leaflets and books for sale, and a plate of falafel and salad:



More about vegan Wales on: www.eatoutveganwales.org

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The Big Veg Weekend

November 2, 2011

World Vegan Day was on a Tuesday this year, so a lot of groups held their big events the previous weekend – and the last weekend of October is now becoming a worldwide vegan party. Some that we know about, in all sorts of varieties, were all happening at the same time in:

Accra, Ghana ; Bath, UK ; Boston, USA
Cape Town, South Africa
Sao Paulo, Brazil ; Sydney, Australia
- and no doubt many more.

Last year I was in Bangalore, India, for the same weekend where the Indian Vegan Society organised the India & SE Asia Veg Congress (all vegan as always these days of course). The photo below is some of the great music at that event. WVD was on the Monday and we had a trip to a vegan organic farm near the city with more traditional Indian music and dancing.



This year Hazel and I headed for a slightly less exotic but equally impressive venue, the West Midlands Vegan Festival in Wolverhampton, about an hour from home, where I was giving a talk on the history of veganism.

We arrived at 11.00am, just as the doors were about to open – and found the extraordinary sight of a huge number of people queuing all along the street, to get into a vegan event. It would have been hard to imagine that ten years ago.



As I was due to speak at 12 noon we jumped the queue and went in to meet lots of old friends who were at their stalls waiting for the crowds. And it did get very crowded – the photo below is just one end of the main hall, and *before* most people came in. By 1.00pm it was getting difficult to move around.



By 4.00pm over 1,500 people had gone through the doors, and more were still coming in, quite amazing in a town that few people outside the UK will have heard of, and many in the UK only know because of the football team. We met friends from Manchester, London and Leicester, and there were many more that had made long treks to be there.

The Vegan Society (below left) and the Vegetarian Society (right) were both getting plenty of interest on their stalls. It was great to be at a vegan event where all vegetarians were equally welcome, without the sort of hostility we've sadly seen in some places. We're all on the same path.



A couple more of the stalls below – the guy in bear suit must have been getting rather hot as it got ever more crowded . . . and a colourful food stall seen from above.



As well as the main trade hall and eating area, there was a big café/bar with music, comedy, poetry and more going on. Plus upstairs and downstairs were cookery demos and three lecture/workshop rooms.

I spent an hour giving my talk on vegan history in one of these rooms. Considering all rival attractions I was pleased with the attendance, and they seemed to find it interesting. I was also very grateful to the Vegan Society, Amanda in particular, for letting me use their projector and setting it up for me.

Next year the IVU World Veg Congress/Vegfest is in California early in October so there might be an opportunity to stay in the states for a couple of weeks, and visit the huge Boston Veg Food Fair over the 'big weekend' at the end of the month on the way home. Last year they reported 25,000 thru the doors over two days at that one, and initial reports from this year suggest they still need a bigger venue...

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Cruelty Free Christmas - an idea for Christians?

November 23, 2011

We're getting near the season of peace on earth and goodwill to all sentient beings. Well it would be nice to think that was what Christmas could be about . . . and even better if we could have that all year round of course.

Last Saturday Hazel and I went to a local Cruelty Free Christmas Fair in Shrewsbury, organised by the Montgomery Voice for Animals – in a church, which seemed just a little incongruous to me. As far as I could tell, the Church owners were not too concerned about what was on the stalls, as long as they brought in some more money to help maintain the building. And it certainly is one of those glorious buildings that must be preserved.

Right is my photo of the 'Christmas Card Shop' in a separate part of the Church. It sells cards produced by dozens of different charities, with 4% commission to the church:



I recently read a book by an academic, non-veg, historian who said that vegetarianism was 'quite fashionable' in first century Rome. Then the Christians took over, followed by 2,000 years of mass slaughter.

And not just slaughter of animals of course – both sides in the First World War had army chaplains praying for victory while millions of humans were slaughtered there too. Most slave owners on the American 'deep south' plantations were devout church-goers. Throw in a few Catholics and Protestants bombing each other, heretics burned at the stake, and the list is endless. Not really the most glorious record of "*love thy neighbour as thyself*" (Mark 12:31).

Most genuine Christians today would distance themselves from all that of course, but they still seem to be generally oblivious or indifferent to the appalling cruelty involved in producing their Christmas dinner.

There are several Christian Vegetarian Societies that are members of IVU, and I had the privilege of speaking at one of their conferences last year. I went along with some trepidation but they were the most delightful company, I really enjoyed the two days I spent with them and came away with a lot of respect for them. But sadly they talked about the hostility they face back in their home churches.

Below some of the food at our local Cruelty Free Christmas Fair, all vegan of course:



For most of us, the reality of Christmas in western countries is a time for advertising agencies to pile on the emotional blackmail, persuading people to spend money they don't have, buying other people things they don't want, or else "you're a scrooge". All in the interests of economic growth and prosperity of course, and to hell with any people, let alone non-human animals, who get in the way of all that.

Below, a quiet moment in one corner of the Cruelty Free Christmas Fair in St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury, there was a steady flow of people coming through for most of the four hours it was open. Over the next few weeks there are dozens of similar events being run by local groups up and down the UK and probably in many other countries, some much bigger, many small like this one, but with a significant combined effect:



It would be good to think that more Christians might make their Christmas cruelty-free this year. There are plenty of cruelty-free Christmas shopping ideas in your own country, both online and at local fairs, far too many to list here, try a Google search.

For more about Christian Vegetarianism see:

Christian Vegetarian Association

- www.all-creatures.org/cva

Christian Vegetarian Association UK

- www.christianvegetarian.co.uk

Christian Vegetarian Association of Ghana

- christianveggiesghana@yahoo.com

Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (Nigeria)

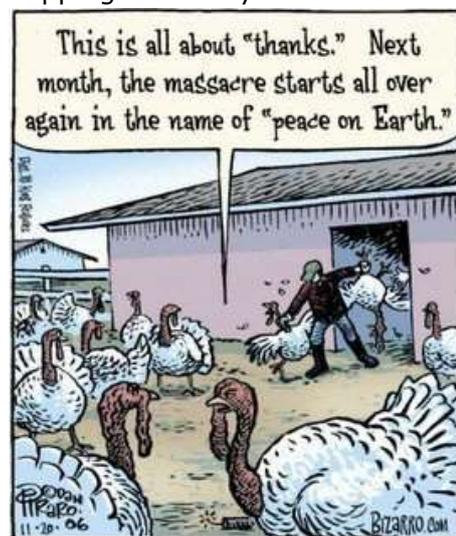
- bcsvegetarianfellowship@yahoo.com

Brotherhood of the Cross & Star (UK)

- celiaofo@yahoo.co.uk

The Order of the Cross

- www.orderofthecross.org



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Vegan Camp – 31 years of a simple idea

August 22, 2012

Last week I had the opportunity to drop into the Vegan Camp, which has run for a couple of weeks every year, in all parts England, Scotland and Wales, since 1981. This year it was near the Lake District in North West England.

Over those thirty-one years it has grown into something of a national institution, a simple but effective idea which could work for groups in other countries.

The camp's origins seem to have followed from the thinking behind the Vegan Views magazine, which was first published in 1975, and has appeared quarterly for 37 years. There is a low price for print/post version, but these days the free online PDF version is equally popular and gaining international interest.

Vegan Views (a member of IVU) has always supported the work of the Vegan Society (also a member), but the founders felt a need for an independent magazine which could take more in-depth, and perhaps more controversial, articles and opinions. For more info, and free downloads, see www.veganviews.org.uk

In 1981 the Vegan Camp was started as another independent organisation, overlapping with Vegan Views, but quite separate. It is open to anyone who wants to spend a couple of weeks on a campsite with a lot of vegans – it has never been restricted to committed vegans, though they have to be for at least those two weeks of course. The idea took off and attracted so many participants that numbers eventually had to be limited. Below is a view of half of the 2012 camp, the big communal tent with a vegan food shop and meeting space was just off to the right:



Most at the camp bring their own tents, but some this year stayed in the caravan (trailer) site across the road, and some, like me, stayed in a nearby veg B&B. Many stay for the whole two weeks, others for any time they wish, I just dropped in for a couple of days.

The campers include families, so there were plenty of children around, along with some older couples and younger singles, just anyone who wants a vegan holiday. The organisers say it is not meant to be any sort of campaign, just a holiday, but for vegans

who are isolated in their local communities it is a great source of support to get them through the rest of the year, and a good intro for wannabe vegans.

The activities include day trips to local attractions, physical outdoor activities, and home-made evening entertainment, all down to whatever anyone wants to organise, with plenty of choice so mostly smaller groups taking up each option. While I was there I went to a talk in one of the caravans, a karaoke session in the bar, and then a group day-trip over to Keswick in the Lake District, where we took a boat ride around Derwent Water, a large lake surrounded by mountains. It was getting windy, the water was choppy, and those in the open part of the boat were getting wet:



On the way back we stopped at Castlerigg, a stone circle estimated to be 4,500 years old, on a hill-top surrounded by mountains. The rain had stopped for a while but the clouds were down over the mountain tops:



If anyone wants to go to the camp next year (in Somerset I heard), or is interested in doing something similar in another country, you can find a lot more details at:

www.vegancamp.co.uk

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Wild Food Foraging, and the Veg Cookery School

September 5, 2012

Last week I had the opportunity to join the staff of the Vegetarian Society UK on their team-building day out, learning about foraging for food in the wild, then cooking it. As a trustee (board member) of the society it was great to spend a day in such good company away from all the usual office routines.

We were led by John Wright, who has appeared in the *'River Cottage'* TV series alongside Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, as an expert on foraging for free food that is growing all around us.

The society's HQ, Parkdale (photo right) is on the outer edge of greater Manchester – right next door to a large country park with plenty of woodland, so we didn't have to go very far to find something edible.



John gave us a tour of all the culinary delights growing in the park, some of them familiar, but others were unexpected. That's him below with some the group of about 20 of us, wondering whether they really wanted to taste the offerings...



After a couple of hours collecting unlikely specimens (unfortunately no fungi around), we headed back to the Cordon Vert Cookery School, housed at one end of Parkdale. The school offers professional as well as recreational courses in vegetarian/vegan cookery, and has become world-renowned in its own right for the high quality of tuition it offers.

Most recently it has been running courses for the chefs of one of the UK's top hotel chains. The chefs are not vegetarian of course, but they learn how to produce high

quality plant-food dishes. Many of the people ordering these dishes in the hotels are not veg*n either – but it's a great way to get more people trying more veg food, and raising the quality of what is on offer for committed veg*ns in the process.

John set out some of the items we had collected and proceeded to demonstrate some unlikely things he could do with them – naturally we had to taste those too:



Living in the country I've done some foraging myself over the years, but it does take some dedication as most wild varieties take a lot more work – often for less results – than the bigger, juicier, cultivated plants.

My main concern has been that in this cooler northern climate, there is very little wild food, especially fruit, that can be eaten without added sugar to make it palatable. Tropical fruit has rather more sun to sweeten it than we get around here.

Below – some photos I took a few years ago of food growing wild within a few minutes walk of our house: sloes, elderberries and chestnuts:



If you want to try it for yourself, search for 'Foraging for Food' on google, and you should find some articles and books for your own country and in your own language.

For more about the Cordon Vert Cookery School (not far from Manchester airport...) see www.cordonvert.co.uk



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Divided by a common language

March 9, 2011

"Do you have anything vegetarian?"

"Yes, do you eat fish?"

"No, vegetarians don't eat fish."

"Some vegetarians here eat fish."

"No, some people eat fish and unfortunately call themselves vegetarian, but they could call themselves Martians if they like, it doesn't mean they are...."

"Oh, so what do you eat then?"

"I eat plants."

Blank look. End of conversation. They seem to be thinking that I might like to go out and graze on the lawn...

It should be simple: *Vegetable* – *vegetation* – *vegetarian* – all derived from the Latin '*vegetabile*' which roughly translates as 'plant'. So vegetarians eat plants.

But of course it isn't simple. I've lost count of how many times I've gone through this. Do the same in India and you're offered lassi and paneer. Milk products are not plants either.

Some years ago a poll in the USA asked people if they were vegetarian – up to 12% said yes. More detailed surveys of what people actually ate showed that nearer 1% came within even a loose genuine definition of 'vegetarian'. That left about 30 million Americans who think vegetarians are flesh-eaters.

Even that loose definition included eggs, dairy and honey – which don't look much like plants to me. Back in the 19th century some people did actually claim that milk was a plant because it was just grass that passed through a cow. The same logic would make meat a plant too, not that many cows get anywhere near grass these days.

The Americans in those days were at least a little more accurate than the British – early 19th century American books often referred to their 'vegetable and milk diet' – the Brits added eggs but still called it just a 'vegetable diet'!

The first people to call themselves 'vegetarian', around 1840, really did just eat plants, we have now proved that beyond doubt. If they'd had more money our history would have been different – but just as they launched the world's first Vegetarian Society they fell apart and it was rescued by the vegetable-egg-and-milk eaters who were then stuck with the word 'vegetarian'.

They knew they weren't really vegetarians and spent the rest of the 19th century trying to solve the problem of the wrong name. In 1871 the President proposed changing it to 'Diet Reform Society', which would have been better, but he was narrowly out-voted and the problem continued.

Then they spent most of the 20th century trying to pretend the problem didn't exist. The classic was the silly fiction of vegetarian being derived from the Latin '*vegetus*' – meaning 'whole, fresh, lively' – so fresh milk? No problem, it's *vegetusian* (and why not fresh meat?). But it was fiction and now we've proved that too.

So 'vegetarian' really does just mean someone who eats plants.

Some people call themselves 'pesco-vegetarian' – I'm not bothered by that if they really are just eating plant food with occasional fish, like Bill Clinton does now. Though I'd guess most of them include eggs/dairy which are neither pesco nor veg.

In India there are several hundred million people following what was originally just a Hindu diet – plant-food-plus-milk-products. Thanks to the British they're now called lacto-vegetarians, which again wouldn't be a problem, except that it takes too long to say all that. So they just shorten it a bit to 'vegetarian' – which all adds to the confusion with a lot of people being convinced that all 'vegetarians' must be eating vast amounts of cheese.

In fact the most recent USA polls show that 66% of those genuinely within the broad ovo-lacto-vegetarian definition in that country don't use any eggs or dairy products at all.

Ah, so they're vegan then?

Nope, 'vegetarian' minus eggs/dairy does not necessarily equal 'vegan'. The original vegans saw it as an ethical lifestyle, as do many today – treating all non-human animals with the same respect as humans (I refuse to define veganism with a long string of negatives!). That goes for clothes, entertainment, research, work etc., etc., as well as food. Would you wear human skin on your feet..? Well, apart from your own I suppose.

So, for them, someone who only eats plants, but wears leather or goes to rodeos, is not a vegan – though many others just see it as a diet and call themselves vegan because they just eat plants, which is what 'vegetarian' really means, as opposed to ovo- lacto- pesco- pollo- or even carno- vegetarians. So now we're all confused again. What we should have:

Vegetarian – someone who just eats plants.

Vegan – a person living an animal-respecting ethical lifestyle, including a vegetarian diet. So simple, but I doubt if we'll get back to it in my lifetime. Maybe it would be easier to invent some new words and start again. So next restaurant:

"Do you have anything plantatarian?"

"Yes, do you eat eggplants?"

"Only if they're free-range."

For the real origins of 'vegetarian' see 'Vegetarian Equals Vegan' in the History section.

note... in recent years biologists have deemed that fungi and algae no longer belong in the kingdom of plantae. But for most of us common folk a definition of 'plant' would be something that grows in the ground and cannot move around of its own accord - sounds like a mushroom to me :-)) and the supermarkets will still sell mushrooms in the fruit and veg section....

later note ... a couple of months after the above blog was written, the International Veg Union Council proposed a new definition of 'vegetarian', though it stopped short of 'plant food only' as we cannot dictate common usage - this was put to all the member organisations worldwide and was given a 95% majority support. So this definition is now used by IVU, but others will of course continue to define it their own way... details were in a later blog: www.vegsources.com/john-davis/vegetarianism-re-defined.html

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Are you a positive or a negative veg*n?

July 21, 2010

If we ask meat-eaters what they think 'vegetarian' means, most would probably say 'someone who does not eat meat' - but that is not at all how I see it.

I'm a positive veg*n, I eat plant foods. I define myself by what I do, not by the negative of what I do not do. If we define ourselves as a negative of others, then we are saying that they are 'normal', and we are abnormal for abstaining.

When I was in Indonesia last year I went on a great day-trip with a bus full of veg*ns from all over Asia. The driver didn't know my name and at one point referred to me as 'the European guy', which was fine - he could have called me the 'non-Asian guy' as I was the only one, but that would have been odd, maybe even slightly offensive. So why do veg*ns collaborate with the flesh-eaters in defining ourselves as 'non-meat-eaters'.

I do not 'abstain'. I do not 'avoid'. I am not 'meatless' or 'meat-free'. I simply make a positive choice to eat, and to wear, the things I prefer, and my health, the animals, and the planet, all benefit from that choice.

[the photo right is George Jacobs, chair of the IVU Council, with a friend in Dresden, Germany, 2008]

By way of comparison, when I was growing up in the 1950s and 60s most people smoked tobacco. They branded me as a 'non-smoker' but I didn't see it that way, I just thought it was disgusting and unhealthy, and I certainly did not consider my preference for clean air to be some sort of self-denial.

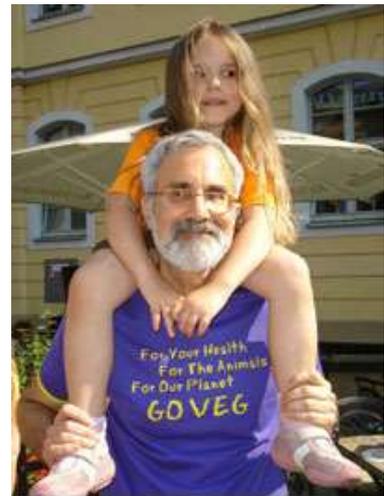


So when I was offered a cigarette I asked them why they did it - but they couldn't defend it of course, as the real reason they smoked was just because everyone else did, and they thought it looked 'cool' - encouraged by film star images and mass advertising.

I like the graphic left as a representation of the image and the reflected reality as I always saw it (courtesy of www.smokingadverts.com)

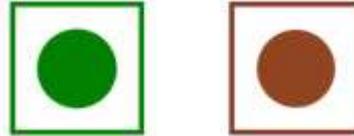
Even in the 1980s I had to fight to get a ban on smoking in the office where I was based. One otherwise intelligent colleague couldn't believe that we did not allow anyone to smoke in our house, and tried to brand *me* as anti-social for that!

In July 2007 the British government finally caught up with some other parts of the world and banned smoking in all public places. So now I'm finally vindicated as the normal one, and the smokers have to stand outside in the rain to indulge their perversion.



I can also remember Frank Sinatra singing about 'one for the road' - but now drinking and driving is universally considered a social evil. So things can change. Maybe one day we'll get to the point where flesh-eating is seen as the abnormality that it is - meanwhile we can at least set a better example of how we define ourselves.

Ultimately we should be aiming to abolish words like 'vegetarian' and 'vegan' completely - normality does not need a label, it's the flesh-eaters who should be branded as abnormal. And in the long term we do not want green labels on supermarket products saying 'suitable for vegetarians' - we want blood-red labels on anything which is non-veg. The Indian government tried to do exactly that, but they kept the green, and against predictable opposition the red one got diluted to brown, but at least they do have both (see right). That will take time for the rest of us of course, so for now we have to live with the reality of being a minority, but the way we use language can help towards those long term aims.



So I am not 'non-Asian', I am European.

I am not a 'non-smoker', I am someone who demands the right to breathe clean air. - and I am not a 'non-meat-eater', I am someone who chooses plant foods, which is what 'vegetarian' originally meant.

The International Vegetarian Union obviously does not have the power to define words, that's just down to common usage, and dictionaries trying to keep up as they change. But we can decide how we define our own membership (groups only, IVU does not have individual members), and we can set a better example.

The above was written in July 2010. In May 2011 it was proposed to make our definition positive and to return it nearer to the original. The proposal was:

"IVU defines vegetarianism as a diet of foods derived from plants, with or without eggs, dairy products, and/or honey."

The last clause being an inevitable compromise. This was to replace the old negative definition:

"For the purpose of membership of IVU, vegetarianism includes veganism and is defined as the practice of not eating meat, poultry or fish or their by-products, with or without the use of dairy products or eggs."

Making the change required a ballot of all 120 IVU member organizations around the world, and as many of those have thousands of individual members who were also consulted. The proposal was supported in May 2011 with a 95% majority.

Later update: Further to comments about fungi/algae etc - I think most ordinary people would describe a 'plant' as something that grows in the ground and cannot move around of its own accord. Sounds like a mushroom to me... the fact that academic biologists have recently deemed that fungi and no longer in the kingdom of plantae is not going to stop supermarkets selling mushrooms in the fruit and veg section.

wikipedia: *"Herbivores are organisms that eat plants."* - seems simple enough - would anyone really define a herbivore as a 'non-carnivore', or 'an animal that doesn't eat meat' - with a long list of things excluded from their diet?

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Vegetarianism Re-Defined

May 11, 2011

After a couple of months of lively, and even heated, debate about the meaning of the word 'vegetarian' the IVU International Council finally reached a unanimous proposal. The Council currently consists of 16 voting members from *Argentina, Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Singapore, Togo, Spain, United Arab Emirates, UK and USA.*

This proposal was then put to all the member organizations by email ballot (IVU does not have individual members, but the large number of member orgs have hundreds of thousands of individual members and supporters). The response was an overwhelming – 94% - 'yes'.

Those that voted are from all the above countries plus: *Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay, Portugal, Thailand and Turkey.*

Some countries have more than one member organization, such as the UK and USA which have many in each - and all entitled to vote. *Right: a small sample of IVU member logos:*



This is the message that George Jacobs, Chair of the IVU Council (in Singapore) sent to all the members:

By way of background, the IVU International Council (IC) consists of members elected every two years by you, the member organisations, and regional coordinators who liaise with member organisations in a particular part of the world. I am an elected member of IC, and in 2008, I was selected by IC to serve as chair of IC.

Recently, IC voted to bring a new definition of 'vegetarian' to you, the member organisations, for approval. The current definition, as used in our Memorandum of Association - www.ivu.org/..articles.html - states:

"For the purpose of membership of IVU, vegetarianism includes veganism and is defined as the practice of not eating meat, poultry or fish or their by-products, with or without the use of dairy products or eggs."

IC suggests that we change the definition to the following:

"IVU defines vegetarianism as a diet of foods derived from plants, with or without eggs, dairy products, and/or honey."

The two definitions seem quite similar. The main reason we are proposing this change is that the proposed definition highlights diets derived from plants, while at the same time including those vegetarians who also eat non-flesh animal based foods, such as dairy and eggs. Our goal is to maintain the crucial unity of all vegetarians while acknowledging the benefits of plant based diets for human health, the environment and our fellow animals.

In the past, the situation with our food was different in two ways. One difference is that factory farming has now spread its tentacles further and intensified the conditions under

which increasing numbers of our fellow animals suffer.

Another difference between the situation today and that of the past lies in the greater amount of knowledge we have:

- (1) We now understand more about the health dangers of foods from animals;
- (2) we know more about the connection between livestock raising and climate change;
- (3) awareness has grown substantially as to the horrors of intensive farming, of not just meat but also of eggs, dairy and honey.

As a result of these differences in knowledge, we can see a huge increase in the number of people who know about plant based diets and a smaller increase in the number of people who are adopting them. Yes, as a percentage of the entire population, those who eat a vegan diet constitute a very small percentage of the population, but it is a growing percentage in some countries, and whereas even five years ago, 'vegan' was a word and a concept most people in most places didn't know, today at least people are aware that some among them choose plant based diets and that there exists a sensible rationale for choosing not to eat any animal based products.

A second reason we like the new definition is that this definition uses positive wording. The current definition uses negative wording, as it talks about what vegetarians do not eat: "not eating meat, poultry or fish or their by-products". In contrast, the new definition is positively worded: "a diet of foods derived from plants". We hope that the positive wording will put vegetarianism in an optimistic, constructive light.

The discussions

Many issues arose in the discussions and it was clear that there were views from opposite directions on several points. The new definition is inevitably a compromise which the ballot showed is an acceptable minimum basis for most of the IVU member organisations. It is not in any way binding on the member organisations, which will continue to use their own definitions, or adapt this one, as they wish.

From the discussions we know that:

Some will just delete everything after the first comma.

Some will move dairy products into the section before the comma.

Some will add another clause defining what they do **not** eat.

Some will produce extremely detailed lists of **everything** they do or do not eat.

Some will include their particular priorities of **why** they choose this diet.

The old definition was in place for almost 12 years, and no doubt this issue will continue to be debated and the definition is likely to be further revised one day in the distant future. **Some of the points raised:**

Eggs/dairy/honey are not veg - true, so delete the 2nd half for your own purposes if you prefer...

Mushrooms and seaweed are not plants - in recent years biologists have deemed that fungi and algae do not belong in the kingdom of plantae. But for most of us common folk a plant is something that grows in the ground, or the sea, and cannot move around of its own accord – sounds like a mushroom... we'll stay with common usage.

Salt is not a plant - true, but added salt is not food either, it's little more than an addiction with people in developed countries consuming, on average, ten times more salt than they need. Plant foods contain enough natural sodium for normal needs. Some medical conditions require added salt, but then it is, in effect, a medicine/drug, not food. The meaning of this definition is perfectly obvious – and quite sufficient for us to decide who can or cannot join IVU, which was the original reason for doing this.

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Why Vegans Need Total Vegetarians

May 2, 2012

A few days ago I went to Amazon books, just searched for 'vegan', and got 4,503 results. That sounds great, except that after looking thru dozens of pages all I could see were American cookbooks, finding any mention of the animals was very rare. One even said "Whether you go vegan for your health or the environment..." – it gives the impression that most Americans see veganism as just another health-food fad diet.

Veganism is not just about food. It is an ethical position which rejects any use of animals for any purpose, including clothing, research and entertainment, as well as diet. (Someone once described the term 'dietary vegan' as the equivalent of a 'secular Catholic'.)

So what do we call someone who only eats food entirely derived from plants, but still wears leather or even just wool? One increasingly common term is 'total vegetarian'.

Vegetarianism is a diet which may be adopted for reasons of health, ethics, the environment or religion.

The word 'vegetarian' was first used by a small group of people in the London, UK, area around 1840, but it only came into more common usage with the founding of The Vegetarian Society on September 30, 1847.

The Society was founded jointly by two distinct groups, one of which included eggs and dairy products in their diet, the other relied exclusively on food derived from plants. It was this latter group which first called themselves 'vegetarian' – people who just lived on vegetation – and much as some of us might like to return to that original meaning, common usage and dictionary listings will make that difficult.

The first objectives of the Society simply required members to 'abstain from the flesh of animals', leaving it to individuals to decide whether to use other animal products. Thus, from 1847, there was always more than one type of vegetarian.

Today we can define three common types:

1 – **Ovo-lacto-vegetarian** (plant foods plus eggs/dairy) – still the most common form in the UK and many other countries.

2 – **Lacto-vegetarian** (dairy but not eggs) – this is the predominant type of vegetarian in India, and therefore relevant around the world, where there are now significant numbers of vegetarians of Indian ethnicity.

3 – **Total-vegetarian** – a term becoming increasingly common in the USA which is also helpful elsewhere, meaning a diet entirely of plant-foods – a total-vegetation-eater.

In the later 19th century there were attempts to use 'pure vegetarian' or 'strict vegetarian' to separate these from the eggs/dairy users, but they ended up just being used to describe anyone who was pure or strict about not eating flesh. It is possible that 'total vegetarian' could end up suffering the same misuse, but maybe we can avoid that by promoting it.

In 2011 the International Vegetarian Union conducted a ballot of 120 member organisations worldwide, and they agreed, by a 95% majority, to a new definition, consistent with everything above:

IVU defines vegetarianism as a diet of foods derived from plants, with or without eggs, dairy products, and/or honey.

The placing of the first comma is an important division. This definition does not consider why anyone becomes vegetarian, merely what they eat. There are, of course, many smaller variations as well as the three above, including whether honey is used.

Many vegetarians hold a variety of ethical positions, but there is no overall consistency due to the different reasons for becoming vegetarian, as well as the different types of vegetarians.

Vegan

The word 'vegan' was invented in the UK in 1944 to provide a name for the first Vegan Society. That Society's current definition:

Veganism denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude — as far as is possible and practicable— all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment.

Comparing that with item 3 above, we can say that a vegan follows a total vegetarian diet, but total vegetarians are not necessarily vegan.

The relevance of all this to vegans is that there has, for many years, been an increasing tendency for people who only eat plant foods to call themselves vegan, whilst continuing to wear leather shoes or use other animal products. This has been a particular trend in North America, and is very frustrating for those trying to promote genuine, fully ethical, veganism.

If the term 'total vegetarian' becomes more widely accepted, it could just prevent the word 'vegan' from continuing to decline into the same sort of confusion that overtook 'vegetarian'.

Of course we will continue to refer to 'vegan food', I do too because it's shorter than 'total vegetarian food', but if we can make them interchangeable then it could at least help to clarify that veganism is more than just food.

In the French language they have three terms – the original '*végétarien*' dating back to 1878, then in 1920 they added '*végétalien*' for an exclusive plant-eater, only much later adding '*végane*' for those of an ethical persuasion.

We need this clarity in English . . . something between ovo-lacto and vegan. 'Total Vegetarian' fits – but will it catch on enough before it gets corrupted?

See the North American Vegetarian Society: 'What is a Vegetarian?'

- www.navs-online.org/faq

- like most vegetarian organizations today, everything NAVS does is Total Vegetarian.

Flexitarian and Plantatarian - 21st century dimensions

February 9, 2011

My definition of an ovo- and/or lacto-vegetarian would be someone who deliberately and consistently chooses a diet of plant food plus eggs and/or dairy products, and sees that as their ideal diet. Not someone who occasionally goes in and out of that diet for whatever reason, or from any direction.

Accurate statistics are not always easy to obtain, but those I've seen tend to confirm my personal impressions all around the world – that relatively few younger people have been adopting this form of diet over the last ten years (apart from those born into it by religion and even many of those are moving away from it).

If I'm right then the number of consistent secular ovo- and/or lacto-vegetarians is not just reducing – more significantly they are getting older, and not being replaced. Which would inevitably mean it is only a matter of time before they die out.

Of course I'm not suggesting that ovo-lacto-veg food, cook-books, magazines or websites will disappear – there will be a vast and growing number of 'flexitarians' buying, cooking and eating it all. What is going faster than many realize, especially in the developed world, is the class of individuals who only eat that way, all the time.

And I'm certainly NOT saying that younger people are rejecting vegetarianism, just that particular form of it. It is being squeezed out on both sides by two major trends:

1 – Flexitarians – people who deliberately choose vegetarian food (either ovo-lacto or just plants) for some of their main meals, but not all of them. Commercially-funded research is showing a huge increase in this approach in recent years, almost everywhere in the developed world - the various 'meat-free Monday' campaigns play on this of course.

2 – Plantatarians – (or plantarians if you prefer) I'm using this to mean people who live wholly on plant foods, including vegans and raw foodists – but many 'plantatarians' are solely concerned with health and diet, so not necessarily sharing all the vegan ethical values.

Considering those two approaches in more detail:

Flexitarians

– this includes an infinite variety of diets, defying the simplistic attempts at categorization we often see. Some use only organic/free-range meat, others cut out red meat, some only eat fish etc. etc.

– but they all consciously make some meals vegetarian, some with eggs/dairy, others rejecting that. The commercial research shows that in western countries up to 90% of the 'meat-free' food in supermarkets (especially the fake-meat varieties) is bought by flexitarians, not by committed vegetarians, and their numbers are rising dramatically.

A recent report in a national UK newspaper suggested a remarkable tenfold difference in numbers: *"Research by Mintel shows the number of consumers calling themselves 'vegetarian' has stuck stubbornly for the past five years at about six per cent of the overall food market. However, the number who agree with the statement 'I eat meat-free foods' is about 60 per cent."* (www.telegraph.co.uk/.../Dont-call-it-vegetarian-it-is-meat-free.html)

Plantatarians

- the above comment about the static number of 'vegetarians' hides what is really happening – an equally remarkable rise in the number of those vegetarians that are now excluding eggs and dairy, thus moving to plant-foods only.

In the USA we have meticulous and detailed surveys commissioned by the Vegetarian Resource Group showing that 66% of genuine and consistent US vegetarians now exclude eggs and dairy completely (though some still use honey - www.vrg.org/nutshell/faq.htm#poll).

In the UK, some rather basic data suggests an equivalent rise from 20% to 40% dropping eggs and dairy in recent years. This needs verifying but would be entirely consistent with my personal experience of meeting veg*ns all around the UK. The majority of activists I meet are now vegan, and the majority of consistent ovo-lacto-vegetarians seem to be getting noticeably older.

In India the national survey from 2006 showed that older and more religious people are more likely to be ovo- and/or lacto-vegetarian than younger non-religious people. The future implications of the vast number of secular westernized young Indians are fairly obvious. However, we are also seeing more and more reports about vegans, and particularly vegan sympathizers, which in India is very significant indeed.

So why do some people persist in the belief that the 'vast majority' of vegetarians are ovo and/or lacto? Some possible answers:

1 – they wrongly imagine that the huge quantity of ovo-lacto-veg foods, cookbooks etc. are being bought by ovo-lacto-vegetarians – in reality the vast majority of these consumers are flexitarians, especially in the developed countries.

2 – they are still living in the 20th century, oblivious to recent major changes. This seems to be particularly true for older long-term ovo-lacto-vegetarians in the west.

3 – they are motivated by religious views, noticeably among older lacto-vegetarians of Asian origin who want to maintain their religious traditions of using milk and milk products. But even this is changing in India, with traditional vegetarian groups now actively promoting soy milk and tofu.

4 – they are including several hundred million Hindus, Buddhists and others in Asia who do not eat meat. But most of them have also never heard of 'vegetarianism' and would have no interest in it if they did. They simply follow the diet required by the religion they were born into. Gandhi grew up not eating meat, but only consciously decided to become a vegetarian when he was a student in London, he saw it as quite different.

No doubt those religions will continue, but elsewhere will committed long-term ovo-lacto-vegetarians continue for much longer?

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The Plant-food Two-step Shuffle - and Pure Vegetarians

April 13, 2011

The perpetual problem in promoting the plant-food diet: the meat-eater says he/she would like to switch to plant-food only but, for whatever reason, says it's too difficult to make the change all at once. Do you:

- 1 – scream about animal abuse and demand they go vegan immediately.
- 2 – continually demean their less-than-perfect diet as they slowly progress, or even stop.
- 3 – try to help them find a route that works best for them, and offer support on the journey.

If 3 then your response is likely to depend whether your primary concern is health, animal rights, religion or the environment – or some combination of those, making for endless permutations of pathways into the light . . .

Some of the many possible first steps towards a completely plant-food diet:

1 -Avoid the *direct* products of slaughter

- this evolved from British vegetarianism and leaves a lot of indirect products such as eggs, dairy products (and wool). We know that they all ultimately involve a lot of slaughter of male calves, chicks (and sheep), but many, probably most, vegans today did get there via that route.

Sadly, once they're safely across, some think that same route should then be blocked to others.

2 - Avoid the products of all animal farming

- to me this looks more American but I've seen it elsewhere too. It eliminates eggs/dairy from the outset but allows wild-caught fish (but not farmed fish) in the first step. In theory it could include wild birds and mammals too, but city dwellers won't find much of that in their supermarkets.

This second route seems to follow from the Henry David Thoreau legacy of living in the wild – plant-food with a bit of fishing. Though Thoreau did say he felt guilty about the fishing.

For most city-dwellers this 'life in the wild' is just fantasy, but it is easy enough to argue from both health and ethical perspectives that 'no animal farming' could be a better first step than 'no slaughter'. The obvious downside to this being that if all 6 billion humans switched to eating fish, there soon wouldn't be any more fish in the sea.

3 – Avoid factory farming

– a smaller first step. In the UK, and probably elsewhere, there has been a significant movement towards organic and free-range meat – again for both health and ethical reasons against industrialized mass production. I know several organic/free-range meat and dairy farmers in the countryside where I live. But is this – or the others above - a step towards plant-food only? Or is it just an end in itself?

Eating this way is more expensive, so likely in itself to at least reduce excessive consumption.

4 – the 'meat-free Monday' approach.

- Persuade people to cut out meat one day a week and hope they gradually expand it to

the others. This is often promoted for environmental reasons, as a way of reducing emissions from the livestock industry, though not all types of livestock are equally responsible, and again some people will just switch to fish etc.

The Catholic Church has been promoting meat-free Fridays for the last 2,000 years, but it would probably be hard to find anyone who ended up vegan as a result. It still leaves eggs/dairy/fish etc. which most people don't see as 'meat'.

5 – probably lots more

– I recently saw a suggestion of go plant-only for breakfast, then sometime later change lunch, and eventually dinner. Some will still only ever get as far as step one of that route too.

Any of these steps are of course the permanent diet for some people, there is no guarantee they will ever take the next step. However, **without route #1 there would undoubtedly be far fewer vegans in the world than we have today.**

As someone once said 'a *journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*' and many will never go the full distance. If millions of people simply reduced their meat consumption in any of the ways above, it would save a lot of animals, improve their health and help the planet.

People who have taken even a small first step will usually have started a thought process which eventually points towards other possible steps – and if millions at least start thinking then there is the possibility of a cultural shift in attitudes.

Of course vegans will always promote the destination, but they do need to give some thought to how others can make the journey. It is unfortunate that many perpetuate the misuse of the word 'vegetarian' – when what they are really arguing against is ovo-lacto-vegetarianism as a *permanent* diet rather than just a first step.

The latest stats from the USA show that 66% of all types of vegetarians there no longer use eggs/dairy at all – but a lot of American vegans still seem to spend more time attacking the remaining 33% than attacking the meat industry. Maybe they're just an easier target with a convenient label – how you do label someone who only eats plant-food plus wild-caught fish?

Vegans could make a major contribution by helping to promote *Pure Vegetarianism* – a term being increasingly used in India and elsewhere to specify a diet of foods derived wholly from plants. That would allow veganism to be more clearly seen as an ethical lifestyle, not just a diet.

For the real origins of 'vegetarian' see:

www.vegsource.com/john-davis/vegetarian-equals-vegan.html

Will there ever be more veg*ns?

November 30, 2011

For those who have been active in the veg movement for any length of time the above title must seem almost heretical - but it is actually an interesting question...

Back in January 1995 I started the first website for a national vegetarian society, and one of the first things I put on it was a page of statistics, surveys of the 'how many vegetarians' type. Other people were soon putting up similar stats for other countries, a few accurate surveys, others just rough estimates from various sources. The internet had created new possibilities for easily collating and sharing this data in a way that had never been possible before.

After a few years we began to notice something odd - the number of vegetarians was not going up.

It was odd because we could all see a significant increase in the provision of specifically vegetarian foods in shops and restaurants, and business surveys were showing similar significant increases in sales of these products. So, if there were no more vegetarians, who were the people buying all this stuff?

It became increasingly apparent that there was a very large number of what the food industry called 'meat reducers', later also known as 'flexitarians' - people who liked eating vegetarian meals some of the time, but they were not at all consistent about it.

Many of the surveys were very concerned to check consistency - the commitment of individuals to **only** eat vegetarian, **all** the time. And the data we could collect from various countries showed a surprisingly similar level of a few percent in every country of the genuinely consistent veg*ns - usually 1-6%, with just a few dubious estimates going slightly higher.

India appears to have a lot more 'vegetarians' - but in reality the vast majority are Hindus just following the diet of the religion they were born into without thinking about it much. Apparently one survey a few years back even claimed that 80% of Hindus would eat meat if they could afford it (though I haven't see the original survey...).

The numbers making a conscious, deliberate, consistent and committed choice to be vegetarian or vegan in India are back to the same low levels as everywhere else.

Today, 17 years after I put those first stats online, the figures have still not changed. We still have about the same number of committed vegetarians that we had back then, despite far more veg*n activity being apparent. So has the movement failed in all the campaigns to persuade more people to 'Go Vegetarian'?

In the sense of people becoming consistent, committed vegetarians - yes, they have very obviously failed. But what they have inadvertently achieved has been to persuade a vast - and increasing - number of people to eat some vegetarian/vegan meals, some of the time. These part-timers seem to like the idea of veg*ism, but they won't stick to it consistently when it becomes inconvenient for any reason.

I can hear the outrage of moral indignation from those 'conviction vegetarians' - and even more so from 'conviction vegans'. But are they being realistic in demanding that everyone should be as committed to the cause as they are?

Or does all this actually have more to do with personality than dietary or ethical choices...?

I've been doing some research into 'personality types', and there seems to be agreement that our personalities are fixed by an early age, then don't change much. It seems that only a small percentage of the population have the type of personality that prefers a total commitment to whatever cause they are promoting.

It works the same in politics and religion as it does in veg*ism. There is always a small core of people with strong convictions, and a large number of 'fair-weather friends' – the flexitarians who bend with the wind.

In all the great world religions there are millions who keep the faith they were born into just because 'it seems the right thing to do' – but they don't spend very much time thinking about it. People who vote for a particular political party often do that out of habit too.

There is often a problem with the 'conviction personality' types being unable to understand why everyone else is not like them. This often results in ever louder and more aggressive ranting about the lack of commitment in others - common in fundamentalists of many religions, and political movements, and we see it in some vegans too.

But most others are **not** like them because they just have different personalities, and no amount of ranting will change that. If this is right then there will never be more than a small percentage of people who are consistent, committed vegetarians or vegans.

We have, however, seen a significant change over the last ten years in the deepening of that commitment – to the extent that more and more vegetarians are dropping the eggs/dairy and moving closer to veganism.

So it may be that we will never have more than a few percent of committed 'conviction' vegetarians and vegans. But if those of us who are committed to the cause can make it easier for others, then there is ample evidence that very large numbers of others would follow.

How consistent those others become just depends on how easy it is for them – so a greater variety and quality of vegan food in shops and restaurants, at reasonable prices, would make a huge difference to the numbers who (mostly) follow our lifestyle.

Eventually there would come a 'tipping point' – where it becomes so easy to be veg that many will just eat that way all the time, because it 'seems like the right thing to do', but without really thinking about it much – just like all the millions of Hindus in India.

Why some restaurants don't do vegan food – and why they should

December 14

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned encouraging more restaurants to offer vegan meals, and was asked for some ideas about doing that. So here are just a few thoughts. The excuses:

1 – We've had no demand for it

The Catch22 - most vegans will just look at the menu in the window, or the website, and if they see nothing vegan they go somewhere else instead. Hence the restaurateurs see no demand.

2 – Losing one awkward customer won't make any difference

Most people do not dine out alone, and most vegans have mostly non-vegan friends and family. When they're deciding where to eat the one vegan will have a veto – and they won't hesitate to use it. The restaurant doesn't just lose the one awkward customer, they lose all their friends and family as well.

Add to that, most people like going back to the same restaurants, and repeat trade is crucial to the success of any business. Those friends and family are likely to keep going back to the one with vegan options that was chosen – even when the vegan isn't with them.



"Can we be seated under a vegan painting?"

3 – It is just too much hassle when there are so few vegans

Most plant-food meals in restaurants are not eaten by committed vegans, they are bought by people who like the idea of vegan food but do not commit themselves to it in any consistent way.

There have been many business surveys demonstrating this for vegetarian food in general over the last 20 years, and in recent years it is possible to see the same trend for vegan food. One of the biggest groups choosing vegan options are ovo-lacto-vegetarians - they are generally well aware of all the health and ethical issues around eggs and dairy products, and most are inclined to limit their consumption, but without much consistency. Given a choice between a restaurant whose vegetarian dishes are all smothered in cheese sauce, and one offering some vegan options, they will often prefer the latter.



In most parts of the world there are still more ovo-lacto-vegetarians than vegans, but the impact of the internet in general, and social network sites in particular, has made a huge difference to attitudes in recent years. In 2009, for the first time according to Google Books, there were more books published with the word 'vegan' in the title than 'vegetarian'. In 2011, for the first time, there were more Google searches for 'vegan' than for 'vegetarian'.

But still only a relatively small proportion of the people generating all this interest are actually 100% consistent vegans, the rest are part-timers, but they still like eating out, and are likely to be attracted by vegan options on the menu.

4 – Vegans are unpleasant, holier-than-thou, unwashed drop-outs with no money, why would we want them in our restaurant

The media does like that stereotype, and a lot of people fall for it. Vegans are just people, all different, like everyone else. And we come back to the point above – most vegan food is not bought by 100% vegans, there is an endless variety of potential customers.

That's a mostly vegan family on the right that doesn't fit all of that stereotype. Well you might not want them either, but two of them do spend a lot of money on vegan food these days...



5 – We did a vegan option, but they don't come back again

If there is only one vegan item on the menu, then the only option is take it or leave it. Why would anyone go back to a restaurant with only one dish on the menu? Bigger restaurants should be able to offer two or more options, for a genuine choice. Smaller places could at least rotate a few vegan dishes, to give a different single dish each week over a few weeks, there would then be something different to come back for.

6 – There are no easy vegan recipes suitable for commercial restaurants

Vegan cookbooks do tend to be written mostly for domestic use. We need cookbooks that are specifically for non-vegans chefs about how to make it easier to provide vegan options in a non-vegan restaurant (I'm sure I'll be told they already exist, in which case they need to be better publicised).

All the above points have been well known to many vegetarian groups for the last 20 years or more. In the UK for example, almost any café, pub or restaurant now has a choice of vegetarian meals, but outside of the bigger cities there is still very little without eggs and dairy products. Times are changing, the increasing consumption of meals entirely derived from plants is significant, and the approach we make to businesses needs to change too.

This is not just about the relatively small number of committed vegans, the provision of vegan food in restaurants goes way beyond just them. If all this makes sense, then do feel free to print it and take copies to your local restaurants!



The Future of the Movement

November 22, 2010, updated October 31, 2012

Two years ago I wrote these thoughts about where we're going in promoting veg*ism worldwide – not necessarily what I think should happen, just what it appeared was already happening. I've updated a couple of minor points, otherwise it still stands.

1 – There will be a continuing decline in the number of traditional vegetarian/vegan societies. By 'traditional' I mean those that collect subs, elect committees etc. These fall into two types:

- a) Small groups – those whose income is mostly from members' subs.
- b) Larger groups – those with significant other sources of income.

The smaller groups traditionally collect subs to cover the cost of printing and posting newsletters, but now that most people are online they are increasingly using email and websites which are free. Very few of the new start-up groups are now following the traditional structure, they just use meet-up style online news and networking. Some long-standing traditional societies have also scrapped all the bureaucratic systems and gone online only, many just calling themselves Anytown Vegetarians/Vegans, instead of 'Veg Society'.

The bigger groups are moving towards the non-profit business or agency model, which is what in reality they are if they are not relying on member subs for their main income. Very few new veg societies of any significant size have emerged in recent years, as most of the bigger groups are now avoiding the pretence of democracy maintained by the older groups – where only a tiny number of members ever bother to vote, and the same few try to manipulate everything.

The indications from the bigger traditional groups is of a declining membership, whilst those following the non-profit business/agency model are attracting large numbers of highly mobile 'supporters' who have no interest in voting for 'leaders' – if they don't like what the organisation is doing they just take their support elsewhere.

2 – there will be an increasing prominence of online-only veg organisations, both profit and non-profit. Usage figures show that traditional real-life veg groups are generally not very good at attracting visitors to their websites – the most popular veg websites (with the odd rare exception) are all run by a small number of people with no real-world organisation behind them (vegsources.com and happycow.net are among the best examples of that). Some of them, like Vegsource, then move on to promoting real-life events as well.

This is happening everywhere, not just in the veg movement, a typical case would be to consider the advance of amazon.com compared with high street book stores. This will also add increasing pressure to traditional veg*n societies as they will struggle to compete with much more efficient online resources offering everything for free.

3 – a much higher proportion of vegetarians will exclude eggs/dairy. The latest detailed survey from VRG shows that in the USA, over 60% of those who were genuinely within the broad definition of vegetarian (optional eggs/dairy) were in fact eating plant-foods only (apart from some still using honey). This reflects a major shift in recent years.

What happens in the USA usually goes everywhere else before too long – and inevitably those mostly younger people show the trend for the next generation of adults. However this will still not help the traditional vegan societies as most of this next generation will be less interested in joining traditional societies, as they will have grown up in an online world.

Some of those traditional societies are already being run by people who are too old to understand what is really happening in the youth culture (and I have to admit that includes me, but at least I'm aware of it, it seems some others are not...)

Photo right: from the 2010 IVU World Congress in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Everything above suggests that that traditional vegetarian and vegan societies will be left with an ageing and declining membership in the coming years.

All the above also has implications for the International Vegetarian Union (IVU), which was founded in 1908 as a union of all world's vegetarian societies. Clearly IVU will have to rethink its role when those societies disappear – and less than half of the current member organisations now appear to be using the traditional 'democratic' structures.

4 – there will be a continuing increase in big veg trade fairs. In the past we had congresses with a few stalls thrown in as a bit of an afterthought. Now we're getting very big trade fairs with lectures as optional extras, some of which are very professionally run and counting attendances in tens of thousands. The money from the trade stalls covers the cost of the lectures, and allows for paying expenses to top quality speakers – a big advance on simply relying on registration fees to pay for the lecturers.

5 – a further rise of Asian led spiritual/business organisations. The most dramatic example can now be seen in the Loving Hut restaurant chain – currently 207 eateries in 29 countries (up from 166 in 19 countries two years ago), by far the biggest vegan restaurant chain the world has ever seen and still expanding rapidly. The Loving Huts are run by the followers of Supreme Master Ching Hai. Along with other examples, this Asian style combination of business and religion is having a significant impact globally.



Add to that the Govinda restaurants run by Hare Krishna followers, lacto-veg but plenty of vegan options, and now with at least 60 restaurants in 30 countries – and a lot more at various times in the hundreds of temples and food relief programs. There are of course countless thousands of independent veg restaurants and smaller chains, but a serious worldwide challenge to multinationals like McDonalds, KFC etc. is only going to come from similar global franchises offering a veg alternative.

As I said at the beginning, this is not necessarily what I think should happen, merely what is already going on. I look forward to some comments below telling me I've got it all wrong – it will be interesting to see what others think the future holds.

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Neer cast a clout 'til May be out - Veg*ism, Wildlife and the Environment

updated September 26, 2012

The title is an old English proverb, subject to endless debates about what any of it means (try googling it). I wrote some of this at the end of May 2010 – and as the May blossom and the month of May were both now out it seemed to be time to start some clout casting....

May blossom is the mass of tiny flowers which cover the Hawthorn trees. In this part of England it appears in late May and stays into early June - and we have a lot of Hawthorn around here, looking like spring snow on the trees. I notice it more when I'm photographing wildlife - and I'm increasingly wondering how long before another developer destroys a lot of it.

We should all know, by now, that the livestock industry is making a huge impact on climate change. But being vegetarian, and more so vegan, can also make a significant difference to the environment in other ways, including the survival of wildlife - wild plants as well as animals, birds and insects.

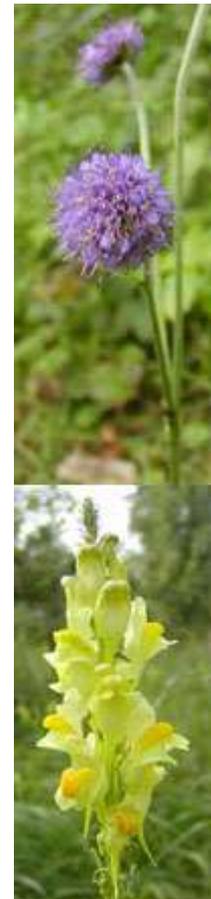
The damage done by grazing livestock is enormous, mainly through the destruction of habitats and extermination of competitor species. No doubt meat-eaters will point out that growing large areas of crops also destroys habits and 'pest' species - but they conveniently overlook the fact that it takes vastly more land, and water, to produce a pound of meat, compared with a pound of soy. 90% of the world's soy production is used for animal feed, if it were eaten directly by humans there would be more than enough to feed the world, and far more habitat left for the wildlife.

My personal involvement with wildlife began by chance. The English city my parents were living in was badly damaged during WWII. New houses were being built out of town, so they moved out and I spent my childhood surrounded by countryside. Gradually ever more houses were built and the countryside disappeared, but I was one of the lucky ones who lived there before it was destroyed.

I took all the photos on this page since we first moved to this part of the countryside in 2001. *[right: sometimes the names are as interesting as the plants - top is 'Devilsbit Scabious', and below 'Common Toadflax' both on local nature reserves]*

My parents moved into the countryside when I was 3 months old, and my earliest memories are a large area of open land near our house, just a left-over patch from where the new houses had been built. It had a meandering stream, trees to climb, a swamp with frogspawn and dragonflies - and lots of birds, insects, fish and wild flowers. Several other young families made the same move away from the bombed city (this was late 1940s) so there were plenty of other kids my own age to share this natural adventure playground. The stream had a lot of bends, with fast/slow and deep/shallow areas, perfect for what was later called bio-diversity.

I must have been about 8 or 9 when someone in authority decided this was a health and safety issue. They sent some workmen along to build a wooden fence between our



houses and our 'wilderness' - it didn't take us long to knock it down again as soon as they were gone! My first encounter with 'them'.

They tried to fence it again from time to time, but we always got through - it would have been fair enough if they were trying to protect the wildlife, but 'they' didn't think like that in the 1950s, it was just seen as a dangerous wasteland. Meanwhile I read every book I could find about the wildlife, and in our gang soon became 'the one who knows what things are called'.

Paul McCartney tells a similar story in his autobiography *'Many Years from Now'*. He is just a few years older than me and from a different bombed city, but that early experience seems to have had a similar impact on both of us, ultimately leading to the end of eating our fellow-animals. No doubt many more of our generation went through a similar encounter with the natural world.



Top right; a Honey Bee
Middle - Southern Hawker Dragonfly
Bottom: a Peacock Butterfly on Buddleia

When I was 13, in the early 1960s, I got my first guitar and was distracted for some years from the wildlife - which turned out to be just as well. The authorities gave up with the fences and turned to their 'final solution'. They sent in a digger to cut a dead straight trench and fill in the meandering stream. Then they bulldozed the small hills into perfectly flat parkland, with closely mown grass. The wildlife vanished, and years before 'environmentalism' became trendy I began to understand what ecological vandalism looked like.



While all that was happening our patch of countryside was rapidly turning into a giant housing estate with ever more motor vehicles polluting the air. By the mid 1970s I was living back in the city, but it had sprawled so much that there wasn't really much difference by then.

I eventually returned to the city but never lost the fascination with the countryside. Some years ago I was doing some

voluntary work on a local wildlife reserve when I mentioned to a colleague that it was just like where I had grown up. That was when it dawned on me that the nature reserves were the only places in the south of England left like that. It was time to move.



My wife, Hazel, had a more authentic country childhood, in a small village where her family had lived for generations. But that too had been swallowed up by the urban sprawl. We looked further north and found a relatively unspoilt area close to the border with Wales, and moved to a small village there in April 2001.

Right: a group of Starlings making a splash in the birdbath, both in our back garden:



The photo below is the back of our house, from across the field one summer, the arrow points to my study window, where I'm sitting writing this:



Right is the view over the top of my computer monitor, looking back the other way from the photo above, during a recent cold winter, and couple more from my office window, moving thru the seasons:



The pressure from developers is relentless, it is much easier to make a profit from building on green fields than from cleaning up polluted ex-industrial sites. The owner of the fields all around us have tried to cash in by getting planning permission to build on

them, which would hugely increase their land value. We're fairly sure they won't get it at this time, and it will be safe for at least another 15 years, but the endless destruction seems almost inevitable.



Maybe we're just being selfish, trying to hang on to our little patch of countryside when people need houses. But the wildlife needs to survive somewhere too, and the space is shrinking all the time.

Summer Daze

Time seems to pass more slowly in the countryside during the summer. The rush of spring flowers has gone, and the birds can find plenty of food under cover in the hedgerows. We actually see a lot more birds in the winter as they come nearer the houses looking for food, with not many leaves to hide under.



This was the view from my study window, over the top of the computer, early in June:

Not much dynamic activity, though I've seen some Hollywood films that *felt* like they were slower. The wheat in the field was looking like long grass, but a month later, early July, it was beginning to look like the real thing:



But we have had some activity, lots of Buzzards circling overhead in June - looking for any young rabbits foolish enough to wander too far from the burrow. The Buzzard on the right very obligingly posed on the tree right outside. They're just medium sized as hawks go, but you wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of that beak.

The bright orange wild flowers below have several country names, including 'Orange Hawkweed', as the



hawks are supposed to eat them to improve their eyesight, though we've never seen the Buzzards eating ours...

Some birds are definitely smarter than others. We have a Song Thrush that regularly uses the same stone to hammer snail-shells to break them open - I'm still trying to be quick enough to get a photo, maybe next time. But one that I haven't heard of elsewhere is the Crows dunking their bread in the bird-bath.

They find the bread in the neighbors' gardens (we don't eat white bread!) - but it tends to dry out, so they bring it over to ours to soak it for a while, then take it back to the nest for the chicks. I can't imagine that white bread is any healthier for baby crows than it is for us, but they seem to like it.



For my facebook albums of wildlife photos around the world, go to: www.facebook.com/#!/john.davis.9279/photos_albums

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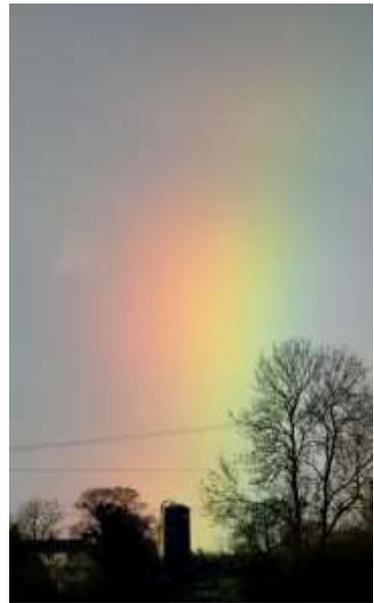
A Year in the Sky

December 29, 2010

Skyscapes are like landscapes, but looking up of course. The photos below are all from my office window, and all but one of them during 2010, so this is my review of the year.

The window looks out over a flat landscape which people living in hills and mountains might think rather boring, but it makes for a big sky, and an endlessly changing kaleidoscope, sometimes unexpected like this odd stub of a rainbow behind a grain silo:

The window looks east, so I get sunrises, but only reflected sunsets, and rainbows in the afternoons when the sun is going down in clear western skies and the east is damp:



Double Rainbow (November 2009, all others 2010)



January - Between the Snows



January - The Big Blue



February - Wood Pigeons leaving the Oak Tree



March - Full Moon Rising



March - Buzzard Soaring



March - Black Headed Gulls following the tractor



March – Double Rainbow 2 – the pot of gold



April - Trails on Blue



May - Stormy Weather



May - Mountains of Clouds



May - Martian Sunset, looking north-east, the setting sun reflected in the clouds



June - Hot Air Balloon in low cloud



June - Midsummer Sunrise



August - Late Summer



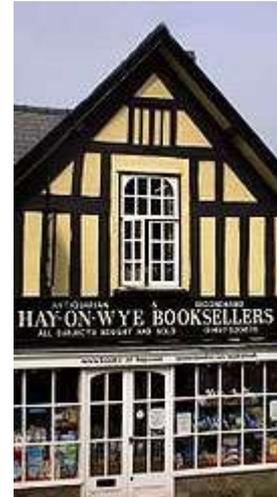
December - Ice Blue

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Read all about it - antiquarian veg*ism

June 9, 2010

Last week was the biggest literary festival in the UK, at Hay-on-Wye, a small town just on the Welsh side of the border with England. It's held there every year because, despite having a population of only about 1,900, it has more than 30 bookshops, many selling specialist or antiquarian books. The festival attracts up to 80,000 visitors each year.



Over the years of researching the history of vegetarianism I have often wanted to read books written hundreds of years ago. But without direct access to a great library, or a big enough wallet to buy antiquarian books, it was never easy. So I mostly had to rely on summaries written by those who did have direct access.

My one big advantage was access to the library of the Vegetarian Society UK, near Manchester, where they have copies of all the society's journals in bound volumes back to 1847. And a lot of other old books as well, the earliest being dated 1819. In 2002 it was suggested that I compile a history of IVU in time for the centenary in 2008, which turned out to be a bigger job than I expected, and resulted in monthly visits to 'Parkdale' for the next six years.

photo right: Parkdale - home of the Vegetarian Society UK which was founded in 1847, and has been at Parkdale since 1969. More about that next week as I'll be going there again on Friday.



But the world is changing dramatically, thanks as ever to the internet - the biggest seller of old books is probably now the Amazon re-sellers system. But the first to put complete old books online for free was Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org) which has been digitizing non-copyright books for many years, but just in a basic plain text-format. They now have about 30,000 titles online.

Google's digital library (books.google.com) was launched in 2004, using scans so that the original books appear in PDF format. By the end of last year Google claimed to have over 10 million books online, though there has been much dispute with publishers about copyright issues.

Microsoft ran a similar project for a couple of years, then transferred its collection to the Internet Archive (www.archive.org), which now has about 1 million books available - but they also link to Gutenberg and Google Books, making it a useful general search site. There are several other more specialized organizations with similar projects.

The impact of this on researching the history of vegetarianism has been enormous - now we can easily read many of the books published on the subject over the last few hundred years. The biggest remaining problem is just finding them... given that the word 'vegetarian' wasn't used until the 1840s, and often not used in the actual titles after that, you need to have good idea of what to look for.

To overcome this last hurdle, we now have our own project on the IVU website, and in the bibliography below - to find links from all the above sources to every out-of-copyright book ever written on veg-related topics - and so far we have about 200 of them.

The earliest texts are from the ancient Greeks and Romans, but they didn't have printing, and of course they were written in ancient greek or latin ... so the scans are of later printed translations.

But we do begin to get scans of original books from the 18th century with our earliest book being Thomas Tryon's 'Letters', published in England in 1700.

In Benjamin Franklin's autobiography (we have links to three complete editions of that) he says that when he was 16, in 1722, it was reading a book by Tryon that had persuaded him to adopt the 'Vegetable Diet' for many years - probably the 'Way to Health' published in 1691. Unfortunately we don't yet have a scan of that, but the 'Letters' are similar and give us a good idea of what Franklin was actually looking at.



photo above: Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) - portrait 1777 by Jean-Baptiste Greuze

The language and typeface of those days is not always easy for us to read, so where available we have also included later editions as they are set in more modern typefaces, but this is the first part of Tryon's letter on 'Flesh Broths' as published in 1700:

LETTER XIX. Of Flesh-BROTHS.

S I R,

I Have received yours, wherein you desire my judgment of Flesh-Broths or Pottages, their Nature, Operation and Nourishment; and likewise Pottages and Gruels made of Vegetables, as Fruits and Herbs without Flesh, and which of the two doth afford the best, finest, cleanest and bestliest Aliment to the Body and Mind: This Question we have answered in several of our Writings, nevertheless, shall endeavour to gratifie your curious Philosophical Mind and longing desire after Wisdom. And first, shall give you an account of Pottages made with Flesh, and of the Fat, Gravy and Blood of Animals.

The flesh of all Animals and Beasts is gross, succulent, and full freighted with many impurities and uncleannesses, as we have demonstrated in our Book, Entituled *The Way to Health, &c.* And to say nothing of the Bestial and revengeful passion of their Mind, which after Deaths painful stroke centers in the Blood and Spirits, and those violent inroaching Spirits do never fail to incorporate with their Similies in the Eaters, it being the natural way of God and the way of Nature, which no Art can prevent.

For as Man is the compleat Image and Likeness of all things, natures and Powers; on the other side, all Created Powers an Epitome and likeness of Man, so that in one Degree or other, Man answers to all things, and all things to him; and all Meats and Drinks are made and compounded both of Body and Spirits, even as Man, so from our Foods our Bodies and Spi-

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All links go to original editions on Google Books or archive.org unless otherwise stated, and are listed in roughly chronological order, instead of the usual alphabetical by author – use search to find authors or keywords. The contents are not necessarily vegan, or any sort of vegetarian, but indicate a movement towards more humane thought and healthy lifestyles.

Starting with **Indian** texts:

1. **Outlines of Jainism** by Jagmanderlal Jaini M.A., Indore. Pub. Cambridge, 1916. Founded by Mahavira, 599 BC - avoids all harm to animal life.
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7. **The Laws of Manu** trans. George Bühler, Oxford, 1886. Somewhat disputed Hindu texts... does not prohibit meat eating but: p.99, Law 48: "Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to (the attainment of) heavenly bliss; let him therefore shun (the use of) meat."

Greece, Rome and Early Christian

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- Byron and Shelley

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USA – Early 19th century – Graham and Alcott

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England – mid 19th century

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130. [**Punch magazine, 1848, Vol.XIV**](#) – includes a sarcastic piece about The Vegetarian Society which was founded in September 1847.
131. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.1**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1849/50
132. [**The penny vegetarian cookery**](#) – by the Vegetarian Messenger, 1850 – mostly ovo-lacto, but much is vegan, even a vegan omelet.
133. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.2**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1850/51
134. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.3**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1851/52
135. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.4**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1852/53
136. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.5**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1853/54
137. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.6**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1854/55
138. [**Vegetarian messenger Vol.7**](#) – Vegetarian Society UK, 1855/56
139. [**On the mode of communication of cholera**](#) by John Snow, 1855 - expanded from the 1849 pamphlet.
140. [**On chloroform and other anaesthetics: their action and administration**](#) by John Snow - published shortly after his death in 1858, and including a brief 'Life of John Snow' by Benjamin W. Richardson M.D. who knew him, but was very hostile to his vegetarianism.

USA later 19th century

141. [**Religion, Natural and Revealed**](#) by Orson S. Fowler, New York, 1st pib. 1844, 10th edition 1848 p.136: Were a flesh diet productive of no other evil consequence than lowering ... benevolence that alone should forever annihilate so barbarous a practice'.
142. [**Physiology, animal and mental**](#) by Orson S. Fowler, New York, 1847, 5th edition 1851 (*half of Fowler & Wells, NY, which published many of the veg-related books on this page*).
143. [**Hydrotherapy or The Water-Cure**](#) by Joel Shew, New York 1851.
144. [**Philosophy of Health: Natural Principles of Health and Cure**](#) by Larkin Baker Coles M.D. Boston, first pub. 1848 - 26th revised edition 1851 (claims 28,000 sold) p.51 The Quality of Foods (promotes lacto-vegetable diet)

- Russell Trall

145. [**The hydropathic encyclopedia Vol.1**](#) by Russell Trall, 1855 (orig.1851) – includes ovo-lacto-dietetics
146. [**The Hydropathic Encyclopedia Vol.2**](#) by Russell Trall, New York, 1854 (orig.1851) – appears to be vegan, but see below...
147. [**The New Hydropathic Cook-book: With Recipes for Cooking on Hygienic Principles**](#) - by Russell Trall, 1854, includes the use of milk and eggs, but see below:
148. [**The hygeian home cook-book; or, Healthful and palatable food without condiments**](#) - by Russell Trall, 1874 – *the first vegan cookbook, see Preface.*

- Thoreau

149. [**Walden**](#) by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), first pub.1854. This edition with intro by Will H. Dircks, 1886.
150. [**Life and writings of Henry David Thoreau**](#) by Henry S. Salt, witten 1890 - 1896 edition
151. [**Anti-slavery and reform papers**](#) - Thoreau, Henry David, ed. H. Salt,1890
152. [**Selections from Thoreau**](#) - Thoreau, Henry David, 1895, ed H. Salt 1895
153. [**Poems of nature**](#) - Thoreau, Henry David, ed. H. Salt, 1895

More late 19th century USA

154. [**Health: Its Friends and Foes**](#) by Reuben D. Mussey M.D., LL.D, Boston, 1862. p.169: Chapter VIII - Man by nature a vegetable eater - vegetarianism

155. [**Recollections of a busy life**](#) by Horace Greeley (1811-1872) pub.1868 - editor of the NY Tribune p.98: Chapter VIII - Temperance in all things
156. [**Horace Greeley Voice Of The People**](#) by William Harlan Hale, 1950.
157. [**Health in the Household, Or, Hygienic Cookery**](#) by Susanna Way Dodds, 1883 – argues strongly for plant-foods only, but then includes meat . . .
158. [**The stomach: its disorders and how to cure them**](#) by J.H. Kellogg, Battle Creek, 1896
159. [**Figs or pigs? Fruit or brute? Shall we eat flesh? : a comprehensive statement of the principal reasons for entertaining the vegetarian or fruitarian principle**](#) - James Madison Allen, 1896 – promotes veganism
160. [**Food, Home and Garden**](#) - Journal of the Vegetarian Society of America Vols I-III, 1897-99; edited by Henry Clubb
161. [**The Golden Age Cook Book**](#) by Henrietta Latham Dwight, New York, 1898
162. [**Every living creature; or, Heart-training through the animal world**](#) by Ralph Waldo Trine, 1899
163. [**The Vivisection Question**](#) articles from 1880 to 1900 compiled by Albert Leffingwell M.D, 1901

Europe – late 19th century

164. [**Les Confidences: Confidential Disclosures**](#) by Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) 1857 edition. p.60: 'to kill animals for the purpose of feeding on their flesh is one of the most deplorable and shameful infirmities of the human state'.
165. [**The Descent of man**](#) – Charles Darwin, 1871
166. [**Fruit and bread : a scientific diet**](#) by Gustav Schlickeysen, translated from the German by M. L. Holbrook, New York,1877 – original German edition appears to have been 1875. Strongly Darwinian, the earliest known vegan (frugivorous + grains) book from Germany.
167. [**The Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger, August, 1884**](#) - The Vegetarian Society (Manchester), one complete issue - the first section of a large book of other misc. articles.
168. [**Sir Isaac Pitman, his life and labors**](#) by Benn Pitman (brother) 1902
169. [**The life of Sir Isaac Pitman**](#) by Alfred Baker, 1908
170. [**Essays on Diet**](#) - Prof. Francis W. Newman, 1883
171. [**Memoir and letters of Francis W. Newman**](#) - Isobel Giberne, 1909
172. [**Fifty Years of Food Reform**](#) by Charles Forward, London 1897 (ivu.org 20mb PDF)
173. [**Tolstoy**](#) biography by Romain Rolland, 1911
174. [**Musicians of Today**](#) - by Romain Rolland, includes Wagner and Hugo Wolf, 1915

- **Henry Salt** (*also much by Salt on Shelley and Thoreau above*)

175. [**Literary Sketches**](#) - Henry Stephens Salt, 1888
176. [**Godwin's "Political justice"; a reprint of the essay on "Property", from the original edition;**](#) - Godwin, William, 1756-1836, ed. Salt 1890
177. [**Songs of freedom**](#) - Salt, Henry Stephens, 1893
178. [**Animals' Rights, considered in Relation to Social Progress**](#) by Henry S. Salt 1894
179. [**Pamphlets V, 1836-1895**](#) - includes 'On Certain Fallacies' by Henry Salt
180. [**Humanitarian Essays: Being Volume III. of "Cruelties of Civilization."**](#) - Henry Stephens Salt , Humanitarian League , London, 1897
181. [**The logic of vegetarianism; essays and dialogues**](#) - Henry Salt, 1906
182. [**The Humanities of Diet**](#) (PDF 42k on ivu.org) - by Henry Salt, 1914
183. [**Killing for sport : essays by various writers**](#) - Salt, Henry Stephens, 1915
184. [**Seventy years among savages**](#) by Henry S. Salt, 1921 - autobiographical essays

Asia and the Pacific – 19th and 20th centuries

185. [**Thoreau's philosophy of life, with special consideration of the influence of Hindoo philosophy**](#) by Helena A. Snyder, Dissertation, Heidelberg University, 1902. p.20 Abstinence from meat eating

186. [**The Hindoos as they are: a description of the manners, customs, and inner life of Hindoo society in Bengal**](#) by Shib Chunder Bose, first pub.1881. This edition Calcutta, 1883. 'The writer has exposed the ... evils to India of English dietetic habits' (*Howard Williams in Ethics of Diet*).
187. [**Poetical works of Edwin Arnold : containing The light of Asia**](#) 1883. p.95: 'henceforth none shall spill the blood of life nor taste of flesh' (in 1891 Arnold was Vice-President of the Bayswater Vegetarian Club, of which Gandhi was Secretary)
188. [**A guide to health**](#) - Mohandas K. Gandhi, 1921
189. [**An Autobiography or The story of my experiments with truth**](#) - M. K. Gandhi, 1925
190. [**A Quest For Gandhi**](#) by Reginald Reynolds, 1952. Personal account of Gandhi at the ashrams.

Europe and USA – 20th century

191. [**Romain Rolland; the man and his work**](#) by Stefan Zweig, New York, 1921
192. [**Thirty-nine reasons why I am a vegetarian**](#) Henry Stephen Clubb, published by the Vegetarian Society of America, Philadelphia, 1903
193. [**Unpolished rice, the staple food of the Orient**](#) Henry Clubb, 1905
194. [**The Universal Kinship**](#) by J. Howard Moore (1862-1916), pub. Chicago, 1906. "kinship of all the inhabitants of the planet Earth"
195. [**No Animal Food and Nutrition and Diet with Vegetable Recipes**](#) – Rupert H. Wheldon, England, 1910. This ed. New York. – the first British vegan cookbook
196. [**Humanitarian Philosophy**](#) by Emil Edward Kusel, Los Angeles, 1912
197. [**A great Russian tone-poet, Scriabin**](#) by A.E. Hull, London 1918. Refers to Scriabin's theosophy, from about 1904, which led to his vegetarianism.
198. [**The Natural Diet of Man**](#) by John Harvey Kellogg 1923
199. [**The Vegan**](#) – the magazine of the Vegan Society UK, all issues from 1944, link to vegansociety.com
200. [**Vegetarian Times**](#) - US bi-monthly magazine, the link goes to January 1980. See 'Browse all issues' for the complete subsequent issues, currently up to 2004.
201. [**Vegan Views**](#) – UK magazine, some items from 1975 onwards, online version free to download.

General histories on ivu.org:

202. [**The Ethics of Diet - A Catena**](#) (*HTML pages, full text*) by Howard Williams, 1st published 1883, text from the 2nd edition, 1896.
203. [**Souvenir Book of the 15th World Vegetarian Congress - India, 1957**](#) - (*HTML pages*) - huge collection of articles by various worldwide authors.
204. [**The Vegetarian Movement in England, 1847-1981 : A Study in the Structure of its Ideology**](#) – (*HTML pages*) PhD Thesis by Julia Twigg, 1981.
205. [**Vegetarianism in Australia, A History**](#) (*PDF 8mb*) by Edgar Crook, 2008

Most recent books are still subject to copyright, so not available for free online. Links below are to some recommended books via amazon.com:

206. [**Animal Liberation**](#): Peter Singer, 1975, revised 1990, chap.5, on history, is still good, and way ahead of anything else written at that time.
207. [**Search for a New Eden: James Pierrepont Greaves \(1777-1842\) : The Sacred Socialist and His Followers**](#) by J. E. M. Latham, 1999 – the story behind Alcott House. This takes a rather condescending view of their diet, and has some mistakes, but much valuable research.
208. [**Vegetarian America: A History**](#) by Karen and Michael Iacobbo, 2004
209. [**Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain**](#) by James Gregory, 2007. A non-vegan perspective, but more useful history.