

TINKERS BUBBLE

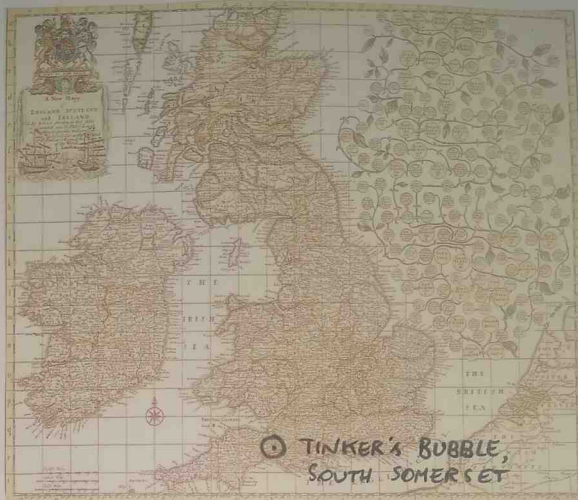
on the land
off the grid

withdrawn #6



This journey starts on my way, on a train,
on the move. Surrounded by people who
have a smartphone. Connected to a
digital economy in a globalised capitalism
But: are they truly connected?
That word haunts me: CONNECTION.
Today is the first day nine eco-detrists
from Insulate Britain wake up in prison.

A New Map of England, Scotland and
Ireland



Robert Morden's interesting and rare
map.
London c1680

Tinkers Bubble is located in Somerset,
England. Tinkers refers to gypsie, Bubb-
ble to spring. Meaning as much as
"spring of the gypries". There used to
be travellers at the spring with horse-
drawn wagons, therefore that name.



table of contents Tinkers Bubble. On the land off the grid

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Note: this zine partly originated as a plan for the promise auction, which is organised to raise money to repair the wood-powered steam engine at Tinkers Bubble (see 10) in april 2022.

The zine can be read by anyone and found at withdrawn.noblogs.org or bought at Tinkers Bubble. The original drawings or lino-cuts will be auctioned of on the day of the promise auction. All the work is by embers unless otherwise depicted, some photos are taken from the blog.



INDIVIDUAL ACTS OF SURVIVAL & SABOTAGE
When new laws were passed or new forces put up a characteristic response of the English people was to simply carry on as normal, reasoning their right to harvest freely from the commons. It is due to this quiet persistence that we still have traditions of foraging blackberry picking & mushroom collecting.

LA VIVA CAPSIVINA
Established to coordinate the diverse strategies waged by peasant producers. La Viva Capsivina has a membership numbering 200 million.

SPANISH CIVIL WAR
Thousands of people from across Europe signed up to the international brigades to fight alongside the Spanish anarchist movement.

ROAD PROTESTS
A campaign of direct action forces the Conservative government to scrap over 200 road building projects.

LAND SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION
A government response to the deep recession: tracts of land were compulsorily purchased, divided into smaller units and offered at a low rent to the unemployed.

KINDER SCOUT TRESPASS
The British Workers Sports Federation organised a mass trespass for the right to walk on land stolen in earlier times.

THE ALLOTMENTS ACT
Land in the form of allotments became a key political issue. Seven acts resulted in the statutory rights to allotments.

TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS
Six agricultural workers were deported for resisting wage drops. Despite their punishments by 1872 the agricultural labourers union had over 16000 members.

CROTHERS' LAND WAR
Scottish crofters rose up against landlords in the Highlands & Islands. A new Crofters Act did not redistribute land but gave them a greater sense of tenure.

THE SWING RIOTS
Agricultural workers rose up & destroyed threshing machines in East Kent.

LUDDITES
Textile workers in Nottingham protested against machinery introduced to replace their labour by destroying mills & machines. The movement spread rapidly across England.

HAITIAN REVOLUTION
Haiti was a French colony where slave labour produced 80% of the world's coffee & 90% of its sugar. In 1789 Haitian slaves rose up & fought off the colonisers to establish an independent republic.

THE LEVELLERS
Named for their belief in leveling the land, the Levellers were the radical wing of the New Model Army.

THE DIGGERS
Remembered for their occupation of St Georges Hill & Gerrards Cross. Winston's proclamation that 'the earth was made a common for all' Some 400 Digger settlements were established over the years.

KETT'S REBELLION
Aggravated by the enclosure of common land, a peasant army of 20,000 took control of Norwich, then England's second city, forcing the army to retreat.

PEASANTS' REVOLT
Triggered by an attempt to lay a poll tax on the population, peasants rose in insurrection across the country. Rebel groups from Kent & Essex burned the Tower of London, spurred on by the dissenting preacher John Ball's peasant questions: 'When Adam delved & Eve span, who was then the gentler?' & 'Eve span, who was then the gentler?'

CIVILISATION OF SCUATING
Conservative-Liberal coalition government criminalises squatting of residential buildings in the UK.

LAND GRABS
The food crisis triggered a corporate-led land grab on a scale never seen before. Recent research estimates the area of land bought by corporations at over 80 million hectares since 2006.

FOOD CRISIS
Between 2006 & 2008 food prices rocketed. Food speculation by large corporations exacerbated the price rises causing millions to go hungry.

SUPERMARKET MONOPOLIES
Four supermarkets control 75% of UK food retailing.

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION
The WTO removed trade barriers forcing small farmers into direct competition with huge corporations.

AGRICULTURAL INTENSIFICATION
Between 1945 & 2005 the percentage of the population working in agriculture had dropped from 15% to less than 1% - the least in the world.

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY
Unjust subsidies pay landowners for caring land, driving up prices & encouraging more large-scale acquisitions.

AGRI-BUSINESS
Following World War Two many companies involved in producing chemical weapons turned their attention to the lucrative pesticide market. Today 5 multi-national companies control 40% of the pesticide market & a quarter of the global seed market.

COLONIAL AGRICULTURE
Food imports produced by exploited slave labour in Britain's colonies were used to undermine agriculture in Britain.

HIGHLAND CLEARANCES
The enclosures of the Scottish Highlands were even faster & more brutal than the enclosures in the rest of Britain.

THE BLACK ACT
Vicious laws were introduced to deal with the resistance of those who opposed the enclosures. In 1723 the Black Act was introduced, authorising & implementing the death penalty for more than 50 offences connected to poaching.

PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURES
The enclosure of land was backed up by increasingly vicious legislation. Between 1760 & 1870 1000 acts of Parliament changed a 6th of the area of Britain from common to private land.

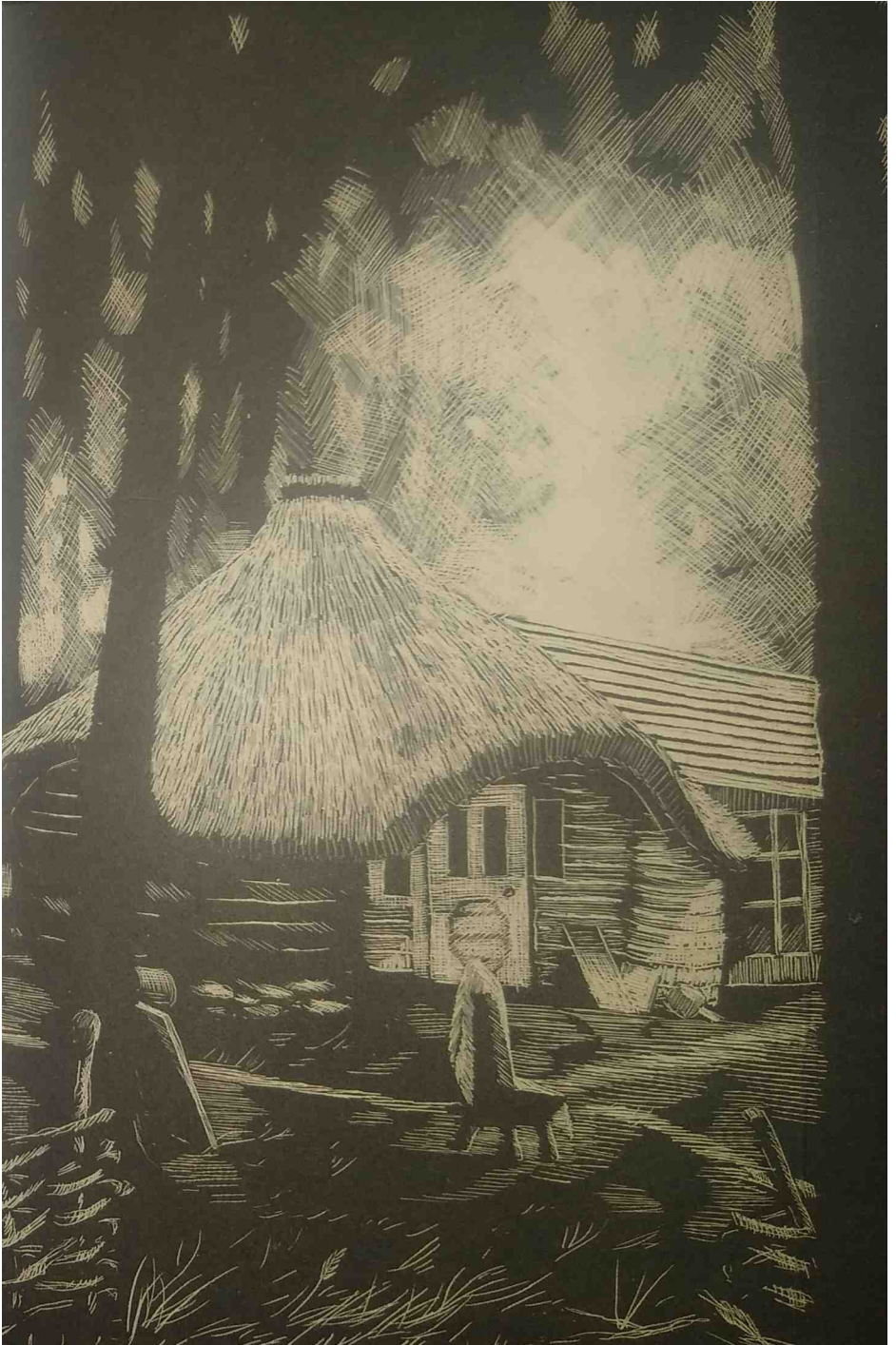
ENCLOSURES
Led by wealthy landowners the enclosures attacked the open field system & common lands to privatise their use.

NORMAN CONQUEST
The Norman Monarchy claimed ultimate ownership of all land in the country ending the Saxon notion of free ownership of soil by working farmers.

OUR ROOTS

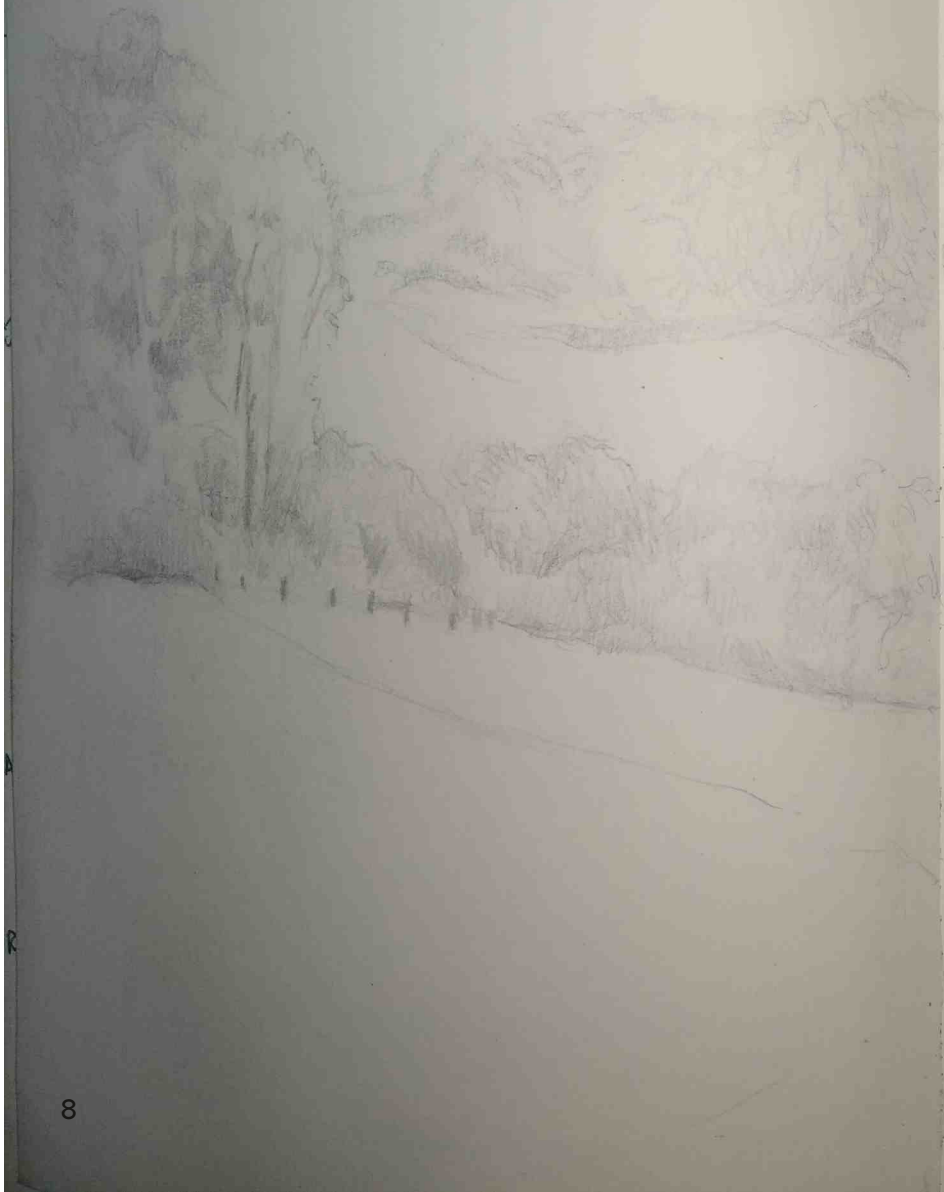
4 INTRO

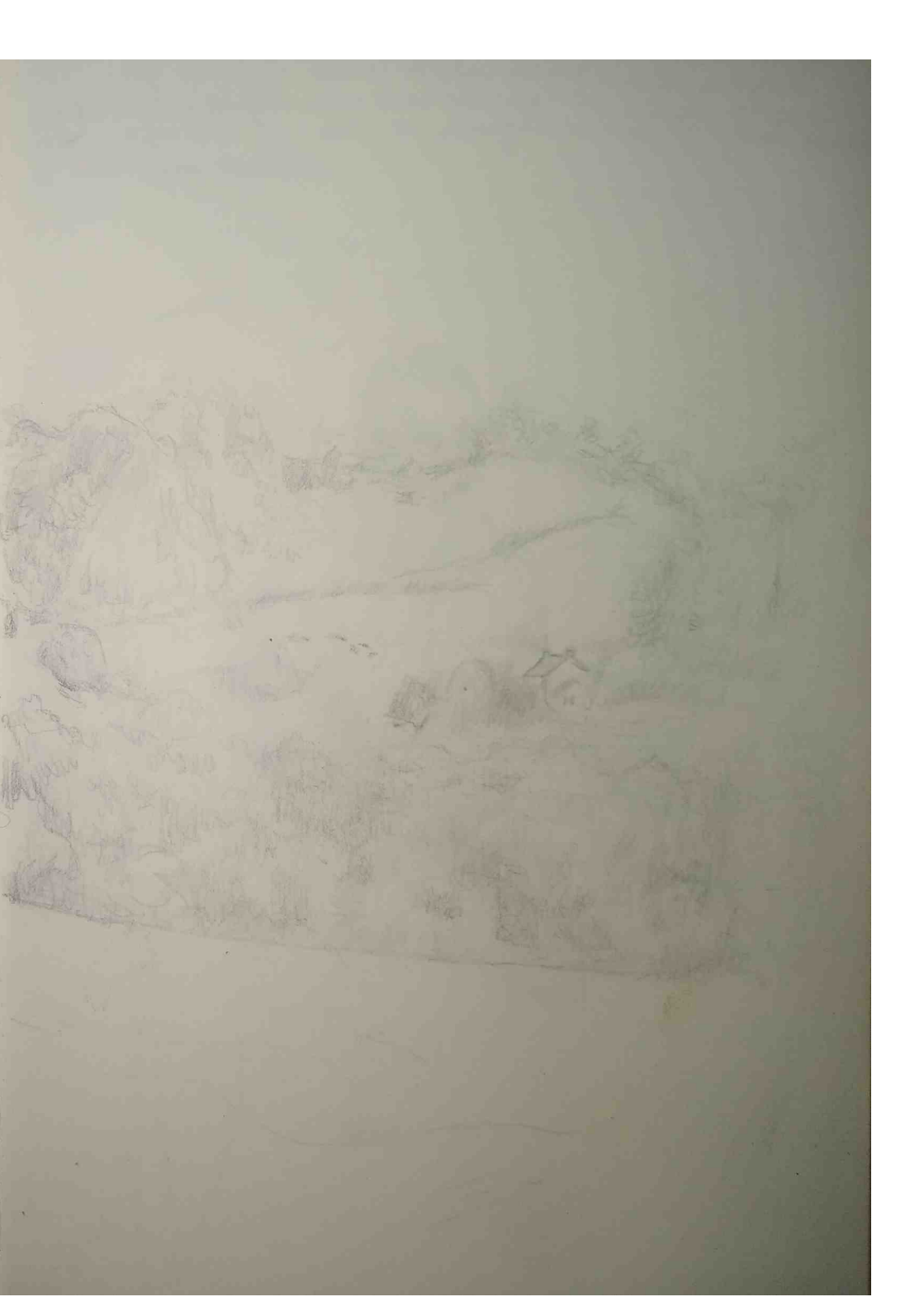
Tinkers Bubble was created in 1994 by some activists to create a place to live closer to the land. Some stories even go that the plan was conspired while in prison. There was a movement of people against the building of new roads (see wikipedia: Road protest in the United Kingdom) and the plan was made to create a place where activists could gather strength. Afterwards Tinkers Bubble became an intentional community which lives off the land but without the use of fossil fuels. There is a ban on the use of fossil fuels on site and electricity is solar powered 12V. For cooking and heating wood is used. Tinkers Bubble earns a small income by selling organically grown produce (salad, apple juice and cider) and selling sustainably produced timber which is felled by hand, logged by horse and sawn by a wood-fired steam-engine driven sawmill. The buildings are temporary structures built with a very low environmental impact when compared to conventional housing. The land is about 40 acres of which 28 acres are woodland. There are no power-tools used which makes it a place that is connected to living off the land through the centuries. The Communal Roundhouse was one of the first, oldest, structures.



Thomas Agran

5.view of the valley

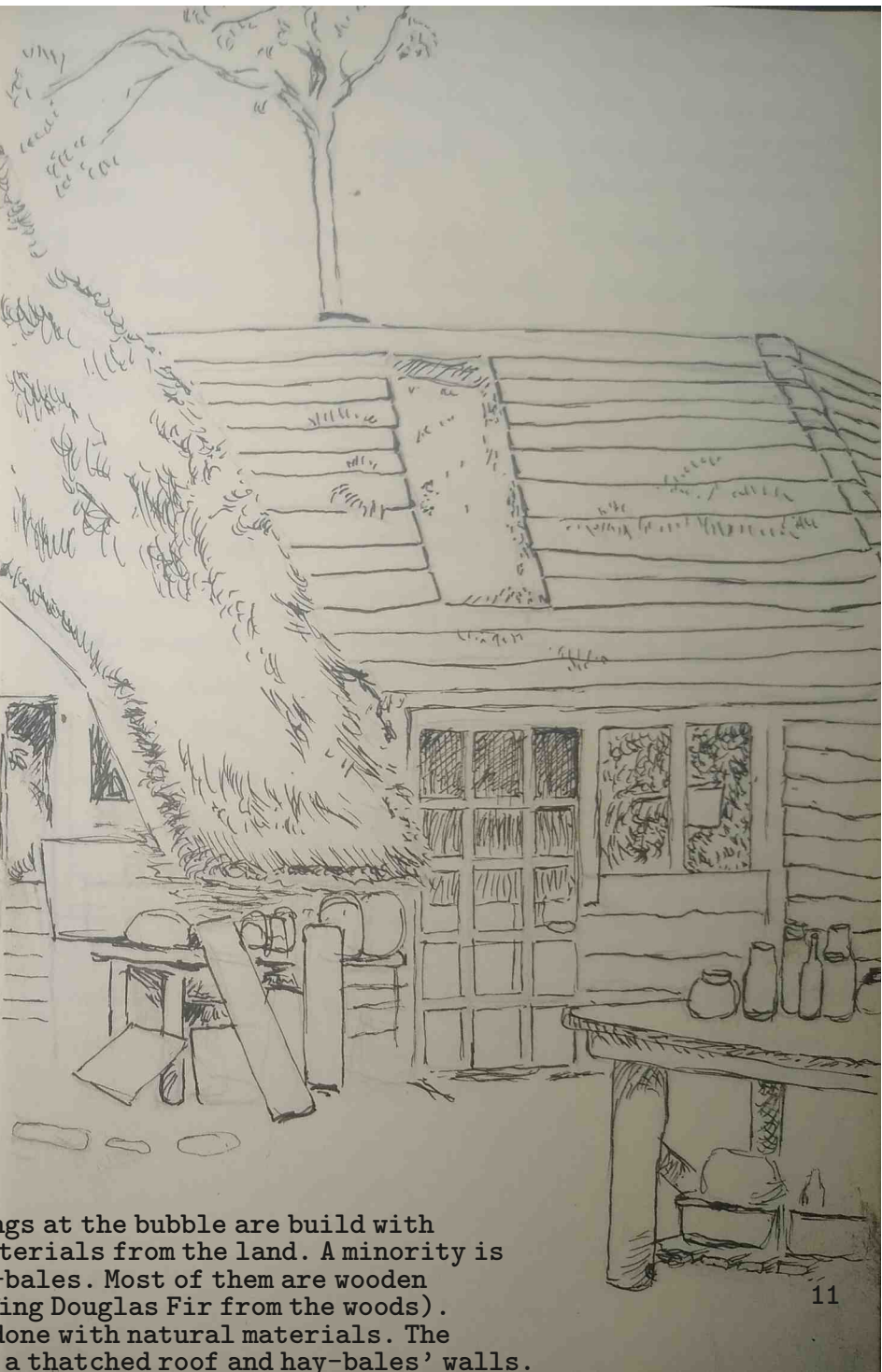




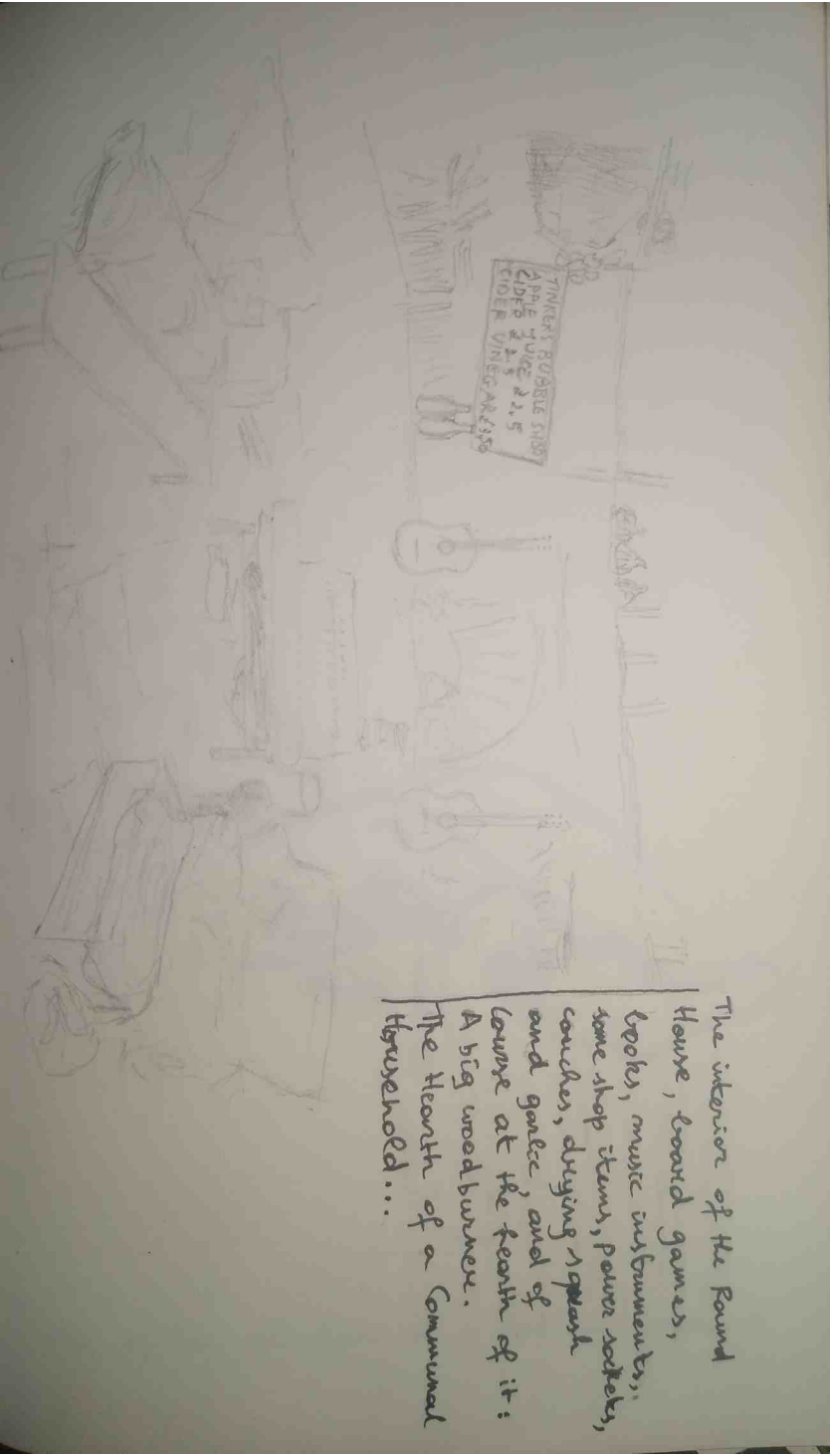
6. roundhouse



All the building
sustainable ma
build with hay-
structures (us
Insulation is d
roundhouse has



ings at the bubble are build with
materials from the land. A minority is
-bales. Most of them are wooden
(using Douglas Fir from the woods).
done with natural materials. The
a thatched roof and hay-bales' walls.



The interior of the Round
House, board games,
books, music instruments,
some shop items, power sockets,
couches, drying 1 guitar
and guitar, and of
course at the hearth of it:
A big woodburner.
The hearth of a communal
household...

Timber's Bubble Kitchen



Apart from rocket
groves in the outside
kitchen here is a
Roughburn wood-powered
oven, to bake bread, cakes
even dishes, ...



7. some residents (Laura, Wren, Sophia, Ava)



LAURA & WREN DECEMBER 2021 #3
GENERATIONS OF FARMING,
GENERATIONS OF STRUGGLE

"PEOPLE OF MY GENERATION ARE PUT
ON THIS CONVEYOR BELT TOWARDS URBAN
LIVING AND MAKING YOUR MONEY IN THE
COUNTRYSIDE IS LOOKED DOWN UPON,
LIVING LIKE THIS IS MY PROTEST."



The scythe is a much used tool at the bubble. For getting weeds out of the way to hay-making, it is an indispensable tool if fuel-powered or electric tools are no consideration.

8. some other inhabitants



Sabotage
Betriebsstörung
HEINRICH
KLEY

Who else lives in these woods?

Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*)
Also called brown or wood
owl; 38cm (15in) from beak
to tip of tail; 40-45cm
(16-18in) high; distribution
widespread but absent from
Ireland and some Scottish
islands.



GREY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Size of adult 25-30cm (10-12in) over head and body; 20-22cm (8-9in) along tail. Weighs about 500g (17oz), females slightly less

Breeding season Jan-July
Gestation period 42-45 days

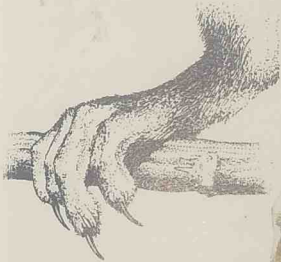
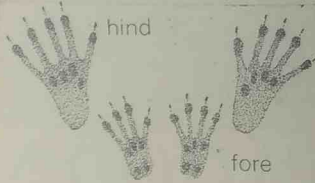
No of young average 3, range 1-7

Lifespan known to live 8-9 years, but less than 1% reach more than 6 years

Food bark of oak, beech; acorns, nuts, fungi

Predators birds of prey; wild cat; casual hunters—stoat, pine marten, fox; control by man; traffic

Distribution Throughout England and Wales where there are trees; lowland Scotland and central counties of Ireland.



Above: The squirrel's forefeet are ideally suited for clutching food while the animal nibbles away, as shown by the grey squirrel gnawing at a hazelnut. The longer hind feet help it to balance and get a firm grip on the branch.



Badger bl 61-76 cm

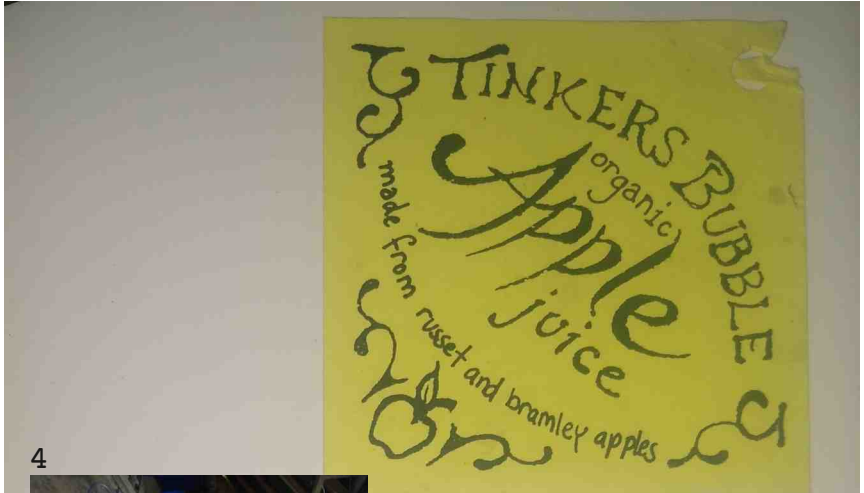
Meles meles. One of our most familiar mammals, from pictures, though rarely seen because of nocturnal and underground habits. Common in woods throughout most of Europe, living on variety of food. Earthworms are particular favourites.

Pheasant bl 65-80 cm

Phasianus colchicus. Mainly ground-living bird, eating grain, seeds and berries. Has broad, round wings and long tail to allow maximum manoeuvrability. If startled, will fly up making noisy, whirring sound, but will not fly far. Breeds in open country with woods throughout western Europe.



9. cider-house



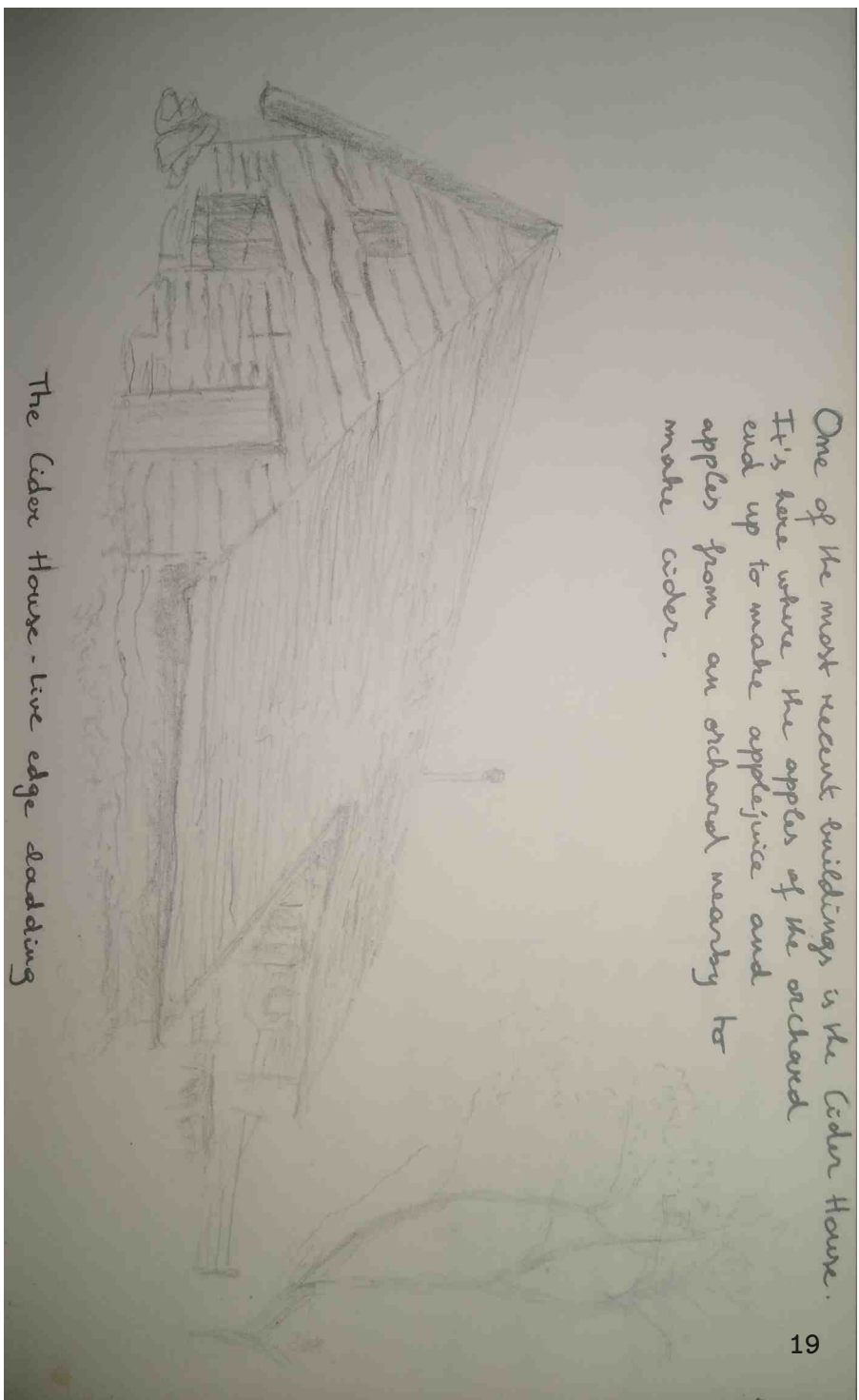
4



1. POT APPLES IN
2. TURN HANDLE, APPLES GET CRUSHED
3. COLLECT PIECES IN TRAY
4. PRESS JUICE OUT, IN PRESS

One of the most recent buildings is the Cider House.
It's here where the apples of the orchard
end up to make apple juice and
apples from an orchard nearby to
make cider.

The Cider House - live edge cladding



10. Steam-engine & saw-mill



Producing timber here involves managing a 26 acre woodland in a sustainable way, felling selected trees with two-person handsaws and axes, transporting logs with the help of our handsome horses, and processing these logs on a wood fired steam-powered sawmill. We have heard that we may be running the only remaining commercial portable steam engine in the country. Our steam engine is 83 years old, and we've been using her almost constantly for 26 of those years. She is now in need of a new lease of life; a once-in-a-century major refurbishment. For us to continue to produce timber, and to continue to act as an example of what is possible in this country without fossil fuels, we need to urgently raise the funds to replace the firebox. We will be carrying out as much of the work as we can, but the costs are far beyond our reach.

20



in 2016

Tinker's Bubble: Forever Temporary

Tinker's Bubble, the Somerset community which is now 22 years old, obtained another ten years' renewal, having once again declined to apply for permanent permission.



Tinker's Bubble's steam powered sawmill can be seen (and heard) working on YouTube videos "Steam Engine and Sawbench at Tinker's Bubble" and "Stenner Saw Bench."

According to community member Pedro Brace:

"SSDC wanted us to prove that we were financially viable. When we asked what this meant, they said that was for us to show. Basically they wanted us to show that we earned enough to pay for whatever we buy in. We didn't feel that we could argue that we were financially viable."

Tinker's Bubble, which uses no fossil fuel powered machinery on site, produces a high proportion of its subsistence needs, but has to work doubly hard to compete for cash in the fossil fuel economy. Pedro is hopeful that recent investment in a new hand saw for the wood-powered steam engine will boost the community's finances.

South Somerset District Council is pretty relaxed about granting temporary permission. When the community first applied for permission in 1994 there were 144 objections from local people. When they applied in 1999 there were 27 objections. When they renewed in 2004 and again in 2016, there were no objections.

11. Forestry & gardening



I feel obliged to dedicate a section to forestry and gardening, so much at the bubble being centered around that. This zine originated for a big part after the forestry weekend of november 2021. Forestry weekends are organised for doing the woodland management. Felling trees, processing the wood, clearing out areas of the forest, dealing with ash dye-back (a fungus affecting the ash trees), ... The gardens are worked in all year round and provide the main food for the self-sustainability of the community. Grain-based foods are bought (wheat, pasta, rice, ...).



12. Poetry for life



Front lines

The edge of the cancer
swells against the hill- we feel
 a foul breeze-
And it sinks back down.
The deer winter here
A chainsaw growls in the gorge .

Ten wet days and the log trucks stop,
The trees breathe .
Sunday the 4-wheel jeep of the
Realty Company brings in
Landseekers, lookers, they say
To the land,
Spread your legs .

The jets crack sound overhead, it's OK here;
Every pulse of the rot at the heart
In the sick fat veins of Amerika
Pushes the edge up closer-

A bulldozer grinding and slobbering
Sideslipping and belching on top of
The skinned-up bodies of still-live bushes
In the pay of a man
From town.

Behind is a forest that goes to the Arctic
And a desert that still belongs to the Piute
And here we must draw
Our line.

- G.Snyder in Turtle Island



collecting scythed hay by horse.
Pic: David Sperro in Settlements

What if?

What if we weren't fenced in?

What if we were fed by what we met

And trusted the nourishment of where we sat?

What if destruction is the wrong word

And we've been saying it wrong, all this time gone?

And what if a dead badger,

Eyes pickled, sides chewn and insides askew,

Were as beautiful to us as a rose?

Or more beautiful in fact,

Than a plant that's had its limbs cut back.

What if we weren't trained or pruned?

And what if we knew that the trees fall

With a sound so loud, nothing cares if we saw?

What if every rat shit, boggy ditch, rotten gate and dead
vole switched

Our minds into the prolific

Into a courting of wild that could almost make you sick.

What if we really felt the energy erupting from every stick?

Well it would be hard to get from A to B,

If we really knew how much it could be.

So what if now we really try to see?

Perhaps we would lose touch with our ideas of me.

And if we open to the cacophony

We may slash and free the melancholy,

To forget what now and embrace what if,

Think of the world in which we could co-exist.



Beacon Fire

two person saw at work

Over the once Green Land
sits an empire of concrete and tarmac
Poisons in the Water , Earth and Air
Madness everywhere

These are dark days

Gather
at the springs by the Woodlands
Build shelters and beacon fires

When the dark times come
we can sing together
Gathered in the light of the beacon
we are stronger

we can sing to ease our fearful hearts
quiet our panicked minds
distract from our tumbling stomachs

As our bodies begin to fade
our passing can be soothed
by the beacon fire song

So gather
find the springs by the woodlands
and build beacon fires
a thousand beacons can burn
across the length of Albion
As one world ends
and another begins

Jacob





13. Outro

In the zine i haven't touched on a lot of issues. The fact that Tinkers Bubble doesn't use fossil fuels and still manages to have subsistence farming, sell organic produce and timber, keeps horse-logging alive, builds sustainably, gardening, livestock... So many elements which make up the 'magic' of the bubble. The zine is an invitation for everyone to go and see it for theirselves or to start changing your own life accordingly, to a more sustainable way of life.

Green capitalism is an unlikely possibility but it will still be at the cost of people and nature and there is also the reality that capitalism is destroying the conditions of much life on earth. The biosphere is finite.

Tinkers Bubble is pioneering in showing how old crafts (and tools) can be kept alive but also to show what a peasants' life without fossil fuels anno 2021 looks like in a developed capitalist country.

I was pleased to be able to attend the Landworkers' Alliance socials' get together on the 6th of december 2021 at Tinkers Bubble. To be connected via La Via Campesina to strengthen the demands of agro-ecology and food sovereignty worldwide. To be connected to small scale farming internationally.

Tinkers Bubble is one place that shows us that a different world is possible if we dare to dream and act profoundly from that and organise and work accordingly.

More material on Tinkers Bubble can be found at:
<https://www.tinkersbubble.org>

More zines can be found at:
<https://www.withdrawn.noblogs.org>

Let's act from POWER.LOVE.CARE. Keep loving. Keep fighting.

Want to volunteer or visit? tinkersbubble@riseup.net

Want to contact the zine-maker? withdrawn@riseup.net