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## *the corrugated iron club*

*"We know we are not alone in having a passion for old sheds,  
but we also love joyous new buildings built of corrugated iron"*  
says Sue Clifford, director of Common Ground.

*"On 25th March we launch a new website  
**www. corrugated-iron-club.info**  
which we hope people from across the world will visit to share their enthusiasm  
for conservation and new build".*

Take a look online now for a preview.

Henry Robinson Palmer (1795 – 1844 the founder of the Institute of Civil Engineers) is credited with inventing the corrugating of iron as a way of strengthening sheets of it for building (London, 1828). The process of galvanising protects the sheets from oxidising, it involves dipping in zinc which alloys to the steel surface and preferentially sacrifices itself to weathering, thus offering protection from rust for possibly 50 years in clean, unsalt-laden air.

Popularity increased for 'the galvanise' (Dorset term of endearment) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries especially since prefabricated buildings took their carapace of 'corrugated' (Devon) with them all over the world. Use for farming and industrial buildings, for substitute roofing especially for thatch and for the creation of small buildings of all kinds revolves around its cheapness and its ease of use. Perhaps for these same reasons it has not been highly valued in England, but even here it has its admirers. And of course in many parts of the world from India to Australia it is much used in housing, farming and industry today.

It may be thought that sheets of galvanised corrugated iron would make for standardised buildings. Far from it. The material has not had an homogenising influence mainly because it lends itself to small scale, self-build enterprises which reflect a precise functional response to need. The result is simplicity, functionally dictated, locally tempered and sometimes idiosyncrasy or high style plays a part.

Colours often carry or create local resonances - red, black, white, grey, whilst sympathetic deterioration leads to the soft rusty patinated walls and roofs which feel such a part of the landscape.

The **Corrugated Iron Club** is part of Common Ground's<sup>1</sup> campaign for Local Distinctiveness<sup>2</sup> linked to its new Building Site on the web pages - [www.England-in-particular.info](http://www.England-in-particular.info) (add [/buildpath.html](#)). Active now for preview, **launch 18 March**

Media: for more information contact: Sue Clifford 01747 850820 over

## Notes

1. Creating the circumstances for local knowledge and professional expertise to inform each other, Common Ground pioneers imaginative ways of reweaving the local world. We try to inspire people to join in exploration of the richness of everyday places, popular culture, common wild life, ordinary buildings and landscapes, to revalue our emotional engagement with places and all that they mean to us and to go on to become actively involved in their care. Campaigning original *Holding Your Ground* - an action guide to Local Conservation Temple Smith 1985, most recent title *The Common Ground Book of Orchards* 2000.

2. Common Ground coined the term Local Distinctiveness which is about differentiating our everyday surroundings and the significance that places have to us. It is an expression of the accumulation of story upon history upon natural history that results as we work with (or against) nature to shape the land, make a living and live our lives. It is about buildings and landscapes, city streets and farming patterns, recipes, language, customs and festivals and more.

This new work on Local Distinctiveness was launched in 2002 through BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, Country Living, Landscape Design etc; supported by DEFRA and others, it is about grounding sustainability. By focussing attention on significance in our surroundings and helping build courage to be demonstrative about our attachment to place, then perhaps we can do better for both nature and culture.

We want to encourage people to create ABCs of their own place, and are happy to send a copy of our leaflet which shows how communities can start their own local actions with an ABC.

3. We are currently researching and writing a big book, *England in Particular*, to be published by Hodder & Stoughton in 2005. It will be an a-z of details from apples and bricks, carr and coe to winterbourne and zawn. We seek information of all kinds to help us to produce a book that resonates with the richness of local voices and intimate knowledge.

4. The classic poster - *Common Ground Rules for Local Distinctiveness*, an A-Z, (A2 full colour) is still available @ £6.00 include p & p.

5. Information on Common Ground's projects can be found in both :  
[www.england-in-particular.info](http://www.england-in-particular.info) and [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)  
or with SAE from  
Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21, High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JE.

6. Common Ground is a charity no. 326335 and is grateful for funding from DEFRA Environmental Action Fund, the Tedworth Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Cobb Trust and others.



**are you doing your bit?**