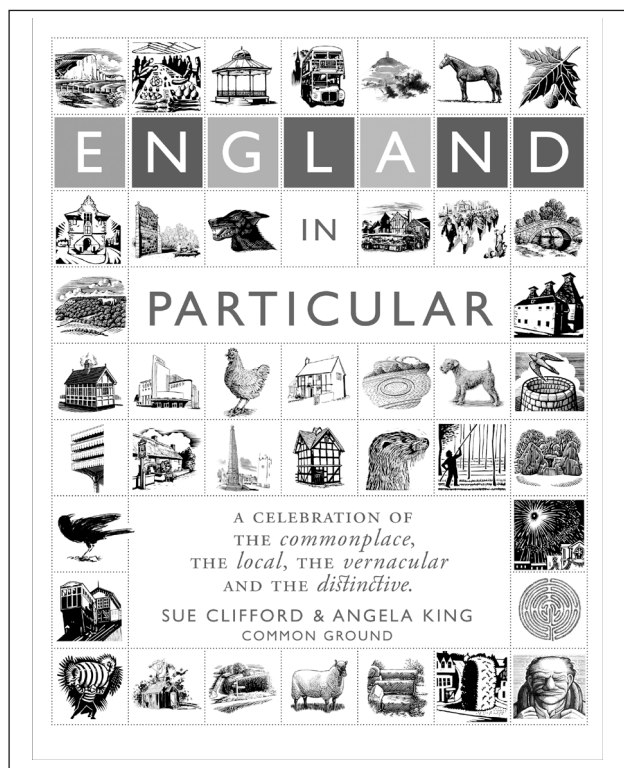


# particular news

Spring / Summer 2006

Hurrah - il est arrivé!

sustainability is about living together



This book is Common Ground's celebration of local distinctiveness taking England as example. It is cry for positive engagement with the commonplace, the vernacular, the everyday - wherever you are. Exploring land as culture and locality as crucible, the attempt is to demonstrate how a care for difference, dynamism, detail and patina can maintain authenticity in our surroundings and help us ground identity and invoke the imagination and humanity we shall need in uncertain times.

Nature will endure whatever our actions bring. It is we who are in danger. We deprive ourselves and others of a rich life. We need to live better with the world, and it is our ordinary actions that will be our salvation or downfall. To ground ourselves, understand our place, find meaning and take steps to cherish and enrich our surroundings demands that we share our knowledge, get involved. We have to know what is of real value to us, where we are, and find new ways of belonging.

We thank everyone who has sent us material from across the country, especially Katrina Porteous who has been our Northumberland correspondent. The book has been written by Sue Clifford, Angela King, Darren Giddings, Kate O'Farrell at Common Ground with Gail Vines.

*An entrancing green alphabet. An enquire within upon every native thing. The reading, walking and seeing are wide, and as fresh as a daisy. "The land is our most elaborate storyboard", say Sue Clifford and Angela King as they demonstrate this truth in seemingly countless small essays, each one a brief masterpiece of combined social and natural history. The entire concept is original and successful. This is a book for all English seasons and every English mile. It cleanses our vision of familiar sights whilst adding a thousand more.* **Ronald Blythe**

*This book celebrates the rich and enduring oddness of England in all its glory, and with its loving and intimate detail it is a triumphant rebuff of all that is bland, anonymous and fake.* **Monty Don**

*On every page of this enormous book the reader will find information of the most teasing and esoteric kind. It is elegantly written; quotations are brilliantly chosen and helpfully explained. The book itself is as informative as an encyclopaedia, but far more gripping and more coherent. There are delightful illustrations. This is a book to keep for ever, that will bring you up to date and take you very far back.* **UA Fanthorpe**

*This book is as vital as it is joyous, and as timely as it is inspired. It reminds us what life should really be about - the little and the local, the marvellous and the modest, the daring, the delightful and the diverse. As we stand on the brink of bowing once and for all to global corporate culture and the might of multinational branding, this exquisite volume is the antidote that might just help to set us back on the path to sanity.* **Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall**

*A magical celebration of English diversity and a much needed wake up call as we sleepwalk further into the dreary global monoculture.* **Zac Goldsmith**

*England in Particular is one of those completely delightful books that draws you deeper and deeper into both personal and collective memory..... part of what makes it so special is that somewhere deep inside you, you feel you know, or half know it already.* **Fiona Reynolds**

*England in Particular is a living portrait of England here and now, with all the narrative and mystery of the past attached. The book is gracefully written, phenomenally knowledgeable, and simply exhilarating, speaking as it does of the extraordinary things that are all around us, if we are only prepared to open our eyes to them.* **Fay Weldon**

*England in Particular* by Sue Clifford and Angela King  
Published by Hodder & Stoughton, May 2006. £30.00 rrp.  
528 pp, 594 entries, 450 illustrations. ISBN 0 340 82616 9



## Campaign for Local Distinctiveness

England in Particular is a celebration of just some of the distinctive details that cumulatively make England. We believe that attachment to places comes through understanding their details and feeling a part of their story. This familiarity is a prerequisite to care and action.

Whilst we worry that many things we cherish are disappearing (from butterflies, hedgehogs and lapwings to orchards, farm buildings and independent shops) and that the forces of globalisation and economic demands that homogenise our surroundings are too great for us to tackle, it is amazing what one single-minded person can achieve, and the extent to which groups of people can change things for the better.


There are many elements to campaigning, starting with investigation and research, the gathering of information from and with local people, local authorities and professional organisations. Work with groups that already exist, such as local food networks, history, civic, open spaces and wild life societies. And stand up for yourself: Woody Allen said 'the world is run by people who show up': initiate a new group, attend town council meetings, become a councillor. Write letters, go on the radio.


It is important to stay focussed and set both idealistic and realistic goals. But the hardest thing is get started.


So begin simply. Ask each other what you value in your surroundings, the question makes you all experts. Share knowledge.


Make a Parish Map – chart the things that have significance locally. Or make an ABC – an alphabetical photographic, pictorial, written expression of your community valuables. Then use these 'pictures', to which anyone from children to high court judges can have contributed, as an agenda upon which to base policy suggestions to the local authority, confrontations about development that will never fit, prompting further explorations and expressions of local distinctiveness as seen from the inside. Work with artists to make the Parish Map or ABC into something that can be printed to let everyone have a copy. Put the original in a public place, keep adding to it as more people want to join in.


A few Common Ground Rules may help a personal beginning:


 Grow your own fruit and vegetables. An allotment or vegetable garden will bring you self reliance and the satisfaction of growing tasty varieties you can't find in the shops.


 Support your local market, ask for organic and locally produced fruit and vegetables in season. Then your local landscape will gain from positive feedback.


 Stand up for old trees and ancient woodland. Old trees are good for us and rich in wild life. "Ten thousand oaks of 100 years old are no substitute for one 500 year old oak".

 Be generous with your boundary to the road, is it in the local idiom? Hedges or walls of local brick or stone add richness to a lane, road or street. Concrete or panel fencing homogenises places.

 Enhance natural features. Never let a stream be culverted: out of sight and open to abuse. We need enchantment, clear streams as well as clear water in our daily lives.

 Diversity is nature's safety net. Encourage a range of plant varieties to attract a range of wild life and offer more protection against disease and change.

 Let the character of the people and place express itself. Support your local independent shops. The corporate high street leaches the locality of wealth, diversity and attractiveness.

 Think about connections. Re-thatch your roof in the style that is typical to your area. Long straw, combed wheat straw and water reed each have their traditional territories. Each of these materials reinforces the particularity of place, offers homes for wild life as they grow and nurtures local culture as they are used.

These campaign pages will be appearing on our web site [www.England-in-particular.info](http://www.England-in-particular.info).

And please send us your stories to help others campaign for the particularity and identity of their places.

Information on Common Ground's Parish Maps project and 'ABC – learning to read your locality' is available with SAE.

All **Common Ground** publications can now be bought from our web-site using **Paypal** - see [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk) for more details.





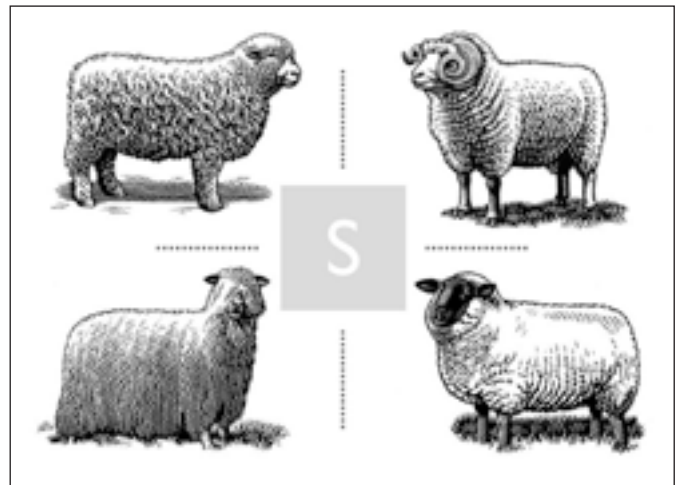
Our new poster shows a glimpse of the rich range of local distinctiveness we stand to lose if we do not answer this call for help. Blandness and uniformity in town and country are the indicators of a deeper malaise as nature and culture struggle under habitat loss and careless development. Common Ground Rules for Local Distinctiveness first appeared in 1992. This is a revised version, a different shape and with many new images, but the message remains the same - it is a call for local action.

A2 sized. Rolled copies sent in cardboard tubes cost £6.00 each, including p&p. Posters folded in 4 sent in A4 envelopes cost £5.00 each, including p&p. Cheques payable to Common Ground.

Our thanks go to the sixty-two artists whose work appears in England in Particular and who have responded so well to our very specific demands. Their skills are obvious, we are fortunate to have had them journey with us under the art direction of David Holmes.

## New Poster and Postcards from Common Ground

Also available - 16 new A6 colour postcards featuring images from England in Particular. Mixed: 8 for £4, 16 for £8 inc. p&p.



## Producing the Goods 2 : Markets and Market Places

Markets represent our oldest and most successful form of exchange. They were the starting points for many towns and the shapes of our streets reveal where markets took place. Many markets have stood in exactly the same spot for hundreds of years.

Yet the market place and street market are under siege. Many have suffered years of municipal neglect, more are threatened by development and car parking schemes. Some traditional markets have become the repository of cheap goods and food sourced from anywhere, sold by peripatetic retailers. The connection with locality and a town's hinterland has been lost.

On the positive side, some local authorities are upgrading markets as part of wider regeneration schemes. And Farmers' Markets and (WI) Country Markets are bringing locally grown produce back to our high streets.

Our new pamphlet gives a brief history and development of markets and market places, market halls, markets today, and offers examples of campaigns to revivify markets, ideas for celebrating and keeping markets locally distinctive as well as vibrant. Our manifesto outlines what we think markets could and should be doing. We want to see the revival of markets as the impetus for a revolution in fruit and vegetable production from the land surrounding our villages, towns and cities. We desperately need to reverse the downward trend – UK acreage of fruit and vegetables fell by 31% between 1987 and 2004.

The 24 page full colour pamphlet is available free from Common Ground with a sae and 37p stamp. Case studies, to encourage those trying to hold onto and enhance their markets, are online at [www.england-in-particular.info](http://www.england-in-particular.info).



## Common Ground's Manifesto for Markets

Markets should be:

- True to their place, adding to its local distinctiveness.
- At the heart of a town's cultural and commercial life.
- Maintained as flexible spaces useable for town gatherings.
- The focus of town regeneration and tourism.
- Encouraging direct selling.
- Providing an outlet for products and souvenirs of all kinds from the surrounding area, linking countryside with town.
- Providing fresh, affordable, wholesome food with traceable provenance from as local as possible, reducing food miles, supporting local jobs.
- Providing a means of selling for local farmers, market gardeners and small producers with a surplus.
- Provoking market gardens/smallholdings in a town's hinterland through local authority market policy and provision.
- Making use of market halls – fine and successful buildings in function and design.
- Conserved - the shapes, buildings and ghosts of a market and its artefacts (such as cattle troughs) are important cultural memories.
- Celebrated for the urbanity and their continuing contribution to town and country life.
- Dynamic – reflecting the comings and goings of new communities and the things they buy.

Common Ground

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Contact us for previous copies of this newsletter, or download them as PDF files from our web-site.

[www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)

[www.england-in-particular.info](http://www.england-in-particular.info)

**Common Ground** is a national arts and environment charity. We play a unique role in linking nature and culture, working to inform, inspire and involve people in enjoying and taking more responsibility for their own locality. Parish Maps, Community Orchards, the Water Market and Apple Day are a few of our projects. **Producing the Goods**, champions production and consumption that reflects and sustains locality, nature and culture.



We are grateful for the support of Defra EAF, the Cobb Trust, Countryside Agency, the John Ellerman Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Headley Trust, Lyndhurst Settlement, Raphael Trust, Tedworth Charitable Trust and more.

Charity no. 326335.