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An eco-company using it's loaf!

Three weeks ago, a new, exciting eco-artisan bakery opened at Charmborough Farm, Holcombe. The company has emerged from the vision of Duncan Glendinning, from Bath, who, having an interest in all things eco-friendly and becoming bored and isolated with working in freelance web development, found himself firstly on a BBC Two programme and then, of all places, on a remote island in Fiji.

Duncan firstly became involved in the BBC Two programme 'It's not easy being Green' where he learnt about how to live a sustainable and waste-free life. Through a friendship made on the programme, he then found himself taking on the position of 'sustainability manager' for a social ecotourism project in Fiji, where he learnt how to live self-sufficiently and also where he met Irish chef, Patrick Ryan, who was also volunteering by cooking with ingredients available to him naturally and had wowed everyone with his sage-and-onion loaf. It was here that the Thoughtful Bread Company idea began.

Duncan explains: "The idea meant that I had found something to marry my passion with the environment and good, healthy food - and, after all, it's unusual to meet someone who doesn't like bread!"

Duncan gradually sold the idea of an eco-artisan bakery to Patrick who subsequently visited Bath and loved the area. After eighteen months of market research, the keys were handed over to the unit in Holcombe early this year, and the pair set about transforming the concrete industrial unit to meet their eco-credentials. From acquiring some smart patio doors from freecycle, windows out of a skip, old double glazing panels used as whiteboards to draft their recipe ideas and a desk made of old pallets, Duncan also found a company, Pico PC, a British manufacturer of one of the smallest fully-featured computers, which uses less than 10% of the energy that a normal desktop computer does. Their log storage for the wood-fired oven is also made from old pallets and Duncan is currently testing to see if the site would benefit from wind power. The company van they use to make their daily trips to Green Park Station in Bath, where they share a stand selling their bread, is run completely on bio-diesel from vegetable oil collected locally. Even the tiles in the bathroom are made from recycled plastic! All of their waste is composted and an area of land has been negotiated for them to grow their own herbs on site, so the compost will be put to good use. An energy monitor in the bakery also lets them know how much energy they are using at any given time.

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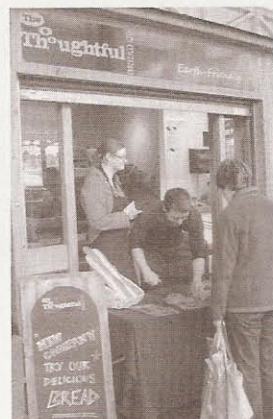
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*The Thoughtful Bread
Company at Green Park
Station, Bath.*

antique equipment, which would otherwise have ended up in landfill. There are also plans to build their own clay oven using recycled materials, working their way through many wine bottles, something that is proving a real chore!

Every morning Patrick has an early start at the unit, preparing their freshly-baked bread using natural, local and seasonal produce ready to sell at Green Park from 12 noon onwards. The flour comes from local mills such as Burcott Mill in Wells. For Comic Relief, he made beet-root rolls to sell in Bath, which went down so well they are now making beet-root bread. Cheddar bread is made from Cheddar Gorge Cheese, (the best cheese-bread I have ever tasted), wild garlic bread which is so tasty you could use it with some butter as garlic bread, wild rocket and apple bread, sage and onion, spelt walnut and raisin, and light rye sourdough to name a few.

If you want to save yourself some food miles and don't want to travel into Bath, you can stop by the unit at Holcombe between 9 a.m. - 9.30 a.m. to buy bread from the Thoughtful Bread Company. You can also read all about them and keep up to date with their online blogs by logging on to: www.thoughtfulbreadcompany.com Some might think Duncan mad for starting a business like this during a recession, but with people wanting to spend their scarce and hard-earned cash on quality, it may just place them apart from the rest.

Becky Brooks