

## A Parish Walk: Creation and Stewardship: Background, Ideas for Further Research and Suggestions for Possible Actions

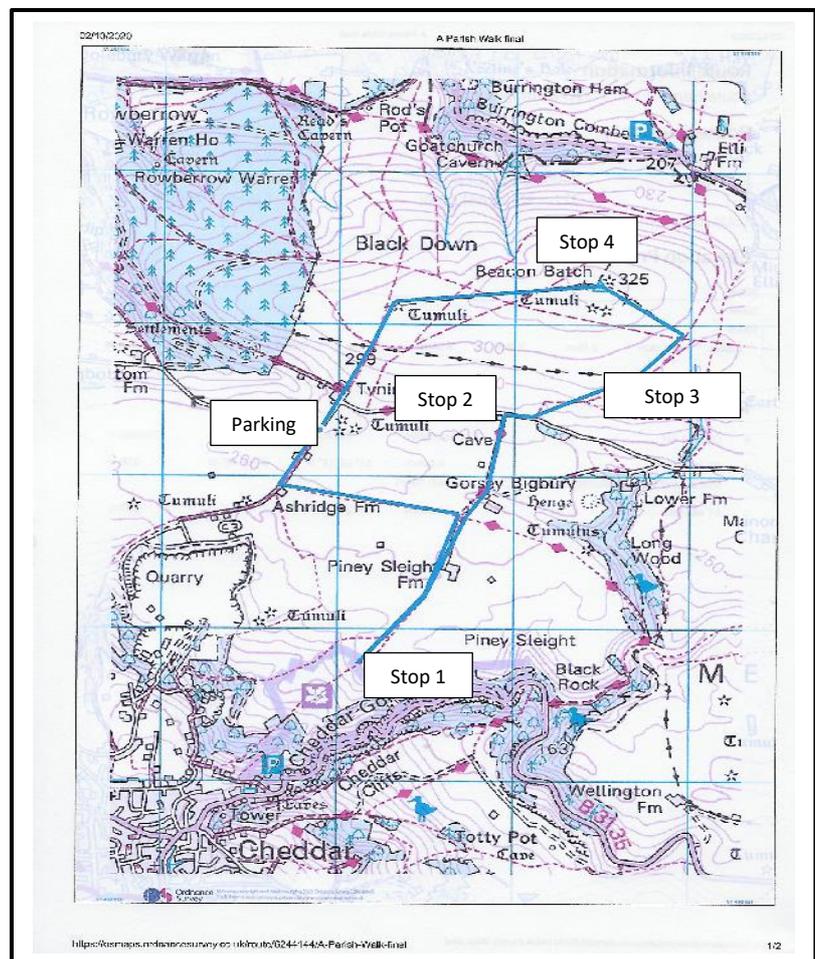
Welcome to the parish walk. Its purpose is to help us move on from the Global Healing videos, which call on us to reflect and to prepare ourselves for a journey of culture change, through educating ourselves. The videos challenge us about how we perceive and value creation at this time of crisis. The walk picks up on this theme and aims to help us deepen our response and make it practical and active by finding routes to a powerful understanding, and possible actions for us to consider in the light of that understanding. We each can see the world anew and act to protect, preserve and enhance our world for ourselves, for others, and for the Ark that is our planet, Earth.

### **The Parish Walk Route Black Down, on the Mendips**

It begins at Tynings Farm, 2km ESE of Shipham at OS grid ref. 468562.

It loops anticlockwise past Ashridge Farm to Charterhouse Farm, with the route diverting one km south over 3 high-height stiles to overlook Cheddar Gorge, (Stop1) then returning to Charterhouse Farm. We then trend northwards to Beacon Batch, via GB Gruffy Nature reserve (Stop 2) and Lots Nature reserve (Stop 3) to the highest point on the Mendips at 325m/1066 ft, (Stop 4) but a very slight and easy ascent on this route. We then walk west and south to complete the circuit.

Distance 8.3 km (5.1 miles)



This document is a resource to help underpin this process, to be used before the walk to help us to visualise the past, present and potential futures of this landscape as we take in the views that this gentle walk is designed to maximise - from 30 to 50 miles around on a clear day. It will point the way to just a few of the resources that may help your own research and personal action, such as: (1), (2) and (3) – see the footnotes at the end for details. Most of these can be found on the internet, others are books or television films. They can be dipped into, or they can be used as a detailed research resource.

## **In the Beginning: An Overview**

We are over-consuming the planet, but we don't have to be poorer, just richer differently, in ways that have been proven to be better for the planet and for ourselves. If you doubt this, suspend judgement for a while, take the walk and do the research that will help you towards making the most informed judgement that you can.

The chief responsibility for action rests firmly with governments (4), and governments have shown they can deliver, however imperfectly: on covid19, on the hole in the ozone layer. Their route to a solution will be the same as for the ozone layer in the 1990s. But it is citizens who influence governments, and consumers' choices that change the economy. All our potential actions come down to those two things.

In the last two centuries we have vastly increased our understanding of the universe, but we have vastly increased our exploitation of the planet. Britain has been at the heart of this, as the cradle of the industrial revolution and at the core of the scientific revolution. Britain 'mined' the empire for wealth, and the world, overwhelmingly our rich world, has mined the planet for resources way beyond what is sustainable.

We are rapidly expending the 'natural' capital sum in the bank, rather than living on its interest. This is a global problem, but it is also a local one. Globally and locally there are two interlinked crises – that there is still time to reverse – if governments and people act now - and it turns out that the concept of 'natural capital' can be at the heart of the solution (5).

At the time of writing, China has just declared that it will be carbon neutral by 2060 – that is the same length of time over which this planned economy went from overpopulated weakling to industrial and political superpower (6). A massive step forward.

### ***The two complex and interlinked crises are:***

*The climate crisis, or global heating* – science has shown us that in the last 10,000 years, global climate has sat in a sweet spot of exceptional stability, allowing us to make the journey from hunter-gatherers to here;

*The biodiversity crisis, or mass extinction* - the greatest since an asteroid strike extinguished the dinosaurs and 75% of the planet's species 66 million years ago.

But they are also so much more: impoverished soils, sea level rise, acidification and eutrophication of the seas, wildfires, stronger storms and floods, chemical pollution, plastics permeating the seas and our own cells, desertification, but they can all be solved by a change in attitude, driven by the knowledge and understanding that we have acquired, and by the decisions that follow from that. The causes are interlinked. So are the solutions.

It has been estimated that the world began to consume more than the planet could sustainably provide around 1970, when there were about 3.5 billion people (7.8 billion in 2020). We are now estimated to be consuming not what one planet provides us as free resources, but 1.6 planets' worth, and the planet cannot renew itself at that rate. Britain consumes at the rate of 3 planets' worth, the USA at 4 (7).

Oxfam and the Stockholm Environment Institute have estimated in 2020 that the world's richest 1% (earning £77,000 or more) cause twice the carbon dioxide emissions of the world's poorest 50%; and over the last 25 years, as total consumption has risen by 60%, that of the richest has risen 3 times faster than that of the poorest 50%. The richest 10% (earning £27,000 or more) - were responsible for 52% of emissions over the 25 year period. –that's most of us, at least before covid19 (median UK household income 2018-2019: £29,600 – source: UK government).

**Action:** *Research your ecological footprint at the website of the world-leading research institute Global Footprint Network: <https://www.footprintcalculator.org>*

### **Stop 1. The View South from Mendip: past and present landscapes – and which future?**

The Somerset levels have always been a rich ecosystem. Its natural lakes and marshes formed one of the richest, most productive types of ecosystem in the world, up there with coral reefs and tropical forests. It also evolved over time as silt accumulated. Thousands of years ago, people lived in lake dwellings, harvested the abundant wildlife and made wooden trackways across the marshes (such as the Neolithic Sweet Track, nearly 6,000 years old and still there beneath the surface). Today that world has been partially restored in the nature reserves that have replaced the open cast peat quarries, including a copy of the Sweet Track to walk on. Otters are numerous, and reintroduced species, formerly extinct in Britain, such as the crane and the great bustard (the heaviest flying bird in the world!), are thriving there.

In Viking times, ships could still sail to Glastonbury, which was linked to the mainland only by a narrow neck of land. The beginnings of England were almost snuffed out in Chippenham, but were reborn in the Levels, at Athelney, Britain's lowest hillfort at 8 metres above sea level, where Alfred the Great in hiding rekindled the resistance to the Vikings and fostered a great victory at Edington.

The latest evidence from the Arctic and Antarctic is that we are committed to rising sea levels as the ice caps melt, but that it is very much in our hands today how great that rise will be. If we keep to the 1.5 degrees Celsius rise of the 2015 Paris Accord, the Greenland Ice cap will add 2.5 metres to sea level. If we let it pass its tipping point – which we cannot know until it is passed, it will eventually collapse, adding 6.5 metres to sea level. Concerns are rapidly rising about the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, which is relatively unstable and is being undermined by warming ocean waters. There is potentially another 7.5 metres of sea level to come here. Add in the droughts, mountain collapses and sea level rise caused by melting glaciers elsewhere, and you have perhaps an eventual 15 metres of sea level rise unless we take urgent and effective action (8) (9).

In that worst case scenario, Cheddar would be a seaside resort, Wells would be 'next-the sea' (two miles from the cathedral) and Glastonbury would be an island like Lindisfarne, with a tidal causeway linking it eastwards to land. Athelney would be undersea. Eastern England would fare far worse. Coastal cities around the world would be awash, much of central London would become part of an expanded Thames estuary.

In the great storm surge of 1607, the sea did again reach Glastonbury, destroying many villages. But floods come from the land as well. In 2012, the Levels experienced the 'worst flood in living memory', covering an area larger than Bristol. As across much of Britain, the upper catchments of the rivers were denuded of vegetation by grazing animals, and the rains were rushed to deluge the lowlands. But reforested uplands, with beavers as river managers, with meandering rivers and their floodplains holding back the flow, would greatly reduce this problem (10).

**Action:** Investigate your carbon footprint at: <https://www.carbonfootprint.com> -  
Or there are plenty of others, not least my energy company, and maybe yours: <https://www.bulb.co.uk/carbon-calculator> And consider what action you can take, e.g. improve insulation, go on a green energy tariff, consider your transport options, etc.

## **Stop 2. The Rocks of Mendip: immense forces shaped the landscape – and mass extinctions**

**GB Gruffy Reserve** has a curious name and a curious landscape. Mining made it derelict, nature reclaimed it. *Make sure that you keep to the paths, keep out of depressions and keep dogs on leads. Mineshafts may open up.* Lead has been mined on Mendip for over two thousand years, as well as iron and zinc. It has been estimated that over 100,000 tons of lead has been extracted from the Mendip Hills.

GB Cave here is around 2km long and 134 metres deep, with The Gorge, a tunnel large enough to hold several double decker buses. Charterhouse Cave here is over 4km long and is the deepest known cave in the Mendips. The caves and swallowholes are here because this is where the streams flow off the Old Red Sandstone of Blackdown onto the permeable and soluble Carboniferous Limestone.

**Blackdown**, the highest part of Mendip, is hard, Old Red Sandstone – ancient rocks laid down in the Devonian era in the continent of Avalonia, between about 460 and 420 million years ago (mya). In the Silurian era before this, the rocks of south Britain and North Britain had been joined together by continents colliding, and the resulting Devonian landscape was hot, dry desert, 10 to 15 degrees of latitude *south* of the equator, equivalent to the Namib and Kalahari Deserts today. You can see these red rocks in parts of Bristol, and in rocks and soils in Devon, after which they were named.

The Carboniferous Limestone of most of Mendip was laid down in shallow seas much like the Caribbean today, when Britain was at the Equator, around 300 mya. This was the age of amphibians, the time of the massive giant fern forests that produced the coalfields that were used to power the industrial revolution, some of which stretch north of here to Bath and Bristol. Britain was now part of the giant continent of Laurasia, running from Alaska across North America, northern Europe and European Russia. There was no Atlantic Ocean, The Appalachian Mountains stretched through Norway, Scotland and the eastern USA, until the continent split 140 mya, when vast flows of magma formed the new ocean floor.

At the end of the Carboniferous era, about 280 mya, continental collision closed the seas south of Britain, just as is happening today with India colliding with Asia, and Africa colliding with Europe. Mountain ranges formed, changing the world's climate, just as the Himalayas and Tibetan plateau have greatly strengthened the Asian monsoon in the present era. The Mendips were formed then, by buckling under huge pressure over a fault line that had sheared in this pile-up. The older rocks underneath were pushed up at the centre of the fold, which eventually eroded to reveal the sandstone at today's summit. The Mendips were at the northern fringe of these mountains, only rising to perhaps 1500 metres. The granite rocks from Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor through Lands End to the Scilly Isles are the magma roots of this high mountain range, cooled slowly over aeons to form the very hard granite of the tors and moors.

So commenced the Permian era, with the continents collecting into one giant supercontinent, Pangaea. For about 30 million years, Pangaea was an ultradry desert continent, with life mostly at its edge, until the Permian ended with the greatest ever mass extinction of species on the planet. Vast and hugely prolonged outpourings of lava in the Siberian Traps released the pent-up heat beneath Pangaea, raining acid down, heating the atmosphere by 8 degrees, raising carbon dioxide levels to five times today's level, depriving the heated oceans of oxygen, which then emitted vast amounts of methane, which warmed the planet more in a deadly positive feedback loop - we risk such loops today (11) (12).

In the Permian extinction, 96% of all marine species and 70% of land species of vertebrates went extinct, as did vast numbers of insect species. One estimate is that it took 10 million years for the diversity of species to recover.

**Now: the sixth mass extinction:** Climate has changed and extinctions have occurred many times before. But the scale of *our* impact is so great that it is already clear that we are in the sixth great mass extinction, the greatest since the dinosaurs died out 66 million years ago, and we are causing it. There is still time to turn it around, but consider the scale of this accelerating crisis: since 1970 there has been more than a two thirds loss of wild populations across the world, and by 60% in Britain, already one of the poorest countries in the world for biodiversity after extinctions caused by humans over the last few thousand years. (13) (14)

According to a recent study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science in the USA, only 4% of the biomass of mammals in the world is of wild animals. Humans take up another 36% and domestic animals for our consumption the remaining 60%. There are far more chickens in the world than all other birds combined. (15) (16).

A recent study by Oxford University and the Swiss agricultural research institute, Agroscope, assessed the environmental impact of farming across 40,000 farms and 40 major foods (17). High impact beef producers create 105kg of carbon dioxide equivalent and use 370 square metres of land per 100 grams of protein, 12 to 50 times greater than low impact producers. Low impact plant-based proteins such as peas, beans and lentils can create just 0.3 kg of carbon dioxide equivalents, including all processing, packaging and transport, and use just one square metre of land per 100 grams of protein. Livestock produces just 18% of total calories, but takes up 83% of farmland (18).

This research shows that, without meat and dairy consumption, global farmland could be reduced by 76% (3.1 billion hectares) – an area equivalent to the USA, China, the EU and Australia combined – and still feed the world. Loss of wild areas to agriculture is the leading cause of the mass extinction of wildlife. And so, avoiding meat and dairy is the single biggest way to reduce our impact on the Earth (19). Even a 50% cut is shown to make a huge difference. And most people in the West eat far more animal protein than their bodies need. The evidence is that surplus animal protein consumption is a key cause of many Western diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and dementia. (20)

**Action:** *consider your diet in relation to the environment, and to your personal health.*

*As well as the references above on the environment, for personal health: a book entitled ‘How to Live’ by Professor Robert Thomas, a British cancer research specialist, published in September 2020 might be a good place to start -see p52-62 and 157 for meat and dairy; or try ‘How Not to Die’ a cheerily entitled book by the American doctor, Michael Greger (2015), who also runs a charity to bring scientific evidence about nutrition to the public, which you can find at: <https://www.nutritionfacts.org>*

*These sources both focus on the evidence from scientific research into nutrition and health.*

### **Stop 3. The Lots Nature Reserve**

There are a number of nature reserves on and around Mendip, but they are fragmented ‘islands’ of nature. The Theory of Island Biogeography has shown that the smaller the islands of nature, the lower the biodiversity, and the greater the risk of extinctions of these small populations. To protect nature, we need larger areas for nature, and ‘green corridors’ joining up these isolated islands in a network through which species can move, especially when climate change is forcing them to migrate. The most ambitious example of this in Britain is the network of green corridors declared by the charity Buglife, like a motorway network for insects, but a feeding highway for other species. *See their website for details.*

At a larger scale, the UNESCO concept of a Biosphere Reserve can be used. Applied all over the world, there are seven declared biosphere reserves in Britain (21). Instead of a nature reserve with fixed boundaries – which nature does not recognise, a biosphere reserve consists of a core area more or less exclusively for nature, but with fringe zones which are shared between nature and humans, in varying degrees of balance, from wilderness to city.

And now we have the first declared city national park: London, with as many trees as humans.

In North Devon, the biosphere reserve there is being used for a trial of the ‘natural capital’ approach to valuing nature and natural services mentioned earlier. It is hoped that this will be the cornerstone of the 25 year Environment Plan, which is being radically strengthened as we come out of the EU and will use subsidies to rural landowners for a much wider range of ecosystem and quality of life services to the community. Much uneconomic grazing land in this way may be reforested or rewilded, providing better flood control better recreation, and many other things, not least more rural jobs.

A recent study demonstrated that even without changing farmland, there is huge scope for tree planting across the world, sufficient to absorb enough carbon to greatly reduce the

climate crisis, providing it is done well and the trees are appropriate and nurtured (22). The British government has consulted on woodland policy. Currently, England has only 10% tree cover, even less than the Netherlands and the least of any country in Europe, covering about the same area as our towns and cities. Farmers manage 70% of our land and there is great scope to increase tree cover to help Britain meet its 'carbon neutral by 2050' goal (23). But the current target is to increase woodland cover by just 2%. Environmental organisations and individuals have been lobbying hard on this.

In response to the disastrous decline of wildlife worldwide, including Britain, our government has joined the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, to make 30% of the world (and UK) protected for nature by 2030. It has claimed that 26% of the UK is already protected, but that is protection for landscape only (National Parks and AONBs like the heavily farmed Cotswolds and Mendips) So the real figure for protected land for nature, such as nature reserves, is 10%, of which only half is in a good state, and in small, fragmented 'islands' of nature (24) (25).

Rewilding Britain, for example, has lobbied for a doubling of woodland cover by 2030 – in this case not by expensive and often abortive tree planting, but by allowing natural regeneration of nature, in the way that has been spectacularly successful in places such as Knepp Farm in Sussex, which gave up uneconomic farming for rewilding 20 years ago and is now immensely rich in rare wildlife – hosting the first hatching of wild storks in 2020 for the first time in Britain for 600 years (26). If this model were followed, the Mendips could be reclaimed by the ash/maple woodland that grows on its steep sides, with flower-rich calcareous grasslands including areas kept clear by grazing animals such as the docile longhorn cattle used at Knepp Farm, or the herd of 50 or so ponies already on Blackdown. Mendip – once a Royal Hunting Forest like The New Forest, could become like The New Forest today, rich in wildlife

**Action:** Investigate and perhaps join and actively support one or more wildlife charities, such as The Woodland Trust, Rewilding Britain, The RSPB, Buglife, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Avon Wildlife Trust. And/or consider internationally-focused charities, such as WWF.

#### **Stop 4. Beacon Batch**

**Bathwater:** Rain that falls north of this point, whether metres away or across the Bristol/Bath basin, emerges heated to 43 degrees Celsius in Bath's spa. While there are some warm springs in Britain, the one in Bath is unique in being hot. The rain percolates deep underground and is heated by the increasing temperature as it goes deeper underground, just as is found in deep mines. There seem to be quite complex geological reasons for this unique hot spring, more typical of volcanic countries like Japan. The water that emerges today fell 2500 years ago, in the pre-Roman Iron Age, only about 300 years after it superseded the Bronze Age.

**A changing cast:** Mendip has a similar high density of burial mounds to the area around Stonehenge and the Dorset Ridgeway. The Bronze Age barrows here would originally have been much larger, and the bare stone surface, perhaps limestone specially brought up the hill, would have shone across the land of the living below, from this, the land of the dead.

The Bronze Age population originated from the pastoral Yamnaya people who powerfully spread from the steppe grasslands Black sea region across the whole of northern and western Europe (27). They brought their bronze weapons and metalworking, horses, wagons and the newly invented wheel, to the stone age world. They also brought their Indo-European languages, the ancestors of the modern languages across Eurasia and India, to where they also spread. Mysteriously, genetic studies show that these Beaker People, as they were formerly called, replaced the Neolithic population almost completely (around 90%) only a century after the last great reworking of Stonehenge around 2500BC. The famous Amesbury Archer was one of these early settlers, travelling from the margins of the Alps to Stonehenge. Whether they replaced the Neolithic people by the sword, or by unwittingly carrying plague to this isolated island is not yet clear, but the evidence is of high levels of aggression, bringing a shift from a peaceful world in which women had high status, to a tribal warrior society.

The Yamnaya people eventually adopted a new culture sweeping Europe, the Celtic culture, and joined the Iron Age. They were conquered by the Romans, then in England by a small Saxon elite, then Viking farmers and Viking-descended Normans, but it is the Yamnaya people of the Black Sea region who are the principal ancestors of the British and Europeans today.

But there is another small percentage in our genetic mix, the people who were the original post-glacial population of hunter gatherers from before 8000BC to around 4000BC. Cheddar Man, found in Gough's Cave, was one of these. He is the oldest complete skeleton found in Britain. He was recently investigated using modern genetic methods. As in other cases across Europe, these hunter gatherers were dark skinned and blue eyed.

A unique discovery of these Mesolithic people was made at Aveline's Hole in Burrington Combe in 1797. Two boys chased a rabbit down a hole and dug after it. They discovered a cave, buried since the Mesolithic age, 43 metres long. It was reported at the time that between 70 and 100 bodies were lying on the floor, side to side. When excavated in 1911, Only bone fragments of 21 individuals were found, and inscribed crosses on the cave walls, as found elsewhere in Europe. This is the earliest scientifically dated cemetery in Europe.

The people buried here did not live to a ripe old age and showed evidence of repeated periods of poor nutrition or chronic illness, and they grew to only about 5 feet tall. At this time sea level was still much lower after the Ice Age and it would be possible to walk to the Scilly Isles or to France, but the climate was still harsh and only pioneer trees like birch and pine were colonising the landscape at this time.

Only two thousand years previously you could have stood on permafrost at this point and seen the Arctic ice sheet to the north and glaciers emerging from the Brecon Beacons to the west, while icebergs floated down the River Severn out to a much more distant ocean.

***The uniqueness of here, now:*** In the sky above us, the atmosphere is only a thin layer. At only ten times this height, typical of the Alps or Pyrenees, most of it lies below. By the height of Everest, about 6 miles up, just below the cruising height of passenger jets, humans are in the Death Zone – without oxygen supplies, we cannot survive at this height for long, if at all. Space

officially begins at 100km or 62 miles above, but there is still drag from the atmosphere way beyond this, pulling satellites back to Earth.

The solar system's boundaries were crossed by NASA's Pioneer spacecraft, and then by Voyager 1 in 2012 and Voyager 2 in 2018. These two launched in August 1977, gaining immense speed by using the outer planets as gravitational slingshots, taking advantage of a unique alignment of the outer planets at that time that will not reoccur until late in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They crossed from the heliosphere, under the influence of the solar wind, into the interstellar medium. They are still sending back signals to NASA today about what they find there. Voyager 1 is travelling at 37,700 mph, Voyager 2 at 34,530 mph. If it were headed in that direction, it would take Voyager 2 81,483 years to reach the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, or about 19,390 years to travel one light year.

How big is the universe? The observed universe is estimated to be approximately 93 billion light years across, and expanding at an ever accelerating rate. The universe originated with the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago (Earth is about 4.5 billion years old), but because of its expansion we can see back into the past not 13.8 billion light years but around 46.5 billion light years' worth. Beyond that, the universe is infinitely unseen and unknowable. But there is no significant curvature to space - it is flat, so it does not curve back in on itself and may, for all we know, go on infinitely. The expansion will continue to accelerate, and every other galaxy than our own will, far in the distant future, disappear from view as space is continually created between the galaxies.

But in the far future, just 5 billion years hence, the sun will expand to a Red Giant, frying earth to a crisp, or swallowing it completely, before sloughing off its outer layers to become an ultra-long-lived white dwarf, a post-nuclear fusion star slowly cooling over the aeons. But before that, in about 2 billion years, the galaxy Andromeda will collide with our own, and the two will engage in a gravitational dance, eventually merging as one. But as they merge, there may not even be one single collision between stars, so great is the space within galaxies. Instead, stars will be wrenched in all directions and even flung out in long tails from each galaxy, before eventually settling down in the amorphous mass of the new super-galaxy.

But even before that, maybe 500 to 900 million years from now, it is likely that as the sun continues to increase its temperature over time, and as calcium carbonate is locked up in Earth's crust by geologic forces, advanced life will have had its day and the bacterial single celled era will return (28). So, complex life on earth is in its glorious early middle age, and we must treasure it in its irreplaceable uniqueness in all space and time

For most of its time on the planet, life on Earth was only single celled organisms like bacteria. For the last 600 million years, complex life as we know it has flourished and evolved, despite numerous mass extinctions, whether Snowball Earth, asteroid collisions, continental pile-ups, volcanic outpourings, or us. But the mass extinction by us of species on this planet is still only gathering pace. It is caused by sentient beings and can be stopped by sentient beings. It can still be reversed. As David Attenborough said, on concluding his programme, Extinction: The Facts:

**“What happens next is up to every one of us.”**

**Action: Possible further research:**

*If you would like to follow up on some of the links and some of the references enumerated above, you can find them detailed at the end of this document.*

*If you grow your own food and haven't come across permaculture, have a quick look at:*

<https://theecologist.org/2010/mar/30/beginners-guide-permaculture-gardening>

*There is also a permaculture magazine at: <https://permaculture.co.uk>*

*Read about the 'landmark study' on future temperatures by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at:*

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-crisis-co2-greenhouse-gas-emissions-study-a9632306.html>

*A book which describes itself as 'A Handbook for the Make or Break Years:*

*There is No Planet B, by Mike Berners-Lee, Cambridge UP, 2019.*

*Read a review of two books that show how climate has been hugely active in history:*

<https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2020/09/16/what-history-tells-us-about-how-we-are-dealing-with-climate-change/>

*Read about how the oil industry used the same tactics as the tobacco industry did in a previous era, to discredit and throw doubt upon the climate science, in the article: How the oil industry made us doubt climate change: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-53640382>*

*And see what the industry cast doubt on, a superb Channel 4 documentary in 1989 about the climate crisis. It is very instructive to see what was known over 30 years before David Attenborough's warnings, and the documentary is still very powerful today – watch it and wait for the indictment from Canadian First Nation chief Gary Potts, and the powerful, echoing question with which it culminates: "What is the lifetime of your lifestyle...?"*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW\\_7ZOiEch8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW_7ZOiEch8)

*And are we doing better now? Check out the lost decade for nature at:*

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/14/lost-decade-for-nature-as-uk-fails-on-17-of-20-un-biodiversity-targets-aoe> - or see the RSPB report it refers to.

*How could we stabilize the climate and limit species loss in one planetary safety net?*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2020/sep/29/planetary-safety-net-could-halt-wildlife-loss-and-slow-climate-breakdown-aoe>

*Recycling all plastic a scientific breakthrough:*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/28/new-super-enzyme-eats-plastic-bottles-six-times-faster>

*Environmental understanding created harmony with nature in the past, so it can be in the future, if we choose it: for example, the incredible story of how all of Australia was a closely managed parkland, until the Europeans arrived: see the books: *The Biggest Estate: How**

*Aborigines Managed the Land*, by Bill Gammage, 2012; and *Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture*, by Bruce Pascoe, 2018. Or for a quick look:  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/australia-bushfires-indigenous-cultural-burning\\_au\\_5e20e493c5b6321176108494?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZWNvc2lhLm9yZy8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAAKnni6gOg0LwPUuygUzDDbQ8tNFUpk - gtdtIEwVk7HVKXS-JVdIsT9d-vk2koU4zjWsY1I75cQTWg3g1xg2llrak\\_9nP8ICWan-OKTQVPBztbUh2gSalYekey3xBYCyleaiNbQomMlpYv9I07-Gr6U37DZ1jPdtXng4LZY0xAvx](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/australia-bushfires-indigenous-cultural-burning_au_5e20e493c5b6321176108494?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZWNvc2lhLm9yZy8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAKnni6gOg0LwPUuygUzDDbQ8tNFUpk - gtdtIEwVk7HVKXS-JVdIsT9d-vk2koU4zjWsY1I75cQTWg3g1xg2llrak_9nP8ICWan-OKTQVPBztbUh2gSalYekey3xBYCyleaiNbQomMlpYv9I07-Gr6U37DZ1jPdtXng4LZY0xAvx)

Read about the deliberations of the UK citizens' assembly:  
<https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2020/09/10/climate-assembly-uk-has-spoken-time-for-boris-johnson-to-act/> -and the Prime Minister's promise to act:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54285497>

**Action: Consider spreading your influence, by informing, educating, acting or lobbying:**

*If you enjoy gardening, you might explore the concept of permaculture, growing food plants in different strata, mimicking the complex structure of nature.*

*You could investigate or join the charity Possible, which takes practical action on climate change: <https://www.wearepossible.org>*

*You could follow or join the charity and thinktank Green Alliance:  
<https://www.green-alliance.org.uk>*

*You could consider joining the political lobby group 38degrees which enables people raise and sign petitions to lobby the government – you sign the ones you agree with, or raise your own: <https://www.home.38degrees.org.uk>*

*For example, would you raise a petition to pay more for your gas? It makes more sense when you read: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54271903>*

*You could consider sharing this walk and information with other people, or other groups you belong to.*

*-You could consider devising your own 'walk for the planet' using a similar (or better?) concept to this walk, and sharing that.*

*We will all fall short of perfection, but we can all:-  
gently influence others around us,  
join organisations that protect nature and campaign for a better world,  
take steps to be more energy efficient,  
experience the natural and semi-natural world to renew ourselves,  
live simply  
and vote*

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St Joseph's Peasedown    Feast of St Francis

4<sup>th</sup> October 2020