

Foreword to the 'Cornerstones' project at Culdees

(The practical aspect of the vision)

This follows on from the [Culdees Manifesto](#)

The 'Cornerstones' Project is a large one and to others it may seem daunting, considering that this is a one-woman's vision and everything needs to be paid for. BUT.... "*The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step*" and if SOMEone does not take that first step, nothing will happen at all. Whatever one is doing in life: like attracts likes and very soon like minded people *are* attracted and when the critical mass is reached, it will mushroom: the Hundredth Monkey Syndrome.

It is all about Educating.

About fifteen years ago I was inspired to start a school based on Education in Human Values* (see 'Cornerstones' below), although I am not a teacher; my only experience with children is with my own children and their friends; my grandchildren and their friends, but otherwise...

First I went to visit a school in Thailand, which by then had been operating on those principles for six years, to observe how they put their beliefs and ethos into practice. It was amazing: at that point there were 118 children in a boarding school situation and although they were together 24 hours a day no child was ever fighting, or bullying!

Over the years I became aware that one cannot separate the growing- and learning process of children from their parents' and grandparents' or their village', so I would have to create a village where those values are lived in every aspect of life; not only talked about, but where one *walks the talk*. And it has to grow gradually and organically.

I myself see this project as one gigantic jigsaw puzzle: Like, one gets a Jigsaw box presented and on the lid is a picture *of how it will look like when the puzzle is finished*. However, when one opens the lid, one finds thousands of pieces which have to be fitted. So, one starts with the corners and edges. Slowly it gets an outline to define its boundaries. Then the sorting process begins: Sky, water, land, vegetation, people, houses etc. Gradually the pieces fit and there comes a moment that one starts to recognise fragments of the picture and then those fragments grow and eventually becomes like the picture on the lid of the box.

I hope that this foreword rouses your interest and that you will follow my journey with interest and encourage me and, who knows, support or even help me.....

Rev. Maryse Anand
Culdees

This part is the *practical* aspect of the Culdee vision:

"The Nine Cornerstones"

The projects at Culdees can be thought of as falling under 9 main categories. We have called these categories the **Cornerstones**.

They are:

Cornerstone 1: Home-schooling Co-operative, Nature (forest) School

Cornerstone 2a: Multi-generational Co-Housing

2b: Senior Co-Housing

Cornerstone 3: Ecological Building and Renewable Energy

Cornerstone 4: Self-sufficiency 1 - Permaculture & Organic Growing

Cornerstone 5: Self-sufficiency 2 - Natural Farming

Cornerstone 6: Animal and Cottage Industry

Cornerstone 7: Health - Alternative Medicines and Treatments

Cornerstone 8: Recreation - Outdoor Activities

Cornerstone 9: Community Education Advocacy

Cornerstone 1:
Home-schooling Co-operative; Nature (Forest) School,
After-school Care

(With an emphasis on giving a Human Values based education)

- 1) Start Nursery with a small number of 2-5 year-olds
- 2) Start after-school care project with 4+ year-olds (up to 16 year-olds)
- 3) Gradually grow into a (Home-schooling) school co-operative with lessons tailored to the individual child, making use of Montessori and Steiner teaching materials Teach lessons outside in Nature as often as possible (Forest Schooling)
- 4) Set up school garden (each child with their own small plot)
- 5) Build meditation garden
- 6) Start Pet-Corner (each child can 'adopt' a pet to learn how to take care of and responsibility for it (starting with rabbits or gerbils and gradually moving on to ponies and horses)
- 7) Build extensive playgrounds for various age groups.
- 8) Attract local teachers for: Gaelic lessons; Scottish Country Dancing; Scottish musical instruments (such as the Pipes, the Fiddle and the Harp)
- 9) Attract teachers for Art, Dance, Drama and Singing (from anywhere)
- 10) Teach cottage crafts, such as spinning, weaving, knitting and carpet making (with wool from the animals).
- 11) Build Sense Gardens:
A Sound Garden with instruments made from re-used materials.
A Tactile Garden
A Smell Garden.

More about Cornerstone 1: SCHOOL

The main goal that we are working towards at Culdees is the creation of a Home-Schooling Co-operative focusing on providing an education based on Human Values. We consider the main human values to be **Truth, Love, Peace, Non-violence and Right Conduct.**

By encouraging the human values aspect of education, it means that as well giving attention to the academic (head) aspects of education, the co-operative is able to provide for the character and moral (heart) aspects too. This goal comes as a result of our feeling that there are some areas lacking in the conventional school system. Having been exposed to many individuals and groups of like mind, we are encouraged with this vision for the future of education. We do, however, like to stay focused on the maxim that 'ours is not the only way, it is simply another way'.

We will also introduce a 'Buddy system' so that no child is left out.

One of the options open to us is a hybrid system based on work of Montessori, Steiner and Forest Schooling. Steiner and Montessori schools are often situated in city areas. It is most likely that there will be a combination of these approaches, making use of their specific teaching materials.

Our plan is to select building plots and invite parents with small children who satisfy the Culdees ethos/criteria to apply to acquire such a plot. (This could be through a Housing Co-operative arrangement that we aspire to set up). The parents build their eco-house, and their children attend the school, where there are trained teachers to assist the parents who 'home-school' their children.

The parents can set up a rota system for themselves so that officially, they can satisfy the criteria set by the Government for home-schooling. We have already acquired a Portacabin to start the school in. In due course we will raise funds for a larger, permanent building. *Once this structure is functioning well, we would invite those same parents to become foster parents to other children who may be in need of good parental guidance. For those children, this would ease the transition into the school.*

Other target groups that we have in mind are mentally disabled children like those suffering from Downs Syndrome. Physically disabled children are also a target group to work with. It is thought that out of every 10 children, there will be a mix of children from well functioning homes and those from so called deprived or dysfunctional homes.

We envisage creating a Cottage Industrious Estate, where the children take part in activities as part of their curriculum.

We aim to teach the children to differentiate between being an active participant in their future: a creator; a producer, or a mere consumer.

Cornerstone 2a: Multi-Generational Cohousing

(draft 06/12/2010)

It is interesting, and perhaps quite shocking, to learn that on average, after paying mortgage or rent, the next biggest expenditure for people is transport (62% of remaining disposable income in 2007). [source: Office for National Statistics -ONS,2008]

This includes car costs, fuel and public transport and much of it is associated with commuting to work. Also we must not overlook the time spent on commuting, for many people, this can be 2 to 4 hours or more daily. This time and money can be much better spent as quality time with family and friends if commuting is eliminated. When a car is no longer needed for commuting, an answer to this is car-sharing. By working where we live, and constructing workshops and offices as part of Cottage Industry [see Cornerstone 6] , this becomes possible, especially when a wide range of trades and professions are represented, in old-fashioned village style.

The type of living, now known as "Cohousing", which was pioneered in Denmark in the 1970's and is now flourishing in many countries, fits very well with these ideas. This principle embraces the advantages of community sharing, combined with family independence. A cohousing development typically has between 20 and 30 private homes built around a common open area containing a large Common House. The common house is somewhere where the members can socialise, have meals together, hold group discussions or other group activities. It also has facilities such as a laundry and guest rooms, The participants may decide to include e.g workshop, sewing room or games room. Because of the availability of the shared facilities, the individual homes need not be as large as normal. Cars are usually restricted to a car park on the fringe of the development, so the area is safe for children to play. This system fits in very well with our policy of encouraging home education, and the children grow up and learn from one another as a social group. [see Cornerstone 1]

If you like what you read here, please contact us as we hope to progress this idea here with other like-minded families and couples. The first members will make the important design decisions and determine the basic house-rules for the group.

We are developing an associated Senior Cohousing project to cater for the elders who may prefer to socialise with their own age group. [see Cornerstone 2b]

Housing Co-operative: Those Culdeans who do not have enough money to buy

themselves in to build their own house are encouraged to set up a Housing Co-operative.

(We sought the advice of Alistair McIntosh, the mastermind behind the take over by the locals of the Isle of Eigg). The long term aim of the project is to create a self-sufficient, sustainable, ecological community-style village based on Human values with zero waste -everything will be reclaimed, recycled and re-used. This means that all properties will be occupied by a specific target group of individuals - socially aware and environmentally conscious people who want to be part of an unconventional system for living.

It will be important to allow all occupants to prove that they are compatible with the ethos of the village, which can only be done over a period of time; typically one year. This means that the occupants have to live on site for this amount of time before they are admitted as permanent residents.

A number of eco-houses will be built-to-let to prospective members of the Housing co-operative at Housing Benefit rates if the tenant cannot afford commercial rates.

After a year, if they are admitted as permanent residents, members will be expected to build their self-build house on Housing Co-operative land.

Once they move in to their own house, the lettings property will become available for the next prospective member. This cycle will continue.

Cornerstone 2b: The Senior Cohousing Project

(Alternative Housing for the Seniors)

(draft 05/12/2010)

What do we do with the old folks? There seems a tendency in modern society for many younger people to regard the elderly sector as a problem and a liability. Hence Retirement/Residential/Care/Sheltered Homes have been set up as an answer. If one talks with people housed like this, although they might put on a brave face about it, usually they are not happy, feeling in decline; no longer valued. One has to ask whether there might be a better solution.

Most people, as they approach retirement age are still quite active, with many years ahead of them during which they can be of considerable benefit to their community. Indeed, they have hopefully gained enough wisdom to help guide the younger generation. Modern society seems to have forgotten this.

An intention of our project is to commit to and facilitate care 'from Cradle to Grave': with strong emphasis on respect for - and inclusion to the last - of the elders. It is important to bring back the multi-generation living approach to our lives.

Maryse realised that gradually the concept of three generations living under one roof has been dying out. Compartmentalisation of the generations can actually be the factor which brings society out of balance. To bring the different generations together in Culdees' Village-Community-style, where the people look after one another as a matter of course can be achieved by blending the houses of three/four generations.

To provide housing for those active elders who may wish to live just round-the-corner from the youngsters, or who may feel they might become a burden continuing to live with their children, or simply want a quieter environment, an interesting concept which was started and is flourishing in Denmark since the 1980's, and which is gaining interest and momentum in other countries, is that of Senior Cohousing developments. A key feature of such developments is the provision of individual private homes, surrounding a shared open space with a large common house where people can come and go, socialise, share meals together, engage in group discussions and other activities, but at the same time everyone has personal choice as to when they need time to themselves, or wish to join in with others. The common house would typically also have laundry facilities, activity room, provision for craft-work, as well as guest rooms.

A Senior Cohousing development provides an alternative to what has become

conventional residential care for the elderly in this country and elsewhere, and the residents, rather than being dependent, become mutually supportive. Everyone can have their own privacy, but at the same time know there are friends nearby if they need them, and if someone develops a need for more intensive care, because as part of the plan for the Culdees eco-village, there will be a professional carer or nurse or doctor, as appropriate, who can attend to their needs. If need be temporary use can be made of a guest room for visitors.

The Senior Cohousing development is seen as being a complementary component of the multi-generational Cohousing project at Culdees. Cohousing residents are typically pro-active in creating viable, friendly, neighbourhoods in which residents co-operate and socialise, and in creating a village, there is room for all trades and professions.

The most successful Senior Cohousing initiatives have begun with a group of interested participants who have met and carefully planned the details of their development, and with professional input as appropriate, brought a plan to fruition themselves. A proven strategy, developed in 1995 by Henry Nielsen, embraces five stages, beginning with a feasibility phase, then an information phase, followed by three study group phases. Groups who have followed this model have invariably enjoyed successful results, unlike projects where a developer has designed and constructed buildings without consulting the people who would occupy them.

The implementation of Senior Cohousing developments seems to be the way forward to ensure people can be allowed to age gracefully while enjoying their later years, with the knowledge they are not going to become a burden on anyone, nor have fear of being institutionalised.

Another reason for considering an alternative way of living was the realisation that if Maryse herself was to go into a Retirement/ Residential/Care home, she would stick out like a sore thumb. It is likely that the staff, the other residents and herself would all be very unhappy due to her personal choices. Being a vegetarian / vegan, having an 'other-than-generally-accepted' relationship with the concept of God, being a Mystic, including Eastern Philosophy and Sufism, practising Meditation/Yoga/Tai-Chi, using alternative Medical Practices, etc. does not, at present, usually generate endearment with the general public. She therefore decided to encourage creating the senior co-housing aspect, as a complementary component of the overall vision of the Culdees eco-village project, which also includes the multi-generational aspect.

There are many people who, like Maryse, follow an alternative lifestyle and who are now nearing 'the evening of their life'. They have similar doubts about successfully blending in with other residents in a conventional residential home. So it is essential to start brainstorming on how to implement the senior cohousing alternative.

We now wish to attract people who would like to participate in a Senior Cohousing project and who could engage with us in discussions which hopefully will result in the formation of a group which will push the project to completion.

Proposed selection requirements:

To have an awareness of: (in no particular order)

- the need to be actively involved in changing the way we deal with environment
- environmental sustainability, ecological footprint, Ecological Debt Day or Earth Overshoot Day and Transition Town are household terms for you.
- ecology; growing food organically.
- recycle, reclaim, re-use: working towards Zero Waste, Zero Energy
- working towards self-sustainability
- being a role model; willingness to set an example, to teach
- the need to set a ceiling on desires
- the necessity to share: car, equipment, tools
- keeping responsibility of your own life firmly in your own hands
- we live in the campus of 'The University of Life' and are willing to learn new things; take on a study, learn new skills, new hobbies
- live preventively: stay active in mind, body and soul: eat healthily, walk, swim, dance, go to theatre, concert, opera, ballet, take cultural trips
- be open to the use of alternative therapies and natural medicines
- respect for other people's requirements
- to partake actively in the initial stages of setting up the co-housing project and later in the maintaining and running of the project.
- the willingness to care for one another -to an agreed extent- and help make it possible that one can stay in one's own home till the end of one's life.
- we are a multi-faith project, the spiritual aspect of each faith is respected; no one-religion has priority over any other.

Maryse would welcome any further thoughts on this.

Recommended reading:

"The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living"

By Charles Durrett Second edition 2009 New Society Publishers ISBN 978-0-86571-611-7

"Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living - The Handbook"

By Charles Durrett Published 2005 Habitat Press ISBN 0-945929-30-7

Cornerstone 3: Ecological Building and Renewable Energy

- 1) Set up an Housing Co-operative [See Cornerstone 2a]
- 2) Self-build houses such as:
Straw Bale; Rammed Earth; Paper Crete: 60-30-10 (=60% paper, 30% cement, 10% earth); Earth Ships; Earth bag; Yurts; Log Cabins, etc.
- 3) Erect Wind Turbines
- 4) Hybrid Systems
- 5) Own Water Supply (Hydro Electricity?)
- 6) Solar Energy
- 7) Geothermal Energy (ground or water source heat pumps)
- 8) Coppicing (Bio Fuel)
- 9) Bio-diesel for car

Self build houses: Plots will be reserved for a number of ecological self build houses: We would like to build a cluster of *Earth Ships*. The first Scottish earth ship was launched on 21st August 2004 at Craigenalt Farm, an ecological centre in Kinghorn, Fife. Earth-Ships are houses made from recycled materials such as car tyres for load bearing walls and drinking cans. (We have books that show how to build Earth-Ships in our library.) We will keep five of the earth ships for self-catering holiday homes, so that people who want to build an earth ship themselves can have the experience of living in one first.

We will build houses with Straw bale, Rammed Earth, Paper Crete, Earthbag and Yurts on a flat plot. Earth Ships and Log Cabins will be built on the hill side.

Renewable Energy:

Renewable Energy is by definition a source of energy that replenishes itself.

We are aiming to become totally self sufficient in our energy requirements. There is scope for the development of both wind and hydro energy.

We have successfully negotiated with the Forestry Commission (who owns the surrounding forests) to remove forest litter and windfall trees. This, together with our own timber resources, will provide us with a substantial renewable resource. It is therefore our intention to develop the facilities and produce woodchip that will be enough for our own combined heat and power plant, as well as being able to generate an income from the supply of both woodchip and the expertise in its use to our local

community.

We also intend to research the feasibility of using other bio-mass energy production technologies.

There is considerable scope for the deployment of solar energy technology, both for passive heating and electricity generation using photo-voltaic panels.

Another form of renewable energy is extracting heat from the ground, water or air, **with 0% CO2 emission!!**

4 units of energy are produced from 1 unit of electricity, which means that 75% of our energy requirement comes free from the ground, water or air.

Car fuel:

We plan to transform the car from diesel-fuelled to Bio-fuelled.

Please stay in touch so we can keep you updated about our progress.

Cornerstone 4: Self-sufficiency 1 - Organic Growing

Each of the points in the section below is ready to go to the next stage - all we need are the volunteers!

- 1) Build polytunnels
- 2) Plant Barley; Oats; Hemp; and *Rice* (use stalks to make straw bales); Beet for fodder;
- 3) Build more raised beds to grow vegetables for own consumption and sell surplus in the Farm shop. (which we will build in the near future)

Organic Gardening

1) Beside the polytunnel for our medicinal plants, we plan to erect a number of polytunnels to grow organic vegetables for our own needs, a Market Garden, a vegetable box scheme and the farm shop (see below).

2) There is a growing demand for organic food, as proven in the highly successful Lurgan Farm shop, just seven miles away from here. Unfortunately the shop had to close. This gap in the market could be filled and we plan to do so as soon as possible. There is potential here to start an Organic Food Co-op, together with a coffee shop where one can prepare delicious organic vegetarian and vegan meals. We will have to convert the barn to house the shop, kitchen and coffee shop. It all depends on if we can arrange finance. Once finished, it will be ideally situated with fantastic views over Loch Tay where the children can play on their own playground.

Permaculture

At Culdees we try to work with the environment. We are lucky because we live among nature, surrounded by fresh air and the natural elements.

In implementing and maintaining the projects and the land we live on, we try to adhere to ecological and permaculture principles.

Permaculture is all about Earth care; People care and Fair shares.

It is about Self-reliance; interdependence and doing things together.

It is about working with, rather than against, the laws of nature - and can be thought of as follows:

- It is a method for creating sustainable human settlements.
- Through applying traditional knowledge as well as modern science, it can be used in both the city and country environments.
- It encourages us to become a conscious part of the solutions to the many problems which face us - and although we are acting locally, our thinking is global.

We throw out as little as possible because we observe that most things can be re-used. For instance, plastic bottles can be used to construct mini-greenhouses (and full-sized greenhouses or bottle-walls - look into our big barn); plastic cartons can be cut into strips to label rows of seeds in the garden; pallets turn into gates, raised beds, recycle containers, decking or caravan-wraps

We also try to minimize our use of energy, so if the sun is out then we put our washing on the line in the garden. Wherever possible we purchase ethically and organically, although this can be difficult in a rural location such as this. For instance, the cost of the petrol needed to buy a product locally is often weighed up against spending more on fuel to get to a shop where more organically and ethically sound ingredients are available.

In order to determine the most appropriate forms of renewable energy we can use, we are currently in the process of monitoring all of our power, fuel and water usage. Within the next few years we would like to become more self-sufficient in terms of energy. We also hope to create our own fresh water supply from the hill.

We believe that it is not difficult to live more lightly on Earth. With the right will, we can live more consciously.

Each of the points in the section below is ready to go to the next stage - all we need are the volunteers!

- 1) Create reed bed sewage system
- 2) Make dry composting toilets, spread over estate
- 3) Water collection
- 4) Build small ponds and an one-acre pond.
- 5) Plant trees, such as willow and hazel for coppicing; bamboo for building and screening and a native species area; wildlife corridor
- 6) Hay-making for animal feed

1) Eventually we want to build a 'Living Machine' for our sewage system, such as in use by the Findhorn Foundation. Since we need more manpower to maintain this system than we have at the moment, we will have to start with a reed bed sewage system.

2) In Permaculture circles, human body waste is regarded as very valuable, since we discard quite a large amount of valuable minerals with our solids and urine. Urine is called 'liquid gold'. We therefore do not want to waste this discarded gold and compost it. The composted solids are used for manuring trees and shrubs, the urine is diluted and helps fertilise the composting heaps and give a thick lushness to grass.

3) Most of the year we have enough water run-off to provide for our water-needs. We aim to acquire and position a couple of large water containers used by the fish-farms to transport their fish. We will position a couple, one below the other, with the first filling the second tank and the second filling the third, etc. We have still to calculate how many we will need.

4) Ponds are essential for the Permaculture gardens. We do not need large ponds, but many smaller water features in and near the gardens, to spawn and house the frogs and spawn the toads. They are nature's answer to any slug problem! The large pond will be used for heat extraction from water and fish to provide protein for the non-vegetarians amongst us and to sell in the organic farm shop

5) Willow will be used in the wet areas, since it loves wet feet. We can coppice it and make living willow sculptures as well as use it for basketry and other weaving.

6) We are closing the North facing wall, using 2-litre **plastic bottles**.

7) We plan to build greenhouses and a conservatory using plastic bottles.

If you are interested in Permaculture and courses related to it, do let us know. Maryse is a teacher and intends to start courses at Culdees soon.

Cornerstone 5: Self-sufficiency 2 - Natural Farming

In order to speed up the 'ripple-effect', we are teaming up with a Japanese Monastery which is aiming to teach natural farming methods all over the world following the inspiration of *Masanobu Fukuoka* with his 'One Straw Revolution' and introduce a vocational training program within "The Academy of Agricultural Philosophy" at Culdees; the training will be given alternatively on the farm sites in Scotland, Japan and Congo

The Academy of Agricultural Philosophy

Principles

"Unlearn everything taught to you by others, only Nature's teachings are worth keeping."
Let us connect with Nature through all our senses. Nature teaches us to be aware of ourselves. We develop this awareness through following our own inner-guidance. We then experience directly the flow of Nature's constant change, like water or like a cloud. This is the natural farmer's way.

Vision

The Academy is an educational organization teaching today's youngsters about the wisdom of Nature and the practice of natural farming. It is creating a network of centres supporting this sustainable way of farming and way of living throughout the world, in particular: revival of agriculture that respects the Earth, education for the younger generation, renewal of the environment.

1 Revival of agriculture that respects the Earth

Current farming methods of agriculture are exhausting the Earth. There is no sustainable future for the over-use of chemicals, over-transportation of food and the dramatic loss of biodiversity. It has become urgent that we change our agricultural methods.

2 Education for the younger generation

It is difficult for young people to lead a fulfilling life today. They grow up in a world which is soulless, materialistic and in which nothing is more important than economic growth and a superficial prosperity.

3 Improving the natural environment

The environmental crisis of Global Warming and the breakdown of ecosystems are deeply linked to modern agriculture. With this in mind we decided to establish The Academy for Agricultural Philosophy to revive the practice of natural farming. It aims to re-connect students with nature as their guide, to provide a practical place of education, a fulfilling daily life-style and at the same time will create a forum where inspired teachers and like-minded people can meet.

Educational Content:

The Academy's curriculum includes natural methods of producing, packaging and storing foods as well as drawing on works of ancient wisdom such as:

Eki-kyo (a form of *feng shui* divination that interprets geographic features)

Shi-kyo (a school of poetry that is inspired directly by nature)

Sho-kyo (philosophy concerned with harmonious human relationships)

Fudo (the study of rational relationships between humans and nature)

Feng Shui (the study of empathetic placement)

Studies also cover:

Construction using natural materials
Self-Sufficiency and the development of Local Economies
Garden Design,
Global Food Systems and Dynamics
Nutrition, Naturopathy, Oriental and Complementary Healthcare
The Origins and Philosophy of Farming
Natural Farming Methods: Crop Rotation, Encouraging Diversity
Proper Care of Implements
The Farming calendar

Unique Features

The students are able to live and work in a variety of environments: Hokkaido (Japan), Scotland (U.K.) and The Democratic Republic of Congo (Africa). After Graduation, students may live and work permanently in Hokkaido as they will each receive the use of a piece of land.

Sponsorship and grants will be available for some places, while other students' course fees will partly be covered by their harvested produce.

Course Requirements

Students should have a University degree or similar qualification. In other cases entrance will depend on the Academy's own examination and evaluation of a student's CV.

More about Natural Farming's aims and studies**Respect for plants.**

We aim to re-awaken a respect for plants, a respect sadly lacking in the modern world. We study their extraordinary processes of transformation of Earth materials and Sun's energy and their selfless provision for all life on Earth.

Plant communication

Plants communicate amongst themselves in many different ways. Natural Farming relies on patient observation of this system to continue to learn further secrets of plant life.

Sensitivity and Gratitude

By studying and working with plants we can regain a harmony with them and a true appreciation of their endless gifts to us

Studying what plants truly need

By carefully observing plants, their real requirements will be discovered and can then be met. This connection has been lost through treating plants as economic factory units. Soil has become impoverished, growth is forced with fertilisers. This situation is not sustainable and is potentially disastrous for human health. We encourage respect for a plant's own time-scale, its own growth-pattern, its own pest-resistance, immunity and its own reproductive system. Once we humans have developed understanding and humility in our hearts we can go on to apply all modern science and artistic techniques in a harmonious way.

Encouraging plants' own natural environments

Vast fields of a single crop are a far cry from the way in which plants occur naturally. Again, to respect their lives and for future harmonious relations with plants we will continue to study and mimic the natural ways of plant groupings, companionships and surroundings.

Current Developments, "Like water, like clouds."

The Academy of Agricultural Philosophy has begun as a private institution yet aims to become a post-graduate university within three years so that a world-wide foundation of such academies can be developed.

Work has already begun at the Bifuka Academy in Hokkaido and the farm in Fukui, Japan, as well as projects in Scotland and The Democratic Republic of Congo. Work is also underway to provide accommodation and dining facilities in Korea, the United Kingdom (London) and France (Paris, Nice). The Academy of Agricultural Philosophy will develop globally, across borders, for the benefit of mankind; becoming a school for learning the ways to live in harmony with nature.

Academy for Agricultural Philosophy Farming Retreats

Natural Farming Work Experience & Long Stay Programmes

The Bifuka Academy and Farm - Hokkaido, Japan

Is located in the middle of northern Hokkaido, amongst a vast forest that grows under the protection of snow. In a place that allows deep relaxation one learns to farm, and is inspired to reconnect with oneself, one's heart, mind and senses. The fields are a ten minute walk into the forest from the centre. A log house building programme is currently underway. Skiing, hiking and wild food are also available according to the seasons - the dramatic changing of which is perhaps the greatest joy.

237-2 Aza-Penkei, Bifuka-cho, Nakagawa-gun, Hokkaido. 098-2207

Phone:01656-2-4555 Japanese web-site:

<http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/noutetsu/>

The Fukui Farm

Our farm is located in the prefecture of Fukui which lies along the beautiful Echizen coast. Our Natural Farming technique has been developed on this farm for many years: in the greenhouses, the terraced rice paddies and vegetable patches hidden amongst the forest, and in a mountain hut from which one can look out over the coastline. In a remote, deserted village in the mountains we have begun to rebuild an abandoned, traditional house. There's always plenty to do with whatever help we receive. In autumn it's the miracle of the grape harvest, whilst in summer we can enjoy sunbathing on the beach.

33-2-1 Mendori-cho, Fukui-shi, Fukui-ken, 910-3378

Phone:0776-86-1240 Japanese web-site:

<http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/noutetsufukui/>

Culdees at Boreland Farm is located in Fearnan in the heart of Scotland. It used to be a sheep farm and horse riding centre before our partner bought it for the purpose of starting a community-based eco-village with community owned businesses. Our part is to develop the agricultural side of this project and grow rice, wheat, oats, barley and vegetables. We will also open an organic Farm shop and Japanese Restaurant.

The Course starts in October

Culdees, Boreland Farm, Fearnan by Aberfeldy, PH15 2PG, Perthshire, Scotland.

Phone +44 1887 830519, Mobile +44 7904 954116 <http://www.culdees-ecovillage.co.uk>

Cornerstone 6: Animal and cottage industry

- 1) Sheep: For wool and milk; (butter, yoghurt and cheese)
- 2) Goats: For wool and milk, yoghurt and cheese
- 3) Cows: For milk, butter, yoghurt and cheese
- 4) Pigs: for digging
- 5) Chickens: for eggs
- 6) Ducks: for eggs and ornamental
- 7) Donkeys for cart (when a nice, compliant one is offered, we will welcome it!)
- 8) Keep bees for honey
- 9) Farm fish in large pond: for the non-vegetarians amongst us.
- 10) Cottage industry: e.g.:
 - Bakery
 - Basket (coffin) weaving
 - Blacksmith
 - Dairy: Butter, cheese, yoghurt
 - Kitchen: jams, pies, tofu products etc.
 - Paper making
 - Plastic bottle greenhouses
 - Pottery
 - Transforming glass bottles into a mosaic wall and Drinking glasses
 - Woodworking
 - Wool: Shearing, spinning, weaving and knitting

More about Cornerstone 6: Animals and Cottage Industry

- 1) At the moment we do not have any sheep ourselves, although a local farmer is grazing his sheep on our pastures until we bring our own (small) flock in.
- 2) We do have a number of nannie goats, which are milked. Using the milk, we make goat's cheese in our kitchen, but very soon we will convert one of the stables into a dairy. We can then start maturing our goat's cheeses. We will have to apprentice with established goat's cheese makers to learn the ropes. If any of you know of a cheese maker who might be willing to teach us, we will appreciate your mediation.
- 3) Pigs is our three year old Pig and the darling of everyone. If any of you who read this know of another suitable pig, we will be very grateful (on behalf of Pigs) to hasten unison. Pigs are used in Permaculture for digging up roots in a field one wants to prepare for a garden.
- 4) We are currently re-locating the chicken coop: firstly, to take them further away from the house (the chickens make a lot of noise and disturb guests in the morning!) and secondly because they are becoming too bold and attack our food-filled plates whenever we are enjoying a meal-al-fresco.
- 5) Some work (digging out silt gathered by the water run off in the pond) is needed before we can house ducks.
- 6) We can create a large pond, fed by rainwater run-off from the roofs. We stock it with fish, which will feed the non-vegetarians amongst us and /or sell them in our own Farm shop
- 7) We designated a plot where we can build units for the cottage industry. The target groups for the ecological houses will preferably be the ones to occupy those units.
- 8) As for the pottery, we do have a very skilful potter in the village and we hope to continue his wonderful work when he decides to retire. (He is 80!) We'd love him to train one of us!

Cornerstone 7:

HEALTH: Alternative Medicines and Treatment

- 1) Build Clinic (ecological) with accommodation and treatment space in dispersed units (possibly connect units by electric carts and donkey/pony cart).
- 2) Treatments i.e. Alternative Medicines, Ayurvedic, Homoeopathic, Alexander Technique, Aromatherapy, Bio-energy, Bowen, Colour therapy, Iridology, Hydrotherapy, Life Coaching, Massages, Music therapy, Radionics, Reflexology, Reiki, Psychotherapy (ReSOULving) and many more.
- 3) Plant growing. Build a polytunnel and a laboratory (with parking) for making medicines; plant hardy plants on trellis and arches on estate.

More about Cornerstone 7:

HEALTH: Alternative Medicines and Treatment

- 1) It is possible to receive intensive treatments at Culdees on a limited scale. Culdees has two B&B family rooms, each of which is fitted with a double bed and two bunk beds (so that the patient's family can accompany them). Because of the limited space we can only treat two patients at a time. Once the infrastructure of Culdees' Cornerstones is up and running, we can build a number of rooms to house more patients in a specially designed small clinic, which will be overlooking Loch Tay.
- 2) Although at the moment we only have Maryse's Reiki and ReSOULving treatments, we also have links with a number of practitioners living nearby who can provide the other therapies mentioned.

Further to this, we are in the early stages of negotiation, working towards the establishment of an Ayurvedic training and treatment centre here. Again, more information on that as it develops.

- 3) We have over 70 new inventions of plant medicine to our name. A number of them are already patented.

Most of our medicines are researched in the laboratories of major universities worldwide, with a number of PhD students writing their thesis about the active plant chemicals. We recently opened our own laboratory in Strathclyde University. We source our plants from many places and grow a number of the Mediterranean ones on our own farm in the south of France.

Scotland's climate can be quite harsh on the plants with its strong, chilling winds. We therefore have to erect polytunnels on the grounds of Culdees in order to lengthen the growing season of the plants we grow here.

Cornerstone 8: Recreation

- 1) Sailing: Instruction, canoeing and water-skiing
- 2) Walking: Hillwalking (trails) and Educational trails.
- 3) Wheelchair Trail
- 5) Cycling
- 6) Climbing Wall and Beach ball training in barn
- 7) Historic/Mystic Tours
- 8) Bunk house accommodation
- 9) Family room accommodation
- 10) Self -catering facilities
- 11) Camping facilities for summer camp
- 12) Outdoor circuit training facilities - also for wheelchair users
- 13) Sauna and Swimming Pool, heated by solar power and wood chips
- 14) Two 28-foot diameter Tepees for functions like weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, workshops and sweat lodges...

More about Cornerstone 8:

Recreation

- 1) Boreland Farm used to be a horse riding centre and at first we thought we would continue with that activity. Our first attempt in that direction was not very successful, but we are confident that patience and perseverance will reward.
- 2) We have good working links with a water sport instructor - he is working from a site that is directly bordering the loch. He houses groups with us and we include him in activities we organise.
- 3) We only realised what a walkers' heaven we had landed ourselves in, after we were inundated by bookings from hill walking clubs and learned that we are surrounded by twelve Munros. We want to apply for funding a tracking-system for lone walkers, which we then can apply as a safety measurement. At the moment we ask walkers to fill in an itinerary. An Educational Trail will be built and will meander around the hill.
- 4) This Trail will be specially designed to accommodate wheelchair users and which also doubles as a training circuit. After the trail is built, we can start planting a diversity of trees.
- 5) Although we're not directly on any official cycle routes, lots of cyclists use Culdees
- 6) One of the activities that we imagine could be welcomed by our guests is a climbing / traversing wall in the barn. There are only a few indoor climbing walls in Scotland - this could be a good one for school groups.
- 7) For the Family room accommodation, we are planning -finance permitting-to add a small shower room-en-suite to the Loch facing room, to meet with the increasing need for en-suite facilities.
- 8) We do have block bookings for the whole place. Sometimes more people show up than we can accommodate; those people can bring their own tent, as long as they belong to the party.

Functions and Facilities at Culdees

Culdees is emerging as a venue for intimate (small-scale) functions. We can house up to 36 people in the bunkhouse and family rooms and 42 once the Cottage is finished - and the rest can be housed in static caravans or even on couches in the main room.

Since we opened in April 2003, we have had a number of children's Birthday Parties, with the celebrating guests spanning 3 generations. Family reunions are also growing in number.

The last wedding held at Culdees saw a blend of different cultures coming together - and a ceremony was chosen which reflected the various backgrounds that were coming together. Maryse (acting as Priestess) conducted the ceremonies which were spread over 4 days.

There are some additional facilities that are available at Culdees. If you can think of a way to utilise them that we have not mentioned or thought of, come and talk to us.

There are two 28-foot diameter tepees and a large barn, floored with sand and pebbles. These have already housed a number of functions such as weddings, theatre performances, folk groups, ceilidhs, Tai Chi and Yoga classes. There are plans to build a recording studio in the near future, with an ethos that is in harmony with the Culdees way of doing things.

Regular music sessions with various musicians take place. There is a piano which is almost constantly in use by guests and volunteers at Culdees; we have guitars, double bass, a violin, a harmonium and a variety of drums and percussion from around the world.

Got any old instruments you don't need any-more?

There are also vast and varied libraries of books and videos at Culdees. Again, if you have old books or videos that are in good condition, we will gladly take them.

Cornerstone 9: Community Education Advocacy

- 1) Centre for Alternative Technology in Scotland (SCAT)
- 2) Community involvement, car boot sales, recycling site etc.
- 3) Educational Courses on themes covered by Culdees work
- 4) Organic Coffee Shop / Lunch-room. Cookery Classes.
- 5) Selling of Handicrafts - exhibition of Artists' work.

More about Cornerstone 9: Community Education Advocacy

- In a number of ways, our aim is similar to that of The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) - so it seems logical that Culdees should work towards a goal that will earn it the name of The Scottish Centre for Alternative Technology (SCAT).
- With each activity, like building the plastic bottle wall, we encourage locals to come and join in. The next step is building a glass bottle wall. A further step to encourage this could be to hold car boot sales, dealing with items that are no longer of use to locals. Also, a building of a local re-cycling site for green waste and compost it will be encouraged.
- Like CAT, we plan to run courses on all subjects covered by the work we do at Culdees. (Permaculture, ecology etc...)
- As already mentioned in the information on Cornerstone 4, we are endeavouring to open an organic coffee shop / lunch-room. We will organise cookery classes and advice on diets and what benefits there are in eating organically.
- The shop in which we will sell Organic Produce can also double up as a Gallery to exhibit and sell the handicrafts of local artists'.

And the volunteers say ...

"Hello Maryse, I am looking back nostalgic at my time at Culdees. The Memory that gives the best feeling to me, is remembering at the living room and the music room, as we sat there all together talking, chattering and laughing. Sometimes I travel up there in my mind, sitting next to you at the couch, have got this warm feeling, this inner peace and silence, and laughing with you. Your place is still in my heart and I miss this feeling. I felt so complete there. Snuggled like in a cosy nest, mixed of mist and sunshine :D
I met there people that changed my way of life in different ways and two of them also led me to God. Wonderful people are gathering at Culdees, some of them really reached my heart and enriched my life. My time at Culdees changed my life and has become an experience I will never forget!
I am really thankful, that a place like Culdees exists, where people can meet each other and make such great experience without spending much money. I hope I can visit you once again! Cordially greetings, yours," - **Carmen Rebecca Hammer** September 2009

"It is a difficult task to give a summary about my reasons for returning to Culdees whenever I can. Basically - even if this is simple - it is about love, warmth and acceptance. The unspoken law at Culdees seems to be that you don't judge anybody - you respect and even support one another in his or her individual needs. This can be either in the special kind of work that you do among the projects listed up in the cornerstones in order to evolve or deepen your skills or in a way of personal 'guidance'. Even if the aim is to finally open a school of Human Values here, it seems to already be one at the moment just because of the special kind of people living here. This place enables you to get back to your heart, to learn what it beats for and to see how many possibilities open up to you to put the often so-called 'dream' into reality. It is about setting your values on the right things and learning to listen to your inner voice." Yvonne Bruehmann, (volunteer from Marburg, Germany)

"I have been living at Culdees for over 5 years now and have seen the land and the community in all their seasonal variations. For 10 years previously I had been travelling the Scottish Highlands searching for a spiritual community with no rules or dogma but whose members shared a vision of living in harmony with nature and our fellow humans. This place, set amongst stunning scenery, has risen to meet my expectations and daily we are struggling with the mechanics of making it work.

The result, after 3 short years of attempting to create a self-sustaining, self-regulating environment against the penetrative backdrop of contemporary culture, is a place where many people from all the continents gather to experience peace, connectedness with nature, healing and joy.

The quality of life here is of an exceptional level. Fresh air, exposure to the beauty of light patterns of the loch below, panoramic views, trees, wonderful food, the quaintness of the buildings and their idiosyncratic decoration every corner bulging with some treasure from afar; spontaneous music often emanates from these rooms as many musicians frequent the place and rejoice in the innate inspiration of the space.

However the strength must come from the core and there is the Culdees family. We believe in human values - and the finest expression of these values (when it comes to relating to others) is the model of the family which is encouraged here. We want families to come here and the atmosphere is like that. There is support, acceptance and love and there is also growth and encouragement into new areas of awareness which can be unsettling. Ultimately I find healing and I feel that that is what we are doing here, for visitors, for the land and for ourselves. Learning to live, work and develop together."
- Marcus Moon, (resident at Culdees)

"In my view, Culdees is an alchemical vessel for a diverse variety of elixirs, from permaculture to tourism, gardening to self-development. To describe my impressions and experiences here, I have to be poetic - it is a place where dreams and realities can meet, mix and grow - both on individual and shared collective levels - where art meets life, and life in turn

can come to resemble art, through a process that contains both courage and magic. The possibilities here are as endless as the spirit which animates them. Its not so much that you stay at Culdees, but more that it stays with you, wherever you are or however long you decide to stay:- an island of beautiful rugged enchantment in the heart of Scotland.- Kevin Fleming, (volunteer from Singapore)

Getting Involved yourself:

As mentioned before, you are welcome to speak to us about getting involved in any aspect of the work at Culdees that appeals to you. For volunteers staying on a weekly basis, we provide them with food and accommodation (albeit for the moment in a caravan) in exchange for a minimum effort of 30 hours per week from them. Any additional work they can do is appreciated, but not necessary.

Useful Information

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Please also read the [Culdees Manifesto](#)

It is possible that you like what you have read and although you cannot be directly involved with the work, you feel supportive of what is going on. You are welcome to make donations to Culdees for any particular part of the work that you feel you would like to support. By talking to us about the Gift Aid option, it means that Culdees can reclaim the basic rate tax paid on your donation. This effectively means that if you contribute £10, the Inland Revenue will give us another £2.80, making the total donation £12.80.

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Thank you for tuning into Culdees