



Home Farmer

www.homefarmer.co.uk

PUBLISHED BY



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PRINTED BY

Woodford Litho
Tel: 01376 534500

DISTRIBUTION BY

Comag Specialist
Tel: 01895 433600



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What makes this magazine tick and why is it called *Home Farmer*? Do you need a farm or smallholding to enjoy 'The Good Life' and what is the 'Good Life' anyway?

Living the Good Life

WHEN I LOOK back on my childhood in the sixties there are lots of things I really miss. Helping out at the abattoir sounds a bit gross to modern ears but at least it wasn't as smelly as the tripe works at the end of the street! I loved working with the pigs at the abattoir; they would come from the pig man who lived on the Dingle. Everyone had a swill bin and all our scraps went in it. The pig man would collect the bin every week and boil it up for the pigs. In payment for our waste we got a turkey for Christmas, and I helped with those too!

Then I loved going to Mr. Dennis' because he had hens like ours – in an old Andersen air raid shelter and I remember listening to England win the World Cup and shouting so loud that an old hen dropped an egg right in front of me. Then there was my grannies – she made the best cheese sandwiches in the world. The cheese came from her washing line in an old muslin bag where it had been draining since she made it early in the morning.

...AND READ
HOME FARMER
FOR ANOTHER
THOUSAND WAYS
TO LIVE THE
'GOOD LIFE'!

Why am I telling you all this? Well Clayton in Manchester was just about the most inner city district in the country and we lived the 'Good Life' there. Only we didn't really know it was the good life – it was just life. In amongst the back streets, where everything was purple from the dye works or noisy and full of smoke from the wireworks, we had hens and their eggs, pigs for their meat, and by the river there was an old man who kept sheep with whom we'd do a swap – a clutch of plucked hens for half a lamb.

Within sight of my bedroom you could see the remains of Manchester United's first stadium, the power station, a dozen factories, including the one that the Germans bombed, my school, rows of back to back houses and a few dozen little farms, because we all did our own. Own food, own furniture, own everything really.

I bet if I went into every garden in Clayton today I wouldn't find a hen or a pig. I know I wouldn't find an abattoir and the tripe works became a Youth Centre. There are no butchers or green-grocers either – only a DVD shop and dusty old newsagents. The allotments and the sheep? They are now lost under the concrete of a retail park.

This magazine is for everyone who, be they dreamers and would love to have a go at keeping hens, or realists and have already got their hands dirty and might even have a little land. We are going to grow wheat and make our own bread – cook it in our own oven too made from our own mud. We are going to fish and salt herring, make furniture, keep hens, make the healthiest bacon in the world, build

polytunnels, hunt for land, keep sheep and even a cow and on top of it all, be responsible for our own food. To eat proper food, clean food, chemical free food, grown mostly by ourselves.

Of course, in this day and age, we have to go to the supermarket, drive a car, go to the cinema, but the fundamental idea behind Home Farmer is anyone can live 'The Good Life' whether they live in a council house in the inner city or in a moorland farm or a valley smallholding. Not because it fits the 'must have' way of life, not because it is trendy or new. Just because, as my grandfather put it when he taught me about his hens, '...if you don't know that, you don't know nowt!'

In this issue...

The 'Good Life'

- * Be kind to the environment: compost, reuse, recycle and make your own.
- * Eat fresh, low mileage, organic produce grown in your own garden.
- * Seek out and patronize small suppliers—you get great produce!
- * Try some of the completely wonderful produce this country provides.
- * Grow your own—even a small crop is better than none.

