

[Sign in](#) · [Register](#)

Go to:

[Read today's paper](#) · [Jobs](#)

Search:
 Guardian Unlimited Web

TheObserver Comment

[Home](#) [UK news](#) [World news](#) [Politics](#) [Business & Media](#) **[Comment & Leaders](#)** [Focus](#) [7 Days](#)
[Sport](#) [Review](#) [Travel](#) [Cash](#) [Observer Woman](#) [The Observer Magazine](#) [Food](#) [Music](#)



Comment

No one is willing to address the accelerating growth in the world's population

Juliette Jowit
Sunday March 18, 2007
[The Observer](#)

Search The Observer

Tools

- [Text-only version](#) ▶
- [Send it to a friend](#) ▶
- [Save story](#) ▶
- The Observer**
- [Front page](#) ▶
- [Story index](#) ▶

Recent articles

[Mary Warnock: We were right to sink super-casino](#)

[Will Hutton: Lack of leadership is the new English disease](#)

[Mary Riddell: Damned if she does, damned if she doesn't](#)

[Malcolm Rifkind: Europe has failed us in the Iran crisis](#)

[Andrew Rawnsley: Tony Blair's great triumph for politics over hate and violence](#)

[Cristina Odone: Why do Brits hate American honesty?](#)

[Henry Porter: For Blair, it's child's play to make us all criminals](#)

[Nick Cohen: Be worried when a copper becomes a nark](#)

[For the record: corrections and clarifications](#)

[Jasper Gerard: Kindly get your Wimpey home off my](#)

In the time it takes you to get to the end of this sentence, seven people have been added to the population of the world. At this rate, the United Nations estimates the number of people on the planet will nearly double by the middle of this century. Even with significant reductions in birth rates, the population is expected to increase from 6.7 billion now to 9.2 billion by 2050.

These figures are staggering. Yet there was hardly a mention of them in a major story last week: the announcement by Britain's two main political parties of how they will tackle what is commonly agreed to be the biggest threat facing the planet, global warming and ensuing climate change.

[Article continues](#)

Labour unveiled their Climate Change Bill promising to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases blamed for global warming by 60 per cent from 1990 levels by 2050. Suggested policies to achieve this ranged from banning standby buttons on electrical equipment and old-fashioned, inefficient light bulbs to 'capture and storage' of pollution from coal-fired power stations. Conservatives grabbed headlines with a plan to limit air travel - a small but fast-growing source of greenhouse gases.

These have been well-intentioned, if not always convincing, ideas. At an Oxford conference, scientists argued against the 'Hollywoodisation' of the problem, that it is being promoted beyond the science. And still, everybody is talking only about one half of the equation: the emissions we generate, not how we generate them. All the standby buttons and low-energy light bulbs are dwarfed by the pressure of a global population rising by the equivalent of Britain every

[lawn](#)

[Ruaridh Nicoll: Hail the reels-on-wheels service](#)

[Mary Riddell: Democracy needs its Judases to thrive](#)

[Henry Porter: Stop treating us like children, Lord Falconer](#)

[Cristina Odone: How to survive the Oxbridge Inquisition](#)

[Will Hutton: War stories my father told made me a proud European](#)



<p>Jobs from our site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CR SEARCH & SELECTION: Director of Fundraising and Marketing ● ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL: Head of SEN and Children with Additional Needs ● MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL: Applications Manager <p>Search executive jobs</p> <p>Search all jobs</p>
--

year.

Put simply, if governments want to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent, and the world's population rises to the mid-range forecast of 9.2 billion, each person would in fact have to slash their emissions by 72 per cent. More efficient technology, renewable energy and lifestyle changes will help do that, but growing prosperity and consumption in developing countries will also make it harder. That all our low-energy light bulbs, home insulation, efficient cars, boilers and washing machines have so far failed to stop emissions growing illustrates how difficult cutting them will be to achieve.

Some population activists argue the world can only support a population of two to three billion, even as few as 500 million in future. But even if reducing the world's population is unlikely or distasteful, it is incredible that there is not even a debate about limiting and maybe one day reversing growth. There are many understandable reasons for the prevailing reluctance to talk about population.

Some question whether there is a problem at all. Blair says Britain doesn't need a population policy, and he has a point: Britain's population grows only because of immigration. But greenhouse gas emissions are a global problem, so it should not matter which countries people live in (some say developed countries have higher standards of living so moving people into them increases overall emissions, but it is hard to argue we should deny others our quality of life). At a global level, optimists say advances in science and technology will provide the solution; more aggressive estimates suggest we could double consumption and halve our impact on the planet.

But other evidence suggests it is too soon to relax. Even if huge advances can be made on slashing greenhouse gases, there is an argument that densely populated countries cannot cope with local environmental stresses such as home-building, fresh water use, waste, traffic, light pollution and noise. More worryingly, the evidence that technology can solve the problem is not yet convincing: the recent failure of European car-makers to meet voluntary emissions reductions is a reminder that a decade after the international community made a serious pledge to tackle global warming, emissions are still rising.

Another deterrent to discussing population is the uncomfortable suspicion that environmentalism is a soft cover for more objectionable population agendas to stop or reduce immigration or growth in developing countries. Sometimes it might be. But that doesn't take away the underlying fact: that more people use more resources and create more pollution. This is why some braver voices - Sir David Attenborough, Jonathan Porritt and Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, to name a few - have begun to raise the issue.

The biggest obstacle to debate is the matter of possible solutions. Propositions such as ignoring disease or limiting life-saving medical treatment can be ruled out as unacceptable, and birth control is objectionable to many on moral, religious and libertarian grounds. It is not surprising that green groups and politicians, worried about offending supporters, stay silent.

There remains a fourth barrier to raising the population issue: even when people acknowledge the problem and brave the debate, it seems too big to solve. But there are things that can be done at least to reduce population growth. Last week the UN Population Fund said its latest projections 'underline the urgency of family planning needs'. It says 200 million women in the world don't have access to 'safe and effective' contraceptive services, and calls for a big increase in funding for family planning, especially in developing nations. Britain's Optimum Population Trust also calls for 45 countries to drop policies to increase birthrates - mostly because of worries about paying pensions for an aging population.

Is this enough to tackle such a big issue? Even with the most optimistic assumptions about falling birth rates, the UN forecasts a population increase to 7.8 billion by 2050. But that is still considerably less than a population of 9.2 billion. And the OPT says the success of campaigns in countries such as Iran and Thailand suggests the best family planning services, especially combined with women's education and human rights, could go even further.

It is understandable then that people are worried about discussing population, but fear of misrepresentation, offence or failure are not good enough reasons to ignore one half of the world's biggest problem: the population effect on climate change.

tudnogen

March 18, 2007 2:02 AM

NEWSFLASH! Malthus is DEAD...

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

RameshN

March 18, 2007 2:26 AM

The figures Jowit is quoting from are from the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN. The UN population programme's figures are on esa.un.org/unpp. The 9.2 billion figure is the median estimate. Actually, in 2005 or so the median estimate was 9 or 9.1 billion, and it was actually increased due to the hostility of the Bush administration's stance on birth control. Actually, this 9.2 billion figure assumes that fertility will continue to decline in the developing world, and that US aid for birth control will resume its 'normal' trend once the 2008 elections are over!

World population was estimated at 2.5 billion in 1950. Between 2000 and 2050, the population is expected to triple in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, the Congos, East Timor, Guinea-Buissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Uganda. However, half of the global increase of 2.5 billion to 2050 will be concentrated in these countries, ranked from most to least: India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, DR Congo, Uganda [assuming HIV epidemic is ameliorated], the USA, Ethiopia and China.

Hence, much of the world's population increase is estimated to occur in the Indian Subcontinent, essentially torpedoing any rapid rise in living standards for the poorest 75%.

The article conflates two differing problems : environmental impact and economic development/ social impact. The greatest environmental impact of world population will occur in China and America. The 13 countries I have listed which will have the most rapid population rises, are actually some of the world's poorest. Each inhabitant here has a minimal environmental impact with respect to CO2 etc. It is not clear whether any of the countries whose population is expected to triple by 2050 will actually be functioning, governable states because of the diminishing per capita resources.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

MarkGreen0

March 18, 2007 3:46 AM

I say we draw straws.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

RogerINtheUSA

March 18, 2007 4:31 AM

LouSeefer posted

BTW Ramesh, I think Bush and most other Christian conservatives are opposed to birth control. They keep pushing for abstinences only programs.

Hi Lou

The Bush administration has been pouring a lot of money into contraceptives including condoms, but have knuckled under to pressure from Roman Catholic groups to put restrictions on funding of abortions or funding groups that even counsel abortions. Europe could easily contribute whatever shortfall is caused by US reluctance to fund these groups.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tommydog

March 18, 2007 5:07 AM

Does anyone not notice the correlation between economic growth, prosperity, education and smaller families?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Kimpatsu

March 18, 2007 5:13 AM

"...birth control is objectionable to many on moral, religious and libertarian grounds."
The religious objection is nonsense, and should be beaten to death and the corpse trampled upon. Why birth control (i.e., contraceptive education) should be objectionable on moral grounds is a puzzle, though. Or are you wrongly assuming that birth control is only ever something that is enforced against the will of the people, rather than a viable option to the educated...?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

hsutreal

March 18, 2007 5:29 AM

tudnogen

March 18, 2007 2:02 AM

NEWSFLASH! Malthus is DEAD...

It is heartening to see that at least someone recognises this. Ahistorical linear extrapolators will never give up the Malthusian 'blanky'. It is so convincing for those with the inability to think as opposed to merely ruminant. Most of these of course have never seen Malthus' work beyond some SOC101 Reader.

Good for you.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

flowergrri

March 18, 2007 6:21 AM

Malthus may be dead but the facts we have in front of us don't look to cheery either. If in 1950 there were 2.5 billion people and now there is more than 6 billion people on earth and we are facing major climatic changes due to global warming, I think there is cause to be alarmed. Maybe population will not grow as predicted but unless we have an honest and open discussion about how to control it, we're still going to be in trouble.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

joatsimeon

March 18, 2007 6:33 AM

You need a TFR -- a Total Fertility Rate -- of about 2.1 children per woman to maintain a population. It's a little higher in backward countries.

55% of the world now lives in countries with TFR's at or below 2.1 -- these include Brazil (1.9), China (1.2-1.7), Turkey (1.9), Iran (1.8), Algeria (1.87) and Tunisia (1.75), by the way. And probably (nobody's quite sure) Indonesia.

On current trends this percentage will increase to 75% in the next 10 years, as India dips below 2.1. Large parts of India already have.

The world TFR is now 2.59, down from over 6 in the 1970's. The decline is accelerating and it's pretty well universal. Even the most backward countries have seen fertility declines. The world TFR will drop to 2.1 or below by 2020 on current trends, quite possibly earlier.

The only large country whose fertility rate is not declining is the United States.

The UN "median" estimate is, as usual, far too high. The UN "low" prediction has consistently been far closer to the way things actually turned out.

Hence there will not be 9.2 billion people in 2050.

There won't ever be 9.2 billion people, and probably never 8 billion, either.

By 2050 the world population will be declining; slowly at first, and then (the "miracle of compound interest") more and more quickly. By 2100, the world population will be lower than it is today, probably considerably lower.

Japan and Germany are just ahead of the curve.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

joatsimeon

March 18, 2007 6:34 AM

You need a TFR -- a Total Fertility Rate -- of about 2.1 children per woman to maintain a population. It's a little higher in backward countries.

55% of the world now lives in countries with TFR's at or below 2.1 -- these include Brazil (1.9), China (1.2-1.7), Turkey (1.9), Iran (1.8), Algeria (1.87) and Tunisia (1.75), by the way. And probably (nobody's quite sure) Indonesia.

On current trends this percentage will increase to 75% in the next 10 years, as India dips below 2.1. Large parts of India already have.

The world TFR is now 2.59, down from over 6 in the 1970's. The decline is accelerating and it's pretty well universal. Even the most backward countries have seen fertility declines. The world TFR will drop to 2.1 or below by 2020 on current trends, quite possibly earlier.

The only large country whose fertility rate is not declining is the United States.

The UN "median" estimate is, as usual, far too high. The UN "low" prediction has consistently been far closer to the way things actually turned out.

Hence there will not be 9.2 billion people in 2050. There won't ever be 9.2 billion people, and probably never 8 billion, either.

By 2050 the world population will be declining; slowly at first, and then (the "miracle of compound interest") more and more quickly. By 2100, the world population will be lower than it is today, probably considerably lower.

Japan and Germany are just ahead of the curve.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Spartan300

March 18, 2007 7:04 AM

"But greenhouse gas emissions are a global problem, so it should not matter which countries people live in"

It does matter. The richer countries are also the ones so situated that they will suffer the least from

the effects of global warming. This means that as the third world overheats and runs out of water, the rich world will be where most of our food will have to be grown. If it is crammed full of people, this won't be possible.

"(some say developed countries have higher standards of living so moving people into them increases overall emissions, but it is hard to argue we should deny others our quality of life)."

it's not hard at all. we already deny our quality of life to 90% of humanity. the survival of the earth is a good reason for continuing to do so. it's harsh but then so is the advancing uninhabitability of the world. as solutions go, getting rid of standby buttons is on a par with Canute trying to order the sea back.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

RameshN

March 18, 2007 8:29 AM

The current fertility rate per woman in the less developed countries is about 3, in the developed countries, it's about 1.6.

The Chinese fertility rate is currently below 2 but above 1.5. The one child-per-couple rule is only applied to Han Chinese, not minorities. The UN median estimate for the Chinese population in 2050 follows guestimates correcting for the underreporting of Chinese children, especially in the rural areas. There are financial penalties for having more than one child, hence the underreporting. [eg Children who are deemed to be 'adopted' aren't counted in the one-child-per household rule.]

The reason that the UN median figure for world population is 9.2 billion, even with fertility falling, is because one cannot assume an accelerating [geometric] rate of reduced fertility, nor even a linear extrapolation. Hence, even when total fertility has dropped from 6 to 2.6 in the past forty years, the decline from 2.6 to 2 is going to be much slower-- as has been the case in most of the developed countries. [Note that even Iraq's population has expanded since 1980, despite the Iran-Iraq war, the sanctions and the occupation.]

Moreover, the women who are going to reproduce from 2020 to 2040 have already been born. All the poorest countries have bottom heavy age pyramids. This means that whenever the total fertility rate is above 2, for these very youthful countries, there will still be a high absolute rise in population.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

rogerhicks

March 18, 2007 8:31 AM

Britain's (and Europe's) native population is declining naturally, which is a godsend, given the degree of overpopulation, certainly in western Europe, and the fact that there is no longer anywhere for Europe's excess population to emigrate to.

So what do we do? Do we celebrate this natural development and give thanks to Providence for it? Far from it. Instead, we worry about the fiscal and

economic consequences of a declining population, encourage people to have more children and invite millions of immigrants to come and live here, in our still natively overpopulated country!

Never mind the developing world. It is the dumb, blind stupidity of us in the so-called "developed world" which is the MAIN problem.

Overpopulation in our part of the world was solving itself quite naturally, until politicians, economists etc. decided to intervene, because an aging and declining population does not fit into their socio-economic models of the world, which require a stable or growing population, continuous economic growth and the assumption that our planet, effectively at least (thanks, we assure ourselves, to our scientific and technological genius), has an infinite supply of natural resources and an infinite carrying capacity.

What is the cause of the blindness that gives rise to such madness?

Here, yet again, is my anthropological explanation:

Human emotions and behaviour evolved over millions of years to serve the individual and their family group in the struggle for survival and advantage in the "natural environment". With the advent of civilisation, the individual's blind, dumb-animal, Darwinian struggle transferred to the artificial, "socio-economic environment", where, naturally enough, and greatly facilitated by the development of free-market capitalism, we give absolute priority to economics (the household of man in the artificial, "socio-economic environment"), rather than to ecology (the household of our planet in the natural environment).

Once you recognise this, it's obvious.

It is also very frightening - recognizing the inherent non-sustainability of the existing socio-economic order of the so-called "developed world".

My homepage: <http://www.spaceship-earth.org>

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Pantheratigris

March 18, 2007 8:44 AM

The Third World is NOT responsible for the mess we find ourselves in. Western society and its greedy way of life is the cause of this globe's plight. Just look at the many single households they take up space, resources and push prices! You speak of a change in lifestyle - start right here. Living space for singles should be limited regardless of their finances. Couples (without children) and singles should be heavily taxed and this money used to save our planet. We should stop financing egoism.

And as far as population increases are concerned - let's rather rejoice at the fact that some people still deem family life a prized commodity.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

TimWorstall

March 18, 2007 9:00 AM

"But even if reducing the world's population is unlikely or distasteful, it is incredible that there is not even a debate about limiting and maybe one day reversing growth."

What are you wittering on about? What do you mean there's no debate? Try looking at the SRES, the economic models that the IPCC reports on climate change are based upon. Of the four families of scenarios one of them, A1, is based upon the idea that population growth is indeed limited and then reversed, leading to a world in 2100 with about the same number of people we have now.

That's not no debate, that's the fact that we've had one and you just haven't noticed.

Also, family planning. Hasn't anyone told you that 95% of changes in fertility come from changes in desired fertility?

More here including references.

http://timworstall.typepad.com/timworstall/2007/03/the_population_.html

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Anthropic

March 18, 2007 9:35 AM

What a load of tosh. First of all, anyone who is not a brainwashed moron, knows that there are big questions as to how much human produced carbon is actually effecting current global warming trend. So to link bigger populations with catastrophic global warming is a false and erroneous assumption.

But leaving that aside; what does Juliette suppose we do about a growing population? Tell people not to have children? Exactly how do we control childbirth - do as the Chinese with limits on children?

The fact is that the population is mainly growing in countries which don't produce western quantities of CO2. In Europe there is a serious shortfall in population growth which will have a worse impact on our economy than this big assumption about our effect on global warming - which as of yet is unproven.

This article is pure pants/panties.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

MichaelBulley

March 18, 2007 10:04 AM

The end of which sentence?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Salfordian

March 18, 2007 10:05 AM

Anthropic:

Global warming is not unproven. There is enough supporting evidence to convince almost all the scientific community. The fact that you choose to listen to the few who dissent says more about you than global warming.

The shortfall in population growth (to be applauded) can be addressed by a change in the economic system (also to be applauded as long as it is to a socialist system).

[Offensive?](#) [Unsuitable?](#) [Email us](#)

bobdoney

March 18, 2007 10:42 AM

By 2050 it's likely that people will be able to live much longer than they do now, possibly even for ever. Now there's a subject not being much discussed, let alone planned for.

[Offensive?](#) [Unsuitable?](#) [Email us](#)

Teacup

March 18, 2007 10:49 AM

Tommydog,

Absolutely! I can see it where I live, not an scientific or unbiased sample, I grant you. Most middle class people in my community have two children. A very few have a third "accident" or an attempt to have a child of the other sex. Increasingly, I notice one child families, even in extremely traditional families. On the other hand, the poorer people seem to have at least four children. This is changing as advertiments extolling smaller families catch on and birth control becomes more accessible to poor women. I don't know if it will be fast enough, though.

[Offensive?](#) [Unsuitable?](#) [Email us](#)

northcroft

March 18, 2007 10:57 AM

Anthropic begins "What a load of tosh. First of all, anyone who is not a brainwashed moron ..."

Good to see that anthropic's brain works in a logical scientific manner!

I am an optimist. The science of the brain will come just in time to allow us to avoid the traps and roadblocks to clear thinking provided by our animal brains.

We need some intelligent long term targets - my own involve man occupying no more than 10% of the planet - when we get around to giving other creatures equal (democratic!) rights to space on this planet this will happen.

A reduced human population is absolutely no problem - it will lead to an increase in the quality of living for every person and every creature on the planet. Reducing the population will be no problem - looking after the old etc - technology will provide very good answers. In my own case I look forward to easy self termination - when I have had enough I want to leave at a time of my own choosing.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tomper2

March 18, 2007 11:43 AM

TimWorstall: "Of the four families of scenarios one of them, A1, is based upon the idea that population growth is indeed limited and then reversed, leading to a world in 2100 with about the same number of people we have now."

So, what your saying is that it's OK because, sometime after all of us are dead, population levels might get back to current levels. Super.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Spartan300

March 18, 2007 11:44 AM

Pantheratigris - "The Third World is NOT responsible for the mess we find ourselves in."

True but any solution to the mess will be predicated on harsh realities and not moral judgments about who's to blame and what's fair. Global warming isn't fair and it has no concept of fairness - that's a human thing. If we manage to respond adequately, which I doubt we will, that will likewise have little or nothing to do with what's fair and everything to do with what works. Top priority for the West will be looking after its own interests and survival. Everyone else will be abandoned to their fate. No, it's not fair but the pressing concern will be to survive, not to be fair.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

HowSoonIsNow

March 18, 2007 12:49 PM

More over-hyped UN forecasts of doom and gloom.

Pantheratigris - 'The Third World is NOT responsible for the mess we find ourselves in'

Which mess would that be ?

Salfordian - Global warming is very definitely unproven. There is enough evidence against AGW to give all bar the most devout warmer pause for thought and much of what I expect you consider to be evidence for it is cherry-picked, misrepresented or misinterpreted, sometimes deliberately. The fact that you choose to ignore contrary evidence and instead allow yourself to be convinced by those who merely shout loudest says more about you than global warming.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Pantheratigris

March 18, 2007 12:54 PM

Spartan 300

Although I appreciate your frankness, I shudder at the brutal picture that you're drawing. Because it would prove:

1. might indeed is always right
2. that Bush is a true stereotype of our Western society (as a logical consequence we should stop complaining about him)
3. that we really give a toss about anybody else and that all this Western tosh about humanitarian this and that is but pure hogwash.

If our way of life is NOT built on fairness WHY should it survive? If we, after thousand and thousand of years on this planet have not learnt the very one lesson that matters, i.e. to live in accordance WITH nature and respectful OF one another what's so bloody worthwhile to keep alive?

Survival of the fittest, as I understand it, would suggest a life form that meets exactly these requirements, i.e. to live in accordance with nature

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Spartan300

March 18, 2007 1:33 PM

@ Pantheratigris - I think you've slightly misunderstood me (I probably didn't explain well enough). Essentially what I'm saying is not that "might is right" but rather that "right" or any sort of moral weighting doesn't really feature at all where raw survival is concerned. You say "If our way of life is NOT built on fairness WHY should it survive?". My response is that the question itself is irrelevant. Our "way of life" won't survive global warming in full-swing; what will happen is that we'll adapt and the motor of our adaptation will be naked pragmatism, not any moral philosophising about what is and isn't fair.

Consider the example of Britain in the world wars. All sorts of pragmatic policies were introduced such as conscription, rationing, executions for supposed cowardice and for spying, internment, and many other measures. These were not measures that in peace time would be considered fair or in any way desirable by most people, but society mostly supported them during war because Britain's survival was considered more important. This is how orderly societies respond to crisis and it's how they will respond to the crises that global warming throws our way.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

TimWorstall

March 18, 2007 2:11 PM

"So, what your saying is that it's OK because,

sometime after all of us are dead, population levels might get back to current levels. Super."

Can you read? I was responding to Ms. Jowitz's statement that there's no debate over this matter. Of course there's a debate over this matter. It's built into the very fabric of the entire set of reports about climate change. It's just that she hasn't noticed it, not that there's no debate going on.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tudnogent

March 18, 2007 2:11 PM

Seems to be some scared people on here;
1. Immigration - Whats wrong with immigration from the 3rd world anyway? I look forward to it.
2. Population - This seems to fall as nations DEVELOP. Given the same level of industrialisation as the west i see no reason why the same should not be true of the 3rd world. Of course this will mean , motorways , cars , steel plants , consumerism etc , just like we have. Only racists could be frightened by this prospect, which brings me neatly to...
3. Global warming - A more conservative, backward looking , reactionary , religious idea it would be hard to find.
4. Solution - Lets have MORE development for everyone and stop listening to the moronic voices of doom , who would have us al live at the level of a poor 3rd world country (that includes you Monbiot)

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

9percentGrowth

March 18, 2007 2:51 PM

Indeed malthus is dead, we are priducing more food per capita than ever in history & the economy is clearly going to grow faster than population for the foresaeble future.

The problem is differential population growth. Growth is largely confined to failed states & poor countries. In 50 years Yemen will have a larger population than Russia & far larger than Britain. This is clearly going to cause wars. The first of which was in Kossovo.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

georgeat4

March 18, 2007 2:59 PM

To be fair, George Bush seems to be trying to do his bit to control population growth, in Iraq at least.

tudnogent: concise, well-argued, coherent: all words that cannot be applied to your post, I'm afraid.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

douglasclark

March 18, 2007 3:16 PM

Just wanted to say that all the evidence suggests that, in poorer societies, children are looked on as a way of ensuring your, relative, comfort in old age. Arguably, as Jonathan Steele remarked all those years ago, superannuation is the answer.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

douglasclark

March 18, 2007 4:10 PM

Err.. Richard Steele, as in:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Steele

Sorry folks!

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

CommanderKeen

March 18, 2007 4:40 PM

Surely increased population growth means more carbon locked up in carbon-based life forms thus reducing the impact of global warming? Its like planting trees but with people.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

bellairs1

March 18, 2007 4:46 PM

The population of the human animal has more than quadrupled during the life of a single specimen (myself, 91).

This indicates a species breeding out of control-a plague, in plain English. If not corrected, it will eventually transform the world into an arid desert devoid of all life save a few hardy insects and microbes, but I think that the scourge will be corrected before this happens. We will probably cull our own numbers by using our superb killing-machinery and chemicals to fight each other for surviving resources, especially water. If we do not, nature will necessarily do the job as James Lovelock has explained in 'The revenge of Gaia'. The only policy that would help to mitigate inevitable human suffering on an enormous scale would be the enforcement of the 'one-baby' rule, but this would be politically unpopular, so it will not even be tried - excepting China and Singapore which are managed by scientifically-literate rulers.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

MaxSmirnov

March 18, 2007 4:58 PM

Spartan300 represents the darker side of our great society - the one that enjoys listening to the war drums and killing as much people as it is possible, for any plausible reason, just because we have bigger guns and supposedly, bigger/smaller penises. If our society will be remembered in history as a society of people like him, I certainly hope we will be eradicated. I actually had similar political views when I was 15 years old, but I've

grown up and only the shame remained.

Supposed 9.2 billion...? If we light a piece of paper, temperature rises by 300 degrees during one second. Therefore, in a hour the flame will be as hot as a core of a star. Perfect logic of extrapolation.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

bruceybaby

March 18, 2007 5:11 PM

Population reduction is vital if we are to avoid massive suffering of humans and other life forms.

"The sixth extinction." by Richard Leakey shows that it is already well under way, and will accelerate. Not pessimism, provable fact.

When any population gets out of control there are natural `remedies`, starvation, disease etc. Humans should be intelligent enough to avoid such suffering. We already have wars for resources. It takes 10 units of oil and gas energy [fertiliser, herbicide, transport etc.] to produce 1 unit of food. This energy will run out soon, another fact, I`m afraid.

If we don`t do it, Gaia will.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tudnogent

March 18, 2007 5:15 PM

Bellairs 1 ; Christ! The power of positive thinking!!!
You must have some fun dinner parties :)

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

goto100

March 18, 2007 5:23 PM

I was going to post something but then I saw Joatsimeon hit the nail on the head already. Well said that man.

The world's population is demonstrably tending to a limiting value, and population dynamics means that after this is reached, there will be a sharp fall in world population. And this is not a crisis nor a bad thing. It is quite natural and if as we always have done in the past, we manage to adapt our lives and our economies to the new reality of falling and aging populations, we will have no problem coping.

Interesting to think what effects this may have on real-estate portfolios in the (foreseeable) future.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

MarceloRoque

March 18, 2007 6:12 PM

What is the point of tackling climate change and don't stop world population growth? Are we all stupid?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

bill40

March 18, 2007 6:33 PM

I look forward to your example. If you have children kill them, if not have your womb removed. Exactly whom do you refer to as excess population, what are their names?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

LeweyNessus

March 18, 2007 7:02 PM

I remember from my youth when population was around 4 billion, hearing a "believe it or not" statement, that said all the world's people could fit on the Isle of Wight.

I guess it would be a bit crowded, but if a really popular headline group, like say a reunion of Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, The Smiths, Velvet Underground and Take That could be arranged today, then all those who get there late and don't make it, will just have to float and be forever known as uncool.

Ms Jowit says:

"There remains a fourth barrier to raising the population issue: even when people acknowledge the problem and brave the debate, it seems too big to solve."

Don't agonize about it.
You may be worrying people could say things like this:

"Ah yes! The solution to the apparent population problem, y'know lebensraum."

Don't worry I say.

"UN forecasts a population increase to 7.8 billion by 2050. But that is still considerably less than a population of 9.2 billion."

What's with the magic year 2050 I keep seeing in futurist projections? Could it be that it is a just a neat target number divisible by 50?

I think it is well established that we in the west and especially we in the UK have come to the consensus that we all really need to reduce our consumption of Sainsbury's carrier bags and filament light bulbs.

But I would say there will always be a contingent of people in the world who, if truth be told, don't read the Guardian and don't subscribe to this opinion. Some Africans. Some are Chinese, Brazilian and Indian.

No matter what pleasing comforting noises, you may hear from these regions, they will still get on with working with their own unique non-western interpretation of the world and its potential, and do what they think they need to increase their own development no matter what we think.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

arget

March 18, 2007 7:56 PM

The more I read British newspapers, the more I am amazed at the parallels between the UK and America. Here as in America, forums such as these tend to bring out such swaggering, George Bush types as tudnugent, who have read a couple of Ayn Rand's preachy tomes and think that *all* progress is measured in terms of material acquisition and technological innovation, and that, moreover, we can grow forever, the bigger the better. If you disagree with them, you're "afraid." Why are you afraid? It's because you have serious doubts about ability of humanity to provide for themselves on a tiny speck of dust in the universe in which, yes, resources ARE limited, including the biosphere, a supposition that just sends these gentle folk through the roof. Why does it send them through the roof? Because global warming, overpopulation, and other environmental concerns disprove their spurious notions that "growth" is always good. It is no coincidence that global warming deniers are *always* conservatives or libertarians.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

JohnCan45

March 18, 2007 8:03 PM

We should keep big saltshakers by our PCs for pieces like this. Thirty-five years ago they thought we'd all be eating soylent green by now. Really, there's another thread on CiF right now by Will Hutton who's anxious about there being too few (female) people in Asia!

And how does Ms. Jowit explain the collapse of the birth rate in the developed world? If not for immigration, most Western countries would have shrinking populations. Moreover the developed world has the same trend, just a bit back on the curve. By mid-century the world population will likely peak then start downward, with a calamitous risk of the whole pyramid toppling over because it's too thin on the base.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

marksa

March 18, 2007 8:13 PM

@arget

Whatever his politics, tudnugent is articulating something more coherent that you can manage. Its not surprising that people from wealthy societies bemoan that "**all* progress is measured in terms of material acquisition and technological innovation".

Do you really know what its like to be really poor at a subsistence level. Why would you deny

somebody the ability to improve his or her lot, which only be done through greater material consumption. Its telling that the only people in the 'third world' who are in sympathy with your views are the reactionary, feudalistic elites, and others profiteering out of the setup in their country.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Spartan300

March 18, 2007 8:13 PM

maxsmirnof - the "view" I expressed is not an advocacy but a description of what will happen. You may not like it but when human societies are thrown into crisis they do not respond by becoming loveydovey idealists intent on spreading goodwill to all mankind. What they do is respond pragmatically to the most urgent threats facing them. Human societies display this behaviour the world over. We are no different and neither would you be any different in a crisis. If resources are limited, you'll feed your kids first even if it means other kids will starve. It's the way of the world.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tudnogent

March 18, 2007 8:15 PM

Arget; Whoa there! Im a socialist through and through . What is it with you people? One minute humanity is a plague next minute were a speck of dust.Actually were better than that and im sick and tired of hearing the same old reactionary rubbish being spouted by people who ought to know better (and yes that includes people who claim to be socialists)Development or poverty? Doesnt take most people long to choose development, its only a handful of very vocal white middle class numpties who always think they know best who disagree. Prediction ; in 50 years time the various apocalyptic scenarios will be shown up for the total nonsense they always were.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

LessPeopleMoreTrees

March 18, 2007 8:40 PM

And flowers. And bunnies.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

arget

March 18, 2007 8:42 PM

Marksa, what causes you make the absurd assumption that I am against increased consumption for populations living at the subsistence-level? As someone who lived in Latin America, let me assure you that I am well-acquainted with what third-world poverty looks like and how developed nations have caused this poverty by sucking the life-blood of whole nations. As apparently a comprehensive understanding of the issues of this forum is a little beyond you, let me spell out what I am criticizing: C-O-N-S-U-M-E-

R-I-S-M, and its attendant philosophy of "growth" uber alles. What we need is more equal distribution of wealth, which might start with the awareness that so much of our "growth" is attained at the price of the "shrinkage" of those very economies you are concerned about.

And as for your esteemed self, Mr Tudnugent, if you had a lick of scientific evidence to back up your prediction, you might have more admirers.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

RameshN

March 18, 2007 8:43 PM

The biggest worry is not so much what the world's peak population is, but that wealth and population is being demarcated on an ethnic divide, and how this will play into aid for the developing world.

This century, one can forecast the East Asian economies and the North American/ Euro / Russian countries as being reasonably developed, some small wealthy developing world countries, but the great majority of the world's population will be poor or poorish, and nonwhite/non Oriental. It is that combination of being poor and of a differing ethnicity to the more prosperous countries which I find terribly worrisome.

Already, one can see in many Islamic writings, formulas such as 'Islam is the world's most rapidly growing religion', or 'Muslims are 1.3 billion strong and we won't go away'. White-Muslim antagonism over the past decade is not going to broker a more favourable climate for wealth transfer from the richer nations to the poorer : very few countries reach the UN suggested figure of 0.7% GDP as nonmilitary development aid. An outdated Islamic notion of greater numbers of co-religionists equating to strength is not going to help social attitudes to population reduction in the poor MUSlim countries.

Even though the developed countries may need immigration to make the poulation more youthful, there is no need for them to accept immigrants from the most overpopulated countries, which are mainly African Christian/Muslim, and non-African Muslim countries. The way that Israel is now employing cheap labour from Eastern Europe and East Asia in preference to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, the white countries can easily import East Asians or Hindus, whose current intermarriage rates in developed countries with whites are higher than the intermarriage rates of Muslims with non-Muslims in the developed countries. [Here I am using intermarriage as an indicator of integration]

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tudnugent

March 18, 2007 9:17 PM

Arget; Consumerism is merely an indicator of the amount of wealth a country has.I look forward to the day when Africa is covered in Malls as opposed to Malaria.Btw the spelling is nogent. Too many people on here look down their noses at consumerism (dont worry Arget - its not an

infectious disease, you wont suddenly become working class!)if they really believe that consumerism is EVIL then why dont they all go live in tee pees and commune with nature, give up their laptops etc? Consumerism is whats helping us communicate via this thread!

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

arget

March 18, 2007 11:21 PM

Beg pardon on the spelling, tudnogent! But you're wrong again! Consumerism is not "merely" anything, but one thing it *is*, by definition (hence the 'ism' at the end), is a belief system based on consumption. It is a very aggressive belief, with many seductions, and it tears down traditional ways (many of which I don't subscribe to, btw) of finding meaning in life to replace them with acquisition. It finds its natural home among libertarians like you (no, you're no socialist), who love its cycle of production, consumption, and waste, all which is translated into "growth," and do so regardless of the limits of earthy resources. (For to acknowledge limits on resources would be to acknowledge limits on growth, and thus their "ism"!)

Therefore, I reject your claim that even this medium is inextricably linked with consumerism.

Technology is merely a tool, and is ideologically neutral. Only when it gets appropriated and used can it can be deemed to ally itself with an 'ism'. Your whole argument relies on a set of preposterous oppositions, the idea that one can be only either a consumerist OR some romantic primitive. One can build a prosperous but sustainable lifestyle without buying into the excesses that constitute the material side of the "ism" of consumerism. Similarly, Africa can pursue prosperity in a sustainable way, rather than replacing its own indigenous "isms" with YOURS, which is a philosophy of malls.

Oh, and btw, I *am* working class.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Trofim

March 18, 2007 11:36 PM

Thanks for this article. In the 1960's it was commonly acknowledged that population increase was the most pressing problem in the world. But then we didn't have political correctness, and it the sentiment was frequently and loudly voiced. Unfortunately, most of those who continue to churn out babies are not "white" people and in the late 1960's being critical of non-white cultures started to be regarded as poor taste, and gradually it has become engineered into a "racist" crime to suggest that churning out babies and mass-immigration are not necessarily good things. The population problem became the biggest elephant in the room. A falling population is something to rejoice in, but for some reason a lot of influential people think that we have to be "prosperous", whatever that means, and this involves continual immigration, until recently, from all the wrong kind of places. Since I was born in 1947, the population of Britain has increased by a third, and the consequences have been largely negative. I would like to see a pronounced economic downturn, because large

numbers of immigrants would then see Britain as a less desirable place to live. Their leaving would greatly alleviate the pressure to cover the remains of our countryside with houses. See this admirable site:

<http://www.optimumpopulation.org/>

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

gaspacho

March 18, 2007 11:48 PM

I agree with the author of this article. Population growth is something that must be taken into consideration when discussing global warming.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

tudnogent

March 19, 2007 12:30 AM

Arget; re; Africa and malls, lets at least give them the choice, left up to you and youd IMPOSE " sustainable living " on them (often shorthand for subsistence living).I dont argue for consumption for its own sake and you owning a computer IS a result of living in a consumer society like it or not thats a FACT.What constitutes an " excess " in the way of consumerism by the way - do tell!!Im a socialist which is why i believe in prosperity for all as opposed to subsistence for all.I notice you dont nail your flag to the socialist mast so how that qualifies you to determine whether other people are is puzzling.Anyway heres to prosperity and choice for the 3rd world, coz all people like you propose is more of the same grinding poverty that Africans are heartily sick of.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

RogerINtheUSA

March 19, 2007 12:34 AM

Trofim posted

Thanks for this article. In the 1960's it was commonly acknowledged that population increase was the most pressing problem in the world. But then we didn't have political correctness, and it the sentiment was frequently and loudly voiced. Unfortunately, most of those who continue to churn out babies are not "white" people and in the late 1960's being critical of non-white cultures started to be regarded as poor taste, and gradually it has become engineered into a "racist" crime to suggest that churning out babies and mass-immigration are not necessarily good things.

hi Trofim

a recent cif article
Watching David Coleman

criticized Coleman for belonging to a group that subsidized family planning.

"But the likelihood is that Coleman's opposition to

immigration is driven by a more extreme and conscious desire than is the case with most people to preserve some kind of notional purity of British stock.

Second, as Coleman points out with pride, one of the Galton Institute's main programmes is to help Ethiopians to have fewer babies. "

Guardian article, in demonizing Dr. Coleman, forgot to mention that the institute was donating the money to Marie Stopes International. Is that a thought crime?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

MarceloRoque

March 19, 2007 12:47 AM

What is the point in tackling global warming and not tackle population growth? Are we all stupid people?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

arget

March 19, 2007 1:43 AM

Tudnogen, if Africa does not have the "choice" you mention, why do you suppose that is so? Oh, I forgot: *I* am preventing them choosing! But how do I do that when I, and people who believe as I do, are out of power? :-/

Might then the "choice" have been removed long ago by the very growth dynamo you admire so much? Might there be a zero-sum game at work here, a set of social darwinist principles that I *thought* good socialists were set to deplore?

OK: you're a socialist. Fine. Why then do you talk like a libertarian?

You say that "owning a computer IS a result of living in a consumer society like it or not that's a FACT." Strange: I don't recognize it as "fact," at least not in the simple terms you would have it. Again, one need not buy into the whole consumerist edifice merely by reason of using a computer. And even if one did, it's rather a trivial point, but one of course that is necessary to make in order to distract from the weightier matters at hand.

Lastly, I am not in the position of imposing anything, so I hardly see how I can be accused of wanting nothing but grinding poverty for Africa. (And why are you so sure that Africans would welcome a continent paved over with malls and parking lots? I am rather certain that many, if most not most of them, do NOT want a consumerist society like America.) I merely accept the science that I read every day, and HOPE, not insist or even propose, that developing countries will find a better way than the consumerism that, in my own country and yours, is leading to environmental catastrophe. But I forgot: there ARE no environmental consequences of consumerism and population growth, are there? If there were, your entire thesis would be invalidated. Can't have that, can we?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

stevemarson

March 19, 2007 8:28 AM

Thank god someone has at last pointed out the obvious. Restricting/cutting world population is the ONLY way of tackling the human component of global climate change. A generation of one child families and a lot of the worlds problems could be ameliorated/solved. The climatic problems will be as nothing compared to the pressures of overpopulation.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

whatreallyhappened

March 19, 2007 9:19 AM

Last month I attended a Sustainable Engineering conference here in NZ. Yeah, I know engineering and sustainability don't belong in the same sentence, but there we are. A large part of the conference was, understandably in the circumstances, given over to engineers claiming to be on the right track for the next sustainable fix or patch that would enable business as usual. Some lofty academics flew most of the way around the world from the UK and US to make their contributions (including O'Riordon). And very nice speeches they made too.

A Q&A session was held on the final day, when the collective great minds took to the stage to respond to the attendees. Most of the early questions were linked to engineering and fixes and efficiencies. My question was:

"The answer's population. Now what are the questions?"

You could have heard a pin drop! One of the panel dismissed the questions as incorrect. Two blustered (including O'Riordon, somewhat disappointingly) but one panel member gave a very interesting reply. A professor at a US University had previously attended a conference in North Africa (Egypt, I think he said) where population had been a major theme that had troubled the presenters. They'd had long arguments and probably resolved little, but had at least addressed the issue. When he returned to his university to write up his report, he was instructed to omit all mention of the population issues and confine his commentary to any other topics on environment and sustainability.

It won't go away. It needs to be addressed. One of the earlier commenters here put it very well. We've become the pestilence. We overconsume (everything from seafood to minerals), and we pollute the land, air and sea. We are the problem. I figured this out in week 1 of my environmental degree 17 years ago. I still don't have the follow up questions that lead to the solution. Or maybe I do, but I can't face them either.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

jomama3

March 19, 2007 2:41 PM

Malthus is alive and well...in the minds of The True Believers. (See Eric Hoffer)

Journalism also thrives on crisis then The Problem Solvers begin to salivate:

"The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it." -- H.L. Mencken

Now the place is overrun with them.

Do you have your cave picked out yet?

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

fatherbryanstorey

March 19, 2007 6:46 PM

I guessed the bottom line. I've heard this all my life and am as unconvinced as ever. Yet the Saviour who recommends we seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, has more than a point. It's a tough challenge. It means sexual self control. Yet it's more than possible despite notable failures everywhere. There's an art and craft available. Why not spend money on training for this? That would be really helpful, assisting us to be better people instead of spreading the pessimistic idea that sexual self control is impossible. There's no need to worry about overpopulation if we set our hearts on this pursuit.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Balrog

March 19, 2007 8:45 PM

Any solution to overpopulation is of a somewhat precarious or rather impractical ideological nature. To save lives or not to save lives? That is the question. Isn't it? We want to practice equality and yet differentiate western and non-western concerns. By projecting part of the problem over to a non-western arena it becomes a lot easier and somehow justifiable to introduce more harsh sanctions or policies. To this end, an eschatological perspective procures an ultimatum. In my mind, the only way to equitably divide the problem is the mandatory sterilization of all men.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

fatherbryanstorey

March 19, 2007 9:17 PM

Yet to sterilise us all as Balrog demands, will leave us in our sins with no moral improvement, chaos in relationships and deprive us of the joys of family life. The purification of the mind is vital to the growth of human love.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

gerrydanaher

March 19, 2007 11:55 PM

In 1948, William Vogt in his book *Road to Survival* warned us that the Four Freedoms (freedom from want and fear, and freedom of speech and religion) depended on a Fifth Freedom – freedom from excessive numbers of children.

In Europe we took this message to heart. We were soon followed by the countries of East Asia and belatedly by the countries of South America. The United Nations gives the figures for contraceptive use 'by couples in union' in these regions as Europe 67%, South America 74%, East Asia 82%. Consequently, birth rates have fallen, or are falling, substantially, and all these regions are either prosperous, or slowly coming out of extreme poverty.

A part of the world that took little notice of the need to reduce birth rates when death rates fell due to the spread of medical expertises is Africa and the Middle East to Pakistan. In this region, contraceptive use is low and the population is increasing by one billion - 1000 million - every 50-60 years. (The UN figures are 306 million in 1950; 1,151 million in 2000; and an estimated 2,330 million in 2050.)

Although Iran and half-a-dozen other countries in the region have effective family planning programmes and can hope to prosper, various powerful ideologies prevent most countries in Africa and the Middle East to Pakistan gaining effective family planning. They are consequently experiencing unmanageable population increases and the chances of the Four Freedoms being achieved there in the foreseeable future are almost nil.

Nevertheless, I was greatly heartened by Juliette Jowett's article. It proves once again that the taboo on discussing population is not absolute.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

fatherbryanstorey

March 20, 2007 8:10 AM

Gerrydanaher, Vogt and the UN should firmly put the focus on the relationship between contraception and marriage breakdown. It would be very revealing. It's increased love through much more well motivated personal self control that's required. A tough challenge but it's the answer we need.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

lifesaver

March 20, 2007 1:26 PM

Well I'll be! The Bush administration can finally take credit for something. Too bad it's eliminating our fellow human beings. Congratulations. You are helping solve the world population problem. Two or three more illegal wars and you might start making a dent.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

phelicks

March 20, 2007 11:44 PM

Well, I certainly did my part by going under the knife a loooong time ago. So Bush and the Pope can kiss my incision.

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

[Offensive? Unsuitable? Email us](#)

Advertiser links

Slim Fast Soup Range

Sensible eating plan from slim fast to help you loose weight...

slimfast.co.uk

The What's Inside Guide - Healthy Eating

Find out what's in your food. Guideline Daily Amounts...

whatsinsideguide.com

Weight Lost with LighterLife

Are you more than three stone overweight? LighterLife is a...

lighterlife.co.uk

[Ethical Gifts](#) | [Cold Remedies](#) | [Travel Insurance](#) | [Home Insurance](#) | [Organic Food](#)

Observer sections 



[Printable version](#) | [Send it to a friend](#) | [Save story](#)

[Privacy policy](#) | [Terms & conditions](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [About this site](#)
[Join our dating site today](#)

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian News and Media Limited 2007