



(Research on Lifestyles, Values and Environment)
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH

FORTHCOMING SEMINAR

Tuesday 26 September 2006, 1300 hrs

Room 4 AD 00

Community, Reflexivity and Consumption

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The Living Witness Project

Lifestyles and consumption are strongly shaped by our social context. In our society, unsustainable consumption trends are "locked in" or overdetermined by a combination of market forces, infrastructure, technology; social structures and cultural norms. Change would need to involve many different agents -- including government, businesses, the media and the public.

One of the barriers to developing a collective will for change is a belief that lifestyle change is too difficult. But there is growing experience in a number of different networks and communities of efforts to change consumption patterns through learning and dialogue in small groups.

Over the last four years Laurie has supported a network of Quaker groups exploring collective approaches to sustainable living. Several of the groups have participated in the Global Action Plan *EcoTeams* programme but most have followed their own paths. Quakers are a particularly interesting group, partly because of their historical commitment to simplicity, but mostly because their experience may be transferable.

They embrace pluralism in theologies and worldviews, yet have well-developed reflexive institutions for developing shared ethics and collective will.

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