



Discerning readers will have noticed a prolonged pause between the last post and this one. I have been sojourning on the Ionian island of Corfu, where a pleasant 38° has been the norm while Britain has been sweltering in the high 20s and low 30s. Although the most northerly and westerly of all the Greek islands, Corfu does still have the common problem of water being a precious commodity. It also finds renewable energy a ready source. What was puzzling, though, is how the solar-heated water contrived to be hotter in the evening than during the day.

The fruit crop this year suffered from an early heatwave in April, while we were clearing snow, which meant the blossom came before there were sufficient bees around to pollinate it. A second crop is very late so will probably never come to anything. It's another side to the freakish weather that some people still don't acknowledge as climate change.

I have come home to find my shorts and sandals are still in demand and the spring trickling from the hillside onto my lawn via a land drain has finally dried up. Ironically, it means the wetland plants I scrounged from a neighbour with a similar problem to soak up the resulting 'water feature' now need watering!

Browsing around current environmental issues, I came across the *Out to Lunch* campaign being waged by the Soil Association and Organix, which is looking to promote healthy and varied children's menus in restaurants and other eating places. The campaign focusses on encouraging establishments to provide freshly-cooked and thoughtful menus for children and to make good appealing. Preferably it wants children's portions of adult dishes available.

One salient point made by a parent and posted on the website is that a child's portion is not a 'one-size-fits-all' affair: what may fill a smaller child to bursting will fail to satisfy a bigger kid.

The campaign's literature reads: "With one in three children now overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school, popular restaurants, pubs and cafés have a responsibility as well as an opportunity to use their influence in a positive way."

It goes on to ask: "Does your menu inspire children to ask Mum and Dad for great tasting healthy food at home? Or are you turning the table into a battlefield for any parent who wants their child to eat well?"

Needless to say, Jamie's Italian topped the list in the secret diner's survey, while some well-known high street chains fared, shall we say, less well. What scandalised me is the finding that only one chain offered children's cutlery as standard. "Where's the fork'n'knife?" I hear young diners screaming.

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