

Duchy Organic donations top £23 million

Every time you buy a Waitrose Duchy Organic product – easily spotted by its green logo – a donation from the sale is given to The Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation. It might go to support farmers who develop more sustainable farming practices or rural communities in crisis.

And it's been announced that in the year to March 2018 the brand, originally founded by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, has generated more than £3.2 million for charity. This brings the total amount donated to charitable causes to more than £23 million since Waitrose & Partners teamed up with Duchy Originals in 2009.

'The Waitrose Duchy Organic brand has had another great year at Waitrose & Partners and we are delighted that sales have generated a record amount for charitable causes,' says Rob Collins, Partner and the supermarket's managing director.

There are now more than 300 products in the Waitrose Duchy Organic range. Each is made or produced following the principles of Good Food, Good Farming and Good Causes. Examples of the charitable agencies that benefit include Duchy Future Farming, a scheme that supports farmers to run on-farm trials with its Innovative Farmers network, and The Prince's Countryside Fund.

Claire Saunders, director at The Prince's Countryside Fund, says: 'The contribution from Waitrose Duchy Organic is of huge help to The Prince's Countryside Fund.'



IN DEMAND Charles Hunter Smart supplies Duchy Organic beef to Waitrose & Partners from Cotswolds farm Bradwell Grove



ROOT-TO-FLOWER GROWTH

The restaurant trend of using whole vegetables, such as carrot tops and broccoli stalks, will be adopted by home cooks in 2019, a New Covent Garden Food Market report predicts.



Illustration: Dale Edwin Murray. Photography: Stephen Hayward

MY WEEK

Alvin Hall



Retiring friends are moving and taking my past with them

January, it seems, is a time of transitions. Looking back, a significant number of my close friends have retired in January and moved to new, always smaller, cities and towns. Looking forward, every week or so one or two of them ask when I am going to retire and move. My response is to push back a bit: 'What makes you think I want to retire?' I ask. I fail to add 'and move' and I leave off the 'like you' part because it may sound just a little bit judgemental and condescending.

My friends' retirements can be emotionally unsettling. It feels like I am watching my past disappear in front of my eyes. The phone numbers I knew by heart, the addresses I've written on dozens of postcards and letters, the places we went each time I visited these friends, all are changed, all essentially gone. There are mornings when I wake and wonder if I'm in a time warp, or a science fiction film in which my desire-for-retirement programming goes awry with me destined to be an old-age outlier.

Still I am learning a lot – especially about what I will do when faced with the inevitable transition. Most of my friends, regardless of where they retired, have double, triple and quadruple checked the numbers to make sure the money is in place to support the lifestyle they want.

One friend headed off on a big month-long trip. He wanted an immediate and total change from his working life. A couple spent the first weeks catching up on all the sleep they felt they had been deprived of when working. Another set of friends started volunteering to give back, keep their minds active and be around young people. And some choose to do little

or nothing, other than enjoy their freedom from any commitments or schedules.

How will I slide into that golden phase of my life? That's the question bubbling up this week, just as it did the week before. I gently suppress it. I feel lucky that I still like all of the diverse things I do and still want to keep on doing them. And even now I find myself asked to do projects that interest me.

This week, I came up with the idea of keeping a journal about my conversations with my retired friends. It's no secret. I've told them all I'm going to do this, and not one of them objected.

In fact, they responded by asking me more questions about my work than they have in a long time. Their curiosity and anticipation felt good – I had found a way for us to create something engaging and interesting together.

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

During a busy week of travelling, I was in New York on a Thursday night when quite a few galleries were opening new exhibitions. Using a specialist app, I planned my route efficiently so I could visit six galleries in just two hours.

My pace was slowed by a British friend, who rarely goes to galleries because he is intimidated just by walking through the doors, and an American friend, who was new to the art world. Some of the exhibitions really puzzled them. 'You really like that?' they asked. 'Intuitively I'm interested, but I have yet to fully understand why,' I responded.

As we left the final gallery, I gave them a challenge: go back and spend some time at the two shows that puzzled you, that provoked a strong reaction either positive or negative, and continue to haunt your memory. We all agreed to meet within two weeks to discuss their thoughts and reflections. More interestingly, they both want to join me for my next round of openings.

I told them they must walk faster.