

The Origins of the Vegans: 1944-46

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The idea of living entirely on plants has been around for a very long time, it was just the word 'vegan' that was new in 1944. During the 19th century there were endless debates between those who added eggs and dairy produce to their plants, and those who did not. From 1847 the word 'vegetarian' was used by both, with or without various appendages.

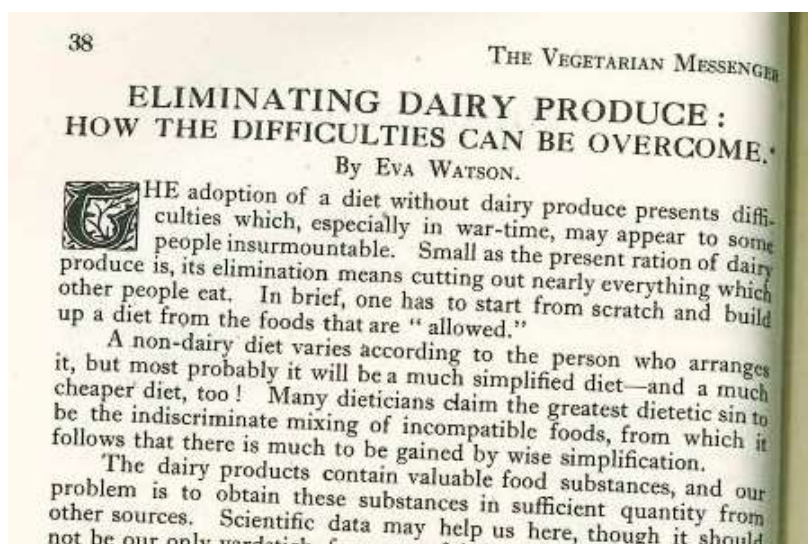
In the 1850s the London Vegetarian Association kept to the plant-only version, but it was relatively short lived, ending within the decade. The discussions continued in print⁸.

The debates about the use of eggs and dairy products in first half of the 20th century were summarized by Leah Leneman Ph.D, University of Edinburgh, in her article "[No Animal Food: The Road to Veganism in Britain, 1909-1944](#)" (1999). Leneman showed that there had been frequent letters and editorials during those years in *The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review* (TVMHR¹ from the original, 1847, national Vegetarian Society based in Manchester), usually a series of items followed by a gap of a year or two, then the sequence repeated.

The letters and editorials that Leneman showed as starting again in 1942 in TVMHR were actually from January with the editor's answer to a question (TVMHR January 1942 pp.8-9). They continued through 1943, and would probably have faded away during 1944 like the others.

It began to be something different from just letters with a series of articles by a remarkable sister and brother duo, originally from Yorkshire.

In February there was a two page article by 25-year-old Eva Watson (b.1918, later Eva Cook, GRO⁷) on "*Eliminating Dairy Produce: How the difficulties can be overcome*" (TVMHR February 1944 pp.38-39). She gave well-written effective practical advice and included anecdotes about fitness when cycling with her brother on their tandem.



She was followed in the next two issues by her 33-year-old brother, an unmarried woodwork teacher, and Secretary of the Leicester Vegetarian Society. Donald Watson wrote an impressively researched nine-page two-part article "*Should Vegetarians Eat Dairy Produce?*" (TVMHR March p.46-51, and April 1944 p.79-81) Eva and Donald's articles were both based on talks given to the Leicester Vegetarian Society on December 14, 1943.

Donald dealt with both animal abuse and health issues, and included details of egg production. 'Non-dairy' was generally understood at that time as catch-all phrase including non-eggs and mostly non-honey.

April 1944

In response to the Watsons' articles a debate was hosted by the Croydon Vegetarian Society (South London) on Saturday April 22, 1944, and was seen as significant enough to be given of a full page report from Manchester (TVMHR June 1944 p.111).

It was presided over, and organised by the Croydon Secretary, Elsie B. Shrigley, and was listed in the preceding TVMHR, as being in the Guild Room, Congregational Church, George Street, 7.00pm, bringing in a wider audience, beyond the local Croydon group.

Elsie was born Elsie Beatrice Salling to a Danish watchmaker father, and a Swedish mother in north London 1899. Her nickname Sally has an obvious derivation. She married Walter Shrigley, a dentist from Croydon, in her home area of Hampstead, north London in 1939 (GRO²). Her career was varied, but mainly teaching music.

Walter was a committee member of the London Vegetarian Society (annual report 1944), which had broken away from Manchester way back in 1888, to become a national rival. They published their own magazine Vegetarian News (VN²), but it was rather thin in 1944 as their office had been bombed. As Walter and Sally were from opposite sides of London, they probably met through LVS.

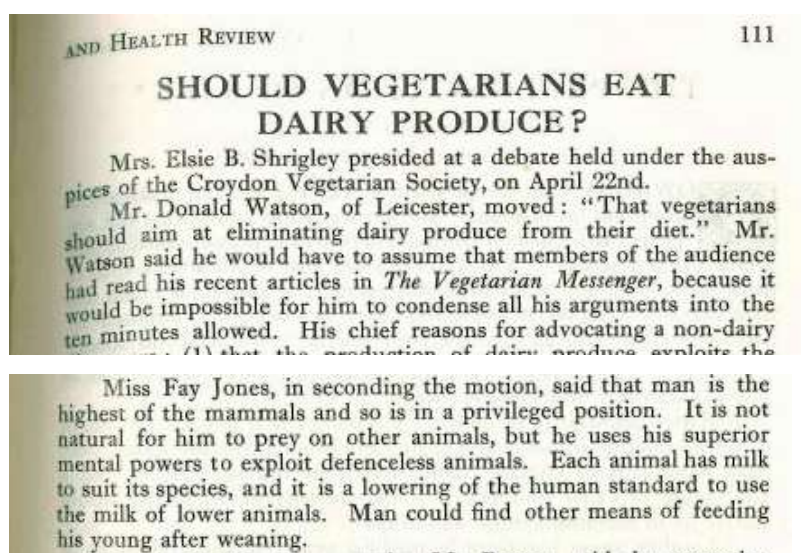
Sally wrote many years later (TV⁴ Spring 1962 p.6) that she was vegetarian from 1934 and non-dairy from April 1944, which suggests that the latter decision, and the inspiration to call the debate, was prompted by the Watsons' articles.

Photo: Walter and Sally Shrigley (back row) at the [IVU World Vegetarian Congress in Gloucestershire, England, 1947](#)



The motion at the debate "That vegetarians should aim at eliminating dairy produce from their diet" was proposed by Donald Watson, who began by stating that he assumed all present had read his article, and seconded by Fay Jones.

Watson later reported (Vegan News, November 1944 p.2) that the motion was carried by about 30 votes to 2 (The TVMHR report, written by the Croydon Secretary, gave 3 against but no figure for those in favour).

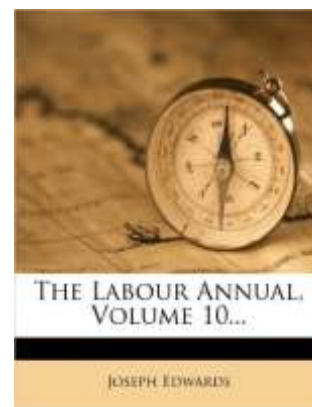


After many years of discussions in the magazines, a sizeable number of supporters of non-dairy vegetarianism had finally met in real-life. Naturally they wanted to continue meeting.

June 1944

On June 10, 1944, Fay Jones age 47 (the seconder above), married George Allan Henderson (known as Allan) age 44, at the Lewisham Register Office in south-east London (GRO).

Fay was born Fay Keeling Edwards in Wallasey (near Liverpool) in 1897. Her father was Joseph Edwards, a customs and excise officer, editor of the Labour Annual, a socialist yearbook (*1904 issue right*), and a vegetarian (Gregory. [Of Victorians and Vegetarians](#)). Her mother was Eleanor Keeling, a prominent socialist, feminist, atheist, and probably also vegetarian:



en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clarion: The Clarion was a weekly newspaper published by Robert Blatchford ...a socialist publication ... founded in Manchester in 1891...The Women's column was written initially by Eleanor Keeling Edwards.

[Julia Twigg, Ph.D thesis, 1981](#): Blatchford himself seems to have had some commitment to or sympathy with vegetarianism ... Innumerable socialists refer in autobiographies to the formative influence of the Clarion. Among the vegetarians, see Semple. [{Dugald Semple, see below}](#)

[Vegetarian Society Diamond Jubilee, Manchester 1907](#): Mr. Blatchford made an excellent chairman, and his clear testimony was enthusiastically received by a large audience, many of whom were attracted by his presence.

[The search for a perfect socialist marriage in fin de siècle Britain. Krista Cowman, Department of Humanities, University of Lincoln UK \(brief extracts\)](#):

This paper examines how four socialist women ... attempted to construct their own socialist marriages ... Eleanor Keeling and Joseph Edwards married in the local registry office with *Clarion* editor Robert Blatchford as witness Eleanor had some concerns about this ... her friend Annie, who replied 'Of course you will not be married in a Church! ... Eleanor Keeling retained her maiden name for all occasions. Many of her contemporaries found this difficult ... Keeling's first child, Fay (named after the *Clarion* writer) was presented to the movement at a socialist naming ceremony held on a beach at which Eleanor offered 'a few earnest words of dedication to the cause' on Fay's behalf... The toll that combining active itinerant speaking with motherhood and domestic responsibilities took on women was immense. Eleanor Keeling died in 1903, aged 33 [\[in Dunbarton, Scotland where Joseph had been posted\]](#).

See also G. Fiddler: [The work of Joseph and Eleanor Edwards](#)

Fay was six when her mother died. Her father re-married and was posted to the Lewisham area of London, where she grew up. Fay married Herbert Jones, at the Friends Meeting House (Quaker) in Manchester, 1927 (GRO). They were both school teachers in nearby Oldham, but he appears to have died in early 1935. Her later writings suggest she continued with the sub-group of [socialist-vegetarian Quakers](#). From 1935, as Fay K. Jones, she ran vegetarian guesthouses in the Rydal/Grasmere area of Lake District (north-west England) until the end of 1941, ending at Beck Allans, Grasmere (TVMHR February 1942 p.40). She left following the death of her stepmother Susan, at Beck Allans, returning home with her father to Lewisham.

G. Allan Henderson was born in Edinburgh, 1899, son of a stone mason. He was conscripted into the army at 18, occupation: accounts clerk. By 1944 he was a chartered accountant living in a substantial property in leafy Chipperfield, Hertfordshire (north-west of London), where he and Fay lived after they married. (both bios via ancestry.com)

Their marriage was reported in the next Vegetarian Society magazine from Manchester (TVMHR July 1944 p.145) as Fay was well known there. The occupation on her marriage certificate was "Manageress Catering Club", which was in fact the vegetarian Attic Club in Holborn, an easy commute from her home in Sydenham (back in Lewisham Borough).

The Attic Club – part 1

Dining clubs were common in the UK during World War II, as way of supplementing the severe rationing which was in force until 1954. The most common being ‘pig clubs’ where members jointly bought and fed a pig, in due course sharing the meat, though a movie from a few years back portrayed a group who, in the end, couldn’t bring themselves to kill the pig.

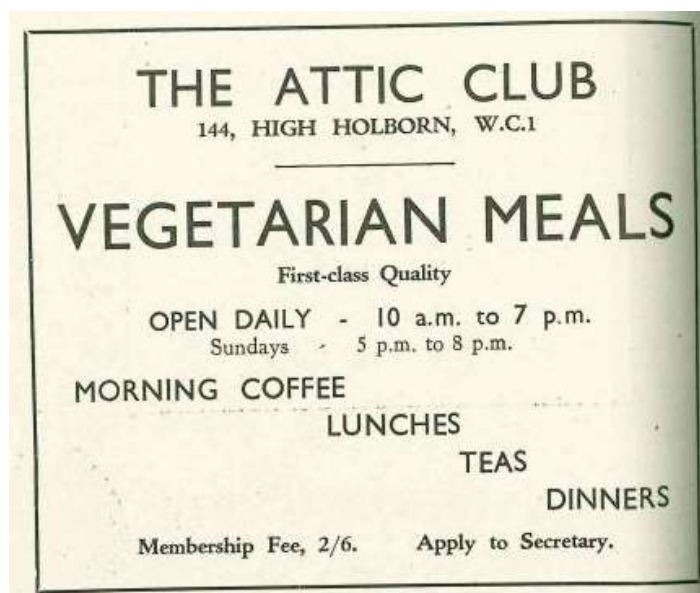
It’s not clear how a vegetarian version worked, though rations were more relaxed for clubs and restaurants, allowing more eggs/dairy. Fruit and vegetables were never rationed, but they were in very short supply, especially in the cities (and no imports from warmer climates – no bananas...). Maybe members with bigger gardens in the suburbs were able to sell spare produce to the club.

The Attic Club in Holborn, London, opened at the beginning of 1944, shortly before the Croydon debate. The very first advert, right (VN² Spring 1944 – Feb/Mar) said apply to Hector Nicholls, probably the secretary or Fay K. Jones, the manager/chef. The finances would have been managed by G. Allan Henderson.

Opening times were initially very limited, but soon expanded as in the second advert, and an editorial comment in the Vegetarian News (London) welcomed the extension, especially on Sundays. (VN² Summer 1944 p.55. The advert below right is from the same issue).

Fay and Allan were married by then, but she would certainly not have given working at up the club to become a housewife! With Fay’s strong socialist background, it’s also easy to see why she would have liked the idea of a club, with a cheap subscription rate (2/6, two shillings and sixpence, is about 5 pounds/\$6 in 2016). This would have suited her much better than a commercial restaurant in London.

The Hendersons’ involvement with the fledgling non-dairy group enabled the meetings to be held there with suitable catering available. It became the natural hub for the group soon after the April debate in Croydon, and while the Attic Club was generally ovo-lacto-vegetarian, it was a rare place where non-dairy was no problem. It was Fay Keeling Henderson who made possible everything that followed.



First Steps

Donald Watson wrote (TV Summer 1988 p.11): "...a few of us had been corresponding and occasionally meeting... I was delegated to write to the Secretary of the Vegetarian Society [Manchester] to ask whether a non-dairy section could appear in his magazine."

Elsie Shrigley later wrote (VN Winter 1954 p.17) that she and Watson discussed this while on a holiday in Minehead, organised by the Vegetarian Social Club. But Watson must also have been discussing it with others, as nearer the time he wrote that "about a dozen" were involved in this delegation, see below.

At the Croydon debate in April, 1944, Fay Jones (as she was then) would certainly have told everyone about the Attic Club, which had only recently opened. Over the following months, some of the thirty-plus who were there would have dropped into the Club when they were in town, meeting each other now and then, and discussing everything with the ever-present manager, Fay K. Henderson. She most likely encouraged Watson to write his letter.

The minutes of the Executive Committee (Manchester), September 19, 1944 (MA⁷), recorded:

A letter was read from Mr. Donald Watson, of Leicester, in which he suggested that (a) the V.S. should establish a section for members who abstain from dairy produce, or (b) that such a group should be formed outside the V.S.

RESOLVED: that Mr. Watson be informed that the Executive cannot see their way to take steps to establish such a section, but if a group were formed outside the V.S. some space would continue to be given in the "V.M." to the group's activities.

An editorial the following year (TVMHR September 1945, p.163) stated that the Executive Committee had expressed some sympathy, but had concluded that:

...the Society must devote all its energies in the direction of the abolition of flesh eating, and that the proposed group would be freer to function as an independent body.

Watson's letter actually asked, as a first option, for an internal section of the Society, not just a page in the magazine, to be devoted to non-dairy, which would have required a sub-committee of the main Executive Committee. There were other such internal sections at various times so this was not particularly unusual.

Just asking for a page in TVMHR would have been an odd request: in the 36 issues during 1942-44, there were at least 36 pages with editorials, letters, articles and reports about the non-dairy issue. But of course they really wanted a *separate* page, under their own sub-committee's editorial control.

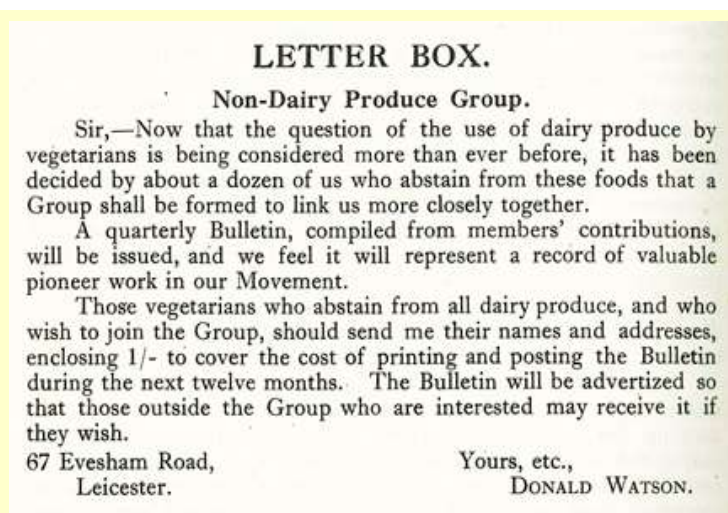
The suggestion was that they should form an "outside group", which would be "given space" (for free) in the Society's magazine. This was also not unusual – Watson's Leicester Vegetarian Society, the Croydon Vegetarian Society, the Vegetarian Social Club and many others, were all "outside groups" (affiliated to either/both of the national Societies). This just meant they were run by members, supported by the national Societies through the magazines, but not run by an internal sub-committee of either Society.

The Executive Committee certainly did not reject the non-dairy movement.

Getting it Together

The group initially accepted the suggestion, and Watson wrote to the editor inviting readers (members of the Vegetarian Society) to join the 'Non-Dairy Produce Group' (TVMHR November 1944 p.214).

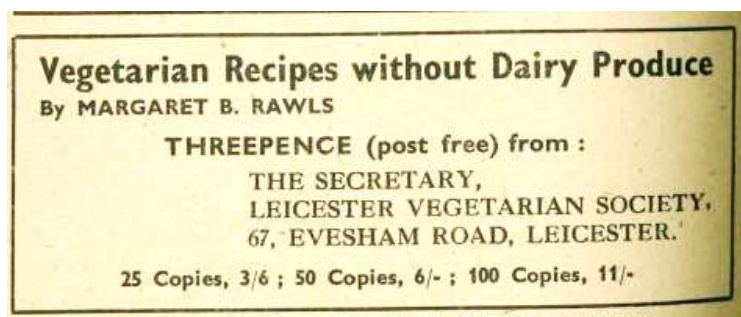
His letter shows he was writing on behalf of the group of about a dozen, not just acting on his own initiative. Allowing for the normal lead time, the letter must have been written by early October.



Watson's letter in TVMHR, November 1944 p.214.

The group, still very informal at this stage, must have agreed to issue their own bulletin after the Executive Committee declined their request for an internal section with their own page in TVMHR. That would have been by more letters and more discussions at the Attic Club.

Despite this letter being sent, Fay Henderson still wanted to be a part of the (Manchester) Vegetarian Society, as she later recorded while Secretary of the Vegan Society in 'Vegan Values' (VWF³ Winter 1947 p.29). Adding: "An appeal was forwarded to The Vegetarian Society to reconsider this decision" (of the Executive Committee). The only way to do that was to take the matter to the Society's Annual General Meeting on November 18, 1944, which they did, see below (it was late that year, as it was normally close to the September 30 founding date).



The advert above appeared in the November and December 1944 issues of TVMHR. It is not known when the booklet was first published but the ad must have been sent by early October. Margaret Rawls later joined the Vegan Society committee, contributing recipes, and they reprinted the 16 page booklet, with the same title in 1951 (Google books).

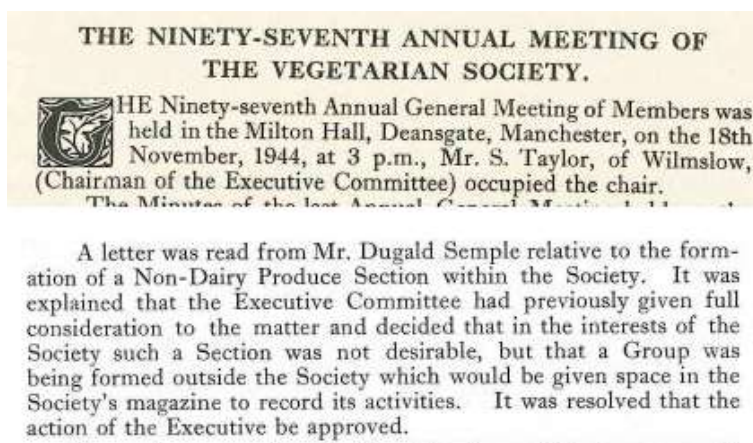


The photo, from the IVU Congress, 1947, includes Mr. T. F. Rawls and Mrs. Margaret B. Rawls at the back left, and Donald Watson front right. Immediately behind Watson is Mr. W. A. Sibly (known as 'Was'), President of both the Vegetarian Society (Manchester) and IVU. He was also the headmaster of the school hosting the Congress. Watson was a speaker in a session chaired by Dugald Semple (see below) and supported later by Fay Henderson.

November 1944

The appeal to the Vegetarian Society AGM was duly made on November 18, 1944, and the decision of the Executive Committee was upheld. Note that the group was still “being formed”

The report, right, is from TVMHR, December 1944 p.240/241.



Dugald Semple was a Vice-President of the Vegetarian Society, and of IVU, who had been experimenting with a non-dairy diet for several decades. It must have been thought that a highly respected VP would carry more weight, so he was delegated to write the appeal to the AGM.

(photo: Dugald Semple and Fay Henderson, IVU Congress 1947. They would have been very old friends and guiding their new young talent, Donald Watson. Semple had been a speaker at a Leicester meeting back in 1942, as recorded in a very thin issue of London's VN).



The Word

The group would also have discussed the rather clumsy name ‘Non-Dairy Produce Group’, and begun the process of looking for something better. The initial informal name change was to replace ‘Non-Dairy Produce Group’ with just ‘Non-Dairy Vegetarians’, possibly agreed at a meeting, or maybe just unilaterally by Watson later that month. In his 2nd Vegan News (February 1945 p.2) Watson reported:

Before the appearance of our first issue [November 24, 1944], Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Henderson suggested the word “Allvega”, with “Allvegan” as the magazine title. It was from this that the word Vegan was taken, and **recently** Mr. and Mrs. Henderson have written stating that they prefer the shorter version. *[emphasis added. There is no way of knowing how they were initially pronouncing these words. ‘Vega’ was the name of a London vegetarian restaurant at that time, which might have provided some inspiration.]*

It is possible that the Hendersons’ suggestions were made at an Attic Club meeting, though neither they nor Watson ever mentioned that, or he might have received their ideas later by post (probably from Fay, signing as both). By “recently” in the above quote from February 1945, Watson is saying that the Hendersons gave their support during the three months **after** the publication of the first Vegan News. He very obviously valued their (Fay’s) support.

Another view of the origin of the word vegan emerged at Donald Watson’s funeral in 2005:

Speaking at Donald’s funeral, Janet *[his only child]* mentioned a day that Dorothy and Donald both attended a dance. During the event the two started discussing the founding of a new society; and Dorothy came up with the word *vegan* as a possible name for it, on the basis that its letters are the beginning and conclusion of *vegetarian*. (veganplace.wordpress.com/tag/dorothy-morgan-watson/)

There is no way of verifying what Janet was told by her parents about a time before she was born, and such things can easily be altered a little in the re-telling. So the above can't be taken too literally, but there is no reason to suppose it would be wrong in substance. If the dance was not long before the first *Vegan News* on November 24, 1944, it could be consistent with Dorothy shortening the version suggested by the Hendersons.

There was an earlier comment, by a male editor, that the word *vegan* was “coined by Donald Watson – with the assistance of his wife, Dorothy – by taking the first three and the last two letters of *vegetarian*.” (TV Autumn 1994, supplement p.iii), with no source given. That must have come from a conversation, as it was never mentioned in print before that date. But how does someone “assist” in such a process? Janet's version at least makes sense.

Dorothy, nee Morgan, had passed away about ten years before Donald, having long since retired as head of a small village primary school. She had married him on October 26, 1946 (two years after the dance), in Christ Church in her home town of Llanfairfechan, near Bangor, North Wales. She was born there in 1912 (GRO). *Photo: Donald and Dorothy on their wedding day (TV Spring 1947 p.11).*



Their marriage certificate (GRO) shows Donald as 36 and Dorothy Mary 34. His occupation was ‘school teacher’ (father: “headmaster”) and it gave his usual address in Leicester (he would have had a week off for the half-term break at the end of October). Dorothy's address was the family home in Wales, father: “rate collector”, whilst her occupation just had a line across it, though she must have been doing something in Leicester during the war to have met Donald.

Dorothy never had any active involvement in the Vegan Society. They were later described by their son-in-law as a vegetarian/vegan family (sandburne.co.uk). In his later years Watson gave his own recollections of creating the word:

Naming the Baby [TV Spring 1989, p.13]

Looking back over the years from the vantage point of old age (78) I feel honoured to have been at the birth of this movement, and that as the person in sole charge for the 18 months before it was made democratic I had the awesome responsibility of choosing its name. I hope you all like it.

It is certainly better than the other bizarre proposals that were submitted to me at the time. How would you like to have been called a ‘vitan’, or a ‘dairyban’, or a ‘beaumanger’? It seems not long ago that I was instructing readers of *The Vegan News* (the forerunner of *The Vegan*) how the new word should be pronounced – not ‘veggan’ or veejan! The word has now been accepted world wide and has avoided the ambiguity so long associated with the word *vegetarian*.

[2002] I sometimes feel that we had reached a watershed and if I hadn't formed the Society, someone else may have done it, very soon, although it may have had a different name. I did appeal to my readers to suggest what the name might be, and I had a list of very bizarre suggestions, which some people may already have heard of - I won't list them now - but, in an inspired moment, I settled for the word “*vegan*”, which was immediately accepted and, over the years, became part of our language and is now in almost every world dictionary, I suppose.

[2004⁶] I invited my early readers to suggest a more concise word to replace "non-dairy vegetarian." Some bizarre suggestions were made like "dairyban, vitan, benevore, sanivore, beaumangeur", et cetera. I settled for my own word, "vegan", containing the first three and last two letters of "vegetarian" -- "the beginning and end of vegetarian." The word was accepted by the **Oxford English Dictionary** and no one has tried to improve it.

All of the above suggest that the first time anyone other than Dorothy or Donald saw the word Vegan (with initially no indication of how to pronounce it) was when they received their copy of the first Vegan News in the post at the end of November 1944. Though possibly even just Donald as it is not known where Dorothy Morgan was living at that time.

The Printed Word

It was certainly Donald Watson who first *used* the word vegan, as the title for his first Vegan News. The appeal to the Vegetarian Society (Manchester) AGM on Saturday November 18, 1944, had failed with the decision of the Executive Committee being upheld.

It is quite likely that Watson went to that AGM, especially as his Leicester group was hosting the Society's next May Meetings (see below). It looks like he had waited for that final decision, then finished writing his first Vegan News by the following Friday, November 24.

Every issue of Vegan News, later The Vegan, is available online⁴, so there is no need to repeat them here. A few points from the first issue:

*Twenty five people responded to Watson's letter in TVMHR at the beginning of November, by sending their one shilling to join the Non-Dairy Produce Group. By the time they received their first newsletter at the end of the month, the sub-title showed the group name as changed to the 'Non-Dairy Vegetarians'.

*Watson wrote that there had been no advertising, beyond the letter to TVMHR, which meant that the initial members were all members of the Vegetarian Society (Manchester).

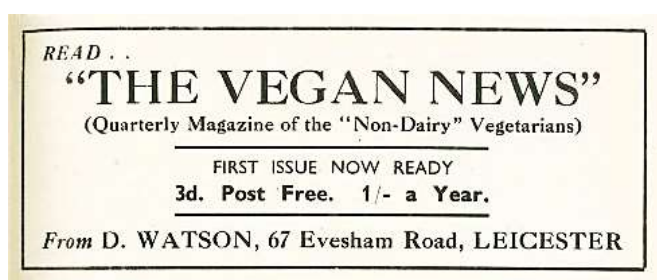
*He wrote that there was no committee and he was dealing with everything himself. Readers were invited to send articles and news to share through the newsletter.

*The word 'vegan' was suggested as the name of the newsletter, the individuals and the diet, with further ideas for the name invited. Any meetings which might have been held were not mentioned. There was no mention of a vegan society.

February 1945

Issue 2 of Vegan News was still sub-titled "*Quarterly Magazine of the Non-Dairy Vegetarians.*"

The advert right is from TVMHR February 1945, sent in January.



The long list of alternative names, some for individuals, some for the group, some for the magazine, in the February 1945 issue of Vegan News (the list is compacted):

Allvega / Allvegan / Total Vegetarian Group / Allveg / Allvegist / The True Vegetarian / Neo-Vegetarian / Dairyban / Vitan / Benevore / Benevorous News / Sanivore / Beaumanger / Bellevore

Watson said the options remained open for anyone who wanted to add to the English language.

April/May 1945

Sunday April 8, 1945, was the day that the Non-Dairy Produce Group, or Non-Dairy Vegetarians, finally renamed themselves as the Vegan Society.

The third Vegan News, May 1945, now had new subtitle: '*Quarterly Organ of The Vegan Society.*'

It also had a new heading, used for the rest of 1945, giving the first definition of veganism, which had been agreed at the meeting on April 8:

VEGANISM is the practice of living on fruits, nuts, vegetables, grains and other wholesome non-animal products.

VEGANISM excludes as human food: flesh, fish, fowl, eggs, honey; and animals' milk, butter and cheese.

VEGANISM aims at encouraging the manufacture and use of alternatives to animal products.

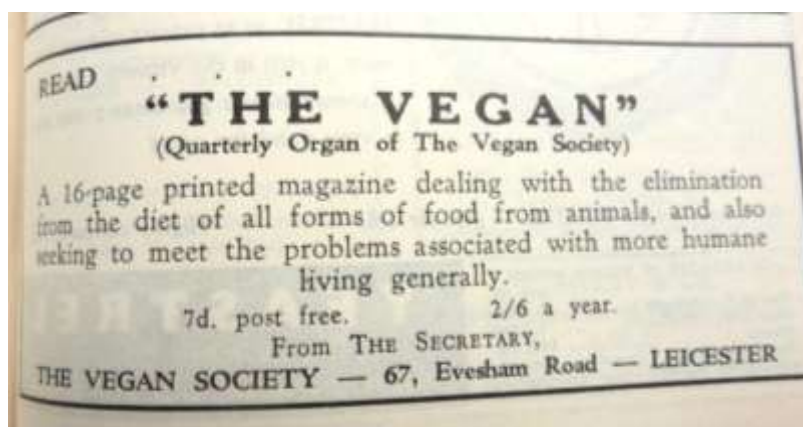
Watson wrote that a provisional committee of ten had been formed since the February issue, including both of the Hendersons and Elsie Shrigley from Croydon, and had met in London on April 8, which would have been at the Attic Club. They discussed "at length" their aims and agreed to extend the existing dietary aim to "commodities made from animal products".

There seems to have been some agreement that they were just a continuation of the same group with merely a name change. Technically it would be correct to write "the group that was later called the Vegan Society was formed in November 1944".

But that's too tedious, and Fay Henderson and Donald Watson both very soon wrote articles for VN (London), stating that the Vegan Society was formed in November 1944.

In later years Watson more often referred to the 'vegan movement' being founded that month.

The advert right is from VN Spring 1946, now with the new name and extended aims.



In his later article (TV Autumn 1965 p.5) Watson showed that he was still very closely involved with the Vegetarian Society (Manchester) at that time:

As a sideline I was also Secretary of the Leicester Vegetarian Society - a flourishing organisation with regular monthly meetings which was preparing to receive the May Meetings of the Vegetarian Society in 1945

The May Meetings were a major nomadic annual conference. A very young Gandhi was a speaker at the 1891 MM in Portsmouth. They can be traced back to 1876 in Manchester, and they were still going in 1955, in Swansea that year. In 1946 they went to Croydon.

September 1945

In September 1945, TVMHR (pp.163/164) published an editorial showing that the Non-Dairy Group had begun through the Vegetarian Messenger, and Vegetarian Society members, and that they had "formed themselves into a group which has since adopted the title of The Vegan Society."

The editorial continued at some length, onto the next page, in a positive and supportive manner, as the "parent society". It praised Donald Watson as "instrumental in forming the Vegan Society", and for his work in Leicester; reprinted the full definition of veganism that was in the May 1945 Vegan News (as above); and looked forward to the Vegan Society being able to "show to the western world the advantages of not having to depend upon any section of the animal community for food".

The founding of the Vegan Society was a gradual, friendly and positive process of independence from the "parent" Vegetarian Society (Manchester).

The Attic Club – part 2

A London Vegan Group was founded at the Attic Club in July 1945, and the Vegan Society held its AGM there in December. But the Hendersons were house hunting by late 1945 (TV Spring 1946 p.16), moving north on September 1, 1946, see below.

In the meantime Fay produced the first recipe book with the word vegan in the title, published in March 1946. No doubt she had tested all the recipes on Attic Club members.

The advert right is from VN (London), Summer 1946.

From Spring 1946 (p.17) The Vegan took paid adverts, the only eating place in London was:

ATTIC CLUB, 144 High Holborn, W.C.1, (Hol. 1068). Food reform vegetarian meals only. Quick service, peaceful atmosphere, modern lighting, heating and decorating. Open daily from 10.00 a.m. to 8.00.p.m. Membership 5/- per annum *[five shillings = £10/\$13 today]*.

The ad was repeated in the Summer 1946 issue, but stopped when the Hendersons left, never reappearing. An advert for Rydal Lodge soon appeared in its place. The Vegan Society never met at the Attic Club again, moving to Friends House, Euston (probably through Fay's links with the Quakers, and the Penrith train). The Attic Club continued under new management.

THE VEGETARIAN MESSENGER and Health Review

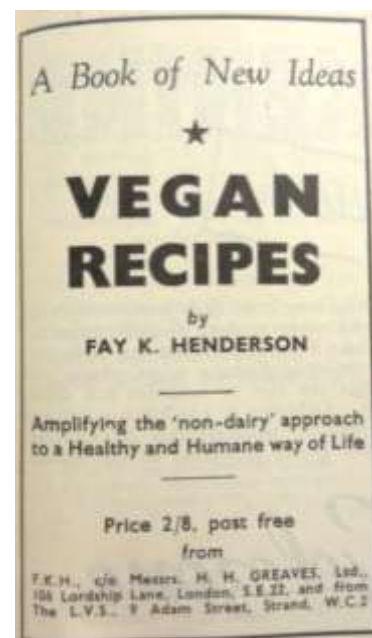
Official Organ of THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY (Established 1847)
Bank Square, Wilmslow, Manchester. Supported by voluntary
contributions of those who sympathize with its aims

VEGETARIANISM (V.E.M.)—That is, the practice of living on the products of the VEGETABLE kingdom, with or without the addition of EGGS and of MILK and its products (butter and cheese), to the exclusion of fish, flesh and fowl.

VOL. 42. No. 9 (8th Series). 97th Year. SEPTEMBER, 1945

The Vegan Society.—A Non-Dairy Produce Group. Following the articles and correspondence regarding the use of dairy products which appeared in *The Vegetarian Messenger* last year, a number of our members, who do not use animal products of any kind, formed themselves into a group which has since adopted the title of "The Vegan Society."

Prior to its formation, it was suggested that a group or section of this character should be formed as part of The Vegetarian Society. After consideration by the parent Society it was felt that with so

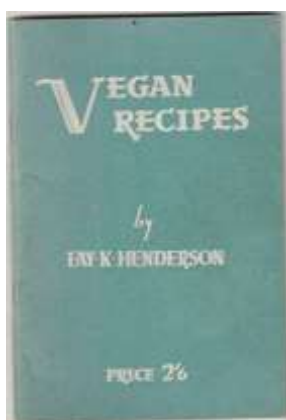


Postscript

The Vegan Society AGM on Sunday November 10, 1946, at Friends House, Euston, London (TV Spring 1947 pp.4-5) was reminded that Donald Watson had already said he could not continue running everything himself (He had married Dorothy two weeks earlier).

The Hendersons stepped in, with Fay as secretary and Allan as editor and treasurer. Watson was profusely thanked for his work and elected as the Society's first President (there had been a chairman, for the previous year). He also became the Society's first Life Member.

The Hendersons were now living in the Lake District, and opened Rydal Lodge, Ambleside,



as the first vegan guest house, or "Vegan Guest Centre", with residential cookery courses. Fay was also working on a revised edition of her recipes book (*photo from amazon.com which has/had one for \$36*). Rydal Lodge became the Vegan Society HQ for the next few years (it is [still a hotel](#), though non-veg now). (*photos right from TV Autumn 1949 pp.12-13*).



Mrs. FAY K. HENDERSON, of The Vegan Guest Centre.



Mr. G. ALLAN HENDERSON, Editor of "The Vegan."

Fay Henderson later handed over her role to Allan who was, for about 18 months, paid a small retainer as secretary, editor and treasurer. At the 1948 AGM Donald Watson (age 38) stepped down as President and appears to have had no further active involvement with the Society until his article in 1965, and then nothing until 1988.

By 1950 Fay had become a leading member of the [Vegetarian Catering Association](#) (VCA), which eventually became the Vegetarian Society Cookery School. She represented VCA at IVU congresses in Paris 1955, and England 1965 ([ivu.org/history](#)). The Winter 1950 issue of The Vegan never appeared, and the spring 1951 issue expressed regret, simply stating that Allan Henderson had retired. Fay contributed a couple of small items in 1951, but after that they had no further active involvement with the Vegan Society at all.

In his 2002 interview Donald Watson said he was offered a teaching post in Keswick, in the Lake District (now in Cumbria) in 1951, and the family moved there, not far from the Hendersons. They all appear to have been active in the Cumbrian Vegetarian Society, which joined IVU when it first accepted local groups in 1965. The Watsons' Keswick home is now a vegetarian B&B, run by the family ([sandburne.co.uk](#)).

Phone records show the Hendersons remained in Cumbria until 1970, but not at Rydal Lodge. They then moved to Allan's home city of Edinburgh, where Fay died in 1985, aged 88.

Notes: Donald Watson confirmed in the 2002 interview that he had maintained his lifelong membership of the Vegetarian Society. In one of his columns (TV Winter 1989 p.21) he wrote:

The few of us who were there at the start were all vegetarians of long standing. Some of us had been secretaries of societies affiliated to the then two national vegetarian societies, operating from London and Manchester, with Frank Wyatt and James Hough as their secretaries [paid staff]. The vegan movement owes much to these two men who bought and distributed our literature before we had a Society to do it ourselves. It was of course their duty to do this since the definition of vegetarianism contained the words "... with or **without** the addition of eggs and milk and its products (butter and cheese)," but they cooperated with us with an enthusiasm that went beyond the call of duty, since not all their members approved.

The Vegetarian Society remains 'with or without' eggs/dairy, but now very positively approves of the 'without' version, and embraces the word 'vegan'. Many members, supporters, staff, and affiliated groups now identify themselves as vegan.

The Society publishes a high proportion of vegan recipes (recipes.vegsoc.org); promotes vegan commodities (vegsocapproved.com); and vegan cookery courses (vegsoccookeryschool.org); all searchable with the word 'vegan', and all included in the magazine, but with no plans for a separate page.

The sources for everything above (except where stated otherwise):

1 (TVMHR) = The Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review, published monthly from 1847 (with occasional name changes) by the Vegetarian Society (Manchester).

2 (VN) = Vegetarian News, published quarterly in the 1940s (initially weekly as The Vegetarian, then monthly) by the London Vegetarian Society from 1888. This merged with TVMHR in 1958 to become The British Vegetarian (now just The Vegetarian again).

A partial index and some articles from The British Vegetarian 1959-71 (mostly IVU related as it was official the IVU journal in the 1960s): ivu.org/history/europe20b/british-vegetarian.html

3 (VWF) = Vegetarian World Forum, published quarterly (initially as The Vegetarian) as an independent journal from Spring 1947 until about 1970. In the 1950s this was the official journal of the International Vegetarian Union. A complete index and scans of some articles are available at: ivu.org/history/world-forum

Note: In 1969 the original Vegetarian Society (Manchester) and the London Vegetarian Society merged to form the Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom (VSUK). The names used in the article are those that applied in the 1940s. Copies of all journals above have survived in the VSUK archives, but very little has ever been made available online due to the vast quantity of it.

4 (TV) = The Vegan, published quarterly from 1944 by the Non-Dairy Produce Group (as Vegan News) then by the Vegan Society from 1945. All issues are available online at: issuu.com/vegan_society

5 (2002) = interview with Donald Watson, December 2002, age 92. Conducted by George Rodger, then Chair of the Vegan Society (transcribed from tape): vegansociety.com/sites/default/files/DW_Interview_2002_Unabridged_Transcript.pdf

6 (2004) = interview with Donald Watson by Vegetarians in Paradise (Los Angeles), conducted by post: vegparadise.com/24carrot610.html

7 (GRO) = UK General Register Office, births marriages and deaths (gro.gov.uk).

(MA) = Manchester Archives at the Central Library.

8 John Davis is the author of "World Veganism, Past, Present and Future" (2012), a free e-book: ivu.org/history/Vegan_History.pdf

He is the former Manager and Historian of the International Vegetarian Union, of which *all* the above were members (except GRO of course), and a Fellow and former Trustee (board of directors) of the Vegetarian Society UK.

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