



world vegan month: celebrating the hard way

The freezing gusts hammered into me yet again, lifting me from my feet. Although I was sheltered from the full force of the 70 mph gale hitting the other side of the pass, the ironing board strapped to my back was acting like a sail. Desperately hanging onto tufts of grass I wondered whether it would act like a glider if I was blown off the mountainside. At least I would have discovered a novel way to celebrate World Vegan Month.

That was, after all, what the Extreme Vegan Sporting Association (EVSA) was for: to showcase vegan fitness through novel means of risking life and limb. Too many seem to think vegans must endure grim and joyless lives of self-denial. Lack of animal proteins make us pale and unfit, they believe. The EVSA exists to prove how wrong they are, and to show how much fun the vegan lifestyle can be.

Seriously fun, I told myself once again through teeth gritted against the cold. And although not as domesticated as I could be, I've always had a bit of a thing for ironing. What better way to celebrate the 67th anniversary of The Vegan Society's founding than an extreme vegan ironing expedition, I reasoned?

Combining 'the thrill of a danger sport with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt', the popularity of extreme ironing has risen spectacularly. International championships now exist, with the English recently beating the Australians by having the greatest number of people ironing underwater at the same time, in a flooded quarry. The waters were so freezing they desperately hoped they'd never have to win back the title. As a native Australian though, I rather hoped otherwise. Maybe I could make the Aussie team someday with sufficient training. But Aussies are tough, so I knew this would need to be hard-core.

And so I headed to Snowdonia with my trusty ironing board last November. I planned to iron on the narrow rock pillars

rising from Tryfan's near-vertical summit ridge, hoping the lightning forecast would make the experience more memorable, and power the iron. Unfortunately however, only the water lifted 50 feet from the lake below appeared able to make any upward progress through the gale.



I was luckier the next day, when the gusts dropped to 50 mph. For a few brief seconds I was able to stagger onto the summit of Mt Snowdon. At 1,085m I was the highest ironer in all of Wales and England.

My failure on Tryfan continues to haunt me, however. I hope to return in winter, when ice-axes and crampons should help me triumph against the wind.

For more on this extreme vegan adventure and others, see www.ExtremeVeganSports.org.

Andrew Knight is the founder of the Extreme Vegan Sporting Association, but is really a softie at heart.



VEG 1 (£4.99 for three months' adult supply)

Specifically designed to benefit vegans. Taken daily, VEG 1 ensures adequate supplies of selenium, iodine, vitamin D, folic acid, vitamins B2, B6 and, of course, B12.

Based on extensive research by Vegan Society health and nutrition spokesperson Stephen Walsh, author of *Plant Based Nutrition and Health*.

Adults: chew one tablet per day. Children aged 2-12: half a tablet per day chewed or crushed. Available only from The Vegan Society