

Former businessman lives on no money for a year

A businessman gave up his career to live on no money for a year after becoming disillusioned with consumerism.

Ben Leach *The Telegraph* 25 Nov 2009

Mark Boyle said giving up his job, possessions and money to live the life of a pauper in a rusty old caravan was the best decision he has ever made.

The 30-year-old has vowed to continue with his money-free life for good, adding: "It's been fantastic. I never really knew how much stress and worry money brought to my life until I was free of it.

"People often ask me if I miss my old world... stress, traffic jams, bank statements, utility bills... why would I miss any of that? Now I've tasted life without money I never want to go back to the way I lived before."

Mr Boyle said he survives by growing vegetables on his one-acre plot of land. He also forages for mushrooms, nuts and berries, as well as picking up waste food from supermarkets and restaurants.

He added: "For toothpaste I use cuttlefish bone I found washed up on the beach mixed with wild fennel seeds. For loo roll I'll pick up old newspapers from the newsagent.

"Even the simplest tasks, like having a shower or flushing the loo, become incredibly time-consuming. Washing my clothes in a sink of cold water, using laundry liquid made by boiling some nuts on my stove, can take two hours. Getting into a skip to look for stuff is harder than going to the shop to buy it. And having to dig a compost lavatory is harder than flushing it away. But I never got bored and I rarely felt lonely. I'd go for walks, cycle, make a fire. I've learned so

much about food, about nature, about myself."

But Mr Boyle admitted that his lifestyle had had repercussions. He broke up with his student girlfriend Clare, 26, six months ago.

He told the *Daily Mirror*: "She was supportive but didn't want to do the whole thing with me. So six months into the year I broke it off with her.

"It was a difficult decision but I want to build my life with someone who's prepared to commit to this lifestyle too. I know my Lonely Hearts ad might put a lot of women off – no money, no car, no career prospects, no hot water! But I'm quite handsome, have a nice personality and I've got a lot of body heat!"

Mr Boyle said he decided to give up all his possessions and spend his last £350 installing solar panels in his caravan to power his laptop after he saw the Oscar-winning film *Gandhi*.

He added: "I realised the only truly sustainable way was to give up cash and reconnect with nature, so I gave away all my possessions."

Mr Boyle said he had written a book about his experience, adding: "Ironically, they say I'm going to make quite a bit of money from it."

"But what am I going to do with it? Should I give it away? And will I have to open a bank account? It's stressing me out!"