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**Date : 30.04.07**

People who have decided to cut out all animal products from their diets and daily lives are finding more and more opportunities to follow their chosen lifestyle.

It comes as retailers cotton on to the vegan way of life, more meat and dairy-free restaurants open and even clubs and groups spring up.

Renowned vegetarian eateries including Hitchcock's, the Zoo and Chance Cafe in Hull and Bean There in Bridlington make sure the region's ethical eaters are spoilt for choice.



Mark Evans, of ER Vegans, has been running nights for people who spurn animal products for nine years.

The group, which has about 50 members, meets about once a month for specially themed nights.

Not everyone who attends is vegan, which is part of the charm, as Mr Evans and the other group members make the switch as easy as possible, whether it is for culinary, dietary or ethical reasons.

Mr Evans said: "A lot of people are interested in coming along to our events to find out more and perhaps that will be the start of a slow route to becoming vegan.

"We have a mixture of people in our little group and also we're an open group in the sense you don't have to be a vegan to come to our events, you just have to behave like a vegan while you're with us.

"Before I became vegan, I lived off meat and two veg, but I found it easy to stop in one weekend and I became vegan straight away."

Vegans and vegetarians keep in touch through an e-mail newsletter sent out about once a month, which includes recipes and details of upcoming events.

Nights are also held once a month and a diverse range of themes are chosen.

Mr Evans said: "We often have them for famous vegetarians and vegans in history, although it's difficult to distinguish them because veganism is a relatively modern term.

"One of the meals we organise is a Bob Marley night which is vibrant. It really boosts the night.

"There are two meals that you have to book in early for and they are the Christmas meal and the Bob Marley nights."

Bruce Hitchcock, 37, a partner in Hitchcock's vegetarian restaurant, said: "We are doing really well and most people who come along are not vegetarians, they just like what we do.

"When we started in 1994 it was a bit of a struggle to try to get people to have a meal with no meat in it."

The ER Vegan group is not as politically minded as those afraid of the V word might imagine, tending to concentrate on the social side of life rather than extremism.

Mr Evans said: "To be honest, we're not as animal rights active as I know other groups in the country are.

"A lot of people come along to the meals because we do something a bit different."

There has never been a better time to cut animal products out of your diet as more and

more shops and manufacturers in the UK are catering for the vegan market.

Mr Evans said: "It gets easier all the time being a vegan, both in terms of going out and also the supermarkets have done a lot of their labelling, partly for us and partly for people's allergies.

"What we've found talking to the various supermarkets is that a lot of people understand the term vegan so they find it a useful one to use."

For more information about becoming a vegan or attending events with the group, visit their website below.

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Links

ER Vegans

[www.merrydowncontrolware.co.uk/ervegans](http://www.merrydowncontrolware.co.uk/ervegans)

Hitchcock's vegetarian restaurant

[www.hitchcocksrestaurant.co.uk](http://www.hitchcocksrestaurant.co.uk)

The Vegetarian Society

[www.vegsoc.org](http://www.vegsoc.org)

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