

The Idle Foundation

Just don't do it

The Future Is Idle

Idleness is about so much more than laziness. To us it's about freedom and independence: why work more than you need to? Why spend the best years of your life climbing the greasy pole?

As Robert Louis Stevenson had it, "idleness does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized as industry in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class."

An Idler Writes...

There's nothing so lazy as getting a job and a mortgage and a pension and a family and a car and a bigger TV and a just because that's what everyone else does. Whereas the idle person is in many ways the least lazy because they are constantly thinking about outside-the-box kinda stuff which actually makes their life harder.

I see my idleness as something to be cultivated, but I regard my laziness (which I also have in spades) as something negative to be transmuted into pure idleness. When I'm lazy I always feel that I've missed out on an experience that could have been interesting or enjoyable if I had made the 'effort' to be idle.

For me, idling is about taking time out to write the story of our own lives rather than being kept in a prison of constant activity that is governed by the limits set by others and stops us questioning the foundations of our worldview. - Mark

As An Idler I Pledge...

To smile more. To enjoy the simple things. To spend quality time in nature. To spend less with big businesses and make lots of nice things instead. To eat good food that doesn't go ping at the end. To know that work is merely for paying the bills. To always remember that friends are a source of strength. To go against the grain. To strive to make a difference, to the world and people around me,, however small. To be happy...



In Praise of Idleness

In 1932 Bertrand Russell wrote an essay entitled 'In Praise of Idleness'. He began it thus:

"I think that there is far too much work done in the world, that immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous, and that what needs to be preached in modern industrial countries is quite different from what has always been preached".

He concluded:

"Modern methods of production have given us the possibility of ease and security for all; we have chosen, instead, to have overwork for some and starvation for others. Hitherto we have continued to be as energetic as we were before there were machines; in this we have been foolish, but there is no reason to go on being foolish forever".

Given the technological advances that have come to pass in the almost eighty years since this essay was written, how even more valid do Russell's words seem today.



<http://idlefoundation.org>

from The Idle Manifesto

'What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?' - *Leisure*, W. H. Davies

Definitions of idleness

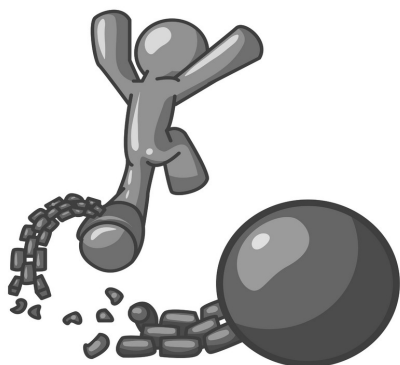
It is necessary to attempt definitions of what is meant by 'idleness' in the context of this manifesto, since the word is open to a wide range of interpretations, but it can mean:

- Doing nothing for a period of time.
- Insisting on involvement in creative activities rather than in mundane tasks.
- Permanently 'dropping out' of mainstream society.
- Only doing work which is enjoyable.
- Working part-time, or job sharing.
- Being self employed and working from home.
- Forming 'intentional communities' of individuals with common goals and interests.
- Living in such a way that work is secondary to leisure.

The above definitions are not exhaustive; nor are they intended to be. Creative people will always insist on the right to choose their own paths through life. Indeed, this need for self determination is our fundamental right as civilised human beings, and this is something which can never be prescribed by the diktat of politicians or employers. It is only through individual consent and self knowledge that we can hope to achieve our full potential.

Our Beliefs

The Idlers' Manifesto is an ideological statement to the world and to individual Foundation members, though in many ways it is easier to describe what we do not stand for rather than to discuss who we are. We are not a cult, we are not 'rich kids' on an ego trip. We are not a religious sect or a debating society. We stand for freedom of expression in all areas of our personal lives and in the wider world.



We believe that there is more to life than work, and that individuals should be allowed to grow in their own way, without having to mutate into wage slaves.

The Idle Foundation wants to encourage a world where people engage in activities they actively enjoy, and we believe that - as far as possible - free individuals should only work for as long as they want to each day. In other words work is built around leisure, and leisure should not be crammed between the vacant spaces of working life as a mere afterthought.

All this implies that we should seek to live minimalistically while learning to 'tread lightly on the Earth', as opposed to deliberately engaging in mass consumerism. We recognise that many people are uselessly employed in needless mind-numbing jobs, which the world could well do without if we are to progress socially and intellectually as a global community.

Rewarding activities should be the children of our fascination, and creative people will never find fulfilment in tedium. We believe that boredom is a social evil which can erode our sense of self, while gradually destroying our physical and mental well-being. Broadly speaking, our goal is to find sustainable alternatives to this way of life, and to actively promote these to the outside world.

Conclusion

We may conclude that the Idle Foundation is a group with a growing membership. We are peaceful and largely apolitical. Rather, our focus is on forming communities of interest to effect social change, while learning to promote idleness in all its forms. We are interested in exploring the practicalities of idleness so that we can demonstrate that it is possible to live sustainable, alternative lifestyles. We are Bohemians and proud of it! Come and join us, there is plenty of room.

To read the full Idle Manifesto, or to find out more about the Idle Foundation, please visit <http://idlefoundation.org/idlemanifesto>.

Idlers everywhere, take up arms! Whether your weapon of choice be pen or paintbrush, spade or egg-whisk, hold it aloft - and throw your clipboard and name badge into the mud at your allotment. Join us as we chuckle at convention and blow raspberries at authority!