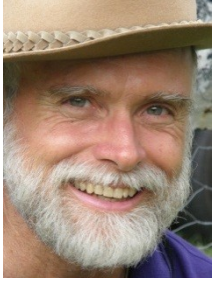


# Satya #95



Contemplating now as I look back in time... I must have joined LETS in the very early days. It didn't feel like that then to me – we were just getting on with our trading, having our meetings of running LETS and I attended the occasional social and trading get-togethers. Over the years I have enjoyed the rich tapestry that being in LETS has brought me, making new friends, social events, services that I either received or gave that enriched the life of another member and trading various goods - one of which I still have. It's an oil heater I traded with Jeni a few years ago that has been so useful to me and others who have used it during colder parts of our winters. I thanked you when we traded Jeni and I thank you again.

It has been said to me by prospective and new members "I don't know what I have to offer." I have developed a response that goes a bit like this... It is often some of the things that not may occur to us to offer that can be the most significant to assisting someone else and thus become a tradable asset... Where we once lived in extended families and had siblings and aunts and uncles and grandparents around there would always be someone in the family who could show us how to make a cake, tie a ribbon, knew where to get a something or "I only want a metre and it's sold by the kilometer roll" someone would have some left over or a friend that did. I need someone to hold this while I cut it. I just need a little help with this ASAP. Can someone help me on Friday to do... , I'm shifting house and need a hand to pack or a meal or two between houses or just some company to hang out with me while I do it and so on. This is what I see as the most important types of trading resources that LETS can offer – the little things. The culture we live in today is so obsessed with always having to do big and grandiose things (and so little time) that that little bit of support our extended family once gave has often and is often being given by LETS. So members if you're up for it put on the resource list you're personal version of what I have written above there will be another member who is so glad to avail of your services – particularly if they are new to town. Oh ... and yes we also need the big services too they are important but let's remember the little ones too.

P.S. One of the little things that is so dear to me right now. I give a public thanks and a bouquet to Jessie who last year visited my aged mother in hospital when I was unable to and still visits her for me when I am so far away. My mother really appreciates the visits and it has really added to her quality of life. Thank you Jessie, my heart is so appreciative.

Blessings

Satya no. 95 (who at this moment is in Far North Queensland)

# Judith (Helen) #303 and Elizabeth #1364 Shaw



There's a shiny new stainless steel cutlery drainer on my kitchen sink. I acquired it at a Trading Day through BrisLets last month ~ just as many other useful items and services have come into my life. Thanks to my membership with this amazing organization I have saved money on accommodation in downtown Sydney and Melbourne, massages, home maintenance, computer advice, mending, editing, errands, gardening, rubbish removal, packing, unpacking and moving, along with 'purchases' of clothing, fabric, jewellery, plants, towels, books, DVDs, shoes, and food. I have even had intricate wooden vehicles made for my speech therapy practice, with wheels cut from a broom handle (see display).

I have earned units by doing photography, renting my car, selling carob balls, and helping people through working bees, organizing their paperwork and decluttering their homes. I even rented my vacuum cleaner when a member sent out an urgent call that hers had malfunctioned ahead of her arriving guests.

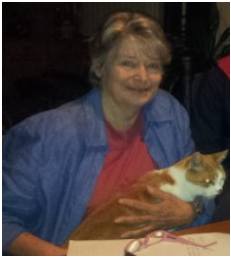
After my sister's home was flooded, the BrisLets Management Committee sent out an SOS for help. Members arrived at her door with energy and food. A later call for wooden pallets went out ~ and pallets materialised at her home shortly after. The supportive energy was very moving. We had witnessed this two years earlier when a member's stored items had been flooded while she was overseas, and many folk arrived to restore her treasures. We learned that flooded photographs can be totally restored by soaking and allowing to dry. (Spread the word!)

I had heard how helping someone can also help yourself, and learned this firsthand through BrisLets. Because I list speech therapy services as one of my offerings I received a phone call from an anxious member whose relative had been diagnosed with a rare genetic syndrome. In researching the condition for her, I discovered to my amazement that the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Scientific Meeting of that foundation was meeting in Brisbane the following week. I was able to attend and expand my knowledge base regarding the impact of this condition on speech production. Incredibly I later learned that the daughter of a dear friend had also been diagnosed with this rare syndrome which often does not manifest until adulthood.

My life has been enriched by BrisLets and its resourceful and resilient members. I have felt embraced by their friendship and energy, and have enjoyed living the philosophy that:

*Whatever I need ~ someone may have it; and  
Whatever I have ~ someone might need it.*

## Liz #0138



I joined Brisbane Lets in 1991 after reading an article about it in the local Quest newspaper. I have met a lot of interesting, unusual, peculiar, fascinating and wonderful fellow members, including Alex who I lived with for 6 years until he died .

I have seen the administration and record keeping of LETS go from a very basic paper based system with one person responsible for entering all transactions to the current computer based system we now have with the CES program.

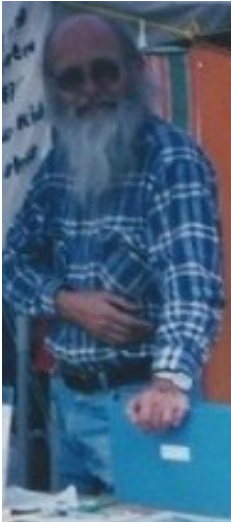
Alex spent a lot of time developing a program for recording all member's details, their offerings and transactions whilst he held the, now obsolete, position of transaction bookkeeper. At the time of his death the program was doing what it was meant to do but was not quite finished, there was no instruction manual, and it had its fragile moments. Michael # 1335 and I kept it going for a while, then I was happy for Michael to cope with it (I was having recurring nightmares of all the information disappearing) and I think we were both very relieved when the CES system took over before our fragile system crashed losing all membership records.

I have traded with countless members over the years, including; an electrician who put an uncovered junction box under my house, (a long time ago and he is no longer a member), cleaners, masseuses, gardeners, cooks, natural therapists, veterinary care advisers, carpenters, handymen, painters, hairdressers, a physiotherapist, mechanic, stats tutor, computer repairer and adviser, as well as purchasing numerous goods at trading days.

For a while I lived on acreage at Mt Crosby and whilst there I organised a LETS pampering weekend. A group of women stayed for the weekend, on sleeping bags and in tents. Lets members brought and served prepared meals and a group of members who provided massages, colour consultations, relaxation and meditation sessions, counselling and astrological readings came during the weekend to offer their services. Apart for some dollars for the food it was all paid for by units. I remember it was a very hot weekend but it was great to be pampered and have a group of pleasant houseguests without any responsibility for catering or looking after them. It took a bit of effort to organise but was well worth it.

Membership numbers rise and fall over time and 100 active members seems to be enough for the system to maintain itself. LETS is great for earning units with what you can do and using the units to pay for what you can't do or couldn't otherwise afford.

Participation in Brisbane LETS has been an important part of my life for the past 27 years and I value the friends I have made and people I have met through this involvement.



# Liz remembers Vietnam visit 2006

- Fred, Adrian, Pam, Maree and I went to Vietnam. Fred arranged the trip and among other things we visited a leprosarium and an orphanage for blind children as Fred had a substantial donation for them. A very interesting trip.
- Viet1 on motorbikes is Adrian, me, Maree and Pam. Pam and Maree fell off their bike going down the hill and Pam grazes her arm fairly badly. Viet2 is Fred, Adrian, Pam and Maree. Fred and Adrian developed a great love for the local beer.



# Paul Wildman #140



*I joined Brisbane LETS in 1990 in order to experience a local economy with a committed trustworthy community from scratch.*

*My work, study and profession involved developing, resourcing and implementing State wide policies aimed at stimulating local economic development in Local Governments and through Community Development so LETS was a natural practical 'walk your talk' type step.*

*There were many many fewer folks then, though with a broadly similar spread of offerings, however meetings had a similar number of attendees as our meetings today. Each of the meetings was a 'market day' so to speak. And after the monthly meeting folks would gather round the various stalls/vendors selling say honey or other goods and services. This is where the 'techne' of the hand crafted life manifest in the goods and services for sale, met the 'agape' of conviviality and mutual aid – THIS LETS'ers is for me the stuff of life.*

*LETS had much potential then and it has now. Realising this potential will require, in my view, LETS members getting a big picture of where Lets fits into, and just how important LETS is for, a community locovore type economy. Secondly my experience suggests there will need to be an apocalypse before many folks decide to take this type of 'prepping' seriously. Maybe GFC2 or a 'bail in' in Aust or complete collapse of manufacturing leading to high levels of youth unemployment and Macjobs – as we see in Europe and the land of the free – the USA today.*

*Finally, I believe though that we as LETS folk HAVE kept the faith and we represent a vital repository of remembering a part of our grandparents lifeworld a part that will again, in our near future, prove vital as a survival skill for our children's children.*

*"This little room was built using bricks, windows, tiles, and accessories & also labour paid for by LETS units. The foundation was partially dug out by Maree & the roof built by a then member of LETS who also sold lovely honey. I used to type there in pre-computer days."*

*Marg C. #157*



## Marg #157



Marg ended up being one of the mover and shakers because she had trouble meeting people and decided to invite people, fed them and then they talked and decided to do things. Marg hosted cards & games, street parties, handcrafts etc days.



## Kris #207



Kris worked in New Farm but never attended the trading days for a long time – then attended one and realised it's the connection with people that really works – that has been the case during helping out Helen during the floods, with Fred leading to visiting Viet Nam and the Eclipse last year, at conferences etc. Have held a few trading days here. Talking to people in LETS can lead to all sorts of things – very diverse group.

It's the spirit of the people – similar values in liking to recycle, enjoying bargains and getting second hand treasures. Really enjoying some people's company. It's the small things – the non-commercialisation of things – really enjoy the accommodation through LETS – the personalisation and not paying the exorbitant prices of hotels. The charity – during the first flood people not working at Helen's donated units to the ones who did – the bonding during such things as washing flooded items, rescuing photos – it's the small things such as being able to call on others when you need to.

## Adrian #267



I was a BOGI member when I first heard about LETS and I have been an active BrisLETS member for 22 years.

I found the social side of BrisLETS of great benefit. I enjoyed the LETS “Tightarse” tour of Vietnam in 2006 that Fred organised and some of the annual LETS Conferences in Newcastle, Sydney and the Sunshine Coast were enjoyable. Memorable was Hugh and the drumming session at Michael and Isobella’s at Mt Gravatt around a campfire. I have helped a number of LETS members shift over the years, and while it is hard work it is satisfying to achieve the move.

The trading days are usually a good time to catch up with fellow LETS members for a chat and some trading. As a recycler I have been able to help some LETS people remove some of their unwanted stuff in an eco friendly way.

At present I am in an accumulation phase for LETS units but in the future I can see that I could be in a spending phase as I age.

I have been president in a previous cycle and currently but think it is better for positions to be taken on by different people to circulate the energy in the group.



# Fred #888



Hi I'm Fred and I joined in 1999. I found LETS multifaceted especially in emergency situations and as a conduit for meeting interesting people.

Adrian and I went to Melbourne 8 yrs ago with a HunterLETS member and stayed at various MelbourneLETS members' places. We also LETSZ in a beautiful house on Lake Tenaroo in Nth Qld 6 years ago. We traded and socialised at Ravenshoe. Our unit bill was reduced by bringing back some of our hostesses belongings to her in Brisbane.

I have been a hoarder for 43 years, partly Council inspired, I am in the process of de-squirreling – BrisLETS members have been invaluable in this process and as well we called in a Nazi Scorched Earth Team from Sunshine LETS (68 yrs, 68 yrs & 69 yrs – they ran rings around a couple of early 20's people I called in privately).

I've heard of many inspirational stories at LETS Conferences eg. Woman from Nth NSW, who hit the wall, divorce, near bankruptcy, imminent eviction, huge health problems – she was only able to survive by going heavily into debt with LETS, and is now on her feet again.

When Carl had his car and tools stolen, the word went out to whip up tools – luckily he got his car and tools back.

No doubt others have told of the LETS trips we had overseas.

I recommend LETS to anyone. Going to conferences you pick up ideas through networking with other LETS, and you share out as well.

# Marg G #897 and daughter Amanda #1306



- Marg knew of BrisLETS many years before she joined at the 10<sup>th</sup> Celebrations under the Story Bridge.
- Marg's most vivid memory is of fixing a favourite dressing gown for a lady – took ages but it meant lots to the husband.
- Amanda had her wedding with LETS help including dog sitting.
- Both Marg and Amanda have held a few trading days at their places – make sure the clothes are clean and go through what's on offer early on so can relax and clean up early. Amanda had been President.
- Love meeting lots of people and exchanging ideas.

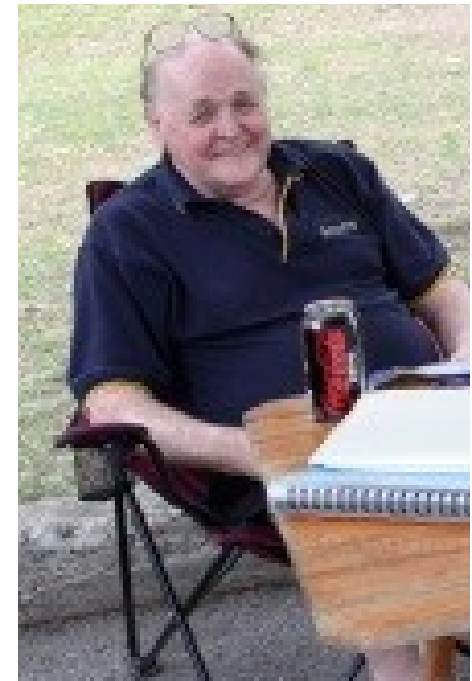
## Madeleine & Tony #1102

- Tony wishes to thank John #1429 for his quality work over the years.
- Also Marg from Stafford who did such wonderful cleaning of houses and cupboards.
- And Alex for his help with all his engineering problems.
- Madeleine does photography – had an interesting experience when photos she took of Qi Gong in the Botanical Gardens came out very differently.

# Carl #1189

Carl joined BrisLETS because he was chasing the country idea where people helped each other when they could.

News article 2007,



CITY LIFE > YOU CITY NEWS Issue 190 7 June 2007

## Think smarter and barter, it beats paying

**YOURS FOR THEIRS**  
WORDS: SUE GARDINER

HAVE you ever yearned to opt out of this dog-eat-dog, money-obsessed society? Well, you can't entirely, so snap out of it. But members of a community-based organisation believe they have come as close as it's possible for city slickers to do just that.

**Brisbane Local Energy Trading Systems Organisation Inc (LETS)** is an alternative currency system that operates like a community bank except with totally interest-free credit.

of personal skills from hobbies, life experiences and formal training, can be used to earn LETS Units which in turn can be exchanged for goods and services from other members.

Not only can people access goods and services they would not normally be able to afford, they can effectively 'earn' more without the taxman being entitled to his cut.

Brisbane LETS spokeswoman Liz Stanhope said a single unit was roughly the equivalent of \$1 with most services offered for between 10 to 15 units per hour.

She said unlike the Bartercard system, members did not have to pay a cash fee to join.

There were currently 100 members across Brisbane including massage therapists, hairdressers, child-carers and book-keepers.

For retired mechanic Carl Johanson LETS is a way of recapturing the values of his country childhood where doing favours for others was a way of life. Mr Johanson charges between 20 to 30 units for an oil change and brake check.

He said whether they could clean, labour or cook most people had a skill to offer. "There's one woman who makes a casserole like you wouldn't believe," he said.

A portrait of himself painted by a LETS member has pride of place in his Windsor home.

Imogen Bunting, 34, has moved house and enjoyed massages and other services all without paying a cent.

The Dutton Park resident said many of the LETS members were alternatively-minded but the biggest "capitalist pig" she knew was also a member "because he doesn't like to spend money".

Visit [www.lets.org.au/bristles](http://www.lets.org.au/bristles)

**BEAT THE TAXMAN:** LETS helps you live life without Peter Costello's hand in your pocket

**NUTS AND BOLTS:** Carl Johanson has traded his mechanical wisdom for a range of goods and services.

## Ruth #1267



### ***An interesting experience through LETS – from Ruth***

I was doing some gardening for Tony and Madeleine - chipping away at weeds between roses and immediately thought of my Maternal grandmother who always had roses growing and we as little girls playing “chasey” (me being the smallest always seemed to get caught in the prickles (actually giant thorns of the roses)

After discussing this with my mother - it seems that they had lived in that very same house and I was weeding probably around roses that perhaps my Grandmother had also tended. Deja vous.

When I did return to the house another time, I mentioned this to Tony and they suggested that I bring my mother to visit with them - which I did. They had a lovely afternoon while I weeded and it seems there was a small pantry cupboard, which my mother remembered well - as she climbed up to the top and ate all the “laxettes” – yummy chocolates that were for the whole family. My mother, nearly 80, is still a bit of a trick.

There are so many interesting people who I have met, since being associated with LETS.

# Hugh #1369



Hugh in his safari suit

## **LETS in action - Hugh's LETS photo-journal 2008**

The idea of this journal is to show LETS in action, and how it works in practice. The journal shows how LETS really helps people and lets them help other people. Isn't that what life is really supposed to be about?

### **20th February – West End**

I'd bought a few shirts from Mary-Ellen at the Xmas trading day – great shirts too for U5 each. Mary-Ellen mentioned she also had a safari suit for sale and was I interested? I wasn't initially, but when she came over and showed me I loved it, and she only wanted 30 Units for it. Awesome!

### **4th March – Kenmore**

I got a call yesterday from Elizabeth in Kenmore. She's just moved into a new house. Could I come out tomorrow and help move furniture and do some general handyman work? Sure! Colin was there too and we put together some puzzling patio swings, cleaned out her garage so her car could fit in, and packed the shed with stuff. 3 and a half hours work for 70 Units each.

### **4th March – Wilston**

Later that day I drove over to Danielle's house to help her deliver bags of manure from the garden centre to her house. While I was there I bought a carseat she doesn't need anymore for 50 Units.

### **5th March – West End**

Suzanne is getting one of our LETS members, Roger, to help her make her website for her sculpting business but she didn't know how to upload photos from her camera to the internet. I was happy to help her (for a small amount of Units!)

### **10th March – Logan TAFE**

I had a drumming workshop to do today, for the students at Logan TAFE. I hadn't budgeted for an assistant but Suzanne was happy to come and help me and I paid her 100 Units for 4 hours work.

### **10th March – Wilston**

The staff party is on tonight at the RSL where I work, driving the courtesy bus. It's going to be a food and drink free for all, which is great except I have Lizzie staying with me tonight... The solution is to ask Danielle if she minds babysitting Lizzie all night. I could never afford to pay a babysitter \$\$ to do that, but with LETS it's no problem. It's just Units Schmoonits!! Thanks Danielle, and thanks BrisLETS!

### **11 March – City**

Danielle asked me if I could drop some X-rays into town for her, so I rode in with Lizzie and charged Danielle 10 Units

### **11 March – Gold Coast**

Des needed someone to drive him down to Benowa to pick up an organ from some friends who were moving house and wanted to get rid of the big old thing. 4 hours x 35 Units per hour plus petrol. (I hope Des didn't hurt his back too bad lifting the thing!)

### **19th March – West End**

A simple delivery job worth 20 Units – dropping off a friend's bike to get repaired at Bicycle Revolution in West End (and delivering the reconditioned bike next week).

### **5th May – Mt Gravatt**

This was a big job for Des and Sue, replacing their old patio ceiling with new villaboard sheeting. It took three days over a couple of months but everyone was happy with the result. I ended up charging U250.

# Jeni #1381



- First joined LETS in Perth in 1994
- Moved to Brisbane in 2000
- Joined BrisLETS in 2007
- Became a committee member in 2011
- I enjoy many things about LETS including the social and community aspects, contributing to BrisLETS on the committee and sharing skills
- Through editing Stacey Huish's book *Communication Impact* I have embarked on a new career as an editor
- BrisLETS Facebook Page
- BrisLETS.com



## Jessie #1422



I joined Logan LETS in 1998, which was started by a nun who I first met in 1989 – she was involved in a food co-op, building and running the Loganlea Neighbours and friends Centre etc.

I took on various committee roles in LETS and 7 other community committees that actually meshed well together. Two Logan Community Centres were LognaLETS members.

I love networking and through talking to OzLETS members I ended up organising the James Taris tour – got to meet local group members and hear how they did things. Also got two media stories on Brisbane Extra and local papers for Logan LETS. I love Cherie's idea to change the "LETS Linkup" to "L.E.T.S. do it - without money" Facebook page for keeping the history of LETS.



I attended the Brisbane LETS conference (loved the house building segment as had been on the Habitat for Humanity SEQ committee with Kevin Oddy, and the beautiful food), after LoganLETS folded, and joined BrisLETS but wasn't active until the AGM in 2011 and took on the newsletter editor role.

I am extremely grateful for the healing from the extraordinary people in BrisLETS – I only met them because as editor I thought I should try people so I could recommend them – it has so completely changed my life. I have also had my house decluttered (20 yrs of community files) plus getting to know people through trading days. Probably the most useful thing I have ever traded is the red bag from Jeni – everyone loves it!



I loved collecting the stories for 25th and 30th BrisLETS Celebrations. I am hoping there is an LETS historian who can add more to this work.