

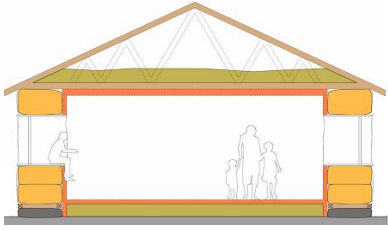
VALE ROYAL ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Winter
2006/7

NEWSLETTER

Ashton Hayes, One Year On...

Ashton Hayes celebrated its first anniversary since 'Going Carbon Neutral' on 25th January 2006. The packed school watched a film of locals commenting on their progress; heard the school choir singing – including a going carbon neutral rap penned by the pupils; listened to George Monbiot praising the villagers' efforts, and watched a video from an infra-red camera roving the village spotting any poor insulation. Andy Foster Architects presented their idea for converting two of the school's



mobile classrooms to energy efficiency by encasing them in straw bales and adding an insulated pitched roof. George Monbiot, climate change campaigner, said that having pushed the message for 20 years, having a whole community taking the message to heart made his job a lot easier!

Want to go Carbon Neutral? See page 4



A New VREN!

We're having a rationalisation:

The **Newsletter** will only be posted to those people who've requested posted copies; it will still be available at libraries and information centres, by email, and on the Groundwork website (Google 'vren newsletter').

We're starting a **Members' Email Forum** – for anyone who'd like to discuss matters of local sustainability, how VREN could help, etc. Just email us to join! (Not connected? Ask your library to help you, on the computer, set up your personal web email address.)

We've started **two blogsites** of information:

www.vrendates.blogspot.com has diary dates, and

www.vrennews.blogspot.com has news.

You can submit information via the blogs, or email us.

Have you recently requested to be, or be retained, on the mailing list? If there isn't a tick in the box, top right of this page, please get in touch, or this will be your last posted newsletter!



Vale Royal Environment Network

thanks its many sponsors, supporters and volunteers.

Registered Charity Number 1101585. Offices at:

Yarwoods Arm, Navigation Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1BE

tel 01606 723160, email vren@groundwork.org.uk

Waste, Recycling and Pollution

Minosus want to change their operating procedures. Rather than bring in already containered toxic waste to the Salt Mine at Moulton, they want to drive tankers up and transfer the contents to silos for bagging, before sending down the mine. There are also fears that vagueness in the permit could allow radioactive waste to be deposited. Residents Against Mine Pollution (RAMP) is conducting a protest – call 01606 594339. Or you can write to The Environment Agency, Appleton House, 430 Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood, Warrington WA3 7WD quoting reference BJ 8499.

Hormone Disruptors

500 hormone-disrupting chemicals, present in approved detergents, pesticides and plastics are thought to be behind the rise in breast cancer. No More Breast Cancer argues that lifelong, low-level exposure to the cocktail of toxins and hormone disruptors both at home and at work is linked to this rise.

For more information on the link between toxic chemicals, other factors, and breast cancer see www.nomorebreastcancer.org.uk or www.wwf.org.uk/news/n_0000003135.asp

Pulverised Fuel Ash

Some information on PFA (a constituent of breeze blocks, cement, and the mix that's being used to fill Northwich Salt Cavities) is to be found at

www.radleyvillage.org.uk/ourvillage/Didcot_PFA/ Essentially, the ash from boilers fuelled by pulverised coal contains:

- a small proportion of radioactivity
- alkalis (that make it valuable in construction) but which can leach out, leaving acidic material
- heavy metals which are restrained by alkalinity, but freer when things become acidic.

The villagers are concerned that Didcot Power Station proposes to fill their much loved lakes with PFA. Campaign website: www.saveradleylakes.org.uk/

Ince Incinerator

Cheshire County Council's Development Regulatory Committee endorsed all the recommendations of the Planning Officer's Report and turned down Peel Holdings application for outline planning permission for a Resource Recovery Park at Ince.

The principal points identified by councillors were:

- ◆ Waste should not be imported into Cheshire; the Proximity Principle should be applied.
- ◆ The scale proposed magnifies any risks that are inherent with this technology. The disposal of waste should be spread across a number of smaller units.
- ◆ UK standards for air quality are 10 times lower than those in the US.

Ellesmere Port should not be the dump for other areas.

However – nothing's certain yet, and Residents Against the Incinerator (RAIN) remain vigilant.

Does your Church Recycle?

Rev John Hale is a Church of England vicar with a waste recycling background, who is taking 3 months off to research how churches can expand their community recycling activities. He'd like details of any church practicing composting or recycling. Contact him at [aj\[at\]jkcahale.co.uk](mailto:aj[at]jkcahale.co.uk) or 01342 714922

Onelessplasticbag: a strong, light bag that folds into a small pocket that goes easily into the smallest of handbags. See www.krata.co.uk/pages/onelessplasticbag.htm

Reusing Waste

See www.junkk.com for a host of ideas on re-using waste! Add your own ideas!



Cutting Building Waste

Building sites use about 400m tonnes of materials a year – and discard 100m tonnes! 60 to 80% of this can be reused or recycled, on or off-site. Site Waste Management Plans (SWMPs) are currently voluntary, although they may become compulsory for projects over £200,000 this year. The average construction site skip contains materials worth £1100, to which can be added procurement overheads: total 15 times the cost of skip hire. For information and help, contact WRAP, 0800 100 2040 or see www.wrap.org.uk. (pic from machinemart.co.uk)

Unique Scrap Store

For almost anything – paints, Astroturf, seashells, circuit boards, furniture, craft tools, left-handed scissors – see www.uniquescrapstore.com. Some items are 'co-buy'; you buy at a maximum price, then as you get friends interested in buying more, the price falls.

BREWing Up Online

Businesses could save both money and the environment on this website launched by the Northwest partners of Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW), including Enworks and the Environment Agency. The new 'signposting' service, Environment-Connect, is free to businesses in the Northwest. See www.environment-connect.co.uk or freephone 0800 032 0222.

Free Bird Food

United Utilities customers can get, free, a Fat Trap – a tub for storing waste cooking fat, rather than pouring it down the drain (with evident risk of blocking the pipes). If fruit, nuts and seeds are added, and a string dangled into the fat before it sets, you can make a fat ball for feeding birds. To claim your Fat Trap, see www.unitedutilities.com > For Home > Products and Services > Drains and Sewers > Fat Trap. Off-line customers might like to try their general helpline – 0845 746 2200.



Where to Recycle What

Cheshire County Council's website has a section on recycling: see www2.cheshire.gov.uk/eco/AtoZRecycling.htm It includes a section on **Paint Recycling**: paint re-use promoters Re-Paint has two sites in Warrington, at Woolston 01925 822536 and Gatewarth 01925 240897.

Bangers to Mash

Has your old banger banded its last? As of 1st January 2007, owners of End-Of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) are entitled to "free take back". Manufacturers of most UK vehicles have arrangements with either: Autogreen, www.autogreen.org, tel 0800 5422002 or Cartakeback.com, www.cartakeback.com, tel 0845 257 3233 See www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=252780&NewsAreaID=2, or Google "Elvs bring new year cheer"



Develop Less Wrapping

WRAP is keen to hear from innovators wanting to reduce packaging waste: funding is available for consumer research, product or concept development, design and lab testing. See www.wrap.org.uk/retail

Wildlife and Countryside

CWT Moves

Cheshire Wildlife Trust has moved to Bickley Hall Farm, Bickley, Malpas, Cheshire, SY14 8EF, tel 01948 820643. It's a 200 acre Site of Special Scientific Interest, home of several vulnerable birds and wild flowers. It's also 24 minutes' walk from the nearest bus service! North West Wildlife Trusts have a lottery to support their works. It runs monthly, costs £2 per entry per month – and there's a £500 jackpot and other cash prizes. For details see www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cheshire/news_lottery.htm or call CWT for a form.

Talking Rivers and Flooding

April 18-19 2007 - 8th Annual River

Restoration Network conference, being held at the University of Chester. A two-day conference focusing on river restoration as a means to deliver sustainable flood risk management and Water Framework Directive objectives. The event will provide a forum for river restoration practitioners to share their experience and expertise. Cost £135 per day Optional site visits on 20 April. For more info: 01525 863 341, email rrc@therrc.co.uk or see www.therrc.co.uk

Save Our Waterways

DEFRA has announced large cuts in its grant aid to British Waterways (BW) and the Environment Agency (EA). Waterways people expect "a massive impact on the maintenance of the waterways of England and Wales."

The EA funding cuts are expected to cause long-term problems; however, previous cuts are expected to result in a large increase in boat licence fees.

BW is facing a grant cut of about £9m (15%). The Inland Waterways Association reckon this is due to the EU fining DEFRA for their problems with the Single Farm Payment. See www.waterways.org.uk/News/DefraFundingCuts

Ribble Re-Shape

The RSPB is to spend £2.5m to remodel Hesketh Old Marsh, 170 hectares on the south bank of the Ribble estuary. The existing outer sea wall will be breached in four places, a new lagoon and saltmarsh created, and a second, inner sea wall strengthened. The whole will enhance the habitat for wild birds and improve flood defences by weakening the force of the waves before they reach the second wall. Work is expected to start this spring. More at www.rspb.org.uk/england/northwest/conservation/ribble/hesketh.asp

Eyes Open!

Springwatch is here again – look out for frog spawn, peacock butterflies, 7-spot ladybirds, hawthorn blossom, red-tailed bumblebees and swifts. Log them in at www.bbc.co.uk/springwatch
You can record many other sightings on www.naturescalendar.org.uk

The Garden Birdwatch is a year-round project: organised by the BTO, participants pay £12 for a quarterly magazine ('Bird Table'), recording sheets, and access to advice on feeding and attracting birds. New joiners get a copy of BTO/CJ Garden BirdWatch Book, free. See www.bto.org/gbw (pic: *Bombus pratorum*, from English Nature)



2007 – the Year of...

The Dolphin: courtesy of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, UNESCO, UNEP and others. They need a bit more peace in the oceans. See www.yod2007.com
International Polar Year: international collaboration between scientists investigating the science of the polar regions, the parts of the world most sensitive to climate change. See www.ipy.org
Heat – the Met Office is forecasting the hottest year yet (or, there's a 60% chance it will be as warm or warmer than the current warmest, 1998). This takes account of various factors including El Nino. Meanwhile, for the UK, 2006

was the warmest on record with a mean temperature of 9.7C, 1.1C above the 1971-2000 average. Since 1914, the 5 warmest years in the UK were 2006, 2003 (9.51C), 2004 (9.48C), 2002 (9.48C), and 2005 (9.46C). See www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2007/pr20070104.html

Low Carbon Transition Towns: life beyond oil

Totnes in Devon has become the first 'Transition Town' in Britain. They're starting a community led comprehensive 'Energy Descent Plan' for a future without fossil fuels. The launch, attended by 400



people, laid out the reasons for the project - our present energy demand is unsustainable and that even eco-fixes will not suffice. The Descent Plan stresses the importance of everyone playing their part through education, knowledge and skills. Interest groups have been established in manufacturing, distribution, building, food, energy, democracy, psychology, and more; and 'Skilling up for Powerdown' courses are proving popular. For more see www.transitiontowns.org

(Chris Hart)

Could your community take up the carbon neutral challenge?

Ashton Hayes is hosting this grass-roots conference on Saturday 14th April 2007 (time 10.30 – 3) at the University of Chester.

Ordinary people and communities can be leaders in the revolution the world now needs to combat the climate change threat. The cost, including lunch, is £35 for individuals, £40 for organisations; and there is a post-conference celebration at the Golden Lion in Ashton Hayes, with village tour and networking. All delegates will receive a free Going Carbon Neutral Toolkit. See www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk, click on the 'Grass Roots' link, or tel 01829 752147

Meanwhile, the school's solar water heater is up, and its wind turbine will soon be raised.

Residents of Chester's Westminster Park area have voted to join Ashton Hayes and set up their own 'going carbon neutral' project.

Sustainable Cheshire Forum

Presentations shown at this event in December are available on CD and internet. They are: progress on waste, CWEA on climate change for business, climate change in the NW, NW action plan, home energy efficiency, Ashton Hayes, community forests, education, business' rôle in climate change, travel planning, Mersey Estuary tidal energy, energy from waste, Weaver Valley Regional Park. The web version is at www.sustainablecheshire.org.uk/annualmeeting.htm; the CD from Michele Burrow, Environmental Co-ordinator, Cheshire County Council, Tel: 01244 603125 (cartoon: Axel Scheffler)

Talking Climate Change

Climate change and the greenhouse effect: A briefing from the Hadley Centre, December 2005. All the information you need to convince someone of the dangers, including the chart showing how current world temperature rises don't tally with non-human influences alone, but do match those plus our input. www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/pubs/brochures/2005/climate_greenhouse.pdf

Carbon Rationing Action Groups

A number of these have been set up around the country – they agree a limit to their individual annual carbon emission. Those exceeding the limit are penalised, 4 or 5 p/kg CO₂. Set one up with your friends, or contact VREN and ask us! See www.carbonrationing.org.uk

Zero Carbon by 2050

A recent report from the Institute for Public Policy Research, the government's think tank, points to the need for a 70-80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050 to minimise risks associated with exceeding a 2C temperature rise. Given the ongoing emissions from developing countries, a zero-carbon economy could be needed by the UK and others. They are optimistic that we have the means to do this. See www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=501
In our newsletter of January, 2006, we made reference to a report "The Cutting Edge: Climate science to April 05". The location of this has moved to http://portal.campaigncc.org/files/THE_CUTTING_EDGE_CLIMATE_SCIENCE_TO_APRIL_05.pdf

Energy

Warm Welcome

Rosie & Dave Humphries of Ashton Hayes have installed a Solar Twin water heater on their roof – and enthuse about their long-term investment. They miss the fumes from their oil boiler. Solar Twin installed it in about two hours, and it works fine – unless it's a cloudy day. (www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk/Press_releases.html)



Second Generation Biodiesel

Technical: mineral diesel (traditional) is assorted hydrocarbons, no oxygen. You can modify your engine to take vegetable oil, which comprises 3 fatty acid

molecules attached to glycerol. Nothing like mineral diesel.

Current biodiesel makers split off the glycerol, and supply the methyl ester of those fatty acids. The glycerol has other uses... This 'first generation' biodiesel is more compatible with current engines. For second generation biodiesel they convert the oil into a straight-chain (or once-branched) hydrocarbon, with no oxygen, and so low affinity for water. Very like mineral diesel, but no aromatics like benzene. In this class, NExBTL is to be made by Neste at their Porvoo, Finland, refinery from this summer. They'll



be using a range of plant oils and animal fats to make oils of different cloud points, suitable for different temperatures.

GreenGold Biodiesel Closes

The only outlet in Manchester selling neat biodiesel closed on the 27th of January. Thereafter, they hope to run at least a limited alternative service, but that could be months away – and the nearest alternative forecourts are in Liverpool, Buxton, Derby, and Ashbourne. For other stockists, see www.biodieselfillingstations.co.uk

Lower Energy Business

The Carbon Trust, which helps businesses become more energy-efficient, will be helping companies calculate and minimise the carbon emissions created by individual products - a service that is free for small companies. These can range from the choice of packaging, the water content of potatoes due to be turned into crisps, and the type of oil used. See www.carbontrust.co.uk

Community Owned Renewable Energy

VREN attended a seminar in Edinburgh in December, with speakers promoting community investment in renewable energy. While largely focussed on wind energy, it could cover small hydro or biomass.

Jens Larsen talked of the favourable regime in Denmark, where 20.8% of electricity in 2004 was from wind. The supply/demand is balanced by fossil power generation or import/export via connections to Scandinavia and Germany. There is a feed-in tariff, which declines after 5 years, and an obligation on the grid to connect. 81% of wind generation is local or community-owned, and only 2% of farms generate complaints, usually noise. Small investors get their returns tax-free, and whether land or sea based, there is an 8-year return on investment. Andrew King of Energy4All highlighted the hurdles in the UK: the risk of £150,000 needed pre-consent, the specialist skills, the sceptics, and the £1m/MW investment. While willing to help community wind start-ups, they have few staff.

UK examples highlighted were:

Baywind Co-op in Cumbria have 1300 shareholders (£300 to £20,000 stake) and 6 wind turbines, and are seeking further opportunities to link developers and land owners with their local communities. One third of their capital is a Co-op bank loan. Investors receive 6-8% return.

Westmill Wind Farm Co-op, in Oxfordshire, with their well-oversubscribed share issue.

Findhorn Eco-Village, keen to make their community carbon-neutral. They use the grid to balance supply and demand.

Others were started by developers: in Boyndie Co-op, 700 locals have a stake in an Industrial and Provident society, owning 7 2MW turbines; and the proposed Pates Hill Wind Farm, again 7 2MW turbines, costing about £15m, with a return of £3m pa.

The presentations can be viewed at www.cspp.org.uk/when.html

Rooftop Wind Turbines

B&Q are also stocking 1kW WindSave wind turbines (£1495 installed, the 1kW is at 12.5m/s wind speed, so at the average of 6m/s in Cheshire expect an eighth of that – output being the cube of windspeed. However, urban wind speeds can be lower,

and highly location-specific.).

Studies in the Netherlands have shown how fickle the wind can be in an urban setting. They seem to recommend a Darrieus style turbine, or a derivative with parallel, twisting blades. On a flat roof, the optimum location is halfway between front and back (depth), and half that depth above the roof. It can be on a horizontal axis, broadside on to the prevailing wind, or vertical axis. See www.tudelft.nl/live/binaries/32943b78-dabd-4087-9cd9-b071f0c96cd3/doc/Outlook052-18-22.pdf.

To have your enthusiasm dampened, see www.wind-works.org/articles/RooftopMounting.html and Hugh

Piggott's

www.scoraigwind.com, scroll down or search for 'rooftop'.

In summary, the urban wind resource is pathetic.

B&Q are also offering RM Solar water heating panels, in packs of 1, 2 or 3 1mx2m panels from £1498, supply only.

Wind Turbine planning approvals.

In July column mounted turbines were approved by Wirral BC in greenbelt at Irby and Crewe & Nantwich BC



for a new Tesco development in Crewe town centre. That at Irby would have 2.5m blades atop a 12m tower. That in Crewe would be a 20kW (at 13m/s wind speed) MKW Gazelle turbine, having an 11m diameter downwind rotor on a 13m tower. It would take up one parking space. Meanwhile, the air curtain in the doorways of Crewe, Northwich and many other Tescos, is estimated to rate at 18 to 30kW! (4.5 or 6kW per meter width).



A 2003 study by the Centre for Sustainable Energy for a small wind turbine in Ealing concluded that the project would not be viable on purely financial grounds, given the low winds of the urban setting and the often poor prices paid by utilities for exported electricity. Large scale, rural schemes have better economics. See www.cse.org.uk/pdf/pub1027.pdf The proposal for 4, 3MW turbines at Aston, near Acton Bridge, got turned down by Vale Royal Borough Council on 30th November.

Lower Voltage, Lower Bills

For businesses and other large users, equipment is available that reduces the incoming voltage down to that necessary for their equipment. Grid electricity starts at about 252 V, and drops with distance from the transformer. You pay for Watts, which are volts x amps, and amps are proportional to volts – so dropping voltage pays twice! Electrical equipment is made to conform to European standards, which means it can do the same job and use a lower voltage than in the UK. Qualifying organisations may get a Carbon Trust interest-free loan. See www.powerperfector.com

Low Carbon Start-Ups

The Carbon Trust is offering free help to fledgling low-carbon companies, to help ensure they have sound plans. Their Carbon Incubator Programme has already given support to 40 start-up companies advising on strategy and business development – 20 have gone on to raise substantial investment. See www.thecarbontrust.co.uk/technology/incubator

CREI see Water Power
On 31st
October last year, members of Cheshire Renewable Energy



Initiative (and others) visited the Pedley Wood Trust, a delightful woodland and home of the Pedley Wheel – a 2.5m diameter, 2kW home-made overshoot waterwheel using 80 litres/sec, generating electricity via a tractor gearbox.

There is also a wind turbine, and to save harmonising with the mains, the house has 3 sets of sockets – for water, wind and mains power.

While the dam and wheelhouse have been around since the 1920s to supply water, via a ram pump, up to the house, the wheel was a recent concept. It has led owner Paul Bromley to help villages in Sri Lanka and elsewhere to build their own waterwheels, using optimised designs for their particular circumstances.

Contact Pedley Wheel Trust on 01625 872263, email pbromley@compuserve.com

Homes

Hockerton Lessons

Hockerton Housing Project, in Nottinghamshire, run tours and classes on low energy housing and sustainable communities. See www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk/SEFS/ID.791/S EFE/ViewItem.asp

Play the Regs: Assessing Energy Ratings

The NHER (National Home Energy Ratings people) have an on-line programme to say whether a house design will pass or fail the current Building Regulations Part L (the energy section). Input factors for natural and built-in ventilation, heating systems, structural details, solar water/electric panels. It demonstrates that a simple stipulation of a proportion of renewable energy equipment (as in requiring 10% of energy to be sourced from renewables) can allow relaxation on structural standards. The results include an estimate of energy demand and the SAP rating. See www.playtheregs.com

Passivhaus

This European concept sets stronger standards (UK new build common practice in brackets):

Overall U-value of external shell, 0.15 W/m²/K (0.25-0.35) (big is bad)

South facing, shading considered (may be looked at) Windows & frames, U-value under 0.8 W/m²/K (1.8-2.2)

Air-tightness – 0.6 air changes per hour, or 1m³/hr/m² (7-10 m³/hr/m²)

Passive air pre-heating and heat recovery (too many air changes in UK standard)

Solar water heating (rarely specified)

Total energy for space heating & cooling – less than 15 kWh/m²/yr (typically 55)

With total primary energy use max 120 kWh/m²/yr

People living in these houses find that the extra cost is paid for in 2 or 3 years.

Their website, www.passivhaus.org.uk, gives details of these specifications, along with useful contacts and details of existing passive houses – and other buildings (although all the structural info is in German).

Playtheregs has difficulties with these numbers – they're outside permitted ranges!

Green Lifestyle Hints

Fred's got a range of ideas, with a load of downloadable pdf leaflets from this website:

www.itvregions.com/Granada/Regional+Affairs/Freds+Green+Guide.htm

Cool Spot Lights!

Halogen spot lights: heaters masquerading as lighting. The alternative, to date, has been LED lights, which tend to give a bluish light, but are efficient and long-lived.

Now there are compact fluorescent spot lights, complete with a worm-like coiled tube within the standard little spot-bulb.

Macclesfield-based **Initial Lights** offer these at £20/pair including the necessary power adaptor; also warm white LED lights, bike lights, hand- and head-torches. See www.initiallights.co.uk/newEnergySavingSpotLights.php or tel 0845 094 6054

Megaman is a German specialist low-energy lighting manufacturer, making many sorts of fluorescent lights including dimming ones and spots. See www.megamanuk.com or tel 0845 4084625 for nearest stockist. Fozz Lighting make luminaries and market Megaman, see www.fozzlighting.co.uk. Megaman and Fozz online catalogues are multi-megabyte affairs.

Other possible stockists:

- www.lightbulbs-direct.com
- Bulbs Lamps & Tubes Direct: www.bltdirect.co.uk/cat501_1.htm, tel: 01473 716418
- www.yourwelcome.co.uk/acatalog/Low_Energy.html or tel 01926 485154

Batteries

A guide from Maplin:

Disposable:

Alkaline: work well, longer lasting and better shelf life than zinc-carbon. Use premium (about 20% more power) for high tech purposes, standard for remote controls and smoke alarms.

Lithium (not Lithium ion) for mobiles, MP3s and digital cameras, they last up to seven times as long as standard alkaline. They work well in extreme temperatures.

Rechargeable batteries cost more, but can be inexpensively recharged many times:

Nickel-Cadmium (Ni-Cd): adequate for radios and torches, they suffer from 'memory effect' so need to be completely discharged before recharging.

Nickel-Metal Hydride (Ni-MH): best for intensive high-drain use. High capacity variants can last 4 times as long as alkaline batteries on



one charge. They don't suffer memory effect, so an intelligent charger can recharge them from part way. Without use, they'll lose 1% of their charge per day, so unsuitable for low-drain appliances like smoke alarms.

Hybrid Nickel-Metal Hydride (Hybrio): ready-charged Ni-MH batteries without the leakage. Not readily available yet.

Chargers:

Manual: 8-16 hours to charge (depending on battery capacity). Slow, cheap, plug into a timer.

Timer Charger: 5-8 hours.

Intelligent Charger: 15 mins to 5 hours, senses when the batteries are charged and switches off.

Low drain to High drain	alkaline	single use lithium	Hybrid Ni-MH rechargeable	Ni MH rechargeable	Ni-Cd rechargeable
Smoke alarm	√				
Clock	√		(√)		
Remote Control	√		√		
Door Bell	√		√		(√)
Torch	√	√	√		√
Radio	√	√	√	√	√
Toy	√	√	√	√	(√)
MP3		√	√	√	
GPA		√	√	√	
Digital Camera		√	(√)	√	

Manchester Eco-Home

Manchester City Council converted two terraced houses on Penzance St, Miles Platting into one eco-home, which it opened for public scrutiny on 19th May 2006 for one year, before tenants move in. It's designed as a show-case for energy (and money) saving measures, along with water saving, composting, and recycling; and information on climate change, energy saving tips, grants and discounts. Energy bills have been cut from £730 to £332 pa, CO₂ emissions by 3 tonnes. Renovation apparently cost £100,000 – we don't know whether this included the value of donated materials. Visiting is free, by arrangement, 9-5 Monday – Friday: tel 0161 242 5805. See www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/213/213669_redbrick_greener_house_is_a_future_ecohope_.html

Warrington also has a house: Energy House 21, at 302 Manchester Road, Warrington; open Mon-Thurs 9.30 – 5, Fri 9.30 – 4, with lunch break 1-2pm. Phone first on 01925 815481 to confirm. Info at www.energyhouse21.org

And Zero Carbon?

Following the Chancellor's announcement of zero-carbon housing being the standard within 10 years, there'll be two intermediate stages of the building regs. Friends of the Earth want action on existing buildings, now; and there is concern about micro-wind producing disappointing results – towns have strange wind streams, with lots of turbulence and quiet bits. There may be solutions in well-located Turby-style turbines (a little like lawnmower blades), or in community-owned wind farms.

Energy Conservation in Victorian Buildings

A new suite of zero-carbon homes would be welcome, meanwhile we're living in a large resource that will take many years to replace... The Energy Saving Trust has a suite of booklets, including "Practical Refurbishment of Solid-Walled Houses" (CE184), which covers floors, roofs, windows, doors as well as walls. It can be viewed at www.est.org.uk/download.cfm?p=1&pid=878 or ordered from the EST on 0845 120 7799. For other publications, see www.est.org.uk/aboutest/publications You can benefit from other people's experience: George Marshall's, at www.theyellowhouse.org.uk, Penney Poyser's at www.msarch.co.uk/ecohome (pictured). You might also try the Association of Environment Conscious Builders – their website, www.aecb.net, includes a forum.

Eco-Home Exhibitions

27 Feb – 1 Mar
Ecobuild 2007, everything for the eco-home. Earls Court, London. See www.ecobuild.co.uk
22 – 25 Mar, 10am – 5pm
The Ecohome Show: over 60 companies. Part of the Homebuilding and Renovating Show, NEC Birmingham. Specialist masterclasses on self-build (Thurs + Sat), eco-build (Fri), Renovation (Sun) and seminars. Tickets £8 in advance, £12 on door. www.homebuildingshow.co.uk > National > Ecohomes, tel Nina Thurman, Tel 020 7970 4249



Miscellany

Faslane

The Faslane365 protest is running in Scotland, against the re-equipping of the nuclear submarines. It's a peaceful blockade of the Trident base until 30th September. See www.faslane.org
CND is organising a London march against Trident, along with Stop the War Coalition, on 24th February – see www.cnduk.org or tel 020 7700 2393

News and Information

EDIE provides a range of information for environmental businesses, councils and other interested people. See www.edie.net

Book Review: Market Schmarket: building the post capitalist society, by Molly Scott Cato. ISBN 187397508

The problems with the present financial system and free market are unpicked: making strong local economies is difficult; there's endless global competition, 'growth', ecological problems and poverty when established lifestyles are lost.

With personal stories, wit, cartoons and a few economic graphs, it's layperson-friendly. (*edited from a review by Chris Hart*)

Raise Money with Fair Trade Shopping Bags

Bradford Diocese Environment Group are offering Fair Trade cotton shopping bags. Made in India from organic cotton, they're brought to you via Bishopston Trading, a fair trade clothing company. They cost £2 each, plus p+p: £1 for the first bag, 50p for each additional. They may be sold on for £3. Send your order, with a cheque made payable to BDBF (Earth Care), to Mrs B. Partridge, New House Farm, Sykes Lane, Oakworth, Keighley, W Yorks, BD22 7JW. (BDBF=Bradford Diocese Board of Finance) (enquiries: geraldandbryony@hotmail.com)



Green Underwear

GreenKnickers offer knickers and men's boxers made from recycled and fair-trade organic fibres. They are as yet a small company in London with a small and select range, prices from £12 + p+p. See www.greenknickers.org, or write to GreenKnickers, 51 St Julians Farm Road, London, SE27 0RJ



Underwych gets underway.

The story of Vale Royal's unstable past is being brought to life thanks to a £47,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Mid Cheshire has been plagued by subsidence as a result of its long history of salt mining. Robert Meadows and the Vale Royal Creative Writers' Group are weaving memories from local people into songs and drama - 'Underwych', about work in the salt mining and brine pumping industries, as well as those whose lives have been affected by subsidence. The play will be performed in Northwich in July 2007, preserved on DVD and in print. If you've a tale to tell, ring Robert on 0773 329 5435 (pic: Salt Museum)

Petition Parliament

There's a string of petitions you can sign up to, even add to. Two you might be interested in:

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/cyclists/>

calls for a solid network of cycleways in towns, and

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Carbon-Rationing/>

calls for a system of personal energy quotas as a means of equitably reducing emissions.

You can only sign these petitions electronically.

Free Websites for Community Organisations and Schools

The Community Builder website provides a tool which community groups can use to build and manage their own website free of charge.

There's also a section for schools websites. See www.communitykit.co.uk/p_home.ikml



OXFAM Directory Enquiries

Dial 118918 for directory enquiries, and support OXFAM – it apparently costs no more than the market leader (14p per minute, plus 59p connection charge from BT landlines), but 9p of every call goes to OXFAM. More at www.118918.com.

Margaret Oldman

We're sorry to learn of the death of Margaret Oldman, of ovarian cancer on 11th January. An unstoppable campaigner, gardener, recycler and compost enthusiast, she leaves husband Richard and daughter Karen. Her funeral was held at the Church of St Boniface, Bunbury on 31st January, followed by a meadow burial at Friends of Nature Burial Ground, Mobberley. (tel 0161 432 2131 or www.burialswithnature.co.uk - thought you'd like to know!)

UnLtd's Millennium Awards provide practical and financial support to social entrepreneurs in the UK – people with the vision, passion, drive and commitment, who want to change the world for the better. See www.unltd.org.uk

A Newsletter for Your Area

Do you live in Macclesfield/Chester/Congleton/Crewe & Nantwich/Ellesmere

Port/Halton/Warrington? If you'd like a 'clone' of the VREN newsletter for your area, and can forward news or articles (raw or processed) relevant to your area, let us know; we'll see if we can get funding for the job.

Transport

Sore Bum, Saw the World

Babara Hadrill has made her way to Brisbane from the UK to be a bridesmaid at her best friend's wedding – overland.

Her route took her through Cologne, Moscow, Ulan Bator, Beijing, Hanoi, Saigon, Chao Doc, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Fremantle, with 2 weeks on a cargo ship. Estimated CO₂ emissions 1.65 tonnes, by air would have been 5.5 tonnes; cost: (to Moscow: £132; to Beijing £190, to Hanoi £70, to Saigon £35 (picture), Bangkok £30, Kuala Lumpur £4, the ship bit £1000); total £2000 for 7½ weeks' travel, food, accommodation, sightseeing, etc. She's now returning, slowly.

Sore bum? She only remarks of numbness on the coach to Moscow.

See www.babs2brisbane.blogspot.com

Reversing Racket

The Environmental Transport Association (ETA) is campaigning for a change to the sound reversing large vehicles make. The noise is currently one/two pure piercing tones, and can disturb many people in the surrounding area. The alternative is to use white noise. This is easier on the ear, does not give a sudden surprise to the person in danger – who can react calmly, and it's source is instantly locatable. See www.eta.co.uk/page.asp?p=268 or tel 0800 212 810.

How Transport Can Save NHS Money

Research from Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, shows that cash spent on cycling and walking could save the NHS huge amounts of money and, at the same time, help tackle obesity and other health problems due to physical inactivity. Analysis of the economic benefits of a number of local walking and cycling schemes reveals that every £1 spent on a route generates a benefit (including health, time saved, maintenance) worth £20, while other transport schemes such as rail and roads typically offer £3 benefit per £1 spent. Sustrans used the Government's own methods for these assessments. See www.sustrans.org.uk/default.asp?sID=1158137684156 (CTC)

Planning for Cyclists

Lancashire – the cyclists' county design guidelines were prepared by Dr John Parkin of consultants MVA and Bolton University, guided by a steering group from council officers and local cycling representatives. Good facility design means more cycling! They are freely available at www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/cycling/pdf/Lancashire.pdf

Cycle to work

Cycling England, has a leaflet on the Government's Cycle to Work tax incentive scheme. Employer buys the VAT-free bike, employee pays 'rental' (before income tax), in effect repaying employer, and may then purchase the bike as 'second hand', again from gross earnings. Download the leaflet from www.cyclingengland.co.uk/viewer.php?f d=131 (CTC) (pic: www.biketowork.ch)

Food, Agriculture, Gardening

Organic Food – Merely a Lifestyle Choice?

Following Environment Minister, David Milliband's comments, the Ecologist magazine responded:

- 1) Organic food contains higher concentrations of beneficial nutrients, with vegetables having more phenolics (believed to be good against cancer), and meat and milk having more essential fatty acids.
- 2) At the same time, they contain less pesticides and fewer additives.
- 3) Organic farms are known to harbour a higher biodiversity.
- 4) In developing countries and even in the US, equal or greater productivity has been achieved by organic farming.
- 5) Half of lower-income families indulge in organic food, and while organic meat may be more expensive, "eating less but better quality meat is better for people, animals and planet."

From www.theecologist.co.uk/archive_detail.asp?content_id=701

A Wealth of Apples

Northwich has a bounty of apple trees, most bearing delicious



fruit. Some are evidently planted, as the one with large coxy fruit behind the library, and the red-skinned, pink-fleshed one near the big roundabout. Others are probably seedlings: Leicester Street's sweet little green apple (like a Golden Delicious, infinitely better fresh than stored) and a number

along Marbury Lane including a small cox, a pink-flushed baker/dessert apple and a baker. Still others are probably remnants of a past orchard; there's a tasty little russet and large yellow baker to the west of Hartford's Blue Bridge. Three apple trees on Greenall Road include a delicious red-skin/russet cross. A tree on Anderton Nature Park has little merit though, other than the large bounty of small green fruit, maybe good for toasting. Any others? (pic A.Powell)



Organic Beef

Tarporley residents can now get organic beef – from Ainsleys at Park Farm, Wrexham Road, Ridley; tel 01829 261700, email ainsley@bakerconsulting.fsnet.co.uk (found on www.organic-supermarket.co.uk). Northwich residents can get theirs, and many other organic foods, from Riverside Organics, Manor Lane, Whatcroft. (From Davenham, follow the lane past the church, eastwards.) tel 01606 46258.



Invasion of Foreign Sprouts

Could they have come from Australia? Maybe, if they're out-of-season. This is your chance to defeat them – just a game! See www.sproutinvaders.co.uk

Drink Fair Trade in Northwich

The Box, the small café on Leicester Street farthest from M&S, is serving fair trade tea and coffee. Cheers! Meanwhile, the fair trade coffee that MacDonaldis plan to sell in their UK franchises is certified by Rainforest Alliance. According to a 2004 Guardian article, Rainforest Alliance (RA) pay their suppliers less than the guaranteed price Fairtrade Foundation pay - www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,,1358047,00.html. RA products need only be 30% from certified growers, and GM is allowed.



Grants for Community Food

The Sheila McKechnie Award is managed by the Food Standards Agency. Two community food initiatives will be chosen every year and each will receive £15,000 (£5,000 a year) over a three-year period. The funding should help the community food initiative generate new ideas about how it can tackle food inequality issues and develop its work in this area. www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/damemckechnieaward/ or call 020 7276 8170.

Experience Wanted

VREN has been contacted by some Environmental Science students requiring work experience. If you can help (or if you are such a student yourself), please contact us. We're also gathering contacts for sustainable development placements.

Schools, Children

A Break from the Parents

EcoWeeks are breaks at the Centre for Alternative Technology, in Wales, for children aged 10-15. For £250 they get 7 nights' accommodation in the Eco-Cabins, hill walking, playing indoor games, singing, trips to the swimming baths and Corris Railway, making and testing wind turbines, and lots of ethical and sustainable living. They even get to share in the washing up and cleaning! Volunteer staff are also welcome. There are two weeks: Easter (31st March – 7th April) and Summer (23rd to 30th July). See www.ecoweek.org.uk or tel 0845 347 9317

Trade Rules are Nuts

Christian Aid has an education pack with video aimed at children – teaching them how trade works, often unfairly, by looking at nuts. How the groundnut was the mainstay of Senegal – they borrowed money to invest in it, then the whole country collapsed into debt when other countries followed suit. Then the cashew, Brazil nut and the subsidised American peanut. All set to some fun music. Teacher Bridget Dimbleby has a set and can help – contact her on 01606 782795 See www.christianaid.org.uk/mpower/resource/mpower/mpower11/index.htm

Prizes for Schools

The Teaching Awards Trust, launched by the former film producer Lord Puttnam (backed by the Education Secretary, Alan Johnson, and Jonathan Porritt, chairman of the Sustainable Development Commission), will reward schools which promote healthy living, environmental awareness and community involvement. Parents, teachers or pupils can nominate their school for the award - which will be shown on BBC 2 next autumn. Nominations may be made through the trust's website - www.teachingawards.com.

Trucking with Climate Change

A multimedia interactive exhibition-on-wheels is available for hire, initial staffing free, to schools and community groups. Inside the 7m long trailer are 4 rooms, covering the current effects of climate change, the science, it's future impact in the UK, and what we can do to cut our contributions. It meets National Curriculum needs for KS2 to 4, covering science and links to English, geography, PSHE and other subjects. If you would like to book the exhibition contact Suzie Alexander, tel 01524 36201 or see www.globallink.org.uk/climatechange

Breathing life into school grounds

Ian Amatt of Cumbria Wildlife Trust tells about three years making Grounds for Wildlife. Cumbria Wildlife Trust, after many enquiries, launched Grounds for Wildlife in 2003 with National Lottery support. They've since worked with 46 Cumbrian schools with £350 budget per school.

They avoid the 'Groundforce' approach – they liaise with the school to determine the where, who, when and what for. A neglected 'wildlife' area might have wildlife value, but not be seen as a school asset. Children may not know about wildlife: they need to see it, feel it, even be it. Let them in on the planning as well as the work and maintenance. Take lots of pictures, display them, and be proud: you'll get others involved.

With the limited budget, you get volunteer help from parents and community. Let the children write letters for help – they do it so much better, another cross-curricular activity. Working through this project gives many schools the confidence to tackle other grounds improvements.

Having the children own and work the project builds confidence, skills, teamwork and knowledge; many children work better on something practical, outdoors.

When all is done, celebrate: a party, certificates, an open day. Make everyone feel special – they've made dreams into reality.

The project needs maintaining: that takes management plans. For each habitat, it's a good idea to have an A3 wall chart saying, for example, 5 person hours to clear the pond of surplus vegetation. This keeps it live, and is a further opportunity to get hands-on and see what's there.

A legacy for life: Our project has created ponds, wildflower meadows, woodlands, sensory gardens, vegetable patches, or revamped old wildlife areas. Just as importantly we hope we have also created spark and passion for nature in the hearts of the children we have reached. *Digested from Wildlife Watch Link, iss 128, from the Wildlife Trusts.*



Rolypig Composter

A new product, designed to be educational and child-friendly. It is a decorative wormery that invites aeration by rolling: a day's kitchen waste goes in at the snout end, you

roll it onto the next side, and periodically empty the processed material from the rear. It contains a spiral to move the material slowly from front to back. It costs £160 + £17p+p from Devon, and there's a quarter-size see-through scale model for £25 + £4 p+p. See www.rolypig.com or tel 01398 361656

Truth..

All secondary schools are to receive a copy of Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' film on climate change, with supporting material. It will form part of a year of action to make all schools models of sustainable best practice. (*Edie*). The DVD was turned down by US schools, fearing it would compromise their funding. (*Ecologist*)



How to work out your household's CO₂ emissions

Enter the approximate tons/half tons:	
1 ton is:	
Coal , 8 sacks	
Gas 5000 kWh	
Oil , 80 gals or 350 litres	
Electricity , 1000 kWh	
LPG , 2/3 m ³ or 670 litres	
Wood , 2/3 tonne unless rescued	
Car, petrol: miles – 3600 (small), 2800 (med), 2300 (large)	
Car, diesel: miles – 5300 (small), 4300 (large)	
Train , 10,000 person miles	
Bus , 6,000 person miles	
Coach , 10,000 person miles	
Air , 1600 person miles (includes effect of contrails)	
Total	
Divide by the number of residents for emissions per person.	
We in the UK emit around 11 tonnes CO ₂ (or equivalent) per person per year, half of which is under our direct control – as above. Can we get it to 1 tonne or less?	

Diary Dates

Abbreviations – see back page

19th January – 29th April 2007

“Underneath the Arches” – exhibition of Mid-Cheshire Railways at the Salt Museum, London Road, Northwich. Free. www.saltmuseum.org.uk/whats-on-events.htm

Tues 13th Feb

Wildlife Gardening with Sue Tatman, Kelsall

Gardening Club. 7.30, Methodist Church Meeting Room, Chapel Bank. Parking next to Methodist Chapel or Morris Dancer. £2.

Wed 14 Feb

Half Term Burn, tackle and learn rhododendron at Marbury Country Park. Suitable for all ages and Valentines!! 10am - 3pm. tel Chris Moseley, 01606 77741

Thurs 15th Feb

Rural Area Meeting, 7pm, St John's Church Hall, School Lane, Hartford.

Fri 16th Feb

Nest Box Workshop, 10am – 1pm, Central Park Learning Centre, Castle Park, Frodsham
All materials provided, £10 per person. tel 01928 736654 – [centralpark\[at\]valeroyal.gov.uk](mailto:centralpark[at]valeroyal.gov.uk)

Fri 16th Feb

Valentine's Special: **Aphrodisiacs**. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. £1.50. VROWG

Sat 17th Feb

Nest Box Building: Join FOAM for Marbury or your garden. From 10.00am Rangers' Cabins Marbury Park. Alan Garner 01606 883539

Sat 17 Feb

Nest Box Making, Little Budworth Country Park: make one for the Little Budworth birds, or two and take one home. All materials provided. Booking essential: Lee Thompson on 01606 301484

Sun 18th Feb

Orchard Workshop with CLT at Erddig Hall, Wrexham, 10am – 4pm. £20. Tel CLT on 01244 376333 or email [cltoffice\[at\]tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cltoffice[at]tiscali.co.uk)

Wed 21st Feb

Winsford Area Meeting, 7pm, Civic Hall, Winsford

Thurs 22nd Feb

'Energy in a Carbon Constrained World: Everything but Nuclear?'

by Nick Wood, Entec; Energy Institute event. 6pm for 6.30 start. At Entec (UK), Windsor House Gadbrook Business

Centre, Gadbrook Rd, Northwich.

For more information or to confirm your place: Bob Hooks, tel 01829 751705, email [bob.hooks\[at\]btintern.et.com](mailto:bob.hooks[at]btintern.et.com)

Fri 23rd Feb

Insect Hotel Workshop, 10am – 1pm, Central Park Learning Centre, Castle Park, Frodsham
All materials provided, £10 per person. tel 01928 736654 – [centralpark\[at\]valeroyal.gov.uk](mailto:centralpark[at]valeroyal.gov.uk)

Fri 23rd Feb

Conservation in Madagascar: Mal Mitchell of Azafady on working with poor people and rich wildlife. Chester Zoo, 7pm, £8: tel Penny Rudd, 01244 650215 for complete details.

Sat 24th Feb

Cheshire Region Biodiversity Partnership Conference: Tenants Hall, Tatton Park, 9.30am – 4pm.
Info at www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cheshire/news_conference.htm or tel 0797 1052162

24 & 25 Feb

Weekend Willow Sculpture Course with Caroline Gregson. DCCG

Sun 25th Feb

Do Some Of My Plants Really Start Their Life In A Test Tube? By Paul Jackson Managing Director, Four Oaks Direct 2.30pm. For info tel Tatton Garden Society, 01477 537698

Tues 27th Feb

Overview of Grant Funding Opportunities: A free conference to be held in Rudheath. email [debbie.roper\[at\]cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.roper[at]cheshire.gov.uk).

26th Feb – 11th Mar

Fair Trade Fortnight. See www.fairtrade.org.uk: promotional items and merchandise available. Or tel 020 7440 7676 Mon to Fri 10am-5:00pm

27 Feb – 1 Mar

Ecobuild 2007, see page 9

Fri 2nd Mar

Anderton Nature Park: industrial wasteland to wildlife haven, with David James. NDHS £1.50, Mid-Cheshire College, Hartford, 8pm.

Wed 7th Mar

Quiz Night (7.30) & AGM (7pm), Cheshire Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group. Fourways Inn, Delamere. Teams of 4, £6pp. Helen Broughton, 01270 627938.

Fri 9th Mar

'Birds of Mallorca', Stuart Meredith. MCOS, Hartford Village Hall Chester Road, Hartford. Adults £2, children £1. Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Mon 12th Mar

Gardening for Wildlife. FOAM. £1.50. 7.30pm Comberbach Memorial Hall. George Pilkington 01925 816217

Fri 16th Mar

Seeds and Seedlings swap and Indoor Bowling. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. £1.50. VROWG

Wed 21st Mar

Early Spring Bird Song, Fox Howl, Delamere Forest 5-7pm. Need binoculars + outdoor clothing. A charge will be made. Info: Kay George, 01606 882183

22 – 25 Mar

The Ecohome Show. See page 9

Tues 27th Mar

Envirenergy North West, everything energy. MUFC, Trafford Park. See www.envirenergy.org.uk, or tel, 01257 450060

Wed 28th Mar

Update on the Weaver Valley Regional Park & AGM. River Weaver Navigation Society, 7.30pm in The Wharf, 216 Manchester Road, Lostock. Free. Tel Ann Bates, 01606 79576



30 Mar – 20 April

I Bike Manchester: a festival of cycling, with events and workshops. Add events, be a steward, do a performance, submit artwork, or just join in. See www.ibikemcr.org.uk

Sat 31 Mar

Willow Weaving, Brereton Heath LNR, DCCG

31 Mar - 15 April

Easter Holiday Hunt, Northwich Community Woodlands. Collect 'hunt' sheets from Marbury Park Rangers' Office and explore the woodlands at leisure while solving the clues. Fun for all the family. tel Steph Hefferan, 01606 77741

Fri 13th April

White Mischief: Mark Bevan on the impact on Cheshire of Lord Delamere, last of Kenya's great white settlers. NDHS. £1.50, Mid-Cheshire College, Hartford, 8pm.

Sat 14th April

Does your community want to tackle climate change? Hosted by Ashton Hayes at the University of Chester, followed by post conference fun and networking at Ashton Hayes. email [conference\[at\]fireflyuk.net](mailto:conference[at]fireflyuk.net)

14th – 15th April

Lambing Weekend, Farm at Tatton Park, from 1pm. Tel 01625 534431



Fri 20th Apr

Fungi Walk, minibus from Central Park Learning Centre, Castle Park, Frodsham, 9.30am, return 2.30pm. Identification, microscopy, gastronomy conservation etc with Dr Paul Hamlyn. £10. tel 01928 736654 – [centralpark\[at\]valeroyal.gov.uk](mailto:centralpark[at]valeroyal.gov.uk)

Fri 20th April

Square Foot Gardening, veg from small plots. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. £1.50. VROWG

Sun 22nd April

Introduction to Longbow at the Old Hall, Tatton Park. Also 13th May, 3rd June, 12th Aug,

Also: **Advanced Longbow** on 11th May, 8th June, 3rd Aug, 7th Sept. Booking essential – 01625 534400 or 01625 534428

Sun 22 April

Sandstone Trail Circular. 7½ mile walk through the Forest, over Old Pale with its views, to Kelsall and back through Dark Ark. 9.30am, Barns Bridge Gates car park, Ashton Road. tel John Street 01270 611 610

Wed 25th April

Early Migrant Bird Song: as 21st Mar

Fri 27 April

Weaver Wander. A gentle stroll through the Weaver Parkway looking at local and natural history. Booking essential Tony Blackledge, 01606 593133

28 & 29 April

Weekend Frame

Baskets Course with Jeff Allen. DCCG

1st – 3rd May

Sustainabilitylive!, including Nemex (energy), Contaminated land (ICU), Environmental Technology and Services (ET and ES), and Water (IWEX) at NEC Birmingham. See www.sustainabilitylive.com/slive07/et/, tel 0208 651 7140.

3rd May – 2 Sept 2007

Myths and Legends of Cheshire at the Salt Museum, London Road, Northwich.

Sat 5th May

Dawn Chorus. Meet 6.00am Marbury Country Park car park. Alan Garner 01606 883539

Sat 5th May

Dragons, Princesses and Green Men. Walk around Little Budworth Country Park to find some of the more fantastical wildlife at Little Budworth. 10am, Coach Road car park. Lee Thompson 01606 301484

Sat 5th May

CWT **Annual Spring Plant Sale**, Cuddington Scout Hut. Bring plants from 11am; sale starts 2pm prompt. Info: Frank Godfrey, 01606 883385

Sat 5 May

Quince Walk: guided walk around the national quince tree collection. Normal entry charges. 2pm, Norton Priory Walled Garden. tel Norton Priory Museum 01928 569895

Wed 9th May

RHS Lecture – **The Kitchen Garden.** Tatton Park. Booking essential – tickets from the RHS on 020 7821 3408



Fri 11th May

Old Knutsford: Joan Leach on the historic town. NDHS £1.50, Mid-Cheshire College, Hartford, 8pm.

Sat 12 May

Dingy Delights, Northwich Community Woodlands. Butterflies of the Flashes and perhaps the rare Dingy Skipper in flight. Stout boots or Wellingtons required. Over 12's only. Booking essential: Steph Hefferan 01606 77741

13th May

Cancer Research Race for Life, Oulton Park. www.raceforlife.org or 08705 134 314

Mon 14 May

History of Marbury Hall + AGM: Geoff Buchan on Marbury Hall and its owning families. £1.50 to non-FOAM members. 7.30pm Comberbach Memorial Hall. Brian Jaques 01606 891242

Fri 18th May

Slugs and Snails. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. £1.50. VROWG

Sat 19 May

Walk in the footsteps of A. W. Boyd, a great Cheshire naturalist. 2pm, Village Hall, Antrobus. CLT

Sun 20th May

Bird Song at Fox Howl III: this time at 5.30am, with hot drinks and bacon butties at 7.30ish. If you've time, there's then a visit to Blakemere. Please book: Kay George, 01606 882183. A charge will be made.

Sun 20 May

Sandstone Trail Circular – Tarporley. A newly-published 7½ mile route from the centre of Tarporley, to Eaton, Utkinton Hall and Fishers Green. Need suitable clothing, food and drink. 9.30am, entrance to Rising Sun car park*, Tarporley High Street. (*Public parking at the far end.) tel John Street 01270 611 610

Sun 20th May
British Skin Foundation **Charity Walk**, Small Showground, Tatton Park. www.britishskinfoundation.org. uk or tel 020 7391 6341

Sun 27 May
Blossom Day: springtime activities and guided walk in the Walled Garden. Normal entry charges. 2pm, Norton Priory Walled Garden. tel Norton Priory 01928 569895

Sun 10th June
Marie Curie Cancer Care **Devoted to Life Walk** – Stableyard, Tatton Park. 4 or 6 mile circular route – hike, bike, jog or walk the dog. Register (£10, inc T-shirt) by 4th June. Walk starts 10.30/11am; info 0161 255 2800 / [regionaleventsnorth\[at\]mariecurie.org](mailto:regionaleventsnorth[at]mariecurie.org). uk. Also **Triathlon**, 07737 002275 or www.mytriathlon.co.uk

Wed 13th June
Bird Song at Fox Howl IV – Established Territories. Details as 21st Mar.

Fri 15th June
A Social Evening Full of Taste – organic food and drink. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. £1.50. VROWG

Sat 16th June
Flower Photography. Professional photographer Penny Boyd will lead a practical workshop at Anderton. FOAM. Booking essential, small charge for the day. Brian Jaques 01606 891242.

16 – 17 June
Mediaeval Fayre at Tatton Park. Re-enactment, combat, entertainment, market. 11am – 5pm (last admission 4pm); Adults £5, Children £3, Family £15 (2 adults and 3 children) No concessions. Tel 01625 534400

Wed 20 June
Lime-bed Lovelies of Northwich Community Woodlands. Seek out the stunning seasonal orchids and maybe the tiny, delicate marsh helleborine. Stout boots or wellies req'd. Over 12's only. Booking essential: tel Steph Hefferan, 01606 77741

23 & 24th June
Cancer Research Race for Life, Tatton Park Small Showground. www.raceforlife.org or 08705 134 314



Sun 24 June
Sandstone Trail Circular. A 5½ mile walk from Higher Burwardsley, via Peckforton, to Beeston with fine views of both castles. Need suitable clothing, food and drink. 9.30am, entrance to Cheshire Workshops car park, Higher Burwardsley. John Street 01270 611610

26 – 27 June
Evening Deerwalk, Tatton Park. Booking essential, call 01625 534428



Fri 29 June
Weaver Wander: A gentle stroll through the Weaver Parkway looking at local and natural history. Booking essential: Tony Blackledge, 01606 593133

30 June
Square work with Chris Jordan. DCCG

Sun 1 July
Busy Bees at Marbury: See the Marbury hive and the bees in action with instruction on bee keeping by the experts. Suitable for all ages. 2 - 4pm, Marbury Country Park. tel Chris Moseley, 01606 77741

Wed 4th July
Evening Deerwalk, Tatton Park. Booking essential, call 01625 534428

Sat 7 July
Get Lost! A gentle introduction to map reading and compass skills in untamed Little Budworth Nature Park. Learn map reading, grid references and to navigate to find hidden treasure...Booking essential: Lee Thompson, 01606 301484

7th (and 8th?) July
1940's Day (possibly weekend) - Old Hall and farm, Tatton Park. 1940s as it was – come dressed up. 11am – 5 pm (last entry 4pm); normal admission charges, no concessions. More info: 01625 534400

14 – 15 July
Rare Breeds Weekend, Tatton Park Farm, from 1pm. Normal admission charges. More info: 01625 534431



Sat 21 July
Hairstreaks and High squeals! View the tree canopy at Marbury Country Park and glimpse the rare butterflies from an open top bus. Booking essential: Chris Moseley, 01606 77741

18 – 22 July
RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park. See www.rhs.org.uk/flowershows or call 0870 247 1223 to secure tickets in advance

Sat 28th July
Kite Making and Flying. Fly your kite. Or make one from the inexpensive kits. FOAM + WATCH. From 10am Rangers' Cabins Marbury Country Park. Brian Jaques 01606 891242

Sat 28th July
Willow work for Gardens with Peter Woollam. DCCG

Sun 29th July
Tatton Park Picnic Concert, Concert Site.

Notes

CLT: Cheshire Landscape Trust, Tel 01244 376333 or email [cltoffice\[at\]tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cltoffice[at]tiscali.co.uk)

CWT: Cheshire Wildlife Trust

DCCG: Dane Coppice Crafts Group. tel Aileen 01270 760810 or email [dccg\[at\]spindizzy.net](mailto:dccg[at]spindizzy.net) at least a week in advance to allow willow soaking. No willow – no workshop!

FOAM: Friends of Anderton & Marbury

LNR: Local Nature Reserve

MCOS: Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Society

NDHS: Northwich & District Heritage Society

VROWG: Vale Royal Organic & Wildlife Gardeners, tel Anthony, 01606 853099