

VALE ROYAL ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Autumn
2005

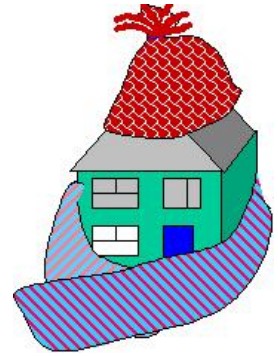
NEWSLETTER

Don't Be Cold!

The Met Office is forecasting a colder winter than of late... The Eaga Partnership exists to help. People on benefits, especially those over 60 and families with (or expecting) children can benefit from their work, which is funded by the Energy Efficiency Commitment – a levy on energy supply companies. They can:

- Use a Warm Front Grant of £2700 (£4000 if oil central heating is recommended) to provide insulation to the loft, walls, hot water cylinder; draught exclusion; central heating, storage heaters or glass-fronted solid fuel fires, with thermostats and timers; heating repairs or replacements. If a Warm Front Grant has already been used on the house, the balance of this £2700 is available.
- Give energy efficiency advice
- Advise on whether you're missing out on any benefits.

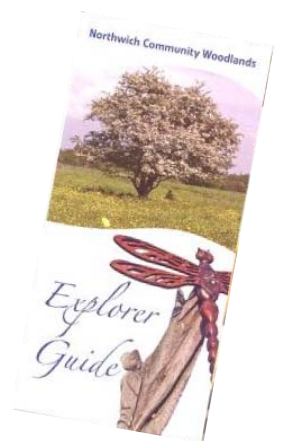
To seek out grants ring Cheshire Energy Efficiency Advice on freefone 0800 512012. Alternatively, visit www.est.org.uk; click on 'Money for home improvements' for a list of willing funders. If you've got solid walls the freefone number is the best bet. There's a home energy check on www.est.org.uk/myhome.



Find Your Way Around Northwich Community Woodlands



A leaflet showing the various routes through the nearly 1000 acres of Northwich Community Woodlands was issued in August. It also shows pictures of some of the sights. Copies are available in information points and from Marbury Rangers' Office. Not just a visitor resource, but useful for commuting cyclists and walkers.



Further proposed developments include a bridge to connect the east of Marbury Park with a path along the south bank of the mere, and thus to Great Budworth. Also a

footbridge for the Hollows, between Anderton and Marbury, as the road there lacks a footpath.

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

Lifestyle



The Call of the Wild

The prospect of mucking their smart clothes and wrecking their trainers is putting 1 in 3 children off traditional games in the park or garden, according to the Positively Dirty survey commissioned by Persil. Many parents encourage their children to play outside, but children worry about

dirtying designer clothes or being told off for getting dirty. 14% of children positively avoid risk of getting dirty through outdoor activities. Many parents consider dirty clothes reflected badly on them, and preferred their children in clean clothes. There is therefore a tendency to try to limit children's engagement with dirt. As children learn to play with technology they play less in the natural world, learning about nature and being creative. Sedentary lifestyles encourage obesity. It seems only 31% of children play in the garden, 22% play a team sport, and 17% ride bikes. The two top everyday activities are watching TV and playing video games – but parents would like their children to play outside more and that it's important for their learning and development. It doesn't consider the possibility of two sets of clothes – one for clean, one for messy activities. See www.londonplay.org.uk/downloads/persil-positively-dirty.pdf

Other motives for restraining children are offered by Tim Gill, in an Ecologist article: fear of strangers, mishap, traffic, etc. While less than one child in a million is killed by a stranger in the UK each year, 5 times that are killed by relatives, and 10 times by cars. He says play areas should be natural, that coordination, social skills and mental and physical health would be helped by interaction with nature and random structures. He quotes the example of Freiburg in Germany, who've abandoned tubular steel and primary colours in favour of mounds, ditches, logs, fallen trees, boulders, bushes, wild flowers and dirt, at half the price of contemporary kit, but still meeting European safety standards. A few UK towns are following suit. To get there, there's a '20 is plenty' move to cut speed limits in residential areas, that may encourage more cycling among the 90% of children who own a bike. (2% cycle to school.) Learning Through Landscapes co-ordinates National School Grounds Week in the second week of June, encouraging events and activities that offer children the opportunity to be creative

and messy through a range of hands on active play experiences. See www.ltl.org.uk

Gardening aids mental health

New research carried out by Dundee University has revealed that gardening and arts projects can provide a useful form of therapy for people with mental illness. A film, entitled 'Recovering Lives; Mental Health, Gardening and the Arts' which highlights the benefits of these types of activity had been produced by Dr Hester Parr of the university and members of Luna, a local arts and mental health group. It's available on DVD from Dereck Ramsay, c/o Art Angel, Dudhope Art Centre, 5 St Mary's Place, Dundee, DD1 5RB, price £5, cheques payable to LUNA. (from www.wellontheweb.org, search for 'Recovering Lives', and www.dundee.ac.uk/pressreleases/prmay05/mentalhealth.html)

No Waste Like Home



If you enjoyed this BBC2 series presented by eco-expert Penney Poyser in August and September, you may like to visit her own home from your computer:

www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/360/where_to_go/ecohome/tour_01.shtml

For sources of materials used in her home, use the "Ecohome" link thereon, or www.msarch.co.uk/ecohome

The Cake Club:

volunteers help clean up Northwich streets, first Tuesday of the month. They meet at 12.30, in the New Vic Club, Neumann Street. Main focus Victoria Road, Church Walk, Vickersway Park. They also meet weekly to work on an organic allotment. Chairman Sarah Merison. Info: 01606 331614.



Wildlife Friendly Gardening

A recent (11th August) Radio 4 Costing the Earth programme looked at biodiversity in the garden, valuable as a wildlife reserve amongst monoculture farming. A wide range of creatures inhabit gardens, and this range, according to the programme, is little affected by the use of pesticides. Maximising the amount of plants – having trees, bushes and lower plants – has the most benefit. They said that metaldehyde slug pellets are rarely taken up by other creatures, and the effect of poisoned slugs on hedgehogs is minimal. Birds are indifferent as to the looks of their nest boxes – they can be brightly coloured. Much was taken from a Sheffield study, “Biodiversity in Urban Gardens”. While nest site provision for solitary bees and wasps can be successful, bumblebee nests, along with nettle patches, were little use. Dead wood shows promise, and wildlife ponds benefit from seeding with appropriate species. The planting of exotic species can provide winter food for wildlife unavailable elsewhere. In all, they found a vast selection of invertebrates and lower plants. See www.rhs.org.uk/research/biodiversity/proceedings.asp and www.shef.ac.uk/uni/projects/bugs/BUGS1/updates.html



Public Relations

Here are a few notes from the Public Relations workshop VREN and Northwich Community Woodlands held on 30th June with Martin Newman.

Public Relations is the planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organisation and its publics (Inst of PR). “In the absence of facts, people will form their own opinions!!” So PR is the management of reputation. PR is not advertising, nor marketing.

PR can be done with TALKS: eg Lions, Rotary, business groups, etc.

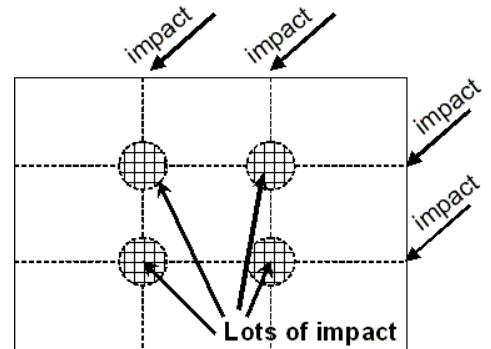
Or through the PRESS: a good picture, and a story. National Papers like to use their own people, locals are easier. If doing a press release, ensure its well written with all the who, what, where, when and why. Have the main points in the first paragraph, then explanatory bits and finally the quotes (it may be trimmed off, from the bottom up). Use your logo at the top, add “News Information”, then your short, snappy heading and your story – 1½ spacing. Finish with “ends” and your organisation information and contact details. The text should be simple, direct, readable and in short sentences and paragraphs – and aim for 1

side of A4. Avoid superlatives, jargon and clichés; include trigger words and relevant quotes.

Any photographs should be attached to an A4 sheet with Pritt-stick, with caption and references on the paper, not the photo. If digital it should be 3M pixel for a 4x6 or 5x8 inch picture, and printed on photocard or emailed. Fill the frame, and try to use the rule of thirds for impact (see diagram)

With vandalism, build a positive story for your local community; or name and shame.

In the event of damage limitation & crisis management, you’ll need a professional.



What Voluntary Opportunities do you have?

Vale Royal CVS is compiling a register of voluntary opportunities so that they can send appropriate prospecting volunteers in appropriate directions. Contact Caroline Jamieson, CVS, Waterside House, Navigation Road, Northwich, CW8 1BE, tel 01606 723180.

Builders Note:

A study from the Energy Saving Trust indicates 47% of homebuyers want environment-friendly features. Low crime rates and local schools and amenities feature higher, both at 57%, and friendly neighbours, spacious garden and fitted kitchen come lower. Most would be willing to pay more for a sustainable home. They’re urging builders to build more environment-friendly homes, and they have a series of seminars planned including Manchester (Freemasons Hall, Bridge Street) on Thursday 24th November.

For further information contact:

Kathryn Hull, Energy Saving Trust, on 020 7227 0375 or kathryn.hull@est.org.uk

Eve Titchener, Consolidated Communications, on 0207 208 2748 or evet@consol.co.uk

See www.est.org.uk, select ‘Housing and Buildings’ then ‘Local Authorities & Housing Providers’, ‘News Centre’, ‘Press Releases’ and ‘29th September’.

The Centre for Alternative Technology is running a course “Eco Design and Construction” next September, for those wishing to learn cutting-edge techniques. Tel 01654 705981 or see www.cat.org.uk/courses for the full range.

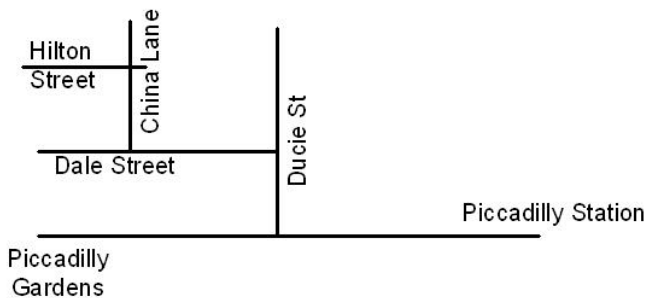
Locally

Sustainability North West moves

Sustainability Northwest (SNW) and The National Centre for Business and Sustainability (NCBS) have moved to Fourways House, easy walking distance from Piccadilly Station, and home to leading environmental and regeneration organisations working for England's Northwest, including: Mersey Basin Campaign Groundwork North West, ENWORKS, Renewables Northwest, Creative Concern.

Bicycle parking is available.

You'll find them at: Fourways House, 57 Hilton Street, Manchester M1 2EJ. Tel SNW 0161 247 7800, NCBS 0161 247 7979. Fax 0161 247 7870



Northwich Vision

As we write, Penny's Lane Mine is being filled: its "giant breeze block" has been found to be setting to plan. Next in line is Newman's, then Baron's Quay. Completion is expected Mar/Apr/May 2007. The development partner for the 30 acre Baron's Quay site, Wilson Bowden Developments, was selected on 28th July. 12 months of consultation follow, before the planning application in mid-2006. The owners will be Vale Royal, with a long lease to the developer, in order to get some of the rent stream. 300,000 sq ft of retail is expected, with leisure, residential, hotel, office/incubator units, art & cultural centre, and riverside improvements. Wilson Bowden, with partners, successfully bid for a mixed development incorporating BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method – addresses management, energy, health issues, pollution, transport, land, ecology, materials and water – see www.breeam.org.uk, tel 01923 664462) for Brighton and Hove's Preston Barracks brownfield site. (www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1125341)

People Changes

Roy Garton is now the secretary for Northwich Anglers

Langley Education Centre is no more
David Hawkes, of mid-Cheshire CWT (Cheshire Wildlife Trust) has handed chairmanship over to Peter Young.

Gemma Ward is now the Community & Education Officer for Delamere Forest Enterprise, taking over from Jayne Harrison.

CLASP is renamed Cheshire Local Energy Support Programme (LESP)

Groundwork's Jennifer Poole has taken over Neil Collie's cycleway and footpath developments.

Vale Royal's New Sustainability Officer

Robin Wilson started in post on the 17th October. He's a former Groundwork Senior Business Advisor, helping small & medium enterprises. His first priority is work on the council's EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme). Contact him on 01606 867864, email rfwilson@valeroyal.gov.uk

Transport

A Successful Bike-to-School

A WWOOF member reports in their newsletter her experience: at 10 schools, hundreds of parents and children turned up at 8am; and they reckon 8000 bike journeys were made that week. At one inner city school, when 140 parents and children arrived on the first day, the peace struck them – no cars revving, no slamming doors, no stress or fumes. They could hear bird song! Sustrans is calling for parents/teachers/pupils to encourage 10 others to join them – see www.areyouachampion.org.uk or tel 0117 915 0100

Riversdale Bridge – Not Yet!

Finance to replace Riversdale Bridge, the footbridge linking Castle to Leftwich via Hunt's Locks and The Crescent, will not happen this year. Owned by British Waterways, it is not a Right of Way, despite the numbers who used it. Cheshire County Council may take it up. The bridge crosses a flood course, so replacement would have to be done in the summer when there is low risk. Bridge construction would be done at British Waterways Northwich works, and the two sections floated up via Hunt's Locks.

Train to Train Cyclists

Bikeright are a Manchester based company specialising in cyclist training – be they schoolchildren or adults. They also offer courses in cycle maintenance and instructor training. They can train in Manchester or travel out anywhere in the North West

The CTC approved National Standards Instructor Training course is held over 4 days and followed by two sessions of monitoring; cost £400 per person. See www.bikeright.co.uk, or tel 0161 230 7007.

Cycle Helmets

Cycle helmets are designed to give some protection in the event of a fall onto the road, without other vehicles being involved. There is apparently no evidence they save lives in the event of anything more severe, and where they are made mandatory, cycling levels fall, providing a negative health benefit. They're not intended for high speed, long distance, or competitive events. On fitting: it should sit low on the forehead, such that you can just see the front edge if you look as high as you can. Then adjust the straps and fiddle about until the helmet is held firmly in place.

There are several different standards for cycle helmets. The lowest, BS 6863, is superseded by European Standard EN 1078 – helmets to this standard are easy to find. Tougher standards are set by the Snell Memorial Foundation, (www.smf.org) - Snell B-84, Snell B-90 and Snell B-95, in ascending order of rigour. These are harder to find, if not impossible due to manufacturers only labelling qualifying helmets to EN 1078. CTC found some by Specialized in this category – their Aurora, Telluride, AirForce, KidCobra and Deuce. (*CTC's Cycle magazine, June/July and Aug/Sept 2005*)

EN 1080 is for young children's helmets, and addresses strangulation issues.

For an extensive report on cycle helmets see www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_507998.hcsp

Cycling for Women

Apparently, in the UK, half as many women as men cycle, and they cycle shorter distances. So – some hints from Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC): Ensure you buy a bike of the right size. There's apparently a shortage of bikes to suit the smaller frame; leggy women have an advantage. Press your supplier!

Women cannot lean so far forward as men – handlebars therefore need to be higher and closer to the saddle, to avoid back pain or hip/knee problems on serious runs.

Saddles need to be broader – the bones you sit on a further apart. The saddle can be adjusted vertically, forward/back, and tilt, for comfort: not just for your bum, but adjustments can affect anything from legs to wrists.

Pedal cranks of 170 or 175 mm suit a 'standard' inside leg of 32". A 29" average woman's inside leg requires 155 or 160 mm cranks. Crank length is from bearing centre to bearing centre. Your ideal crank length is 20% of effective leg length - the difference between your heights when standing and when sat against



a wall. (growing children up to 22%) (from www.highpath.co.uk/cycles/notes/03.html)

Small people deserve narrower handlebars, and some brake levers can be adjusted to bring them in reach of shorter fingers.

A continental style skirt guard (as found on some continental bikes, and some from makers like Pashley) or a very low cross-bar can allow you to ride in a skirt/dress without risk of catching it between your brakes. Lycra non-compulsory! Wearing layers allows you to strip as you warm up. High heels are not advised, boots restrain action of calf muscles, but stiff soles will assist your efficiency.

Before trying your child on a child seat, get used to the feel of a similar weight sack of potatoes in the seat first. 9 months – 3 years can use a seat between saddle and handlebar; up to four years behind you; then trailer cycles.

Pregnancy shouldn't stop you cycling, unless your doctor advises, perhaps on the basis of twins or high blood pressure. Avoid falls and risky situations though. Avoid dehydration too. As your body changes, accommodate the bump by raising the handlebars (may need a taller stem); fit a wider saddle; fit lower gears to make the effort easier, or walk uphill; use padded gloves and shift your hand position regularly to avoid wrist strain. All cyclists need to be prepared for punctures. Puncture resistant tyres can help. Take the necessary tools and know how to use them, or know the train time-table, or use CTC's Cyclecover Cycle Rescue service (tel 0800 211 2810, www.cyclecover.co.uk); or use a folding bike and mobile to call a taxi, if off a bus route. It helps to have your tyres fully inflated, beware of hedge clippings and glass, and keep out of the gutter. Cars are useful for pulverising hedge clippings – unfortunately they don't drive on pavements. Properly equipped you'll be able to use your bike with maximum efficiency and minimum aggro, allowing you to enjoy it better. (*mostly CTC's Cycle magazine, June/July 2005*) See also www.whycycle.co.uk/comfort-saddles.htm

Cheshire Cycling Maps

There are a number of cycle route maps available in libraries, information centres, or direct from Anna Geroni of Cheshire County Council on 01244 603617. Also at

www.cheshire.gov.uk/cycling, where certain downloadable maps are available.

Sustrans also do maps: tel 0845 113 0065 for details, or visit www.sustrans.org.uk and choose Cheshire in the box over the map.

This includes a map of Crewe and Nantwich, showing the new off-road connection between Nantwich Town Centre and Reaseheath, home of Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Cycling Events have 4 route maps for Cheshire, one including Cuddington and Delamere Forest. See www.cyclingevents.co.uk; click on Cycling in Cheshire.

Further a field, the number of people cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats and requiring the train to take them and bike home has caused a problem for Scotrail –nowhere to put all those bikes. They solved it by contracting a local coffin maker, regularly northbound with a load of coffins. And now southbound with bikes.



Traveline Saga

We previously reported a website to work out your public transport – www.traveline.org.uk. Then we reported that it had moved to www.pti.org.uk. That has temporarily closed, providing a link to back to traveline – www.traveline.org.uk with a note that pti will be back in July/August... Traveline is funded and run as a partnership between transport providers and local authorities. It's good for journeys within your province, eg the North-West. Meanwhile, www.traveline.co.uk is a domain belonging to www.chester-le-track.co.uk, which is run from an independent rail station, and supplies rail tickets and timetable information.



Overland to...

Two useful websites for those wishing to travel abroad by surface transport: <http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en> is the German Deutschebahn site, where you can obtain itineraries throughout Europe and apparently buy tickets.

www.seat61.com is an excellent hobbyist's site where you can investigate travel virtually worldwide. It presents advice and links to national operators. There are timetables and fare details which he tries to keep updated, and a number of first hand journey reports.

Car-Free Christians

The European Christian Environmental Network, at their General Assembly in Basel in May, proposed a Europe-wide car-fasting campaign before Easter 2006, and Churches should support and organise the exchange of good practice and examples, including car clubs, walking to church/school, and supporting local business. See www.ecen.org

TrainTracker

Traintracker is a new service from National Rail, enabling you to determine the estimated current running time of direct trains. There are two modes:

- By phone, using voice recognition, to 0871 200 49 50, at 10p per minute typically for 1½ minutes;
- By text messaging, for price of an outgoing text plus 25p for a usable reply (not an error). To use, type things like "dep Hartford" to 484950 for the next few real-time departures; or "dep Greenbank to Chester 0930" for the next few departures from Greenbank for Chester after 9.30am.

Further details can be found at www.nationalrail.co.uk/traintracker and www.nationalrail.co.uk/textme_traintracker respectively.



Recycling & Waste

Public Consultation: there's to be a public consultation on the Waste Local Plan early next year.

CHAIN

Concerned about the proposed incinerator? See CHAIN's website: www.anti-incinerator.org.uk. Future meetings are planned for 9th Nov and 14th Dec. For more details, ring Brian on 01606 41676 or Jonathan on 01606 49717, or email chainsayno@hotmail.com

Split Bins, Can Crushers, Recycling Bags

And more – find them at www.homerecycling.co.uk or contact them at Home Recycling Ltd, Barwick Lane, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees, Tees Valley, TS17 5AB; tel 08456 123191.



Greenfinch

Greenfinch are pioneers of in-vessel digestion of food waste, sewage sludge and ryegrass to produce methane for combined heat and power (CHP) and liquid fertiliser.

Their first system, started in 1996 at Burford, used plate and kitchen food waste from a café-bar, with sludge from its toilets. They were able to use digestate in aquaculture, growing aquatic weeds and carp.

This led to the Ludlow Project, fed with kitchen waste collected weekly from 1200 households in Ludlow. Average collections were 4.2 kg per household per week. It ran for 18 months from October 1999, and was followed by the Sunrise Project. The Sunrise Project included a stage to evaluate the benefits of pre-pasteurisation, taking the feedstock to 70C for a hour before digesting at either mesophilic temperatures (35C) or thermophilic temperatures (56C). Pathogens were reduced significantly with the basic 35C process, more so at 56C, and completely eradicated with pre-pasteurisation.

Seven farm biogas plants have been installed in SW Scotland, partly to help deal with coastal bathing water pollution. Surplus energy is available for the electricity and domestic heating, and digestate is available as fertiliser.

In 2003 they started research into using ryegrass as an energy crop. Most energy crops are dry, or dried for combustion, and are long-term planting investments. Sunrise's production equates to 2.5kW electricity output per hectare. (For short rotation coppice read 1.4-1.9kW, miscanthus 2.1-2.9kW.) They're part of the pan-European Cropgen research project, looking at improving farm bio-gas production. Greenfinch are researching ryegrass, red clover, Jerusalem artichokes, lucerne, and maize in 500 litre research digesters in Ludlow. They have a portable digester for rental.

Contact Greenfinch at Greenfinch Ltd, The Business Park, Coder Road, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1XE; tel 01584 877687, fax: 01584 878131, email: biogas@greenfinch.co.uk; website www.greenfinch.co.uk

Other Ways with Waste Food

One third of our food, worth £420 per person per year, is not eaten, and a quarter of that is still edible.

FARESHARE uses surplus food donated by retailers, wholesalers and caterers to feed

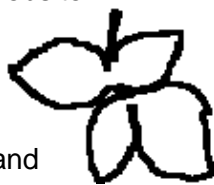


homeless people. Their nearest site is A.N.E. Church, Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 9XR Tel: 0161 437 1363, email copperdale_trust@hotmail.com; see www.fareshare.org.uk.

Greenfinch (see below left) digest the food to produce fuel gas, and Leicester City Council, with BIFFA, have a larger digester. At baker Gregg's Newcastle branch they're drying the waste in its packaging to a powder, to be used to make gas for heating and power, in a process from Inetec (of Unit 17, Village Farm Road, Village Farm Industrial Estate, Pyle, Bridgend, CF33 6BL, tel 01656 746439 or see www.inetec.co.uk). Householders can also digest it in a stainless steel box called The Rocket, adding something called Bokashi which stops putrefaction and speeds composting – it's ready to fertilise your garden in 14 days. For details on Bokashi see www.livingsoil.co.uk (Digesters normally £110 a pair, bokashi £38 for 1½ years' worth) or write to Living Soil, 12 Walhatch Close, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5GT

Recycling Ideas

Counterproduction, of Berkeley, California, use recycled glass to make worktops and tabletops. The material is 85% glass in a cementitious base, with no polymers or resins. See www.counterproduction.com
The Dutch company GICOM have developed from supplying mushroom growing equipment to composting waste and sewage sludge. Their system has no problem with animal waste: Animal By-Products Regulations call for 2 days at 60C; meat products make it difficult to keep below that temperature! See www.gicom.nl





The US site Grassroots Recycling Network (GRRN) has some good resources. There is a slide show on composting for children (their link leads to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/sustainable/slidesets/kidscompost/cover.html>) and inspiration for

higher education, colleges etc: see www.GRRN.org.

Nappies: Environment Agency Study Slated

The Environment Agency commissioned Environmental Resources Management Ltd. to provide an unbiased life-cycle assessment for disposable nappies, home-laundered flat cloth nappies, and commercially laundered nappy option. With everything included – pesticides on the cotton plants, transport, some drying on the line, different excreta disposal options – they found no significant difference. They recommend that disposable manufacturers focus on weight reduction and improvements in materials manufacturing, while reusable users should aim to reduce energy consumption in washing and drying. For the report, see www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commondata/acrobat/nappies_1072099.pdf

While disposable makers are satisfied with the report, other groups like the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) say it uses poor quality data. (The report itself is unhappy about the way it has to claw an average from a broad range of home-laundry habits.) Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) point out that users cannot do other than dispose of disposables, but they can have an impact with re-usables, in the washing and drying. WRAP say modern re-usables don't need soaking, can be washed at a lower temperature in an energy-efficient washer, and air dried. (*Warmer Bulletin, June 2005*)



What you can do: a 40C wash uses half the electricity (0.82kWh) of a 90C wash (1.77kWh) (according to the report). For nappies, the Real Nappy Campaign suggest washing at 60C (1.36kWh). Tumble drying, we estimate from the DoE report's data, might use 1.27kWh per load. For more inspiration, see www.realnappycampaign.com WEN calculations work on modern A rated washing machines doing a 60C wash for 0.94kWh. They suggest doing soiled nappies at 60C, wet nappies can go with the rest of the laundry at lower temperatures. See www.wen.org.uk/general_pages/Newsitems/ms_LCA19.5.05.htm Tumble-drying will leave your nappies soft and fluffy: even just a 10-minute burst will do. Alternative methods: a tablespoonful of white vinegar in the conditioner compartment of your washing machine will help remove lime-scale and detergent residues and make nappies softer, or give laundered nappies a good shake and rub together when they are almost dry. (The Ecologist: www.theecologist.org/archive_detail.asp?content_id=426) (The Vinegar Book suggests a host of other uses for vinegar, particularly in cleaning see www.vinegarbook.co.uk)



Making a Pile - Not

Kelly Atkins runs a small company in Derby using old carpet to make hard household items by heat-pressing. Trays, planters, newspaper racks... HTC (Heat Treated Carpet) is made using something like giant toastie maker, and is not recognisable as carpet. A happy mishap, whilst ironing clothes on the bedroom carpet, led to its discovery. Contact Kelly Atkins, 109 King St, Derby, DE1 3EE or see www.carpet-burns.com

Energy & Climate

Shopping for Renewable Energy

Energy and Environment Ltd are a Manchester-based company offering: condensing boilers, solar water heaters, ground source heat pumps, windchargers and accessories, solar & wind powered streetlights, inverters and chargers and a range of solar-powered equipment from laptop chargers to lighting, alarm systems to domestic roof top modules. They're at 91 Claude Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 8DE; Tel: 0161 881 1383 email : mail@energyenv.co.uk, or see www.energyenv.co.uk/links.asp



Renewable Energy Grants Change

Note that the last deadline for DTI's PV programme grants is 2nd December 2005, thereafter the new Low Carbon Buildings Programme comes into effect, by April 2006 at the earliest, offering grants under different criteria, with deadlines probably 3 months later. *Energy World*

Train to Install Solar Panels

The Centre for Alternative Technology in Mid-Wales is now an accredited by British Plumbers Employers Council for their Solar Water Heating Installation courses. They're also a City and Guilds accredited training centre, running C&G Solar Electrical Installation for Professionals. Courses this year are fully booked. Check for next year on www.cat.org.uk/courses, tel 01654 705981, email courses@cat.org.uk



Stop Climate Chaos

Is a coalition of 18 campaign groups (the Women's Institutes, Greenpeace, RSPB, Oxtam, Christian Aid, WWF, CAFOD, Friends of the Earth, Tearfund and others) asking the UK government to cut greenhouse gas emissions, make climate change an international priority (so that emissions will be descending by 2015), and invest in low carbon technology for the developing world. You can visit their website at www.stopclimatechaos.org/index.asp and send a message to the Prime Minister. You may like to have prepared short messages in advance, one on climate change and your pledge for personal action, another to explain why you think it so important to you to take action.

How Does Your Power Supplier Match Up?

The Renewables Obligation is the legislation that decrees that electricity suppliers source a set proportion of their energy from renewable sources, rising from 3% when introduced in 2002, now

5.5%, to 10% in 2010 and 15.4% in 2016.

Suppliers not achieving this minimum have to buy ROCs (certificates given for every megawatt-hour of renewable electricity) from those who have spare, or pay a penalty. Where your supplier sources from will be with your next bill; for other suppliers, see www.electricityinfo.org/suppliers.php

The Manchester Bobber

This wave energy converter, conceived by Professor Peter Stansby and others of The University of Manchester, is based on a float hanging on the water surface. It is attached, over a pulley, to a counterweight. Movement is transmitted from the pulley via a freewheel, gears and flywheel to a generator. All the vulnerable bits are held well out of the water, and could well be located on a decommissioned oil rig. Advantages include easy maintenance, off-the-shelf parts, and it works whatever the wave direction without re-orientation. They're currently building prototypes. More information from Simon Hunter, Media Relations Officer, telephone: 0161 2758387; see press release from www.manchester.ac.uk/press/title,40649,en.htm

Wildlife

Free Trees

The following are available from Cheshire Landscape Trust: Alder, Ash, Beech, Blackthorn, Silver Birch, Bird- and Wild Cherries, Crab Apple, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Horse Chestnut, Hornbeam, Small-leaf Lime, Field Maple, Common Oak, Rowan, Scots Pine, Spindle Tree, along with varieties of Apple. Contact Katie Lowe, 01244 376333 or email cheshire@landscapetrust.fsnet.co.uk for details.

TB and Badgers

Defra have surveyed roadkill badgers for bovine TB in the seven counties - Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. Shropshire and Dorset – where the Randomised Badger Culling Trial is being conducted. 1 in 7 was found to be infected overall, with a prevalence in the northern counties. However there was no correlation between the levels of TB in badger and cattle. (*Defra press notice*)



Water Shrew

For a Sunday Stretch

Cheshire Wildlife Trust welcome volunteers with gloves and boots to do selective weeding on local wildlife reserves from 10am. Len's team works 1st Sundays – tel 01928 733559, while Dave's works 3rd Sundays – tel 01606 832148.

Clocaenog Wildlife

The Forestry Commission's Clocaenog Forest, just west of Ruthin in North Wales, is now home to three Przewalski's horses. They're grazing an area called the Enclosures, helping recreate a Neolithic/Iron Age scene. Clocaenog is also home to perhaps the largest population of Red Squirrels in Wales, which the management are encouraging to thrive; and of Black Grouse: there's now a viewing area to see the courting display. Groups of male Black Grouse display ("lek") to defend their territories throughout the year, except when moulting in July and August. Activity



increases when the females surreptitiously attend early April to mid May. It does not appear to be serviced by regular public transport.

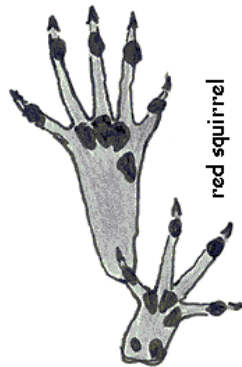
More on Harlequin Ladybirds

The Harlequin Ladybird, as reported in the last issue, is a highly successful competitor with other ladybirds. It's now the most widespread ladybird in North America, and is established in the near continent. Distinguishing features include – it's slightly larger and rounder than native species, and in many of its colour variations the pronotum (bit between the head and the elytra) has an M mark. Also, the elytra have wide keel at base, and the legs are almost always brown DEFRA, via the National Biodiversity Network Trust, is funding the Harlequin Ladybird Survey at the Biological Records Centre, CEH Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2LS, to where details of sightings should be sent. They require location (grid reference or postcode), date,



how many, and if possible, a photo to verify identity.

The Biological Records Centre are also running a UK Ladybird Survey to monitor all 46 native ladybird species – see www.ladybird-survey.org for forms to fill and return, or write to them. You can enter details for an individual siting or a survey. There are details of 26 native ladybird species – select UK Ladybirds.



More Carp Trouble

While Cheshire Carp have been struggling with an unknown disease, Spring Viraemia virus



is affecting carp near Weymouth. Spring Viraemia affects common and ornamental carp, tench, roach, rudd, goldfish, pike and wels catfish. Signs of the disease may include darkening of the skin, swollen eyes, abdominal swelling, pale gills, trailing faecal casts and protrusion of the anus. Infected fish tend to be lethargic and show signs of haemorrhaging. It does not affect humans, but is a notifiable disease – contact CEFAS (address below).

Importers, keepers or sellers of carp or other susceptible species should take strict precautions to prevent the spread of SVC and follow the advice set out in Defra's advisory booklet "Combating Fish Disease", (which also describes the other 7 notifiable fish diseases) available on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/fish/fishfarm/diseases.htm or from CEFAS, Fish Health Inspectorate, Weymouth Laboratory, The Nothe, Barrack Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8UB. Tel: 01305 206673/74 Fax: 01305 206602 Email: fish.health.inspectorate@cefass.co.uk. Further information can also be found on www.efishbusiness.co.uk.

The Cost of Cheap Herbicides

Professor Tyrone B Hayes is to speak at the Rachel Carson Memorial lecture, Middle Temple Hall, London, 6.30pm 1st December. He has researched the herbicide atrazine, finding effects on frogs and humans, and is concerned with how much government regulators probe industry-funded studies. Tickets cost £30 include organic buffet, wine, exhibitions & music, from Pesticide Action Network, tel 0207 065 0908, see www.pan-uk.org

Diary Dates

Sat 29th Oct

Make a Difference Day: any individual or organisation can volunteer to get involved and make a difference. They or the website can suggest things to do, or groups to join up with. Tel 0800 284 533 or see www.csv.org.uk/Campaigns/Make+a+Difference+Day/Home.htm

Mon 31st Oct

VR Renewable Energy

Consultation, Winsford Civic Hall, 2.30-4.30 or 5-7pm. Booking Req'd: contact Angie Jukes, email clasp@epplus.org.uk, tel 01606 594173

Tues 1st Nov

Make a Difference at Daresbury Firs,

restoring it from plantation to heather/bilberry, planting and erecting rabbit-proof fencing. 10am-3.30pm, Daresbury Firs, Delph Lane off A56, Daresbury. Take working clothes & lunch; hot drinks provided. Tel Eamonn Ritchie, Groundwork Mersey Valley, 0151 257 2720, eamonn.ritchie@groundwork.org.uk

Tues 1st Nov

Catchment Sensitive Farming

Conference, by Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group. At Stoneleigh. Tel 01476 696699

Sat 5th Nov

CWT **Christmas Coffee Morning**, with inspiring ideas for presents. £1.50 includes coffee & mince pie. Tel 01606 832148

Fri 9th Nov

CHAIN meeting. Tel Brian on 01606 41676, Jonathan on 01606 49717, or email chainsayno@hotmail.com

Fri 9th Nov

Hedge Restoration & Maintenance Workshop: Tilstone Bank, Tilstone, Tarporley. Tel 01270 627938, email cheshire@fwag.org.uk

Thurs 10th Nov

Lion Salt Works: Andrew Fielding, of Lion Salt Works, about the site and plans for its restoration and return to salt making. £1.50 to non-members. 7.30pm Comberbach Memorial Hall. Brian Jaques 01606-891242 or Lion Salt Works 01606-41823

Fri 11h Nov

Lapland Summer, John Rains, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Fri 18th Nov

Home Grown, Home Cooked: members' garden & kitchen feast. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 19th Nov

Hedge laying for Beginners, All tools will be provided. 10am – 3pm. Book your place: tel Peter Schofield 01606 77741

Sat 19th Nov

Lost Meres & Mosses of Delamere. Meet Barns Bridge CP, Ashton Rd, Delamere 10.30am. Tel CWT, 01829 751954

Sun 20th Nov, 10am – 1pm

Winter Birds: A walk around Goway Meadows in search of wintering birds. Meet at Thornton-le-Moors Church. SJ435740. £5 (£3 CWT members). Bring lunch. Booking required: Len Greenhough/Kat Walsh, 01270 610180

Mon 21st Nov

Sustainable Cheshire Forum Annual Meeting, Trafford Hall near Mickle Trafford. Details: Michele Burrow, 01244 603125, michele.burrow@cheshire.gov.uk

22nd & 23rd Nov

Environment 2005 "the challenges facing local, regional and national government in delivering effective environmental change", Environment Agency, London. £175 for both days for NGOs. Tel 020 7324 4364, debbie.young@neilstewartassociates.co.uk, see www.neilstewartassociates.com.

Wed 23rd Nov, 7.45pm

Wildlife Friendly

Farming: Alan Clare of Red House Farm, Dunham Massey on the many interesting aspects of his work on this farm. At St Mary Magdalene Church Centre, Ashton-on-Mersey, Sale. Entrance from Moss Lane.

23rd Nov – 4th Dec

National Tree Week. Further details from CLT on 01244 376333

Thurs 24th Nov

Building Environment-Friendly Homes, by Energy Saving Trust, Manchester.

http://portal.est.org.uk/housingbuilding/s/news/pressreleases/index.cfm?mode=view&press_id=435 for article, or contact Kathryn Hull, Energy Saving Trust, on 020 7227 0375

Thurs 24th Nov

Hope for the Planet – a conference for church leaders. London, 9am – 4.30pm. £45 incl lunch+refreshments. Sekeeta Crowley of Hope for the Planet, tel 0208 574 5935, email hope@arocha.org

Sat 26th Nov, 9.30 – 3.30

Wildlife Watch, trip to **Martin Mere**, Burscough (coach proposed from Northwich Memorial Hall – alternatively meet there 10.30am). Contact Ken on 01606 883013 – booking for coach needed by 4th November

26/11 – 06/12

NEA Warm Homes Week 2005 – UK wide. See website: www.nea.org.uk (or tel 0191 261 5677)

29th Oct – 5th Nov

UK Vegan Week

Celebrate veganism and raise awareness all week and the 60th anniversary of the Vegan Society. Info: www.vegansociety.com (0845 458 8244, 01424 448 828, media@vegansociety.com)

30th Nov

Green Architecture Day, £5 donation suggested. 9:30am-4:30pm, CUBE, 113-115 Portland Street, M1.

Exploring innovative, low impact housing initiatives from all across the country and urban green design from within Manchester. Artistic & interactive workshops, discussion, debate and vegan lunch. Bookings: Ailsa Holmes, Pow-wow Eco Arts (0161 273 5367, pow_wowltd@yahoo.co.uk)

Sat 3rd Dec, 10am - noon

Wildlife Watch: Celebrate National Tree Week – **Tree Planting** at Rudheath CP School. Contact Virginia on 01606 42667

Fri 9h Dec

Uganda – Pearl of Africa, Mike Roberts, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Fri 14th Dec

CHAIN meeting (Cheshire Anti-Incinerator Network). Brian on 01606 41676 or Jonathan on 01606 49717, or email chainsayno@hotmail.com

Sun 18th Dec

Christmas Gifts: A family event.

Make gifts for free using natural materials from Marbury Park 10.am – 3.pm Rangers cabins at Marbury. Yvonne Singh 01606-871795 or Brian Jaques 01606-891242



2005

Fri 3rd Jan

Sun, Stilts and Storks, Hugh Linn, ARPS, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Sun 8th Jan

Starting Out with Orchards: fruit varieties, stocks, planting, care, harvesting and fruit storage. With TLG Orchards at Norton Priory Walled Garden, 10am – 4pm, £20. Tel CLT, 01244 376333 or e-mail cheshire@landscapetrust.fsnet.co.uk

Sat 14th Jan

Wildlife Watch trip to **Liverpool Museum**. Meet Hartford Station about 9.30, return about 5pm. Lunch required. Contact Bev 01606 882770

Sat 14th Jan

CWT Hot Pot Supper, Fox Howl, Delamere. Social with wildlife chat, local food, £6 each. Bring drink. Book by 10th Jan: ring 01829 751954.

Sun 15th Jan

Starting Out with Orchards. Details as 8th Jan

Fri 20th Jan

Herbal Remedies with Natalia Kerkham. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sun 22nd Jan

Pruning for Beginners – of fruit trees, soft fruit & roses. With TLG Orchards at Norton Priory Walled Garden, 10am – 4pm, £20. Tel CLT, 01244 376333 or e-mail cheshire@landscapetrust.fsnet.co.uk

Sun 29th Jan

Pruning for Beginners. Details as 22nd Jan

Sat 4th Feb

Wildlife Watch: **Chester Zoo** – seeking Chinese animals for their New Year. 10am – 2pm. Meet Chester Zoo – in front of main entrance. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Sun 5th Feb

Pruning for Beginners. Details as 22nd Jan

Fri 10th Feb

The Birds of Fenns & Whixall Marshes, Dr Joan Daniels, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529



Sun 12th Feb

Pruning for Beginners. Details as 22nd Jan

Fri 17th Feb

Square Foot & Container Gardening: get more from less space. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Tues 7th March

Envirenergy in the North West, Manchester United plc, Old Trafford, admission £45+VAT includes conference, training workshops, lunch & refreshments. tel 01257 450060 www.envirenergy.org.uk

Fri 10th Mar

Kwazulu Natal, John Dempsey, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Fri 17th Mar

Plants for Butterflies. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 18th March

Wildlife Watch: **Search for Spring**, Marshall's Arm – meet Hartford Manor Car Park. 10am - noon. Contact Stuart on 07788 570628

Fri 21st April

Growing Pains: your gardening problems and queries hopefully solved. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420



Sun 23rd April

Wildlife Watch: **Bluebell Day**. Marbury Country Park – meet by the Rangers' Hut, 2-4pm. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Sat 6th May

Wildlife Watch: **Blossom & Bees**, Cuddington CP School, 10am-noon. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Fri 19th May

The Sensory Garden: tactile ideas. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 10th June

Wildlife Watch: **World Ocean Celebration** – and kites, at Thurstaston, The Wirral. Coach planned from Northwich Memorial Hall. 9.30am – 4pm. Contact Bev on 01606 882770 – booking for coach needed by 24th May?

Fri 16th June

Salad Daze: Edible flowers, leaves, anything else you bring with your own cheese & wine. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sun 16th July (tbc)

Only One Earth, 11am – 5pm, Grosvenor Park, Chester. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Sat 12th Aug

Wildlife Watch: **Butterflies & Bikes**, 10am-noon, Whitegate Station. Contact Ken, 01606 883013

22nd September

In Town Without My Car Day, as every 22nd Sept. www.22september.org, click Themes

Sat 23rd Sept

Wildlife Watch: **Step into Food For Free**, 11am-2pm, Marbury Country Park – meet by the Rangers' Hut. Contact Yvonne, 01606 77741 / Ken 01606 883013

Sat 14th Oct

Wildlife Watch: **The Big Draw**, 10am – noon, and 1-3pm, Owley Wood Scout Hut, Weaverham. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667, Bev, 01606 882770

Sat 11th Nov, +Sun if sleeping over
Wildlife Watch: **Autumn Sleepover** at Fox Howl, Ashton Road, Delamere Forest. Packed lunch required. 10am – 6pm Sat; or to 11am Sun. Contact Ken, 01606 883013

Sat 9th Dec

Wildlife Watch: **Christmas Crafts**. Weaver Parkway (off road opposite side of roundabout to Morrisons, Winsford, 10am-noon. Contact Ken, 01606 883013

Abbreviations

CHAIN: Cheshire Anti-Incinerator Network
CLT: Cheshire Landscape Trust
CWT: Cheshire Wildlife Trust
FWAG: Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group
MCOS: MCOS
VROWG: Vale Royal Organic & Wildlife Gardeners
Wildlife Watch = Vale Royal Wildlife Watch, junior branch of CWT

Sundry leaf outlines are of various food plants: apple, achoccha, Jerusalem artichoke, blackberry, bistort, fig, ginkgo, gooseberry, grape, hazel, lamb's lettuce, oca, pomegranate, potato bean, raspberry.