

THE GREEN PAGE

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For the last three years the ATC have teamed up with Calderdale Council's Countryside and Forestry Unit to provide practical hedge-laying courses. Everyone attending the courses has helped to restore the hedge that borders the Hebble Water walk and Salem Fields in Hebden Bridge. This year Mick Chatham has led two very successful courses.

Pictured laying the last few metres of the hedge up to the cricket hut are (from left to right) Ken Ransom, Ellen Broome and Jeff Broome. The dramatic improvement to the hedge and its benefits to local wildlife are becoming more and more apparent with each growing season.

Bees are good!

Bees are vital to our food supplies. Many plants cannot grow unless they are cross-pollinated by insects such as bees and almost 80% of what we eat relies on bees at some stage of its production.

When bees land on flowers to collect pollen and nectar (their staple diet!) they spread pollen from one flower to another which encourages cross-pollination and growth. Yet despite bees being essential to our existence nearly a quarter of the UK's native species of wild non-honey making bees are considered to be on the endangered list.

The International Bee

Research Association (IBRA) claims that in some parts of England, such as East Anglia, modern farming methods and practices have virtually wiped out the bumblebee's natural habitat of meadow and field margins.

During the Twentieth Century the bee population has declined more than any other insect group. And whilst the bumblebee is suffering, the honey bees are also having to deal with the deadly Varroa mite. This parasitic insect feeds on and kills honey bees and has developed a resistance to the chemical that was originally used to control it. Once only found in Asia the mite first appeared in the

UK in 1992. By 1996 it had spread throughout the world destroying about 25% of all commercial honey bees.

As the warmer weather approaches everyone is being encouraged to do what they can to help preserve and improve our bee populations.

Although bees have diverse nesting and social habits the IBRA has called for gardeners to leave corners of their gardens a little untidy throughout the year to create habitats for emerging Queen bees, and to consider planting bee friendly plants.

Bees tend to favour large flowered plants such as buddleia

and foxgloves because the pollen is easily accessible. They are also regular visitors to sweet herbs such as thyme and lavender and need a source of water to drink.

Every positive action in every garden will make a difference to the survival of this vital element in our food chain. It is essential that pesticides are not used in areas surrounding bee habitats due to their indiscriminate and unquantifiable effect on wildlife.

For more information contact www.ibra.co.uk

A to Z of recycling

When the head of the Government's Environment Agency, Baroness Young, claims that composting (a superb example of value-added recycling and the keystone of organic gardening) is more dangerous than the incineration of waste it might be tempting to throw the towel in, but we must not let ignorance get the better of us! Whilst welcoming back Kerbside to our streets we press on with the A-Z of Recycling.

U's

U is for

Ukuleles - Visit the Green Shop to see an excellent example of a 4-stringed Hawaiian style guitar made from reclaimed and recycled materials by local amateur luthier Robert Collins.

Umbrellas - Bring your parasols, they may be small, they may be big, he will fix them all with what you a thingamajig, or alternatively,

before discarding old umbrellas, it's always worth asking if your local school is carrying out a science project on waterproofing

Unbleached products - Whilst bright white paper might look clean, producing it from brown wood pulp or recycled paper fibres can be a dirty, dangerous and wholly unsustainable business. Chlorine bleaching creates poisonous by-products in the atmosphere and watercourses. Other types of bleaching are less hazardous but often unnecessary. Make the effort to buy unbleached toilet and kitchen rolls and experiment with unbleached recycled stationery.

Underwear - Don't recycle radioactive Y-fronts from the Ukraine because Chernobyl fallout.

Universe - Many little things done by many little people will change the face of the world.

Upholstery - Sitting Comfortably will recycle all good quality furniture through their furniture shop that is based in

Calderdale Business Park, Ovenden, Halifax. Contact them on 01422 329895 or 01274 731909.

Uranium - As BNFL have proved there is no safe method of disposal or recycling for the heaviest of our naturally occurring elements that is used as a source of non-environmentally friendly and utterly unsustainable nuclear energy.

Urine - Human urine is an excellent activator for compost heaps even though our esteemed head of the Environment Agency will most probably think that we are taking the piss.

Usury - Avoid loan sharks or credit cards with excessive loan repayments and extortionate interest rates by joining your local credit union, an effective community banking system. Contact Calderdale Credit Union on 01422 393106.

Utopia - Visit the Green Shop and let us help you visualise your very own sustainable utopia!

BEYOND THE VALLEY

— positive green news stories from outside the Calder Valley

TREES ARE GOOD!

All of the Forestry Commission's woodlands in the United Kingdom are now Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. The FSC was set up in 1993 by an alliance of environmentalists (including the World Wildlife Fund), wood-workers and wood products retailers to set criteria for sustainable forest management that incorporate a range of environmental, economic and social considerations. Over 40 million hectares of forest have now been certified in 58 countries. In Latvia, which supplies Britain and much of Europe with everything from sawn timber to furniture, all of its 1.67 million hectares of state owned forestry are now sustainably managed to FSC principles.

IT'S A GAS

Three London buses on route number 25, Oxford Circus to Ilford via Bank and Holborn, are currently being powered by hydrogen fuel cells. Producing only water vapour emissions they are part of the Clean Urban Transport for Europe (CUTE) project which receives funding from the European Union and is also taking place in Barcelona, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Madrid, Stockholm, Porto, Luxembourg and Stuttgart. The single decker buses are fitted with roof mounted pressurised gas cylinders and manage up to 125 miles before they need to be refuelled. The buses, which cost approximately £750,000 each, will be used on various routes across the capital during the two-year trial.

LET THERE BE

LIGHT...AND HEAT!

Following in the footsteps of other renewable energy pioneering Scottish religious institutions, a church on the Orkney Island of Westray has won an award under the Eco-Congregation scheme due to its installation of a small wind turbine, ground source heat pump and bio-diesel fuelled back-up generator. Only 30 Eco-Congregation awards have been made throughout the United Kingdom but already there have been 3 winners on the Orkneys. In Kirkwall East, central Orkney, the local church has used sustainably produced wood for its flooring, reclaimed timber for the font, lectern and communion table and introduced low energy lighting throughout the newly refurbished church building.

ABELLES SONT BONNES

After a mass occupation of government offices by members of Confederation Paysanne, the radical French land workers organisation, the French Food Agency has withdrawn the pesticide Fipronil from sale in France. Fipronil is closely linked to the decimation of the French bee population. Beekeepers estimate that as many as 90 billion bees have been killed by pesticides within the last decade. The French Government has also begun a criminal investigation of multinational chemical companies Bayer and BASF for their roles in selling products that include Fipronil. The judge in charge of the case said he was stunned by the disregard for bees shown by the two companies.



Oliver Heath from BBC's "Changing Rooms" examines one of the ATC's recycled plastic bowls on launch day of the Ideal Home Show at Earls Court in London. Made from broken CD and cassette cases these bowls were a feature of the Show's Recycled Kitchen, which was developed by WRAP and Rethink Rubbish. Every item in the kitchen had been recycled or re-claimed and was advertised at the Show, which is open until April 4th, as the "stylish future in modern kitchen design."

These bowls and other useful household items made from recycled plastics at our very own micro factory are available from the Green Shop. For further details contact Dave on 01422 842121.



This month's nomination for Green Room 101 comes from Eric Young who says of humans wearing fur...it's dead simple!

Throughout the world between 30 and 50 million animals are killed each year for their fur...that's about one animal murdered every second of every day!

The list of fur-covered animals that are routinely slaughtered for the so-called "fashion" trade includes mink, foxes, rabbits, chinchillas, domestic cats and dogs, coyotes, raccoons and lynx. These animals are either hideously trapped in the wild by a vicious contraption known as the leghold trap or intensively "farmed" in appalling conditions for their fur.

Mink, an animal that would normally spend half of its life hunting or playing in

water, are imprisoned in cages with a floor space equivalent to two shoeboxes before being gassed (often by a vehicle exhaust pipe). Foxes are crammed into cages about 1 metre square and are usually killed for their fur by electrocution, after having steel clamps inserted into their mouths and rectums.

Most animals bred on fur farms are killed when they are only 6-8 months old. In Britain, generally considered to be the major rabbit "farming" country in the world, around 500 farms currently rear rabbits in bare wire cages. Approximately 35,000 rabbits are murdered each week, usually by having their necks broken or throats slit. Rabbit fur is often used as a lining on coats, collars and gloves. It is also used to cover novelty goods such as key rings, hairbrushes and soft toys.

No one actually needs a fur coat except the animal that was born with it. Synthetic fabrics can be warmer, softer and lighter than fur and it takes more than 60 times as much energy to produce a fur coat than is needed to produce a "fake" fur alternative.

It takes up to 29 bitches to make a fur coat but only 1 to wear it! Neither the farming of animals for fur or the wearing of real fur belongs in a civilised society. Fur...your time is up!