

ATC CONTACTS

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We're dreaming of a green Christmas...

IT'S MUST BE YEARS SINCE WE HAD A WHITE CHRISTMAS (global warming?), so perhaps we can adapt Bing's old tune to something more appropriate for the new millennium. You don't have to only dream about it, though. Having a Green Christmas is not that difficult – it just takes a little bit of thought and a little bit of planning. It may save you time, it can probably save you some money and will certainly help save the environment. And you can still have as good a Christmas as ever - probably even better! The main thing is to remember the 3 'R's'. No, not Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer, but - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Reduce

- **Reduce waste** – try to buy Christmas goodies with less or no packaging.
- **Reduce your energy consumption.** Switch off the TV - don't leave it (or the video) on standby. If everyone in the country did this, we would need one less power station. Switch off lights when you are not in the room.
- **Choose an artificial tree or a natural tree grown in the UK.** Many artificial trees are made from reconstituted PVC, which saves energy and raw materials. Buying local trees reduces the environmental impact of transporting from overseas.
- **Buy organic produce** for that slap up Christmas Day meal – preferably locally grown (no energy intensive pesticides, far less food miles...). Contact Valley Garden Organics (in the next few days) to place your order for organic veg and fruit on (01422) 886032. Buy organic drinks (Oasis has a particularly good selection of organic wines and

beers).

- **Reduce your car mileage.** Shop locally for your Christmas presents - or order through the internet or catalogues. (You weren't really going to get in your car and drive to the Trafford Centre, were you? Don't bother – you should see the queues spilling out onto the M62!). Leave the car at home over Christmas and use a bike or walk whenever you can – good for the environment ... and your waistline.

Reuse

- **Re-use plastic shopping bags** (or even better, use string shopping bags).
- **Unwrap presents carefully** – you can reuse the paper.

Recycle

- **Recycle your cards,** tins, bottles, cans, Christmas tree... (we will have lots of ideas in a Green Page Extra between Christmas and New Year so don't throw out anything until you've read your last Hebden Bridge Times of 2000!). Remember that 'Kerbside' collect cans, textiles, shoes, paper and green kitchen waste from some parts of Hebden Bridge on a weekly basis and from the rest of Hebden Bridge monthly. Contact Chip Wood on (01422) 843709.
- **Look out for recycled cards,** tags and paper – or, if you have kept them, recycle those that you received last year.
- **Use recycled paper** for your thank you letters (or use the phone/ e-mail).
- **Compost your vegetable peelings.** Food waste, such as vegetable peelings makes up around 20% of dustbin waste.
- **Look out for presents made from recycled**

materials (see below).

Here are some suggestions for green Christmas presents - for a wide range of budgets:

- **A bicycle** (no need to go far afield, there are good bicycle shops in Hebden Bridge and Mytholmroyd). If the hills round here put you off, how about an electric bike to make mole-hills out of mountains (almost). More information from the Electric Bike Company (Tel: 01484 720120)
- **Freeplay wind-up / solar radio** – available from the ATC's Green Shop and other local electrical shops.
- **Wooden toys** (rather than plastic) and toys with rechargeable batteries.
- **Lots of beautiful green gifts** available from the Natural Collection. Ring 0870 331 33 33 for a catalogue or go to www.naturalcollection.com
- **Calendar from Friends of Valley Garden** with seasonal organic veg recipes for each month. Ring Mary-Ann on (01422) 886032.
- **Fleece Sheep Bag** made from reclaimed materials, mouse mat made from reclaimed computer circuit board, fruit powered digital clock... (all available from the Green Shop).
- **And finally,** for those of you who are really planning to splash out on the car crazy wife / husband / son / daughter - look no further than the Peugeot 106 Electric! It's a bargain at £15000 (it will cost you only about 1p per mile to run and there are subsidies of up to £4500 now available). Or else just buy them a copy of 'Cutting Your Car Use' by Anna Semlyen – considerably cheaper at £4.95!

We asked the Reverend Martin Parrott, Vicar of St James' Church, who recently arranged a special Harvest service with an environmental theme, to write a few words for us about green issues and Christianity.

Harvest for the World

THE WORD THAT COMES TO MY MIND when thinking about green issues and Christianity is sacrament. The word literally means 'holy moment' and is used to describe occasions in church ritual when the presence of God is shared by something material: bread and wine, water, touch, oil.

However, sacraments are much wider than church events. Anything which enriches life could be said to be sacramental. For example, the people who love and care for us are sacraments, signs of God's love.

The world in which we live is a sacrament. It supports and nurtures us. Humanity has the task of making the world a sacrament for all. A green ecology is linked to a sacramental theology.

The time of year when the Church thinks about these things is Harvest. This year at St James' we had a service, which began with litter being used as part of our sorrow for our mistakes and continued with a conservation theme.

Christmas is a time for sacraments however. We celebrate at this time of the year the greatest sacrament, the birth of Jesus.

Reverend Martin Parrott

What on Earth is Permaculture?

PERMACULTURE - A WORD that invariably evokes a "Oh yes, I've heard of that - but what on earth is it?". It sounds like an Alaskan yoghurt or some dodgy biological experiment but is actually an approach to designing systems so that they can be more sustainable. It achieves this by using the patterns and processes of natural systems.

Why? Because natural systems are the most sustainable systems we know (having been around for a fair few years) but also because every system in nature is like a cog in a bigger machine. If we re-arrange that cog without taking notice of the role it plays, the whole machine can go wrong. It's about trying to see the output of the whole system as relevant, not just the individual components.

Take the example of the recent flooding. Among the causes are changes made to the way land in river catchment areas is used. The original forest has been replaced with grass and concrete with no regard to the role it played in the whole river system. The result is that rivers burst their banks and damaged property and business.

Permaculture does not advocate returning the catchment area to its natural state - humans have to make a living after all. But it would design the area so that we could get what we need from it without affecting its role in retaining water.

The same philosophy also applies, on a

smaller scale, to, for instance, the role that ladybirds play in keeping aphid populations down. Because natural systems are all linked, they get what they need from each other, using what they have in the most efficient way, thereby reducing waste, over consumption and pollution.

So, how do we do that, then? By understanding the system you are working with, using good, well thought out design, then looking at how you can get what you need from what you've got without clearing it all and starting from scratch. The solutions that permaculture finds are often the same as those found by environmentalists looking at recycling or organic gardeners trying to avoid chemicals.

Bill Mollison and David Holmgren who first coined the term permaculture in the 1970s described it as a philosophy, which pulls together past and present common sense. Indeed, many of the techniques used are not modern. Some of the best ideas for re-using waste were discovered during the Second World War, or by isolated island communities who have had to be self-reliant. What makes permaculture different is the bringing together of these techniques into one approach, working out holistic solutions, which take into account all the elements, so that inputs and outputs are used most effectively.

POOETIC JUSTICE



ONE DAY LAST APRIL, local resident and ATC supporter, Nic Etherington, popped round brandishing an article from the Guardian (as ATC supporters often do). The article reported on park wardens in the North East who had, with some success, used poetry to combat wildlife theft – they had displayed poems by Wordsworth and other poets around their park with signs warning against duck rustling. Nic suggested that we try something similar in our campaign against dog poo along the canal towpath and that we contact popular poet and comedian, John Hegley, to ask if he would donate the first poem.

So.....we wrote to John and, several weeks later, we received a postcard (of a dog called 'Morris', dancing) with the following six line poem on the back:

IT'S NOT DONE
Please do not let

Your dog do
Dog do
On the canal path
No alimentary
Aftermath
Thank you.

We then threw it open to the people of Hebden Bridge as a competition for the best poem – with the proviso: keep it clean, keep it short, keep it witty.

We received lots of entries and the competition was duly judged – with Nia (aged 7) and Chiara (aged 13) winning the fantastic prizes (little somethings from the ATC's Green Shop). We wrote back to John Hegley to say that we were very sorry indeed but he had not won the competition but, as he was going to be in Hebden Bridge in November performing his show called 'Dog', would he come and perform the grand unveiling of the finished dis-

play? He agreed!

So..... Dick Booth at Rochdale Canal Trust kindly donated the wood from an old lock gate to make the plaques. Tony Arkell, another ATC supporter (this one brandishing a chainsaw), cut off a suitable piece and Alan at Drew Forsyth & Co offered to slice it up. Leigh from Solo Design sanded down the wood and H and Susie from the ATC engraved the signs and put them up along the towpath.

John Hegley, joined by his rag dog, a 'Sack Russell' called Herman Hessian (pictured above), and competition winners, Chiara and Nia, duly unveiled the plaques on November 17th. There are now ten in all between Hebble End and Blackpit Lock.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped in this project.

Dog owners please note - pooper scoopers are now available at the ATC and the nearest bins are in the park!

TOP TEN WAYS TO CUT YOUR CARBON EMISSIONS

WITH THE CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS IN THE HAGUE having ended with only limited measures agreed by governments to combat global warming, it's up to all of us as individuals to look at how we can reduce our carbon emissions. Scientists believe that we need to cut our emissions by 60% to avoid further climatic disruption. You can calculate how much carbon you or your business burns by checking out the simple interactive website at: www.carboncalculator.org/

Here are ten ways to help you reach your 60% target:

1. **Don't fly to a warmer climate...** Flying is the cheapest and easiest way to cook the planet. One return flight to Rio de Janeiro burns as much carbon per passenger as over 500 train journeys between Hebden Bridge and Leeds. How about holidaying a bit closer to home this year (Whitby's lovely... if not quite as exotic as Rio!)? For an interactive guide to air travel go to: www.chooseclimate.org/flying/
2. **Cut back on your car use.** Go by train (OK, it's not been the most tempting option recently but, as they say, things can only get better...), catch the bus, get on your bike or walk (you'll feel a lot better for the exercise as well). We stock a wonderful little book

down at the Green Shop entitled 'Cutting Your Car Use' by Anna Semlyen – full of useful tips on how to reduce your car dependency or kick the habit altogether.

3. **Convert your car to gas or go electric...** Deputy Prime Minister, John ("two jags") Prescott has converted his ministerial car to run on LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) and last week announced subsidies to enable other motorists to follow suit. Subsidies for electric cars and dual electric / petrol cars are also available. Contact the ATC for details or visit the Powershift scheme website at: www.est-powershift.org.uk

4. **Insulate!** Top up your loft insulation, get those cavity walls filled, stop putting off doing that draught-proofing... You may be eligible for a grant – contact Calderdale Housing Energy Team (Andrew Cooper (01422) 392487 or Angela Walsh 392302) for details.
5. **Go solar!** Install solar panels to heat your hot water, rather than burning up more fossil fuels. Contact the ATC for details of the Solar Club which offers advice and training for DIY installations.

6. **Switch on to renewables.** Switch your electricity supply to renewable sources of energy. All the electricity companies now have schemes, including Yorkshire Electricity.

7. **Watch your food miles.** Pollution from transporting goods around the world is among the fastest growing sources of carbon emissions. Try to find local sources of food and other goods and try to resist those tempting fruits that have been flown thousands of miles into Britain (planes from New Zealand carrying kiwi fruit to Britain pump 5kg of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for every 1kg of fruit carried).

8. **Recycle as much as you can** (including this newspaper). This reduces the need for high-energy processes such as waste incineration and aluminium and glass manufacture.

9. **Turn it off, turn it down!** A video recorder on standby uses almost as much electricity as one playing a tape. Don't leave your TV or music centre on standby either. Turning down the thermostat by one degree will save you about 10% off your heating bills and you probably won't even notice the difference in temperature.

10. **Look at the label.** If you are planning to buy a new fridge, freezer or washing machine, look for the Energy Label that has to be displayed on all new electrical goods. One of the easiest ways to cut your carbon dioxide emissions (and save money in the long run) is to buy the most energy efficient model. And don't forget the low energy light bulbs!