

the green page

News and information from the Hebden Bridge Alternative Technology Centre

SCHOOLS GET SUSED



Pictured with SuSchool coordinator Gail Hirsh and the huge SuSchool poster are local schoolchildren Reuben Fisher, Matthew Rose, Isaac Rose and Luke Fisher.

To launch the next stage of the ATC's popular SUSchool project and to celebrate its success so far we have created the SUSchool poster in collaboration with local artist Steven Hutton. It's crammed full of environmentally friendly

tips and information. Thanks to the Council's Sustainable Development Unit every school in Calderdale will be getting a free copy.

SUSchool provides workshops and tours of the ATC for groups as well as working directly with schools, helping them teach about all aspects of sustainability using a library of teaching resources, lists of helpful organisations, funders, resources and places to visit and a myriad of kits and demonstration models. The ATC's landscape architect also works with interested school communities to develop play-

grounds into child and biodiversity friendly and stimulating spaces.

SUSchool covers all aspects of sustainability in education, including energy efficiency, renewable energies, climate change, healthy eating and food growing, the natural world and biodiversity, sustainable playgrounds, recycling and waste management, water, transport, food, consumer and lifestyle issues, communities, homes and the built environment.

For more information contact Gail (842121).

OPEN GARDENS

The ATC gardens are part of this years Arts Festival Open gardens and Studios on 5th and 6th of July. (They are numbered 41, 42 and 43 in the official event map!). We thought that it would be a good idea to have a party! On Saturday the 5th there will be a morning of pottering around Primrose garden, doing a bit of gardening from 10AM to 1PM, followed by refreshment and relaxation in these beautiful canalside surroundings. This will include showing off work in progress in the roundhouse, the wonderful wooden interior, mosaics, and cordwood walling, as well as longer standing features such as the wildlife areas, John Adamson's Green Man sculpture and the establishing glade areas. Invitation is open to Friends Of The ATC, Plastic Recycling and Gardening Club members, and anyone else interested in doing a spot of gardening. Please bring suitable refreshments for a hopefully sunny day.

For more information contact Susy (842121).

Room 101: Vivisection=scientific fraud!

Steve Hutton

"BUT WE MOSTLY USE RATS!" - the rallying cry and plea for support from those who experiment on animals, aimed at large swathes of the public that has little sympathy for these sensitive and intelligent creatures. But why rats? Are they so similar to us? Hardly...rats are merely considered 'good' laboratory models because they are easy to breed and house, don't require much room nor consume costly amounts of food. Rats are far easier to handle than dogs or primates and when it's time to kill them you don't have to spend much money on expensive euthanasia techniques. Is it scientific? Vivisecting rats has proved only 37% accurate in predicting what substances will cause cancer in people. You'd get better results from tossing a coin! The vast anatomical and physiologi-

cal differences between humans and animals render vivisection totally meaningless.

How successful is vivisection? Imagine as an aspiring chemist you have 100 potential drugs you wish to develop. On average around 90 of these substances will prove to be either of no use in treating diseases in animals (conditions that have been artificially induced to 'mimic' human illnesses such as destroying an animal's joints using corrosive chemicals to 'simulate' arthritis!) or so toxic for the animal that the new drug never reaches human trials. So you are left with 10 potential drugs. Of these, 8 will already exist- so called 'copy-cat' drugs that companies develop to avoid infringing another firm's patent. That would leave you with 2 new drugs that make it to the market.

Judging success in terms of treating illness rather than sales, a success rate of about 2%.

And how many useful drugs are discarded because of the misleading nature of animal experiments? How many dangerous drugs make it to the market undetected by these same tests? Legal drugs kill more people per year than all illegal drugs combined! Isuprel was a medication used to treat asthma and "safely" tested on animals that proved devastatingly toxic for humans, killing 3,500 asthmatics. Suprofen, an arthritis drug, was withdrawn from the market when patients suffered kidney toxicity, despite animal tests giving it an "excellent safety profile". There are countless other examples...

Vivisection: Room 101 awaits you!

ATC CONTACTS

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BEYOND THE VALLEY

a positive green news stories from outside the Calder Valley

BRITAIN'S FIRST LOCALLY OWNED WIND TURBINE!

Whilst the Department Of Trade is committed to spending £48 billion pounds just to clean up redundant nuclear power stations and the Government's white paper on energy promised only an extra £62 million for all renewable energy sources it would be easy to get down-hearted. However a local community in Wales have just succeeded in beginning the operation of their very own 75kW wind turbine. The idea was conceived three years ago at a meeting in Pantperthog Village Hall, resulted in the establishment of the Bro Dyfi Community Renewables Group, and has given us the first turbine in Britain to be owned and managed by its local community. The electricity generated by the turbine will prevent the release of 70 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

WIND WORKS!

A British Wind Energy Association survey has revealed that whilst almost 80% of the population are in favour of increasing the use of wind energy, just 12 people in the United Kingdom are responsible for a staggering 27% of all anti-wind letters published in newspapers! The UK is the windiest country in Europe with an untapped potential that is 8 times the country's total electricity demand. Our wind turbines currently prevent the emission of over 1.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, 14,000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide, and 4,000 tonnes of Nitrogen Oxide every year. Wind energy has also been proved to be one of the safest technologies, with no member of the public injured by modern wind energy anywhere in the world in over 20 years of operation.

GOING BANANAS

An innovative recycling project is proving that a previously wasted product, banana stalks, can be used to make paper, and other items such as shopping bags, lampshades and clothing fibres. The banana stalks are crushed and treated with a non-toxic plant extract before being used in a routine manufacturing process. The Banana Green Gold Project claims that half of the world's paper could be made from banana stalks within ten years, thereby reducing tree felling for paper whilst also hopefully benefiting poorer economies through job provision and local wealth creation. The scheme is currently being implemented in Jamaica and Haiti with other banana producing countries considering the scheme. Examples of banana paper can be seen in the Green Shop.

A SIDEWAYS LOOK

I'm sure that there must be a law of economics written somewhere to tell us that if you give something a zero price there will always be an excess demand for it. Such a law was obviously written way before the advent of the daily free newspapers that flutter around our bus and train stations and ITVOne but the basic truth just about still holds firm.

Similarly it seems that unless there is a realistic and enforced monetary deterrent to many unwelcome activities then there will be an excess amount of these activities taking place. Surely there can't be many people who would flinch at the prospect of housing developers and members of Council planning committees facing financial ruin and being prohibited from ever setting foot in town again if they flagrantly flouted planning laws or showed little respect for the wishes of local residents?

The 2001 Census revealed that only 15% of the people travelling to work in England use public transport, whilst 61% use a car. In London, where the percentage of those using public transport is much higher, the huge volume of vehicles using the roads for work, as well as getting to work led to the introduction

of the notorious congestion charge - a £5 financial deterrent on most vehicle users, attempting to reduce the amount of unwelcome traffic entering the centre of London.

According to Transport For London, less than four months after the inception of congestion charging, traffic levels are already down by 20% and even Jeremy Clarkson has admitted he was wrong to suggest that it couldn't work! Bus passengers are not all smiles however...it seems that their favoured modes of transport are now almost racing around the non-gridlocked town and are unable to respect their old slow timetables!

A road charging scheme in Trondheim, Norway had a similar effect on its traffic levels so what's stopping Hebden Bridge? Let's start by charging £5 (or £3 and 2Favours) for driving through St George's Square, with all proceeds going to its ultimate pedestrianisation, and then before we know it we could set up a couple of toll booths at each end of town, another one or two on Heights Road and we'd soon be able to finance our very own local, pollution free tram service with a chair lift or water balanced cliff railway serving all hilltop settings.

Hemptastic

There is little doubt that hemp should be regarded as a wonder crop and an essential item of any sustainable blueprint. It is a low maintenance, high yield, environmentally friendly crop that will grow almost anywhere without the use of pesticides or herbicides, deters weed growth, has a root system which aerates soil and can be ready to harvest in just 4 months. It also absorbs carbon dioxide whilst growing and its processing requires very little energy input.

Prior to the 1930s it had been one of the world's major crops, valued for its excellent nutritional, medicinal and commercial values with more than 25,000 separate uses ("ranging from dynamite to cellophane") being claimed for hemp in its heyday. You can eat it, drink it, wear it, burn it, make paper, plastic and other fibres from it, and rub it on your skin. Hemp oils are used in many medical treatments and hemp seeds are low-fat, gluten free, jam-packed with essential fatty acids Omega 3 and 6, protein carbohydrate and dietary roughage. The Magna Carta and American Declaration Of Independence were written on hemp paper, hemp sails and rigging held the British Empire's navy together and even Levi Strauss' original riveted "jeans" were made from it.

Now, in the Suffolk town of Haverhill, two houses have been built using a hemp-based construction fabric! By-products from hemp fibre production have been mixed with hydraulic lime and water, rammed into timber

frames and left to solidify like concrete. The trademarked product, Isochanvre, is a construction material resistant to moisture with good heating and sound insulation properties. The housing developers also claim that it is easier to work with than brick!

And yet despite it being compulsory during Henry VIII's reign to grow hemp on all unused land, the UK is the only country in the European Union where you currently need a government license to grow it! Unfortunately its uncanny shared looks and distant relative status to cannabis (hemp's botanical name is *cannabis sativa*) has officialdom running for cover. But you can't get "high" on hemp, it doesn't contain enough of the psychoactive compound THC that makes cannabis a so-called controlled drug. It has been suggested that you would need to smoke a joint as big as big as a totem pole to experience even the faintest sense of cannabis inhalation.

But with conservative organisations such as the National Farmers Union recognising the benefits hemp cultivation has for its members there is hope that the government will begin to understand its potential value to the country. A recent DEFRA report emphasised the extent of new worldwide markets for hemp and in 2002 the Queen even awarded Hemcore's Hemp Horse Bedding the Royal Warrant.

For more information visit www.mother-hemp.com or www.yorkshirehemp.com

THE A-Z OF RECYCLING

On average we all produce seven times our own weight in "waste" every year...there's nowhere left to bury it so let's all get used to chanting the mantra of "reduce, re-use, repair and recycle!" Britain still only recycles 12.4% of its "waste", Austria manages 64%, Belgium 52%, Germany 48%...onwards with the Os-

Oddments and ornaments - Donate all unwanted but re-usable items to Zion Housing Co-Op (01422 845990) who will sell them at their Wednesday market stall in Hebden Bridge.

Oil - It is highly dangerous and illegal to pour oil into drains or dispose of it on open land. The amount of oil dumped each year is estimated to be 11 times that which was lost in the Exxon Valdez tanker disaster. Waste lubrication oil from vehicles is recyclable. Car oil can be deposited at Eastwood Waste Transfer Station. More information can be obtained from the Oil Bank Line 0800 663366.

Offices - It is reasonably easy and enjoyable to start up a basic office recycling and waste reduction scheme. If you can afford to pay to have your waste paper and drinks cans collected contact Kerbside (01422 881110) otherwise work co-operatively with colleagues and create your very own system. Re-using envelopes and packaging materials, recycling unwanted CD roms, contact the ATC (01422 842121), inkjet printer cartridges (envelopes available from the Green Shop), and donating unwanted office furniture and equipment to worthy causes, such as the ATC, will dramatically reduce your waste creation and help you to sleep at night.

Onion skins - Produce an excellent golden brown dye for all types of material and can also be used in the manufacture of recycled paper.

Open spaces - Ensuring community involvement in revitalising unused open spaces is a guaranteed way of repairing and recycling community well-being.

Optimism - Reduce cynicism, re-use enthusiasm and determination, repair energy levels and recycle all optimistic thoughts. Even through the very smallest of actions we can all make a positive difference to our own and other's lives and have a good time doing it!

Orange Peel - Apart from being composted when fresh, dried orange peel makes excellent firelighters.

Organs - Application forms for organ donor registration are available from Valley Road Medical Centre, Hebden Bridge.

Organic waste - It is generally agreed that about a third of all household waste is organic, such as vegetable and fruit peelings, food and garden refuse, and could be composted. If organic waste is buried in landfill sites it normally rots in the absence of oxygen and causes potentially dangerous gases such as methane and leachates that poison our air, land and water supplies.

Ostrich Feathers and Ottomans - see Oddments and Ornaments.