

the green page

News and information from the Hebden Bridge Alternative Technology Centre

ATC CONTACTS

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Gregg. "Just two hours is all it takes. The course is very practical - it will show you how to sort and prepare the plastic, how to keep it clean, dry and compact. You will learn about the different types of plastic and the energy used to make them. There will also be a chance to see how we do the reprocessing

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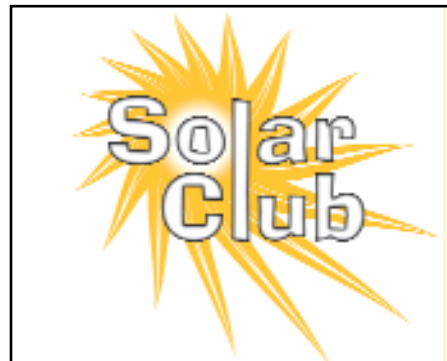
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This month's nomination for Green Room 101 has been submitted by Billy Frugal from Broughton Street in Hebden Bridge.

The subject of Billy's wrath is..... the DAIRY INDUSTRY.

The dairy industry is bad news.

First of all, it's bad news for cows. In order to produce milk for human consumption, cows are subjected to yearly pregnancies, losing their calves a few days after birth. The cow is then milked twice a day, including the 6 or 7 months that she spends pregnant with her next calf. Instead of producing a natural amount of milk, about 3 litres per day, she produces up to 30 litres for human consumption and her full udder can

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weigh up to 50kg. Every year, a quarter of Britain's dairy herd suffers from mastitis and a fifth go lame.

It's bad news for calves. Calves are the forgotten victims of the rise of vegetarianism, unwanted by-products of the dairy industry. Most calves are either slaughtered at two weeks old for pies or calf-skin, exported to Continental veal crates or reared for beef. Falling demand for meat products means that calves are increasingly killed shortly after birth and their bodies dumped.

It's also bad news for the environment. Cattle slurry is probably the major cause of water contamination in the United Kingdom. It is thirty times more potent as an oxidising agent in rivers and streams than treated human sewage, contributing to fish deaths and algae blooms as it de-oxygenates fresh water. Also, each cow emits about 200 litres of methane - a very potent green house gas - every day.

And last but not least, it's bad news for you. Hormones and antibiotics used to force unnatural yields from dairy cows find their way into the human food chain. The World Trade Organisation forces Europe to import milk tainted with Bovine Growth Hormone. Cow's milk has no dietary fibre, a high saturated fat content and contains significant amounts of pus.

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household metals (including all food and drink cans, aluminium foil, pots and pans, pipes and cable) out for collection in used plastic bags every Monday morning. Collections begin at 9.00am.

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A Sideways Look

John Morrison

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Even a simple definition is elusive, conjuring up more questions than answers. Being green is not about subscribing to every principle in some mythical charter. It is, I trust, a broad church, not a rule-bound clique. There should be room for many shades of green, various degrees of commitment. What about meat-eating cyclists? Vegetarians who smoke? Vegetarians who, bafflingly, reckon it's OK to eat chicken and bacon? People who drive five miles to the bottle bank and drive five miles

back? What about people who sort their rubbish into bags, but then never take it anywhere? Can they join the green club, even if only as associate members? What about me, with my cartload of good intentions and my principled procrastination: could I be a Friend of a Friend of the Earth?

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There seems such a huge gap between who we are and who we would like to be. When the gap grows too wide, disillusion sets

in. We're tempted to close our eyes, cross our fingers, burrow under the duvet and hope the problems will go away.

So I doff my hat to whoever it was who first coined the motto 'Think globally, act locally'. We hear it so often that it's in danger of becoming just another cliché. Yet these four well-chosen words achieve the near-impossible: they bridge that yawning gap between thinking and doing, between the ideal and the pragmatic. Our contributions, however small, are important. Every little bit helps - whether it's planting a tree, buying FairTrade products or giving a few quid to Greenpeace.

At the very least, we can make a simple audit. We're either adding - however minutely - to the sum of human happiness, or we're subtracting from it. OK, it may be a close-run thing, but as long as we're on the right side of the equation, then surely we can afford a little smile. Not a smile of complacency or self-satisfaction, but just the warm feeling of contentment we get from seeing, say, a Ferrari with its wheels clamped, or Michael Portillo's face when the votes were announced at the 1997 election.



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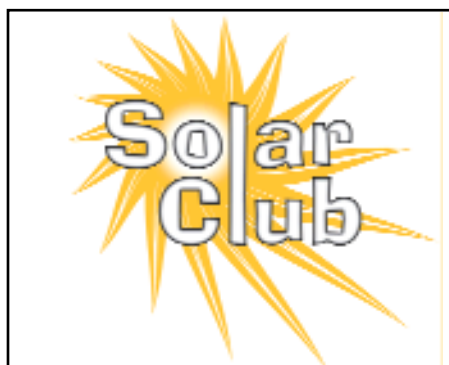
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