

The Green (half a) Page is an exciting new feature in the Hebden Bridge Times, showcasing the work of the Hebden Bridge Alternative Technology Centre and other environmental projects in Calderdale.

Each month there will be news from the ATC, reports on ongoing projects, tips on how to make your own lifestyle a bit more environmentally friendly and background information on topical green issues.

With GMOs and global warming constantly in the news, the Green Page will provide some positive light-green relief and news of sustainable alternatives that work.

If you have an issue you'd like to see covered or an article you'd like printing (no promises) just contact the ATC.

ATC CONTACTS

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Vacancy for a volunteer

There is a vacancy for a volunteer to help in the shop/information unit at weekends. Training will be given.

Apply at the Centre.

Going Green for Softies

This month's energy saving tip . . .

Next time you get the vacuum cleaner out – give your fridge a treat and save money. Run the cleaner gently over the coils on the back of the fridge to remove the dust. The motor will run for shorter periods and save you cash.

HERE COMES THE SUN

AT HALF THE PRICE

Nearly all the energy we use, and ultimately life itself, results from solar energy. Even fossil fuels are the product of solar energy long ago.

Most of the energy we currently use in our homes and cars comes from burning fossil fuels such as oil, coal and gas. When we burn them, large amounts of carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere adding to global warming. This is the change in the world's climate which is contributing to flooding, famine and water shortages. Burning fossil fuels also causes other environmental problems such as acid rain and reduced air quality.

Renewable energies such as solar, unlike fossil fuels, will not run out and are comparatively benign to the environment. One step many of us could take in reducing pollution is to install solar water heating – and doing so would also massively reduce your water heating bills.

To encourage the spread of solar water heating, the ATC is launching an exciting



new scheme called the Solar Club. The club will assist people who want to install solar water heating with the necessary

skills, equipment and support.

Getting a commercial company to install solar water heating for you will cost between about £2500 -£4000. The Solar Club, though, is a not-for-profit scheme and will help cut installation costs to less than half the price – around £1300.

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Contrary to popular belief, the UK has a plentiful supply of solar energy, amounting to over a thousand kilowatt hours each year per square metre. Even here in the mid-Pennines, solar water heating can provide about 50% of a household's hot water requirements. It is a well established technology and there are currently more than 42,000 domestic solar water heating systems installed in Britain.

Solar systems involve a heat collector, usually mounted on a roof. The solar panels are not obtrusive (it's rather like having in a Velux skylight on your roof) and can either sit on an existing roof or can be built into it. Heat is then transferred from these panels to water stored in an indoor tank.

Annual hot water bills should be reduced by half and nearly all of the hot water required during the summer should



be provided. Solar systems usually give 20 years useful service during which time the money saved more than repays the initial cost.

The Solar Club is easy to join and members have the benefit of:

- Professional training, advice and support
- An independent home visit to assess if solar water heating would be suitable for your home
- Discounted solar panels and other components
- Sharing skills, labour and tools.

If you have basic DIY skills, the practical work involved will be well within your capability - expert training and assistance will be on hand if needed. What's more, if you don't like the idea of DIY

installation, we can install the entire system for you (with your help) and the system will still be a lot cheaper than those commercially available.

There will be a short presentation about the Solar Club tonight (Friday 26th May), 7.30 – 9.00pm, at the ATC at Hebble End. There's no obligation to join – just come along if you would like to find out more.

For more information about future presentations and training days, contact the Solar Club co-ordinator John Brierley at the ATC or at home on (01422) 886792 or e-mail: john.brierley@zen.co.uk

Did you know???

...that if all UK households had 'A' rated fridges, it would reduce carbon emissions by over 900,000 tonnes a year - that is the same as the total carbon emissions from all the houses in Scotland each year. Buying a new 'A' rated fridge will save you up to £450 in electricity bills over its lifetime.

....that if all the sunlight hitting the Earth's surface in one hour was harnessed and converted into electrical power, it would be enough to fulfil mankind's energy needs for a whole year.

....that if every south facing roof and office wall in the UK were clad with solar panels, the sun's energy could generate more than the UK's complete electricity requirement

...that by the year 2050 the whole of Europe's electrical power requirements could be met by solar power.

.... that sustainable development will be a statutory component of the new National Curriculum, which will take effect in September 2000. References to sustainable development are contained in four main subjects: Geography, Science, Design and Technology and Citizenship.

Exploding myths

"UPVC Windows are Better than Wooden Windows"

This is a myth - compared to modern high-performance wooden windows, UPVC windows are:

- more damaging to the environment to produce and to dispose of
- have poorer thermal performance and cannot readily be improved
- cannot be repaired when ironmongery breaks or sections of the frame get damaged
- have similar maintenance requirements but a shorter overall life.

Many housing providers automatically specify UPVC windows because they believe them to require less maintenance. Whilst this may have been true ten years ago, modern high-performance wooden windows that have been factory stained typically have a re-staining / re-painting cycle of 6 - 8 years. Such windows can now be purchased with 30 year guarantees, as against 15 to 20 years for UPVC windows.



Fuel for thought

On a recent visit to Hebden Bridge, Martin Steel, a window cleaner from Manchester, called in at the Alternative Technology Centre to show off his smart red Volvo diesel estate car. Nothing special about that you might think, except that Martin's car runs on used vegetable oil! Martin collects the oil from restaurants and chip shops and processes it himself to make 'Bio-Diesel'.

We took a test drive. Wow!

The car performed like a petrol powered car, with amazing acceleration from a completely unmodified 2.4 litre engine. Martin has covered 15,000 miles so far on 'Bio-Diesel' with absolutely no problems and he estimates that the fuel costs him just 32p a gallon to make. He commented "It gives me a great feeling to motor on fuel that is less than 12 months old instead of the millions of years that it takes to make fossil fuel diesel. The bio-diesel is also com-

pletely bio-degradable"

Eric Archbold of the ATC, seen here checking out the engine, was suitably impressed "Even the exhaust fumes smell sweet, just a hint of a summer barbeque" he said.

To find out more about Bio-Diesel call in on the ATC at Hebble End Mill, Hebden Bridge.