



News and information from the Hebden Bridge Alternative Technology Centre

£20m to end solar power eclipse

The Government has launched a major £20 million scheme to stimulate the installation of solar (photovoltaic) panels on roofs and walls of houses, flats and public buildings. Under the programme, the number of domestic solar installations alone is expected to increase ten-fold by 2005. Hundreds of homes and offices will generate electricity direct from sunlight as part of the government's attempt to kick-start the UK industry, which has so far lagged behind those in the US, Japan and Germany because of lack of government support.

The scheme is part of the Department of Trade & Industry's Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme to reduce carbon emissions and cut the cost of solar technology over the next three years. The panels can be used as cladding on the side of buildings or on the roofs of houses and flats. Unlike other renewable power sources, they require no extra space.

Other parts of the DTI's programme include

£4m for the installation of solar systems on public buildings including schools, galleries, church halls and sports centres and a similar amount for social and private housing developments. The aim of the programme is to show that solar power works in the UK and to dispel the myth that solar energy is a non-starter in the UK's climate.

Grants will be offered to two main groups:

- For domestic householders, small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and small-scale building projects (e.g. schools and community groups), there is up to 50% grant funding for small-scale applications (0.5kWp - 5kWp).

- Larger installations, including groups of dwellings or commercial and public sites, with sizes ranging from 5 kWp up to 100 kWp, up to 65% grant funding is available.

For more information: ring Freephone 0800 298 3978 or Faxback number 0845 330 0745. There is a website at: www.solargrants.org.uk

GREEN MAPS

The ATC has started to develop a set of electronic maps identifying all sites in Calderdale relating to sustainability. The maps will cover: energy & climate change, waste and recycling, bio-diversity, schools and educational centres, transport and food and agriculture.

The plan is to make them available on the Internet and also on CD-ROM - with 'clickable'

icons connecting the user to background information and photos as well as other sites of interest. A large format tourist map will also be produced to go on sale in Tourist Information Centres.

There is a prototype (non-clickable) sample map on our website at www.alternativetechnology.org.uk/green-map.html

If you have any suggestions for sites to include, please contact us at the ATC via the website above, or any of the other usual ways.

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The views expressed by individuals on the Green Page do not necessarily represent the views of the ATC.

BEYOND THE VALLEY

Positive green news stories from beyond the Calder Valley

Power Plants

A £66 million support scheme for bio-energy projects has been launched by Energy Minister, Brian Wilson. The money will support the establishment of up to six power stations to produce electricity from burning fast growing crops such as straw, willow or miscanthus (elephant grass), and up to a hundred smaller power and heat plants.

Hydrogen Partnership

The Greater London Authority has teamed up with big business, the motor industry and top research experts in a bid to make London a world leader in the use of hydrogen. The Hydrogen Partnership is the first partnership of its kind in the UK committed to taking forward fuel cell technology. Hydrogen fuel cell-powered vehicles produce no pollution or carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming. Fuel cells can also be used to power homes and offices, and in the future even laptops and mobile phones. With more Londoners dying from vehicle emissions than are killed in road accidents, the development of cleaner fuels is crucial to London's future.

If the trial is successful, Mayor Ken Livingstone will consider converting all London buses to hydrogen.

in brief...

All Wheels Good

Unicycles, tricycles, roller blades, skateboards, pogo sticks, space hoppers, rickshaws, penny farthings, tandems, wheelchairs, electric bikes, pushchairs, go-carts.....or even just your old two wheeler. Whatever it is you get around on, if you want to be part of the ATC's entry for the Hebden Bridge Carnival on June 8th, please let us know. The theme will be human-powered pollution-free transport.

- Contact Abby or Pip at the ATC for details.

Superweed

The National Trust is appealing for help in stemming the spread of the Crag's pink space invader, otherwise known as Himalayan Balsam. On Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th June everyone is invited to bring their family and friends (and gloves) to Hardcastle Crag for some superweeding. Meet the wardens at Midgehole car park for details and bags, 10am - 4.30pm. Dogs on leads, please.

AT Online Resources

If you need information and resources about alternative technology matters, you need look no further than the ATC website. The Links Page has around 75 other websites listed, divided

into sections such as solar power, wind, green electricity, building, education and alt-tech case studies. These are not just a random set of links as found on too many websites. The ATC media team has visited each of them and decided they are potentially useful.

Also on the ATC website are copies of all 23 issues of this Green Page. Over the coming months, the website will see some exciting developments so keep it bookmarked.

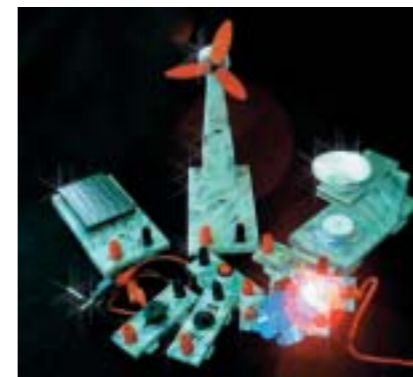
If you can't immediately find what you are looking for, we have a website search facility.

www.alternativetechnology.org.uk

Kits for schools

Suitable for science education for key stage 2 upwards, these educational kits (see below) are made from recycled plastic and low-power components.

- Contact Abby at the ATC for more information.



A TO Z OF RECYCLING

This month we move onto 'E' with a selection from our A to Z of Recycling in Calderdale. The complete A to E listing is now on our website. We will add entries for each letter as it gets published in the Hebden Bridge Times month by month. If you have any suggestions or additions, please send to Sharon at the ATC.

Egg boxes - Torn up cardboard eggboxes are a useful addition to your compost heap. They also make great trays for chitting potatoes or as biodegradable seed pots. Some are accepted back by retailers for reuse - it's worth asking.

Egg shells - Crush up your eggshells for the compost heap. They are rich in nitrogen and phosphorous.

Electrical Equipment - Some charity shops still take electrical goods - try Oxfam on Market Street in Hebden Bridge who will take items, send them to be tested and resell them. Or try Sitting Comfortably in Halifax on (01422) 392482 - they will take working TVs, irons, kettles etc.

Engine oil - Waste oil contains toxic substances, which could end up in our drinking water if dumped. It is illegal to dump waste oil down the drain. If you live in Hebden Bridge your nearest recycling sites are Milner Royd Depot, Mearclough, Sowerby Bridge or the Eastwood Waste Site, Halifax Road, Todmorden. A lubricating oil called 'Envirol', manufactured from waste oil, is available from some branches of Halfords.

Envelopes - Re-use your envelopes - there's no difference between a used one and a new one except maybe a bit of writing. Open them carefully so that they can be reused. You can buy envelope re-use labels from Friends of the Earth 02074901555 or other green campaigns and charities.

Extended Life - This company promote re-use of old computers and are involved in recycling them too. You can contact them on 01422 422256.

Over wrapped and over here

Food packaging wasn't always the problem it is today. There was a time, not so long ago, when market stallholders would tip the fruit and veg straight into our shopping bags. Now we stand in the supermarket aisle, rubbing a plastic bag between finger and thumb, trying in vain to get the damn thing open. Or maybe that's just me.

Our infatuation with purpose-free packaging is reaching bizarre new heights. On those blissfully rare occasions that I need to call in at a motorway service station, I see oranges on sale. They aren't sold by the pound, not even by the kilo. Each orange is individually wrapped in a clear plastic bubble, with a little label for the hard of thinking. 'Citrus Snack' it reads... and there's me thinking it's just an orange.

There are bananas too, snug in their own little banana-shaped plastic sheaths. Since bananas and oranges already come with their own wrapping - elegant, easy to peel and biodegradable - any further packaging is unnecessary.

A new kind of pizza made a brief appearance in local shops. The base was pre-smeared with tomato paste, but all the other ingredients were separately shrink-wrapped. This, in short, was a pizza



John Morrison

A sideways look

you built yourself. You could add the little slices of cheese, mushroom and ham in the exact proportions you preferred. Maybe, if you weren't thinking too clearly, you could kid yourself that this was home cooking.

The supermarkets seem to be in the vanguard of this trend, as they continue to add what they call 'value' to the humblest of foodstuffs. So it's goodbye to the turnip, and hello to some shrink-wrapped concoction called 'Turnip Surprise' (tiny baby turnips marinated in a spicy Chinese-style sauce, ready to microwave in seconds).

You'll find a dollop of unappetising gunk in a plastic tray, sealed with film, and slid into a cardboard sleeve emblazoned with heating instructions,

list of ingredients, serving suggestions... and a full-colour photograph of something very different to what you'll tip onto your plate once the microwave has gone 'ping'. All at a price per pound that would make a saint blush. 'Serves two'? I don't think so...

The manufacturer adds any two magic words from the lexicon of food labelling: fresh, pure, natural, prime, farmhouse, farm-fresh, free-range, organic, authentic, country-style, wild, homemade, traditional, heritage... While some of these epithets have a specific definition, the truth can be stretched imaginatively in a way that Bill Clinton would immediately understand. 'Natural' is a good one in this context - vague, with a host of pleasant associations, but ultimately meaningless.

In an Alice in Wonderland kind of way, these flowery words can mean whatever we want them to mean. My favourite description, found on a packet of vile, frozen, 'Mexican' enchiladas, is 'Authentic style'. If you think about this combination of words for long enough - and what they might actually mean - you'll come to the conclusion that either the world has gone crazy, or you have.

Green Avenger - Mike Bryson

