

ATC CONTACTS

HB Alternative Technology Centre,
Hebble End Mill, Hebden Bridge, HX7 6HJ.
Tel: 01422-842121
Fax: 01422 84 31 41
info@alternativetechnology.org.uk
www.alternativetechnology.org.uk

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

PRIMROSE GARDEN



Thanks to Colin Duke for answering our plea and providing a name for the fungus recently featured on the Green Page. Colin believes it is a Velvet Shank, a late winter, early spring species. (Photograph courtesy of Susan Feltham)



Also found in Primrose Garden is the Scarlet Elf Cap, a species that was first recorded in Calderdale in 1991 and has since been reported at four other sites in the area. (Photograph courtesy of Mike Sykes, Halifax Scientific Society)

WILD THINGS!

As part of this year's Big Green Week activities, 8 children aided by the expert guidance of Colin Duke explored the mini beasts inhabiting Primrose Garden. Amongst the six different types of fungi, 3 varieties of centipede, ground and rove beetles, and 2 types of ants were woodlice, springtails, earwigs, moths and the exotically named woodsnake and armoured millipedes. Unlike

centipedes, which are predators, the millipedes are vegetarian and feed on a diet of dead and living plant matter, living under stones, bark and leaf litter. The woodsnake millipede is also known to climb trees to browse mosses and algae.

One of the fungi found, Alfred's Cake, so called because it looks like a burnt bun, has a very interesting heritage. Not only

does it grow an extra ring each year but in the past was used as a tinderbox for keeping charcoal alight ready for the next fire. It has been found throughout the world and used in the same way for thousands of years. It is claimed that some North American Indians still use this as a convenient way of "carrying" fire!

A to Z of recycling

Recycling is not a gimmick. It makes economic and environmental sense and must become a regular part of all of our daily lives. It takes 350 times more energy to make food and drink cans from raw rather than recycled materials onwards with The A-Z of recycling -

N's

N is for

Nappies – Despite what the Absorbent Hygiene Products Manufacturers Association might try to tell you (and I bet they have exciting parties!), disposable nappies are not recycled and are not good for the environment! 8 million disposable nappies are used every day in the UK creating 800,000 tonnes of dirty nappy waste every year. It is possible to purchase more environmentally friendly disposable

nappies but "real" re-usable nappies supplied by a laundry and delivery service are the only cost-effective and more environmentally friendly alternative.

Neighbourhoods – Community inspired projects with effective resident participation, free from the hands of overpaid consultants and outside contractors, will breathe life into all depressed urban and rural areas in need of regeneration!

Nettles – Nettle leaves and young nettle plants are good activators in compost heaps and make a superb liquid plant feed.

Newspapers – On average over a third of the contents of everyone's waste bins is paper and card. Kerbside Recycling (01422 881110) will collect newspapers on their local collection routes and all Council recycling sites have facilities for newspaper recycling. With vinegar newspaper can make an excellent window cleaner, shredded newspaper makes a good bedding for pets and other animals, it is used both commercially and domestically as an effective insulation material and can be used in small quantities in compost heaps.

Alternatively, cut down on the amount of gossip and misinformation you consume. On average each American uses the equivalent of one mature tree of newsprint annually! Try rejecting "free" publications and replacing daily newspapers with quality publications and alternative electronic media sources.

Notebooks – What more ethical statement could you possibly make than purchasing a notebook with a recycled plastic cover and 100% recycled paper!

Nostalgia – Recycle those rose tinted spectacles with the local optician and take a fresh look at the issues affecting contemporary life.

Nuclear power – Beware of messengers from deepest Surrey who will try to convince you that nuclear power is clean, non-polluting and the answer to all of society's ills. Remember that the total radioactivity released into the atmosphere after the Chernobyl accident was 200 times that of the combined releases from the atomic bombs exploded at Hiroshima and Nagasaki!

Someone told me they'd recently seen a dog pooch with a tiny paper American flag on a cocktail stick standing up in it. Instead of the usual red stripes, which represent the original 13 colonies who rose against the British in 1775, it bore the legend "U.S Foreign Policy". That's the type of considered political comment I'd normally warm to, but after repeatedly watching those American Marines making such a good job of yanking down that statue in Baghdad I realise that they could now be carrying out an equally important task here in the Calder Valley.

Attaching a few ropes to the mobile telephone mast on Heights Road above Mytholmroyd and pulling it down, whilst ensuring that they've got a few locals around to attack the fallen tower with assorted footwear, in front of an array of international television camera crews, would surely help cement the so-called "special relationship".

A Sideways View

A "special relationship"

And should the U.S ever consider invading our green and pleasant land, the removal of this mast would be a classic pre-emptive strike.

It was discovered during the Kosovo War that mobile telephone towers have the ability to detect the American's radar-invisible Stealth Bombers and Cruise missiles because they continuously emit energy pulses that are disrupted by anything crossing them. It was claimed that one of the £1.4 billion bargain bombers was actually shot down by Serbian forces using this technology.

Armed with this knowledge perhaps we

could remove the need for the proposed American Missile Defence System, also known as Star Wars, at RAF Menwith Hill and Fylingdales by simply surrounding our coastline with mobile telephone masts. Forget the facts that I've yet to meet anyone who actually wants one of these towers near their homes, that the jury is still out on their potential health hazards, that it might encourage even more people to use mobile telephones and talk loudly about inane things in public places, that security authorities are able to track anyone with a mobile telephone by using these masts, or that they might cause homing pigeons to lose their way home, and I think that we are on to a winner!

And if that's pie in the sky to some of you then I'm all for creating government legislation that forces all major educational institutes to develop specific departments of pie in the sky. Such departments would be expected to introduce unpopular ideas and inventions that are beyond the accepted scientific "rules", for discussion amongst the masses without fear of ridicule in the nation's media. Anyone for compulsory National Environmental Service?

BEYOND THE VALLEY

Positive green news stories from outside the Calder Valley.

Power To The People?

A cross party group of MPs is seeking support for a bill designed to give local people more power to improve the quality of life in their communities.

The snappily titled Local Communities and Sustainability Bill, a private members bill led by Liberal Democrat MP Sue Doughty, covers economic regeneration, social inclusion, environmental protection and political participation. It aims to make regionally based planning more sustainable as well as giving local authorities more powers to protect jobs and services.

The bill proposes that elected regional or national assemblies will compile draft strategies for local sustainability but that if a majority of councils in a region oppose any part of the strategy, it would not be implemented locally. Councils would also have to

take the largely unknown step of actually consulting their electorate, who would be able to reverse any unpopular decisions.

Parliamentary co-coordinator of the campaign Ron Bailey said the bill would oblige central authorities to back local sustainability. He aims to raise the support of 30,000 people to lobby the government.

For more information (email) ron.bailey@bergery-rd.fsnet.co.uk or (tel) 07951 761229.

Power For The People!

Representatives of local businesses, environmental groups, and the farming community in St David's, Pembrokeshire, the UK smallest city, have launched a project that aims to have the whole of its energy needs generated from renewable sources by 2008. Their plans include the use of a dedicated worker to visit

all local householders, approximately 500, offering advice on energy-saving measures and carrying out a door-to-door recycling survey, whilst examining viable sources of renewable energy for the city's energy demands. This project, which has applied for funding in partnership with their local County Council, also plans to encourage community purchasing of everything from insurance services to basic foodstuffs. Its association with the Council came at the same time as local authorities across Europe were being encouraged by a report from the European Relief project to convert all of their operations to renewable energy in order to save the equivalent of seven million people's emissions. The report also points out that installing flush control devices in all local authority toilets would save the equivalent of the water used by 3 million European Union citizens per year.

A BIGGER, BRIGHTER CALDER FUTURE!

Calder Future, a partnership organisation that aims to improve the standard of the River Calder and its tributaries, is celebrating its 5th birthday with the launch of a 5 Year Action Strategy and its annual River Calder Day on Saturday 28th June. Last year six activities took place on and around the river and this year ten are planned with several based around Hebden Bridge.

In the morning Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed will be removed from Hebden Water on the riverside walk between the bowling club and the bridge next to the archery field. Both of these plants are invasive species that were originally imported as orna-

mental additions to Victorian gardens but have proved to be damaging to local environments. They displace native plants and reduce wildlife habitats and food sources whilst also increasing the risk of riverbank erosion when they die back in the autumn. Both grow voraciously, are thriving near the river and seed profusely. Each Balsam plant can produce up to 800 seeds that are released from seedpods to distances approaching 7 metres. The seeds are often transported by water and remain viable for up to two years. The removal of Himalayan Balsam is easy, fun work and makes an immediate improvement to the environment.

During the morning Calder Valley Search and Rescue Team will be doing a river clean up between Calder Holmes Park and Walkleys Canalside Mill and in the afternoon BBC weatherman Paul Hudson will be larking about in a canoe at Sowerby Bridge. Food, music and other entertainments will be provided and displays of activities undertaken by various environmental groups will be exhibited.

For more information contact jane@calderfuture.org.uk - (01422 316661) - www.calderfuture.org.uk



This month's nomination for Green Room 101 comes from Steve Hutton who argues that Vivisection is scientific fraud!

"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. Scientific? Vivisectioning 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 physiological 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!

To comment upon this nomination, read previous suggestions or submit your own Green Room 101 nomination visit www.alternativetechnology.org.uk/101/