

THE GREEN PAGE

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

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BATS'LL DO NICELY

Of the 16 resident species of British bats, which make up about a third of our land mammal species, 6 are endangered or rare and 6 are vulnerable. Only the Brown long-eared, Natterer's, Daubenton's and Pipistrelle bats are currently on the "not-threatened" list. Britain's commonest bat, the Pipistrelle, is only 4cms long and weighs about 5 grams, less than a 2p coin, but can eat up to 3,000 insects a night!

All British bats feed on insects and live and feed over a wide area. They need a continuous food supply during the summer, as well as wide choice of places to shelter throughout the year, and they can be encouraged to visit and become resident in and around our gardens and open spaces. Food sources for bats can be attracted by growing night-scented flowers and herbs, and by leaving part of your lawn unmown from about mid-May until it seeds. An insect-friendly pond will also attract bats. Sheltered areas created by using any combination of walls, fences, or trees and bushes will provide possible roosting sites, and by simulating tree holes, bat boxes offer an additional option for shelter.

Bats and their roosts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is an



offence to intentionally kill, injure or deliberately capture a bat, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to all bat roosts whether or not the bats are present.

Whilst some bats in Europe do carry a strain of the rabies virus it is exceptionally rare in Britain. Only 2 cases have been detected within the last fifteen years of surveillance by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. The risk of catching the virus from a British bat is extremely low as it is usually only transmitted by the bite of an infectious bat. Bats are not aggressive and most of our resident bats have such small teeth that a bite will not break the skin. A bat that appears to be baring its teeth is actually scanning you with its unique method

of echo-location (listening to the echoes of its high frequency calls!)

If you find a grounded or injured bat avoid handling it and contact the Bat Helpline (the Bat Phone?) on 0845 1300228. If you need to move it ensure that you are wearing thick protective gloves and place the bat in a small cardboard box in a quiet place.

For more information contact the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) on 0207 627 2629 or www.bats.org.uk. This is the only organisation solely devoted to the conservation of bats and their habitats in the British Isles. It supports a network of over 90 voluntary Bat Groups, operates the National Bat Monitoring Scheme, actively campaigns for stronger measures to protect bats and provides education and advice. Its President is Professor David Bellamy.

An introductory Bat Detector Workshop, where you can learn about the ultra-sonic world of bats, is being held at the Countryside and Forestry Offices in Mytholmroyd at 3.00PM on Saturday 15th May. For further details contact Hugh Firman, Calderdale Conservation Officer on (01422) 393214.

NOT A WIND UP!

In 1994 a BBC documentary focussed on the Clockwork Radio, an innovative idea from British inventor Trevor Bayliss, which enabled radios to operate without batteries or mains electricity. Originally designed as a method of helping to spread information in the fight against AIDS in Africa, just 10 years later wind-up radios have developed into a self-sufficient technology using human, solar and other energy sources to provide a range of self-powered products which are in demand throughout the world. Freeplay is the only company worldwide that concentrates on developing and marketing personally renewable sound power technology, and through the Freeplay Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to deliver information and education to the most vulnerable members of society through self-powered radios, the original inspiration also lives on.

The three most popular consumer wind-up products are currently the Sherpa torch, and Summit and Ranger radios. The Sherpa is a compact, robust flashlight, suitable for all domestic needs and even recommended for use in emergencies by the Home Office! It is powered by a Nickel Metal Hydride battery which is recharged every time the radio is wound up.

With a fully charged battery the Sherpa will provide 5 hours of regular light or 30 minutes of high beam use. For instant use a 30 second wind will provide between 5 to 8 minutes of light. A fully charged battery will retain up to 70% of its capacity after a month, it is not possible to over-wind the internal mechanism when charging the battery, and it has a standard 2-year warranty.

The Ranger radio, which receives FM and AM wavebands, uses the same quality construction as the torch but also includes a small solar panel for recharging the battery. A fully charged battery will play for about 25 hours on normal volume, whilst a 30 second wind will provide about 30 minutes of listening time.

The stylish Summit radio, which is only 17cms long and 9cms high, boasts FM, AM, Short and Long Wave reception, a superb sound quality, digital tuning, clock and alarm clock facilities! A fully charged battery offers about 20 hours playing time and a 30 second wind will provide approximately 30 minutes playing time.

All of these products are on display at the ATC and during the Big Green Week the Green Shop will be offering the Sherpa Torch for a special promotional price of £25.

Beyond the Valley

ROOF ACTION

Six new homes on a housing development in Lincolnshire have been installed with a new type of solar roof tile developed for the housing market in the United Kingdom. The C21 was designed by SolarCentury to avoid the need for specific planning permission for most developments. It fits quickly and easily to standard battens, integrates with common interlocking roof tiles and can be installed by any roofing contractor. Replacing 200 roof tiles with C21 solar tiles would generate 1,600 kWh of electricity per year and displace the emission of 690kg of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. SolarCentury also recently installed Britain's first solar motorway sound barrier on the M27 near Portsmouth. This is 50 metres long and will generate 9,500 kWh of electricity per year.

GREEN KEN

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone has launched a guide, "Help Create A Green London - advice for businesses", which will be distributed across the capital. Three key areas where London's businesses could make significant improvements, transport, building management and procurement, are highlighted in the guide. Businesses can sign up to the Mayor's Green Procurement Guide to find recycled products and information is also provided on where to buy energy efficient equipment. The Guide is managed by London Remade, a partnership between businesses, London boroughs, regional government, waste management companies and the voluntary sector.

SOLAR SO GOOD

Work on the new Solaris Environment Centre in Blackpool has recently been boosted with a £132,000 government Energy Savings Trust grant. This money will pay for the 145 solar panels that are an integral part of the building's design. The development is beginning to be regarded as an example of how modern sustainable technology can be attractively integrated into an older building. The £1.75m project is transforming the formerly derelict 1938 art deco Harrowside Solarium into a centre of excellence for the environment, and slots into Blackpool Borough Council's Energy Action Plan.

100% RENEWABLE

The state of Connecticut, USA, will be using 100% renewable energy by 2050 after an Executive Order was signed that requires the state to purchase 20% of its energy from renewables by 2010, 50% by 2020 and 100% by 2050. The Order, which was signed on Earth Day will ensure that by 2020 the change in energy supply will displace the emission of 420 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, roughly the equivalent of removing 45,000 cars from the roads for a year! Connecticut's governor has pointed out that not only will the switch be cost-effective, it will improve the health of the people and reduce "America's dependence on foreign oil", echoing a Pentagon Report which has recognised that renewable energies can be a positive influence on reducing tensions throughout the international community!

THE BIG GREEN WEEK

This year's Big Green Week, the fifth to be organised by the Alternative Technology Centre, runs from May 31st to June 6th and coincides with the United Nations World Environment Day, European Green Week, Hebden Bridge Carnival and our fifth birthday!

Along with the Centre's usual attractions, during the Big Green Week there will also be local shopping promotions, displays on the bicentenary of the Rochdale Canal, an open day at Treeresponsibility's Tree Nursery, and talks on renewable energy. To kick-start the weekend the ATC will be joining in the traditional carnival procession through Hebden Bridge, on Saturday 5th June, along with a Yellow School Bus, the HourCar car share scheme, a Toyota Prius hybrid car, Kerbside, schools and other voluntary groups, musicians, cyclists and pedal taxis. At the same time Calder Future will be holding 10 different events throughout the River Calder valley.

The weekend's festivities will include a Picnic in a pedestrian friendly St Georges Square, which will be transformed into an open green space for two days, allowing everyone to take a break and sample the delights of the local shops. At venues around the town and in the park you will be able to learn more about renewable energy and energy efficiency (Yorkshire Renewable Energy Network and Energy 21 will be hosting displays and answering all of your questions!), sustainable building techniques, recycling, tree planting, water power, sustainable transport, minibeasts and more. On Sunday there will be a cycling festival in the park celebrating national Bike Week.



The Big Green Week aims to showcase what is already going on in the Calder Valley and illustrate the best of what is happening around the country. If you would like to be

involved or require any further information please contact Polly on (01422) 842121 or polly@alternativetechnology.org.uk.

THE A-Z OF RECYCLING

When the head of the Government's Environment Agency, Baroness Young, claims that composting (a superb example of value-added recycling and the keystone of organic gardening) is more dangerous than the incineration of waste it might be tempting to throw the towel in, but we must not let ignorance get the better of us! Whilst continuing to welcome back Kerbside to our streets we press on with the A-Z of Recycling.

The Us...

Ukuleles - Visit the Green Shop to see an excellent example of a 4-stringed Hawaiian style guitar made from reclaimed and recycled materials by local amateur luthier Robert Collins.

Umbrellas - "Bring your parasols, they may be small, they may be big, he will fix them all with what you a thingamajig", or alternatively, before discarding old umbrellas, it's always worth asking if your local school is carrying out a science project on waterproofing

Unbleached products - Whilst bright white paper might look clean, producing it from brown wood pulp or recycled paper fibres can be a dirty, dangerous and wholly unsustainable business. Chlorine bleaching creates poisonous by-products in the atmosphere and watercourses. Other types of bleaching are less hazardous but often unnecessary. Make the effort to buy

unbleached toilet and kitchen rolls and experiment with unbleached recycled stationery.

Universe - Many little things done by many little people will change the face of the world.

Upholstery - Sitting Comfortably will recycle all good quality furniture through their shop based in Calderdale Business Park, Ovenden, Halifax. Contact them on 01422 329895 or 01274 731909.

Uranium - As BNFL have proved there is no safe method of disposal or recycling for the heaviest of our naturally occurring elements that is used as a source of non-environmentally friendly and utterly unsustainable nuclear energy.

Urine - Human urine is an excellent activator for compost heaps even though our esteemed head of the Environment Agency will most probably think that we are taking the p**s.

Usury - Avoid loan sharks or credit cards with excessive loan repayments and extortionate interest rates by joining your local credit union, an effective community banking system. Contact Calderdale Credit Union on 01422 393106.

Utopia - Visit the Green Shop and let us help you begin to realise your very own achievable vision of sustainability!

In brief

PLASTIC FANTASTIC

The ATC's micro plastic recycling factory, EKKO, has just completed its largest single order after delivering 7,000 coasters and 3,000 key rings to Blackburn and Darwen Council. All of the items, which are being used as promotional gifts to residents who have helped the Council reach a 60% recycling rate, were hand-manufactured at the factory in Hebble End Mill from post consumer used plastics collected in Hebden Bridge.

BIG GREEN JUMBLE SALE

To help raise funds for the upcoming Big Green Week, and to give everyone the chance to snap up some recycled bargains, the ATC is hosting the Big Green Jumble Sale on Saturday 15th May. Donations of good quality items will be welcome at the Centre from Monday 10th May. For further information please contact Abby on 01422 842121.

CALLING ALL NATURALISTS

Bradford Botany Group have sent out an open invitation to all Calderdale naturalists to accompany them on a series of evening walks to record and monitor rare plants on Calderdale's "Priority Species List". They will be meeting at Hardcastle Crags main car park at 7.30PM on Wednesday 2nd June to monitor Brittle Bladder-Fern, Mountain Medick and Narrow Buckler Fern, and to record a general species list for the woodland.

GETTING THERE?

Does anyone have a "n" gauge electric train set and track that they would be prepared to donate to the ATC? It will be used as part of a display project to be housed in the Green Shop. If you are able to help please contact the Centre on 01422 842121 or info@alternativetechnology.org.uk.