

ATC CONTACTS

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Warm up your home this winter...

WITH WINTER APPROACHING, this is an ideal time to be thinking about loft insulation. OK, so it's not a very exciting subject, but having good insulation is a guaranteed way to save yourself some money and to make your house warmer during the cold winter months.

Loft insulation is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways of improving the energy efficiency of your home. You may well have some loft insulation already but how much money it is saving you (and how much in the way of carbon emissions it is saving the planet) depends on how thick it is. By installing loft insulation to a depth of at least 200mm (8") you may well save yourself more than 20% of your heating costs. If you do-it-yourself, which is easy with Warmcel (see below), you will probably recover your costs in just a couple of years.

A few points to remember when insulating your loft:

- Good ventilation is essential to minimise the risk of condensation and subsequent wood-rot. Most lofts already have adequate ventilation but do check yours just to be on the safe side.
- After you have insulated your loft, the temperature will be lower, so if you have a water tank or pipes in there you will need to make sure that they are well insulated too, to prevent your water from freezing in the winter. Don't insulate under the water tank, as you want heat from your house to rise up and stop

the tank from freezing.

- Heat loss is greater from certain areas such as joists, so remember to lay the top 100mm (4") of insulation across them. As the insulation will then hide the joists, you will need a boarded passage to enable you to reach water tanks in the loft.
- Remember to draughtstrip and insulate the loft hatch.

A hard sell for Warmcel

The 'greenest' type of loft insulation is cellulose fibre. An excellent product called Warmcel is available which is manufactured from 100% recycled newspaper. It has much less embodied energy – this means it consumes far less energy in manufacture - than all other insulation materials.

Warmcel also has no added formaldehyde or other toxic materials, making it safe to handle. Other than a simple dust mask, no special clothing is required, making it ideal for DIY installation. It is remarkably fire resistant – even the heat of a blowlamp underneath will not set it alight!

Warmcel also offers better insulating properties than other materials, such as mineral wool.

125 mm thickness of Warmcel will prevent the same amount of heat loss as 150mm of mineral wool. It has been manufactured in the UK and Europe for over 10 years and has already been installed in nearly 1 million

homes in Britain.

Warmcel is easy to install – just pour it straight from the bags. It can be ordered through the ATC. Just give us a ring for more advice and details.

Energy Efficiency Grants

A number of grants for insulation and energy efficiency measures are available under various schemes:

- Under the new Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES) households in receipt of certain benefits may qualify for free loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing

- Over 60s on benefits may qualify for free central heating installation (HEES Plus)

- Over 60s not on benefits may benefit under the CHEAP (Calderdale Health Energy Action Project) scheme for loft and cavity insulation and draught proofing

- Any householder (under 60 and not on benefits) may qualify under the CAKE (Calderdale & Kirklees Energy Savers) scheme providing discounted work on a range of insulation and heating measures with cash backs available
- Energy Savings Trust grants are available to households heated by oil, LPG or coal for loft insulation and draught proofing.

For full details contact Calderdale Housing Energy Team: Andrew Cooper (01422) 392487 OR Angela Walsh 392302

Solid foundations

SUSY FELTHAM AND DANIEL COLLINS start to lay the steps for the first part of the Little Theatre Garden, next to the canal in Hebden Bridge. The solid stone steps were kindly donated by Pecket Well College.

"The garden is to be planted with a display of trees, shrubs, and perennials dramatic enough to reflect their theatrical setting, with star plants spotlighted against a colourful backcloth." said Susy. "All the plants will be grown along permaculture principles, using natural planting and organic techniques rather than chemicals and labour, to produce a range of food and craft products for use at the centre. Using a similar approach as with the planting, art and technology are to be combined in a solar powered water feature."

The clearing and mulching of the garden has helped keep the weeds at bay. The next stage is to build the walls and paths, add the star plants, now waiting in the wings and to create a flourish of colour with some wild annuals. After that, we will gradually introduce the rest of the plants, and finally create the water feature.

If you would like any more information, or if you would like to help, please contact Susy or Daniel at the Centre.



SNEAK PREVIEW

A party of students from Springhill High School in Rochdale, visited Hebden Bridge last Thursday for a preview guided tour of the ATC last Thursday. The visit was arranged as part of the development plan for the centre, which will be running regular courses and guided visits for both teachers and students

from March 2001.

Mr Ian Baird, head of year at Springhill High said of the visit "Absolutely brilliant, we'll definitely be back".

Any school wanting to arrange a visit for next year should contact the centre as soon as possible.



What on Earth is Sustainability?

SUSTAINABILITY - YOU HEAR THE WORD EVERYWHERE THESE DAYS. Sustainable economy, sustainable transport, sustainable agriculture. I've even heard talk of sustainable defence systems (hmmm...).

Surely this can't all be the same 'stuff'? Well, in a way, yes. They're all about keeping a particular 'system' going. The problem, of course, is that each 'system' is tied up with all the other systems, so while one system might 'keep going', it may stop another one from functioning altogether.

Over the centuries farming has become increasingly intensive. Fields have grown bigger and bigger, more fertilisers and pesticides have been applied and more and more machinery has been introduced in an effort to make food production more economic. The claim is that without these changes the farms would not have been 'sustainable'. But these changes have affected other 'systems' - wildlife, the water system, local communities and, some would say, even our digestive 'system'.

You could say the same for our transport system; it gets clogged up, so we build more and more roads to 'keep it going', to keep it sustainable. I'll leave you to work

out which other 'systems' that messes up.

Maybe we're finally beginning to realise the truth, that all 'systems' are interconnected. Change one and you change them all. Maybe that's why there's such a huge surge of interest in organic food. Perhaps we're starting to think about the bigger picture, about the whole community, about the whole planet.

Here's a definition that I pulled off the Internet –

"A sustainable community is any group of organisms that lives in harmony with its surroundings such that: use of a resource does not impair its utility or future supply; future generations inherit the surroundings in a similar state; other communities are not forced out or exterminated; health, well-being and quality of life are not compromised".

It goes on to suggest that sustainability can be achieved through conservation; population control; wise use of renewable resources; recycling and reuse of non-renewable resources and the restoration of damaged resources.

It makes you think – but that's what we're here to do.

Next month: What on earth is.....Permaculture?

Going Green for Softies

IF YOU HAVE AN ELECTRIC DISHWASHER (mine is human and still goes to school!) try switching it off before the drying stage and simply open the door. The contents should still be hot enough to dry naturally and save you money each time you do it.

Also (assuming that your dishwasher

draws water from the hot water supply), before you switch it on, run your nearest hot water tap until the cold water in the pipe has run away. This saves your dishwasher having to heat water from cold with its expensive electric heater. (Oh! and don't forget to buy environmentally friendly detergents).

Education, Education..

NOW THAT WE HAVE GOT THE GO AHEAD FROM YORKSHIRE FORWARD for the Energy Conservation and Training Centre at the ATC, we are getting stuck into writing training courses. These will be one of the mainstays of the Centre and which we hope will help keep us sustainable (yes, it's that word again – see this month's What on earth is...?).

One of the first courses we will be running at the Centre will be a one-day 'Introduction to Alternative Technology'. It assumes no previous experience and will cover all aspects of the subject. It is planned as a primer for a much longer course leading to a qualification in the subject. We will be running trials early in the New Year - if you would like a FREE place on one of these trials, please contact us. Most of the places are reserved for volunteers at the centre, but we may have some places spare.

Other courses currently 'under construction' are 'Sustainability in Schools - A Whole School Model' (a one-day course and a four-day course), 'The Secret Life of Soil', 'The Ecology of Trees and Woodlands' and 'Water'. There will also be courses in Permaculture theory and practice.

Starting in March next year the Centre will also be open to guided visits by school, college and university parties. We expect demand to be extremely high, so if your school would like to be one of the first, BOOK NOW!

If you want to help in any way with the writing, running or evaluating of any of the above courses, we would love to hear from you. Contact John Brierley or 'H' Gregg at the Centre.