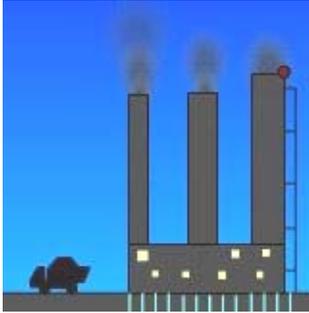


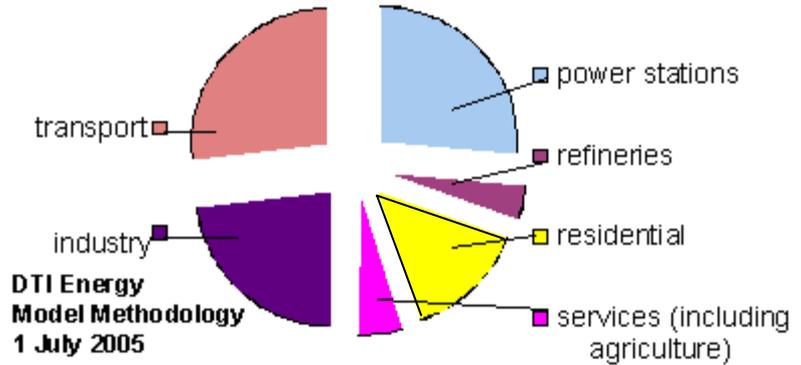
VALE ROYAL ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Winter
2006

NEWSLETTER



2010 CO₂ emissions



90% CO₂ Cuts by 2030!

Climate-Crisis, a small independent Scottish research and campaigning group, have produced a report "The Cutting Edge: Climate science to April 05". Using information from the Met Office's Hadley Centre, temperatures will rise 2C over pre-industrial levels by 2030 under business as usual, while carbon sinks will diminish in capacity. They expect the temperature rise will decrease Nature's current ability to absorb man-made carbon emissions, from 4 Giga Tonnes per year to 2.7 GT, or 1/3 of a tonne per person per year. Emissions in the UK currently stand at 3 tonnes Carbon pppy. (that's 11 tonnes CO₂)

See www.climate-crisis.net >downloads > 'Cutting Edge; Climate Science To April 05'

There's a group running a local carbon rationing scheme in the West Midlands (there are many exponents for a national scheme). Such schemes provide a framework of progressively reducing carbon rations for members to adapt to. See <http://forum.campaigncc.org/?q=node/550>



Eco-Building Special

Norton Priory Building in Straw

Work has now begun on the Priory's Eco classroom, funded by WREN. The foundations and floor of the Green Room are now in place and the strawbale walls are in progress. Volunteers are needed to help with certain stages of the process, so if you are interested, contact the Priory's Volunteer Development Officer, Sarah Harris on 01928 569 895. See www.nortonpriory.org > Eco Building to watch their progress.

An example of this technique, used for a home, was featured on Channel 4's Grand Designs programme, and the Ecology Building Society recently involved its members in the construction of a meeting room for its West Yorkshire office. The Ecology's team was lead by Amazon Nails – to contact them write to Barbara Jones or Bee Rowan, Hollinroyd Farm, Todmorden, OL14 8RJ; tel/fax: 01706 814696 or 0845 458 2173 or see www.strawbalefutures.org.uk. For more examples, see www.strawbale-building.co.uk/index.php?page=pictures

More on Eco-Building.....

Vale Royal Environment Network

thanks its many sponsors, supporters and volunteers.

Registered Charity Number 1101585. Offices at:

Yarwoods Arm, Navigation Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1BE

tel 01606 723160, email vren@groundwork.org.uk

Future Homes?

Register Your Interest in Living in an Earthship

Earthships are a radical housing solution only recently introduced to the UK through two pilot projects in Fife and Brighton.

Earthships are independent buildings that heat and cool themselves, are self powered, harvest their own water and deal with their own waste. Made from free waste materials, the Earthship is based on earth

rammed tyre walls giving thermal mass to store free heat from the sun. They are 'heavyweight' high quality buildings, designed with a comfortable low cost future in mind. They run free and yet can be realized at similar costs to the conventional homes.

The Energy Savings Trust is now funding an Innovation Study to review the feasibility of Earthship Home developments in the UK. The study partners (which include the Ecology Building Society, Earthship Biotecture Europe, an architect, a housing association and a local council) are now looking to assess the likely demand for Earthship units in a new residential development. Anyone interested in living in an Earthship is asked to complete a one page questionnaire to help assess viability and to enable the team to keep you informed of progress with Earthship Homes in the UK. For more on the project go to www.earthship.co.uk, contact the study co-ordinator, Daren Howarth of Earthship Biotecture Europe on 0870 765 9892 or email estsurvey@earthship.co.uk Of the tyres: the UK produces 40 million scrap tyres a year, enough for 20 thousand earthships a year. (We make that 2000 tyres apiece!)



Cae Mabon

Eric Maddern, Australian-born story-teller and song-writer, has 5 acres of Snowdonia set up for educational camps. On the site, Cae Mabon, are a number of low-impact buildings – a cob cottage (bottom), two roundhouses, a straw bale Hogan (top), and a “loo with a view” composting toilet. Write to: Cae Mabon, Fachwen,

Llanberis, Gwynedd, LL55 3HB; tel 01286 871542; www.caemabon.co.uk



Solar Decathlon

This is a US competition held in Washington DC. College teams design and build homes, then erect them in the city. It's called decathlon because its

scored on 10 points: architecture, dwelling (how liveable it is), documentation, communications (how they put across their ideas to the visiting public), comfort zone (how steady the temperature and humidity are held), appliances (the modern American can't live without them), hot water (enough to live a typical life), lighting, energy balance (the batteries supporting the electrical system should not have lost any charge), and how far they can run a road-worthy electric car. Most of this year's 18 entrants were from the US; one was from Europe (Madrid). The next competition is planned for 2007. See the homes on www.eere.energy.gov/solar_decathlon

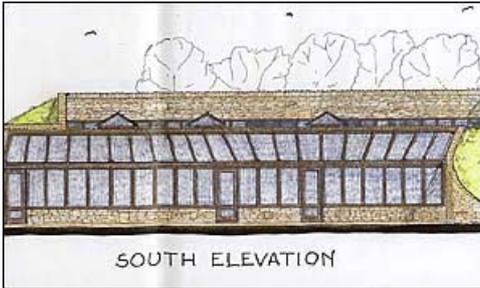


Walter Segal Timber Frame

The Walter Segal method is a timber-frame construction with no cement or plaster involved, and creates a home with an NHER (National Home Energy Rating) of 9.8 out of 10. The lightweight building can be done by people of virtually any age or ability, and apparently modest finances, and there are examples of community-built groups of homes and community buildings. The National Tenants' Resource Centre at Trafford Hall sports a row of bedrooms in this style, constructed by course members; a home can be seen at the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth. The trust offers training

and assistance with planning, etc. Write to them at 15 High Street, Belford, Northumberland NE70 7NG, see www.segalselfbuild.co.uk or email info@segalselfbuild.co.uk.

Earth Sheltered Housing



These, like earthships, rely on a heat-gathering conservatory and a massive, stabilising, heat

storage bulk. At Hockerton Housing Project (featured in a previous newsletter) this comprises concrete, surrounded by insulation and waterproofing, and covered in earth, turf and sheep! They argue that the seemingly unsustainable use of concrete is countered by the expected lifespan of the five homes (centuries) and the fact that they very rarely need to supplement their solar gain. Simon Ormerod's modest home near Wadebridge in Devon uses a redundant quarry wall for heat storage, and compares with the up-market Mole Manor of Gloucestershire. There are about 60 earth-sheltered homes in the UK; and far more in the US and China. The uninsulated version does lose heat to the surrounding earth – but heat use is said to be a quarter of that of a comparable house, and the earth warms up in time, from an original of say 10C, to perhaps 16C in ten years. Contact the British Earth Sheltering Association, tel 01993 703619 or see www.besa-uk.org,

www.bbc.co.uk/wiltshire/villages/nettleton_underground_house.shtml

Building with Cob

Cobs are double-handfuls of worked earth, sand,



straw and water. Raised on a secure stone base, and with an adequate roof, the walls are stable, have good thermal mass and rounded features. It's inexpensive and can be done as a community activity involving little skill. A group of artists called Earthed run community events using cob (or other materials) to make anything from bread ovens and children's play structures to homes. Write to Alan Cameron-Duff and Annabel Fawcus, 38 Southey Drive, Sheffield S57NR; tel: 0781 493 8308 or 0797 318 5286; www.earthedworld.co.uk There's a book on the technique, **Cob Buildings - A practical Guide** by Jane Schofield and Jill Smallcombe. Tel 01884 861181 or see www.abeysmallcombe.com/eb_1b.html

For a **technical review** of three novel homes (including a straw bale and a cob home) see www.homebuilding.co.uk/Technical.Features.asp?Action=View&ID=7

Shared Walls

Sharing walls is one way to reduce your heat loss through the building structure. Living in flats does this, although higher floors have the penalties of wind chill and the need for lifts. New flats can be built – check the standards – and large, old houses converted and improved. You might miss a garden, fresh produce, composting waste and the washing line.

There are a number of voluntary communities in the UK, many established a good number of years. Environmental benefits can include: use of renewable energy, car-sharing, shared equipment, reedbed sewage systems, rainwater/greywater use, shared garden and food production, communal cooking. They can enable a less consumptive lifestyle. The Diggers and Dreamers website



lists those seeking new members and volunteers, along with details of the communities, links to communities abroad, and interesting reading. Their buildings, typically old, generally have potential for insulation improvements. Contact them at Diggers & Dreamers, c/o Edge of Time Ltd, BCM Edge, London, WC1N 3XX or www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk/ See www.evnuke.org.uk/pf for people wishing to meet or start up a new community.

The Findhorn Foundation is running an Ecovillage Training programme. There are 8 modules of 2 or 3 days between 18 Feb and 18 March. You can take any number. See www.findhorn.org >Ecovillage Training or tel 01309 690311.



Share To Buy

Groups of friends (or family) can take out a single mortgage on a property rather than struggle buying, and managing, individual homes. shareto-buy.com provides groups of 2, 3 or 4 with a legal agreement. More than 4 is possible but requires slightly different legal arrangements. Former students are typical clients. See www.shareto-buy.com or phone 0870 755 4118.

The Ecology Building Society lend to people aspiring to help the environment by their housing (or enterprise) choice, whether it's rescuing a near ruin or a low-impact or low energy property. Tel 0845 674 5566 or see www.ecology.co.uk

Any readers who'd like to consider any of the above options further may contact us at VREN, and we'll put you in touch with each other.

The **Centre for Alternative Technology** has a factsheet on Environmental Building – see www.cat.org.uk, select Information, Environmental Building, or tel 0845 3308373 Their more expansive factsheets are available both online and by post.

Clear Skies Grants Extended

Clear Skies grants scheme for the installation of renewable energy devices, due to end last Autumn, has been extended until March 2006. The DTI-funded grants, managed by BRE (Building Research Establishment), are available to homeowners and not-for-profit community organisations such as community groups, environmental trusts, housing associations, local authorities, registered charities, schools, universities, hospitals etc.

Homeowners can apply for grants between £400 and £5,000, whilst not-for-profit organisations may apply for grants up to £50,000 for renewable systems such as:

- Solar thermal system for hot water pre-heating
- Wind turbines
- Micro/small scale hydro turbines
- Ground source heat pumps
- Room heaters/stoves with automated wood pellet feed
- Wood fuelled boiler systems

Visit www.clear-skies.org or call 0870 243 0930 for further details and application forms. (*Ecology Building Society*)

Advice for an Eco-Friendly House

The Association of Environment Conscious Builders offers the following advice on greening your home on its website, www.aecb.net/faq.php:

1. Ensure it's fully insulated and draught proofed, with a serviced efficient boiler and controls to match; 'A' rated appliances, low energy light bulbs, low flush toilet cisterns, water butts. Consider solar water heating.
2. Eco products can be more expensive, but look at the long term savings, and consider how their inherent qualities can save money elsewhere – eg a solid wood floor, well finished, can save the cost of a carpet needed on a chipboard floor.
3. They advise no wood preservatives indoors, and boron compounds elsewhere or for the treatment of woodworm or dry rot. Permethrin, the current common treatment, is an endocrine disruptor and suspected carcinogen
4. Eco paints, made from largely natural materials, and lime washes are available from a number of UK outlets.
5. They advise against injection damp proof courses on the basis of volatile organic compounds, suggesting first to investigate the damp source, and if from below, use a barrier or injection mortars.
6. MDF and chipboards are becoming available as formaldehyde free (European E1 grade) for large orders, but E1 HDF (high density fibreboard), birch plywood and Sterling board are more easily available.
7. For sustainably sourced wood, look for the FSC logo. Unmarked tropical hardwoods have the most doubtful pedigree.

Greenpeace have a free CD-ROM to help architects, constructors and specifiers to buy wood from sustainable sources. It can be ordered from their website, www.greenpeace.org.uk/forests/gwg.cfm,

and/or you can download a pdf-format poster - see links on the above site, or tel 020 7865 8100 for either.

Greenpeace are also promoting "Specifying Timber from well managed forests", a day course in Oxford. Scheduled dates: March 11th, April 8th, May 13th, June 10th. See www.tce-uk.org/fulldetails4.asp, or contact the Timber Centre of Excellence, tel 01865 862223

Homes for Good Exhibition

A three-day event being staged at the Somerset College of Arts and Technology in Taunton, Fri 17th – Sun 19th February. see www.sustainablehousing.org.uk/h4g.html
Expect: architects, books, timber frame house, Auro natural paints, Ecology Building Society, traditional restoration, solar thermal and other renewable energy, self-build, lime mortar, wood cladding, natural flooring, green oak, recycled fibre insulation, cleaning agents, heat pumps, timber re-use, straw bale house, education, wood boilers, furniture... with seminars and children's activities. Adult admission £3.

Food



Wholesome Food Association (WFA)

Is for small food producers, for whom organic certification would be prohibitive. The principles are similar, being chemical and pesticide free (unless in dire emergency); however, local sustainability is encouraged over food miles. There is no inspection by the WFA, but producers are expected to run at least one open day per year and allow visits by customers at reasonable times. It basically works on trust. The £25 annual membership pays for newsletters, a certificate and the right to use the WFA badge. To date, there is one mid-Cheshire producer listed: **The Green Cottage Garden**, of Gorstage, tel 01606 852325. They currently sell eggs, but are planning bedding plants in spring and vegetables next autumn. To register with the WFA write to Ball Cottage, East Ball Hill, Hartland, Devon, EX39 6BU, tel 01237 441118 or see their website, www.wholesome-food.org.uk. Non-producing supporters can join for £15 pa. Not being within Defra's UKROFS, organic conversion grants are not available through WFA.

The Soil Association lists the following organic suppliers in Vale Royal:

Bennett Riverside Organics, Shipbrook Hill Farm, Manor Lane, Northwich, Tel 01606 46258

The Hollies, Tarporley, Tel 01829 760414

Marion Villa Farm, Whitegate, Nr Winsford, CW7 2QG. Tel Robert Bates, 01829 760289

A new name for Henry Doubleday

The Henry Doubleday Research Association, HDRA, proudly named after an organic pioneer,

is to be known as **Garden Organic**. The former name was thought long-winded, involved a long story, and didn't say what the organisation did. Garden Organic is only to be their working name; legally and formally they are still Henry Doubleday Research Association, and this will cover their research and international work. See www.gardenorganic.org.uk



H5N1

H5N1 is a subtype of influenza A virus infecting birds. Bird flu viruses circulate among wild birds (particularly ducks and geese) for years, worldwide. Some birds are resistant, eg pigeons, while many die rapidly giving it little chance to pass on. However, anyone coming across a group of dead birds is advised to contact the RSPB or Garden Bird Health Initiative on 0207 449 6685. Don't touch or send them the carcasses unless asked. For sick or injured birds, contact your local vet, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) (Tel: 01582 831818) or the RSPCA (24-hour tel. line: 0870 5555 999) for further advice.

Influenza viruses come in types A, B and C: A and B affect humans, only A causing pandemics. Avian flu usually affects birds, but may infect pigs, horses, other mammals, and some types have affected humans – but not usually with human to human spread.

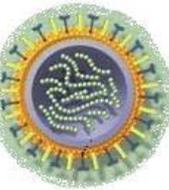
Bird flu comes in high and low pathogenic forms. Ruffled feathers, a drop in egg production, some respiratory problems, and recovery mark the low pathogenic form, and could go undetected. The other spreads rapidly, affects many internal organs, and can kill all infected birds within 48 hours.

Each influenza A virus has two characteristic proteins in its coat – these can be one of 16 H proteins, and one of 9 N proteins. All the highly pathogenic forms

have either H5 or H7 proteins, but not all H5 or H7 types are highly pathogenic. Viruses can change their type when an animal is infected with two strains that can then exchange genetic material. 20th century human pandemics were caused by H1N1 (1918), H2N2 (1957), H3N2 (1968) and H1N1 (1977). Some genes of avian flu origin were involved in the 1957 and 1968 pandemics. They only have 8 genes! Wild ducks and geese are

considered to be a natural haven for type A influenza viruses and have probably been so for centuries. It's not yet known whether they're moving H5N1 around: evidence points to outbreaks of H5N1 following the poultry trade. It's recommended that poultry keepers:

- Feed and water their animals indoors, with no excess: keep things tidy, to avoid attracting wild birds and vermin
- Keep birds separate from wild birds, waterfowl, pets and other animals
- Control vermin
- Keep visitors and their cars away from your birds
- Ensure your hands, clothes and footwear are clean before and after dealing with your birds
- Don't share equipment
- Take care when buying in new birds, and quarantine
- Look out for signs of disease and contact a vet immediately anything is suspected
- Prepare to keep birds indoors



- And evidently, avoid contact with them if you contract human flu. (At least one doctor is advocating that poultry workers be vaccinated against human flu, so that, should avian flu emerge in their flock, they don't risk mixing two strains. Any vaccine takes 14 days to take effect. (www.greenhealth.org.uk/AvianFlu.htm))

The virus is transmitted via faeces, blood or saliva, and survives but a few hours outside the body. There is a high risk of infection when slaughtering affected birds, dealing with their carcasses, or handling their faeces. It is not felt necessary to avoid feeding wild birds.

The Soil Association believe that birds should continue to have outdoor access, to enhance health and avoid indoor crowding, and that vaccination is helpful.

Have you flu or a cold? Colds are centred on the nose and throat; only in the very young can they cause a fever. Flu attacks faster, going for a fever in the body before moving

to the nose and throat area. General advice during any flu outbreak is to avoid large gatherings and to wash hands – the first to avoid contact with the infection, the second to avoid moving it from hands to mouth or eyes.

What is a virus? Just a cluster of proteins around genetic material. When it meets a host cell, the proteins push the genes through the cell membrane. The genes hijack the cell's processes, reproducing themselves and producing proteins to make new coats. The cell dies, the proteins wrap themselves round the genetic material, and the new viruses disperse.

The above is VREN's interpretation of available information, and we advise you to check the details as we are not professionals in these matters.

www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/facts.htm

See the various news items on the front page of www.smallholder.co.uk

Bird Flu: Register of Poultry Keepers

Defra has set up a poultry register to boost government and industry's ability to tackle an outbreak of avian influenza (bird flu).

Commercial poultry keepers who own flocks of 50 or more birds (total of all species of poultry) have to register their birds as soon as possible, and by 28th February.

You can register by

- Phone - freephone 0800 634 1112
- Asking for a registration form on the above number.
- Or refer to the website, www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2005/animal-1209.htm, to download a form.

Birds kept for owner consumption (of bird or egg) or as pets are excluded. And at present, premises with fewer than 50 birds don't need to register. They can voluntarily register their birds after 28 February. Click on the Great Britain Poultry Register link of the above website for more info.

Some Brief Book Reviews

"Valuable Vegetables, Growing For Pleasure & Profit" by Mandy Pullen could be a useful handbook for prospective vegetable box scheme operators and others. Mandy is herself in the veg box business, and assesses the merits of the various crops she has supplied. Available from www.permaculture.co.uk/erc, choose Index. For those who wish to know more about everyday foods, "Not on the Label" by Felicity Lawrence, could be a put-off.

"Plants for People" by Anna Lewington covers a wide range plants used by man; how they are used, and often their history and the consequences of over-exploitation. It inspires one to seek out the uses of plants that can be grown locally, without exploitation of people or environment. The last two books are available in Cheshire libraries.

What is Permaculture?

A weekend introductory course was held in October at Astbury Mere Country Park, Congleton led by Sarah Pugh. The word permaculture is derived from "permanent agriculture", and means that, with respect for natural systems, crops can be had without degrading the land or other environments. It is more inclined than organic methods to leave the soil unturned, its structure intact, and to make more use of perennials that require less soil working. It also goes beyond food production into a whole way of life, that minimises the input and maximises the output. Hence their maxim of not planting anything unless it has at least three purposes, and this philosophy transfers to other actions. Individuals are encouraged and empowered to care for the environment. Sarah illustrated the course with examples from Bristol and the South West: a community allotment off the Bristol-Bath cycleway with polytunnel, composting toilet and other items, largely made from waste from the adjacent industrial estate; a dairy farm converted into a profitable venture for a small community; and a wasteland crime blackspot nurtured into a welcoming garden. There was also a "no land required" orchard, when Valentine presents in the shape of apple trees were sold to residents with back yards. The £5 cost included training in their care.

Outdoors, the course looked at the various plants in the park of use to man, and set up a small garden using a deep but inconspicuous mulch planted with woody cuttings.

The dozen participants were largely from east Cheshire.

The movement was initiated by Australian Bill Mollison, and is supported in the UK by the Permaculture Association, see www.permaculture.org.uk, and the Permaculture magazine, www.permaculture.co.uk

GM Study Reviewed

The four-year BRIGHT project (Botanical and Rotational Implications of Genetically Modified Herbicide Tolerance in winter oilseed rape and sugar beet) has been reviewed by a group led by Henry Doubleday Research Association. The report, published in November 2004, was reported to find GM crops relatively benign, if not beneficial. The review delves into whether those headlines were justified, whether it's even possible to draw meaningful conclusions, considers the quality of the economic analysis and potential environmental questions raised. See www.genewatch.org/CropsAndFood/reports.htm - BRIGHT to order or download the review. You're led to a page of publications on GM. Alternatively, phone 01298 871898 or write to GeneWatch UK, The Mill house, Manchester Road, Tideswell, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8LN

GM without choice

The Soil Association say: "Large quantities of GM crops are being imported into the UK to feed livestock that produce much of the non-organic meat and dairy products in our supermarkets. This is fuelling the expansion of GM crops in the USA and South America - your help is needed to change the policies of the supermarkets." See www.soilassociation.org/gm or tel 0117 314 5000



Support for Farmer Owned Business

English Farming and Food Partnerships has released a range of services and a report to encourage and support agricultural co-operatives or farmer owned business. They're at EFFF, 45 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JU; Tel: 020 7213 0430. Or see www.efff.com, >press releases > 'EFFF launches new range...'

In one example of farmer cooperation from their website, 600 Austrian farmers pool their oilseed rape crops to produce their own biodiesel. They also process used kitchen oil, and supply enough for themselves and to sell to the local authority and public transport. (www.efff.com, search for 'seeg'; or www.seeg.at - see this for the biodiesel plant, woodfuel district heating and manure to biogas to electricity)

Transport

Coach your Bike Abroad

Yorkshire Bikeliner caters for parties wishing to travel to Ireland or Europe. Their coach pulls a covered trailer for cycles, including tandems and recumbents, non-dismantled. Write to them at 33 Queensgate Street, Boulevard, Hull, Yorks, HU3 2TT, tel 01482 222122, or see www.bikeliner.karoo.net.

European Bike Express runs a luxury coach and bicycle trailer from the North East, down the M1 and across the Channel to various destinations. The coach starts early from Stokesly, near Middlesborough; nearest stations to their recommended overnight accommodation are Great Ayton (4.5 miles) and Yarm (9 miles, but better train service). On return, you might choose to get dropped off for Sheffield Meadowhall Station.

In Europe, EBS coaches take 3 routes: down the French Atlantic, to the east Pyrenees, or to the north Adriatic. Two of



the routes go to sites where you can hire a caravan or tent for a static, look-around-the-locality, family holiday. Contact European Bike Express at Bolero House, Roseberry Court, Stokesley Industrial Estate, Stokesley, TS9 5QT. Tel (office hours): 01642 713710, eves (6-9pm): 01642 750077, Email: info@bike-express.co.uk www.bike-express.co.uk

Cycle Security

The Immobilise Register has demonstrated success in tackling mobile phone crime in the last year, and is being expanded to include cycles. This register is an internet-based system that allows the UK Police to identify the owner of any registered item of property. In addition the public can "flag" any registered item as lost or stolen and this then appears on any Police search. To register (it's free), visit www.immobilise.com and enter the bicycle make, model and frame number (hard stamped usually somewhere near the pedals). If lost or stolen, report to the police or visit the website. When buying a bike, one can check if it's stolen on www.checkmend.org.uk. Other advice: expect to spend 20% of the bike's value on a lock; park it in a public place – plenty of people passing; lock the frame, not just a wheel. For more tips visit www.tfl.gov.uk/cycling



Twenty's Plenty

The Slower Speeds Initiative and Transport 2000 are campaigning to introduce 20mph speed limits on "community streets", where people live, work, shop and play. Hull, which has introduced over 115 20mph zones, reports a 90% cut in fatal and serious injuries. The Road Safety Bill is currently in Parliament, and, along with slower speeds, there are proposals to clarify the distinction between dangerous and careless driving. Of 3400 road deaths annually, 250 result in convictions of "causing death by dangerous driving". Yet speeding was involved in at least 1000 of them. In the countries of the near continent, the basic assumption is that, unless proven otherwise, the driver, not the non-motorised user, is responsible. See the "change your streets" section of www.transport2000.org.uk, or visit www.ctc.org.uk/campaigns for more details and to automatically send a letter concerning the Road Safety Bill to your MP. (CTC)



Station Refurbishment

Spacia estimate the refurbishment of Frodsham Station would cost £300,000. Vale Royal BC have put it on their website to promote its availability. Network Rail has announced a £4 billion package for clusters of railway stations. Helsby Station won 3rd place for their station garden.

Flashing becomes Legal

It is now legal to use flashing LED lights on your bike, providing their output is over 4 candela and they flash between 1 and 4 times a second: most better quality LED lights will do this. However, the use of a steady beam, however bright, still has to conform to the old BS6102/3 regulations, ie, be incandescent. A 1000cd LED superbright will help you along dark lanes, but to be legal you need a 4cd flasher as well! The Department for Transport is aware of this, and the Highway Code (under review) may reflect this. (CTC magazine)



Merseytram Rejected

Line 1 of Merseytram had received an offer of £170 million from the Government, but Merseytravel have reassessed their needs following two years' inflation and asked for £204m out of a total cost of £325m. This was turned down. A local entrepreneur, Mike McComb, is keen to invest to ensure Merseytram happens. In time, three lines are planned originating at the City Centre/Waterfront. Line 1 would run to Kirkby, line 2 to Whiston Hospital via Alder Hey, and line 3 would reach Speke and Garston, and possibly John Lennon Airport and beyond. (See www.merseytram.co.uk/merseytram/frameset.htm, write to Merseytram Office, 24 Hatton Garden, Liverpool, L3 2AN; or tel: 0151 330 1000). Watch www.britishtramsonline.co.uk/news.html for any progress.

Experiences of Converting a Car to run on Vegetable Oil

Rosie and James bought an Elsbett conversion kit (www.elsbett.com, phone 0049 9173 77940 – that's Germany) for their Vauxhall Astra. They found they could have it fitted by ATG of Wolverhampton (www.dieselveg.com, tel 01902 450001), use a local inexperienced but enthusiastic diesel mechanic, or have James, Rosie's dad and brother tackle it during a camping holiday. They chose the latter, and spent many a happy hour under the bonnet, or tripping to garages and agricultural suppliers for bits, with some final tweaking at home. Dad and brother now know enough to modify their own cars with mainly scrap parts. Rosie says that an alternative to modifying your car, providing you have an appropriate model, is to use a proportion of vegetable oil in your fuel – variable depending time of year. There are various opinions on this, but they successfully ran their Astra on a 50% mix of filtered waste vegetable oil. See www.wirren.org.uk/, select 'ever green', 'Aug-Oct 2005'.

Miscellany

A Breath of Sea Air

The Lion Salt Works Trust is building a brine graduation tower for Science Week in March. Jules Vleugels, from Rheine, Germany is coming to help build a scaled version of the monument in his hometown. He is also giving a public lecture, in partnership with the Trust and pupils of St Nicholas High School. The experiment will build a scale model to demonstrate the use of a brine cascade over thorn bush trimmings to increase the salinity of the brine for later evaporation in open pan salt making. In towns such as Rheine the increased salinity of the air gave it a quality similar to seaside towns and a spa town was established downwind of the towers. Public Demonstration Sun 12 March, 10am to 5pm, free (donations welcomed). Evening Lecture 14th March Northwich Memorial Hall, adults £3, children £1. Schools can book to visit the experiment Monday to Thursday 13-16th March. For further info contact Andrew Fielding 01606 41823 or email afielding@lionsalt.demon.co.uk. See www.lionsaltworkstrust.co.uk

New Rules for Businesses

2 pieces of legislation that may affect you:

The Control of Pollution (oil storage) Regulations 2001 came into effect on 1st September 2005. This requires anyone who stores more than 200 litres of oil in tanks or containers outside and above ground must now meet new storage requirements.

Redundant IT equipment is now hazardous waste.

Regulations which came in to effect on 16th July 2005 state that anyone producing more than 200 Kg of hazardous waste per annum now has to register with the Environment Agency. Many items that were previously unclassified are now included. In a nutshell, any business scrapping say 10 x 17" old style monitors in a year is effectively a producer of hazardous waste. Contact Groundwork's Environmental Business Services on 0870 214 5886 for more details on these subjects.

Fair Trade Fortnight – Get Your Packs

The Fair Trade Foundation is ready to receive requests for promotional packs for fair trade fortnight. Fair Trade Fortnight will take place March 6-19th 2006. Anyone wishing to organize an event can request an action pack. The packs containing guides, leaflets and promotional materials are available from

www.fairtrade.org.uk/
Alternatively, go to the Open Day at Cheshire DEC Winsford Centre (at Handley Hill Primary School, Off Beeston Drive, Winsford, CW7 1EW; Tel/Fax 01606 869200), 9.30 – 5 on 2nd February.



Sustainable Communities Bill, 20 7 05

The Sustainable Communities Bill, EDM 641, involves all levels of government down to local communities, drawing up and implementing strategies to promote local services and local economic activity and measures for protecting the environment, social justice and greater political involvement. The bill enables councils and communities to significantly influence higher tiers on these issues. It is supported by Christian groups, farmers, small retailers, financial organisations, environmental organisations, social charities, organic growers, transport groups and more. They rue the decline of local facilities – banks, post offices, shops, independent pubs, doctors' surgeries, police stations; and the number of green belt developments. You can find out more and indicate your interest at www.localworks.org



VREN News - New Face

Abi leaves VREN at the end of February.

Nick Rowles will take over, in post from the beginning of March. He has a background of teaching and natural resources projects in developing countries.

- **Greenguide:** VREN's in www.greenguide.co.uk/ - for environmental, ethical and nature organisations; sources of eco products, events and job listings, competitions, forums, news and links.

- **By email:** The VREN Newsletter is available in print in Vale Royal libraries or posted direct, or it can be emailed as a Word document. We also offer an E-News service of items that can't wait for the newsletter – email us to register for either. (If you have difficulty with the format of the E-News, click on View >encoding >Unicode.)

Energy

Coal Mine Methane Power, Llay near Wrexham

A coal mine at Llay, near Wrexham, closed since 1966, is producing gas feeding a small power station generating 3.3MW of electricity for ENER.G Natural Power. The plant started in November 2004, when the flow was 1400 m³/hr of gas, 77% methane, and at 2 bar pressure as the mine had been stopped up. A year on the gas still flows, but the pressure and methane content are down. Soon they'll have to start pumping the gas out of the mine voids, the rate of pumping depending on the rate of desorption. They aim to match generating capacity to gas production, and surplus

portable generating plant will be moved elsewhere. Other coal mine methane power projects exist in Derbyshire and Staffordshire; there are 900 former deep coal mines in the UK. (*operating info supplied by ENER.G*)

Climate Camp: eco-building offer

A week-long camp is being planned in the north of England between 26th August and 4th September. It aims to bring together a thousand or so people to take action against climate change, to share and live practical solutions. They

hope to offer their host community an eco-building or two and public education on sustainable lifestyles. The second organisation meeting is planned for 11th & 12th February in Nottingham. A camp venue has yet to be set: offers are welcome, from a field to a building. More details as they happen at www.climatecamp.org.uk

Biodiesel comes to Manchester

Green Gold Biodiesel is on Fairfield St, just behind Piccadilly train station. They supply two grades: B5 (5% biodiesel + 95% diesel), and B100 (100% biodiesel).

B5 will be available to all, and can be used in any diesel engine having the same specification and not affecting warranties, etc. B100 will only be supplied to members of Manchester Biodiesel Coop. Membership only costs £10, but ensures you've been given all the necessary information. You'll therefore be able to mix B5 and B100 to suit your engine – no conversion needed.

Manchester Biodiesel Coop is a not-for-profit company. More info from Matt on 07706 565550, manchesterbiodiesel@yahoo.co.uk

If you're out and about, check

www.biodieselfillingstations.co.uk/outlets.htm for a list of biodiesel suppliers. It currently doesn't list Manchester, nor our local in-bulk supplier Ebony Solutions (www.ebony-solutions.co.uk, tel 01606 301222).

The DTI's **Energy Review consultation** was launched on 23rd January and promises to be a battleground between the nuclear lobby, renewable enthusiasts and energy conservationists. Follow the link from www.dti.gov.uk/energy, enquiries to 020 7215 5000. It closes on 14th April.



Bioenergy Conference

"Turning Opportunity into Commercial Reality", at Harper-Adams College, Newport, Shropshire, 14th Feb 2006. This is a practical, business-focused conference promoting the creation of the regional supply chain for biomass and biofuels. It's targeted at landowners, farmers, local authorities and regional government. In the afternoon, there's a choice of 2 of 4 workshops: biomass, biofuel, public sector, or a tour of Harper-Adams' 250kW CHP plant, fired with Miscanthus and other biofuel. They hope also to demonstrate biodiesel tractors and a biodiesel racing car.

To book the £20 event, contact Carol Hinks on chinks@harper-adams.ac.uk For further details email Dr Andrea Humphries at ahumphries@harper-adams.ac.uk. The switchboard number is 01952 820280. www.harper-adams.ac.uk/press/events/index.cfm?id=2627

Grants

The **Big Lottery Fund** will launch a £50 million programme for capital projects involving village halls and community starting in summer 2006

Current programmes are:

Awards for All: projects that enable people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, as well as projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community. Tel 01925 626845 (North-West hotline)

Do It 4 Real: an exciting week-long YHA-run residential summer activities programme for young people in England. See the Do it 4 Real website at www.doit4real.co.uk or contact the YHA on 0870 11 88 018 for an information pack.

Fair Share Trust: disperses funds to places where the lottery has touched least. Excludes Mid-Cheshire.

Living Landmarks: funding major capital projects to capture the imagination of communities, and inspire them to transform, revitalise and regenerate the places where they live. Call 08450 10 11 12 for an application pack and guidance notes.

Young Peoples' Fund: they want young people to come up with ideas for community projects and make them happen. Call 0845 4 10 20 30. For all the above see www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/programmes

Cash For Young Social Entrepreneurs

Unltd, Changemakers, Prince's Trust and Scarman Trust have formed a partnership funded by the Big Lottery Fund to provide project funding and support to individuals/informal groups between the ages of 11 and 25 to help community or young people. It's not for wages or career development. £10 million is available, in amounts from £250 to £5000.

For more information tel 0845 4 10 20 30 or see www.thebigboost.org.uk

Grab a Grant!

CSV has hundreds of grants available from 1 Jan to 30 June 2006 for groups who want to make a difference to their local environment. Grants of up to £50 are available for activities such as tree planting, wildlife boxes, community gardens or local clean ups. For a pack call 0121 3287455 or email naseem@csvnvironment.org.uk

Recycling Ince Marshes Sustainable Resource Recovery Park

Peel Holdings are proposing to develop a site on the Manchester Ship Canal west of

Frodsham into a resource recovery centre. They plan to process the likes of metals, glass, batteries, textiles, plastic, paper, chemicals and wood together with discarded products such as fridges, electrical goods, and tyres – thus increasing recycling. They hope to maximize rail and water transport, and work in synergy with nearby glass, fertilizer and petrochemical industries. See

www.peeladmin.co.uk/peelholdings/property/incemarshes.pdf They plan thermal treatment/incineration of 600,000 tonnes a year, extracted from up to 2 million tonnes of waste. (according to CHAIN). A local action group has been set up, Residents Against Incineration (RAIN), with a programme of meetings and a fundraiser on 4th March (see dates). They're worried about the incinerator, transport of waste in and toxic ash out, and litter. See www.rain-ince.org.uk, tel Sharon 01928 722875 (6pm on). Press contact Lance Yates 01928 722832

For CHAIN - Cheshire Anti-Incinerator Network tel 01606 881693, email chain@anti-incinerator.org.uk.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) Cheshire Branch point out that the Cheshire Structure Plan recognises Ince Marshes to have ditches of ecological importance, while also allocating 140 hectares for oil, chemicals and related industries, subject to certain conditions. Contact them on 01606 835046 (9-12, weekdays) or email info@cprecheshire.org.uk Against the proposal is that it is a Greenfield site, a Grade A Site of Biological Importance, and in a flood risk area.

Furniture Finders

of Winsford is back, following a devastating fire in 2004 and subsequent grants and support from various sources. They are a social enterprise and will be working with all sections of the community providing support and training as well as keeping furniture out of landfill. Though not yet ready to receive goods, they may still be looking for a paid co-ordinator besides welcoming any volunteers. Keep watching their website www.ffow.co.uk (or phone Gary Cliffe, on 01829 760987). They aim to create employment opportunities for disadvantaged people, giving them skills, as well as doing valuable recycling.

When ready, they plan to take a wide range of household items – furniture, small and large kitchen equipment, textiles and floor coverings, computers and hand tools. They are currently negotiating for premises on Winsford Industrial Estate.



Pub Glass Toolkit

WRAP have launched a toolkit for people who would want to go into business recycling glass from licensed premises. Tel 0808 100 2040 or see www.wrap.org.uk
>materials > glass > process & collection >pub glass
>Have you got the bottle

Free Bike Stand

You can convert a dead bike (from the tip, local stream, wherever), together with a workmate and some common odd bits, into a bike stand – to enable you to work on your own bike more comfortably. Details of this idea, from Dr. Richard Lawson, are on his website at www.greenhealth.org.uk/Phoenix%20Bike%20Stand.htm

Wildlife & Countryside

Frodsham Forward's Nature Plans

Frodsham's last survey of natural history was in 1984, and they are planning a repeat, especially of sites under pressure, with easy access, potential for training, diversity/rarity, or Sites of Biological Interest. They're considering pond surveys (including pond dips with children) and surveys of grassland, invertebrates, freshwater invertebrates, fish, moths, lichens and possibly beetles.

They also hope to involve the public in garden surveys of birds, butterflies, bumble bees, plant pests and weeds, and to do school grounds surveys with the schoolchildren.

Public Training will include moth trapping, mist netting, and identification of small mammals, garden birds, bats, grasses, orchids, bumblebees and churchyard lichens. Details of these will appear in a leaflet. (*Frodsham Forward*)

Cheshire's Landscapes – Photo Competition

Cheshire Landscape Trust is running a competition on the theme of Cheshire's Landscapes – natural or man-made, colour or black & white, minimum 7"x5" and to be mounted on card. There'll be an open competition and one for under 16s, with prizes for the best three. Entries should be sent to Cheshire Landscape Trust, Fountains Building, Upper Northgate St, Chester, CH1 4EF by 31st May 2006.

Badger Cull Consultation

"scientific evidence shows that intensive culling of badgers over large areas can be effective in helping to prevent the spread of bovine TB (bTB) in cattle and vets advise that without badger culling satisfactory control and reduction of the disease in cattle is unlikely to be achieved." Previous culls have resulted in a 25% increase in bTB. 80% of bTB outbreaks are caused by cattle, according to Ben Bradshaw, Animal Welfare Minister. While badgers are held to be the main carrier, deer, rodents, the stoat family and cats are also susceptible.

The National Farmers' Union propose a general reduction in badger numbers and targeted area cull where disease is a problem. The area would be kept clear if repopulation with healthy badgers was unlikely. Gassing with carbon monoxide is their favoured

option. It's known that infected badgers suffer and are driven from the sett. Leaving cleared setts for diseased badgers to find is a proposed method of finding further infected animals. There are diagnostic tests to determine if setts contain infected badgers. Ultimately, farmers hope for a vaccine suitable for badgers.

Views are sought on whether or not to go ahead with a cull. It's proposed to use licensed operators, and not totally eliminate this protected species. From Defra's front page – www.defra.gov.uk >Consultations >List of Current

>'Consultation on controlling the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle in high incidence areas in England: badger culling', or tel 020 7238 6000. The consultation closes on 10th March.

For the antis, see www.badger.org.uk

For the pros, see "Disease reduction through sustainable wildlife management" on www.nfonline.com (a search for "disease reduction" leads to a press release: - find and click the link.)

Bluebell Recovery Project

Last summer seed was gathered from various sites in the Mersey Forest, including Owley Wood, Weaverham, Longacre Wood, Dutton, Pumphouse Wood, Barnton, Wheeldon Copse, Alvanley, and Murdishaw Woods, Runcorn. Apart from sowing directly, it's also to be grown to bulbs on the Barrowmore Estate, Chester.

Feeding Birds

A wide variety of foods are commonly offered to garden birds – seeds, nuts, fat, fruit, and invertebrates such as mealworms, to supplement the birds' available foods.

Food should be bought from reputable suppliers to avoid fungal toxins, spoiling organisms and infectious diseases; and a good mixture will have a good nutrient balance.

Don't put out lots at a time and risk it going mouldy. You can feed round the year. Don't locate feeders under roosts or where cats can attack: close to a dense hedge is ideal.

To reduce disease risk, use several feeders to avoid crowding, but also rotate them out of use, to reduce contamination. Clean them regularly, using diluted household bleach or similar, then rinse and air-dry, and be aware that some diseases can pass to humans – so use

rubber gloves, and dedicated cleaning equipment, stored outside.

(from a pdf leaflet on the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare website, www.ufaw.org.uk. For a 32 page booklet, send a cheque (inc p+p) for £4.99 (plus any donation), payable to "UFAW Garden Bird Fund", to UFAW, The Old



School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN.) Plants good for bird seed include Field Scabious, Knapweed, Sunflower, Sweet Rocket, Honesty, Teasel and Evening Primrose – all available from HDRA/Chase Organics'. Write to The Organic Gardening Catalogue, Riverdene Business Park, Molesey Road, Hersham, Surrey, KT12 4RG; Tel: 0845 130 1304; or see www.organiccatalog.com.



Schools

Growing Schools

Is a government initiative to encourage outdoor education. A website offers local opportunities to get out and about, a one-stop-shop of resources to download or order, and training: "outdoor education, horticulture, garden construction, health and safety issues, animal husbandry, and securing funding" – all currently for teachers, and all in London; but check for updates. It doesn't list many education providers in this area! See www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools

Owley Wood

Friends of Owley Wood are developing a teaching pack with money obtained from Awards for All and Ineos Chlor funding. It is focused on natural heritage and citizenship. The pack will be available from March '06 and (although locally focused) is available to anyone within The Mersey Forest area. Footpath improvements have also been carried out.

Diary Dates

Fri 10th Feb

The Birds of Fenns & Whixall Marshes, Dr Joan Daniels, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Mon 13th Feb

Walking for Health in Northwich Community Woodlands – Meeting for prospective walkers and leaders. Walks would be throughout the year. Groundwork Offices, Navigation Road, Northwich; 2-4pm. Tel 01606 723160, email helen.jackson@groundwork.org.uk

13-15 Feb

Delivering Sustainable Communities

Conference. Birmingham. Tel 020 7973 6671, www.lga.gov.uk/dscc/home.asp

Tues 14th Feb

Bioenergy Conference. A practical, business-focused conference promoting the creation of the regional supply chain for biomass and biofuels. £20. Booking: Carol Hinks on chinks@harper-adams.ac.uk details: Dr Andrea Humphries at ahumphries@harper-adams.ac.uk. Or tel (switchboard) 01952 820280. or www.harper-adams.ac.uk/press/events/index.cfm?id=2627

Wed 15th Feb

Part L of Building Regs and EPBD for non-domestic, with Building Research Establishment. Manchester. Tel 01923 664800, www.bre.co.uk/event/details.jsp?id=862

Wed 15th Feb

Weaver Valley Regional Park – a major project.

Presentation by WVRP Project Officer Shea O'Neill, Acton Bridge Parish Rooms (near the Maypole pub), Hilltop Rd, Acton Bridge, 8.15pm. Peter Young, 01606 852406

16 – 18 Feb

Northwich Vision Consultation

Northwich Memorial Hall, 4-8pm Thursday 10am-4pm Friday 10am-1pm Saturday. Tel Andy Wallace, 01606 867656 or see www.northwichvision.org

Fri 17th Feb

Herbal Remedies with Natalia Kerkham (date moved from January). VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 18th Feb

Nest Box Making, for the park or your garden, 10am – 3pm. Marbury Country Park. Tel Marbury Rangers, 01606 77741

17 – 19 February

Homes for Good Exhibition: Green roofs, wood heating, natural paints, lime, breathing membranes, car clubs, water conservation, natural swimming pools, low energy decorative lighting, small scale renewables, etc., Somerset College of Arts and Technology, Taunton, Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset



TA1 5AX. See

<http://h4g.sustainablehousing.org.uk>

Tues 21st Feb

Wildlife of Anderton and Marbury. An illustrated talk by Vernon Lundy with special reference to birds. Free to FOAM members, £1.50 to non members. 7.30pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall. Tel Brian Jaques 01606 891242

Wed 22nd Feb

Half Term Burn – Rhododendron destruction! All ages, 10am – 3pm, Marbury Country Park. Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Sat 25th Feb

Nest Box Making for bats and birds, Little Budworth Country Park. All boxes will be fixed in the park ready for spring. Booking essential: tel Lee Thompson, 01606 301484

Sun 26th Feb

Winter Birds at Mere Sands, Rufford, Lancs, with CWT. Meet at car park, GR 447160. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Tues 28th Feb

Annual Hedge Laying Competition, Rivacre Valley LNR, Ellesmere Port. Tel Hazel Barber 0151 356 6991

Wed 1st March

Community Action for Energy Conference, Birmingham. Tel 08701 261 444. www.est.org.uk

Sat 4th March

RAIN (Residents Against Incineration) **fundraising event**, Helsby Ex-Servicemens' Club. With Band (Junction 12) and disco. £5. Lance 01928 722832

4th & 5th March

Lambing at Reaseheath: new-born lambs and other animals. £3, £2.50 children & concessions, under 3 free. Refreshments. Not suitable for expectant mothers. Tel 01270 625131



6 – 19 March

Fairtrade Fortnight
www.fairtrade.org.uk

Tues 7th March

Envirenergy in the North West, Manchester United plc, Old Trafford, www.envirenergy.org.uk

Tues 7th March

Work out with a Walk! Northwich Community Woodlands – leisurely stroll exploring the new routes. Meet 10am, Northwich Library. Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Fri 10th Mar

Kwazulu Natal, John Dempsey, MCOS, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Tel Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

11th & 12th Mar

Lambing at Reaseheath: as 4/5 March

12-16 March

Brine graduation tower, at Lion Salt Works: see article

Wed 15th March

Redefining Social Capital Conference, Manchester. Email info@bura.org.uk

Wed 15th March

The Flora of Flintshire, with Geronwy Wynne – preparatory to April Cheshire Wildlife Trust field visit. Acton Bridge Parish Rooms, 7.30pm. Tel Nancy Benson, 01829 751957

Thurs 16th March

2nd Northwest **Sustainable Construction Conference**, Wrea Green, Lancs. Tel Linda McGeechan, 01942 491294, www.envirolinknorthwest.co.uk

Fri 17th Mar

Plants for Butterflies. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 18th March

Wildlife Watch: **Search for Spring**, Marshall's Arm – meet Hartford Manor Car Park. 10am – noon. Contact Stuart on 07788 570628

22nd Mar, 26th April, 7th May

Fox Howl Bird Song Group, Contact Joan Fairhurst, 01829 751954, email joan.fairhurst@btopenworld.com
Fri 24th March

Community Rail Development Strategy, George Hotel, Huddersfield. C/W pre-conference social evening, 23rd. ACoRP, 01484 847790, hazel@acorp.uk.com

Sat 1st April

Quince Walk, Norton Priory. Guided walk around the national quince collection. Normal entry charges. Meet: 2.00pm, Norton Priory Walled Garden. Tel Norton Priory Museum 01928 569895

Wed 12th April

Storytelling – tall tales and magical mysteries, 5 years and over. Marbury Country Park, 2pm. Tel Steph Hefferan 01606 77741

Fri 21st April

Growing Pains: your gardening problems and queries hopefully solved. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £3.50 Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

22 – 28 April

National Downshifting Week
www.downshiftingweek.com

Sun 23rd April

Yesterday's Trackways – Today's Greenways – a stroll along the Whitegate Way and surrounds. Binoculars useful. Parts may not be suitable for prams and wheelchairs. Booking essential: tel John Cergnul on 01606 301485

Sun 23rd April

Bluebell Day with live music, arts and crafts activities, maypole dancing and a chance to explore the 'Marbury Maze!' 11am – 4pm, Marbury Country Park Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Sun 23rd April

Wildlife Watch: **Bluebell Day**. Marbury Country Park – meet by the Rangers' Hut, 2-4pm Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

26th April

20th Anniversary of **Chernobyl disaster**

Sat 29th April

Plant Sale, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Delamere Farm Waste Lane, Kelsall; sale starts 2pm. Louise Norris, 01829 751886

Sun 30th April

Plant a Bush Day – bring your own plants to add to the herbaceous borders around the pool, to help it retain its glory! Tel Jeni Doull 01606 782957 www.marburypool.info

Sun 30th April

Blossom Day springtime activities including a guided walk of Norton Priory's Walled Garden orchard. 2pm. Normal entry charges. Tel Norton Priory 01928 569895

Mon 1st May

Marbury Swimming Pool opens for the season. 11am – 5pm. Become a member or even take a dip! Tel Jeni Doull 01606 782957 www.marburypool.info

Sat 6th May

Wildlife Watch: **Blossom & Bees**, Cuddington CP School, 10am-noon. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Sat 6th May

Plant Sale, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Cuddington Scout Hall, Norley Road.

Bring plants 11.30; sale starts 2pm. Frank Godfrey, 01606 883385

Sun 7th May
Sandstone

Trail I: a full day walking the northern section (18km/11 miles) of the Sandstone Trail from Frodsham to Willington. Booking essential: tel John Street 01270 611610, email: sandstonetrail@cheshire.gov.uk

Abbreviations

CLT: Cheshire Landscape Trust
CWT: Cheshire Wildlife Trust
FOAM: Friends of Anderton & Marbury
MCOS: Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Society
Reaseheath: Reaseheath College
VROWG: Vale Royal Organic & Wildlife Gardeners
Wildlife Watch = Vale Royal Wildlife Watch, junior branch of CWT
For **other Cheshire dates** see www.cheshire.gov.uk/countryside/Events/countrysideeventslist2.htm#july

For theme weeks and days

see www.sustainablecheshire.org.uk/documents/ecoplanner06.pdf

Sundry pics in the diary section come from www.wildyorkshire.co.uk/naturediary/docs/diary.html



Tues 7th March

Work out with a Walk! Northwich Community Woodlands - leisurely wander. Meet 10am, Northwich Information Centre. Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Sat 13th May

Have a go at **dry stone walling**, for all the family. 2pm, Tegg's Nose Country Park. Tel CLT 01244 376333

Sun 14th May

Sandstone Trail II: a full day walking the central section (18km/11 miles) of the Sandstone Trail from Willington to Bickerton. Booking essential: tel John Street 01270 611610, email: sandstonetrail@cheshire.gov.uk

Sun 14th May

Reaseheath Festival & Open Day: 10am – 5pm. Dog show, riding displays, mini-train rides, bands & entertainers, archery, dairy & horticulture demonstrations...BBQ & refreshments. Adult £4, child £3, car & passengers £12, concessions £1. Tel 01270 625131

16-18 May

National Energy Management Exhibition (NEMEX), NEC Birmingham. Tel 0151 334 6763, www.ef-expo.co.uk

Fri 19th May

The Sensory Garden: tactile ideas. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

Sat 20th May

A Walk in The Woods, trees, wildlife, traditional uses and folklore in Little Budworth Country Park. Booking essential: tel Lee Thompson, 01606 301484

Sun 21st May

Sandstone Trail III with a twist: a full day walking an alternative southern route for the Sandstone Trail (19km/12 miles) from Bickerton to Whitchurch via Malpas. Booking essential: tel John Street 01270 611610, email: sandstonetrail@cheshire.gov.uk

Sun 21st May

Neston Green Day: lots of environmental crafts and activities for all the family. 12noon - 3pm. Tel Rangers 0151 357 1991

Sun 21st May

The **A.W. Boyd Walk**, in the footsteps of Cheshire naturalist A. W. Boyd. 2pm, Antrobus Village Hall. Tel CLT 01244 376333

Sun 21st May

Herbal Walk: traditional hay fever treatments, tonics and a herbal tea from a medical herbalist. 2pm, Anderton Nature Park. Tel Natalia Kerkham, 01925 860664

Fri 26th May

Living off the Land – bush craft for beginners. Over 16s only please. Booking essential: tel Richard Snow, 01606 593133

Sat 27th May

Sandstone Trail Challenge 2006: Can you complete the whole of the Trail (55km/34 miles) in a day? Serious walkers only. Entry fee £12.50 includes coach travel to start, full back up and medals for completion. Send sae to Sandstone Trail Challenge 2006, c/o Frodsham Fire Station, Ship Street, frodsham. WA6 7NW. More details - www.welcome.to/frodsham06 or phone 07802 273821

Thurs 1st June

Mystery Salt Cycle, Weaver Parkway. A gentle 25 mile mystery cycle around local sites of interest. Optional pub lunch. Booking essential: tel Tony Blackledge, 01606 593133

3, 4 June

Reaseheath Summer Horse Show. Tel 01270 625131



5th June

World Environment Day. Submit suggestions of events April-June which could support WED to jackie.bowley@environment-agency.gov.uk or tel. 01925 543365

Wed 7th June

Lime-bed Lovelies - Butterflies and Orchids of Ashton's limebeds. Over 12s only, stout boots or wellies required. Booking essential: tel Steph Hefferan, 01606 77741

Sat 10th June

Wildlife Watch: **World Ocean Celebration – and kites**, at Thurstaston, The Wirral. Coach planned from Northwich Memorial Hall. 9.30am – 4pm. Contact Bev on 01606 882770 – booking for coach needed by 24th May

Wed 14th June

Weaver Wander: stroll Weaver Parkway seeing local and natural history. Booking essential: tel Tony Blackledge, 01606 593133

Fri 16th June

Salad Daze: Edible flowers, leaves, anything else you bring with your own cheese & wine. VROWG: Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Tel Nickki Hughes, 01606 556420

17-25th June

National Cycling Week. For Event Organisers Guide, tel 0845 612 0661 or email HQ@bikeweek.org.uk. Register Event at www.bikeweek.org.uk

Sat 24th June

Bug Safari (for National Insect Week), Marbury Country Park, either 10am or 2pm. Tel Paul Hill 01565 722928

24+25th June

Weekend Chair Making course with Jeff Allen, Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve. Booking essential: tel Aileen Thompson, 01270 760810

Sun 25th June

Yesterday's Trackways - Today's Greenways: A gentle guided cycle ride along the Whitegate Way and nearby. Booking essential: tel John Cerngul, 01606 301485

Sun 2nd July

Arts in the Forest Day - something for everyone including music, drama, dance, spoken word, drumming, sculpture as well as the visual arts. 11am – 4pm, Trentabank Visitor Centre area, Macclesfield. Tel Hazel Winder 01260 252832 or Trentabank@hotmail.co.uk

Sun 2nd July



Herbal Walk - the medicinal properties of trees, and more. 2pm, Marbury

Country Park. Tel Natalia Kerkham 01925 860664

Thurs 6th July

Pond Skaters and Water Scorpions – pond dipping at Weaver Parkway. Over 8's only please. Booking essential: tel Tony Blackledge/Richard Snow 01606 593133

Sun 9th July

Only One Earth, 11am – 5pm, Grosvenor Park, Chester. Contact Virginia, 01606 42667

Sun 16th July

Marbury Swimming Pool Summer Festival – swim in glorious surroundings, +BBQ. Tel Jeni Doull 01606 782957 www.marburypool.info

Sun 16th July

Explore Northwich Community

Woodlands: guided walk as part of Sport Relief with flora, fauna and site management explained Meet: 2pm, Marbury Country Park. Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

22 July – 6 August

Forest Fever - over 100 different activities, leaflet available June 2006. Tel Jo Sayers 01925 816217 www.merseyforest.org.uk

Sat 22nd July

Little Budworth Country Park

Guided Walk. Gentle stroll, see flora, fauna and rare lowland heathland habitat. Booking essential: tel Lee Thompson, 01606 301484

22 July – 4 Sept

Reaseheath Maize Maze. 11am – 6pm (last entry 4.30). With zoo animals. 2 mazes – one 5 acres, other smaller. Adult £4, child £3, under 3 free. Group & evening bookings on request. Tel 01270 625131

Sun 23rd July

Post 2 Post – orienteering at Marbury Country Park under guidance.

Suitable for all ages and abilities. Booking essential: tel Pete Schofield, 01606 77741



Wed 26th July

Ragwort Wonders –

Lots more to learn about ragwort and get involved with practical conservation around Ashton's & Neumann's Flash, Northwich. Over 12s only please. Booking essential: please contact Steph Hefferan on 01606 77741

Sat 29th July

Herbal Walk - Medicine or Magic?

Superstition or genuine cure? 2pm Anderton Nature Park. Tel Natalia Kerkham 01925 860664

Thurs 3rd Aug

Pond Skaters and Water

Scorpions details as 6th July

Sat 5th Aug

Living off the Land details as 26th May

Sat 19th Aug

Bat Talk and Walk: learn about the different bats of Marbury Country Park, then guided walk. 8pm Marbury Country Park. Tel Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Thurs 24th Aug

Pond Skaters and Water

Scorpions –details as 6th July

Sun 27th Aug

Marbury Swimming Pool Gala Day:

races & BBQ. Jeni Doull 01606 782957 www.marburypool.info

Sat 12th Aug

Wildlife Watch: **Butterflies & Bikes,**

10am-noon, Whitegate Station.

Contact Ken, 01606 883013

26 Aug – 4 Sept

Climate Camp. See

www.climatecamp.org.uk

Thurs 7th Sept

Mystery Salt Cycle, details as 1st June

Sat 9th Sept

Have a go at dry stone walling,

details as 13th May

9/10 Sept and 3 weekends after

Cheshire Open Studios 2006:

artists open doors. Tel Emma on 01565 621156,

www.artistsatwork.org.uk

16 – 24 Sept

Step into Cheshire: a festival of

walks, rides and outdoor

activities. See

www.stepintocheshire.org.uk or

phone 01606 541825

Sun 17th Sept

Sandstone Trail with a

difference: a full day walking an

alternative southern route for the

Sandstone Trail (19km/12 miles)

from Whitchurch to Bickerton via

Malpas. Booking essential: tel John

Street 01270 611610, email:

sandstonetrail@cheshire.gov.uk

Sun 17th Sept

Herbal Walk: prepare yourself for the

cold season as our medical herbalist

finds remedies that grow around us.

2pm, Marbury Country Park. Tel

Natalia Kerkham 01925 860664

Wed 20th Sept

Weaver Wander: see local and

natural history in Weaver Parkway.

Booking essential: tel Tony

Blackledge, 01606 593133

22nd September

In Town Without My Car Day, as

every 22nd Sept.

www.22september.org/, click

Themes

Sat 23rd Sept

Food for Free: 2 hour walk

gathering, then prepare, cook and

taste. Own food optional... 10am –

3pm, Marbury Country Park. Tel

Chris Moseley 01606 77741

Sat 23rd Sept

Wildlife Watch: **Step into Food For**

Free, 11am-2pm, Marbury Country

Park – meet by the Rangers' Hut.

Contact Yvonne, 01606 77741 / Ken

01606 883013

Sun 24th Sept

Moths for Breakfast! See what was

caught during National Moth Night.

Breakfast available. 9am, Marbury

Country Park. tel Paul Hill 01565

722928

Sun 24th Sept

Walk the Baker Way: morning train

from Chester to Delamere, walk back

via Roman Bridges at Hockenhull

Platts and canal. 13 miles. Booking

essential: tel John Street, 01270 611

610 email:

sandstonetrail@cheshire.gov.uk

Sun 24th Sept

Memory Walk: 8km walk exploring

Marbury and Anderton Parks; finish

with refreshments. Details and

sponsor forms from Vale Royal

Alzheimer's Society, 01606 351112

Sun ?? October

Seed Gathering Sunday. Jo Sayers,

01925 816217

<http://www.merseyforest.org.uk>

Sat 7th Oct

Quince Day: activities and guided

walk through quince collection.

Normal entry charges apply. 2pm,

Norton Priory Walled Garden. Tel

Norton Priory on 01928 569895

Thurs 12th Oct

Marbury Hall: history talk with new

material. £1.50 to non FOAM

members. 7.40pm, Comberbach

Memorial Hall. Tel Peter Schofield

01606 77741

Sat 14th Oct

Wildlife Watch: **The Big Draw,** 10am

– noon, and 1-3pm, Owley Wood

Scout Hut, Weaverham. Contact

Virginia, 01606 42667, Bev, 01606

882770

Sun 15th Oct

Apple Day: activities and traditional

games. 1pm Norton Priory Walled

Garden; normal entry charges apply.

Tel CLT, 01244 376333

Sun 22nd Oct

Landscape, Trees and Water:

guided walk and fruit tasting from the

CFWI orchard. 2pm, Ranger's Office,

Marbury Country Park. Tel CLT,

01244 376333

Thurs 2nd Nov

Weaver Valley Watersides: Ann Bates talks about the Weaver, particularly about water quality. £1.50 to non FOAM members.

7.40pm, Comberbach Memorial Hall.
tel Brian Jaques 01606 891242

Sat 11th Nov, +Sun if sleeping over
Wildlife Watch: **Autumn Sleepover at Fox Howl**, Ashton Road, Delamere Forest. Packed lunch required. 10am – 6pm Sat; or to 11am Sun. Contact Ken, 01606 883013

22nd Nov – 3rd Dec

National Tree Week: tree planting, walks, talks, songs, story-telling and tree dressing. Register your event with Jo Sayers, 01925 816217

Sat 9th Dec

Wildlife Watch: **Christmas Crafts.**
Weaver Parkway (off road opposite side of roundabout to Morrisons, Winsford, 10am-noon. Contact Ken, 01606 883013