

# VALE ROYAL ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Winter  
2004/5

NEWSLETTER

## A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers,  
half truths, and superficial relationships,  
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice,  
oppression, and exploitation of people,  
so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation,  
and war,

so that you may reach out your hand to  
comfort them

and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough  
foolishness

to believe that you can make a difference in  
this world,

so that you can do what others claim cannot  
be done.

Amen



## A Letter from South Africa

"It appeals to our ego to consider what 'we' have and what 'they' need. I went to South Africa once, to a small village about 800km from Cape Town. The people were extremely poor, conditions were basic; alcoholism was rife. My first impression was typical of a Westerner: I thought 'These poor people...' and I thought about what 'we', in the prosperous North, could offer people in poor developing countries. But, by the time I left, having been invited into homes, eaten and laughed with both kids and adults, talked to folk wherever I roamed, I came away thinking more about what they had to offer to us. The visit made me realize that in our greedy pursuit of wealth we have lost a great deal of what money cannot buy. Our value system has gotten out of kilter with what is important in life. The people I met had an abundance of natural generosity, exuberance, lust for life, sense of community and family. I am now more worried for us and the road that we are walking, blinded by unconscious greed because we always look after number one. We all, rich and poor alike, have something very valuable to gain if we share the world resources more fairly, and if we look again at what is really valuable in life." (Fran Healy, singer/songwriter with the band Travis)

This passage comes from "The Rough Guide to a Better World", a book published by Rough Guides, for the Department for International Development. It contains lots of information relating to both the developing world and how we can help, through charity and lifestyle. The book is available free from Rough Guide Public Enquiry Point, DfID, Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 8EL, email enquiry@dfid.gov.uk. There's an online version at [www.roughguide-betterworld.com](http://www.roughguide-betterworld.com), and you can subscribe to DfID's free magazine 'Developments': tel 0845 300 4100. 10am – 4pm Mon-Fri, or view or subscribe at [www.developments.org.uk](http://www.developments.org.uk)

*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](mailto:vren@groundwork.org.uk)

## Energy

### Miscanthus

Miscanthus is a tropical grass that does well in the UK – varieties are already grown in gardens. The type used for energy crops is a sterile hybrid of clump-forming habit; it is therefore easier than willow to extract should the farmer change his mind. It takes 3 to 4 years to reach full size, when it forms a dense stand 10' high. Weed control is needed initially; thereafter the only attention required is the annual harvest, for an expected 20 years lifespan. Projected yields are about 20 t per ha of dry material annually when mature. Fertilisers are said not to be required, as leaves, containing most of the nutrients, fall to the ground before cane harvesting. Ash generated at the power station is equivalent to 5% of the fuel weight (and contains 20-25% K<sub>2</sub>O, 5% P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> -

<http://bioenergy.ornl.gov/reports/miscanthus/combustion.html>). The leaf mulch and lack of cultivation mean the crop is good for wildlife. Grants are available if planting within 10 miles of a small biomass user, 25 miles of a large one. Alternative uses (not grant attracting) include equine bedding and composite materials. BiEcc is a local company set up by farmers and Bical as a contractor to plant and manage Miscanthus crops – contact BiEcc at Site Office, Raleigh Hall Industrial Estate, Eccleshall, Stafford, ST21 6JL. They are particularly seeking farmers within a 25 mile radius of Eccleshall to supply a biomass power plant there – this includes the southern extremities of Vale Royal.

Other biomass crops include straw, reeds (which apparently don't need boggy conditions), willow and poplar. (See [www.nf-2000.org](http://www.nf-2000.org))

Talbot's Heating Ltd. have developed a biomass boiler with electricity generation capability: the BG50 nominally takes 50-100 kg/hour of fuel, producing 50kW net electrical output. They plan to extend their range in 2005. Contact them at Drummond Road, Astonfields Industrial Estate, Staffs ST16 3HJ; tel 01785 213366, email [sales@talbotts.co.uk](mailto:sales@talbotts.co.uk), [www.talbotts.co.uk](http://www.talbotts.co.uk). Alternative suppliers include Wärtsilä Biopower Oy of Helsinki (2 and 5 MW of electricity) and Exus Energy of Northern Ireland.

### Diesel on the Move

UK-based D1 Oils has developed a modular transportable oil refinery for producing biodiesel locally from various feedstocks. It produces minimal emissions, uses virtually no water, and in remote locations can run off its own biodiesel. It's been developed for use in developing countries, to process

the likes of Jatropha seeds. (A tropical tree enjoying near desert conditions.) The EU biofuels directive requires the current 2% market penetration by biodiesel (and ethanol to be 20% by 2020. An area the roughly size of Belgium is currently planted with rape, only one fifth of which is for biodiesel. Alternatives include Sunflower, Camelina (Gold of Pleasure), and imports of Jatropha oil. (*Energy World*)

### Big and Blue

Cooperative Financial Services own the tallest building, the CIS Tower, in Manchester, but at 40 years old its cladding needs replacing. On three sides this is to be done using dark blue photovoltaic



panels. Over 3200 m<sup>2</sup> of Sharp panels, of nominal 391kW rating, will generate 180,000 kWh of electricity annually. Installation is being done by solarcentury, and the £5.5m cost is being supported by grants from North West Development Agency (£885,000) and Department of Trade and Industry (£175,000). solarcentury comment: "Normally functionless cladding can be replaced by aesthetic solar cladding, often at a cheaper price, hence providing clean renewable electricity for free. When complete (end of 2005), it will be the largest vertical solar cladding project in Europe and the largest solar power system in the UK. More at [www.solarcentury.co.uk/news/newsitem.jsp?newsid=400](http://www.solarcentury.co.uk/news/newsitem.jsp?newsid=400)

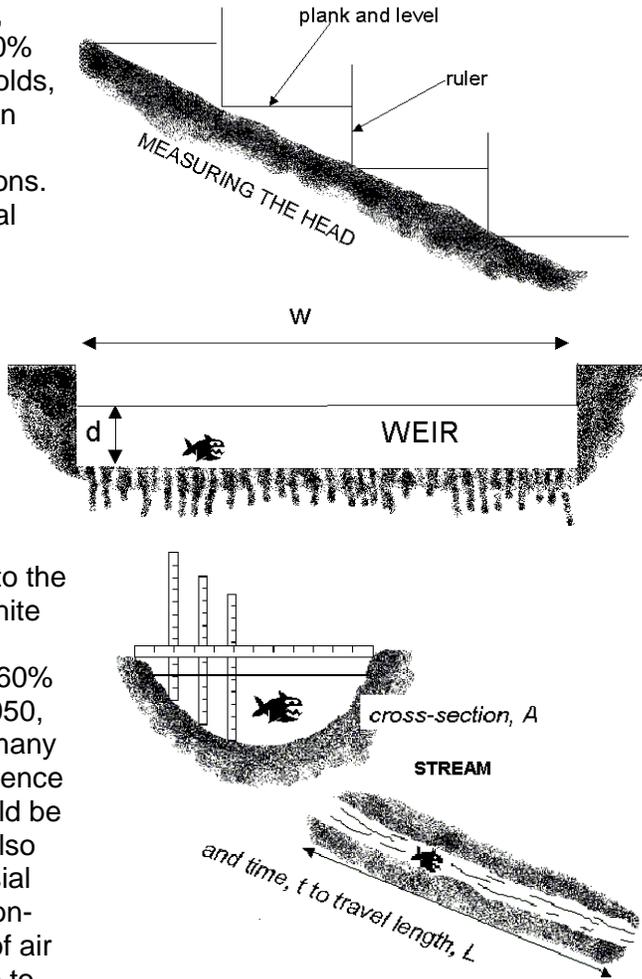
### Estuary Energy - another approach

Rather than a tidal barrage, Statkraft Energi AS Development of Oslo is researching the use of differing osmotic potentials of fresh and sea waters, generating hydraulic power to turn a turbine and generate electricity. A flow of 1m<sup>3</sup>/sec of fresh water should provide 1MW. They're looking for the right osmotic membrane.

## Domestic Tradable Quotas (DTQs) for Energy Use

A presentation on DTQs was held in London, and Anthony Powell of VREN was one of the full audience, invited by Colin Challen, MP. Speakers included Richard Starkey of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Research, developer of the DTQ concept. The principle is that every adult should receive an annual CO<sub>2</sub> allowance, accessed by a plastic card. As electricity, gas, petrol etc. are bought, so quotas are deducted. Currently, 40% of UK energy use is bought by households; accordingly, the government would set the year's UK allowance, allocate 40% to households, and auction the rest to organisations. This annual allowance

would be steadily reduced: charts were shown indicating a reduction to the Energy White Paper's proposed 60% drop by 2050, although many in the audience felt it should be steeper. Also controversial was the non-inclusion of air travel, due to problems deducting quotas at the time of ticket purchase; however one representative from the air industry was interested in being included in industrial carbon trading (it currently only applies to UK internal flights). It is technologically possible, and equitable - unlike fuel tax, which hits the poor first, most in the lower classes would be better off as they could sell their surplus to hungrier fuel users. The idea of a futures market was suggested: selling your future quotas so that you can invest in energy conservation or renewables. See [www.dtqs.org](http://www.dtqs.org), [www.colinchallen.org/record.jsp?type=article&ID=18](http://www.colinchallen.org/record.jsp?type=article&ID=18)



## Have Ruler, have Power

There are a number of local sites where hydropower is possible. A number were listed in our newsletter of February '03. A recent search has found a US based website giving details of the sites in more detail - see [www.small-hydro.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=countries.generalReport&country\\_ID=79&country\\_IDSHP=3](http://www.small-hydro.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=countries.generalReport&country_ID=79&country_IDSHP=3) Their data for the sites we listed give the following ratings: on the Dane, the Mill in Congleton (36kW); on the Weaver, the Mill at Church Minshull (65kW), Vale Royal Locks (92kW), Hunt's Locks (104kW), Saltersford Locks (188kW) and Dutton Locks (216kW). (These are lower than our estimates due to unconsidered factors.) How do you assess the potential at other sites? Typically you'll need to know the head of water (H) and its quantity (Q). To find the head, you can use a spirit level, plank and ruler (meter or longer): To estimate the quantity, use either a weir or

the stream itself:

on a weir, just measure its width (w) and the water depth (d) as it flows over:  
on a stream, use two rulers to do some representative transects, transfer the data to graph paper, and estimate the cross-sectional area (A). Then time (t) a Pooh-stick (dog biscuits work well) over a measured length (L).

*formulae*

first, ensure all data is entered as metres, square metres or seconds.

flow over a weir,  $Q=1.77wd^{3/2}$  m<sup>3</sup>/s [that's 1.77 x w x the square root of (d x d x d)]

flow in a stream,  $Q=(A \times L)/t$  m<sup>3</sup>/s

Total power in the water = H x Q x 9.8 kW, of which the very most you'll get is 70%. Allow also for the seasonal fluctuations.

VREN would be interested to hear of any locations you think may be suitable for surveying by school children.

## Domestic Wind Turbines

Windsave produce a 1.75m diameter turbine, complete with mountings and electricals to plug in to a domestic socket: it synchronises its output to the mains. It's rated at 1kW at 12m/s wind speed - at 6m/s average the assumed 1/8 kW output works out at £76 pa saved off your bill, at 7p/kWh. It qualifies for ROCs (renewable energy certificates), making the return more attractive. It's priced at £995 + 5% VAT and installation (£200 or so), for which grants are available. Much of Cheshire enjoys wind speeds

averaging 5-6 metres/sec with the sandstone ridge at 6-7, at a height of 25 metres: local conditions may differ. The Centre for Alternative Technology warn of possible vibration of house-mounted turbines. See [www.windsave.com](http://www.windsave.com), tel 0141 353 6841.

The Swift wind turbine, designed to minimise noise, is rated at 1.5kW and is intended to heat water. See [www.renewabledevices.com/swift.htm](http://www.renewabledevices.com/swift.htm), tel 0131 535 3301

**DEFRA guideline promotes Renewable Energy**  
PPS 22, published in August, gives planning guidelines for renewable energy. Considerations include:

- If environmental, economic, and social impacts are considered, any renewable energy technology, large or small scale, should be allowable;
- All forms should be considered, with their various characteristics and allowing for technological progress
- The wider environmental/economic implications should be considered
- Community involvement is welcome
- Environmental, social and economic benefits should be maximised and negative impacts minimised
- Local plans may designate specific sites only if there is developer with a strong case
- Planning authorities may stipulate that new developments include a proportion of the energy requirements to come from on-site renewable sources where possible. Certain councils (Merton, Oldham) have already used this to require 10% renewables.

See [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk), selecting in sequence: planning, policy, then statements... there's also a companion guide. For a hard copy, try: 020 7944 3146

## Food and Gardening

### What's in the Box?

One of the member's experiments being run by the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA) this year is an 'Organic Box Scheme Watch', to look at their range, quality and value. Organic Box Scheme subscribers will be asked to complete a questionnaire and record sheets. Non-members of HDRA are welcome to participate in this experiment: send a postcard/sealed down envelope with the following details - "HDRA members' experiments 2005", your name, address, your membership number (say non-member), and "I wish to take part in experiment 1 - Organic Box Scheme Watch". Send to Members' Experiment Co-ordinator, HDRA, Ryton

Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG. Alternatively, email that lot to [experiments@hdra.org.uk](mailto:experiments@hdra.org.uk)  
HDRA's **Organic Open Garden Weekends** are being publicised on their website from spring onwards - [www.hdra.org.uk](http://www.hdra.org.uk)



**Welly Week** is to promote organic gardening and raise money for HDRA. It's from Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. They're encouraging employers to allow their staff to wear wellies to work on 1<sup>st</sup> April (and look a fool?), along with events (a walk, a fashion show, children's activities) at their HQ at Ryton Gardens near

Coventry. More info from Sue Mattock, 0247 630 3517, email [fundraising@hdra.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@hdra.org.uk), or select events from [www.hdra.org.uk](http://www.hdra.org.uk).

### Organic Food for All

HDRA have one local mentor lined up for training; ideally there should be another, and suggestions for a suitable plot of land would be welcome. The project involves a plot of redundant land, some locals to work on it and enjoy its fresh produce, and the odd gardening (not necessarily already with organic expertise) expert, aka mentor. Contact Anthony Powell at VREN for more details.

### Organic Website for the North West

This new site gives details of farmers and food processors in Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria.

There are very few Cheshire entries, and the only local entry yet is Abbey Leys Farm, known for its vegetables at our farmers' markets - they're offering 7 different breeds of laying pullets. Tel 01925 753465.

Visit the site at [www.nworganiccentre.org/web/nwoc/nwoc.nsf](http://www.nworganiccentre.org/web/nwoc/nwoc.nsf)



## Resources

### Energy Saving Trust Grants

Contact the Energy Saving Trust for the following grants:

- **Innovation Programme:** up to £10k for feasibility studies, up to £90k for implementation, of schemes that reduce CO2 emissions from domestic housing. Next deadline: 30th June 2005
- **Community Energy** - Funds the refurbishment of existing, and the installation of new community heating schemes (also called district heating), usually with combined heat and power.

- **Solar Grants Programme:** for photovoltaic (PV) installations. For small scale, £2800 - £4000/kWp or 50% of costs; no deadline – rolling scheme. Larger scale: 40-55%; quarterly deadlines.
  - **PowerShift:** grants to help with the purchase of, or conversion to, cleaner vehicles – eg electric hybrid of LPG
  - **CleanUp:** for diesel lorries, buses, emergency vehicles and refuse trucks, to help cover the cost of fitting emission reduction equipment or convert to LPG or natural gas.
  - **Transport New Vehicle Technology Fund:** to encourage innovative low carbon vehicles.
- For the vehicle grants call the TransportEnergy hotline: 0845 602 1425 or visit [www.transportenergy.org.uk/grants/home.ft](http://www.transportenergy.org.uk/grants/home.ft)  
For others tel 0870 241 2089, or email [info@practicalhelp.org.uk](mailto:info@practicalhelp.org.uk) (From [www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk))

### Community Champions Fund

This provides grants to encourage and support people to get actively involved on a voluntary basis in improving and regenerating their community – be it a place or a community of common interest. It's especially to help people develop their skills, knowledge and confidence, and to get information and support. Hopefully grant recipients will then help others become more active in their community. Grants of £50 to £2000 are available with the Cheshire and Warrington area. There is no closing date, but you're advised to apply as soon as possible. For all the small print and an application form, tel Hector Robb, 01270 211545.

### Oxfam Unwrapped

This innovative idea from Oxfam gave an opportunity for people to buy a Christmas present with a difference. You bought, say, ten chickens: the birds went people in the developing world, you got a card to give your friend. Chickens proved so popular over Christmas that they're now off the menu: choose instead from a selection including a school desk and chair (£15), a beehive and training (£84), a water tank for a refugee camp of 3000 (£2160). See [www.oxfamunwrapped.com](http://www.oxfamunwrapped.com) or call 0870 608 1200.



### Advice for Small Businesses

In a recent survey of 8000 smaller UK businesses, only 18% could name any environmental legislation. Hence netregs - a government website with clear guidance on waste, water and energy efficiency, as they apply, and will apply, to businesses. Along with

the good practice advice, the site can help avoid fines and even help make money through reduced waste and improved image. See [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

### Eco-congregation info

Promote biodiversity in your churchyard with information from [www.yorkshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/ylc.htm](http://www.yorkshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/ylc.htm)

Structural issues:

[www.buildingconservation.com/articles/living/living.htm](http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/living/living.htm)

For display material, inspirational newsletter and general networking, contact Jo Rathbone, Eco-congregation, The Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ, tel 0247 685 3061, email [ecocongregation@rase.org.uk](mailto:ecocongregation@rase.org.uk), [www.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ecocongregation.org)

**Lichens**, common in churchyards, are covered in the British Lichen Society's website. There's details on how to encourage or remove them, booklists and a CD ROM to help identify the 2000-odd British species (£26 + £2.50 p+p from Frank S. Dobson, 57 Acacia Grove, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3BU.) See [www.thebls.org.uk](http://www.thebls.org.uk)



### First International Play Safety Congress

"As safe as necessary - not as safe as possible" is the theme of this gathering to be staged in Stratford upon Avon on June 6th 2005. There will be workshops for parish and town councils. Phone RoSPA on 01367 820988 or see [www.rospa.com/playsafety/news.htm](http://www.rospa.com/playsafety/news.htm)

### Planet Earth

is a quarterly magazine from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). The autumn 2004 issue includes articles on how Mesolithic people retreated as the sea rose to cover forests and become the Severn Estuary; a description of how changing soil water content can cause structural damage to houses; how kittiwakes suffer when sandeels are fished; and various aspects of NERC's work. There is also a critique of air travel: if the government aims to reduce the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60 million tonnes pa by 2050, and the current 8m tonnes pa CO<sub>2</sub> emissions attributable to aircraft is projected to rise to 20m tonnes by 2030, that being equivalent to up to 80m tonnes as it is released high in the atmosphere. Planet Earth, and other NERC publications, is available free: visit [www.nerc.ac.uk/insight/publications/orderpubs.asp](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/insight/publications/orderpubs.asp), or tel 01793 411500

## Courses at Trafford Hall

A range of courses is available, aimed at helping community members to help their communities.

Other than a £6.50 registration fee, there is no other charge. The April – October programme includes:  
11-13 April 2005: **Growing Plants for a Community Business**. For small groups planning community horticulture – food or other.

27-29 April 2005 **Spaces by Design**. Turn a small public space from a liability into an asset!

4-6 May 2005 (later dates available) **Buildings by Design**. Plan, design and build a community facility, large or small.

16-18 May 2005 **Project Allotment**, for a group planning to take on an allotment together.

23-25 May 2005 (or 12-14 Sept 2005) **Fundraising Strategy**. Help your group's fundraising (accredited).

23-24 May 2005 **Energy**. Energy and regeneration schemes – conservation and renewables, strategy and funding.

26-27 May 2005, **Freebies**. Time, people and other things than money to make your project happen.

8-10 June 2005 (later dates available) **Places by Design**. For residents, developers, & planners involved in large-scale regeneration projects in neighbourhoods.

24-26 June 2005 **Using and Appreciating the Environment**. For young adults aged 16-25. Lots of simple ideas to improve your local environment. A small grant is available help enactment.

25-27 July 2005 **Designing a Community Garden**: turn derelict land into a useful community facility.

29-31 July 2005 **Young Spacemakers** small-scale regeneration for young people (14-17) and adult volunteers. Fun and activity-based.

5-6 September 2005 **Recycling**. Look at your community's waste, explore reduction, devise recycling schemes, and get support.

10-12 Oct 2005, (also 20-22 March 2006).

**Homes By Design**. For residents, developers and planners involved in large-scale regeneration projects in neighbourhoods.

17-19 Oct 2005 **Greening Up**. Give your organisation an environmental action plan! Organic growing, wildlife, derelict land, energy efficiency, transport...

Others include Drug Awareness, Committee Skills for Voluntary Organisations, Community Newsletters, Presentation Skills, Social Enterprise Training, Bringing Dance to Your Community, Action on Anti-Social Behaviour, and courses for TMO Committee Members, RSL Board Members, and Treasurers. For more details or booking information, contact Natalie Bradbury, Trafford Hall, Ince Lane, Wimbolds

Trafford, Chester CH2 4JP, tel 01244 300246, email [n.bradbury@traffordhall.com](mailto:n.bradbury@traffordhall.com)

## BTCV for holidays, tools, jobs, training, plants, insurance...

Visit the BTCV website <http://shop.btcv.org.uk> for the above and more. Books on outdoor work are available as hard copy or free to read/download on-screen; there are tools for woodworking, gardening or heavier work; clothing from boots to hats (including reflective jackets OK for cyclists); holidays from Albania to USA and lots in the UK; training for fun or a reason in conservation, construction, IT and more; plants from meadow seeds to young forest trees. Alternatively contact their HQ for mailed literature: BTCV, Conservation Centre, 163 Balby Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 0RH; Tel: 01302 572 244, or the Cheshire office at 01244 300 230.

## BMX track advice

For a free information sheet on BMX trails and guidance on other popular wheeled sports, visit [opfa@ruralnet.org.uk](mailto:opfa@ruralnet.org.uk)

## Got Leaflets to Distribute?

Vale Royal Borough Council can distribute leaflets around their network of outlets. Contact Andrea Peattie for details, 01606 862862.

## Grants Wanted

Our many small groups, usually based on volunteers, often hear of grants late. If they haven't already missed the deadline, they have to try to muster their committee to organise a bid at the eleventh hour. Please, if you hear of a grant, let us at VREN know so that we can issue it promptly in our E-news service.

## Energy Awareness for School Children

Helen Richardson is EPPLUS's recently appointed Project Officer, available to talk to schools on energy efficiency and renewable energy. These can be short sessions or part of an Eco-Schools or sustainability programme. Contact her on 01606 594331 or email [helen@epplus.org.uk](mailto:helen@epplus.org.uk)

## Local News

### Laura Needham Moves On

After many years as Vale Royal's Local Agenda 21 Officer, Laura left on 4<sup>th</sup> February for Manchester City Council. Thanks for the Farmers' Markets, the allotments revivals, being on the VREN management group, and much more; may you do great things for Manchester too. A successor will be sought.



## Crash! Ouch! Sorry!

Have we got your contact details right? Due to a serious computer crash, we've lost the latest update of our database. We've tried to rectify it from our records, but if we've missed you, we apologise. Please let us have your details so that we can right things.

### meanwhile

Please ensure you've got our details right – in your address book, databases, etc. We're still receiving surprises!

## Transport

### Arriva Offers

Arriva have the following offers:

Students can buy a long-term ticket on-line.

The following tickets are available from the driver:

Arriva Day Tickets cost £3.30 for adults (children & concessions ½ price) and cover the whole north-west area – Rhyl, Llangollen, Hanley, Macclesfield, Manchester, Preston.

A Weekly ticket covering the same area plus Wales costs £12.50, children £5.50.

Up to 2 adults and 3 children can travel on a Family ticket in the north-west area for £7.

See <http://www.arrivabus.co.uk>, enter town (eg Northwich), click Select, choose a route then you'll find a button for fares.

### Half Fares for Over 60s, Day Rovers for All

National Express run a network of coach services throughout the country. In England and Wales, and to and from Glasgow and Edinburgh, over 60s can travel for half price on most services. The main exceptions are Fridays and, during July and August, Saturdays. A discount card is not required – just proof of age of the traveller on the coach (so an under-60 can buy a ticket for an elder). Book through [www.nxroutesixty.com](http://www.nxroutesixty.com), tel 08705 80 80 80 (telephone booking fee - £1), or a National Express agent.

### Faster than Concorde!

A new website, [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) has been set up for planning journeys by bus, coach, train, ferry and air for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It links with regional journey planners, but if you need to know about Scottish ferries, use the Scottish section, not our North-West England one. It also extends abroad, but the Holyhead to Westport leg of a journey takes a mere 4 minutes! It currently lacks all Metrolink times; go to [www.metrolink.co.uk](http://www.metrolink.co.uk) and click Tram Times for them.

For continental travel see

<http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en>

## Hunt's Locks: the traffic stops

The Greenways Strategy for Vale Royal (prepared by Neil Collie of Groundwork for VRBC) includes data on pedestrian usage of the path across Hunt's Locks and the now-closed Riversdale Bridge.

A winter (end February/early March) Sunday count in 2003 registered 391 crossings in 9 hours; in 2004, 279 crossings in 5 hours.

A winter weekday count in 2003 got 675 crossing in 9 hours, in 2004, 206 in 5 hours.

An August Sunday count in 2003 got 219 in 11 hours, in 2004, 305 in 5 hours.

An August weekday count in 2003 got 392 in 11 hours, in 2004, 193 in 5 hours.

The counts are done on 4 days a year and cover Manley Common, Dutton cyclepath and Delamere Way, Whitegate Way, Newbridge Winsford, Carden's



Ferry and Carey Park, the cycleway at Sir John Deane's and the aforementioned Riversdale.

Volunteers for counting are welcome to contact Neil Collie: phone on 01606 723160 or email [neil.collie@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:neil.collie@groundwork.org.uk)

British Waterways plans to replace the bridge this summer. (see [www.rwns.co.uk/rwns2.htm](http://www.rwns.co.uk/rwns2.htm))

## Bridge Concerns

The relatively small body of people against the second Mersey Crossing at Halton are concerned about:

Mercury in the river sediment will be resurrected, and may kill off much of the wildlife;

The foundations will act as a barrier to water flow, an increasing concern with looming climate change;

Motorised transport will be encouraged, leading to more congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Supporters say it will relieve congestion and improve access to Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

The bridge is to be 2-tier; the top carrying 4 (upgradeable to 6) lanes, the bottom for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and possibly, in future, light rail. The cost is estimated at £335m.

## No to double M6

By a margin of 18 to 1, people in Cheshire and Staffordshire have told the Department of Transport they DON'T want an "M6 Expressway" toll road alongside the existing M6. The consultation ended on 21 October. See

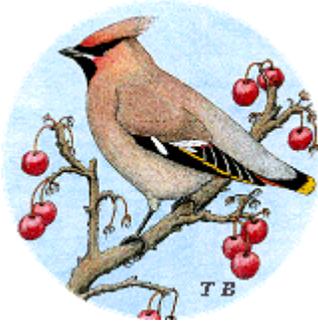
[www.foe.org.uk/campaigns/transport/press\\_for\\_change/m6\\_expressway/](http://www.foe.org.uk/campaigns/transport/press_for_change/m6_expressway/)

### **Come Back Later**

The new timetable for the mid-Cheshire line through Northwich shows an additional service on Sunday evenings, leaving Chester at 8.10pm and Altrincham at 9.30pm.

### **Pedal Power!**

An Excel spreadsheet is available, whereby you can estimate your energy and power output for your cycling, so that you can work out how many doughnuts to replace that energy. It's among the many and varied items on the Cyclists' Touring Club's website. Hit it directly at [www.ctc.org.uk/resources/About\\_the\\_bike/POWER.XLS](http://www.ctc.org.uk/resources/About_the_bike/POWER.XLS)



### **Natural World**

#### **Watch the Birdie**

Waxwings, a rare visitor this far south, have been seen in numbers feeding on berries in car park shrubbery in the Crewe area.

### **Your Roots are Showing**

One of the plane trees outside Northwich Road shops (in front of the pet shop) has recently shed a branch. Before it fell, evidently a gap was filling with decaying matter. With the branch gone, the roots that were growing into that humus are in full view, above head height.



### **Do It!**

#### **Photographic Competition**

Friends of Anderton & Marbury are again holding a Photographic Competition, for pictures taken in the parks. Hand in your photographs taken in Anderton and Marbury at the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury before the closing day of 30th June. Winning photos will appear in a 2006 calendar. See

[www.northwichcommunitywoodlands.org.uk/calendar/index.shtml](http://www.northwichcommunitywoodlands.org.uk/calendar/index.shtml) for a display of the current winning shots. (Some pictures in this newsletter are derived from these.)

#### **Local Volunteering**

Marshall's Arm Nature Reserve Group: can you spare some time to help clear reeds and/or cut back scrub? If so, please contact Derek Richardson VRBC on 01606 867724, or Stuart Poucher, 07788 570628.

### **BTCV Cheshire Breaks**

The following was gleaned from the above BTCV website:

25-27 Feb: Copse and Loppers: learn a variety of woodland management skills. 6.30pm, Chester train station, £50

17-19 June: Traditional Crafts and Willow Sculptures 7.30pm, Chester train station, £90

26-29 Aug: Walk on the Wild Side: improve access on the west side of Peckforton & Bickerton Hills. 7.30pm, Chester train station, £70

For all, standard accommodation is included, contact BTCV on 01244 300 230. Minimum age 16.

### **Volunteering at Gowy Meadows**

Cheshire Wildlife Trust are working at Gowy Meadows on the last Sunday of the month, 10am – 3pm. Work includes hedgerow creation, scrub clearance, making footbridges, etc. Bring suitable clothes and footwear, your lunch and drinks. Gowy Meadows lies between the A5117 and the M56, west of Helsby; the meeting point is Thornton-le-Moors church. Contact Lee Greenhough at CWT, 01270 610180, email [lgreenhough@cheshirewt.cix.co.uk](mailto:lgreenhough@cheshirewt.cix.co.uk)

### **UK Climate Change Programme Review:**

#### **Consultation**

Defra are seeking comments on this document. Despite being on course to meet our Kyoto target, a 12.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2008/2012, (overall, the EU is set to fail), but not it's personal target of a 20% CO<sub>2</sub> cut. Where to next? Request a paper copy from Lisa Stratford, National Climate Change Policy Division, 3/F3 Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE; Tel: 020 7082 8645; Email: [ccpr@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ccpr@defra.gsi.gov.uk) or download from [www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/ukccp-review/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/ukccp-review/index.htm) (pdf format). Response deadline 2nd March 2005.

More information on the Climate Change Programme is at

[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/02.htm#uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/02.htm#uk)

#### **From Here to Sustainability**

Is the subtitle of a consultation, 'Strategy for Sustainable Development', from the Learning and Skills Council, deadline 31st March. It's available at [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectLising/ConsultationsandResponses/Currentconsultation/sustainable\\_dev.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectLising/ConsultationsandResponses/Currentconsultation/sustainable_dev.htm)

## Waste, Recycling and Pollution

### Mock Wood

“Wood” made from second-hand plastic is long-lived, easily worked and requires little maintenance. WRAP’s website lists a number of makers, many local:



Ecodek of Saltney produce a polythene composite with 65% wood flour, brown or grey Ecodek 30mm x 140mm and 38mm x 140mm profiles are well suited for use as decking, fencing, pool sides, docks and other similar applications. Ecodek Sales & Manufacturing. Tel: 01244 677 367, [www.ecodek.co.uk](http://www.ecodek.co.uk)

Lankhorst of Birkenhead make bollards, poles, planks, grid, deck, sheet, block out of recycled plastic. See [www.lankhorst.co.uk](http://www.lankhorst.co.uk), tel 0151 650 6999 Knotwood Composites of St. Helens make profiles and fabricate furniture, fencing, bollards, planters and decking. tel 0174 481 0001.

Centriforce Products of Liverpool make profiles for fencing, walkways, furniture, signage, and sports equipment. tel 0151 207 8109 [www.centriforce.com](http://www.centriforce.com) See

[http://www.wrap.org.uk/materials/plastics/woodalternative/about\\_wrap.html](http://www.wrap.org.uk/materials/plastics/woodalternative/about_wrap.html)

### Banned Timber Treatment

Last winter creosote was banned from use; now the CCA (copper, chrome, arsenate, also called tanalised or pressure treated) treatment is. While it is still safe to use such wood, it should not be burnt or composted as that releases the poisons, and be careful not to breathe the dust when working it.

### Diary Dates

Fri 18th Feb

**Willow Weaving** workshops with Peter Woollam. VROWG. Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £1.50. tel Niccki, 01606 556420

25th - 27th Feb

**BTCV Woodland Management:** see article

Sat 26th Feb

**Climate Change: How Christians Respond.** Conference, workshops & displays, address by the bishop of Oxford. High Wycombe [www.sageoxford.org.uk/climatechange.htm](http://www.sageoxford.org.uk/climatechange.htm)

Sat 26th Feb

**Structures in Fresh Willow,** at Brereton Heath with Peter Woollam, 10am – 4pm Booking essential: Aileen Thompson, 01270 760810

1st – 13th March

**Fair Trade Fortnight** See [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) or tel 020 7405 5942 for action guides, church action guides and events. For a supermarket tasting stand, tel 020 7440 7676

Fri 11th Mar, 5pm

**Manchester at War:** images and stories. Christopher Makepeace. NDHS, Mid-Cheshire College £1.50 to non-members

Alternatives include Tanalith E® and Osmose made from a copper and organic biocide (triazole) mixes. Also Boron/borax compounds are also available; and there are plant-based formulations around, but these have few test results to date.

### No Nukes

Those interested in abolishing nuclear weapons can visit [www.abolition2000europe.org](http://www.abolition2000europe.org) where there is a petition running. Alternatively, write to Rae Street, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 97 Hare Hill Road, Littleborough, Lancs OL15 9HG, tel 1706 378043

### How to Recycle Drinks Cartons

A plant is now open in Scotland capable of pulping the pulp off the polythene and aluminium and turning it into packaging: see

[www.drinks-cartons.com/docs/recycling\\_uk.htm](http://www.drinks-cartons.com/docs/recycling_uk.htm)

They propose to incinerate the residue. Post your rinsed and drained, flattened (open the ears and remove any plastic opening device)

milk/juice/soup/sauce/custard containers, with paper cups but nothing else, in a cardboard box with a label showing both the address and Bill Platypus logo. Bind the box with parcel tape or string. The logo tells them to throw the whole box into the machine!



**Smith Anderson & Co Ltd**  
**Fettykil Mills**  
**Leslie**  
**Fife**  
**KY6 3AQ**

Fri 11th March

**Nesting Birds,** John Lintin Smith. Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Soc, Hartford Village Hall, 7.45pm. £2, children £1. Harold Fielding, 01606 882529

Tues 15th March

**Salt Making Demonstration,** a quantitative experiment using replica ceramic salt pans. 9am-5pm, Lion Salt Works. Tel Lion Salt Works, 01606 41823

Thurs 17th March

**Badgers:** A talk by badger expert Cllr Keith Musgrave. £1.50 for non-members. 7.30pm Comberbach Memorial Hall. Tel Brian Jaques, 01606-891242

Fri 18th March

**Extending the growing season**, Margaret Bird. VROWG. Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £1.50. tel Niccki, 01606 556420

Sat 19th March

Wildlife Watch – **Signs of Spring** at Marshall's Arm, 10am-noon. Tel Virginia, 01606 42667

Sat 19th March

**Make a Garden Basket** with Sally Cole, Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, 12 noon on Booking essential, Eileen Thompson, 01270 760810

Wed 23rd March

**The changing face of Weston point:** a community built around the canal  
An illustrated talk by Kate Cawley – former head teacher of Weston Point School. River Weaver Navigation Society, 7.30pm upstairs at Hazel Pear, Acton Bridge. £2 non-members ann@gardinerfrodsham.demon.co.uk

27<sup>th</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April

**Welly Week** – see article

Wed 6th April

**Storytelling: tall tales and magical mysteries** for ages 5+ in Marbury Park, 2-4pm. Tel Steph Hefferan, 01606 77741

Sat 9th Apr, 10am-noon

Wildlife Watch

**Conservation in Action** at Owley Wood, Weaverham. Tel Ant, 01606 853099

Fri 15th Apr, 5pm

**Oulton Park – the rise and fall of the Grey-Egertons.** Mark Bevan. NDHS, Mid-Cheshire College £1.50 to non-members

Fri 15th Apr

**The Worm Hotel:** Lisa Bennett on composting with worms. Non-members £1.50. tel Niccki, 01606 556420

18th-22nd April

**Bike to School Week** off for 2005.

Sat 23rd April

**Bluebell Day** at Marbury Park Tel: Rangers, 01606 77741

Sun 24th April

**Herbal Walk:** with a medical herbalist. 2.00pm Anderton Nature Park car park. Tel Brian Jaques 01606-891242

Sat 30th April

**Bluebell Day** at Marshall's Arm. Meet at Stones Manor Lane, Hartford. 2 trips: 10am & 2pm. Tel Stuart, 07788 570628

Sun 1st May

**Dawn shows:** members of FOAM lead a 6am bird walk. Bring warm clothes and binoculars. Marbury Country Park car park. Tel: Rangers 01606-77741

Mon 2nd May

**Nature's Bounty**, food from the wild. Marbury Park, 10am – 3pm. Tel Chris Moseley, 01606 77741

Fri 13th May, 7.30pm

AGM and **Windmills of Cheshire and Beyond** in their diversity. Arthur Townsend, NDHS, Mid-Cheshire College £1.50 to non-members

Sat 14th May, 10am-noon

Wildlife Watch: **In a Flash**, birdlife at a flash off the River Weaver. Meet at Newbridge, Winsford (the picnic site off Bradford Road) Tel 01606 76473

14th & 15th May

**"Bug Hunt"** detective trail, about 1 hour. Any age, £2.00 per entry form in aid of Friends of Comberbach School. 11am – 4pm. Tel Simon Mazier 01606 891135

Tues 17th May

**Ashton Flash butterflies.** Not suitable for children: stout footwear/wellies req'd. 10am-2pm. Meet at Witton Mill car park. Booking essential: Steph Hefferan 01606 77741

Fri 20th May

**Companion Planting**, VROWG. Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. Non-members £1.50. tel Niccki, 01606 556420

Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> May

**Wildflowers of salt lime and ash clinker**, Anderton Nature Park, 1 – 3pm. See the difference in July. Tel Dave James 01606 77741

11th – 19th June

**National Cycling Week** See www.bikeweek.org.uk, tel 01243 527444

Fri 17th June

**Organic Gardeners' Social.** Charge (to cover food & drink) tba. VROWG. Comberbach Memorial Hall, 7.30. tel Niccki, 01606 556420



17th – 19th June  
**BTCV traditional crafts and willow working:** see article

Sat 18th June, 10am

Wildlife Watch: **Cycling and Recycling** through Northwich

Community Woodland. From the recycling bins on Cumberland car park (north of Matalan) to the Bug Safari at Anderton Tel Ant, 01606 853099

Sat 18th June, 10am onwards

**Bug Safari Day:** An all day search (stay as long as you can) for interesting insects with Paul Hill of Biota. Anderton Nature Park car park Marbury Rangers 01606-77741

Thurs 30th June

Friends of Anderton & Marbury **Photographic Competition:** closing date. See article.

6th – 10th July

**The Salt Tellers**, a community play at the Lion Salt Works and Anderton Lift. Tickets £4.50, £2 concessions, from Development of Arts in Northwich, tel 01606 41597, www.danarts.org.uk

Sat 9th July, 10am-noon

Wildlife Watch: **Let's Rock** - geology at Helsby Quarry (possible extension to picnic at Alvanley wild flower meadow). Tel Bev, 01606 882770

23rd July – 7th Aug

**Forest Fever Fortnight.** Contact Jo Sayers, 01925 816217 for info to support your event.

17th – 25th Sept

**Step into Cheshire:** tel 0845 1110656