



GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

newsletter

JUNE 2008

## AT LAST!

SATURDAY MAY 3rd was one of those days that succeeded in lifting the spirits. And by Gaia our Goddess Mother Earth we needed it! We had woken up to the dreadful news that Boris "Bloody" Johnson (as Jonathon Porritt put it) was Mayor of our great capital city: the city with the best Sustainable Development Plan of any great city in the world thanks to Ken Livingstone.

So what was so redeeming? It was the total dedication over 12 long years by organic farmer Adam Twine, backed by the Board of Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative Limited, that had given us five beautiful, elegant turbines gracing the landscape near Watchfield, Oxfordshire (10km east of Swindon), on open farmland at 110m elevation.

This is the first wind farm in the south-east of England, and no ordinary wind farm, being 100% community-owned. People local to Watchfield were given first preference to own shares in the project, and thereafter the offer extended to the wider community. Several people from the Forum are members and attended the AGM and Grand Opening by Jonathan Porritt on 3rd May.

Energy4All, the not-for-profit community renewable energy group, managed the project including setting up the member approved Board. The five 1.3MW Siemens turbines cost £7.7 million to buy, deliver (from their factory in Denmark), install and commission. This breaks down into £5.2m for the turbines, £1.3m for foundations and access tracks, £0.6m for the sub-station and grid connection, and £0.6m for fees. To pay for this, £4.6 million was put up by 2,500 members of the Westmill Co-op and the balance of £3.4 million is a 12-year loan from the Co-operative Bank at 7.45% fixed interest. Good Energy, the 100% renewable electricity company, is buying the output from three of the turbines at a price over 10p per kWh. The power purchase agreement for the output from the other two turbines has been signed with SmartestEnergy, a specialist in buying from independent distributed energy producers.

The five turbines were erected in just five days during the winter. In one case a section of turbine

## OUR FIRST WIND FARM IN THE SOUTH- EAST



arrived on site at 0830 and the turbine was fully erected the same day at 1830. The 49m towers come in two sections each weighing about 25 tonnes, the nacelles each weigh 50 tonnes and the rotors 30 tonnes.

It is expected that the carbon emissions created from the raw materials, manufacture, delivery and erection will be recovered within a year of start-up. The average wind farm in the UK pays back its carbon within five months, and over its lifetime a wind turbine will produce well over 30 times more energy than was used in its manufacture. Coal and nuclear power stations never achieve an energy payback, delivering only one third of the energy used in their construction and fuel supply.

These turbines are unbelievably quiet and graceful. New co-operative wind farms are always being formed so keep your eyes on the Energy4All website [www.energy4all.co.uk](http://www.energy4all.co.uk)

John Bannister

GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM  
will be holding its

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
on Wednesday 2nd July**

at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber,  
Guildford Borough Council, Millmead

**followed at 7.30pm by  
an illustrated talk by Mike Grimshaw  
"Britain's spectacular flora and fauna"**

*Refreshments from 6.30pm*

**PLEASE GIVE YOUR  
OPINION!**

Emma White of the Forum is conducting a study of greenery on homes for the University of Surrey, and needs interested homeowners to fill in an online questionnaire. Email [greenroofsstudy@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:greenroofsstudy@yahoo.co.uk) to be part of it.

[Emma's work is due for completion in July, so please respond as soon as you can. *Editor*]



**FACTS  
&  
FIGURES**

**Rhetoric and reality**

The EU's rhetoric on climate change doesn't match the reality. Of the 112 billion euros handed out in loans by the European Investment Bank between 1997 and 2007, more than half has gone to roads and air transport. The expected increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from EIB-funded airport expansion alone equals the entire national emissions of New Zealand.

*(Source: New Statesman, 7 May 07)*

**"Give us this day . . ."**

When a female common shrew is suckling her litter of at least five youngsters, every day she must catch more than her own body weight in beetles, worms, woodlice and other small invertebrates.

*(Source: BBC Wildlife, May 08)*

**Water – 1**

The global annual spending on bottled water is \$20 billion.

**Water – 2**

There are 1.1 billion people worldwide without access to clean water.

*(Source: New Statesman, 3 Dec 07)*

**Water – 3**

There's enough water for everyone on the planet. We can all get by on 50 litres a day; distribute it evenly and there's enough for each person to have nearly a hundred times that.

*(Source: BBC Focus, Autumn 07)*

## Let's morph into a Transition Town

WE ARE THINKING about Guildford becoming a Transition Town. We would be part of a grass-roots movement seeking local solutions to the twin challenges facing our society: Climate Change and "Peak Oil".

A rapidly growing network of Transition Towns is developing across the UK and Ireland, where local people have decided to start preparing for life when reducing our carbon emissions has become a necessity and we no longer have access to cheap energy supplies.

However, a lower-energy lifestyle does not have to mean a future of dreary enforced simplicity, increasing scarcity, drudgery and hardship; far from it! Those who are already trying it are finding rewarding community solutions and a better quality of life.

Our main aims will be:

- **to support people in cutting their carbon emissions and reducing their dependency upon fossil fuels to meet energy needs**
- **to enable self-reliance by strengthening and rebuilding social and economic connections at a local level**

In England, Totnes has been in the vanguard of this movement and on 8th May Ben Brangwyn from the Transition Network at Totnes came to help us forge our own Transition pathway here in Guildford. Ben is one of the main creative minds working alongside Rob Hopkins, co-founder of the movement. In April we attended the Transition Network Annual Conference in Cirencester, which was really inspiring.

More than 50 towns in the UK are now committed Transition Towns and the number is growing fast. On 23rd April we went to the first gathering of aspiring Transition Towns in the South East – this was held in Lewes, one of the most far advanced Transition Towns in the UK.

In many respects the Forum has been pursuing the same steps taken by the Transition movement, but we will need to engage a very much broader spectrum of our community including arts, culture, growing our food, etc. Will you join us?

*John Bannister*



**THE HAPPY outcome of the Guildford Mukono Link visit (featured in our March newsletter): Amy pictured in Uganda with Christopher, a teacher at a school in Mukono where there is no electricity on site. He and the school will now benefit from the Solar Aid equipment given by Guildford Environmental Forum.**

## Michael Palmer

MICHAEL PALMER, a great friend of the environment in Guildford and its surroundings, died in April, at the age of 66.

Michael contributed much to the work of the Guildford Environmental Forum. His professional work in estate development gave him valuable insights into the viewpoints of developers. He was an enthusiastic and hard-working member of the Transport Group for several years before becoming the Group's Chair for three years from 2001, a role he carried out with efficiency and dedication. Eventually he gave up his transport work because he thought (rightly) that progress at resolving transport problems was frustratingly slow, at both local and national levels.

As well as his work with the Forum, as a dedicated and hard-working chairman of the Guildford branch of the CPRE for several years, he did all he could to protect Guildford's countryside and especially the Green Belt.

He leaves a widow, Leone, and a son and daughter, to whom we express our deepest sympathies.



## Promoting a sustainable Stoughton with S.W.A.P

by Forum member Ian Waghorn

THE STOUGHTON Waste Action Project, or SWAP, was set up in 2006 as part of a Government initiative to promote sustainable living at a community level. Essentially the project is funded by DEFRA and delivered by WWF with close support from Guildford Borough Council. The group was initially formed through links with Stoughton Infant School, and as such comprises mostly teachers and parents as well as a splattering of other interested parties (I became involved through Guildford Borough Council's Community Recycler Scheme).

Our first group meeting in 2006 consisted of a good old-fashioned brainstorming session where we decided upon three main areas of focus: food, water and recycling. With our aims and ideas clear we began to plan our first event, a junk swap to be held at Stoughton Infants School. We picked a day, booked the venue, advertised the event and arrived in our 'recycle now' T-shirts, waiting in anticipation for the rush of interested residents. Unfortunately the rush was a trickle and after a fun but ultimately

disappointing day we left feeling slightly deflated. However, this was the first event we had ever organised and we were a group of mothers, teachers and amateur environmentalists, not experts in marketing and event planning. After a debrief and some excellent advice from WWF and Guildford Borough Council, we realised where we had gone wrong and started planning our next event.

I'm pleased to say that things have improved dramatically. Our second event, a book swap in March 2007, was a triumph! Kaye Smith did a hilarious role play during assembly at Stoughton Infants School, starring as the bookworm. Over 100 children and their parents came to the swap and two new members joined our group.

In June we promoted water saving and 30 lucky people went home with a free water butt in our giveaway! October came and another book swap, this time at Northmead School where Kaye had been working to make further links within the group. In addition to these events we have been involved in 'ban the bag' and worked with vendors at Guildford farmers market.

Links have been made with the local supermarket, Budgens, in Queen Elizabeth Park. Co-operation from the owner of the store has resulted in the installation of a new recycling bank in the car park and an on-going home composting display in store. This year we will have displays at both Stoughton Fun Day and Compost Heaven.

On the down side, the project was funded by DEFRA for a fixed two-year period and as such WWF has recently withdrawn its official support. This lack of support will be a challenge for the group, but hopefully through increased exposure we can recruit more members for the team. A large group with diverse knowledge and interests is key to the continued success of SWAP.

If you would like further information or wish to join the group please contact

Ian Waghorn ([ianwaghorn@rhs.org.uk](mailto:ianwaghorn@rhs.org.uk))  
or Kaye Smith ([kaye.smith@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kaye.smith@hotmail.co.uk))

**Above left: Getting water wise at our water butt giveaway.**

**Below: Kaye Smith with children at the book swap.**



## Peaslake School pioneers wood fuel in Guildford

by John Bannister

IN OUR MARCH newsletter Mark Lebus told us about the excellent progress the Surrey Hills Wood Fuel Group is making to utilise our local woodlands to generate sustainable supplies of wood fuel for commercial and domestic space heating. Mark's company LC Energy Ltd is leading the charge with others, such as Longlyf Timber Ltd, and with the Forum playing a supporting role. With wood fuel supplies in place efforts are now being focussed on promoting the benefits of wood fuel, which include the fuel cost advantage, security of supply, improved biodiversity from better woodland management and local jobs. As with other renewables, the UK's use of biomass for heating is lagging far behind other European countries; we hope that is all about to change.

One inspirational project that was commissioned in Guildford in April this year is at Peaslake School, which sits at the very heart of the Surrey Hills surrounded by the most beautiful woodlands. It is not a state school, but is run by the village community for their community. When the original state school was closed in 1994 Peaslake School Trust, a registered charity, was established by the village residents to keep the school open for 3 to 7 year-olds. They receive no state support, apart from funding for early years (nursery). Peaslake villagers fund, operate and manage the school, which is absolutely brilliant.

When the school oil-fired boiler needed replacing



last year the Trustees decided that they would like to use wood fuel, provided they could stay within a capital cost premium over a new oil boiler of no more than £2,000. With Mark's help this objective has been achieved. A 50 kW Gerkos pellet boiler supplied by Longlyf Timber in Tilford is installed and up and running. Wood pellets are made from sawdust (a waste product) sourced from sawmills and are delivered in bulk. A small pellet plant is being installed at Longlyf Timber and so very shortly the 7 to 9 tonnes a year of fuel that the school needs will be supplied from the Surrey Hills Wood Fuel Group by Harvest Wood Fuel, set up there to make wood pellets – a truly local, renewable and sustainable energy source.

The children can now make important connections between our sensitive climate, the trees around them, diminishing oil and gas supplies and being comfortable and warm at school.

John Bannister

## Protests against new Tesco in Ash Vale

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY in Ash Vale has been demonstrating to stop a Tesco Express store coming into the area. A leader in the fight is the Blackwater Valley branch of Friends of the Earth, which has launched a campaign called **Shop Local First**. Its spokesman, Rick Kimber, says:

"The **Shop Local First** campaign is asking people to support their local shops selling local produce, and fight the supermarkets that sell mass-produced food trucked in from their distribution centres, often over very long distances.

"It is becoming obvious in talking to the Ash Vale residents how much they appreciate the local independent stores and do not want a Tesco Express in the area. Among the many advantages that people mention are that local shops offer a much more personal service than supermarkets and a diverse range of local shops provides more choice

than one supermarket. In addition, local shops keep money circulating in the local area as they support other local businesses.

"We expect the Tesco Express proposal to be submitted to Guildford Borough Council very soon and will be publicising how to object to it."



## Nature conservation and a car park: Merrow Park and Ride

Mark Willis, Guildford Borough Council

THE PRESENTATION at the March meeting was given by Mark Willis, Environmental Projects Officer with Guildford Borough Council, who outlined the proposals for landscaping Merrow Park and Ride site and its wildlife potential. When he came to Guildford about a year and a half ago he was given responsibility for this although by then much of the design work had been done. The construction work on the site was due to start in April, and the landscaping is due to start in September. This could be delayed as it can only be done in the right season and weather.

The site is a large grassed field that has lately been used for brassicas. It has the thin soil (a maximum of 30cm) that is expected on chalk and which gives the distinctive flora of the downs. In the area towards the cricket pitch there is established hawthorn and Robinia. Along the Epsom Road the edges are grassed with some cultivated plant types, including oilseed, and a few planted trees struggling through the grass. It is not proposed to remove any trees from the site and the total planting should cover about a third of the area. Across the Epsom Road is parkland and patches of woodland, including plantation on fields but also substantial hedges with beech trees.

Mark portrayed the planting as a series of layers, of decreasing height. The first layer is of semi-mature nursery stock trees about 5-6m high to envelop the site and give an instant effect. The second layer is also around the outside of the site using "whips" (trees of about 3 years old – 1.2 to 1.3m high) to reinforce the semi-mature trees. They will take a few years to grow but will give mass, and

will catch up with the semi-mature trees, being able to adapt more rapidly to the site.

Mature trees along the cricket club boundary will be augmented with whips, planted to give a dense edge to the car park. The choice of trees would be appropriate woodland mix for this location and would be beneficial to wildlife.

Interior planting will be semi-natural but it has to be low enough not to block the light columns and the view from the CCTV cameras. (The lights will be 6 metres high and have "no" upward light pollution.)

This shrub layer, where there is not enough space for tree growth, will be of UK species and as local as possible. Below that is the ground cover that must be low enough not to hinder users (for example not obstructing the opening of vehicle doors). There will be some seeding with a wildflower meadow mix for the lowest level. Some areas will be a bit more formal including roses, which are relatively resistant to vandalism, but also ivy. There will be some mounds for aesthetic reasons and to stop cars from exiting or entering the carpark outside authorised hours. As sunlight is reflected from cars, hedges will break up the glaring expanse of cars.

There is an inherent conflict between trees absorbing heat and providing shade but reducing visibility. Tree species to be used on the site include: field maple, hornbeam, hawthorn, ash, crab apple, Scots Pine, English oak, whitebeam, yew, hazel, the spindle tree, the wayfaring tree, dog rose and buckthorn. Mark also outlined the wildlife potential of many of these species.



### Turning garden waste into a fertile mulch

IN FEBRUARY, the community in Puttenham village arranged a shredding event for residents to bring prunings from their gardens, and take away the resulting chips for use as a mulch. This will provide fertility, suppress weeds and conserve water in a dry summer – without using peat from endangered ecosystems.

If you would like to arrange a similar event in your community, contact Jane Alexander, Project Coordinator (Recycling), on 01483 444499, or e-mail [jane.alexander@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:jane.alexander@guildford.gov.uk)

### Battery recycling . . .

BY THE TIME you receive this newsletter in Guildford, you should have had a leaflet and two bags posted through your letterbox that will enable you to start recycling household batteries in your green box.

If you have run out of bags, or have not received them, please contact our Hotline on 01483 444499 and we will post you some more.

### . . . and in Waverley

WAVERLEY Borough Council also issues small bags for battery collection. But each bag has a sticky strip in order to attach it to the lid of the (general waste) wheely bin, i.e. it is collected separately from the boxes of recycling. Currently there is also a trial of monthly roadside collection of textiles – involving yet more plastic bags supplied for the purpose!

### Dry recyclables figures

IN 2006/7, Guildford recycled close to 25% dry recyclables as a percentage of total household waste. This is 51% of the dry recyclables per se.

Think how much higher these numbers would be if every discarded can and plastic item lying in the street were disposed of correctly.

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL owns 10 large vehicles equipped for collecting recycled materials, and a transit van with wire cages to collect from the 2,000 homes scattered across the borough that are inaccessible to the bigger vehicles.

We caught up with one of the large vehicles in Bushy Hill and watched the crew sorting the materials into the slots on the side of the vehicle. When these containers are full they are lifted up and tipped into the spaces inside, hence the 'crashing' that we hear from time to time when they are in action.

A separate container has been added onto the back of the vehicle to hold the textiles, shoes, bags, etc. These are sent to BCR Global Textiles Ltd in West Bromwich.

Guildford, along with Mole Valley and Elmbridge, is trialling a collection of food waste from 3,000 homes. Again in Bushy Hill, we saw the crew of the collection vehicle emptying the collection caddies. Every week they collect between 1.5 and 2 kilos of food waste from each household. I was surprised to see that most of the waste was uncooked vegetables and fruit, which could have been home-composted, and quite a lot of bread. It didn't smell as unpleasant as I'd anticipated!

This is taken to Leatherhead, where it is bulked up with the other collections from the county, and then taken on to a sealed composting building in Dorset (see *article below*). Surrey hopes to have its own in-vessel composter for food waste in the near future.

Following the tracks of the recycling lorries, we made our way to Slyfield. This is not only a civic amenity site but also a transfer station which collects all the rubbish from Waverley, Woking and Surrey Heath as well as Guildford and some commercial firms.

Every vehicle is weighed on entry. The rubbish lorries

drop off their loads into a building where it is bulked up and then loaded onto large vehicles for the journey to the landfill site at Albury.

The green waste, which is 10% of the materials collected, is sent to composting facilities near Reading where, in 10-12 weeks, it is turned into good quality garden compost.

The vehicles containing recycled materials are also weighed. Then they drop off each of their loads in turn and are re-weighed after each drop, so that the weight of the amount of each material deposited is recorded. It looks like a choreographed dance

routine as they circle around the site filling bays with glass, plastic bottles and cans, newspaper and cardboard.

The deposits are transferred into large lorries which take the plastic bottles and cans to a Materials Recovery Facility at Chartwell Lane, the newspaper to Aylesford Newsprint (from where it is put back into circulation within four days), the cardboard to Sevenside in Kent and the glass to United Glass at Milton Keynes. Nothing stays on the site for more than 24 hours.

When the food waste collection is rolled out across the borough, 83% of our domestic rubbish could be recycled if everyone used the services available, leaving only plastic film, packaging materials and disposable nappies in the black bags. We currently recycle 39%.

The Council also offers a commercial waste collection and collects annually 600 tonnes of mixed dry recyclables from offices, 250 tonnes of glass from pubs, clubs and restaurants and 750 tonnes of cardboard. Landfill tax will increase the cost of rubbish disposal, so taking these materials out of the rubbish stream is becoming increasingly important.

## Site visit to see what happens to our RECYCLABLES

by *Community Recycler*  
Maureen Jones

UNLESS YOU USE a green cone, a worm bin, or are part of the trial food collection scheme within the borough, the chances are that your food waste contributes to the waste that goes to landfill, and decomposes to release methane – a greenhouse gas.

The ideal solution would be not to waste food, to limit the amount of spoilage; but there will always be peelings, which should go into your green cone, worm or compost bin.

But what if you, for whatever reason, cannot compost? The recycling team

at Woking Road has conducted a food waste collection trial, with the material sent to a processor in Dorset.

New Earth Solutions is a 50,000 tonne per year business, on a 9-acre complex near Wimborne, which

composts segregated, and unsegregated (black bag) waste in covered buildings – to comply with animal by-product rules. Sophisticated ventilation systems mean that the air within the composting buildings is recycled, to reduce odours to a minimum. Computers

regulate the composting process using remote temperature probes to record the heat during decomposition, ensuring that all the final material is safe from pathogens.

The process starts with sorting, shredding to 40mm and blending to provide the ideal mix of material. The material is then turned around eight times during the compost process of 19-21 days to aerate the mix, and to ensure that all the material is maintained at around

## Site visit to see what happens to our FOOD WASTE

by *Stephen Rainbird*

60°C. The material is regularly analysed, with adjustments to the moisture content using leachate and ventilation, maintaining the whole process in an optimum manner.

There are six buildings on site, each with a capacity for 1,000 tonnes of material. The air within the buildings is eventually released through a biofilter, with the leachate also used to inoculate new material in the batch compost process.

After the composting, the material is left to stabilise and mature for around 4-5 weeks, before being used

in agriculture, landscaping and horticulture. The segregated waste produces a finished material to P100 standards.

The results from the food waste collection trial are proving very satisfactory, and the Council is to continue with it and roll it out borough-wide from the end of 2009. Surrey County Council has committed to provide composting facilities (in-county if at all possible) by the end of 2009, but has not divulged its preferred technology, nor whether there will be one large plant or, as the Forum would prefer, several smaller ones.



## MY ALLOTMENT

by Stephen Rainbird

CONCERN ABOUT food miles, how my food was produced, and GM led me to apply for an allotment. It seems that I am not alone, and there are now large waiting lists for the limited number of allotments available.

After being neglected for many years, there is now an interest from many people to grow their own food, but unfortunately many councils have been selling off allotments sites for development. To ensure this does not continue, and to protect the present sites, I urge you to write to the council: only by people asking for and using allotment plots will these be safeguarded for the future. (See also [www.guildfordallotments.co.uk](http://www.guildfordallotments.co.uk))

I acquired my allotment in June 2007 – at that time it was around 125 square metres of weed, with some overgrown soft fruit. I then took the easy way out. No double-digging for me; I strimmed the plot twice, and then covered the whole lot with sheet material for six months.

Purists will possibly criticise me for the use of sheeting, but it lasts for around 20 years, and I will pass it on to other plot holders when I have developed my plot – a bit of re-using. At least this will avoid the use of a noisy, polluting rotovator, churning up the soil, chopping up bindweed and couch grass rhizomes to increase their numbers.

But I could not look at an empty plot for six months, frustrated by not growing any food. So I used vehicle tyres filled with compost, and produced many kilos of veggies during that first summer.

Now the plot was clear of perennial weeds came the hard bit. Again I chickened out, no digging and not wanting to keep walking on and so compacting the soil, I have opted for raised beds – I am trying recycled plastic wood. Rather than worry about preservatives on natural wood, the plastic wood will be maintenance-free, and its use is stimulating plastic recycling.



A sight that typically greets owners of 'new' allotments.

While I have been bed-building during the winter, I sowed broad beans, and planted onions and garlic, with some kales and chard to give me some fresh winter salad.

One of the benefits of being an allotment owner is the social side of meeting others concerned about producing their own food, and quite quickly you are drawn into a web of intrigue and gossip among fellow plotheholders (*"he does what with his onions?"*). Some of my broad beans were grown in pots and got a bit drawn, well, actually quite drawn. Barry, a plot neighbour, kindly asked me in the run-up to Christmas if I was going to put fairy lights on them!

My tomatoes, aubergines and peppers were all germinated in pots in the airing cupboard at home, with summer cauliflower in the glasshouse. On my plot now are carrots, beetroot, radish, lettuce and spring onion, all going in once a fortnight from March onwards. Parsnips, Brussels, broccoli, celery, kale, leeks and spinach are being sown at monthly intervals for crops towards the end of the year, while runner and French beans are being sown once a fortnight from the end of April.

Potatoes have been planted in towers made of car tyres filled with grass cuttings and compost (to avoid scab and save on digging).

## **Otter signs found in Godalming**

An exciting discovery was made a few weeks ago, when Chris Matcham, Otters and Rivers Project Officer at Surrey Wildlife Trust, came across evidence of otters in Godalming. So far, signs (consisting of 'spraints' or faeces) had only been found in the west of the county on the River Wey and the Blackwater. Now volunteers will be constantly monitoring the area to check whether the animal intends to stay. It looks as though all Chris's hard work in habitat restoration, water quality improvement and artificial holts – and remember there's a holt in Guildford now – is beginning to pay off.



## **Aviation expansion**

A record number of new air links are opening from the UK this summer: 100 to Europe, and more than a dozen new domestic links, some as short as 150 miles. Despite a growing chorus of politicians demanding that the rate of aviation expansion should be slowed, public funds continue to support new routes, and the addiction of British travellers to cheap flights goes unchecked.

The environment will pay the price, of course. Three years ago, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research calculated that if Britain were to meet its target of cutting greenhouse gases by 60% by 2050, and emissions from aviation were NOT reduced, all other emissions – from households, businesses, energy generation and motor transport – would have to go to zero. Flying would be taking up everything that was available.



## **The plastics challenge**

In 2006, UK households achieved the following:

- 25% of plastic bottles were recycled versus 5% in 2001; this was 3,300 million bottles or 132,000 tonnes.
- This saved 5.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of landfill capacity.
- On average every household uses 500 plastic bottles each year, of which 130 are recycled.
- Recycling 1 tonne of plastic bottles saves 1.5 tonnes of carbon going into the atmosphere.
- During 2006, plastic bottles worth £50 million were disposed of at a cost of £100 million.
- Reprocessor demand for plastics outstripped supply 3 times over.
- Plastic packaging uses approximately 2% of all crude oil.

(Source: RECOUP 2008 conference)

## **An apple a day . . .**

A staggering 4.4 million whole apples are being thrown away untouched every day in the UK, according to the latest figures from 'Love Food Hate Waste', WRAP's (Waste & Resources Action Programme) campaign to tackle food being wasted in UK homes. The figures show that in total we bin nearly £3 billion worth of perfectly good fruit and vegetables each year.

A third of the food we buy, or 6.7 million tonnes, gets thrown out annually. Fruit and vegetables make up a huge 40% of this.

A study by WRAP finds that the main reasons for such waste are that the produce is not being eaten before it goes off, and that it is not stored in the best place at home. Storing most fresh fruit and vegetables in the fridge, instead of at room temperature, will prolong their life by as much as a fortnight. As part of the research by WRAP, Sainsbury's is trialling new storage guidance to customers both in-store and on its website.

## **The meaning of 'green'**

Organisations from Carphone Warehouse with its "green" mobile phone charger, to political parties such as the Tories with their motto "Vote Blue to Go Green", all claim to be green. High Street firms, especially supermarkets, have jumped on the bandwagon. But has business really changed?

According to a survey by the Carbon Disclosure Project, only 38% of the FTSE 350 firms have projects to cut greenhouse emissions and targets. Even advertising firm Ogilvy admits the "tokenism" and "tick box mentality" of some organisations, and WWF says that green goods are often tacked on to the main business as a sideline.

Green claims can also be so broad that no-one knows what they mean, eg Ryanair's "Europe's greenest, cleanest airline", a statement which the company was later obliged to retract by the Advertising Standards Authority.

TerraChoice, an environmental marketing company, has found that of 1,018 common consumer products, 99% were guilty of "greenwashing" in some way. Defra has a green claims code, but it is not enforceable.

However, Marks & Spencer is one of the firms whose environmental claims are sound. Its 5-year plan, announced in 2007, includes aims to send no waste to landfill by 2012, to increase sustainable sourcing, to cut energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and to help farmers who are investing in small-scale renewable energy production.

(Source: [news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk), 8 Apr 08)

## **GBC recycled paper**

Four years ago, the Forum campaigned to get Guildford Borough Council to switch to using 100% recycled paper in its offices, as many large organisations were then doing. GBC was consuming over 40 tonnes of paper every year, mostly imported virgin paper from sustainably managed forests. We wanted it to source locally recycled paper.

We are very happy to report that GBC now uses only Evolve 100% recycled paper for all its needs.

**GOOD NEWS**



**BAD NEWS**

compiled by John Bannister

## Fancy keeping a sloth?

Last year the Government relaxed the regulations on owning wild animals. A total of 33 new species can now be owned without a licence after a review of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act deemed them not to be a risk to the public. They include sloths, raccoons, emus, a number of wild cats, North American and crested porcupines, hyraxes, sand snakes, mangrove snakes and Brazilian wolf spiders.

Animals no longer needing a licence, but still covered by CITES legislation, are woolly lemurs, tamarins, night (owl) monkeys and squirrel monkeys. A few species, including the dingo, have now been added to the list of those that do require a licence.

Don't wild animals deserve more respect than simply being judged for their suitability as pets?

## Where do dragons fly?

This April has seen the launch of the National Dragonfly Atlas Project. It aims to update knowledge of the distribution of British dragonfly and damselfly species for a new national atlas due in 2013. This is urgently required to understand the impact of climate change on the life-cycles and distribution of a number of our species.

Our dragonflies are closely related to the huge insects that flew over the forests 300 million years ago. With a suitable pond you can watch these fascinating creatures in your garden. Ponds need to be kept free of fish which are the main predators of dragonfly larvae (have two ponds if you really want fish as well).

Dragonflies themselves are voracious. As adults, they may eat 20% of their bodyweight in food each day, including other flying insects, particularly flies, midges and mosquitoes – making them very useful creatures to have around the garden!

See <http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/nationalatlas.html>

## West Thurrock Marshes saved



Plans by Royal Mail to build a vast distribution warehouse and car parks on West Thurrock Marshes have been ditched. The Marshes comprise one of the richest and most important wildlife sites in the UK, home to more than 1,300 species of invertebrates, birds and plants. It is officially considered a 'brownfield' site.

The decision is timely, with Royal Mail having recently produced a set of stamps featuring rare bugs . . .

## Journey planner

A helpful website, [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info), allows you to key in journey details such as start and finish postcodes, to get travel information for trains, buses and more. You can buy tickets online, and use a simple carbon calculator.

## China's yellow clouds

Cities in China are enveloped in a white haze for much of the time, any signs of the sky blocked out by the effects of manufacturing nearly half the world's industrial goods. When the capital disappears inside yellow clouds – a mix of coal smoke, sand, particulate matter and ozone – residents leave their bicycles at home and opt for an air-conditioned car instead. Many people are unhappy that they have to keep their children in on certain days.

The problem of pollution goes well beyond China's borders. Traces of Chinese pollution have been found in the haze above Los Angeles, while emissions from factories in Guangdong province in the far south are causing havoc in Hong Kong, where air pollution is making it more difficult for companies to attract foreign staff to the territory.

## MYTH OF PROSPERITY

by Heinrich Boll

A tourist focuses in on a most idyllic picture: a man in simple clothes dozing in a fishing boat that has been pulled out of the waves which come rolling up the sandy beach. The camera clicks; the fisherman awakens. The tourist offers him a cigarette and launches into a conversation: "The weather is great; there are plenty of fish. Why are you lying around instead of going out and catching more?"

The fisherman replies, "Because I caught enough this morning."

"But just imagine," the tourist says, "if you went out there three or four times a day, bringing home three or four times as much fish! You know what could happen?"

The fisherman shakes his head.

"After about a year you could buy yourself a motor-boat," says the tourist. "After two years you could buy a second one, and after three years you could have a cutter or two. And just think! One day you might be able to build a freezing plant or a smoke house. You might eventually even get your own helicopter for tracing shoals of fish and guiding your fleet of cutters, or you could acquire your own trucks to ship your fish to the capital, and then . . ."

"And then?" asks the fisherman.

"And then," the tourist continues triumphantly, "you could be calmly sitting at the beachside, dozing in the sun and looking at the beautiful ocean!"

The fisherman looks at the tourist: "But that is exactly what I was doing before you came along!"

(retold by Wolfgang Sachs)

# Some garden features for wildlife

Text and photographs by Harry Eve

**IN THE DECEMBER newsletter I described how I manage the grassland in my wildlife garden. This time I will cover some of the other features that I have used deliberately (and sometimes accidentally) to make a home for wildlife.**

## A pond

One of the most valuable additions to a garden is a pond and there are a number of ways to make it attractive to wildlife. I dug a larger and deeper hole than I needed for my pond so that the water surface would be below ground level and sheltered from the wind but still able to receive plenty of sun. I included a shelf along one side which I bricked off, lined with a permeable blanket and filled with soil to create a boggy edge with vegetation sloping down into the water. One end also has a small sloping beach. These features help any small animals that fall in to find a way out.

I intended paving the edges for easy access but at first I did not fix the paving down. I noticed that Grass Snakes took to hiding under the loose slabs, so when I did eventually get round to finishing it I included an artificial cavity under the paving, with several entrances placed carefully to avoid flooding. The Grass Snakes quickly took advantage of this as a bolthole and, since then, I have also built cavities beneath a pondside rockery and seat.

The water supply is rainwater stored and piped from



**The Keeled Skimmer, *Orthetrum coerulescens*, is associated with sphagnum bogs, but one turned up unexpectedly and stayed long enough for a photo.**

the house and garage roofs. I allow plenty of submerged plants to develop, creating an underwater jungle ideal for aquatic life. Newts, Toads and dragonfly larvae do really well in it. Dragonflies are great to watch and once in a while something unusual, such as a Keeled Skimmer, turns up. The plants have to be thinned out at some stage and I try to restrict this to early autumn, putting them on the boggy edge for a while to allow as many creatures as possible to find their way back into the pond.

Digging a hole for a pond creates a problem – what to do with all the soil that comes out? The worst thing



**Having built your pond, you'll be amazed at how quickly it is colonised.**

you could do is to hire a skip and make a contribution to Surrey's landfill. However, it is an opportunity to create a bank, preferably with a south or west-facing slope in full sun, which will provide a warm habitat for invertebrates. As I dug the hole for my pond I soon reached chalk and flint. I kept the flint for a wildlife wall that I plan to build one day and the chalk was just what I wanted. I covered the soil with a membrane and put the chalk on top to create a small chalk bank ideal for colonisation by plants such as Kidney Vetch.

## Re-use of "old rubbish"

The previous owner left behind a pile of old roofing tiles – a complete roof-full of the chunky interlocking variety that nobody would buy. Among the uses that I have found for them are making compost frames, a base for a rockery, and refugia for Slow Worms. A substantial pile remains, partly covered in brambles and grass and, because the tiles are not flat, the cavities have proved ideal for Lizards and even the occasional Grass Snake. They are attracted by the narrow gaps, which protect them from predators, and by the heat-storing properties of the tiles in the sunshine. It has turned into a kind of reptile city!



**When they're not basking in the sun, Common Lizards seek hidey-holes to lie up in, as do Grass Snakes, Frogs and Toads. Around my pond and garden are many such cavities, some by design and some by chance.**

In another part of the garden I filled a green plastic bowl with gravel to grow rock plants in. It was on a slope so I levelled it using pieces of rubble and I fully intended keeping the grass around it mown. Somehow that didn't happen and, inadvertently, I had created an ideal home for Lizards. The cavities underneath provide a night refuge (and possibly a hibernation site), the rim of the bowl stores warmth from the sun for basking, and the long grass provides the hunting ground that they need. Several Lizards could be seen basking on the rim in the summer, including juveniles,

and sightings continued well into October last year.

I am very lucky to have Lizards, but the chance of a new wildlife garden attracting them depends on how close it is to an existing colony. However, as more people take up wildlife gardening, the distance between suitable habitats will decrease and the chance of colonisation will increase.

Many creatures are being affected by habitat loss and fragmentation and this is where you can make a real difference – by providing a home and a stepping-stone for wildlife.

## Minimising our environmental footprint

*We may all feel helpless as to what we can do in reducing our carbon emissions and minimising our resource use but, as Julie Roxburgh points out, even small steps can help by starting from home.*

- Use hemp or other material bags for shopping and avoid plastic bags.
- Local food should be bought whenever possible; within a range of 30 miles is considered best. (Food miles are another huge problem.)
- Keep food containers for storage, and buy food with as little wrapping as possible
- Cut meat-eating down to a minimum if you can't go veggie or vegan, and only eat free-range. Not only is this kinder to the animals but also to the planet, as the amount of water used by factory farming, and land and water for the vast herds in the rainforests, is shocking. Also, grazing animals emit methane into the atmosphere in huge amounts – 20 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>!
- Try to eat as much raw food as possible, eg fruit of course, but also certain vegetables such as carrots, sugar peas, broccoli, etc. Organic is best.
- Wash rather than peel vegetables, for less waste.
- When cooking, choose the quickest cooking times and steam rather than boil. Cook green vegetables separately and use water for gravy, etc.
- Recycle any frying fats.
- When washing up, it seems that a dishwasher is best. But otherwise, do not run utensils or dishes under a running tap. Put a little clear water in a bowl and place all soiled articles in the water. Clean them and then wash again in water with a little liquid such as Ecover. Always use a smaller bowl rather than simply putting dishes in the sink as this uses less water.
- Always be aware of how much water, detergent, gas, electricity, etc. is involved in meals preparation.



Guildford Environmental Forum aims to improve the environment in and around Guildford for wildlife and for people and to build a sustainable future. Forum membership costs only £5 per year or £7 for a couple, and new members are warmly welcomed. Please contact John Bannister on 01483 570468 or e-mail [johnw.bannister@virgin.net](mailto:johnw.bannister@virgin.net)



# CALENDAR



All the Forum's Group meetings are open to the public

### Thursday 12 June

GEF Transport Group. Paul Arnold, Senior Project Manager, Highways Agency: **"The A3 Hindhead Tunnel and the Environment"**. How environmentally appropriate the scheme is, how the work is progressing and how the new tunnel is likely to impact on Guildford. 1900. Committee Room 1, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1830.)

### Saturday 21 June

**Wildlife Gardening Day Conference and Fayre.**  
**Conference** 1000-1630. Zoological Society of London Conference Centre.  
For details and booking see [www.wildlondon.org.uk/Events/Wildlifegardeningconferenceandfayre](http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/Events/Wildlifegardeningconferenceandfayre)  
**Fayre** 1000-1700. Gloucester Green, Regent's Park. Open to the public.

### Wednesday 2 July

**GEF Annual General Meeting.** 1900. Council Chamber, Millmead Offices. (Refreshments from 1830.) 1930. Illustrated talk by Mike Grimshaw – naturalist, photographer, lecturer and educationalist: **"Britain's Spectacular Fauna and Flora – a Walk on the Wildside"**

### Thursday 10 July

GEF Sustainable Energy Group. Film show: **"The Power of Community – How Cuba Survived Peak Oil"**. An example we might all learn from as we approach global Peak Oil, with very high fuel prices and intense competition for transport fuels and fossil fuel based fertilisers. 1900. Council Chamber, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1830.)

### Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 July

GEF will have a stall at the National Trust River Wey & Godalming Navigations **"Recycling Weekend"**, with information on recycling, composting, energy efficiency and renewable energy. 1100-1700. Dapdune Wharf.

### Wednesday 17 September

GEF Biodiversity Group. Cynthia Bendickson, Biodiversity Officer, Spelthorne Borough Council: **"Re-greening a Suburb"**. 1900. Committee Room 1, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1845.)

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**Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor by Monday 4 August 2008. The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.**