

THE GREEN PAGE

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A MIGHTY WIND

Wind turbines set to become part of the urban landscape.

With the construction of three 85 metre high wind turbines due to begin at Ford's motor works on the outskirts of East London (one of which will house a viewing platform for the public to enjoy views of the River Thames), BP experimenting with two wind-powered petrol stations in the centre of the capital, and Hammersmith Council in West London launching a scheme to install small turbines on the roofs of some of its tower blocks, wind power will soon become a common sight in our urban landscapes.

The Ford turbines will provide all of the energy requirements for their new diesel design centre and will recoup their costs within 4-5 years. The first wind turbine on a 22-story residential block in Hammersmith, which is being installed this month, does not need planning permission and will be capable of supplying 15 homes. A tower block can support several turbines, which cost £30,000 each and will pay for themselves within ten years.

Whilst the speeds that the wind reaches in towns and cities does not match those reached in offshore locations, urban wind turbines are similarly efficient as their offshore relatives because less "transmission" loss is caused when electricity is generated close to where it is actually being used.

For individual households, Windsave, a small company based in Scotland, has launched a unique slow-turn wind turbine, endorsed by Energy Minister Brian Wilson, that can provide supplementary electricity to households and does not involve the use of batteries. Windsave believe that their turbines, which measure approximately 60cms by 90cms, and will cost about £750, could supply up to 15% of the annual electricity needs of an average household. They are specifically designed for use by houses in urban areas and start generating electricity in winds as low as



Windsave's pioneering wind turbine designed for use on most urban dwellings.

3mph. The turbines work most efficiently in light winds of 20mph, which are common throughout much of the year across most of Britain.

The system does not sell excess power to the National Grid but users will receive a dividend from their local energy supplier, courtesy of the Government's Renewable Obligation Charges, according to how much energy they have supplied. Their electricity bills will also be reduced thanks to the power being generat-

ed by the turbine. Initial estimates suggest that the amount of time it will take to recoup the initial cost of the turbine will be only approximately 30 months.

The turbines, which have even received support from Country Guardian, the anti wind farm pressure group, will be produced in Scotland and should become available to households within the next three months. For more information contact www.windsave.com

THE A-Z OF RECYCLING

Whilst the competition continues to see who can get the most into their black boxes without spillage until Kerbside's welcome return to our streets in April, we will plough on with the A-Z of recycling.

T is for...

Tables – Good quality tables will be collected and re-used by Sitting Comfortably (01274 731909).

Tartan – Well I'm holding onto mine...A Bay City Rollers revival is surely just around the corner.

Tautology – I'm not saying Bye Bye Baby to my Scottish fabrics...I reckon that we'll all be singing Shang-a-lang before the year's out.

Tea bags – A suitable ingredient for your compost heap. Tea leaves are a very good source of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Telephones – There are several mobile telephone recycling schemes (old mobiles can be packed in a strong envelope and sent to

SENSE, Recycling Centre, FREEPOST NAT5224, Peterborough PE2 6BR) but it is also possible to recycle your non-mobiles too. BT will recycle BT telephones and should provide you with a freepost padded envelope (they currently recycle over a million telephones every year!).

Telephone directories – Telephone directories can be recycled at most cardboard recycling facilities but can also be mixed with other papers if they are ripped down into smaller volumes. For those who need to talk to someone about what to do with their Yellow Pages, The Directory Recycling Helpline can be reached on 0800 671444.

Televisions – It is estimated that leaving your television on standby instead of switching it off contributes to an extra 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide being dispersed into the atmosphere each year. Most faulty televisions can be repaired. In 1989 a survey revealed that a quarter of televisions found dumped had no obvious fault and another 20% could have been repaired by an hour's work.

Thyrus – Return to Dionysus.

Tiles – Using unwanted tiles to make mosaic decorations is one of the most rewarding and

worthwhile re-use/recycling projects. Mosaic stepping stone kits are available from the Green Shop.

Timber – Although wood is a renewable resource many forestry practices are unsustainable and it makes economic sense to re-use wood whenever possible. Contact Aarons Reclaimed Timber (01422 330138) or Aaron Beam Centre (01422 300300) for good quality reclaimed and recycled timber. Unwanted timber can be recycled locally at Eastwoods Waste Transfer Station.

Toilet Paper – Despite several experiments we have not been able to perfect the re-use or recycling of toilet paper. However it is of course essential to buy toilet paper made from 100% recycled and unbleached fibres, and to reduce the quantity used whenever possible!!!

Twaddle – Regularly recycled in articles by Bernard Ingham.

Tyres – The production of tyres consumes vast amount of raw materials and it is essential to prolong the life of your tyres by regular maintenance, and frequent checking of tyre pressure.

BEYOND THE VALLEY

positive green news stories from outside the Calder Valley

ELECTRIC STORM

Wind energy was recently brought to the very heart of the capital with the launch of the Electric Storm arts project. A single 225KW wind turbine, approximately 100 feet tall, has been sited on London's South Bank, near to Hungerford Bridge and the London Eye, to provide the electricity supply to an innovative light and sound show which guides visitors between two rows of decorated trees for almost half a kilometre. It has been described as an "ethereal show of mist, light and music" and a display "evocative of the Northern Lights"! The show is running for the next four months.

SUSTAINABLE PEAT FREE COMPOST

The New Smithfield Market in Manchester is home to a unique sustainable waste management system that converts fruit and vegetable waste, non-reusable cardboard and pallets into locally produced peat free compost. In just 3 months it has diverted 147 tonnes of material away from landfill and produced 77 tonnes of compost that is currently being used in Manchester parks, by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, and for landscaping projects around the market. The system uses a Vertical Composting Unit which can produce immature compost in 7 days which is ready to use after a further 6 weeks. Contact www.gmcomposting.co.uk.

CAR FREE AND HAPPY

It might have escaped the notice of much of the media but there were 62 different events organised throughout Britain that celebrated last year's International Car Free Day. In London, Camden Council's decision to close Museum Road for a day, opposite the British Museum, was so popular that it's staying closed for the next six months! Albert Square was closed to traffic for three hours in Manchester, and Heathrow Airport offered all of it's employees free tickets for the day on rail, bus and coach routes. Elsewhere 160 square kilometres of Brussels were closed for a massive car-free street party!

NEWS FROM THE ATC

A Green Christmas – part one

Almost 90 Christmas trees were hired (and returned) locally during this year's festive period. Farmer John Robinson estimates that this is a staggering five-fold increase on last year's figures. Even schools and local businesses got involved and plans are already afoot to make next year even more successful. If you have a good quality rooted tree in a pot that you wish to donate to the scheme please bring it down to the ATC. Anyone who hired a tree from the Farmer's Market and has yet to collect their deposit please contact John at the next Farmer's Market in Hebden Bridge on Sunday 1st February.

Hedging Your Bets

Planned in conjunction with Calderdale Council's Countryside and Forestry Unit, the ATC has organised a one-day hedge-laying course, working on an established hedge in Hebden Bridge on Saturday 31st January. For more details contact Susy Feltham on 01422 842121.

A Green Christmas – part two

Working in partnership with those lovely people at Hebden Bridge Post Office the ATC have been offering local people a convenient way to have their Christmas Cards recycled. The Christmas Card mountain at the ATC is quite spectacular and worth a visit! We will continue to collect cards until the end of January when they will be delivered by Kerbside to the Sonoco paper recycling mill, just outside Halifax.

Fantastic Plastics

A one-day course for teachers, artists, lecturers, technicians and anyone else interested in learning about and working with recycled plastics is being held at the ATC on Wednesday 25th February. The course, which is only open to a maximum of six people, will focus on the identification of common household plastics and small scale recycling and processing methods. For further details please contact Dave Robinson on 01422 842121. Places cannot be reserved on the course without full payment in advance.

I like them big...

THE BIG GREEN WEEK

Make a note in your diaries that this year's Big Green Week, our local celebration of all things sustainable, will run from May 31st to June 6th. The ATC are keen to encourage participation from everyone within the local community. If you would like to get involved please contact Polly Webber at info@alternativetechnology.org.uk. The hugely popular Big Green Week benefit gig will take place at the Trades Club on Saturday April 3rd.

THE BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH

The ATC are helping to promote the Big Garden Birdwatch. Everyone is being asked to choose one hour during this weekend (January 24/25th) to watch the birds in their garden, local park or other open space and record the highest number of each species that land at any one time (not the total number of birds seen because some may re-visit the area being watched several times during an hour). The results, along with the location of your bird watching venue, and the amount of people who took part in the survey, can then be either sent directly to the RSPB, Big Garden Birdwatch 2004, FREEPOST ANG10850, 17 Birkheads Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9SP, or dropped off at the ATC.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Consultation on the government's Planning Policy Statement 22 (which aims to create more consistency in planning decisions dealing with renewable energy developments, requires planners to set sustainable criteria against which projects can be assessed, and encourages them to place significant weight on the wider benefits of all types of renewable energies) is now underway. The full document is available to download at www.odpm.gov.uk. Comments can be made by e-mail to pps22consultation@odpm.gsi.gov.uk.



“Isolated facts”

My consignment for Green Room 101 is 'isolated facts'; to be more specific – isolated 'green facts'. I doubt that this will be a popular choice, but let me try anyway.

I'm sure you understand what I mean by 'green facts'; they are the one-liners of the eco-world; short, easily digestible, chunks of information designed to encourage people to live in harmony with their surroundings. But do they really work? I don't think so - and here's why.

This is an example from the opposition. I recently heard Noel Edmonds state, on Radio 4, that wind turbines take more energy to manufacture than they produce. This is typical of the propaganda that the anti-windfarm lobby produces. And what was the green fact that emerged in response? - 'A wind turbine pays back the energy used to make it in the first six months.'

This illustrates the problem very well. The opposition produces propaganda – we

produce facts. The problem (for there is one) is that the opposition would say the same.

Here are the usual reactions (from both sides) to these facts: 1) 'Interesting - I must repeat that to someone else, to justify my prejudices.' 2) 'What a load of rubbish, that contradicts my prejudices – here's one of my facts in return.' 3) 'So what!'

In short, we're probably not changing anyone's beliefs.

These isolated facts are the Big Macs of rational discussion; they offer instant gratification and provide comfort food for the mind. Just as cow-burgers may damage our physical health, so fact-burgers may affect our mental reasoning. It's symptomatic of these times that we prefer these little snacks to a hearty discourse on the subject. We just don't have the time to sit and digest a full meal. So, what is the alternative?

Try to present these snacks as 'starters' and always have the rest of the meal ready to

hand. Always tell people where the fact came from – so that they can check it. To return to the example above; I don't actually have to hand the calculations to prove the energy pay-back of a wind farm; but I should! - I've often used that fact myself. Crikey! I hope I'm not wrong! How many times have you repeated a green fact without being fully aware the science behind it? Be honest!

Or you could simply say. 'Do you know how much energy a wind farm produces compared to how much energy needed to make it? Here's where you can find out.'

Let's get back into the habit of trying to make people think for themselves. No more sound bites please. Open your mouths or sharpen your pencils only if you know the subject, otherwise, just point people in the direction of an expert. Please let's put these isolated 'facts' into Green Room 101 and confound our critics. *H Gregg*