low-impact living initiative

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L I L I

newsletter 1 - spring & summer 2002

Welcome to our first newsletter, and thank you for your support during LILI's first year. We never imagined that we would have achieved so much so quickly – it just goes to show the depth of feeling amongst the public about what is happening to our environment.

courses

Our residential weekend course programme started in January this year, and we have so far run four very successful courses: introduction to Permaculture; compost toilets; how to make biodiesel; and wind generators & solar electricitry.

Upcoming courses are:

Solar Hot Water	7-9 Jun
Intro to Beekeeping	26-28 Jul
How to Make Biodiesel	16-18 Aug
Straw Bale Building	9-11 Sep
Intro to Permaculture	18-20 Oct
How to Make Biodiesel	8-10 Nov

We are about to schedule our course programme for 2003. We will repeat our 2002 courses, plus several new ones:

Eco-building & Renovation
Globalisation v. Localisation
DIY for Beginners
Low-Impact Living (General)

Please contact us if you're interested in any of them, or let friends know if you think they might be interested.

Unfortunately, our **Eco-paints & Lime** course had to be cancelled, but Dave, and Lynn from the Green Shop (Stroud) will be running the course for North Kevesten District Council in Lincolnshire in August.

biodiesel course: *participants seen here during a practical session.*

self-build solar

the team at Norwich: *the self-build team at Norwich pose with a completed panel.*

We have been running a self-build solar hot water project with the National Energy Foundation, funded by the Government's Environmental Action Fund, targeting homes in the east of the country. Phil has designed a new, efficient (and rather attractive) panel, and we have run events at Wisbech, Cambridge and Norwich. Participants made their own panels and pump / control sets, and received a manual on the manufacture, installation and maintenance of the system. So far we have made systems for over 30 homes and done trial installations at all three locations. The Norwich self-build event was featured in a three-page article in Permaculture Magazine..

The panels are 1 sq. metre in size, making them relatively easy to transport and install on the roof.

Ours is perhaps the most efficient and value-for-money flat-plate system in the country – four of our panels raised the temperature of an entire 160-litre cylinder from 30° to 80° in March!

We are now looking for people from all parts of the country to join our self-build solar events – both at Redfield (3-day residential) and at venues supplied by local authorities. The price will be around £1200 and participants will leave with a complete system and the skills needed to install it.

Alternatively, we can supply materials, or install directly.

installations

We have undertaken four direct installation jobs in our first year: a wind generator and PV panel at Tithe Farm School in Dunstable; fixing the grey water recycling system for Moseley and District Churches Housing Association in Birmingham; repairing the photovoltaic panels on the headquarters of the National Energy Foundation in Milton Keynes; and we are currently installing two wind generators and a PV panel at a Wildlife Trust site near Bedford.

wind gen and PV: *our installation at Tithe Farm School.*

office and office manager

We have moved our office from the main house to a larger room in the stable block, nearer to the accommodation for course participants, and to our workshops. We have also employed Mary, a Redfield member, as part-time office manager.

office move: *Mary in our new office in the stable block.*

schools programme

model pupil: *model-making session during our recent children's event.*

We recently held the first of our programme of educational children's events. Together with Ricky Gershon, an ex-teacher and educational consultant from Aylesbury, we hosted 27 children from Education Otherwise in Milton Keynes.

We gave the children a tour of the facilities here – from solar panels and compost toilets to straw bale buildings and the gardens and woods. They took advantage of the opportunity to feed the chickens and get their hands into a worm-bin.

After the tour they were given handouts describing the facilities and why they are good for the environment, a word game, and there was a session during which the kids made models of an eco-friendly house and garden.

We are now looking at ways to raise funds to involve many more schools in this programme.

biodiesel plant

We have applied for a Landfill Tax grant (administered by EB Bucks) of £64,000 to establish a plant at Redfield to produce up to 80,000 litres of biodiesel per month, from waste cooking oil.

We already have three customers who would like to purchase more than we will be able to produce.

Our bid was provisionally accepted by the board of EB Bucks, and now we are putting together a business plan, and obtaining planning permission and third party funding (10% of the bid from elsewhere) before the board meets again in July.

stable block improvements

We have been busy, along with other Redfielders and volunteers, carrying out improvements to the stable block. We have put down a path across the courtyard, and repaired several windows and the forge doors. We are currently installing a second bathroom for course participants.

web site

We have recently removed the frames from our website, as they were causing problems for some browsers, and for visitors from search engines.

The next step is to add information sheets, more links, and pages on our schools programme, projects, course outlines, booking forms, 'Friends of LILI' forms, newsletters, and an environment page.

energy bus

We have taken the National Energy Foundation's Energy Bus to schools, green events and festivals around the country to demonstrate it's range of renewable energy features to the public – from wind turbines and solar hot water panels to solar fans, burglar alarms, fountains, and a bicycle.

Phil has designed and project-managed the building of their new bus – the Green Energy Mobile (GEM), with a much larger wind turbine and solar array, and a giant plasma screen for educational videos.

GEM: *the new energy bus for the National Energy Foundation.*

thanks

Thanks are due to the National Energy Foundation, for a successful partnership during the last year; to Aylesbury Vale District Council for a £1000 grant as part of it's LA21 (SAVE) initiative; to Microsoft Giving for £900 worth of free software; and to all 'Friends of LILI' and course participants.

If undelivered return to: LILI, Redfield, Buckingham Rd, Winslow, Bucks, MK18 3LZ