

November



ecocongregation England and Wales

england & wales



The steam seemed to go out of big interna-

Keeping up the pressure

tional initiatives on climate change after the Copenhagen summit last year but there is still a lot of good work going on at grass roots all over the country and the world. Governments may be unable to agree but individuals know there is a problem and that it is no good pointing the finger at everyone else

The Big Climate Connection drew a lot of support in constituencies all over the country last month. MPs constantly say they like being lobbied as it is the best way they have of knowing what their constituents really want them to focus on. Even if you didn't take part you can still write to your MP on your own behalf or that of your church. The 10/10 campaign has attracted a lot of support for a 10% reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions by the end of 2010. Even if you missed that it we need to be making similar reduction year on year. Climate Week coming up is coming up in March 2011 – could your church do something to take part? For our part we are confident of hitting 200 Ecocongregation awards by the end of 2010.

Ecocongregation news

I am sorry we had to cancel our Growing Organically conference in September. Sadly both the keynote speakers had to pull out for different reasons and we did not feel it would be fair to go ahead without them.

Two more churches achieved their 3rd awards this year. Congratulations to Bethesda Methodist in Cheltenham and Bramford Rd Methodist in Ipswich. Congratulations also to the following churches who all received a first or second award:

St John the Evangelist Hurt Green; Wimborne Minster; St John the Baptist, Southover; All Saints Wokingham; Didcot Methodist; Bradford Cathedral; Emmanuel Church Loughborough; Selsdon Baptist; Church of the Nativity Aylestone Park Leicester; St Mary the Bolton's London; Vickerstown Methodist Church Walney Island; St Eustachius Tavistock; Westborough Methodist Scarborough

It seems likely that we will reach 200 hundred awards by the end of this year so a big thank you to all our assessors. If you would like to join their number we would love to hear from you.

I have been joined by Stacey in the office for a 6 month contract. Stacey is funded by the government Future Jobs Fund and is helping me with the admin before she goes off to do a nursing degree. Many of you will already have been contacted by her to fill in gaps in our database. Part of her work has been to transfer our records to the A Rocha database to make the admin a bit easier in the long term.

Solar cash for churches

The Archdeacon of Bolton has urged British Gas to give more information to churches about generating their own electricity using solar panels. This follows the suggestion made by British Gas earlier this month that religious buildings, such as churches and mosques, could take advantage of their south-facing roofs to harness the power of the sun. It claims that religious buildings could raise £34 million a year across the UK using solar panels.

In a press release British Gas outlines the latest findings of its Green Streets programme. It believes that [solar panels](#) on Britain's religious buildings could generate over £29 million a year through [Feed-In Tariffs](#), a scheme which pays households and organisations for generating "green" [electricity](#). They could also make further savings of nearly £5 million a year by not having to buy electricity, as their [energy](#) needs would be met through the [solar panels](#). British Gas says this money-making potential 'will be a welcome revelation to churches and other religious buildings that have been hit hard by the recession over the last few years'.

It says that as well as improving their finances, Britain's religious buildings could also do their bit to help protect the environment, as the CO2 savings could also be significant - up to 42,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year, which is equivalent to the carbon emitted by over 600 transatlantic flights. Phil Bentley, Managing Director of British Gas, said:

"These potential savings are great news for the UK's religious buildings and their congregations, and give them the opportunity to lead their communities in tackling climate change and helping Britain move towards a low carbon society. Religious buildings are particularly well suited to [solar power](#) as they tend to have large south-facing roofs which receive direct sunlight for the main part of the day.'

There are lots of schemes offering to put solar panels on your roof at no cost to you. Some are good, some not quite so good. The Centre for Sustainable Energy has produced an excellent download on what to look out for if Greeks come bearing solar panelled gifts! See the CSE website at www.cse.org.uk/news/view/1471

A Rocha's Associate Projects

A Rocha's new Associate Projects programme aims to provide a new way for local conservation projects to connect with the wider A Rocha family. These projects, run by and for local people, get the support of A Rocha because they have a faith-based underpinning of what they do and a conservation focus with community cooperation in mind. The projects include the Lee Brook Valley in Dronfield, Derbyshire, Steyning Downland and the Chiltern Gateway

With the recent addition of St Madoc Christian Youth Camp in north Gower, Wales there are now four established Associated Projects, with

several more planned for the months ahead. At St Madoc Jess Rae, formerly of A Rocha Canada, is the environmental coordinator while trustee Dr Chris Walley is a long time A Rocha UK supporter.

St Madoc's camp leaders, with the support of Jess and Chris will be developing a conservation strategy for the land. The team will be looking to ensure that activities for youth on site don't interfere with wildlife and will also be looking for ways of encouraging visitors to gain a basic understanding of creation care through eco-friendly projects and activities.

HARD WATER - a London problem with implications for biodiversity

One of our supporters writes on a London issue:

"In December 2009 Waitrose announced that they were to introduce sustainably grown palm oil into its own-label food products by December 2012. A move we can support, as uncontrolled production of palm oil threatens biodiversity in general, the most striking example being the orang-utan. But there is an elephant in the room, which this policy does not address: palm oil has many uses other than in food products, notably in soap production.

When I go on holiday, or when other Londoners do so, in other parts of Britain or elsewhere, we lather ourselves thoroughly as we habitually do at home, and then think "what's wrong with their water – why can't I get rid of all this soap?" The answer of course, is that there is nothing wrong with "their" water – it is soft, whereas the water we are used to, with its dissolved mineral content, is hard. In consequence, up to half the soap we use we waste as scum, as our soap is produced from palm oil and similar tropical products. (A glance at the recommendations on a packet of soap powder for soft and hard water areas will confirm this.)

The hardness we experience in London and in other hard water areas could be treated at source, by the water companies which supply us. The method to do this is relatively

simple (dosing with a controlled quantity of slaked lime, which precipitates out the soluble calcium bicarbonate which causes the problem, as calcium carbonate). Some Acts of Parliament which established water companies required this to be done, but as the issue is not one of health many water companies do not recognise it as a concern.



The Waste Hierarchy encourages us to **Reduce – reuse – recycle**, in that order. We should take this seriously and should avoid wasting half the soap we use, and hence reduce the palm oil we require. Hard water is not just a local problem which affects the energy efficiency and life of our kettles, washing machines and hot water systems – it also has the global consequences of waste of tropical products, pressure to produce more to satisfy the perceived demand, and the loss of tropical rainforests and their biodiversity to create these plantations. As a society we have the technology, but apparently not the will to avoid this."

SAVE MONEY! SAVE CO2 EMISSIONS! – A CASE STUDY

Baildon Methodist Church, a certificated Eco-congregation, is saving money and helping to reduce global warming. Despite the 70 000 users a year of the church and its Wesley's Community Centre, the church's carbon footprint is becoming smaller.

In 2006 the church started giving the Caretaker a percentage bonus for energy saved. In 2008 energy saving equipment was installed; and in 2009 this continued with the fitting of Weather Compensation Controls on the two outdated and inefficient boilers, insulating ceilings and cutting out draughts. This was done with the help of grants of over £9000 from the Shipley Area Panel and Bradford Environmental Action Trust [BEAT].

Bradford Full Council passed unanimously on January 19 2010 a motion setting a target of 40% reduction in CO2 emissions for the District by 2020 over those of 2005. It was among the first Councils in the country to do so. Radical change is needed. So Baildon Methodist Church transferred its electricity account to the RSPB Green tariff of Southern Electric on 1 June 2010. This tariff means that Southern Electric put into the grid an equivalent amount of renewably generated electricity to that which the church draws out. So, from 2010-11, the tonnes of CO2 emitted because of the Church's electricity usage will be zero.

Members and users contribute to a Green Fund if they fly, drive or emit Carbon Dioxide from their heating systems. This provides seed money for future measures to reduce the church's CO2 emissions. Baildon Methodist Church is constantly informing its users of how it is carrying out its mission as an Eco-congregation and asking them to support it. IN 4 years Baildon have reduced their CO2 emissions from 66 to 52 tonnes. If you want to know more contact John D Anderson du-melama2000@yahoo.co.uk, 10 Bramham Drive, Baildon, Shipley, BD17 6SZ. T 01274 590525

Praying for the climate

Climate Stewards is the climate change programme of A Rocha. They produce a monthly climate prayer letter. See the sample for week one of November below. For more like this or to sign up to receive the email version visit www.climateprayer.net/

Truth & love

In recent USA elections some candidates fiercely denied that people can cause climate change. With strong support from parts of the media, many were elected. Their election will make it very difficult to pass climate action laws in that country.

At the same time 700 US climate scientists have committed to explaining the scientific evidence which supports the truth of man-made climate change. yhoo.it/US-scientists

Often the debate about climate change is full of insults, threats and disinformation. How should we respond? Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies and pray for them.

- Pray for God's blessing on all who take part in climate change debates, on both sides.
- Pray that truth will triumph, that God's Spirit will give the right words to say, that people who seem not to listen will have 'ears to hear'.

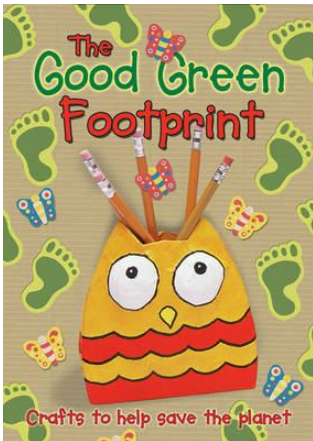
Pray that all who have the privilege and responsibility of a vote will use it to 'love their neighbor'.

Another great prayer resource is from Christian Ecology Link at

<http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/prayer-guide-index.htm>

The Good Green Footprint

By Christina Goodings



This is an inspirational craft book containing a wide range of crafts to get the reader reducing, recycling and re-using materials. I especially like the butterfly clips for holding scraps of paper for lists, and the 'personal insulation' hats made from old fleece jackets. There is even a recipe to encourage us to use up

odds and ends of food! It sets my mind racing with all the other things I could make or do.

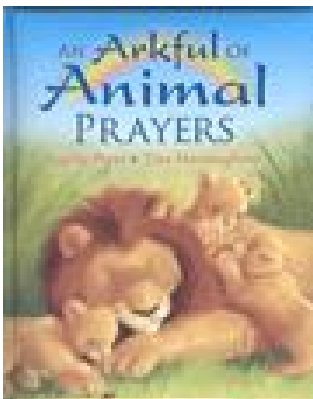
The text is laid out in easy to follow format, with numbered instructions taking us step-by-step through each project. Richard Deverell's bright illustrations and some good photographs add to the appeal and aid understanding of

the instructions. Some projects are simple, others require more skill or an adult's help, but all will be great fun and help reduce our impact on world resources.

The green footprint box accompanying each craft suggests more ways we can reduce, re-use and recycle. I can't wait to get going!

An Arkful of Animal Prayers

By Sophie Piper



When I picked up this book I thought from the title and cover illustrations that it would be for very young children. I was surprised – it is so much more!

The prayers within are often deep and thoughtful with words that could challenge parents

too. Many of the prayers are written from the animal's point of view, offering insight into aspects of their lives we may not have considered.

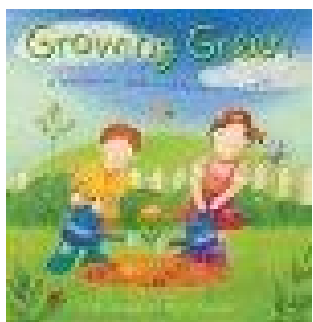
Tina Mcnaughton's illustrations are a joy, and generally a detailed portrayal of the crea-

tures, especially the birds, (although I find one or two are a little too cute).

Altogether an inspiring little book that would make many 7-11 year olds want to reach for a pencil and write their own animal prayers – I certainly do!

Growing Green

By Christina Goodings



This book provides a good introduction for primary school children to the concept of gentle living. It covers all the areas with just a few words and, I'm happy to note, doesn't shy away from using the more technical vocabulary, doing so in a

straight-forward manner.

The 'think' wave on each page is a pointer to take the idea a step further and make it a practical part of life relevant to children. The captions spread around the page pro-

vide easy, quick reference and facts.

Masumi Furukawa's illustrations are bright, yet simple, although I think more detailed, less 'cute' pictures would better complement the integrity of the text and the age group it is aimed at.

God Doesn't do Waste by Dave Bookless

Meet 'the Bookless bunch', a very ordinary family who went green.

When God challenged him over his attitude to the environment, Dave Bookless did a total rethink. This led to major changes, not only in his family's lifestyle but also eventually in his career: full-time involvement in the global A Rocha movement that aims to care for God's fragile world.

But in one sense this book isn't about going green at all. It's a personal account

of a life lived in relationship. It's about roots and belonging, suffering and healing, identity and meaning, faith and doubt. It's about how in God's economy nothing need be wasted.

This is a story about the messiness that each human being wades through in every area of their lives, and about a God who can take all that seems most wasteful and useless, and recycle it into something of infinite worth.

'This story, both of A Ro-

cha UK and of the 'Bookless Bunch', is wonderfully and movingly told. It brought tears to my eyes and inspired me in my desire to love God and look after all that he has made. Dave has been one of the pioneers in calling the Church to pick up its mandate to take care of God's world and it has been my privilege to work with him and learn from him. I have no hesitation in encouraging you to read this book - you won't regret it!' - Ruth Valerio, author of 'L is for lifestyle'



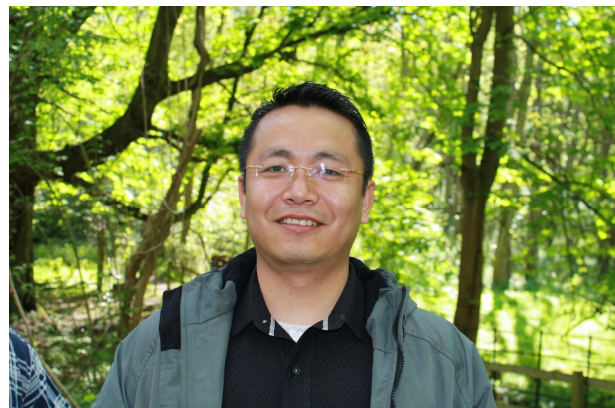
Mission support needed in London

Kailean and Kim Khongsai are part of the A Rocha team in Southall doing some wonderful work raising environmental awareness across different faith groups to build community participation in environmental projects. Their work involves advocacy and increasing the engagement of Christians with local environmental projects as well as developing inter-faith partnerships and community building around environmentalism.

Kailean and Kim came to the UK originally as students from India. As a result they do not have many well established church connections and networks. So the Church Mission Society are looking to find

churches who might wish to support them, both in prayer and financially. The first step is to find appropriate churches who might already be interested in supporting local mission around environmentalism and the good stewardship of God's creation. Kailean and Kim could then visit either to be interviewed as part of a service or else to speak about their work. The church could then consider how they might wish to follow up any interest. If you think your church might be interested please contact Mike Burke at CMS on 01865 787515 or email:

michael.burke@CMS-UK.ORG





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The Churches' Environmental Programme

Eco-congregation provides a framework to get churches involved with environmental issues. Start with the church check-up (module 1), draw up an action plan, download the modules, get on with the work, and then apply for the Award!

Ecocongregation is a project of A Rocha UK (Registered Charity 1089276)
13 Avenue Road, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3BL

David Hughes is the part time co-ordinator of the programme, and editor of this newsletter.

All material is freely available from the website: ew.ecocongregation.org
It is helpful if you register your church after working through the church check-up (so that we can build up a national picture), and receiving the Award is a way to publicise your activities, and encourage other churches to get involved!

If your church has benefitted from the award scheme or from the material on the website could you make a donation so we can maintain our policy of a free service. Please make cheques payable to 'Eco-congregation'.

Thanks.
David

Find lots of resources on the web:

www.ew.ecocongregation.org

Do you know anyone else who would like this newsletter—let us know their email address!

We are no longer sending out a paper copy of the newsletter because of the cost in both financial and carbon footprint terms. If you know anyone who should be receiving the newsletter please email us, giving these details:

Please send these details to:

ecocongregation@arocha.org

and we will update our records accordingly.

We will only use these details to contact you about newsletters, and occasionally if there events coming up in your region in which you might be interested.

If they are not on email, could they find someone in their church who is, who could receive communications on their behalf?



Their name
Their address
Their telephone number

Email address
Name of church
or
Name of organisation

Denomination (if relevant)