

# LLES *newsletter*

Llanidloes Energy Solutions July 2002

## HOW LLES STARTED

It is not widely known that the inspiration for LLES came originally from a Quaker meeting. Barbara Anderson, David Utting and I had attended a talk on Global Warming by Sir John Houghton at Machynlleth in November 2000, and we were very disturbed by the catastrophic future predicted unless we act urgently. Having spent a number of years there, I was particularly concerned about the dire effects of climate change on Africa.

Barbara and I got together and meditated on what we could do about the situation. Shortly afterwards, Barbara spoke in the Quaker meeting about a vision of Llani as an energy conscious community, and through discussions subsequently the idea of starting a community group was born. The aims were to raise consciousness of the issue of Global Warming and encourage energy saving in the local community.

'Global Warming - What can We Do?' was the question we posed on notices around town, and 29 people came to an inaugural meeting in the Town Hall on February 19th 2001, when a speaker from REACT talked about the local government initiative to encourage voluntary groups to participate in a home energy conservation scheme. We formed a committee and began by promoting the REACT scheme to local community groups - if groups were willing to participate they registered with REACT and received £2 for each completed Home Energy Questionnaire. The Foot and Mouth outbreak limited the number of groups able to participate, but 5 groups joined and received an energy efficiency training.

'LLES' means 'benefit' in Welsh, and the original name, 'Llani Energy Savers' promoted the idea that energy saving benefits the individual, the community and the environment. The name was amended to 'Llani Energy Solutions' at the AGM this year to reflect wider concerns about promoting renewable energy as well as energy conservation.

Since we started we have held a number of successful meetings and stalls publicising the problem of Climate Change and promoting recycling and renewable energy. We have talked a lot, and hopefully raised consciousness, but the burning question remains: what can we DO?

## LLES ACTIVITIES SO FAR

2001

February 19: Inaugural Meeting at Town Hall. Speakers: Becci Johnson of REACT, Barbara Anderson, Gwen Prince, Andy Scrase chair. 29 people including Lembit Opik M.P. attended

March to October: Promoted REACT scheme

May: Talk on Global Warming to Llani Rotary Club by Gwen Prince

June 3: Stall in Great Oak Street. Lembit Opik, and 51 other people had photo taken for FoE 'I'm facing up to Climate Change' photomontage for Tony Blair and G8 leaders in Bonn. 200 leaflets handed out, Energy Quiz with prize for winner, and Energy Tips Chart - free pens given for adding a tip.

September: Barbara Anderson attended a meeting of the mid-Wales Committee of the National Assembly discussing Sustainability

October: REACT Energy Efficiency training for participating groups by Chris Edwards from the Mid Wales Eco-Centre

November 10: Stall in Great Oak Street on Solar Water Systems. Also selling Low Energy light bulbs and promoting energy efficiency and electricity from renewable sources. Mick Bates A.M. attended

November: Barbara Anderson, Gwen Prince and Alan Anderson attended 2-day Energy Efficiency training at Mid and West Wales Eco-Centre

November 24: Display on LLES at conference on Climate Change, Friends House, London

December: Display on LLES in Resource Centre window

2002

January 10: Public meeting on Global Warming. Speaker: Sir John Houghton FRS, co-chair of IPCC at Minerva Centre. Mick Bates chaired, more than 110 people attended

January 19: Stall cancelled due to bad weather; March 10th: Stall cancelled due to bad weather. Very windy and wet on both occasions - just the sort of climate change John Houghton warned of, in answer to those who think mistakenly that we could do with a bit of global warming round here!

March: Barbara Anderson invited to represent LLES on a Powys Energy Agency committee

Hayley Myles LLES representative on Llani Link group

March 14: Talk on LLES at Llandinam WI by Gwen Prince

April 11: Public Meeting on Renewable Energy. Speakers: Andy Rowland (Dyfi Valley Eco Partnership), Hayley Myles and Vicki Leaney (Dulas Engineering). Mick Bates chaired, 45 people attended.

April 17: Barbara Anderson and Gwen Prince attended a conference on Sustainability in Welshpool

April 27: Stall in Great Oak Street on Recycling with Cae Post. Low Energy light bulbs and eco-cotton bags sold

April 27: Gwen Prince attended a FoE Climate and Energy Campaigns Day in Birmingham

June 20: Public Meeting on Wind Energy. Speakers: Peter Harper (CAT), Tony Burton (Wind Energy Consultant) and Lance Mytton (CPRW). Mick Bates chaired, 49 people attended

June 22: Stall in Great Oak Street on Solar Water Heating systems. Low Energy bulbs and eco-cotton bags sold

June 26: Barbara Anderson attended the Powys Energy Agency Advisory Group (see report below)

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Tuesday September 10, from 7p.m. Alan Selkirk will show us his Fresh Air Heating system at his house (see below for details).  
Thursday October 3, 7.30: Meeting at Minerva Centre on Recycling with Mike Membrey from Cae Post.  
January (details to be confirmed) Peter Harper from CAT will lead a discussion on lifestyle issues. Renewable energy is only a partial solution: we can cut carbon emissions by changing the way we live. And it doesn't mean 'cold showers and no telly' as someone said at a recent meeting!

## **PRESS REPORTS**

LLES has had good press coverage of our activities, with regular reports in the County Times, the Llani Weaver and an article in 'the Friend'.

## **POWYS ENERGY AGENCY**

The Powys Energy Agency was set up to promote energy efficiency and 'appropriately scaled' renewable energy throughout Powys.

Core funding is provided by the European Union, while support in kind is given by Powys County Council, Scottish Power, SWALEC, Marches Energy Agency, the Forestry Commission, Dulas Ltd, and National Wind Power, amongst others.

The Agency has three main spheres of activity. It provides expertise and advice, promotes energy efficiency and the generation of renewable energy, and gives planning and policy advice support.

In pursuit of these aims, it works in various sectors, including areas in which LLES is interested, namely - community initiatives, public buildings and housing.

The Agency has a Management Board and an Advisory Group meeting every six months, on which LLES has a place. This gives us a very useful insight into what the Government and the local authority are doing to combat global warming and the energy crisis that looms ahead.

The Agency has been very supportive of LLES, and was hopeful of getting funding to employ a part time Energy Warden for Llanidloes. Unfortunately this did not transpire, but is something that we can set our sights on, perhaps with funding for LLES from a European fund. This is something we need to investigate.

At the last meeting of the Advisory Group on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the main item of the agenda was a report by Jenny Lampard, Development Officer with the Agency, on a new project called Greenheat, which will promote Community Renewable Energy projects. So far, this project has run two seminars, held a stand at an International seminar at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, opened a Renewable Energy Advice line, and strengthened the network in the UK and EU. So far there have been 50 enquiries, 25 of them from the domestic sector.

Out of this, a project has been launched in Llanwddyn to heat a school using biomass energy. This will also provide enough heat for several houses in the vicinity. This project will be launched at the Royal Welsh Show in the Forestry Commission tent.

The Agency is managing a project for Scottish Power to provide 100% funded solar water heating for ten households in Mid Wales. Four installations have been completed to date, and two families in Llanidloes have benefited from this scheme.

The work of the Agency shows that the authorities are taking the threat of global warming seriously, and that they are fully aware of the need to save energy and start developing renewable resources. LLES has an important part to play in raising public consciousness of these issues and in helping people in Llanidloes to address their own particular energy problems.

## The LLES Library

### The Purpose of the Library

Lles has set up this library in accordance with our aims to raise awareness of the global energy and sustainability problem and to provide information about the various proposed solutions.

The library offers the chance to answer and form an opinion upon the following questions:

**What is the global energy and sustainability problem?** (Knowledge)

**Why should we be concerned about it?** (Wisdom)

**What can we do about it collectively and individually?** (Action)

The library **catalogue** is in the *Resource Centre* and *Great Oak Café* and can be obtained by e-mail from [LLES@perpetuearth.com](mailto:LLES@perpetuearth.com). The books are up to date or have been chosen because they provide an insight that is still relevant today. The catalogue contains a brief description of each book so you do not necessarily have to browse through the books before making a choice. The books are held in the Resource Centre and can be borrowed for up to two weeks at a time.

If you have any queries about the library or about LLES in general please ask either at the Resource Centre or **e-mail** [LLES@perpetuearth.com](mailto:LLES@perpetuearth.com)

### How The Library Works

In order to borrow a book from the catalogue all we ask is that you **become a member of LLES**. This costs only £1 and goes towards covering our administrative costs. You can join at the Resource Centre. **The library service is free**, although donations (loan of books or contribution of lending fee) are gratefully welcomed. As a member we will also be able to keep you informed about what LLES is doing and what we are planning.

When you borrow a book we make a note of your membership number (every member gets a card with a number) and you may borrow the book for **two weeks**. We will ask you to sign for the book(s) when they are lent to acknowledge acceptance of the terms of lending. At present, due to the limited availability of multiple copies of the books we are limiting the loan of books to **two** at any one time.

We encourage you to buy your own copy of any books that you find particularly useful as it is not our intention to compete with the booksellers but to cooperate by introducing you to new titles. The Great Oak Bookshop should be able to get you any title listed here. If you have any problems e-mail [LLES@perpetuearth.com](mailto:LLES@perpetuearth.com) and we will assist you in finding a copy. Please also respect the publishers' rules on copyright.

Please let us know if you have seen any good books that you think would benefit inclusion in the library. We would also greatly welcome and appreciate any relevant books you may wish to lend to the library.

### Terms of lending:

These are very simple and we are relying on your goodwill to abide by them.

1. The books either belong to LLES itself or more probably to one of its members who have kindly lent them to the library. None of us are particularly well off so we ask you to take due care of the books and return them in the condition that they were received for others to benefit from afterwards.
2. Please return the books to the Resource Centre within two weeks of borrowing them and do not pass them on to anyone else even if they have reserved the book after you. This is so we can track who has which book. If the Resource Centre is unavailable please leave them at the counter in The Great Oak Café. If you have difficulty in reaching the Resource Centre during its opening hours we will be happy to deliver and collect the books by arrangement: please e-mail [LLES@perpetuearth.com](mailto:LLES@perpetuearth.com).
3. Please understand that we cannot be held liable in any way for any loss or damage caused due to reliance on any information contained in the books in our library. Neither do we necessarily endorse or agree with any points of view expressed in the books. Our purpose is to facilitate access to information to assist decisions concerning energy use and sustainability and to help members make up their own minds as to the problems and solutions. It is in this spirit that we set up this library and we hope that our members will appreciate and support this.

### Recycling – some thoughts

Here in Llanidloes we can recycle tins, glass, paper and some sorts of plastic bottles. Add a compost heap and a wood stove lit with any cardboard packing, and there can be very little left for that black bag which the government is thinking of charging us £1 to collect (good idea!). I reckon I could get it down to one a month – maybe two months with a bit of jumping up and down, and it's all clean stuff so no smells. If I was more careful about only buying veg. in paper bags it would be even less, but I'm afraid I succumb to those bargain plastic punnets of mushrooms and peaches, and have a yoghurt-and-pot-noodle addict teenager. There's a limit to how many of these you can use as seed trays and plant pots: I have a bulging 'guilt bag' of the things which I can't bear to bin. Anyway, I'm innately sceptical of personal solutions and would rather campaign for recycled card and cellulose film packaging for all – does anyone have any suggestions as to how to do this? I'd like to persuade all our chipshops not to use polystyrene trays too – I always ask for 'just the paper' and get very odd looks. And in supermarkets where you weigh fruit and veg. yourself, you can stick the label straight on the bunch of bananas or one of your three leeks and not use a bag at all – doesn't work for cherries though.

We could all make our recycling facilities more efficient by squashing our tins and plastic bottles – can banks in some areas have stickers saying "Wash 'em and squash 'em". I've even seen people who leave their engines running while posting their wine bottles, thereby undoing any benefit to the environment! Perhaps we could put up a sign encouraging good practice? Cae Post (who manage the plastic recycling) used to have a notice about washing bottles and removing tops but weather or vandals have removed it.

There's an article in the Guardian this week on Zero Waste – basically it's about improving recycling and 'designing out of the system' anything that can't be recycled\*. Imagine if we could shut down landfill sites not just to move them into someone else's backyard, but because they became redundant!

Isn't it encouraging to hear how quickly Ireland has embraced a 'no carrier bags' culture when a tax was imposed on them (around 9p a bag)? Let's hope we soon follow.

\*This has given me a thought: we all see articles which are interesting and relevant to Lles: perhaps we could add a cuttings and photocopies file to the library? Gareth agrees, and says "Please leave any relevant newspaper clippings, articles, web links etc. for me either at the Great Oak Cafe (in the rack by the back door) or in resource centre if they do not mind and I will incorporate them into the library"

### Energy-Saving Tips

- Turn off all remote controls at night (we could close down one UK power station)
- Turn the central heating down by 1 degree (can save 10% on fuel bills)
- Get a Home Energy Check (phone 0345 277 200)
- Fit low energy bulbs
- Shower more often than bath
- Use washing machine on economy or half-load setting when appropriate
- Cut car use by 20%
- Drive more slowly (speed pollutes and uses more fuel)
- Use public transport where possible
- Avoid travelling by plane if you can
  - Eat locally produced food where possible (save 'food miles')
  - Use local shops not out of town supermarkets
  - Get milk from the milkman (avoid plastic bottles)
  - Eat organic food when you can
  - Grow some food
  - Use environmentally friendly cleaning products
  - Switch to green electricity (phone 020 7490 1555)
  - Join an environmental pressure group
  - Take more time to enjoy the natural world

Have you got any hints, or articles for our next issue? Please email them to me, Beck, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, or leave them in the 'B' pigeonhole in the resource centre.

### The Day the Oceans Boiled

A few Lles members gathered at Gwen & David's house on July 30 to watch this programme, originally broadcast on Channel 4.

Two researchers from opposite sides of the world were brought together to answer two questions: *Why is there only half as much CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere as might be expected?* and *What caused the sudden two-stage rises in global temperature recorded in ice and ocean silt cores?* The answer to the first seems to be that the Amazon rainforest is able to 'lock up' far more than was realised. The Brazilian researcher had built a slender tower to measure the flow of CO<sub>2</sub> in and out of the forest canopy. He also spoke of the lengthening of the dry season, which might eventually trigger uncontrollable forest fire.

The forest stores carbon, but beneath the ocean lies another huge store of another greenhouse gas sixty times more powerful – methane hydrates, kept down by water pressure and cold temperatures. A quite sudden rise in sea temperature, triggered by the release of CO<sub>2</sub> from huge forest fires, could release it in a violent 'boiling' of the oceans. This enormous increase in the greenhouse effect, added to the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere today, could only mean doomsday.

How can we react constructively to such gloomy predictions? I expect many of us were involved in the peace movement twenty or more years ago at the height of the anti-nuclear campaign. Although the world today is far from peaceful, we are not now in the midst of the post-nuclear war winter which was a very real fear. We must believe that our actions and convictions helped to avert that disaster, and bring the same creative energy to work on the problems which face us now.

### Lembit supports 'contraction and convergence'

Our local MP, Lembit Öpik has signed an Early Day Motion calling for the government to press for a further global climate agreement based on the 'Contraction and Convergence' principle, and for Tony Blair to demonstrate global leadership by arguing the case for this at the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg this August.

Contraction and Convergence is a proposed solution to the problem of climate change caused by increased greenhouse gas emissions. It proposes worldwide reductions in ghg emissions (contraction), and an equitable sharing of the right to consume fossil fuels on a per-capita basis (convergence). This means that countries would have emissions-rights based on their populations, not on their industrial development, as in the Kyoto Agreement. Less Developed Countries would have surplus emissions rights to trade with over-polluting industrialised countries. This would encourage the former to develop along 'clean' energy lines, thus saving their trading rights, and would solve the problem of 'third world debt' as the rich nations would be indebted to the poor.

Lembit is to be congratulated on his support for this. Please write to him at the Lib-Dem Office, 3 Park Street, Newtown, or e-mail him at **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

### FreshAirHeating

Alan Selkirk invites Lles members to his bungalow, (Woodlands, Llidiartywaun) on Tuesday 10th Sep. evening from 7p.m. until 9.30p.m. to see his FreshAirHeating system in action.

FreshAirHeating is an air-source heat pump with the following benefits:-

Much cheaper than other heat pump systems to install (around £3,000)

The system can be paid for comfortably on a low-interest loan.

Heat can be felt immediately because it is delivered via slightly warmed blown air, or chosen room temperature turned up or down very quickly via a remote control set to 1 degree.

Gently moving warm air at "comfort temperature" is more efficient (and comfortable) than very hot air (created by radiators and most other forms of heating) which is circulated by convection only. This hot air creates warm ceilings and so unnecessary heat losses, and "cold feet" due to inadequate mixing of the air.

Warmed FRESH air is being blown in, providing numerous health benefits to the occupants as well as the house.

"Stale" damp air is extracted from the bathroom, transforming it into a drying room and also curing numerous health and house structural problems from high humidity.

Comfort and health benefits cannot be equalled.

Heat is recovered from the extracted air via the external unit.

Fan sound level on internal unit is quiet and unobtrusive, unlike fan heaters.

The system delivers around 4.5 kW of heat for a consumption of 1kW of electricity, which, combined with part-use overnight on "Economy 7" creates big cost-savings. Approximate cost for the same level of comfort is half the cost of gas.

Alan's phone number is 01686 414949. Here are directions from Llanidloes (I have directions from Rhayader & Newtown if needed; email Beck **Error! Bookmark not defined.**):

From town centre, (market hall) follow signs towards LLANGURIG (A470)

Within a few hundred yards, immediately after a right hand bend, turn left on B4518, signed to Tylwch. Take the first fork left (after 1 mile), signed Llidiartywaun.

This is an accident area! Go slowly approaching all bends!

After 1 mile, at crossroads ***immediately fork right***. (*Signed 'Cambrian Archaeological Projects'*)

Drive very slowly approaching blind bends for approx. 3/4 mile & look out for notice & entrance on right hand side. At end of drive, open gate and park. Walk to the left of the Garage and straight on for front door.