

Belstone Youth Group

Carl Wratten: We had an excellent Disco night, recently, when all members were asked to bring a friend along to the evening which was great fun for all. Many thanks to DJ Harry for the music, Victoria for organising the food and Theresa and Zoe for the fun games and activities.

The film project is well under way and producer, Tim, is very pleased with progress. We spent a Sunday in the cold and wet, filming one of four main scenes for the film (Huge thanks to Harry's parents and family for allowing the film crew full reign of their garden and home). Next Youth Group meeting is 8th June, next film meeting Sunday 10th June at 1.30pm, meeting at 'The Barn', Birchy Lake.

How to Contact the Steering Group

No space this month for full list but if you contact us, we can put you on to the right person: -

Eddy & Robin Hill (**Editors**) 01837 840332
edwinarobin_hill@yahoo.co.uk

Useful Websites

www.dsen.org.uk Devon Sustainable Energy Network – A partnership of organisations from across Devon, committed to promoting sustainable energy projects.

Climate Change and Wildlife – The Adaptation Challenge.

Richard White, in his capacity as Head of Wildlife Champions at Devon Wildlife Trust, will be giving this talk on

Friday 22nd June in the Hall. 7.30pm
Donations invited for Devon Wildlife Trust

Forest Garden & Riverford Visits

Rona Gundry:

A really enjoyable day was had recently by a group of villagers who visited a forest garden on the Dartington estate near Totnes. We were able to fit in a field walk on the Riverford organic farm first: fascinating to see organic farming on this very large commercial scale.

It was the forest garden that was the main focus though, and the uninitiated (such as me) were able to see exactly what this means, and what agroforestry is about in a temperate region. Everything planted has a practical use, trees are integrated with agricultural or horticultural plantings, the emphasis is on perennials and diversity is a priority. The inspiring director, Martin Crawford, guided us round the 2-acre plot, which he has now been developing for 13 years and which contains about 500 species. He is monitoring the effects and adaptations taking place in response to climate change and was a wonderful guide. We were encouraged to pick and munch leaves from all sorts of improbable plants; salads will never taste quite the same again! *And* – you can adapt it to any back garden. Inspiration indeed!

Many thanks to Rob and Eddy for organising this, and to the Green Village's lottery funding for financing it.

Don't forget the visit to Anne and Tony Dickman's garden at Tenacity Cottage, Tongue End. **Sunday 10th June** from 2.30 until 4.30. An opportunity to share ideas on vegetable growing and ways to encourage wildlife.

Tenacity garden is mainly for growing vegetables and bird/bee food. There are experimental beds of no-dig cultivation where it is hoped to grow perennial and self-seeding vegetables especially for year-round salads.

Cream Teas will be available!

Belstone Green

Editorial

This month's edition is mostly taken up by two extremely important articles that have an impact on us all. Please read about the **Hydro Project** and the **Nature Day**. The above photo is of the leat mentioned in the former.



Don't forget the eco-friendly bags – on sale at Thursday Café Club or contact a Steering Group member. What about following Modbury's lead and trying to make Belstone a plastic bag free zone?

Green Tips From the World Wildlife Fund

If you are partial to the odd glass of wine or "bubbly", remember that cork comes from sustainable forests and is biodegradable. Plastic stoppers and screw caps, however, are not. **The WWF** asks you to choose bottles with proper corks – this way you are helping to preserve Mediterranean forests and industries that have been around for at least a century. Not always easy, when you have to make choices between miles travelled, whether to buy organic and whether to have cork, but worth thinking about!

The Belstone Green Village Initiative aims to:

provide opportunities and resources for Belstone to become a greener and more sustainable village, now and in the future.

Hydro Electricity Scheme

Andrew Terry:

As many of you may have heard, the river in Belstone Cleave has been identified as offering the potential for a small-scale hydro-electricity scheme. The Green Village Steering Group recently received funding to pay for a professional Feasibility Study looking into this idea which has now been completed. It looks at the prospect of a low-impact "micro-hydropower" installation incorporating the restoration of the disused leat which formerly ran from below Birchy Lake to the wheelpit inside the corner on Skaigh Hill. The Study has concluded that such a scheme would, in due course, be capable of producing a significant financial return from the supply of electricity to the National Grid.

The scheme would be owned and managed by the community with its eventual profits being available exclusively for the benefit of the community to support and enrich village life. So, apart from its outstanding "green" credentials, such a scheme could, for instance, enable Belstone to maintain such transport and other facilities as have already been lost or are liable to come under increasing threat in a rapidly changing economic environment.

The scheme would only develop gradually and there are regulatory hurdles to be cleared with the Environment Agency and the planning authority etc, etc. Also it would, of course, be dependent on fund-raising and in particular on qualifying for loans which are available for such projects from banks and other institutions specialising in this area. However, in the meantime, in order that as many people as possible can assess the impact and suitability of a hydro scheme in

Belstone Cleave, a group visit has been arranged to a "talk and walk" at Old Walls Hydro – an operating scheme which has been running for some fifteen years at Ponsworthy near Widecombe in the Moor. The trip will be on the afternoon of Saturday June 30th and is open to everyone in the village who replies to the invitations which are being circulated to households. It will give an opportunity for everyone to find out at first hand what such a scheme looks like and how it runs. So, if you are at all interested, do reply to your invitation as soon as possible and come to learn more about this exciting prospect.

Natural History Day

During the winter, Devon County Council sponsored an "audit" of Belstone's wildlife and natural history. This involved a professional ecologist bringing together all the available information from the surveys and research of other people into one summary document. In addition, a brief survey on the ground was conducted. Though the result labours under the grand title of "Biodiversity Audit", it does provide groundwork which could prove of historic value to the nature-lovers of Belstone for many years to come.

In addition, DCC ecologists have invited villagers to make their own input which will be incorporated into the final version of the audit. They are the first to admit that local people may well have their own expertise to bring to the project along with a level of familiarity which no surveyor could claim.

In order to gather as much information as possible for inclusion in the final document there will be a Natural History Day on Saturday August 11th. There will be opportunities for some fieldwork along with a session going through the audit and giving people the opportunity to add to it and to refine it. Finally there will be ideas for further projects in and around the village.

Everyone with an interest in the nature and wildlife of Belstone is invited and it is hoped that we will be joined by as many experts (professional and amateur) as possible to throw light on the potential of Belstone's varied habitat to support some perhaps hitherto less familiar wildlife.

In the meantime for those who would like to study the draft audit, copies are available from the Village Hall.

Village Hall

Village Fair Sunday July 8th.

Helpers still needed. If you are available and can help in any way at all, please contact Ruth Stickland on 840847

Dehumidifier: has anyone a large dehumidifier that they would like to pass on? The Village Hall is in desperate need. Contact Marion on 840498



"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

The White Queen: *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll.

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