

## Green Fair requires help

South Somerset District Council, this year, hosted the first Green Fair in South Petherton. A great time was had by all with approximately 300 adults and children attending throughout the day. Plans for next year's event, to be held sometime in August, are already underway. However, help is desperately required to form a community run management group that will organise next year's event. If you have some time that you could give to this budding annual extravaganza, please contact Hannah Aitkin at South Somerset District Council on 01458 257430.

## Library and Display Unit face lift

Over the past few months, we have been giving the library and display unit an upgrade. New display shelves have been made from local reclaimed Douglas Fir and new samples of sustainable building materials have been gained accompanied with appropriate information to take away. The library has had an overhaul and we will continue to build on the resources, books and other publications that we have to offer. If you have any suggestions of anything you think we should display, please let us know. In future we are hoping to make links with other libraries across the county to highlight this sustainable construction resource.

## Membership News

### Member's Directory ... at last!\*

As you may be aware, one of the benefits of membership with STSD is the opportunity to be included in the member's directory. We are now planning to have the first edition ready for the next newsletter. The directory will be updated as necessary and distributed with newsletters twice a year. Use the Directory to advertise expertise, experience, skills, or simply put your name to aid familiarity in future networking events. Feel free to swap and change the information that you wish to be published from one half of the year to the next. Please note: Details must be received by 1st February in order to be included in the first edition directory.

If you would like to be included in the directory, please fill in the form below (feel free to copy the form if you wish to keep your newsletter complete) and return it to us. Alternatively you can email your details to [corina@sustainablehousing.org.uk](mailto:corina@sustainablehousing.org.uk)

Name*	
Address	
	Post code
Telephone <i>home</i>	<i>work</i>
Email address	
Website	

Please use this space to write anything about yourself that you think may be of interest to fellow members of STSD. Use it as a free advertising space if you wish!

Please tick this box if you do not wish for your details to be passed on to other organisations promoting sustainability.

## Dates for your diary

### First Wednesday Club

So far, we have received very positive feedback from the First Wednesday Club meetings. We are keen to keep these meetings a useful and regular event for our members. Join us in the Old Town Hall on the first Wednesday of every month (with the exception of New Year's Day!) for an informal networking opportunity, a chance to air your thoughts and questions, and of course the opportunity to have an out of hours browse around the library and resource unit. Refreshments, as always, will be provided. The first club meeting of 2003 will include a discussion on Living Villages – sustainable, self-build, earth friendly, low cost, communities. If you would like to pioneer this idea in Somerset, please come along.

### Sustainable construction in schools conference

*Thursday 27th February 2003, 10-4pm  
The Winter Gardens, Weston-Super-Mare*

This conference will show how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated into school buildings and other education establishments. Amongst other things it will show how these approaches will lead to substantially lower running costs for these buildings. This conference is supported by North Somerset Council and Somerset County Council and is open to anyone. It is particularly suitable for LEAs, School Governors, Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers.

### Eco renovation seminar

*Wednesday 14th May 2003*

Following the unfortunate cancellation of this seminar earlier in the year, we are pleased to announce that a new date has been set for 2003. This seminar will aim to address how the renovation of existing buildings can be carried out in a sustainable way. The seminar will be suitable to those interested in any form of property refurbishment. Times and venue to be confirmed.

If you are interested in any of these events and would like further details to be sent nearer the time, please send us your request and mailing details. In order to save on resources, the Trust prefers to make contact via electronic mail so do send us your email address if you have one.

*Finally – As this is the last newsletter of the year, may we take this opportunity to wish all our members and supporters a very enjoyable Christmas and start to the New Year!*

## The Somerset Sustainable Construction Grant Scheme for Village Halls and Community Buildings

This pilot scheme was set up last year to provide financial assistance towards the cost of incorporating sustainable features in the design and construction of village halls and community buildings. A number of projects in Somerset have already benefited from the scheme which is funded by Somerset County and District Councils and Wyvern Environmental Trust Ltd. A review of the scheme is in progress and, whilst the changes are not likely to be finalised until the New Year, there remains money in the pot for this good cause. *If you would like more information on the scheme and details of how to apply for a grant, please contact your District Council who will send you information and an application form.*



From left to right: Corina Reay STSD, Charles Couzens STSD, Mark Orme Architect, Anna Groskop Bruton Ward Member, Geoff Allen SSDC, Martin Woods SSDC

In October, under a similar grant scheme for South Somerset, Tolbury Mill Hall in Bruton received a grant payment of £3,000 towards the cost of installing a number of sustainable building materials, such as locally grown Western Red Cedar, recycled cellulose insulation and special glazing to minimise heat loss.

The Cheque was presented to South Somerset District Council by Charles Couzens.

The Trust's contribution to the Tolbury Mill Hall building project helped to create a facility welcomed by many local organisations in and around Bruton. Designed by Mark Orme Architects of Glastonbury and built by Bartlett Construction of Yeovil, Tolbury Mill Hall was officially opened on the 28th June this year.



## STSD Project Updates

### Great Bow Yard, formerly formerly Silkolene, formerly Stuckey and Bagehot!!!

As we go to press, this 1.5 acre development site, complete with a listed warehouse, should now be in the ownership of STSD. We have managed to raise the asking price for the land via loans from private investors and are now engaged in a limited architectural competition to select one or possibly two architects to take the project through to completion. The architects selected for the competition are: Architype, Architecton, Mark Orme, Mark Richmond and Stride Treglown. The final selection will take place in January 2003. A sub committee of STSD has been set up to oversee the project which consists of the three directors of SW Eco Homes (our subsidiary development company), two directors from STSD and two investors. This group is advised by Julian Brooks and Stuart Black who will carry out the day-to-day management of the project.

Once developed (completion anticipated early 2004) the dwellings will be sold and the profits distributed for further investment in the site and warehouse, STSD and the next eco development of SW Eco Homes. We hope that the development will prove that speculative eco developments are indeed commercially sound

propositions that other house-builders can learn from and hopefully begin to emulate.

### Peat Moors Visitor Centre

Somerset County Council have decided to build a new straw bale Visitor Centre at the Peat Moors Centre nr. Shapwick. By doing so, they have become one of only a handful of public bodies in the UK and probably the first County Council to invest in this low impact ecologically sound technology. The project aims to build a 14.5 x 7 metre single storey building divided up internally to provide a shop, exhibition area and office.



A Straw bale building by Amazon Nails

*The project team has already enrolled the services of the leading UK exponent of straw bale construction, Barbara Jones. STSD are also trying to involve students from the Young Builders Trust and* →

*STSD aims to make sustainable construction the norm rather than the exception in Somerset by 2010. STSD have received Grant Contributions from: Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, J.A Clark Trust, Wyvern Environmental Trust and Shell Better Britain. The World Wildlife Fund now sponsors The Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development.*



## STSD Project Updates

*continued...*

*Somerset College of Arts and Technology, so as to maximise the educational benefits of this unique and ground (or straw?) breaking project.*

### Jubilee Close, Springmead

Planning permission has now been granted by South Somerset District Council for nine bungalows for the over 55's, four of which will have rooms in the roof. The specifications for the dwellings are as follows: FSC timber cladding to the external surfaces, pressed metal gutters and downpipes, timber windows and doors, compost makers, recycling store, passive ventilation system, Warmcell recycled newspaper insulation, superinsulated large thermal mass concrete block construction and substantial south facing orientation. This development, the first of its kind in South Somerset and the first true eco development by Raglan Housing Association, has taken nearly two years to plan and negotiate. The project team, including architects Gale and Snowden, STSD, Winsley White Builders, Denley King Q.S.'s and of course Raglan HA, have been very thorough in researching the best and most cost effective methods to achieve the final design. Additional features now being explored include grey water recycling for flushing WCs and a photovoltaic roof installation.

### SC@SCAT

STSD have been working closely with the Somerset College of Arts and Technology to build a Sustainable Construction Resource Centre on the

The chosen architect's plan for the SCAT development by Architype



campus. After gaining initial support from the South West RDA they have chosen to work with architects Architype who were selected following a competition involving Gale and Snowden, Feilden Clegg Bradley and others.

They are now going for planning permission and are beginning to raise the half million matched funding required for SWRDA support. SCAT has also been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for Construction, which has Sustainability as one of its aims and project money to develop curriculum materials. SCAT have recently put out a job advert for a Sustainable Construction Coordinator which is also part of their CoVE project.

The centre, when built, will have a lecture theatre, offices, exhibition and gallery space and seminar rooms. The construction of the building will include straw bale, lime, earth, timber, and glass and will be educational in itself with water harvesting on display and energy generation from photovoltaics. The centre will also be adjacent to a new 200 seat purpose built conference centre – a much needed resource in the area. It is hoped that the project will be completed by Spring 2004.

### A Sustainable Materials Centre for Somerset?

Plans for a major visitor centre and science park at Morlands near Glastonbury are emerging with the help of Bristol University. The science behind natural and recycled materials could provide a focus to excite and amaze visitors enabling them to learn about uses of natural materials such as timber, reed and lime. This could be demonstrated e.g. using recycled materials in a reconstructed Lakeland Village or in a contemporary context in the refurbishment of some of the existing buildings at Morlands. Research by the

Trust has also identified considerable interest amongst manufacturers and retailers of sustainable building materials, attracted to the link to a world renowned research centre and a major visitor centre.

The Trust is now developing a consortium to include other local Trusts, training and educational organisations and local councils to present to the RDA.

## Self Build Network

The inaugural meeting of the Self Build Network back in July of this year was well attended by an enthusiastic group. There was a fairly comprehensive discussion of the problems that self-builders face, particularly the availability of land. Everyone contributed to a brainstorming session which produced a list of concerns and suggestions.

One request was for a directory of key skills, advisory and practical, which members might be willing to offer each other if a self-build project got underway. It was agreed that we could start this task immediately.

However, come the designated evening of our second meeting on Tues 26th September, only the three staff from the Trust and our guest speaker made an appearance. We had received a few apologies prior to the meeting, so we knew that the information had reached people but something had obviously gone wrong!

Now we need to know what. We would like to know what we did or neglected to do which might have influence whether or not to attend. If you think the network is a good idea and you would like further meetings and if there are particular aspects you would like investigated, please contact us with your views.

Numbers do not matter – we will continue even with a very small group because the Trust is here to advise and help. We just need to know if any of you who are interested in self-building would like to continue with forming a self-help group.



# Carymoor

## Environmental Centre

Based on a restored landfill site just outside Castle Cary, Carymoor Environmental Trust illustrates renewable energy, sustainable development and education. The Trust has developed a reputation that exemplifies environmental good practice. Its unique location provides the ideal setting to contrast environmental sustainability against the less sustainable activity of landfill.

The Environment Centre is an exemplar of sustainability. It is constructed out of sustainably grown Douglas Fir from the Duke of Somerset's Estate and is constructed on stilts mitigating the excessive use of concrete – having a low environmental impact. Other features of the centre include: the use of recycled roof tiles and doors; insulation made from recycled materials; special 'argon' filled glazing units and under-floor heating. The centre also has its own renewable energy sources: a wind turbine and photovoltaic shingles for the generation of electricity and a solar panel and wood burner for heating. Every attempt is employed to reduce waste. A composting system is used and effluent from the centre is filtered through a Reedbed system.

The centre and its facilities are available to all organisations and individuals with an interest in education, sustainability, conservation and the environment and offers educational tours around the site to schools and community groups. A typical site visit incorporates the Environment Centre, a replica bronze age roundhouse, energy recovery from landfill gas, leachate treatment systems,

reed beds, aquatic environments, a working landfill and much, much more.

The over-riding aim of the Trust is to increase biodiversity on site and it is in partnership with eight universities and three national charities to help restore the landfill cap. A large section of the landfill has already been transformed into wild habitats including butterfly meadows and wetland habitats.

As well as a quarterly newsletter, there is a programme of courses running throughout the year, ranging from seminars on reed bed filtration systems to watercolour workshops and a 'Friends of Carymoor' group which meets monthly. In the months running up to Christmas, Carymoor are offering courses on hedge laying, hide construction, living willow sculpture, renewable energy and a Christmas watercolour workshop!

If you would like to book a visit, join friends of Carymoor, subscribe to the newsletter or would like more information on Carymoor Environmental Trust, please contact Matt Parkinson on 01963 350143. Alternatively the centre has an 'open evening' the first Monday of every month, 4-7 pm (summer) and 4-6 pm (Winter).

## News from the outside!

Alan Jones is a member of STSD and runs a company called Pembrokeshire Thatch and Carpentry Services.

Based in Wales, Alan is a carpenter by first trade, and now specialises in historic reconstruction. He became particularly interested in thatching 20 years ago when he was asked to thatch an Iron Age Roundhouse as an experiment and has since undertaken many projects including the cob wall shelter and strawbale thatched Gate House at the Eden Project. His next job is to help with the construction of an Iron-age Roundhouse on the 3rd storey of a mansion in Machynlleth, Midwest Wales as part of a project known as Celtica. Alan aims to use as much locally sourced materials as possible. He uses locally coppiced wood and is about to embark in his 21st year of harvesting locally grown reed for use in his roofing projects. The reed beds are owned by his Local Wildlife Trust and other private owners. He also uses straw for thatching.

His Website [www.pembrokeshirethatchandcarpentry.co.uk](http://www.pembrokeshirethatchandcarpentry.co.uk) has examples of his work, including a few in Somerset. Alan is interested in networking with any like-minded individuals. His contact details are on his web pages or you can call him on 07971 705096.



Cosmeston, Penarth – © Pembrokeshire Thatch and Carpentry Services

## STOP PRESS...

Housing Corporation back the South West Sustainable Construction Network. STSD are delighted to announce that the Housing Corporation have agreed to fund a major part of our project to establish six sustainable construction projects in the SW region. The projects will form the basis for local delivery and action to make sustainable construction the norm for the SW region. Already, Cornwall are beginning to establish such a body and Dorset are not far behind.