



# Network

## **News**

**February 2009**

### **AECB Annual Conference**

Oxford Brookes University, 11-12 June 2009

Preliminary details are now available for the 2009 AECB Conference. This year's event 'Building for a Sustainable Future: Policy, Research and Design' will take place at Oxford Brookes University.

The programme, which is organised in association with the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development at Oxford Brookes, features a keynote presentation by Wolfgang Feist of the Passivhaus Institute, followed by 12 workshop sessions focussing on the main conference themes of policy, research and design. Workshops include:

Proposed workshops (to be confirmed)

- Building Regulations 2010, 2013, 2016
- Water efficiency: An eco-minimalist approach
- Lessons for Eco-Towns
- Delivering Passivhaus refurbished homes in the UK
- Learning how to do building performance feedback - public buildings
- Building performance feedback for UK homes
- Using new materials in refurbishments - homes and offices
- Myth-busting on eco-materials
- Refurbishment of tower blocks
- Specifying heat pumps
- Delivering a Passivhaus office in the UK
- Testing for airtightness

The following four workshops will be delivered by Wolfgang Feist and these are limited to 20 per workshop on a first come, first served basis. Each delegate may attend only one of these workshops.

- Why high performance insulation? Can you insulate too much?
- Do we need triple glazing?
- The role of ventilation By Wolfgang Feist
- Why passive houses? Why heat recovery? Why operable windows? Why 15kWh/(m<sup>2</sup>a)? Why?

Additional features include a review of selected refurbished houses from the Oxford area and beyond, a closing plenary panel session and an exhibition.

Further information and online booking will be available on the AECB website very shortly. Enquiries concerning the conference and the exhibition should be directed to [karen@bluezulumarketing.co.uk](mailto:karen@bluezulumarketing.co.uk)

### **Ecobuild Earls Court**

3rd – 6th March – Stand No. 1582

Don't forget if you are visiting Eco Build this year pop over to the AECB stand and say hello and if you have some spare time we can always use a bit of labour chatting to the punters and giving out leaflets etc. Any way you can encourage exhibitors and visitors to join the AECB would be very welcome. More info from [geoff.biy@homecall.co.uk](mailto:geoff.biy@homecall.co.uk)

### **Homebuilding & Renovating Show**

Birmingham NEC 19th – 22nd March

The AECB has been asked to run the "ask the experts" desk in the ecobuilding section of the show. We did this last year and it was very busy and successful. The aim was not to give definitive advice but to point people in the right direction. Those who used the desk clearly liked getting neutral advice after spending a lot of time being sold stuff that may well

have been inappropriate. If you are planning to visit the show it would be good to see you. Free tickets available from [geoff.biy@homecall.co.uk](mailto:geoff.biy@homecall.co.uk)

### **Special Offer From The Phone Coop**

We're offering 2 months FREE line rental if you move to us before 31st March. That holds whether you have a single analogue line or thirty ISDN channels. The savings don't end there: our analogue lines are 13% cheaper than BT, and you could save up to 25% on digital lines too.

The transfer process is simple, with no down-time, even if you have broadband services on your line.

Call 0845 458 9070 to discuss how we can save you money.

If you don't need line rental just now, remember that around 90% of businesses who contact us are able to cut costs. Call us for any of your data or telecoms needs.

Remember to quote AECB AF0130, the AECB has an affinity scheme with the phone coop so that we both benefit.

### **Second Nature Gains Environmental Accreditation**

Ecological insulation expert Second Nature has been awarded the ISO 14001 accreditation, confirming that the firm's business practices are as environmentally responsible as the products it manufactures. The ISO 14001 accreditation testifies that Second Nature, manufacturer of market leading natural fibre insulation brand Thermafleecce, operates an Environmental Management System (EMS) that complies with the requirements of ISO 14001:2004.

Commenting on the news, Christine Armstrong of Second Nature said: "We pride ourselves on producing thermal insulation products developed from sustainable, natural resources in order to minimise environmental impact. It therefore made sense to us as a business to adopt this ethos in every aspect of our day-to-day operations, from the suppliers we use and the manufacturing processes we adopt, to the light bulbs in our office and the waste we recycle. We're thrilled that these efforts have now officially been recognised."

The environmental policy which has earned Second Nature ISO 14001 certification also encompasses the firm's commitment to helping others when it comes to energy efficiency and ecological measures.

Christine continued: "One thing that has been central to Second Nature since the beginning is that fact that we aren't just seen as a manufacturer. The team behind Thermafleecce and our other products have a wealth of expertise in ecological solutions for the building and renovation industry. We are therefore extremely well equipped to offer advice and guidance to customers in order to help them achieve maximum environmental efficiencies on their projects."

For more information on Second Nature, or to arrange a consultation with a technical advisor, please visit [www.secondnatureuk.com](http://www.secondnatureuk.com) or call 017684 86285.

### **The 'Tea Cosy' Effect! Green Building Store Launches New Passivhaus Range**

Leading environmental construction products supplier Green Building Store is today (Wednesday 7th January 2009) launching an extensive range of Passivhaus products and services which it hopes will help facilitate the uptake of Passivhaus design and construction in the UK. Green Building Store's new Passivhaus range can help the UK construction industry create buildings which use 90% less energy for space heating than standard UK buildings.

Green Building Store believes Passivhaus design offers the most effective - and cost-effective - strategy for 'low carbon' construction in the UK. Passivhaus design is based on the principle that reducing heating loss to the minimum is the most cost-effective way of creating a low carbon building. Instead of complicated design and expensive bolt-on renewables, Passivhaus design relies on a simple 'tea cosy' effect maximising the use of super insulation and stringent airtightness. By combining this with passive solar gain and mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems, Passivhaus design can create healthy and comfortable buildings that require minimal heating.

Green Building Store's Passivhaus range brings together under one roof many of Europe's leading Passivhaus products, introducing a number of them for the first time to the UK market.

The new Passivhaus products and services include:

- Passivhaus windows/ doors: Among the most thermally-efficient windows/ doors available in the UK, with whole window U values as low as 0.65 W/m<sup>2</sup>K. Available in FSC 100% timber or timber/ fibreglass composite.
- Pro Clima airtightness membranes and tapes: Airtightness products using high performance tapes and 'intelligent' vapour checks can help buildings achieve the high levels of airtightness required for Passivhaus buildings, as well as protecting building structures from condensation, mould, rot and damp.
- PAUL Comfort Ventilation (MVHR) systems: Comfort Ventilation (also known as Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery) is an essential part of Passivhaus building design and helps ensure high quality ventilation while retaining heat in the building, through use of a highly efficient heat exchanger.
- Design & Build: Green Building Store's sister company Green Building Co. now offers a Passivhaus and 'low carbon' design and build service in the West Yorkshire and the North-West regions.

Green Building Store's Passivhaus products will be showcased at this year's Ecobuild (Stand 1833). Green Building Store Director Chris Herring will be speaking at this year's Ecobuild on the urgent need for Passivhaus design in the UK (Ecobuild 'road to zero carbon' seminar 'Creating a Passivhaus culture' Tuesday 3rd March 2009 10.30am).

For more information on Green Building Store's new Passivhaus products and services go to: [www.passivhausproducts.co.uk](http://www.passivhausproducts.co.uk) or ring: 01484 461705.

## **Sustainable Building Courses Get RIBA Approval**

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has approved a range of courses for sustainable building developed by amazonails, the leading strawbale building organisation based in Todmorden, West Yorkshire. This approval makes amazonails a member of the RIBA CPD Providers Network. The courses are delivered by amazonails at its training centre in Todmorden and other locations in the UK, on real builds around the UK and overseas, and at the premises of construction professionals such as architects, building surveyors, local authorities, housing associations and building contractors. Courses will also be available as evening classes in the future.

There are 18 courses in the RIBA-approved amazonails programme. The course year consists of a rolling programme which includes the straw bale and associated building techniques that are within amazonails' standard designs. These include cement free foundations, straw bale wall building and associated timber, sustainable roofing, and lime and clay plastering. There are different options depending on the participant's level of previous experience, so they can have a purely practical course, a theoretical introduction, or do a week long course to learn about building with bales from the base plate to the roof. There is even a planning and preparation course for self-builders, the topics ranging from an introduction to the different regulatory bodies involved in house building, through an overview of the code for sustainable homes to an insight in designing your own home.

There are other amazonails courses in preparation and some, aimed at self-builders, which are delivered by amazonails-approved expert trainers. Courses for self-builders include topics such as building an earth oven, cob-building, and green wood working.

Full information on courses, with prices, locations, dates and times, is continuously updated and available on the amazonails website [www.amazonails.org.uk](http://www.amazonails.org.uk), by emailing [info@amazonails.org.uk](mailto:info@amazonails.org.uk) or telephoning 0845 458 2173.

## **Defining Zero Carbon Homes And Non Domestic Buildings**

Communities and Local government are holding a consultation on the definition of Zero Carbon Homes and Non-Domestic Buildings responses must be in by 18 March 2009 the background document can be downloaded for free from [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/zerocarbondefinition](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/zerocarbondefinition)

## **Biomass Could Make Massive Savings On Heating Costs – Carbon Trust.**

Businesses and the public sector could make massive savings on energy bills by switching from oil, gas or electric heating to biomass boilers, according to the Carbon Trust. Heating buildings currently accounts for just under half of the UK's carbon emissions. But moving to biomass systems could cut carbon emissions from fossil fuel heating systems by as much as 90%.

Although burning biomass such as wood does release CO<sub>2</sub>, the emission is offset by the CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed during the growth of the original biomass or during growth of new biomass. Biomass has a number of advantages, he adds. Not only will it help meet the UK's renewable energy targets, it makes use of waste that might otherwise end up in landfill and it could even create new 'green' jobs.

But the most pressing for businesses in the current economic environment is cost. The greatest savings can be made by small to medium scale systems, particularly where there is no access to gas. The heating costs for a typical school, which amount to around 1600 MWh per year, could be cut by up to £50,000 a year by switching from an oil-based system to one relying on wood or straw.

To encourage businesses and organisations to make the switch, the Carbon Trust has today launched Biomass Heating, A Practical Guide. The organisation also offers interest-free loans of up to £200,000 to help make the switch. The move is being supported by the Forestry Commission who is working to make an additional two million tonnes of wood available each year by 2020 for use in biomass boilers.

For further information: [www.carbontrust.co.uk/biomass](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/biomass), [www.forestry.gov.uk/](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/)

## **Construction To Start On 'Natural' House**

Construction on a low-energy home built from 'natural' materials will start on next week at the BRE Innovation Park in Watford. The project, which is being supported by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, will aim to demonstrate energy savings during building and use. The Natural House will be built from materials that have either been grown or taken from the ground.

Walls, for example, will be built from aerated clay blocks with an external lime and hemp render. The high levels of thermal insulation provided by the blocks will be augmented with an internal layer of woodfibre board. Construction of the Natural House will be simple – aiming to demonstrate that low-carbon doesn't have to mean complex or require specialist training.

As much as possible, the Natural House will use local materials and local labour to minimise transport-related emissions and make future repairs as easy and inexpensive as possible. Materials will also be sourced with an eye on recyclability. The Natural House will be the first built at BRE that uses all natural materials.

For further information: [www.princes-foundation.org/](http://www.princes-foundation.org/) [www.bre.co.uk/innovationpark](http://www.bre.co.uk/innovationpark)

## **ISO Launches Standard For Energy Efficiency Of Buildings**

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has launched a new standard for the building industry to help increase energy efficiency. The new International Standard ISO 23045:2008 provides specific design guidelines for new buildings and building mechanical equipment to reduce energy demand. It focuses on the collection of information, the iterative processes used to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and obtaining target values for energy efficiency labelling.

As well as buildings, ISO 23045:2008 can be applied to heating, cooling, lighting, hot water, ventilation and control systems. The buildings sector is one of the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions but has great potential for improvements in energy efficiency, which will reduce these emissions. Other ISO standards related to building environment design and the indoor environment are covered by the 16813 family.

For further information: [www.iso.org/iso/home.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm)

### **Northern Ireland Introduces Rate Rebate For Energy Efficient Homes**

The Northern Ireland Executive has announced the introduction of rate rebates for energy efficient homes in the region. As part of Finance Minister Nigel Dodds' economic package, homeowners will qualify for rate rebates if they undertake energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation. Under the scheme, homes that are improved to reach zero-carbon standards will be exempt from rates for up to five years, while exceeding level six of the code for sustainable homes will qualify owners for a two-year exemption.

However, eager homeowners will have to wait until spring 2010 for the introduction of the measures.

For further information: [www.northernireland.gov.uk/](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/)

Source: EEN Buildings News 20 January

### **Few Brits Interested In Improving Energy Efficiency, Says Survey**

A survey of over 1700 Brits by npower reveals only a disappointing 3% are considering making 'green' New Year's resolutions to improve energy efficiency and reduce consumption. Around half of respondents said they had no plans to make their homes more energy efficient, despite the financial savings this could garner. Most energy savings measures are too expensive or difficult to implement, say survey respondents. Only 8% of those surveyed said they had plans to install double glazing and only 6% to insulate their hot water tank.

Even easy options such as switching to energy efficient light bulbs and turning off electrical appliances when not in use gathered support from only 15% of respondents. npower are launching a UK-wide ad campaign featuring Wallace and Gromit offering energy efficiency tips.

For further information: [www.npower.com/web/At\\_home/index.htm](http://www.npower.com/web/At_home/index.htm)

## **Events**

### **The Green Register Events**

12 February 2009 - The CREATE Centre, Bristol - South West Checklist Training

The South West Checklist ([www.checklistsouthwest.org.uk](http://www.checklistsouthwest.org.uk)), developed by Future Foundations and the BRE, was created to help planners and developers achieve best practice in built environment sustainable development in the South West. The Checklist is available online and in order to assist with understanding how to use this invaluable tool, The Green Register and Bristol City Council are holding a half-day seminar which will demonstrate in practical terms how to use it. Planning authorities, local developers and private practitioners will be invited to allow cross-disciplinary discussion and to facilitate understanding across the professions. Speakers include Lesley Seymour, former director of Future Foundations; Celia Beeson, Climate Change and Built Environment Co-ordinator at Bristol City Council and Lucy Pedler, director of The Green Register.

Cost: free to attend, but places must be booked in advance

26 February 2009 - The CREATE Centre, Bristol - 'Build Tight, Ventilate Right'

Most of the techniques for achieving a low energy building are well documented but in practice the standards aimed for are often not achieved through lack of understanding about what makes a highly insulated, airtight, energy efficient building. This one-day course will explain the straightforward building techniques that can achieve this and what can be done on site to improve build quality.

The afternoon will include an on-site demonstration of an airtightness test, examination of best practice detailing (with full size models) and an opportunity for the delegates to discuss detailing the external envelope to achieve the 'build tight, ventilate right' aim.

Cost: £140 for members, £175 for non-members to include lunch

12/13 March 2009 – Phoenix Centre, Exeter - Sustainable Building and Services - the introductory course

This two-day course provides an ideal opportunity for delegates to learn about the essential issues surrounding sustainable building practices and to network with like-minded individuals across a range of disciplines. This course is held several times a year throughout the UK and completion of this course is a requirement for those wishing to become members of The Green Register. For full details please see our website: [www.greenregister.org.uk](http://www.greenregister.org.uk).

Cost: £295 per person

2 April 2009 - The CREATE Centre, Bristol - 'Low Carbon Technologies - the advanced course'

This one-day course will explain the operation, application and limitations of all low carbon technologies

(LCT) including important non-renewable technologies such as energy efficiency and CHP. Delegates will look at technologies that are likely to be at the forefront of sustainable energy provision as it moves into the mainstream.

A wholly practical approach will be used through a combination of the spreadsheet models, case studies and role play. The attendees will be shown a number of insights into how low carbon buildings will be delivered to the mainstream and the tools and understanding they will need to develop in order to be at the forefront of this exciting and challenging field.

Cost: £140 for members, £175 for non-members to include lunch

23/24 April 2009 – Belfast Sustainable Building and Services - the introductory course See 12/13 March above

4 June 2009 – Roots & Shoots, London - 'Build Tight, Ventilate Right' See 26 February above.

10 June 2009 – Priory Street Centre, York - 'Low Carbon Technologies - the advanced course' See 2 April above

11/12 June 2009 – Cardiff - Sustainable Building and Services - the introductory course. See 12/13 March above

18 June 2009 – Bristol - Sustainable Development Seminar

Speakers at this fascinating conference include Patrick Brown of The British Property Federation and Celia Beeson of Bristol City Council giving both the national and regional perspectives. Both domestic and commercial aspects of new legislation relating to retrofit as well as new build construction will be covered.

Three important local case studies will be illustrated by developers who have been able to successfully address some of the key issues such as integration of renewable energy technologies on site, lower water consumption and Site Waste Management Plans:

The seminar is suitable for developers and architects alike as well as local authorities and will provide plenty of opportunities to discuss these pressing issues.

Cost: £150 for members, £180 for non-members to include lunch

2/3 July 2009 – Roots & Shoots, London Sustainable Building and Services - the introductory course See 12/13 March above

The TGR have several other events in the pipeline so please visit our website - [www.greenregister.org.uk](http://www.greenregister.org.uk) - for more details. In addition to these events open to the public, The Green Register will be continuing to run its in-house CPD sessions to various public and private organisations. Please phone on 0117 377 3490 or email [mail@greenregister.org.uk](mailto:mail@greenregister.org.uk), if you would like any further information on in-house presentations as we can customise a wide range of topics to suit your requirements.

### **Eco Home Tours Near Newport, Pembrokeshire.**

Visit 6 homes and a community.

Talk to the residents about their wind, water, and sun sourced electricity, various wood stoves and ranges including the Lohburger, different solar thermal, PVs, GSHP, reed bed, natural building techniques and materials, projects ranging from £200 to £200,000. Also compact and communal lifestyles, shared vegetable gardens, electric vehicles, reedbed sanitation, pv pumps, etc.

On a 3 mile walk through woods, lanes and quiet roads near Newport Pembs, with a film and social option for the early evening.

Cost £10. Booking essential.

Sundays March 1st, probably monthly thereafter.

For more information contact Vicky Moller 01239 820971, or email [vickymoller@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:vickymoller@ukonline.co.uk)

## **Courses**

### **CPD Seminar – Lime: Traditional Building Materials For Today's World.**

Wednesday 25th February 2009 from 10am to 12 noon, coffee at 9.30am. Golden Grove Village Hall, Gelli Aur, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

You are invited to a RIBA accredited CPD event.

- principles of 'breathing' buildings and the importance of this in maintaining the fabric of traditional buildings
- different types of lime available (fat and hydraulic limes) and the appropriate selection for different buildings
- marrying the new to the old with particular reference to Part L of Building Regulations

RSVP by Friday 20th February:

Nell Hellier, Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd, Carmarthenshire County Council, Civic Offices, Crescent Road, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6HW. Phone 01558 824271, email: [NHellier@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:NHellier@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

## **Courses At Ty Mawr Lime Nr. Brecon.**

- Introduction to Lime, Friday 6th March, Friday 3rd April

A one day course designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to lime in building. The day starts with an illustrated talk on the properties and use of lime in building. It then focuses on practical demonstrations and hands-on work including building and pointing, plastering and lime washing.

- Lime Plastering, Friday 13th March, Friday 17th April

This one day course focuses on practical demonstrations and hands-on work using both fat lime putty and hydraulic lime plasters. Suitable for homeowners and contractors.

Further details from [mike.scruby@lime.org.uk](mailto:mike.scruby@lime.org.uk) or visit [www.lime.org.uk](http://www.lime.org.uk)

## **Scottish Environmental Design Assoc. (SEDA) Course**

Design and use of massive timber/ Brettstappel in Scotland

11th February. Netherbow Theatre at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, High Street, Edinburgh EH1, 13:00 to 18:00hrs

Massive timber is a form of construction that is increasingly finding its place in the market here as a result of regulatory change, environmental concerns and use of modern methods of construction (MMC). This event will provide an update of the introductory conference held in Birnam, Perthshire in 2006 and a progress report on the use of massive timber - including presentations of current projects, the pros and cons of the technology, the commercial potential for massive timber as a future use for Scottish Timber and an examination of the impact, choosing these materials may have, on the Scottish Forest resource and land-use ecology.

Cost: £5 students/ £8 SEDA members/ £12 non members

Cheques to be made payable to "SEDA" and sent to: SEDA, 15 High Street, Belford, NE70 7NG. Enquiries to Mary Kelly, email: [mary@segselfbuild.co.uk](mailto:mary@segselfbuild.co.uk)

## **Publications**

### **The Green Guide To Specification – Fourth Edition**

Authors, Jane Anderson, David Shiers and Kristian Steele

Publisher, IHS BRE Press, Reference – BR501, ISBN 978-1-84806-071-5

Price £69.50, Subscriber Price £50.00

The fourth edition of The Green Guide to Specification has been revised and updated by BRE to provide designers and specifiers with easy-to-use guidance on making the best environmental choices when selecting construction materials and components. It is more comprehensive than its predecessors and contains more than 1200 specifications used in six generic building types: commercial, educational, healthcare, retail, residential and industrial.

The Guide provides robust information to assist decision-making by translating numerical life-cycle assessment data into a simple A+ to E scale of environmental ratings, enabling specifiers to make meaningful comparisons between materials and components. The performance of each specification is measured against a range of environmental impacts, including climate change, toxicity, fossil fuel and ozone depletion, levels of emissions and pollutants, and mineral and water extraction. The principal building elements covered are floors, roofs, walls, windows, insulation and landscaping.

The Green Guide to Specification is an essential tool for architects, surveyors, building managers and property owners seeking to reduce the environmental impact of their buildings by informed and responsible selection of construction materials and components.

For more information contact IHS BRE Press, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, RG12 8FB. Phone 01344 328038, email [brepres@ihs.com](mailto:brepres@ihs.com) or visit [www.ihsbrepres.com](http://www.ihsbrepres.com)

*If you have any news, events or courses you would like to publicise in Network then please email details to [network@aecb.net](mailto:network@aecb.net), or post to Chris Lord-Smith, y Graig, Llidiart-y-Waen, Llanidloes, SY18 6JT.*