

The Seed



You spoke. We listened. Our Ecovercity Newspaper

Issue 1

Summer 2008

- Water, water, everywhere...
... so why do we have to pay?
- Sodexo: you have your say.
- Ecovercity. What is it?



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Main stories

Water, water, everywhere ... so why do we have to pay?

We have the best mains water in the world (probably) so why don't we have access to it and why are we buying non-sustainable bottled water? 'The Seed' investigates....

What's in a bin? Why and how recycling is being rolled out across campus, why all bins aren't the same and what rubbish goes where – in photos.

How do you get 1,000 students to clear up after themselves?

Answer: ask them nicely. 'The Seed' applauds students attending the Party on the Amp and the 'Bag it up' project for successfully clearing all the event rubbish up.

Regular features

Everyone 'doing their bit': How individual University Community members show their care for the environment.
Campus Views
Wild Living
The 10,000 Tin Can Man

What is Ecoversity? In this issue 'The Seed' explains Task Groups; where do they come from, what do they do and who are the members?

Notes from a novice: Lou Commerford-Boyes gives us the first chapter of her adventures of a more sustainable lifestyle; in this issue - 'worm drama'.

You have your say: In this issue; questioning Sodexo, extending lunch hours, and banning Coca-Cola – uncensored but respectful debate.

Articles

Sunshine power: The Ecoversity office expert explains why we don't have solar panels on the Atrium.

Party on the Amp: Tom Lawfield reports on the students' end of year bash.

Free Shop: Jen Fox reports on a successful way to recycle through giving and taking

Editorial

“ There should be more awareness. If everyone takes part then it's definitely useful...but everyone needs to be on board ” [Tom Wilson: student]

This was the comment from one of our students about Ecoversity, a comment echoed throughout the three campuses. But how does 'awareness' happen? How can everyone 'take part' and 'be on board'? Especially when people might not be completely sure what Ecoversity is.

“ Ecoversity is just about being more Green, isn't it? ”

[Anonymous]

And this, in part, is true, but Ecoversity is about so much more. Our environment isn't just physical, but social too.

“ It needs to be more of a community endeavour ” [Susan Wilson, Unison Rep on campus]

...and so there needs to be more communication. 'The Seed' is the beginning of this communication. It is a newspaper that will be published four times a year in line with the seasons and will be a space for 'everyone' within the University to communicate with each other about the things they believe to be important to our becoming an Ecoversity.

For some people this will be the way the University recycles its rubbish (see page 8) and for others it will be about how the campus makes them feel, (see Campus Views).

Some people may want to express their opinions about what is being taught and others about how we are teaching. Others will want to campaign about issues they feel passionate about, for example Sue Edgeley's call to bring back the lunch hour (see page 11).

The idea is that the 'The Seed' provides a space in which all members of the University Community can respectfully express themselves ... a space in which all our ideas of Ecoversity can grow ...



CAMPUS VIEWS

In response to the newsletter published earlier this year, some members of the University Community expressed what appealed to them about the campus through photography.



'Shadow Trees' was photographed on the Main Campus by Fiona Stewart ©



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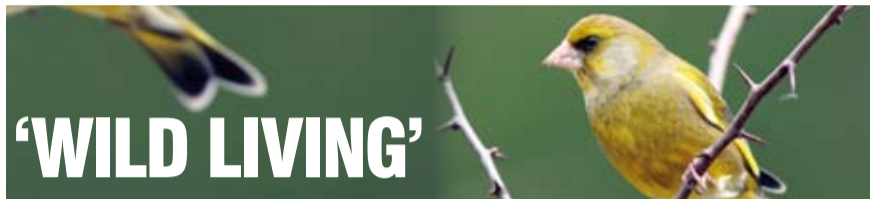


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EVERYONE 'DOING THEIR BIT'

Some of you may have attended the two Ecoversity conferences [see page 6] and some of you may have seen the Ecoversity newsletter published earlier this year. Whatever the reason, many of you have expressed the idea that, while as individuals you feel you are "doing your bit", as a community it seems that others are "not doing theirs". Logically, this doesn't add up. If, as individuals most people are doing a little, as a group we must be doing a lot – we just don't know about it. So this, and hopefully future issues of 'The Seed', will feature what individuals in the University are doing in relation to both the physical and social environment, starting with the examples featured below ...



Steph, the cheerful woman who works in Jazzman's, just loves the wild life – indeed her face lights up as she describes the experience of a robin perching on her finger as: "...one of those special moments in my life".

Steph goes on to describe her garden as home to a large collection of birds, which she names with enthusiasm and with no obvious preference between usual species such as Great and Blue tits and rarer varieties, for example Greenfinches. Steph appears just to love all animals regardless of status – so her dogs are always from the rescue centre and she is as impressed with the two grey squirrels she feeds as with the majestic black rooks that nest at the foot of the garden.

"One day last Spring, my dog and I found a baby bird that had fallen from its nest into my garden. It was still alive but obviously distressed and apparently unable to fly. I rang the RSPB for advice – I thought maybe I should try and put it back in its nest – but the RSPB said to leave it because the parent birds would come and fetch it. I took their advice and watched as the parent birds flew back and forth, over the baby bird, calling to it – it was like they were encouraging it and telling it what to do. Eventually, the baby bird picked itself up and flew – it was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen ... I could hardly believe it".

Steph relates to the environment through her love of wildlife and would like to see Ecoversity encourage more wildlife into the University environment. From discussions around campus, she is not alone; it would be interesting to find out what people's suggestions are for how more wildlife could be encouraged.

CAMPUS VIEWS



'Hidden depths' was photographed at Heaton Mount Campus by Debbie Alstead ©

THE 10,000 CAN MAN

John Waller, former Senior Assistant Secretary and now an International Officer, was caught putting tins into the recycling bin on F-floor Richmond. When asked where these tins had come from John explained that he collected them on his way to work:

"I have for the past year been walking to work at least three times a week and collecting all the stray aluminium cans that I encounter on the way".

One morning, John decided to count them, and on that occasion he found he had collected 145. Out of curiosity he continued to count his collection on a daily basis.

He occasionally finds that, Pied Piper-like, he trails a group of curious youngsters behind him, pointing out ones he has missed.



"Since 8th August 2007 I have been logging the numbers of cans, and on 19th May 2008 I achieved the 10,000 mark. That's a lot of cans not chucked into landfill. I only count tins I have collected on the streets, and do not include all the domestic tins I would have recycled anyway. The average cull per two-mile walk is about 50."

This deserved further investigation; which streets was he talking about, how far was he walking, how did he carry all these cans and how much effort did he put into finding them? John answered that he lived about two miles from the University, and although he varied his route to and from work he limited his can collection only to the verges and gutters of the streets he was walking. He carried his cans in a supermarket plastic bag, explaining that:

"They often need emptying before I squash them flat under foot and this means it can be quite a sticky process. You do need a good hand wash after depositing the tins into the appropriate bin."

John said that the majority of comments from the public were positive. Adults want to know how much money he gets for them, but children are especially intrigued. He occasionally finds that, Pied Piper-like, he trails a group of curious youngsters behind him, pointing out ones he has missed. Generally the public not only acknowledged but praised his actions, wishing more people would do what he was doing.

It is interesting to speculate what the campus would look like if we were all inspired to pick up just some of the recyclable rubbish we found when walking across campus. Although perhaps not all of us are likely to be as industrious as John, as he concludes:

"Who knows, maybe it will lead to all manner of professorial and administrative staff scouring the mean streets of the city picking stuff up from the gutters and secreting it away in plastic bags... or maybe not."

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE but where do we find free, fresh drinking water?

Summer is here alongside the desire for cool, refreshing, pure drinking water. Given the UK can boast some of the cleanest mains water provision on the planet it seems astonishing that it is so difficult to find fresh, free drinking water in our University.

Water Facts



Did you know that last year University departments spent more than £33,000 buying bottled water for use in their offices?

Or that the annual sales of bottled water through all SODEXO catering outlets on campus is 37,440 bottles?

Shocking, isn't it?

Here we are in a country that has some of the best drinking water from the tap in the world and we are buying bottled water.¹

But that's not all. 81% of the water we purchase in the UK comes in plastic bottles. In an article in The Observer in February this year, Lucy Siegle highlighted the ecological damage that is being done through plastic packaging and not just through the transportation of water from overseas.²

Over the last few months the Ecoversity Food and Drink Task Group has been working with Estates and Facilities and Sodexo, the University's catering suppliers, looking at how the University might be able to reduce (and even to eradicate) the use of bottled water on campus.

One of the things we have been looking at is how we can reintroduce drinking fountains around the campus. These fountains have gradually been phased out over the last few years, partly in response to concerns about *Legionella*. However, studies have shown that, if basic precautions are carried out, public drinking fountains are safe and in fact many people may actually end up drinking bottled water that is dirtier than that they can get from taps.

Water Plans

The first step for the reintroduction of drinking fountains is to put them into catering outlets around the campus and then in other areas with large footfall. The next phase is to have water fountains in each building.

The other important element is to build fountains into plans for new buildings or refurbishment of buildings, wherever possible. The main difficulty with installing drinking fountains is making sure water cannot stagnate in pipes as this can be a cause of *Legionella*. Estates and Facilities are currently assessing appropriate locations around campus to ensure that drinking water will be fresh.

Once we have drinking fountains in catering areas on campus the plan is (with the agreement of Sodexo) to phase out the sale of bottled water in catering outlets. As far as office water coolers go, we hope that, with good drinking water available, staff will choose not to buy bottled water and by doing so will not only save money but also be doing their bit to help save the planet.

Alison Darnbrough

Director of Academic Administration and Chair of the Food and Drink Task Group

footnotes

1. The latest figures published by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) show that 99.94% of Yorkshire Water samples in 2006 comply with some of the most stringent health, related standards in the world.
2. 'It's Just Water Right?' Lucy Siegle, The Observer, Sunday February 10 2008.
3. <http://www.iphe.org.uk/health/legionnaires.html>
4. Journal of Applied Medical Biology <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=203798>



“but I like my water chilled!”

A direct mains-fed Yorkshire Water Cooler only chills the water that is being used to fill a cup. The benefit of this method is that energy costs are significantly reduced compared to continuous chill.

The carbon saving is in the order of 300kg/yr of CO₂ compared to continuous chill or 4 tonnes of CO₂ per year compared to bottled, assuming a use of two bottles per week and a 50-mile journey for the delivery vehicle.

The only trade-offs are that the water is about 1 to 2 degrees warmer, but still chilled, when compared to reservoir-chilled and the flow rate is reduced slightly at 22 litres per hour which means, for example, a 7oz cup will fill in less than 5 seconds.

For more details please see Yorkshire water website follow the link:

yorcooler.com.

What you say about water

One fifth of comments about food and drink at the last Ecoversity Conference (April 2008) were about water!

No bottled drinks – use large cartons and glasses

Provide drinking taps around campus

Provide free water in refectories

Get rid of water coolers and replace with filtered tap water

Use re-usable water bottles (glass) for meetings...
Or jugs

Put up signs to water sources

Provide refill points for water placed near to where water is sold

Reduce use of plastic bottles

and we are not alone...

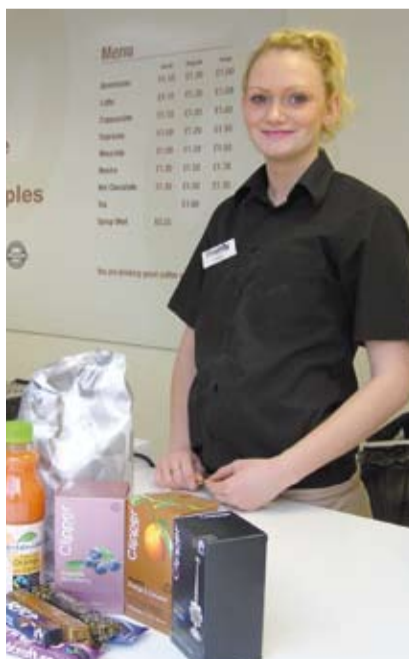
“[...] is it not time, when we are looking at environmental change and the enormous environmental costs of bottled water, that the House of Commons stopped preaching to the rest of the country and started to reduce its use of bottled water, to use tap water and to stop all the waste of the empty bottles, too?”

John Spellar M.P.
(Debate in House of Commons: 8th October 2007)

...wouldn't it be brilliant if University of Bradford led the way?

“The Atrium should be solar panelled. There should be more solar panelling across the University.”

Charlie, Coffee With Principles, Atrium



SUNSHINE POWER

Good point. You would think that solar panels were a good idea – especially given the amount of sunlight the Atrium gets.

Firstly, what are solar panels? Solar panels are flat plates made of a combination of materials that converts sunlight (photons) to electrons which can be captured to generate electricity. Another form of solar energy, known as solar thermal, captures energy from sunlight to heat up water. Both types use panels so the ones that generate electricity are called photo-voltaics.

Secondly, when the Atrium was designed in 2005 the decision was made to use the material EFTE – a plastic material which has the advantage of being very light in weight, allowing transmission of natural light and having excellent energy efficiency properties. Once that decision was made, it was not possible to add solar panels.

Okay – if not the Atrium, why not have solar panels on other buildings. Surely

an Ecoversity should have solar panels. However the economics of solar energy is quite complex and depends on how much sunshine there is, capital costs and the amount of electricity you actually use. The Ecoversity programme investigated using solar panels for the campus and found that the cost of installing the current generation of solar panels - even at today's energy prices - would not pay for itself in terms of energy saved for around 35 years.

So thirdly, the more efficient – but less visible – energy generating installation for the University is the biomass boiler, which provides more sustainable energy than solar panels and is more cost efficient. [details in Ecoversity briefing paper: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/ecoversity/carbon/#biomass>].

Ecoversity continues to explore new renewable energy technologies and maintain an open mind. It would be really interesting to hear what you have to say on these issues ...



WHAT IS ECOVERSITY?: TASK GROUPS

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM, WHAT DO THEY DO AND WHO ARE THE MEMBERS?

Each season 'The Seed' will try to answer the question; 'What is Ecovercity?' by explaining one aspect. In this first edition Task Groups will be explained.

Interviews conducted with delegates attending an Ecovercity Conference held in November 2007 clearly showed that there was little awareness of what Task Groups were and that they had been set up to address issues arising from an earlier Conference. The articles and diagrams below and opposite seek to redress this and explain what task groups are, where they came from, what they are for and who makes up the membership.

HOW TASK GROUPS DEVELOPED

When the University set out to be an Ecovercity we didn't really know how to do it. What do you have to do to change the way people think about their work and their surroundings? Because that's what the Ecovercity 'vision' was: not just about being green, or planting trees for bugs, or recycling, or being 'environmentally friendly.'

It's about sustainability: thinking about everything we do so that we automatically ask what the most sustainable thing to do is; what would be best both financially, and environmentally, not just now, but into the future.

A project management approach doesn't really help: too 'top down driven by orders from on high', with no real understanding of what's needed. So the question was 'what do we want to do, and how do we get more people involved?'

A group of us was sent away to try and answer this question: a Pro-Vice Chancellor, a Dean, the Director of Estates, the Director of Ecovercity StuDeNt the Ecovercity Manager, the head of ASSU, and the newly-appointed student engagement officer – so newly appointed she had only met one of us before! We were sent to the Change Academy a week-long residential in the wilds of Essex, where we worked together as a team, supported by the Higher Education Academy. Change Academy is actually a "year-long programme of support for teams from higher education institutions that enables them to develop the knowledge, capacity and enthusiasm for achieving complex institutional change." (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/institutions/change>).

We used and continue to use our time together to think about what the Ecovercity is (see paragraph 1!), and how we can spread the message, and get more people involved. Change

Academy is about cascading change, so the team who go are those who can start things off, but once change starts in the University, the Change Academy team should really disappear.

One of the approaches we learned was the 'creativity workshop' approach that we have been using at the Ecovercity Conferences. At Change Academy, we practised on ourselves, and used it to define more clearly how we thought Ecovercity could work: the idea of task- and time-limited Task Groups was developed, which come together through the Ecovercity Action Group: not a committee, but a group of engaged and informed people who can lead change in specific areas through the Task Groups. Our own creativity workshop created the framework of which you are becoming a part.

The first Ecovercity Conference used the creativity workshop to define, sometimes confirm, which areas should have Task Groups, and we used the feedback from that first Conference to set the agendas for the different Task Groups: the discussions that eighty people had

on where the priority should be, and what could be done in different areas, have been given to Task Groups to work on, and they will feed back in due course – ongoing work is always to be found on the Ecovercity website:

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/ecovercity/>

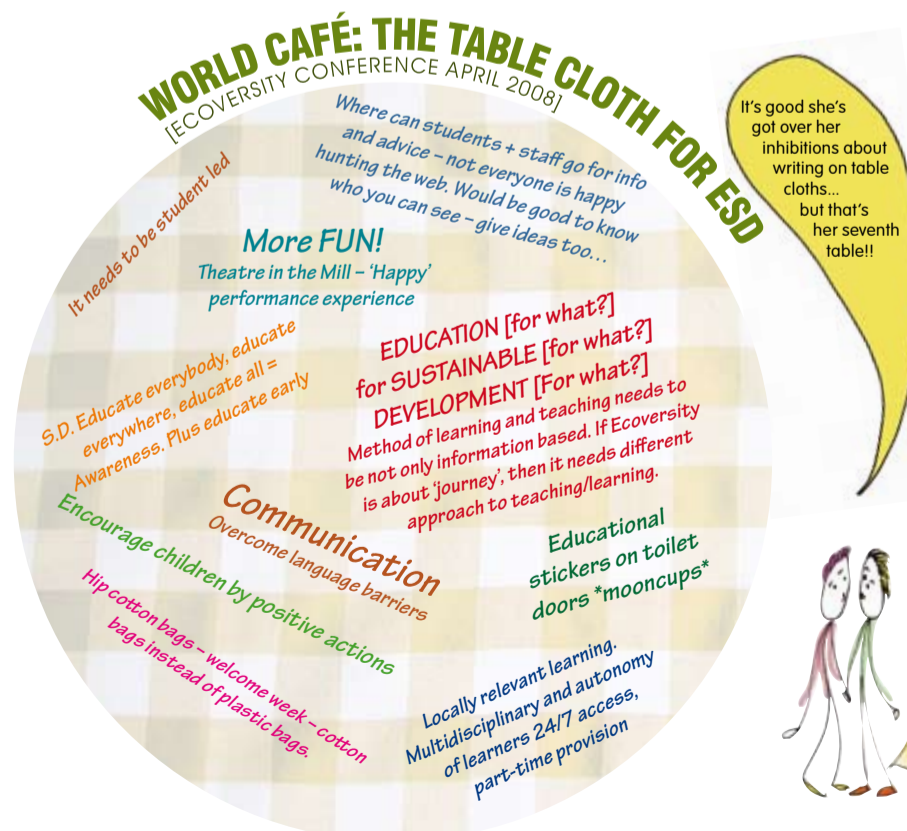
The second Ecovercity Conference used the same approach to find out how best to get you involved: that all-important student and staff engagement.

What better way than to ask the opinions of 80 more people, feed that information back into the communications strategy that is becoming such a strong part of the Ecovercity, and help the community grow!

World Café and Post-its: What goes on at an Ecovercity Conference?

The main purpose of an Ecovercity Conference is to inspire discussion about how Ecovercity can be progressed. In order that everyone participates, discussion groups are organised in different ways. For example, the exercise entitled 'The World Café' involves a number of tables, spread with paper table cloths, on which people are invited to write comments and suggestions on different topics eg: Education for Sustainable Development [ESD]. (opposite)

“ What I remember of the conference is breaking into groups and meeting people from across the University that I don't usually have the opportunity to talk with. I found the conference quite productive in that meeting people from different departments face-to-face generated some good ideas. It was refreshing to put faces to names and be able to discuss matters. My impression of the day was that essentially it had been an enjoyable experience; it wasn't a waste of time. ”



WANT TO GET INVOLVED? WHY NOT BECOME A LOCAL ACTION CHAMPION?

Ecovercity is already working with a number of groups who are taking action within their own Schools, or Planning Units. New groups include:

- the Students' Union
- Informatics
- Learner Support Services
- The Hub
- Peace Studies.

If you would like to take action in your area and would like some support (including training and access to practitioners) contact the Ecovercity Helpdesk by emailing:

ecovercity@bradford.ac.uk or calling 6929. For further info visit: www.brad.ac.uk/admin/ecovercity/localaction

Carbon and Energy

WHO'S IN CHARGE? Ian Palmer, Dean; School of Informatics
WHO'S ON IT? Staff from Estates with responsibility for energy, staff and students with an interest in action on carbon and energy waste.
BIG ISSUES: Reducing the carbon footprint of the University; improving energy efficiency; promoting and supporting use of renewables; display certificates showing energy performance of all our buildings.
WATCH OUT FOR: The new biomass boiler plant (behind the JPBL library, woodchip deliveries arriving in July); building energy ratings (October); Energy week (October).

ESD (Education for Sustainable Development)

WHO'S IN CHARGE? Geoff Layer, PVC
WHO'S ON IT? Academic staff, students and academic support staff who regard education as fundamental to making a more sustainable world.
BIG ISSUES: Promoting learning about ESD across the whole University curriculum; supporting the UN Decade for ESD; supporting ESD activity in Bradford primary and secondary schools; creating a culture of self-learning and reflection around sustainable development within the University.
WATCH OUT FOR: Student projects, activities, competitions and events to encourage student participation in sustainable development; a new learner centre committed to ESD; all taught programmes and teaching activity including ESD.

Local Action

WHO'S IN CHARGE? Sara Marsh, Director of Learner Support Services
WHO'S INVOLVED? Staff and students from different departments interested in working together to promote sustainability and action for change in the workplace. Five Local Action Groups currently up and running (Students' Union, Learner Support Services including the Disability Office, Informatics, The Hub, Peace Studies).
BIG ISSUES: Localised energy metering; communication and promotion; start-up funds for small-scale projects; support for staff time.
WATCH OUT FOR: Local action self-assessment checklist; online polls to identify key topics of interest; summer conference and celebration for members of all Local Action Groups.

Purchasing

WHO'S IN CHARGE? David Coates, Dean of Life Sciences
WHO'S INVOLVED? Purchasing Office of University; purchasing representatives from Schools; Deputy Director of Finance and members of Estate staff.
BIG ISSUES: Sustainability Criteria used in all purchasing contracts; assessing our current suppliers, green credentials; ethical, social and environmentally responsible investment policies of the University.
WATCH OUT FOR: 100% recycled paper; phasing out of plastic bags; buying more recycled goods.

Recycling

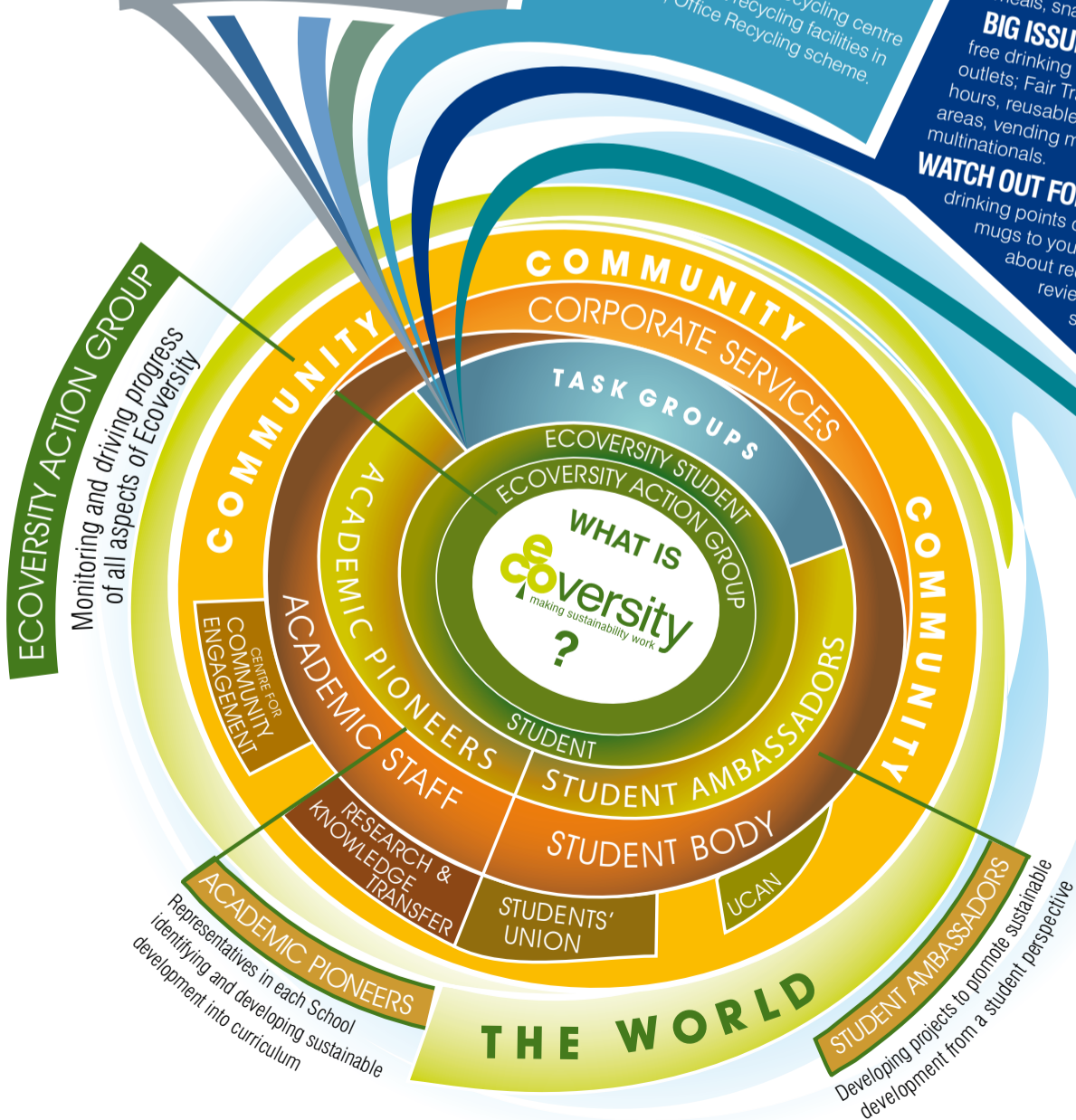
WHO'S IN CHARGE? Janet Jones, Director of Human Resources
WHO'S ON IT? Staff and students from different departments interested in recycling and reducing waste.
BIG ISSUES: Reducing our levels of waste to landfill; promoting the purchase of products with recycled content; creating a culture of waste minimisation.
WATCH OUT FOR: New recycling centre (behind JBPL); student recycling facilities in University Halls; Office Recycling scheme.

Food and Drink

WHO'S IN CHARGE? Alison Darnbrough, Director of Academic Administration
WHO'S INVOLVED? General Services Manager for Sodexo and staff and students with an appetite for developing healthier, more local, affordable, tasty and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks.
BIG ISSUES: Working out what is feasible at an affordable price; free drinking water points in all parts of the University and catering outlets; Fair Trade; food waste; access to food and drink out of normal hours, reusable drinks containers, coffee machines in serviced areas, vending machines; working with products from specific multinationals.
WATCH OUT FOR: Farmers' market; map of existing drinking points on campus; lug a mug (reusable mugs to you and me); improved signage about recycling in catering areas; review of menus offered to staff and students.

Transport

WHO'S IN CHARGE? Jeff Lucas, Deputy VC
WHO'S INVOLVED? A large number of staff and students interested in every travel issue you can imagine.
BIG ISSUES: Supporting public transport, cycling and walking; making non-car-based travel more attractive to staff and students; security and safety regardless of method of travel; redesign of car parking areas to make centre of main campus less car-dominated.
WATCH OUT FOR: Road closures (Longside Lane and Richmond Road); improved A99 service to and from Management Centre; more cycle facilities; free campus-city centre bus; demolition of Longside Halls and re-arrangement of car parking areas; better signage and more joined up green space on campus for pedestrians.



WHAT'S IN A BIN?

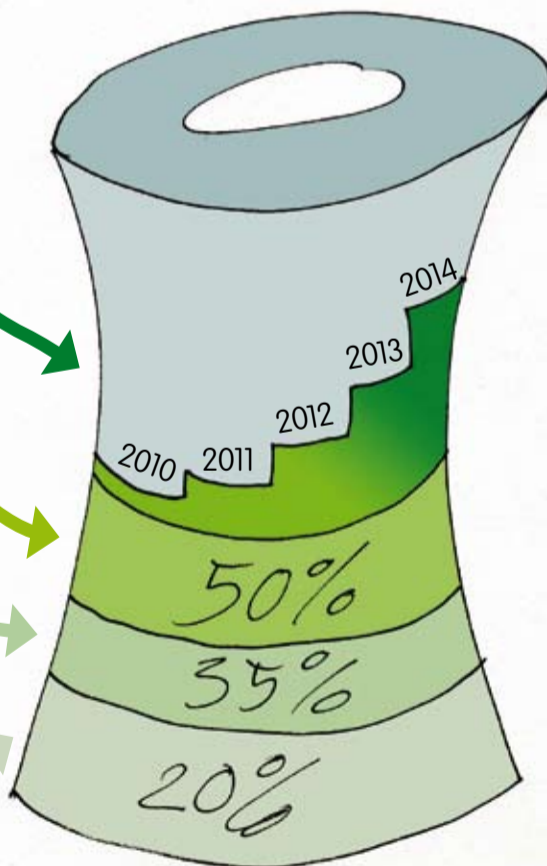
If there is one issue that gets staff and students talking whenever Ecoversity is mentioned then it's recycling. There seems to be unanimous agreement that producing so much rubbish which gets bagged up and then thrown into a big hole in the ground in Wakefield isn't a very sustainable way of running our University. So the answer to 'what's in a bin?' is currently - 'too much'.

We produce around 500 tonnes of waste from our buildings every year. That doesn't include waste from Halls of Residence, waste from demolished buildings or landscaping projects or special types of waste such as laboratory or clinical waste and hazardous chemicals. Our building waste alone costs us about £80,000 to dispose of, excluding the need to replace any materials thrown away which could be reused (it is estimated that around 25% of all the paper we throw away is only copied on one side). We've estimated that around 50% of our waste from buildings is paper or card, around 20% is metal or wood, 15% plastic (plastic is a very light product and takes up a lot of space) and 15% food or organic materials.

So what are we doing about it? Well we have had numerous attempts at introducing recycling schemes as our photo display shows. Past attempts have had varying success, often due to problems outside of our control. What this has left however is a legacy of too many different types of recycling bins in too few locations.

Up until Ecoversity got going our recycling rate was about 20%, mostly paper and glass from the Union bars areas. From this year it has been agreed to roll-out a comprehensive recycling scheme across campus using a common style of bin. These bins will be in all buildings by the end of 2008. As a result of a new set of contracts with different recycling contractors and the new approach we have increased our recycling rate to about 35%.

- With your help we can increase the amount recycled by 5% each year, resulting in 75% of University rubbish being recycled by 2014
- In 2009 our aim is to recycle
- We currently recycle approximately
- Before Ecoversity we only recycled



This is pretty good but we want to do better. We aim to achieve a rate of 50% by 2009 and increase this amount by 5% each year, resulting in 75% of University rubbish being recycled by 2014, which would be amongst the best in the sector. To achieve this requires everyone to get behind the new scheme. The team behind the recycling project is working out signage and communication to help people identify which materials and waste items go into each bin. We know that it's better not to produce the waste in the first place but this is our first step in getting to grips with our rubbish mountain. We have other projects to improve external recycling facilities and will be communicating this in the next edition. If you are interested in knowing more about the roll out or have views about recycling on campus then please get in touch.

WHY AND HOW RECYCLING IS BEING ROLLED OUT ACROSS CAMPUS.



PRE-2001 THE BIN LINER.

Amazingly some of these systems still survive in a few outposts. Essentially a bin liner held in a frame. Cheap but not very cheerful, they are also problems when the bags get full and split.

2006 THE FERRARI

Purchased for the Atrium and Northcroft buildings these elegant-looking bins are almost works of art. They are expensive and hence were brought in to reflect the ambience of those new spaces.



THE TREECYCLER

This little workhorse was introduced in early 2000 and has been very effective in helping recycle paper within office areas. This system still operates today.

2008 THE DROP AND GO

A bit more confusion was created when these bins appeared in catering outlets earlier this year. These were purchased by Sodexo to improve recycling in their areas. They seem to work quite well but it's clear we need to avoid any further types of bins



2003 THE DALEK

These heavy-duty bins are found in a few buildings on campus. They are primarily for recycling cans and metal. They are expensive and when they get full they are very heavy and difficult to empty. These will be slowly phased out.

2008 THE BINS WITH NO NAME

These bins were selected for the University scheme on the basis of appearance - people were consulted on the colour and look - the swing lids which reduce odour problems but make it easy to drop and go and their safety. We ran a test to satisfy ourselves that they could be placed in selected areas without being a fire risk.



WHAT GOES WHERE?

A CARTON OF FRUIT JUICE

A carton of fruit juice (also known as a Tetra Pak) has two parts. 1. the plastic lid goes into the plastic section of the bin and 2. the carton goes into the paper and card section of the bin.



PLASTIC SANDWICH PACKAGING

Sandwich packaging that is mainly plastic with a paper label goes into the plastic section of the bin.



FOOD REMAINS

Fruit remains, such as apple cores, currently go into the residual section of the bin. However, we hope that soon we will have composting facilities ... we'll let you know.



CARDBOARD SANDWICH PACKAGING

Sandwich packaging that is mainly cardboard with a plastic window...



...goes into the paper and card section of the bin.

COFFEE CUP

A coffee cup goes into the paper and card section of the bin. A coffee cup holder can go into the paper and card section BUT if at all possible it would be better to re-use coffee cup holders. A coffee cup plastic lid goes into the plastic section of the bin.



NOTES FROM A NOVICE EPISODE 1: WORM DRAMA

By Lou Commerford-Boyes

Engaging with sustainable development is a relatively new thing for me. I'm finding it exciting, perplexing, absorbing and frustrating in pretty much equal measure.

Having not lived anywhere with its own grass for twenty years, moving to a house with outside space (albeit a dirt garden) affords opportunity to launch myself into – for me – the uncharted waters of composting.

Firstly, this means shopping for one of those supersonic composting daleks that garden centres will kindly let you take home for £49.99. Or, it turns out, your council will happily supply (subject to your council). Mine arrived with matching kitchen caddy. The more adventurous can build their own (www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

Secondly, there is need for expert advice, and in my case this is provided courtesy of the king and queen of composting, Mum and Dad. The leaflet that came with the Dalek is also useful: 'Getting the Best from Your Composter', as is the Soil Association booklet (www.soilassociation.org)

The experts advise deciding which soil pile to move so that maximum exposure to the sun can be achieved. Luckily the final and crucial stage of setting up successful composting is to make an overly enthusiastic start and then forget about it for months on end; it says so in all the books.

The range of things that can be composted is quite varied. Yes to shredded cotton cloth and urine, no to raw meat. What can and can't be composted is something to do with the difference between aerobic activity (good) and anaerobic (not good: the composting equivalent of gangrene)

and getting the nitrogen to carbon ration right, which, according to Ms Composting 2008 with whom I share an office, means getting a good balance between the green and brown stuff. Although, apparently worms will sort this out!!!

Worms are crucially important to successful composting. Worms are something that just happens, apparently, although you can parachute them in if you are a very impatient person. It's about creating ambience though: they will vote with their feet (tummies?) if you do not nurture the right conditions for a top notch wormy happiness venue (refer to guides). I have purposely sited the composter up close to next door's in the hope that their worms have bourgeois aspirations and decide to go all semi-detached.

In eager anticipation of my composter, I hoarded kitchen waste for four weeks (not in the house, I have to say). Depositing the first lot of conserved kitchen waste (stinkily more anaerobic than aerobic but hopefully the worms will sort that out) was strangely joyful and called for a pub lunch celebration. After the initial excitement, the novelty wore off and there was a period of adjustment – old habits die hard and there were occasions when I have found myself fishing out mushroom peelings from the middle of the sack. But it became easier and there were some pleasant and unanticipated benefits; the once over-gorged and needing-to-be cleaned bin is now transformed into a streamlined, pristinely sparkling bin. Looking after the worms was not so easy. As the experts predicted, worms happened and I had become a reasonably successful landlord for these little compost-makers. Unfortunately the town was flooded, and all the worms were washed away when the river came into my garden. The composter itself was salvaged, and I will start again. Perhaps my worms wound up in a garden with an equally attractive composter ... I hope so.



FRESHOP!

@ party on the amp

In the name of the environment, and for the benefit of as many people as we could tell, **Branches Housing Co-op** ran a free shop at the Party on the Amp. The whole day was ace fun and the freeshop, after a few puzzled looks, seemed to take off too.

We ran a freeshop for the day because there is enough stuff around and about now for everyone: it's just hidden in the back of wardrobes, under beds and even on your desk - you look at it every day but don't use it. The idea that we need more things and stuff is one put forward by those that make money out of us buying more things and stuff. In fact, we don't need a lot of what we have.

So, purely through word of mouth, we got about 10 bin liners of stuff that people no longer wanted/had use for, but that they thought other people might be able to use.

At first aiming for some sort of semblance of order I attempted to make a neat table of folded clothes, stacks books and DVDs, but it soon became apparent that this sort of behaviour was futile when in collision with the huge amounts of stuff we had to give away! People dug in and soon the pile began to look a



Photographer: Philip Lickley

It's free to be with friends and have a good time, all the best parties are free, yet there are still companies who insist on selling fun to us. Whether it's a fancy dress shop where you can hire a polyester banana suit for some preposterous amount of money, high street clothes stores selling us the idea that we won't have a good night out unless we buy a new dress or just that we should buy NEW books and NEW CDs when actually it's a whole lot more fun to swap! And all this, not for our benefit, but so they can make money from us. Never mind money, never mind the high street, let's have our own 'shop' and our own fun!

The worst part of this is that people who are in need of something, even if it's just a coat for the winter because they didn't realise quite how cold Bradford is (and that's an easy mistake to make)

are the ones who have to then worry about how to get that thing that they don't just want, they NEED.

And it's stupid that there are other people who have that thing, that winter coat, and they aren't using it. So if we all just share the stuff we don't want anymore, and instead of throwing it away, freeshop it, then when we need something we can go back to the freeshop and the probability is, it'll be there and won't cost a penny. What a deal.

By Jen Fox



Photographer: Tara Daze

little bit smaller. Throughout the day even more bin bags arrived from people moving out of halls for the summer or student house because they had finished their course. The steady flow meant an ever-changing collection of items.

Lots of people came down to pick up some amusing items for fancy dress, which highlights one of the important messages of a freeshop - fun should be free.

YOU HAVE

True to its name, 'The Seed' provides the opportunity for those issues that really concern you to grow and develop in a healthy, nurturing environment. Therefore YOU HAVE YOUR 'SAY' is a regular slot affording uncensored, but respectful, discussion between anyone with an opinion they consider relevant to Ecoversity ... This season's Have Your 'Say' appears to mainly concern Sodexo for example the Ecoversity office was sent the following e-mail:

“ Just read your newspaper and I thought I'd ask a question that's been annoying me for some time. Whenever there's an event (especially when external folk are invited) we always seem to use the automatic coffee machines that use lots of plastic and are very wasteful. If you haven't seen the ones I mean, they are everywhere [...] These machines need a plastic drinks sleeve to be inserted which is then thrown away. One large plastic sleeve for each drink! ”

This e-mail was forwarded to the Food & Drink Task Group – the group in Ecoversity dealing with such issues (see page 7) - and Trish Cannon, General Services Manager, provided the following answer:

“ I agree that the current machines are not the most sustainable option, they were originally chosen because we needed a quality solution for numerous meeting rooms which could be permanently sited due to transportation issues, and we had to source a machine which was not plumbed in as most meeting rooms can not have a permanent water supply. We are currently looking at reducing the number of machines used during the summer and replacing with a more sustainable option, and hopefully changing the remainder during the next twelve months. ”

Comments made at the last Ecoversity Conference [see page 6] demonstrated that concerns about catering went beyond coffee machines; the following is just a selection:



Along with the comments above were comments specifically directed At Sodexo, for example:

- Contract negotiation.
- Encourage contractors to source locally.
- Sodexo – multinational corporation (non-sustainable), policies unethical.
- Paradoxical to Ecoversity.

YOUR 'SAY'

Sodexo staff at the conference found these comments quite upsetting, perceiving the organisation for which they worked, and in some cases proudly identified with, to be under attack.

This raised an important point for 'The Seed' ... While it is important that issues are addressed ... it is also essential that ALL members of the University Community are respected. At the same time as being considered by some members of the University a faceless multinational organisation responsible for policies which some individuals have gone so far as to describe as 'evil', for other members of the University Sodexo represents the faces of their workmates and friends. For these people the issues are not straightforward. For example one Sodexo worker said:

"I know Sodexo has a bad reputation – but I don't know why"

So, while 'The Seed' invites people to express their concerns, ideas and suggestions with vigour, it is with the understanding that care will be taken not to disrespect each other as one member of the University Community commented:

"The University has a unique position within the wider community to be an "honest broker" in cutting through the "fog" associated with many environmental issues and open up the arguments and counter-arguments regarding concerns related to Ecovercity. We may all know (or think we know!) what is the "accepted" knowledge about sustainable objectives, but are these OK? The University, through its impartial knowledge and research capital, is well-placed to lead on innovative thinking on these issues.

John Dennis, Honorary Visiting Research Fellow in Life Sciences.

Q. Why can't we have more locally - produced sandwiches?

A. We are moving towards this with plans to produce home-made sandwiches. We currently provide on average 600 sandwiches a day to produce these fresh on-site daily creates quite a few logistical problems, yet we are sure we can overcome these, and home-made sandwiches will be better in quality, and a more sustainable option through the reduction in food miles.

However questions such as ...:

Q. What is Sodexo's policy as a multinational company on environmental and ethical issues?

Q. The Students' Union has a boycott on all Nestle products [such as Polo sweets, Kitkat chocolate bar] in their outlets, yet Sodexo continues to sell Nestle products and ignores students' wishes; why is this?

Q. [Sodexo own Kalyx who run Harmondsworth Detention Centre, criticised as having the worst conditions seen in a detention centre by Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons] How does Sodexo morally justify its position working in an educational institution while also being part of the asylum detention system in the UK?

... obviously exceed the domain of the University and Trish forwarded these questions to SODEXO National Management Team. The company responded with a set of comprehensive answers to be published here and the complete list of questions and responses can be found on our web site: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/ecoversity/food/sodexo.php>

SODEXO'S 'SAY'

Trish also expressed a desire to answer questions she would have liked to have been asked. It seemed only fair to give Trish the opportunity to have her 'say'.

Q. What are our key priorities over the next twelve months?

Improve the internal Hospitality provision. We currently serve Hospitality to an average of 250 staff per day, to thirty different locations. Main production takes place in Richmond Building and is then distributed across the campus. We only have two members of staff to produce the food and distribute. Our key priorities are to improve the variety and quality of the range of food offered whilst making the provision more sustainable through the reduction of transport and the use of disposable plates, cutlery and napkins.

Continue to develop the existing catering facilities. The University has invested a great deal of time and money into fantastic facilities over the last eighteen months, particularly within Richmond Building. However we would like to continue with the development of these and all the facilities across the campus during the summer and it is imperative we continually look to enhance what we provide. We recently ran a full customer survey across the campus and will be reviewing the feedback from the survey in order to deliver the changes students and staff require.

Q. If you could change anything what would it be?

A. That's a really hard question to answer, it would be great to be able to change quite a few of the older facilities. However one thing

BRING BACK THE LUNCH BREAK

By Sue Edgeley

If I had a magic wand I would like to see people leaving their desks at lunch time!! People are under tremendous pressure at work – I feel under pressure – to work through lunchtime, to have lunchtime meetings and then it becomes the norm. People are scared that they'll loose the hour that they could have been working, but I do believe you could work twelve hours a day and there would still be more to do because that is the nature of work.

We should set up a campaign – bring back lunchtime. We need those at the top to say – I want you to take a lunch break, in fact it is unacceptable if you don't take a lunch break – and I am going to lead by example. We need to bring back a compulsory lunch hour – an hour to meet and eat and walk and talk and maybe join one of our clubs or go for a swim, anything other than work – and definitely something that gets us away from our desks. That's what I would like to see... people not just playing lip-service to the importance of health and well-being but really meaning it. If we brought back the lunch hour it would mean happier people.

I would like to change would be to create a better communication process between ourselves and students and staff.

We do obvious things such as comments cards and customer surveys, but that does not capture all of the concerns or question that students and staff have about the facilities and service we provide at the relevant time. Unfortunately this leads to assumptions being made and concerns or questions being discussed in wrong forums. We have a fantastic, dedicated team here at the University, who strive to deliver a great service. We realise that we don't get it right all the time, and would love the opportunity to be able to respond to concerns and questions raised. That way we could at least do something about it or at least explain why the situation is as it is. Perhaps we could set up a Blog.

Q. What do you like about working with the University?

A. My background is quite varied. I have always been involved with catering, originally with hotels and restaurants, gradually working my way up to management level. I then moved into Healthcare as an Area Manager looking after catering services across a range of hospitals and hospices which was completely different but very rewarding. Five years ago I moved into the University business. Bradford is fantastic, the variety of facilities and customers means no two days are ever the same. Also being involved with such a forward thinking organisation presents lots of opportunities and challenges which means we never get bored.

WHY NOT BAN COCA-COLA?

I love the idea of an Ecovercity committed to the principles of sustainable development and paying more than 'lip service' to this commitment.

However, like many others, I shall struggle to take this commitment seriously for as long as our University continues to encourage us to add to the profits and power of some of the very multinational companies which most blatantly threaten the lives and livelihoods of people across several continents.

The Atrium Restaurant, for example, has chill cabinets well stocked with bottles of Coca-Cola; hardly what I would expect in a community or institution committed to sustainable development. War on Want (2006) report that:

"Coca-Cola has been dehydrating communities, contaminating water systems and polluting agricultural land through the dumping of toxic waste."

They remind us that, in 1999, Coca-Cola established a bottling plant in the small, impoverished village of Kaladera in Rajasthan, where farmers rely on access to groundwater to cultivate crops, and that, since then, the local people report that they have been "increasingly unable to irrigate their lands and sustain their crops putting whole families at risk of losing their livelihoods." Also that "village wells used for drinking, cleaning, washing and sanitation are now in danger of drying up altogether." (p5) At the same time, Rajasthan's Ministry of Water Resources (2004) report that water levels remained stable for the five years until the Coca-Cola plant became operational, but then dropped by almost 10 metres over the following five years.

Kaladera is, of course, not the only community affected by Coca-Cola's relentless expansion and pursuit of profit. War on Want (2006) cite similar cases from Uttar Pradesh, Kerla and El Salvador. They also report Coca-Cola has become increasingly associated with anti-trade union activities, not only in Colombia but also in Pakistan, Russia, Guatemala and elsewhere.

It is time that we eradicated Coca-Cola from our University. Maybe then I'll begin to take the notion of our being an Ecovercity a little more seriously.

By Philip Gilligan
Social Sciences and Humanities

REFERENCES

- Ministry of Water Resources, Central Ground Water Board (2004) Report on Press Clippings on Withdrawal of Ground Water by Coca Cola Factory at Kaladera, District Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- War on Want (2006) Coca-Cola: The Alternative Report, London, War on Want: Available at <http://www.waronwant.org/downloads/cocacola.pdf>

PARTY ON THE AMP

This years 'Party on...'
contained lots of good
features to minimise the
environmental impact of
the event. Our Ecoversity
reporter went to find out
what all the fuss was about.

By 13.00 the Amphitheatre was packed with students. For many it would mark the end of the exams – while for some it was saying farewell to their peers after three years of hard studying! But it was much more than a parting – quite the opposite in that it brought together different people from across the Uni into one place.

Events

Loads went on throughout the day, including poetry, a fashion show using clothes from our very own UBoutique, traditional dancing, a tree planting session, and of course, live music from great bands.

The Bag It Up scheme, where students recycled their rubbish at manned recycling points, was a roaring success, allowing us to recycle umpteen bins of glass, cans, plastic and card.

Stalls

Lots of stalls turned out for the day, including Oxfam, a soap making stall, stands promoting volunteering and money raising for charities (including victims of the recent earthquake in China), as well as a 'free shop' and catering outlets to keep everyone fed and watered!

The Final Verdict: How 'green' was it?

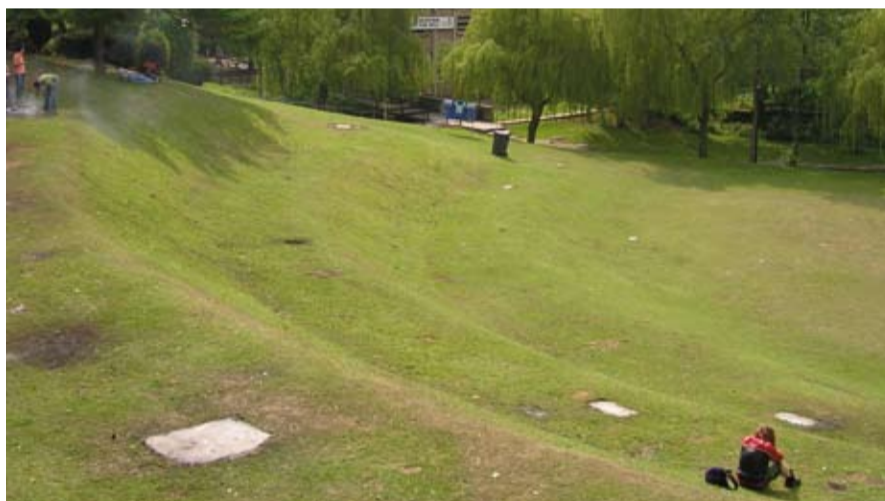
The event succeeded in bringing the end of the year to a close, but also highlighted some important issues and demonstrated practical solutions to making events as low impact as possible. With obvious things like a recycling scheme for the day but also other features like a second-hand fashion show, the event was designed to show that having fun can be environmentally friendly. Watch this space for how other events on campus will incorporate sustainability into their planning from the beginning. Well done to the Union for putting on such a great show! See you next year! How should the Amp party be improved next time to make it more sustainable? Email your ideas to the address below.

By Tom Lawfield

Q HOW DO YOU GET 1000 STUDENTS TO CLEAR UP AFTER THEMSELVES?



A ASK THEM NICELY...



AND HERE IS HOW...

It is not complicated or difficult to get students to recycle their waste – many are desperate to! All we did was provide the facilities, some guidance about which bit of waste to put in which bin and offer a little thank you.

The Amp has, at present, no permanent recycling provision so the facilities had to be temporary points which we situated under the 'Bag It Up' banners. The guidance was offered by Ecoversity Ambassadors wearing the 'Bag It Up' T-shirts in a very bright green and the thanks took the form of a refreshment voucher that was offered for every bag of waste that was recycled.

As well as the recycling there were litter picks arranged late on the Friday and early on the Saturday which meant that the Amp was ready to be enjoyed by all again over the weekend.

It is hoped that the 'Bag It Up' campaign will act as a catalyst for getting some proper recycling points into this space so that the litter problem can become a thing of the past and the Amp can be a clean, green space at the heart of the campus, enjoyed by all.



Mark Cleary and Lloyd Russell-Moyle aim to promote further 'Bag It Up' projects by setting a caption competition for this photograph of them both in the 'Bag It Up' t-shirts. The idea is that you devise a caption - hopefully witty and generous - promoting the collection and recycling of rubbish. The winning caption will be the one that is most effective. The results will be published in next season's issue with the winner receiving a £20 book token. If you want to enter please send your caption/s, not more than 15 words please, to the Ecoversity office [contact details below]; closing date August 1st 2008.

The Seed AUTUMN ISSUE - SEPTEMBER 2008.

- Who are Student Ambassadors?
- Energy Wise: Personal & Universal
- Your comments and contributions please

