

# WIRRAL EVERGREEN



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The magazine of Wirral Environmental Network  
Promoting Wirral's environment and sustainable living

## Jim Flies Through The Air With The Greatest Of Ease!

It's getting harder to raise money for charities, most funders today are, in effect, saying "go jump". So I did. From a great height!

Forty years ago the idea of sponsored walks was new and groovy but on an individual basis they just don't attract the interest that they used to, and something new and different is needed.

I've always wanted to do a skydive, even though I'm scared stiff of high buildings. So I did some investigation and found that a sponsored skydive was no problem, provided of course that the British weather behaved itself! Almost everyone (*thank you* to the three people who didn't!) said "You're raving mad" or more kindly "You're very brave" - but it is *not* scary, honest.

"Skydive Tilstock", near Whitchurch, provided the perfect opportunity. They are close enough to travel there and back in a single day, thus eliminating accommodation costs, and they are very professional and well organised.

The company offer every type of skydiving and parachuting. To get the full experience of a high skydive for a total novice the tandem option is better. It can be completed in one day, as the training is only about half an hour. All of the instructors are highly experienced – you have to have done something like 800 jumps before you are allowed to take another person with you.

Having been rained off all day on the first attempt – British weather for you – I went up in December, on a good day without snow, and climbed for about 20 minutes to 10,000 feet, gaining a brilliant view of the countryside and then through the clouds to a bright blue sky. This is about the maximum height allowed for skydives without oxygen.

Then we assumed the "arched back" position, for stable freefall, and simply fell forward out of the door – no problem, we had lovely fluffy white clouds to land on.... It was wonderful, just like childhood dreams of being Peter Pan. All too soon the parachute opened (it had to, you know!) and we started some really tight twisting turns to land as softly as a feather a minute or so later. I was supposed to keep my feet and legs up for landing position, but instinct took over and I put my feet down at the last moment – not good, as I landed flat on my face with the instructor on top of me – it was meant to be the other way round! However it was so gentle neither of us was hurt, but it's something to remember for next time.

There *will* be a next time....

Jim O'Neil

*The experience raised £937.69, which covered the £330 costs, WEN gained £387.95 (plus the gift aid) and RePaint gained £219.74 (net).*

***What a man, our hero — thank you, Jim!***

### Wirral Environmental Network

Working to advance the education of the public about the environment and its protection.

**Patrons:** Pat Sykes (MBE). Tina Fox, Prof. John Guillebaud, Jonathon Porritt, Charles Secrett, Dr Joanna Sharples.

**Reg. Address:** Wirral Environment Centre, Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Wallasey, CH44 8ER

**Tel:** 0151 639 2121 **Fax:** 0151 639 4826

**Email:** info@la21.net **Website:** www.la21.net

**We do not inherit the world from our parents. We borrow it from our grandchildren.**

## Community Organic Allotments (Plants on Plates)

*A Healthy Lifestyles project in partnership with NHS Wirral's Health Action Area Team*

The aim of the project was to use the existing allotments facility in Wallasey established 10 years ago by WEN for an extra user group recruited by the NHS Wirral's Health Action Area Team (WHAAT). Although the target group was for the over 50s there was also a wide variety of people who took the step through the allotment gate. The idea was to use the current media interest in healthy eating and cooking and take it beyond the television and the classroom to help people access practical gardening skills in an informal and social setting.

It's an opportunity to enjoy the touch, smell and taste of the plants that keep us alive and well. For some, it may just be a chance to have a natter amid the beans, others a peaceful spot of watering, try different ways of propagating herbs, sow some melon seeds or let off steam with a spade. People may at the same time have been taking part in some of the other WHAAT activities on offer such as tai chi, salsa dancing, cook sessions etc. Thank you to Sandy who never seemed to be more than a watering can away all summer when needed at the polytunnel.

Early in the season it was a struggle to persuade people to take much produce home. Maybe it was that fear of letting something fresh and possibly muddy loose in the kitchen without plastic bag and bar code in place. As the days lengthened and the plants became more familiar, a change occurred that surprised me. People began discussing recipes for some of our produce and the high price of veg in the shops such as salad bags etc. Suddenly it was strawberries in the sun, baby turnips sliced into salad, tatsoi and tomato, fresh parsley, fennel seeds and coriander in the chilli, new potatoes and fresh mint, secret Wallasey recipes being exchanged that Jamie Oliver could only wonder at. By mid-summer people were going home with bags full of plants for their plates from a small but productive green space in the town.



WHAAT hosted a cook session with some of the produce grown and this was well attended by the group and also the regular

allotment volunteers. Before long we were holding a draw to see who would take home which pumpkin, there was the great runner bean extravaganza and on the weeks when we just couldn't take any more lettuce and courgettes people were able to drop it off at Thompson's Mission in Birkenhead. Five people from the groups took on their own allotments at the end of the season. Other people joined the regular allotment volunteer group at Ilford Avenue and others converted yards and gardens at home to growing spaces, started composting and brought photos in to show us. The wet summer days began to fade and there was an interest in saving seeds at the end of the year (this year we are trying to move completely away from F1 hybrid seeds and save more of our own where possible)

So this year, it is here, then there birds are singing and its time to get those seeds out. The project is due to run again starting 5th April at Ilford Avenue Allotments and is open to everyone.

10am - 12 Morning session

1pm - 3pm Afternoon session (Different group, but it may be possible to stay for both)

*To register please call Gemma at the WHAAT office 0151 201 4162  
email gemma.heaps@Wirral.nhs.uk*

A big thank you for the preparation of the allotment site by everyone in the Plants on Plates Allotment Group, and a special mention for the time put in by Lena Chard and (often behind the scenes) Brian Parry that made this project possible, and their continued support. Jeff Hughes

## The Cove—watch it and cry.....

One cold winter evening my wife Carol and I sat down to watch TV while we ate our dinner but there was nothing on either live or recorded that we wanted to see, so, as we do, we turned to BT Vision On Demand and rented a film - and what a film - wow! We chose the Documentary section, which has only has seven titles to choose from, and we chose "The Cove". This was released in 2010, in the USA under the title "The Rising" and even now is only on limited release in UK.

In a sleepy lagoon at Taiji, on the coast of Japan lies a shocking secret that a few desperate men will stop at nothing to keep hidden from the world. In the 1960s, it was Ric O'Barry who captured and trained the five dolphins who played the title character in the international television sensation "Flipper." One fateful day, a heartbroken Barry came to realize that these deeply sensitive, highly intelligent and self-aware creatures must never be subjected to human captivity again.

This mission has brought him to Taiji, a town that appears to be devoted to the wonders and mysteries of the sleek, playful dolphins and whales that swim off their coast. But in a remote, glistening cove, surrounded by barbed wire and "Keep Out" signs, lies a dark reality. It is here, under cover of night, that the fishermen of Taiji, driven by a multi-billion dollar dolphin entertainment industry and an underhanded market for mercury-tainted dolphin meat, engage in an unseen hunt....killing 23,000 dolphins every year. *Yes, you read that right, 23,000 dolphins every year.*

The nature of what they do is so chilling and the consequences are so dangerous to human health that they will go to great lengths to halt anyone from seeing it.

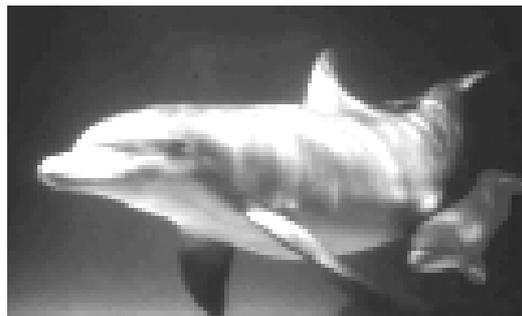
At last, the truth of THE COVE is shown in an act of covert filmmaking that turns a documentary into a gripping action-adventure thriller . . . and a heart-pounding call for help from the world's oceans.

One American comment on THE COVE: *"If you are an intelligent, caring person, concerned about the environment and the animals, you must see this documentary. The film was made with great risks involved and all who took part in making it have to be commended for their courage and desire to show the truth.....people should be made aware of the horrors documented in this film"*

Running time is 92 minutes, rating PG12 and, depending on your broadband package, will cost you about £3 to rent for a day.

Then log on to:-  
[www.savejapandolphins.org](http://www.savejapandolphins.org)  
Several other links are given at the end of the film.

*[Some encouraging recent news is that the Japanese Government recalled its whaling fleet early from Antarctica, citing interference from the environmental group Sea Shepherd as the reason. Save Japan Dolphins are seeing this as a "resounding victory for whales and all the organizations working to stop Japan's killing of whales and dolphins". Editor]*



## Gardening Courses

Beginning in Autumn we have two more courses that are suitable for everyone, whatever your gardening experience! You'll learn techniques and skills that will enable you to successfully grow all types of food in your own garden.

These courses are run as part of our work with the Wirral Lifelong & Family Learning Service and are held at our Sandon Building, Falkland Road, where we have a classroom, a poly-tunnel and raised bed facilities.

Starting in September we have **"The Productive Garden: How to grow vegetables, fruit, salad and herbs"** on Tuesdays and **"Progressing in Gardening"** on Wednesdays .

There are fees payable but if you are on benefits there are reductions. Details of both courses and fees should be available in August—ring 630.3486

## Liverpool University to Open Energy Research Centre

The University of Liverpool is opening an interdisciplinary renewable energy research department. *The Stephenson Institute for Renewable Energy* will undertake research into many different sustainable energy sources. These will include photovoltaics, carbon capture and storage, wind and marine energy. The Institute is scheduled to open in late 2011 and they are currently appointing academic staff and drawing up plans for the refurbishment of their home building.

The Institute will help bring together other departments in the University that have energy-related research activities. They will have both undergraduates and postgraduates working on energy-related projects and technologies.

There will also be occasional public lectures and events, the next one being:-

**"Contested Energy Transitions: how social science can help us understand how and why good ideas are or are not translated into practice by endearingly illogical, politically-motivated human beings"** given by, *Dr Peter North, Department of Geography* on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

This lecture will begin at 4pm and will be held in the Surface Science Research Centre Seminar Room at Liverpool University.

For more info:-

[www.liv.ac.uk/stephenson-institute/index.htm](http://www.liv.ac.uk/stephenson-institute/index.htm)

## Gilroy Community Allotments Are Coming Soon!

In November 2009 amongst much excitement the **Gilroy Road Community Allotment Society** was formed to develop a former paddock into allotments, the excitement was a little short lived as an issue arose with regards to Planning Permission for sheds and other structures on the site. This was resolved but over the last 16 months the society has been on a bit of a roller coaster ride with various obstacles to overcome. The long wait is nearly over, the Council Legal Services department are finally preparing the lease agreement and this spring Gilroy Community Allotments should finally be a reality. A new fence has been erected down one side of the site and a new gated entrance installed with support from the Borough Council's Allotment

Development Officer. Assistance is also being given to clear the site once the lease is finally signed. Those people who have supported the development of the site since early on and who want a plot have now been asked if they want a full or part plot and they will be allocated a plot shortly. The site will be marked out and then the hard work for all will really start! Not only do the allotmenters have their own plots to dig and develop but the society has a Management Plan which will see a community area which has toilets, brew room and classroom with accessible facilities. There will also be a wildlife area and a small orchard area.

Richard Hill, Chair,

**Gilroy Community Allotment Society**

[richard.hill1966@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richard.hill1966@hotmail.co.uk)

## Wirral Waters & the Mersey Tidal Power Scheme

These two projects are potentially the biggest developments to affect Wirral for many years. Both schemes are being led by the Peel Group, who are an infrastructure, transport and real estate giant, particularly here in the North West. They have fingers in many pies, including the Trafford Centre, JL Airport, Mersey Docks, Manchester Ship Canal and Salford Quays.

Permission has now been given by Wirral Council and the Dept. of the Environment, for the Wirral Waters scheme, the biggest ever of its type anywhere in the UK, to go ahead. However this will *not* involve any public enquiry!

The Wirral Waters scheme makes worthy claims that it will be 'eco-friendly': they write "Peel aims to create a sustainable development ..... using the latest technology and best practice to minimize the effects of the development on the environment, in particular the amount of carbon (CO<sup>2</sup>) produced". But, perhaps worryingly there are as yet no firm plans as to how this may be implemented and the costs of 'going green' allegedly will slow this process down! This is highlighted by their comment, "Peel has not yet identified the detail of what will be done when, as this will come through more detailed implementation. There will also be a cost attached with 'going green' which will need to be factored in. It is therefore likely to be a phased approach over time".

The Mersey Tidal Power scheme is at an earlier stage. It has just gone through a period of 'community consultation', (hopefully, you may have attended one of their public exhibitions recently). After this, a report will be written to accompany the Feasibility Study to take the development forward with the formal Application for Consent following in 2012.

Whilst as environmentalists, we might naturally be inclined to support such a project, we must be assured that it will take into account the ecology of the estuary, together with the social and economic implications of such a sensitive development.

We note that Peel's scheme states the objectives are "To deliver the maximum amount of affordable energy (and make the maximum contribution to carbon reduction targets) from the tidal resource in the Mersey Estuary, with *acceptable* impacts on the environment, shipping, business and the community". It will be interesting to see if they can square the circle!

Wirral Environment Network will be watching both projects with great interest and will be making representations whenever there is an opportunity. We would urge all our supporters to do likewise.

For more information on both these projects:-  
[www.wirralwaters.co.uk](http://www.wirralwaters.co.uk)  
[www.merseytidalpower.co.uk](http://www.merseytidalpower.co.uk)

## Recycling at W.E.N.

We are a collection point for lots of your stuff that can be recycled and some of it raises a small amount of much-needed funds for us as well!

We collect:- *Mobiles Phones – Stamps – Batteries – Spectacles – Used Printer Ink Cartridges—*

*UK or Foreign currency (any age, both notes and coins),*

*Jewellery (this can be any kind of item, gold, silver, costume jewellery and watches, even including odd earrings and snapped chains!)*

We have regular collections throughout the year, so please keep collecting!

There is a collection box in our foyer, or we can supply Freepost envelopes if that's easier for you!



## Watching the Carbon Detectives

The Carbon Detectives programme is a European wide initiative. It provides support and ideas for actions that schools can take to shrink their Carbon shoe size. It also provides tools to allow schools to monitor their progress and report their savings, with thousands of schools participating across Europe our individual actions can begin to make a big difference.

If you are a school in the UK all you need to do is complete a simple registration form to gain full access to the programme and its supporting tools, that includes how to work out your school's carbon use. There are thousands of schools in the UK already registered and

once registered yourself you will be able to communicate with these schools and others across Europe.

Their three year mission is to:

- link schools and pupils across Europe to help slow down the impact of global climate change
- \* inspire and empower young people to take practical action to save energy and carbon in school
- \* enthuse and support teachers to bring carbon saving to life in the classroom

For further information:-

[www.carbondetectiveseurope.org](http://www.carbondetectiveseurope.org)

where you will also find lots of great links aimed at younger folks.

## We get by with a lot of help from our friends.....

Over the four years and more that we have been in operation, Community RePaint Wirral has greatly benefited from some very generous local companies, and I felt that it was time we thanked some of them, by name, in print!

Riverside Housing have been really supportive; they print and distribute leaflets about us to all their tenants, and last year went above and beyond the call of duty and gave us a grant to buy our containers outright, which put us on a much more secure financial footing. *Thanks, Jayne!*

The trade department of Bromborough Paints rings me every few weeks or so to say that they have overstocks available and off I go down the New Chester Road with my trailer to collect the goodies! *Thanks, Martin and Nic!*

Another local company which should get a mention here is Alan Bowden Contractors of Liverpool. They undertake a full range of property maintenance service including, of course, painting, and work closely with many housing associations including Riverside. They are a major customer of Bromborough Paints and Bowden pass any paint they don't need back to them and through them to us.

Bowdens work with social enterprise group Fusion 21, which mean that Bowdens work in a socially and environmentally aware manner, for example taking on and training apprentices, considering environmental and other issues, such as equality and diversity and equal opportunities in the work place. This is a win-win strategy, as it helps Bowdens survive in a very competitive market-place by meeting the stringent requirements for housing association work and at the same time helping the wider community whenever they can, including, of course, Community RePaint Wirral! *Well done, Alan!*

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## Hoylake / West Kirby Food Fairs

The first Hoylake Local Food Fair was held in October 2010 at the Hoylake Community Centre as a joint venture between Transition West Kirby and Hoylake Community Centre. Many people have been saying that West Wirral needs a regular farmers' market to complement the thriving monthly Wirral Farmers' Market at New Ferry. Once we had fixed the date, the doubts flooded in: would suppliers want to come, would helpers materialise and would customers turn up on the day?

But New Ferry Farmers' Market gave us lots of advice, and in the event, everything went much better than we hoped - local food really does seem to be an idea whose time has come.

We surveyed people attending and were very pleased to find that most people had come just a short distance, from Hoylake and West Kirby, and most of the rest from adjacent areas, and so by holding a West Wirral Food Fair, we will not be weakening the existing markets at New Ferry and Birkenhead.

We are now holding a second **Hoylake Food Fair** on **Sunday 27 March**, from **10am to 2pm**, at Hoylake Community Centre - for more details see [www.wirralfood.org.uk/hoylake.html](http://www.wirralfood.org.uk/hoylake.html)

Our longer term aim is a monthly farmers' market in West Wirral, but there are still some legal issues around Birkenhead Market's rights to markets within 6.6 miles.

We are also working on a Wirral Local Food Guide - a guide to what primary and secondary food producers there are, and which retail outlets stock their products.

Ian Campbell  
**Transition Town West Kirby**



### Dates for your diary - forthcoming green events on Wirral

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March**  
**Hoylake Food Fair**  
Hoylake Community Centre, Hoyle Road, Hoylake.      10.00am - 2.00pm

**Saturday 16th April AND Saturday 18th June**  
**Swap Day, Wallasey Tennis Club, Kingsway, Liscard (behind Asda)**  
10.00 am - 1 pm each day.

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June**  
**World Environment Day, with an Eco Craft Fayre**  
Ness Botanical Gardens, Neston. 10.00am - 4.00pm

## Wirral Evergreen - advertising rates 2011

	BLACK & WHITE	COLOUR – FRONT PAGE	COLOUR – BACK PAGE
Full page	£50	NOT AVAILABLE	£100
Half-page	£25	£75	£50
Quarter-page	£15	£35	£25

*Wirral Evergreen* has been reaching people across Wirral for many years and is the Primary newsletter for the environmental voice in the Wirral. To save trees our print run is only about 150 per issue and those are distributed through members without email, libraries, events, etc. We load it live on the W.E.N. website [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net) so that it can be read across the planet.

We are pleased to announce that even though we are in a difficult financial climate, the editorial team have decided not to increase the advertising rates this year - and W.E.N. members can deduct 20% from the above prices! What you see is what you pay – we are not VAT registered. We will accept copy on paper to the office address but it is much easier if you can send it directly to the editors via email to [mike@la21.net](mailto:mike@la21.net)

Please remember that *Wirral Evergreen* is funded completely from members' subscriptions, donations and adverts. The editors would like to thank all the members for their support, as a percentage of membership income also goes to help pay for rent, office supplies, etc.

**CUT HERE.....**

### Would you like to join Wirral Environmental Network?

(Members receive 20% off stall fees at our events  
and 20% off advertising in *Wirral Evergreen*)

**£8 waged      £6 unwaged      £12 whole household**  
**£80 individual life membership**  
**£10 voluntary group      £20 commercial organisation**

Signature.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode..... Telephone .....

Email .....

**Please cut off this slip along the dotted line and send with your cheque to:-**

**Les Bufton, 34 Ford Road, Upton, Wirral. CH49 0TF**