

Chairperson's Report 2015

Thorney Lakes

Around the Fair

Stalls, Catering and Green Crafts

The stalls are part of the winning ingredients of the Green Scythe Fair. This year we saw our largest number, with eighty-three stalls and caterers encircling the Fair. We try and ensure a real variety so there is something for everyone's taste, be it hand crafted knives, pottery, upcycled clothes and jewellery, incense making, plants or re-conditioned hand tools, to name but a few. And we had an inspiring mix of environmental charities which educate and provide practical advice for sustainable 'green' living. Interspersed throughout are the amazing and very tasty food stalls offering a great choice of vegetarian, organic and local produce, not forgetting the ice cream trucks...that were not running generators!

18 wonderful Green Craft displays showcased stone masons, potters, thatchers, timber framers, timber suppliers, blacksmiths, basket makers, greenwood workers, musical instrument makers, leather workers, trug makers, quality bric-a-brac and agricultural salvage stalls. Willis Lane Sustainability Centre had an information stall and also present was a complementary medicine stall offering Bowen technique and reflexology.

Each year we have more requests for stalls than we have space to offer. We work hard at building our relationships with stall holders and thank them all for making such an effort and to everyone who helps with setting up the stalls. We couldn't do it without you.

Music and the Marquee

Simon Squire and his team of Yeovil College students, who take on the Fair's music as an educational project, once again ran the music tent with great gusto. We were horrified to hear their course was in line for the chop, but sense seems to have prevailed and we are delighted it will continue, if in slightly reduced form.

Our second, acoustic stage, managed by Ian & Martine Hardy and powered by our Green Energy Trailer, provided a lovely alternative area. Complemented by the second bar facing the stage, this space really came into its own this year.

Our 2015 debate was The Climate Change Challenge with speakers Kit Vaughan (director of climate change at Care International), Graham Harvey (author of the Carbon Fields and the Archers' agricultural story editor) and Theo Simon (Green Party candidate for Somerton and Frome). A full house heard that those most susceptible to the effects of climate change are the most vulnerable in the world, but there are answers staring us in the face, including under our feet: really good soil management can sequester all the dangerous carbon emissions. The main challenge is in how communities come together to build local resilience, how we as individuals take responsibility, and how the political system can start to take the longer view.

Children's Area

The Green Kidz area fizzed with creative activities designed to show that childhood doesn't need to be expensive. Kids and their families love to play with the simplest of things: building fabulous dens and sculptures from hay inspired by Serena De La Hey; carving, sawing & chiselling soft stone with Richard Langford; joining in with circus skills, songs and dance with Steve Apelt and his Magical Bike; helping Martin Maudsley weave Wild & Wonderous Tales; watching the Legend of the Lambton Worm played out with puppets by Paul Batten from Theatrix Arts; exploring pedal power with Nick Mercer from 'the Campaign for Real Events' creating electricity to keep the lights on and make music and clouds of bubbles; twisting and bending willow to make eco warrior swords and flower garlands with the Willow Man Maurice Fawcett; drawing with charcoal with Andrea Clarke; weaving wool and swopping toys with the Bear Cat Collective; potting up butterfly friendly plants with Megan from Butterfly Conservation; getting led astray with Misguided Tours and watching wonderful insect stilt walkers from Fuse Street Performance. All this was topped off by a surprise performance from Kabana Lyndsey who not only took his shirt off on the high slack wire, but then took his trousers off too!

Skills for the Future Raffle

Tickets sold well in the Skills for the Future raffle, the first raffle for many years, plus all walkers and cyclists got free tickets. Prizes included places on local courses teaching natural arts and crafts, helping people access skills so important for sustainable and low impact lifestyles.

Green Info Café

The Green Info Cafe provided over 700 pieces of organic and local cakes including GAPS/paleo nut fudge brownies, gluten free polenta cake with local rhubarb, and sugar free cakes with sea buckthorn chocolate topping. Paul the Potter kindly heated all hot water on our specially designed rocket stoves and 16 litre wood fired urn. The information area centred on it being the International Year of the Soil, on Organic food and the debate topic of the Climate Change Challenge.

New for 2015, the Workshop Yurt was a great success, with nearly 100 people attending workshops through the day. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who made it run so smoothly!

*Francis (Herbi) Blake
October 2015*