

SageDiary

Saturday 1 October: *A Christian Framework for Sustainability* day conference, St Paul's Church, Robert Adam Street, London W1. Contact Dr Caroline Berry at secretary@cis.org.uk or telephone 01732 451907.

Thursday 6 October: Planning meeting for Operation Noah conference in February 2006, Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford, 7.30 - 9.30pm. See article inside.

Tuesday 11 October: Sage prayer meeting, 42 Morrell Avenue, 10.30am - 12.00pm. Contact Clare Newgass on 01865 242588 or can@freenet.co.uk.

Friday 14 October: Climate change seminar, Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road, Caversham, 7.30pm. Held by Caversham One World Week. Contact Owen Jewiss at owen.jewiss@ukgateway.net.

Saturday 15 October: *Walk with the Creator*, Chilswell Valley. Meet at Hinskey Park, Abingdon Road at 2.00pm. Optional refreshments at St Clements Church afterwards. Please book with Caroline Steel on 01865 432600 or caroline.steel@ntlworld.com a week in advance.

Thursday 27 October: *Homes for the Greenhouse*, The Vaults, University Church of St Mary's, High Street, Oxford, 7.00 - 9.00pm. Speaker: Gavin Killip, University of Oxford Environmental Change Institute. Food available from 6.30pm. Entry £2 / £1 concessions. See www.COINet.org.uk/speakers or contact Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) on 01865 241097 or jo@planb.org.

Tuesday 8 November: Sage prayer meeting, 150 Leiden Road, 10.30am - 12.00 pm. Contact Caroline Steel on 01865 432600 or caroline.steel@ntlworld.com.

Thursday 24 November: *Will the politicians ever save us from climate change?* Oxford Town Hall, 7.00 - 9.00pm. Speakers: Charles Secrett, Active Citizens Transform & Caroline Lucas MEP. Free entry. See www.COINet.org.uk/speakers or contact COIN on 01865 241097 or jo@planb.org.

Tuesday 6 December: Sage prayer meeting, 81 Green Road, 10.00 - 11.15 am. Contact Edith on 01865 763242.

Thursday 15 December: *I'm dreaming of a grey Christmas*, Oxford Town Hall, 7.00 - 9.00pm. Speakers: Helen Young, BBC Weather Centre & Dr Stephan Harrison, University of Oxford. Free entry. See www.COINet.org.uk/speakers or contact COIN on 01865 241097 or jo@planb.org.

Saturday 17 December: Sage stall at the Winter Green Fair, Oxford Town Hall. Volunteers to man the stand will definitely be needed. Contact info@sageoxford.org.uk.

Monday 2 January 2006: Sage New Year walk. 10.00am. Meet at the Hodson's flat in North Oxford, for a walk on the meadows, followed by food back at the flat. Bring sandwiches, suitable footwear, warm clothes etc. Contact Martin & Margot on 01865 516507 or info@sageoxford.org.uk.

Saturday 21 January: *Walk with the Creator*, River Thames & Port Meadow. Meet at West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road at 2.00pm. Optional refreshments at St Clements Church afterwards. Please book with Caroline Steel on 01865 432600 or caroline.steel@ntlworld.com a week in advance.

SageWords

The newsletter of Sage, a Christian environmental group in Oxford
September 2005

www.sageoxford.org.uk

What can you do to your house?

An urban semi-detached house built in 1958 is having a makeover. All being well, it will have a wind turbine above the roof. Photo voltaic cells will convert light to electricity, and solar panels will heat water. Nine-tenths of the rain that falls on it will be stored in an underground tank and pumped when needed to flush toilets, wash clothes, water the garden etc. These are the exciting bits but a great deal more is being done to make it as eco-friendly as possible. There is much scope for renovation. Efficient central heating, cavity wall insulation, and piling fleece high in the loft will keep the house warm using much less fuel. The rotting window frames will be replaced by the best double glazing, made of sustainable timber. An extension will be wooden too, roofed with cedar shingles.

Why do all this? I have been recently widowed and have sold our rather large house and bought this one in a place which will be more suitable for a woman growing



old. Global warming and water shortages alarm me. Now I have a chance to act, to explore just what could be done by someone of moderate means (using available grants) to make a very ordinary house as environmentally friendly as possible. A small group of architects have taken up the project with enthusiasm, recognising that together we seem to be breaking new ground. Designing efficient new buildings is more glamorous perhaps, but changing thousands of existing houses will do much more good in the short term. So what we learn will be made freely available and I hope many will be inspired to take advantage of our work.

I really believe that the world belongs to God. That includes my house. And yours.

Averil Stedeford

More details and photographs of Averil's house can be seen at www.sageoxford.org.uk/eco-house.htm. We will follow the progress of this project in future issues.



Rotting window frames will be replaced

Sage helps lead three services

Sage has been very active over the summer months in helping with church services on environmental themes. In June, Environment Sunday coincided with World Environment Day, and Sage took part in



Elm Farm, Burnett

a special service at St Columba's United Reformed Church in Oxford. This year the theme was Noah and Global Warming. In Sunday School the previous week the children made some wonderful illustrations of the Noah story, concentrating on the animals. These were put up around the church before the congregation arrived. One of St Columba's congregation, Tina Fawcett, produced a leaflet, *Climate change and you*, which you can download from the Sage web site.

On a very hot early July evening Sage

member Margot Hodson spoke at choral evensong at St Andrew's Church, Sandford on Thames. Every second Sunday in July the church holds a flower festival, and has a special 'green' sermon on the environment and creation, which Margot was able to provide.

Finally, in late July a team of eight Sage members visited Keynsham parish near Bath and Bristol for the weekend. We took part in a family communion service at St John's, Keynsham. After a bring and share lunch in the church hall, we all went to Elm Farm at Burnett, a rural part of the benefice. There we enjoyed an afternoon's guided walk around the farm, led by farmers John and Phillipa Paget, looking at the impressive environmental schemes. There had been considerable changes since our last visit five years ago. We spotted several species of butterflies on the walk.

Thanks very much to all these churches for their invitations. If you would like Sage to come to your church do let us know at info@sageoxford.org.uk.

Martin Hodson

Lottery grant for churchyard

SS Mary & John churchyard has been given a major grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an educational trail. Adding to all the voluntary effort, memorials will be repaired that link with local social history, and wildlife habitats will be encouraged, building on the churchyard's beginnings as a landscaped cemetery. Volunteer working parties are held on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8pm and Saturday afternoons from 2 to 4pm. Meet outside the south porch facing the churchyard. See www.sageoxford.org.uk/churchyard.htm for more details.

British Library archives Sage website

The Sage website (www.sageoxford.org.uk) has now been archived by the British Library's UK web archiving consortium (www.webarchive.org.uk). The project first archived our site on 4 July this year, and they say it will be regularly archived from now on. It is quite an honour as we were among the first 21 religion sites selected from the whole of the UK. So in 100 years time historians will still be able to find out about Sage and all its activities!

Operation Noah workshop to build on climate change conference

An 'Operation Noah' conference/workshop is planned for Saturday 11 February 2006 in Oxford, to follow-up the February 2005 High Wycombe conference on climate change. All environmentally concerned Christians in Oxford are invited. Please put the date in your diary now!

Meanwhile, a launch and planning meeting on 6 October at 7.30pm in the Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford will aim to identify people willing to help with preparations for the big event in February. For example, we shall need a planning subgroup to make detailed arrangements,

help with contacting churches and facilitating group activities at the conference, and practical help on the day.

It should also inspire us all to arouse interest in climate change and what we can do about it in our faith communities, and to publicise the conference.

Please contact Alan Allport (alan.allport@psy.ox.ac.uk or telephone 01865 515984) as soon as possible if you are able to come to the launch meeting or for further information. For information on Operation Noah, see www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah.

Farm day highlights CRES developments

Half a dozen Sage members spent a July day at Manor Farm, Warmington, near Banbury, as the guests of farmer John Neal (Treasurer of Christian Rural Concern), joining a larger crowd of folk interested in rural issues. In the morning we walked around Warmington village looking at how the village had changed in the last 100 years or so. Before lunch, Rev. Philip Wagstaff, a Methodist minister in charge of a large rural circuit in Devon, gave his views on rural ministry. We then took a walk to see the environmental schemes on the farm, led by John Neal. To finish the day we heard about the latest developments on the Certificate in Christian Rural and Environmental Studies (CRES) course from Martin Hodson, and had a short service led by Rev. John Whitehead. Thanks particularly to John Neal for ably organising the whole day.

The CRES course, which is jointly run by the John Ray Initiative and Christian Rural Concern, has now moved its validation from Keele University to Ripon College, Cuddesdon (just to the east of Oxford). Sage member, Martin Hodson, is now Senior



Attendees discuss rural issues at Manor Farm, Warmington

Tutor of the course. Several students have already registered for this year, and registration remains open until the end of September. If you are interested contact Martin at info@sageoxford.org.uk.

• Congratulations to Sage member Emily Wilkins, who was awarded her CRES certificate, with a distinction, on 10 September, after giving a presentation on her dissertation. Emily has now moved back to Scotland, and we will all miss her!