

Throughout September & October: SS Mary & John Churchyard restoration work parties, Wednesdays 6.30 – 8.30pm. Details from Ruth Conway on 01865 723085 or m.r.conway@virgin.net or at www.sageoxford.org.uk.

Saturday 18 September: Sage creativity day, 10.00am – 1.00pm then bring & share lunch, 18 Lytton Road, Florence Park. Bring your own project or come and be inspired by others. Contact Susie Pavelin on 01865 748220 or susiepavelin@onetel.net.uk.

Saturday 25 September: John Ray Initiative Coffee House Day, 10.30am – 4.30pm, St Aldates Parish Centre, Pembroke Street. Papers on Christian environmental themes plus discussion, chaired by Margot Hodson. Cost £5 – 7 including sandwich lunch. Contact David Thistlethwaite on 01242 543580 or dthistlethwaite@glos.ac.uk.

Saturday 2 October: Sage bring & share meal and planning meeting for a Sage holiday around Easter 2005, 7.00pm, 42 Morrell Avenue. Contact Clare Newgass on 01865 242588 or can@freenet.co.uk.

Thursday 7 October: Sage prayer meeting, 10.30am – 12.00pm, 42 Morrell Avenue. Contact Clare Newgass on 01865 242588 or can@freenet.co.uk.

Thursday 14 October: *Walk with the Creator*, 10.00am - 12.30pm. Meet at St Clement's Church, Marston Road (next to the Plasterer's Arms). There is parking at the church. For more information or to book, contact Caroline Steel on 01865 532600 or davesteel@ntlworld.com.

Saturday 16 October: Sage work party, 1.00 – 4.00pm, Boundary Brook Nature Park. Tasks for all energy levels, a chance to see autumn colours and tea & cake. Contact Clare Newgass on 01865 242588 or can@freenet.co.uk.

Sunday 17 October: Open day, 2.00 – 4.00pm, Boundary Brook Nature Park.

Sunday 31 October: Rev. Dave Bookless, Director of A Rocha UK, speaking at Christ Church, Abingdon, 6.30pm, on *Animal Rights*. Contact Richard Riggs on 01235 521931 or richard.riggs@physics.org.

Thursday 11 November: Sage prayer meeting, 10.30am – 12.00pm, 150 Leiden Road. Contact Caroline Steel on 01865 532600 or davesteel@ntlworld.com.

Thursday 9 December: Sage prayer meeting, 10.30am – 12.00pm, 81 Green Road, Risinghurst. Contact Edith Clift on 01865 763242.

Saturday 11 December: Sage stall at Oxford Green Fair, 10.30am – 4.30pm, Oxford Town Hall. Contact info@sageoxford.org.uk.

Thursday 20 January 2005: *Walk with the Creator*, 10.00am - 12.30pm. Meet at St Clement's Church, Marston Road (next to the Plasterer's Arms). There is parking at the church. For more information or to book, contact Caroline Steel on 01865 532600 or davesteel@ntlworld.com.

Saturday 26 February: Conference: *Climate Change: How Christians Respond*, St Andrew's Church, High Wycombe. See article inside and www.sageoxford.org.uk/climatechange.

The newsletter of Sage, a Christian environmental group in Oxford

September 2004

www.sageoxford.org.uk

Climate research project could use your computer

The climateprediction.net project, based at Oxford University, is trying to produce the most complete probability based forecast of 21st century climate ever attempted. To run enough computer models to achieve this, the world's largest supercomputers are not enough, so the project is calling on people worldwide to donate spare time on their home, school and work computers. So far 55,000 people in over 130 countries have joined in.



climateprediction.net

The project is based on a series of 3 experiments that, by 2006, should give policy makers around the world a much better basis for planning for the probable impacts of climate change. The current, first, experiment, launched in September last year, investigates the way a state of the art climate model responds to both a doubling of carbon dioxide, and a slowing down of the thermohaline circulation - the large scale overturning of the Oceans which, to some extent, drives the Gulf Stream which keeps Europe warmer than it ought to be. Later experiments will try and replicate the climate of 1900 - 2000 and then forecast 2000-2100.

Anyone with a reasonably up-to-date PC can join in by downloading the software from www.climateprediction.net. You don't have to be connected to the internet all the time or to switch your computer on more than

you normally would. It won't slow your computer down either. While your own unique simulation of the climate is running you can watch the weather and climate patterns develop using graphics software supplied with the model.

So why are so many models needed? It is because of the uncertainty inherent in trying to predict the way the atmosphere evolves - we all know from experience that you can't trust a 5-day weather forecast. So, by running hundreds of thousands of models, the climateprediction.net scientists hope to cover all the uncertainties - uncertainties due to the fact that the models themselves aren't perfect and that we don't know just how much greenhouse gas will be emitted in the future, let alone what volcanoes will erupt. Also we don't have perfect knowledge about what the atmosphere is doing right now, and by missing a small detail we might predict a completely different evolution of weather systems. Hopefully the climateprediction.net approach will let scientists say what is most likely to happen and, probably more crucially, what won't happen.

Dr Sylvia Knight

Climate change film not so hot



the first half, after which the film loses its momentum, degenerating into predictable action movie territory, complete with schmaltzy love interest, with only a handful of mildly satirical jokes to maintain interest. The "science" of *The Day After Tomorrow* is so ridiculously

The film *The Day After Tomorrow*, which hit cinemas earlier this summer, was promoted as a Hollywood blockbuster with a conscience, designed to raise awareness of climate change while still being exciting entertainment. Unfortunately, it can only be considered at best partially successful on either count.

The setting is one in which climate change causes the gulf stream to break down, precipitating various extreme weather events in the United States including, for some unexplained reason, a massive tidal wave inundating New York, culminating in a new ice age throughout the northern hemisphere. In case this scenario is in danger of sounding too plausible, it all happens over about a week. The main plot line concerns the efforts of a climate scientist (Dennis Quaid) to rescue his son (Jake Gyllenhaal) from ice-bound New York.

As entertainment, the film's strongest points are the spectacular special effects, especially in the tidal wave and flooding scenes. However, these are concentrated in

over-the-top that it undermines any intention the filmmakers might have had of raising serious issues about real climate change. The film's political impact is therefore a fraction of that of Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, which although not without flaws itself, was made for a fraction of the cost. However, *The Day After Tomorrow* has provided an opportunity for other people to get climate change messages across. For example, Greenpeace have put together an excellent web site, www.thedayaftertomorrow.org, spoofing the film. In Oxford, the Thames Valley Energy Centre organised a special screening of the film for local environmentalists, scientists and others (Martin and Margot Hodson represented Sage), while various local groups leafleted the public at screenings in the main cinemas. The main message I take from this film is that if we want to educate the public or lobby politicians about climate change, we cannot rely on Hollywood. It is up to us.

Karl Wallendszus

Major climate conference announced

Sage is actively involved in organising what could well be the biggest Christian environmental meeting ever held in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire region. *Climate Change: How Christians Respond* will be held at St Andrew's Church, High Wycombe on Saturday 26 February 2005, with the aim of presenting the Christian environmental message, particularly concentrating on the issue of climate change, to Christians in the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Our hope is that the meeting will stimulate Christians of all denominations to take action at all levels: personal, local, church, regional,

national and international. The content will be varied, with keynote speakers, workshops, small groups, and exhibitions, and plenty of time to talk. The Conservation Foundation have agreed to help fund the meeting.

At present many of the details are still being worked out, but we will have more about it in the next issue of *Sage Words*. Meanwhile, we have set up a web site, www.sageoxford.org.uk/climatechange, where further details will be posted as they become available. The most important thing at the moment is to put the date firmly in your diary **now!**

Five-star walk in national press

Fourteen of us met at St Clements Church in the morning of 1 July for the second in the *Walk with the Creator* series, and Caroline Steel guided us around Headington Hill Park. There were lots of changes since we last went in April, and already some trees were showing signs of autumn colour. We gathered back in the church for tea and cakes. One of the attendees, Catharine Morris, later wrote an amusing report of the walk, which was published in *The Times* on 7 August. She gave it 5 out of 5 stars for "spiritual high"! The next walk is on Thursday 14 October, but we do not expect this one to feature in the national press.



Environment Sunday is a success

We had a wonderful time at Wallingford Baptist Church helping lead Environment Sunday 2004 on 6 June. First, three Sage members provided the children's slot in the morning service, which involved the children putting their hands in clay, and then pressing their handprints onto a large white cloth to make a "tree".

Later, Sage took part in an afternoon walk along the river Thames towards Shillingford, admiring God's Creation as we walked. It was a glorious sunny afternoon, and we were rewarded by good views of great crested grebe, reed bunting and damselflies.

Finally, the evening service was an informal affair and was largely led by Sage members. The worship was great, led by Cath Sefton, with Franz Stevens from Sage on top form on the keyboard.

Thank you to Cath Sefton and Emily Wilkins who did an enormous amount of organization behind the scenes, and Wallingford Baptist Church for being incredibly gracious hosts!