

Advance Heating customer writes in her local newspaper...

SOLAR PANELS - A REALISTIC SOLUTION TO CLIMATE PROBLEMS

Local resident Jo Rathbone is trying to fight climate change through use of solar power. She shares her experience with ECHO:

Have you been disappointed by the climate negotiations in Copenhagen? Wondering what you could do to make a difference? We decided to invest some of our money in the future of the planet by having solar thermal tubes installed. This uses the sunlight to heat water for our showers and washing up.

In the summer months, we don't have the gas on regularly. Depending on the summer weather, we can expect to have most of our hot water generated from solar energy. In the winter, even on a cold, below freezing day, if the sun is shining, then that energy can warm the water from very cold to maybe 35°C. In spring and autumn it depends on the amount of sunshine as to how much we gain from solar energy.

We started by having a special hot water tank fitted, which has two coils. The bottom coil takes heat from the



Jo's money saving solar array.

Photo by Jo Rathbone

solar tubes, and the top coil is heated via the gas boiler. This means that in the summer we have lots of very hot water, all solar heated. In the winter we have a smaller volume of hot water, which has been preheated by solar, and heated up to the temperature we need for showers and washing up by the gas boiler. Then we had the solar array put up on our kitchen extension roof. More recently, we had the solar array raised up to be at more of an angle, so as to increase the amount of winter sun which is usable.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON FESTIVAL

The informal organising committee formed last October to look at the future of the Earlsdon Festival is inviting you to tell them what you think.

After several meetings to discuss the issues involved and consultations with a number of organisations in the area the committee members have reached the point where they would like to test the level of support and interest in options for a festival back in the centre of Earlsdon in 2011. They have concluded that it should be re-envisioned as a week long programme of events rather than a single day and that it should be a community-focused festival for local people of all ages which showcases the talent that exists in the area in arts, music, dance, drama etc – to celebrate the area and its history. Potentially this festival would be held in a number of both indoor and outdoor venues and the committee has gained the support of organisations with suitable facilities. At a meeting in December the local police expressed support for this approach, which is vital if the festival is to be re-launched.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the questionnaire opposite. The more evidence there is of support for a new-look festival and of willingness of local people to get involved the more likely it is that the festival will succeed.

We have managed to reduce our gas and electricity consumption as a result of the installation: firstly, because we use less gas to heat the water both in the summer and in the winter; secondly, because we were using an electric shower and now we use a mixer tap with shower attachment. We discovered that electric showers use a lot of electricity! So by converting our shower to run direct from the hot water tank, we use less electricity.

If anyone is interested in coming to have a look at our solar thermal installation, please get in touch.

Jo Rathbone

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