



# Green Centre News

## Latest News

- The IOM Government' had some 40 responses in on its Biodiversity Strategy (including from IOMFoE).
- At a recent meeting of the UN Association, Peter Bridgewater spoke inspiringly about the potential for an IOM application for UN Biosphere status.

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## Beach Buddies Highlight Waste *by ZWM's Muriel Garland*

Since 2006 Bill Dale of Beach Buddies has been doing a great job organising beach cleaning all round the island. Volunteers of all ages can just turn up and take part. Gloves and litter pickers are provided and all the materials collected are disposed of at local civic amenity sites. Bill tries to recycle as much as possible. Recently he has highlighted the problem of baby wipes and other waste being washed up on the beaches. As with so much waste it appears that people don't think when they throw things 'away'.

When you flush anything 'away' down the toilet it goes into the sewerage system and if you live in Ramsey or Peel it could end up going straight out to sea in the sewage outfalls and coming back with the next high tide.

The Water and Sewerage Authority WASA produce a booklet reminding people of the problems caused by flushing stuff 'away' down the toilet. You can download the leaflet from their website

<http://www.gov.im/lib/docs/water/sewerage/binitdontflushitleaflet.pdf>

As with so many instances prevention of waste is better than cure and if these items are not flushed 'away' there will be less risk of flooding and less unsightly, unhygienic litter on our beaches.

If you'd like to spend a healthy hour cleaning up a beach with the Beach Buddies take a look at their Facebook page, ring Bill on 496560 or email [beachbuddies@manx.net](mailto:beachbuddies@manx.net)

## Greening the Green Centre *by Cat Turner*

Those of you who've dropped into the Green Centre lately—and as you may know, we're currently open on a Wednesday from 10 til 2pm, as well as the usual Saturday session—will have seen some changes on its doorstep.

The rather ropy soil (and ciggie butts, syringes, other unpleasant items) that clogged the rowan tree's roots up was removed by great teamwork from Chris, George and Phil, and after a donation of compost from Douglas Corporation, new growing material put in place. We've started adding the odd batch of herbs (free to careful gatherers), and Mike Hortshuis of Robinsons has generously let us have some flowering plants too. The lovely Helen Gibson also donated a clematis – but that was stolen within days.

We knew it might happen, we're not downhearted (much). After all, it shows someone appreciates our efforts! If you have spare plants that tolerate shade, please think of us....

### Raleigh Dover Electric Assisted Bicycle

I recently took George Short's Raleigh Dover for a test ride to see if the hype about Panasonic's crank driven motor lives up to its reputation as one of the best power units for an 'Ebike'. The claim is that it is more efficient than a hub motor with the power being delivered directly to the crank in proportion to the amount of effort you make pedalling.

These bikes, assembled in Germany, don't come cheap with a price tag equivalent to that of a fairly decent Honda scooter, so I was expecting a lot for my money.

The bike seems reasonably well made with no complaints about the quality of finish or components. It comes with a lightweight aluminium frame, three speed Nexus hub gear, cable operated disc brakes, suspension forks and seat-post and a fitted dynamo and lights.

" The riding position is more than acceptable..."

Riding position and comfort is more than acceptable and all the controls for the motor are clear and easily accessible. I only had half an hour or so to put it through its paces so having acquainted myself with all the controls, and adjust the seat height I headed off from his shop at S&S Motors, located on the Castletown bypass, towards Gansey. I chose this route as it has a good mix of flat and sloping roads to try out the motor.

There are three power settings, economy, standard and high and depending on the amount of use each power setting gets the lightweight lithium battery has a range of about 25 – 40 miles; i.e. plenty for most riders in the Isle of Man.

Switching between the three settings I didn't find the jump up or down in power staggeringly different but it was definitely noticeable, in switching between power on and off, the absence of motor drag often experienced on other types of Ebike. So I give the bike a definite thumbs up in this particular test.

Riding the bike as an ordinary bike, to either save power, or simulating a flat battery showed it is perfectly capable of keeping up a reasonable pace, but with only the three gears, which are spaced quite far apart, I probably wouldn't want to travel too far or attempt too many steep slopes.

So what's the ride like with the motor switched on? Well getting away from the traffic lights with full power selected was certainly brisk but otherwise I experienced a similar effect that I had encountered with the two and half grand Smart Ebike.

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When moving from a level section of road onto the start of a slope, the point when you want to accelerate a bit to get the momentum to carry you up the hill, the motor had the opposite effect and on occasion almost acted as brake before starting to offer any assistance. The motor, instead of providing a constant or linear increase in power as I started to exert a bit more pressure on the pedals to get up the hill it kept chopping in and out, making the ride a bit of a drag. This also happened when trying to accelerate on the flat, even when well below the speed the motor is designed to stop assisting.

I rode up and down Fishers Hill several times from both directions, and although I used less effort than would be needed on a conventional bike, the bike certainly didn't perform as well as expected.

On returning the bike to S&S, I commented to George's daughter Rachael the motor seemed hesitant and jerky to which she replied her dad had recently reported similar findings; but that it hadn't been like that when it was new and perhaps a fault had developed in the electrics. Whether this is the case, I do not know as I haven't yet received any further feedback from George who was going to contact Raleigh for technical advice.

However, for a bike that costs not far short of two grand, I would be a bit concerned of a fault like that developing, whether it is covered by warranty or not, in such a short time frame. Some of the cheaper Ebikes on the market may not be quite as sophisticated or well equipped as the Raleigh, but for the price of the Raleigh you could afford to get through two or three of the cheaper makes and still have change for a bus ride home if you get stranded with a flat battery.

Footnote: I have since spoken to George and he says he has had a bit of a play with the bike and has found the symptoms I reported only seem to occur if you switch between power on and power off during your ride. He has found if you leave the motor switched on the whole time it seems to behave fine. However, he intends to discuss the issue with the Raleigh rep when he visits the Island in a few weeks time.

### **Plea for Morsbags Material *by Muriel Garland***

Over the past few years, Zero Waste Mann has organised the making of over 3,000 Morsbags—the environmentally friendly alternative to plastic and single-use bags. They're one of the most popular reasons for people to drop into the Green Centre...and they're absolutely free, so you can help the environment without feeling too much pain! Call in if you'd like one....

But we want to do more! Supplies of material are running low, so if you have any old sheets, duvet covers, curtains or other sizeable chunks of fabric that you can spare, please either drop them off at the Green Centre (10am—2pm Weds, and 10am—4pm Sats) or let Muriel know on 664796 and we'll try and collect it from you. Then we can get ourselves and our friends back to work, stitching more of them together....

THE GREEN  
CENTRE  
YN LAARE  
GHCLASS

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IMI 2PG  
(Opposite Iceland/Shoprite store)

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Only  
10.00am - 2.00pm  
(generally open until 4.00pm  
on a Sat and sometimes even  
later)

We're on the Web  
[www.zerowastemann.org](http://www.zerowastemann.org)  
[www.meac.iofm.net](http://www.meac.iofm.net)  
[www.foe.org.im](http://www.foe.org.im)

Next Newsletter  
due January 2014 —  
please let us know if  
you've any feedback  
on this one at  
[greencentre@manx.net](mailto:greencentre@manx.net).

In the mean time—  
dare we say it—have  
a happy, low carbon,  
and waste-free  
Christmas!

## March Against Monsanto *by Cat Turner, IoMFoE*

C O N T E N T

Following the lively gathering that took place in Douglas on May 25th 2013 (the first global March Against Monsanto, in which the Isle of Man enthusiastically took part), there was a small but lively rerun on 12 October. It tied in with World Food Week, and with Vandana Shiva's Seed Freedom movement—a campaign to protect our rights to plant, save and swap the seeds that suit us best—not what we're permitted to by Big Agriculture. The issues included:

- The problems caused to human and animal health by GMOs in foods - and their devastating consequences on both the environment and those that consume them. There is NO solid evidence proving GM food safe, and masses of peer-reviewed, sound research indicating that it's probably not.
- The small matter of honesty in food labelling. Survey after survey shows people want to know if their food contains GM ingredients. But if companies are so proud of their GMOs, why have they fought so hard this year to get laws in place that mean they needn't label them on foods? In April 2013, the major UK supermarkets dropped their consumer-friendly GM labelling policies. Even if we don't do GM farming here, it still ends up on our dinnerplates.
- The rise of unsafe farming practices, including monocultures, chemical-laden practice, and the steady destruction of the soil structure and fertility that arises from the use of these companies' fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
- The shocking increase in new laws in the EU and US, which control what plants can be sold, swapped and have their seeds saved (the EU Plant Reproductive Materials Law is one example). These grant companies patents not just over plants they've engineered, but also over whole species which have existed naturally for generations. Broccoli now 'belongs' to Monsanto in certain EU countries, with more on the way. Unthinkable? Yes. Un-doable? It's being done.
- The pursuit of profit at the expense of ecosystems and the livelihoods by reducing farmers' options and controlling what they can plant and buy; and
- The hijacking of our food system, bringing hunger and inequality to millions

We heard from Oxfam on how your spending there doesn't just help you buy great



items at fair prices - it funds Oxfam's robust campaigns for (among other things) food justice and an end to monocrop, GM agriculture in developing countries. Then we marched through the town, letting the public know why we don't want to buy GMO, and why we DO want supermarkets to reinstate their GM labelling policies—led by the brilliant Sambamann. We ended up at the One World Centre, where we heard from Minister Phil Gawne about why the island doesn't allow GM farming, and from Vicky Christian about practical steps we can all make to ensure a fairer food system.

Next year we're planning something even more fun—a "True Food" event., where we