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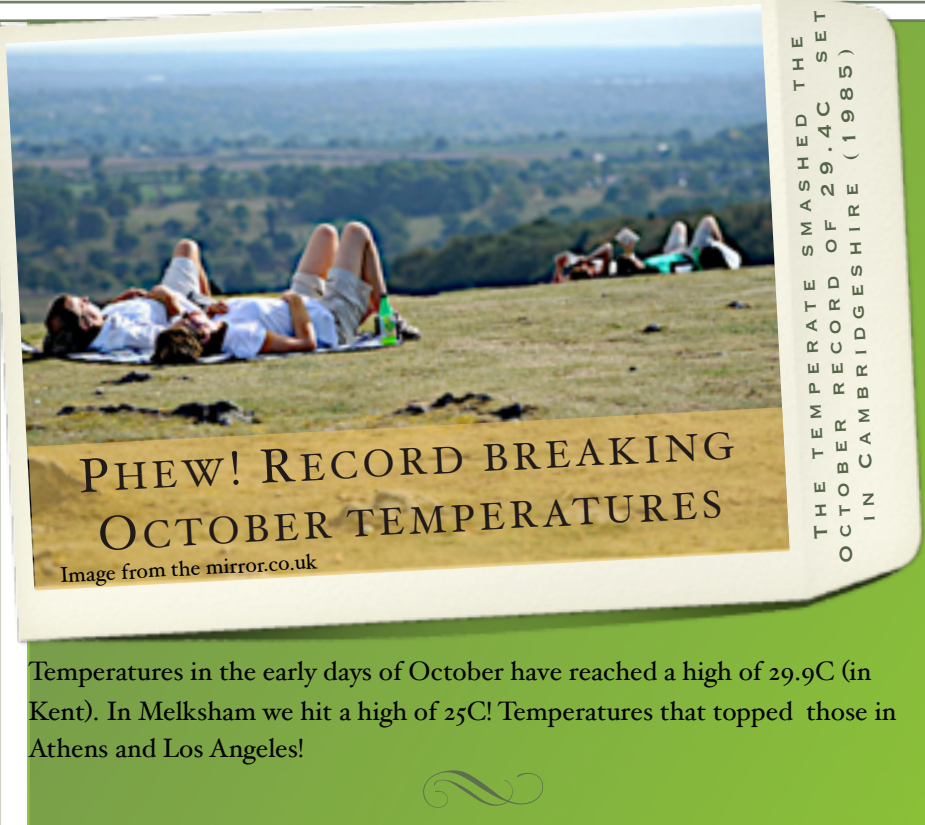
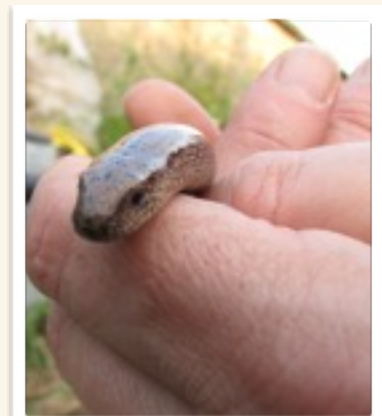
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Temperatures in the early days of October have reached a high of 29.9C (in Kent). In Melksham we hit a high of 25C! Temperatures that topped those in Athens and Los Angeles!

Melksham Freecycle

The Melksham Freecycle recently hit **4,000 members!** This is brilliant for the local community as the Freecycle scheme helps promote recycling. Freecycle is an international scheme and has over 8.5 million members worldwide. The scheme was first established in the UK in London in 2003, and has since grown - There are currently 540 groups in the UK alone!

Help us keep up our 'waste not, want not' mentality and join the Melksham Freecycle. All you need to do is visit: <http://groups.freecycle.org/melksham->

[freecycle/description](#) and click on the sign up link in the navigation bar in the right hand side of the site. That's all you need to do, then you are ready to start offering your unwanted items or start posting requests for things you require. E.g. flower pots and or gardening tools.



Caring for your hedgehogs this winter

Increasingly the humble hedgehog is becoming hard to spot in the English garden.

This is a shame, as their value to the garden can't be understated. Hedgehogs will spend most of their evenings foraging for tasty snacks, many of which are pests to your cherished plants and shrubs. There are quite a lot of misconceptions that surround the feeding of hedgehogs, which I thought might be worthy of some clarification. I certainly remember when my grandparents used to feed 'their' hedgehogs bread and milk! So here are some guidelines on what you should and should not feed your hedgehogs...

Firstly, do not feed your hedgehogs bread and milk! Hedgehogs are unable to digest the bread and the cow's milk may give them diarrhea. Many hedgehogs die every year from this 'kindness'. Things you can feed 'your' hedgehogs include: tinned cat, dog and puppy food. They prefer chicken flavor, but please make sure you do not give them fish varieties! Cat or kitten biscuits are okay but only give the meat flavor one, again not fish flavored!

There is a product called 'Spike's Dinner Hedgehog Food' you can get it either tinned or dry and it is available from good pet shops. There are many more hedgehog foods available.

You can also feed hedgehogs your meat leftovers like mince or chicken, but you will have to chop it all up into very small edible pieces for them. The problem with large sized pieces of meat is that hedgehogs only have small teeth and cannot chew or tear their food into smaller pieces.

You can feed them little bits of mild or medium cheddar cheese and chopped peanuts the same ones you feed to your birds and they have to be unsalted. (NO SALT) Be sure never to give your hedgehogs any salty foods like bacon and corned beef, it is not good for them! They like to eat sultanas and raisins. The most important thing to give to them is water, as they drink loads of water!

In the winter the best advice is to put out the biscuits, unsalted peanuts, cheese etc rather than tinned meat which will freeze very quickly.

The best time to feed the hedgehogs is at night as the flies will have gone but you have to remove the food early in the morning before the flies come again. If you put the food out in the day, the flies will plant their maggots inside, fly maggots cause serious harm to hedgehogs.



Hummingbird?

Spotted in our garden on a lovely hot September afternoon. A pretty little moth with a span of around 2 inches max. As you will have guessed, it loves nectar and literally hovers over open flowers just like a real hummingbird, to extract this. It flies in the sunshine and hovers in front of flowers, sipping the nectar with its long proboscis, very much like the hummingbird which gives it its name. The larvae feed on bedstraw (Galium), and some of these may hatch and give rise to autumn adults in an influx year.



Humming Bird Hawkmoth

**Picture from: <http://butterfly-conservation.org>
(unfortunately the picture we took was not so good)**

The end of the horse chestnut?

You may have noticed that 'Conker Trees' have been suffering with brown shriveling leaves of late. This is an indication that the trees are in fact suffering from an infestation. The entire country's 'fleet' of horse chestnut trees are under threat from a disease which has literally 'flown here' from the EU. Tiny moths are causing this problem.



The chestnut leaf miner moth (*cameraria ohridella*) is a new arrival, established in the UK in 2002. It has since spread rapidly. The damage is caused by the tiny

larval stage of the moth as it consumes only the surface area of the leaf. It does not eat the leaf in the traditional way we normally associate with caterpillars, where we see the ragged edge of the leaves; since this little critter is so tiny with a head measuring less than 1mm across it can only graze on the leaf's surface which, causes a sort of sun burnt effect on the leaf. Millions of these are present on an infected tree and there can be hundreds on just one leaf.

We have noticed evidence of this in our area. With almost all horse chestnut trees seemingly affected. The infestation is spread when the adult is in flight in its moth form. Moth and crinkly leaf Images courtesy of: <http://www.friendsofashridge.org.uk>



Please Contribute!

If you have any Melksham related news, wildlife pictures or great recipes that use local organic fare trade ingredients and wish to share them we would love your contribution towards the next newsletter.

Send any pictures, recipes, stories or news to me for inclusion before the end of the month (ideally at least a week before the end of the month) to either of the following email: melkshamcfg@yahoo.co.uk



It's Walk To School Month!

Walk to School is an international campaign that was launched in 1995. Its aim is to get as many Children and parents to ditch being driven to school run and make walking to school part of their normal routine. Last year over 750 thousand children walked to school, this year it's going to be even bigger! Obviously some children live too far from the school for this to be practical. But for those with a reasonable route (and health) we say "Go for it!"

Our top tip for mums and dads who must take their children in their cars is to drop them off a short distance from the school and let them walk the remaining distance. Example: two or three friends meet 10 minutes walking distance from the school and walk in together. What this means is parents do not have to join what we call 'the red arrows display team' in the morning attempting to drop their children exactly outside the school gate and running the gamut of the other competing parents.



Melksham energy event

Y Have you pondered about PV but not yet found a good installer? Do you want the difference between solar PV and solar thermal explained in plain terms? Are rising fuel prices particularly worrying because your house is 'off gas'? Have you got panels and want to shout about your ace installer? Do you realize that step one is to insulate your home?

Come to the Melksham Energy Event on **Sat 5th November in the Town Hall, 10.30 am - 3.30pm**, for unbiased information about the help available to save you money and contribute to lowering the carbon footprint of your Community Area.

Melksham Energy Group Lead, Shirley McCarthy, said " We felt that many people did not know what is on offer or are hesitating about installing, for

instance, Solar Photo Voltaic Panels because they were uncertain about which companies to trust, so in conjunction with the Melksham Community Area Partnership and Wiltshire Council we are putting on this Event covering most aspects of low carbon and renewable energy" .

Climate Friendly Bradford's Energy Group will tell us about their experience of a 'bulk buy' scheme for solar photovoltaics. We expect to have speakers on wind and river power. What businesses and homes might gain from the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive, issued this Summer, will also be spelled out.

The Wiltshire Council's 'Green Room' will be parked in the Market Place, making clear, among other things, what the 'Warm and Well' scheme for insulating homes means for you.

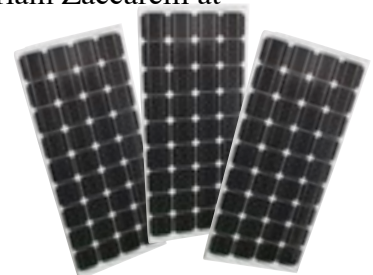
In the Town Hall at noon and at 2pm there will be talks and speakers will answer your questions. These speakers will also be on hand throughout the day. There is, in addition, separate space for insulation, solar PV and solar thermal installers to 'set out their wares'.

We very much hope that business people, landlords, householders, tenants and installation and other companies will all realize that there is something in the Energy Event for them.

**Sat 5th
November
Melksham
Town Hall,
10.30 am -
3.30pm**

Notes:

- The Melksham Community Area Partnership is an independent organisation set up to be the voice of the community to influence decisions about the Melksham Community Area, which includes Atworth, Broughton Gifford, Bulkington, Great Hinton, Keevil, Melksham, Melksham Without, Poulshot, Seend, Semington and Steeple Ashton
- Melksham Energy Group was formed in Autumn 2010 as a Sub Group of Melksham Climate Friendly Group (MCFG). The Energy Group has since become one of Melksham Community Area Partnership's Theme Groups.
- If you have a comment or query, are interested in attending, having input to, or having a display at, the Energy Event, please contact Shirley McCarthy via Miriam Zaccarelli at melkshamcap@googlemail.com
- Useful websites include;
www.warmandwell.co.uk
www.wiltshireworldchangers.org
www.decc.gov.uk
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk



The wildlife garden - A monthly pictorial update



A few pictures of the MCFG wildlife garden as of the 3rd of **October** 2011



Thanks to the sterling work by all who have contributed to the garden last month it now looks fabulous!



“A fruit smoothie is a healthy alternative to chocolate or a candy bar and they taste great”

Smoothie of the month

Raspberry Cream Smoothie

- 1/2 cup of orange juice
- 1/2 cup of raspberry yogurt
- 1/2 vanilla yogurt
- 1 banana
- 4 ice cubes

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth

