

## Holiday club offer

ENERGETIC children will have the chance to take part in a sport-themed holiday club in the half term.

Organised by a team of volunteers associated with Emmanuel Baptist Church, the 'Champion's Challenge' club will feature a range of activities including singing, playing games, reading stories and craft and drama.

Bible memory and other challenges are also part of the club and refreshments will be served.

The club will be held at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Manstone Lane in Sidmouth from Tuesday, May 26 to Friday, May 29 between 10am and 12 noon.

The club is open to all children currently in Years one to six.

All holiday club participants and their families are invited to an all age family service at the church on May 31 at 10.30am, when the children will be presented with their medals earned during the week and this will be followed by a lunch.

For more information ring Ian Rush on 07717 886643.

**DAMAGE:** Vandals caused £100 worth of damage when they attacked a pay and display machine in Sidmouth. The incident happened between midnight on Sunday, May 3 and Monday, May 11 on Peak Hill Road. If you can help ring 08452 777444 quoting crime reference number KS/09/256.

**FOLK DANCE:** Sidmouth Folk Dance Club will meet tonight. Budding dancers are asked to meet at Sidmouth College, Primley Road from 7pm. The class ends at 9pm. For more information ring (01395) 513131. New members are welcome.

Graham's solar system means *they* pay him

# Sunshine energy cash bonanza!

By Kingsley Squire

**SIDMOUTH design consultant Graham Cooper is championing the cause of renewable energy with a solar system that pays his electricity bill.**

And the saving does not stop there. Under a contract with his utility company, he is credited for exporting the surplus power generated back into the national grid.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say it's a nice little earner," Graham said this week. "But it certainly helps because what I get back by exporting clean renewable energy has effectively reduced our bill over the year to zero.

"Such a system is worth exploring especially if you want to ease your conscience on carbon pollution and climate change because, by reducing your household energy consumption you are helping the planet and saving on the pocket. So in my book it's a win win situation."

Fifteen grid-connected photovoltaic solar cells, installed four years ago on the roof of Graham's house high on Peak Hill, are linked to the mains electricity supply through a black box "power station" inverter in the loft.

A separate thermal solar panel introduced twelve years ago heats the water. But the solar electricity generated through the PV cells by sunlight and radiation, even when the sky is overcast, is sufficient, apart from the winter months, to drive the household lighting and appliances such as the kettle, television, the computer, printer and fax machine.

"All the time it is running that equipment I am saving money because I am not using any power from the national grid," explained Graham. "This is particularly so in the



**ENTHUSIASTIC:** "In my book solar power is a win win situation ..." renewable energy champion Graham Cooper

Spring, Summer and Autumn months when the surplus generated by the solar system mounts up."

He calculates that over the past year the £15,000 PV installation, half funded by a Energy Saving Trust grant to encourage renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions, generated 2000 kilowatt hours of electricity.

"Last Year I paid for 1959 kwh and, through the surplus generated, exported 1000 back

through the meter into the national grid," said Graham. "For that I am credited 28p per kwh which is roughly twice as much as I currently pay. This has effectively reduced my carbon emissions by a tonne and electricity bill over the year to zero."

The equation will be even more favourable next April when, under new government legislation, the export tariff is due to almost double to around 50p per kwh.

"So there is no better time than now for anyone to consider reducing their carbon footprint by installing photovoltaic cells," says Graham. "There is a window of opportunity to take advantage of both the present installation grants and the new export tariffs which are due to replace the current grant system next Spring."

Graham's commitment to reduce carbon emissions is everywhere in his home which has energy saving light bulbs throughout and a monitor to control usage.

In addition he and his Japanese wife, Toshiko and their daughter, Felicia, a pupil at Sidmouth Community College, ensure that every household appliance, apart from the fridge freezer, is switched off at the wall when not in use. Nothing is ever left on stand by.

"Leaving anything on standby, such as the video or satellite box, is wasting electricity, causing pollution and costing you money," he says.

Graham's "green" commitment is endorsed by the Sid Valley Energy Action Group which has had discussions with the EDDC and Leisure East Devon on the possibility of a solar system to heat the Sidmouth pool.

It has quotations for 40 solar thermal panels on the roof and has started to apply for grants.

"The pool is heated now by two out of date gas boilers which are inefficient and wasteful," said Graham. "So we are trying to use it as an example to raise awareness of the advantages of renewable energy."

He certainly has no regrets about his own solar installation. Far from it. He plans to add a couple more PV panels to the 15 already up there on the roof!

## Reptile ramble treat for young

A REPTILE ramble is just one of the activities on offer to Sidmouth youngsters during the half term holidays.

East Devon District Council's Education Ranger, James Chubb, will be leading the way to the Great Outdoors during the break in his bid to find everything that walks, crawls, flies or swims on the Local Nature Reserves- from A to Z.

The week kicks off on Tuesday, May 26 with three events at Fire Beacon Hill Local Nature Reserve- a reptile ramble at 9am, bugs and beasts at 2pm and nightjars at 7pm.

James will meet all those brave enough at the Bowd Inn before facing the challenge of the steep climb up the hill to the nature reserve.

The following day, Wednesday, May 27, James will be at Holyford Woods Local Nature Reserve to listen out for birds. He will be waiting to meet and greet at the lay-by at the top of Seaton Down Hill at 10am. Binoculars are encouraged but not essential.

On Friday, May 29, James will be conducting a pond dipping session at Seaton Marshes Local Nature Reserve and will be meeting everyone in the car park at 10am.

All the events are free and do not require booking.

For more information ring the Countryside Service on (01395) 517557.

## Lifeboat beneficiary of ocean feat

**SIDMOUTH** lifeboat will be one of three charities to benefit from the efforts of a talented athlete who will soon be embarking on the toughest journey of his life.

David Brooks, who lives in Topsham, plans to row across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by himself - a voyage of more than 12,000 miles which will last 13 months.

The 23-year-old Birmingham University graduate will leave La Gomera in the Canary Islands on December 6 and across the Atlantic to Antigua. He will then travel the Caribbean through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific to Australia.

He said: "This challenge is not a personal ego trip, or a rite of passage. It is a chance to show others that people with big dreams can make them achievable, no matter who they are.

"In principle if you want to take up a task like this it is how you prepare for it mentally.

"This is always the case with endurance challenges - whether you are about to do a sponsored silence or a long bike ride."



**CHALLENGE:** Dave Brooks.

David, who will undertake the marathon trip on a customised boat, said he has no rowing experience but has used a kayak before. He added: "Hopefully, it should be a

case of adapting slightly."

For the Atlantic-leg of his journey, the first stage of the trip, he plans to take part in a race alongside other rowers.

He said: "Being under the supervision of the race should be beneficial for me, notably from a safety perspective if anything were to go wrong.

"It also means that I could gain help and advice."

David hopes to raise £10,000 each for Sidmouth Lifeboat, the Guide Dogs charity and the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.

Simon Sparrow, senior Coxswain of Sidmouth Lifeboat, has praised David for his kindness.

He said: "I would like to thank him for thinking of us and hope he has a safe journey. "He will be in our prayers."

David is inviting people to support him when he sets off on a maiden trip from the Topsham Quay on Sunday, June 7.

For more information about David's challenge, visit [www.davebrookssolo.co.uk](http://www.davebrookssolo.co.uk).

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