



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD AND ABBEY CHURCH ARBROATH

ECO-AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2013

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LOCAL NETWORKS SEMINAR 2013

Ways of Understanding the Human Role in Creation By Rev Trevor Jamison (Chaplain Eco-Congregation Scotland)

Trevor illustrated four models of understanding the human role in creation, with volunteers reading the relevant Bible passages, and used these to open up a discussion as to which model best represented our view of our role in creation:

I. Dominion: Gen 1: 26-28

Our intelligence and the power which that brings, gives us responsibility for creation but that does not mean we should dominate. Collectively we have dominion or power but as individuals we should exercise responsibility (Israelite kings were given dominion, but were expected to use it to serve the people).

II. Stewardship: Gen 2: 15

Stewards have authority and exercise power but they do this on behalf of another. There is a need to steward wisely not only on behalf of other people but also on behalf of other creatures and future generations.

However, there is a "tragedy of the commons": the fact that resources such as the air and the seas are not "owned" by anyone and can be exploited and degraded for economic gain and self-interest. There is therefore an over-riding need to hold political leaders to account, for them to be good stewards on our behalf and so overcome social, economic and environmental injustice. To support this, there also needs to be accountability at all levels of society, "politicians need us and we need them".

III. Priests of Creation: Ps 148

Humanity is part of creation but has a special role within it, enabling it to be as God intends it to be in praise of God. Humans are a model of God's appearance in creation, something that is strongly reflected in Celtic Christianity.

If this model is followed, does it mean that God is not already in creation and it raises the question, does creation need an intermediary (humans) in order to praise God? However, this model encourages a move towards greater responsibility, the idea of giving something up for God, self-sacrifice and self-denial.

IV. Community of Creation: Ps 98

People, the living and non-living world are part of a community of praise. This is perhaps a base to start from and the most hopeful concept. Everything that is taken away or degraded is a diminution of the community of creation. Human needs do not take precedence and there is interdependence within the whole community of creation and interdependence with future generations. This model encourages us to look outwards and to look ahead but do we accept that being part of the community of creation means that everything in the created world has equal value in God's eyes?

* * *

This was part of an excellent talk by the chaplain at Dunblane Cathedral on September 7th.

The seminar was attended by Fay Forge and Alex Robertson.

Other points from the seminar included:

Swap Shops

A lot of fascinating information was shared in these sessions about network and individual church achievements. Ideas for network activities included:

Spiritual:

Encouraging people to write their own green hymns and prayers.

Practical:

Energy: visits to churches that have installed renewable energy, such as: solar panels.

Community:

Many networks organise or take part in regular beach cleans or litter picks, inviting other congregations and the community to join in.

Further outreach to the local community has been achieved by holding eco-coffee mornings and by working with local eco schools.

Interest has also been expressed in promoting eco funerals and green burials.

Members' Topics:

In advance of the seminar network members had been invited to suggest topics for discussion at the Seminar. One of the topics discussed was:

Plastic waste which can now be found everywhere, from remote mountain tops, beaches and oceans to most streets in towns and cities.

Measures to discourage the use of free plastic bags are already in place in Northern Ireland and other European countries. Scotland is due to introduce a 5p levy on plastic bags from October 2014, not a tax, the proceeds going to charity.

Source: Eco-Congregation Scotland website.

BEACH CLEAN UPDATE

The Eco Awareness Group held a Beach Clean in conjunction with Marine Conservation Society's Beach watch Big Weekend on Saturday 21 September 2013 at West Sands, Arbroath.

The Beach Clean had a small turnout with only 7 volunteers in attendance.

Over a period of approx 90 minutes the group of volunteers managed to clean and survey our usual 100 metres of beach that is maintained by the group for the Marine Conservation Society at the beach at West Sands.

The volunteers collected many different items but the survey showed that it was predominantly plastics and derivatives thereof that were collected. A total of 8 black bags weighing 11kg were removed

from the beach. The graph below gives a breakdown of what was collected.

The next Beach Clean will take place sometime in April 2014 in conjunction with the Marine Conservation Society

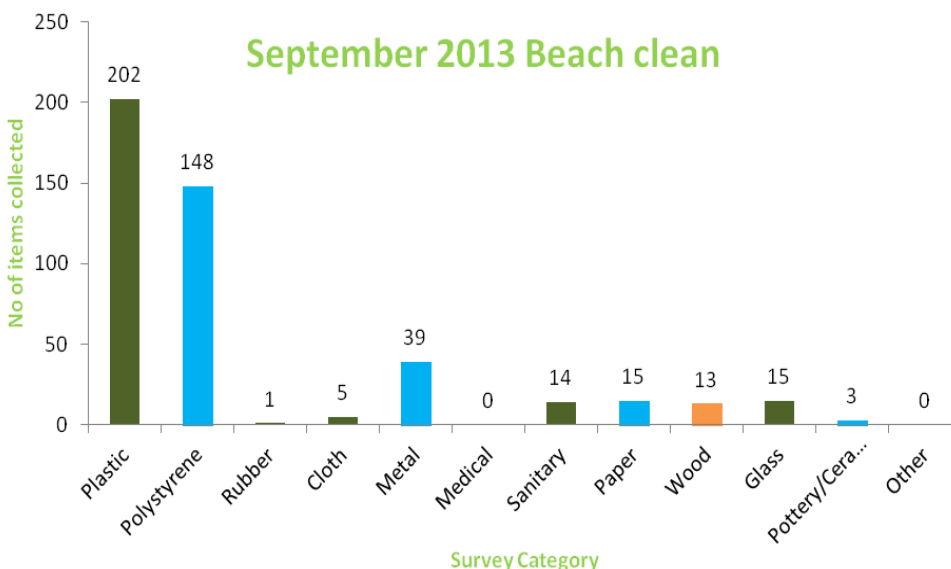
A big thank you to all those who helped make the event a success and gave up their time. It was greatly appreciated.

We all have a part to play in protecting God's creation.

For more information please visit

www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch

By Fiona O'Connor

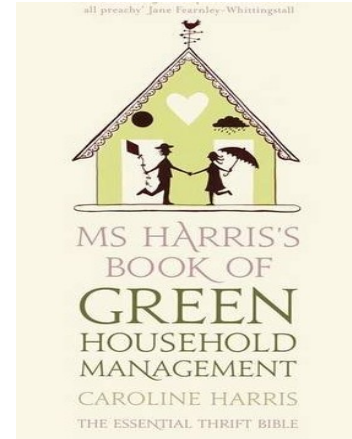


Here are some of those who braved the weather and joined in cleaning the designated part of the beach

BOOK REVIEW

By Vicky Fraser

This book's tag line is "the essential thrift Bible" and it certainly covers many topics from cleaning and growing your own food to managing your wardrobe and mending.



It is designed to allow the reader to dip in and out as needed and has some interesting tips, for example, in the fabric conditioner drawer, add water with a couple of drops of lavender oil or another favourite instead of fabric conditioner.

Not only does it smell nice, better for the environment and clothes, it's good for those allergic to synthetic perfumes and other chemicals.

Other tips include altering clothes, making your own Christmas cards, insulating your home, growing vegetables on your patio and making your own toys with the majority of them being inexpensive to do and requiring little expertise.

A handy book for the home.

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