

A large bale of straw dominates the left side of the frame. Two people are visible on the right, working with the straw. One person, wearing a green shirt, is in the foreground, reaching towards the straw. Another person, wearing a dark shirt, is slightly behind them. The background is a bright, overcast sky.

▶ **SUMMER TRAINING
AT UEL**

▶ **RESET IN BANGLADESH**

▶ **UP ON THE ROOF
WITH BERE
ARCHITECTS**

▶ **MAD ABOUT
BIOGAS**

▶ **RWANDA AID DESIGN
COMPETITION**

AUTUMN 09

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Who said summer was for holidays!

Whilst everyone else may have been relaxing and enjoying this year's British 'BBQ' summer, RESET has been working its little socks off....hence this bumper size quarterly installment.

Since launching our new website this summer, RESET has been moving from strength to strength. In the UK we held our first practical training workshops (in partnership with the University of East London), presented at the HEDON London RIG, ran a living roofs integrated design workshop (in partnership with the Sponge Network and Livingroofs.org) and took part in Practical Action and EWB's 'Small Is...' festival. This is as well as director Blanche Cameron taking roundhouses to Washington.

And to continue the theme of 'working our little socks off', this newsletter is being compiled on the road, in Bangladesh, as Blanche and myself continue developing possible training in cyclone and flood adapted affordable housing - something we hope we will be writing a lot about in many more issues to come.

Thanks again must go to everyone who has helped and supported RESET over the last two years. In fact why not come and help us celebrate our 2nd Birthday on the 22nd October by joining us down at the Ashburnum Arms in Greenwich (see page 7 for more details).

Hope you enjoy.....

Nikki Linsell
Editor



RESET DELIVERS ITS FIRST PRACTICAL TRAINING IN LONDON

This summer, with the support of the University of East London's Sustainable Research Institute, RESET hosted its first series of hands-on training in London.... ▶

WORDS: BLANCHE CAMERON
IMAGES: NIKKI LINBELL

In July and September, RESET ran two 2-day training workshops at the University of East London, looking at construction with straw bale and rammed earth. These were run by experts in their respective fields, Bee Rowan of Amazonails the UK's award winning strawbale training and design-and-build co-operative, and Rowland Keable of RamCast responsible for the reintroduction of rammed earth construction in the UK, including the Eden project and the highly innovative rammed chalk Pines Calyx centre on the south coast.

Over two days, these workshops gave informative and detailed introductions to material performance, specification, design, construction and policy, with case studies of their use in the UK, Europe and internationally. This was combined with hands-on practical training in construction.

Participants included design and construction professionals, lecturers in building services and design, international NGO project managers and students. The mix of participants and the quality of the instruction made for some really interesting discussions.

In Bee's strawbale workshop, people were surprised at the thermal and acoustic performance of the material, as well as the ease – and relative peace! - with which construction can take place, particularly by an untrained group. Bee mentioned that recent air tightness tests showing better than Passivhaus standards, and there is a lot of room for further research into the potential of the material. Check out Amazonails most recent projects, North Kesteven's strawbale social housing, starting on site this winter, and the recently completed National Trust's flagship 'Footprint' building in the Lake District.

“THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE TWO DAYS, IT HAS GIVEN ME AN AMAZING INSIGHT INTO STRAW-BALE BUILDINGS AND HAS ENCOURAGED ME TO DO

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



DARREN JAMES,
LECTURER AT
SOUTHBANK
UNIVERSITY
REFORMING A
STRAWBALE

Rowland's experience as a rammed earth pioneer in Zimbabwe, Zaire, Australia, Europe and the UK has also borne amazing fruit. He talked passionately and eloquently about the qualities of rammed earth, rammed chalk and – particularly – cement free construction. 'With cement causing 10% of the world's carbon emissions,' he said, 'the most undermining material there is – it reduces people's confidence in the construction process, by making them think they have to add cement, just in case. Buildings made of rammed earth have stood for centuries.'

What both these trainers shared was their belief that building with low cost, low carbon, locally available, healthy materials like these can also have a hugely positive impact on the quality of a project. Earth in hot dry, cold dry and temperate climates can even out diurnal temperature ranges, store heat or coolness over a period of time and absorb and control humidity levels. Straw bales can make a thermal and air tight envelope which is hard to beat, becoming ever more popular for housing but also commercial buildings.

Participants went home with a new found passion, not just for these materials but for the principles of local, affordable and accessible construction that doesn't cost the earth! RESET hopes to continue its training relationship with the University of East London – keep your eye on the [website](#) for updates. ◀



WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
RAMMING EARTH INTO THE
PREPARED FORMWORK

www.amozonails.org

www.ram-cast.info

www.uel.ac.uk

RESET SOON TO BE CPD REGISTERED

To keep up-to-date with our latest CPD training events

[JOIN OUR
MAILING LIST](#)

In line with recent announcements from the Department of Energy and Climate Change for the need for a rapid low carbon transition, RESET is developing a comprehensive series of CPD training to address the UK's knowledge gap. This winter, we will be launching training for UK corporate, public, academic and community sectors, in low carbon integrated design for adaptation to climate change and resource depletion. Training will cover the areas of building design and construction, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and restorative urban design for biodiversity, sustainable drainage, natural cooling and ventilation.

RESET AND CAT GO TO WASHINGTON

Converging on Zero at
the Smithsonian
Folklife Festival, on
the Mall in Washington
DC... ►

WORDS & IMAGES: BLANCHE CAMERON



The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is an annual 2-week festival on the Mall in Washington DC. Each year, a country displays its culture, poetry, music, food, craft and building to around a million visitors. Following Bhutan in 2008, this year was Wales' turn.

Wales' amazing wealth of culture, community and creativity was displayed in full, including the Centre for Alternative Technology's display of renewable energy technologies and sustainable building approaches, and a two-day conference on zero carbon futures, 'Convergence on Zero'.



DUSTY AND FRIENDS
BEGINNING TO PLANT
THE ROOF

Adam Thorogood had the mammoth task of coordinating CAT's presence, bringing together an incredible range of speakers for the conference, including Sir John Houghton (ex-IPCC chair), Godfrey Boyle, director of Open University Energy and Environment Research Unit, Richard Heinberg (Post Carbon Institute), David Orr, Pliny Fisk III of the Max Potential Building Systems Centre, Dusty Gedge (President, European Federation of Green Roof Associations, livingroofs.org) and many other great speakers.

I was honoured to speak on behalf of RESET and CAT, on **integrated approaches to environment, community design and development** showcasing some of the community design-and-build projects I have been involved with, as well as organisations that Nikki Linsell and I visited last winter in India and Bangladesh, and their frontline work on climate change adaptation.

On the Mall, Matthew Slack from CAT produced an amazing solar electric and hot water display, providing a charging station for our drills and phones, and hot water to wash with. We also built a living roof structure and a roundhouse as part of the sustainable buildings display, with public participation.

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AND PHONES'**

With the dynamic Dusty Gedge, of livingroofs.org, and the lovely Ed Snodgrass (the US's best known living roof plantsman), we ran workshops on living roof construction - both of them covered in dirt and loving every minute - with help from CAT Ashleigh Uiska and David Nocella from Kentucky, who came all the way to Washington purely for this!

We also built a reciprocal frame roundhouse with North Chevy Chase Elementary School, an ambitious project, with three months of preparation and design, co-ordinating with US contacts for donated materials and technologies.

These buildings had to have an afterlife. Stancills, the family company who donated the living roof substrate, also put us in touch with Nan Sherman and Martha Clark who, at the end of the festival, turned up at 6am to deconstruct and reassemble the living roof structure permanently at Clark Ellioaks Farm, where it is now part of their environmental education resource.

North Chevy Chase's amazing 4th grade teacher Jackie Moore, a powerhouse of renewable human energy! Jackie organised planning permission and galvanised parents and pupils to help build, deconstruct and rebuild the roundhouse through the summer holidays. For two weeks, school pupils, parents and teachers came to work in 35 degree heat, 90% humidity, to strip bark, cut joints, and raise the reciprocal frame. It was hard work but the kids and adults made it so much fun. By the end of the festival, it stood proudly amongst the museums on the Mall between the Washington Memorial and the Capitol - a symbol of community achievement by all ages, and sheer dogged hard work! It was then taken to North Chevy Chase school where it is now an outdoor teaching space.

It was a great event and an honour to be there, in spite of the heat and humidity, and many friendships were made across the Atlantic divide. ◀

'FOR TWO WEEKS, SCHOOL PUPILS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAME TO WORK IN 35 DEGREE HEAT, 90% HUMIDITY..'

www.cat.org.uk

www.folklife.si.edu

www.stancills.com

www.clarklandfarm.com

www.greenroofplants.com

[www.convergence](http://www.convergenceonzero.org)

[onzero.org](http://www.convergenceonzero.org)

RESET'S 2nd BIRTHDAY PARTY

22nd October
7pm onwards
Ashburnham
Arms, SE10 8UH

[Click here to
RSVP](#)

RESET's AGM and 2nd birthday celebrations will be held in London on **22nd October at the Ashburnham Arms**, 25 Ashburnham Grove, London SE10 8UH. The AGM is at 5.30pm, followed by light refreshments and a talk at 7pm by Raffaella Bellanca of the Household Energy Network HEDON, which works with domestic energy programmes in the poorest areas of the majority world (www.hedon.info).

This event is free but please confirm if you would like to attend either the AGM or the evening celebration:
blanche.cameron@reset-development.org



RESET shares its enthusiasm for this technology that closes the circle at events across the UK, and abroad... ▶

WORDS & IMAGES: SARAH KENT, ALEXA MOTTRAM, NIKKI LINSELL, BLANCHE CAMERON

BIOGAS AND DEVELOPMENT

**'THE SCHOOL
CURRENTLY
HAS NO
ELECTRICITY
AND THE DAILY
SCHOOL MEAL
THERE IS
COOKED USING
FUELWOOD'**

Given that biogas has been in use for many years in China and India, and is becoming more and more popular in other parts of Asia, questions must be asked about its potential, particularly in situations where other fuel resources may be rare.

On 27th August, RESET was invited by Raffaella Bellanca of the HEDON Network to come and speak at their London Regional Interest Group meeting in Marylebone. Having attended Charlie Paton's inspiring presentation the month before on Seawater Greenhouses, Sarah Kent, of RESET, gave a detailed presentation on the benefits and challenges of biogas energy generation, in refugee and humanitarian situations and general community development. The meeting was attended by representatives from PLAN International and community groups, including from Uganda and Kenya, and an interesting and lively discussion followed on factors such as the availability of water, temperature, altitude and quality and quantity of 'feedstock' required!

Another of RESET's members, Alexa Mottram, has recently returned from a visit to a biogas school project in Tanzania. The Copeland-Rungwe Community Link is a cultural exchange between Copeland, in West Cumbria and Rungwe, South-East Tanzania. It was established in 1987 with the aim of linking two rural communities with similar, yet different ways of life. The link raises funds throughout the year to help the Rungwe district with community and educational projects.

Kisandela Secondary School is a school new to the link which students from Cumbria visited last year. The school currently has no electricity and the daily school meal there is cooked using fuelwood gathered/bought locally. One of their proposed projects is to install a biogas system – fed by the latrines – to provide cooking or lighting fuel for the 400 pupils.

If anyone wants to know more about the project please get in touch with Alexa Mottram at alexamottram@gmail.com.

ALEXA MOTTRAM IN TANZANIA
VISITING THE KISANDELA
SECONDARY SCHOOL



Following on from RESET's successful HEDON talk, in early September, Practical Action invited RESET to run a biogas workshop at their first ever "Small Is...?" festival, jointly organised with Engineers Without Borders. A vibrant two days of talks, debates, workshops, music, cinema and dance celebrated the life and work of PA's inspirational founder E F Schumacher, author of "Small is beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered". His daughter Diana opened the event, speaking movingly about her father's hopes for a more peaceful world. "Small Is...?" speakers asked participants to consider a wide range of issues including the future of food, appropriate economics and human rights.



Workshops talked us through a range of appropriate technologies such as low fuel stoves, bio char, water batteries, dome construction, micro hydro and solar electric systems. Transition tools were discussed, as were participatory approaches to development. Experts came from Africa, Asia and Europe to share these techniques and technologies. Emmanuel Mutamba of The Green Living Movement from Zambia gave wonderful workshops on community mapping and participatory design and their musicians and drummers, working with Tikambilanie organiser James Clark in Bristol, got everybody dancing in between workshops. RESET ended up dancing in urban woodsman Dan Britton's wonderful Transition Leamington Solar Cinema.

Out in the main field, RESET warmed up 30 or so festival-goers with the Ecosystems Game – developed at the Schumacher College with biomimicry architect Michael Pawlyn - in which **each player attempts to maintain an equilateral triangle with two other members of the group who don't know they've been chosen for this purpose.** The result is like playing football without a football as extinction sends off a player and then a rogue species is substituted, throwing the game into total chaos before equilibrium is eventually restored! The point of it all? A lucid demonstration of interconnectedness and a very handy link to our biogas workshop with its emphasis on a beneficial closed circle energy cycle.

For more information on biogas, see projects such as India's Biotech Ltd and KIST in Rwanda, on the Ashden Awards website, David Fulford at Reading University, and Greenfinch UK anaerobic and biogas projects.

C R IS ENERGY BIOGAS PLANT, WESTRAY (BC)
WE'RE ALL BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT OF HARNESSING THE ENERGY POTENTIAL OF WIND, WAVE OR TIDAL POWER BUT COLIN RISBRIDGER AND SAM HARCUS HAVE STARTED TO RELEASE THE ENERGY POTENTIAL OF COW SLURRY AND EVEN PLAIN OLD GRASS SILAGE. THEY'RE DOING THIS BY EXTRACTING BIOGAS IN AN ANAEROBIC DIGESTION PLANT THAT THEY BUILT WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ORKNEY ENTERPRISE AND ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL ON THE WESTRAY FARM OF TUQUOY.

www.hedon.info

www.crclink.co.uk

www.pracitcalaction.org

RWANDA AID DESIGN COMPETITION

Rwanda Aid has a goal for 2010, to build a further 12 "Progressive" houses on Nkombo...

These houses would provide an immediate and immeasurable improvement in the living conditions to over a 100 people, and could perhaps be a catalyst for further housing and associated development on the island - or indeed elsewhere in Rwanda,

LEFT: TEMPORARY SHELTERS
ON NKOMBO
RIGHT: A 'PROGRESSIVE
HOUSE' BUILT BY RWANDA AID



To raise awareness and to encourage donations to this charitable housing project, Rwanda Aid is running a **Design Competition for Sustainable Low Cost Housing**, whereby engineers, architects, environmentalists, builders, relief workers, etc are encouraged to submit their innovative design and / or construction ideas for low cost housing in developing countries.

Entries should address issues such as sustainable technology, environmental awareness, improved health and living conditions, whilst also being mindful of costs: by driving down costs, more houses can be built and thus a greater number of people helped.

Winning entrants will be rewarded with a trip to Rwanda for 2 weeks in 2010, all expenses paid, where they will be part of the local construction team – a real work experience! And they will also have the opportunity to explore this beautiful country - "the land of a thousand hills, and a million smiles!"

Full details can be found on the competition website - <http://sites.google.com/site/nkombohousingproject>

Or should you wish to contribute to the funding, either directly or by organising fund raising events, please contact Martyn Harris at Rwanda Aid, via nkombo.housing@googlemail.com.

**'WINNING
ENTRANTS
WILL BE
REWARDED
WITH A TRIP
TO RWANDA
FOR 2 WEEKS
IN 2010'**

www.rwanda-aid.org

RESET GOES UP ON THE ROOF WITH BERE ARCHITECTS

As part of the London 2012 Open Weekend, RESET joined forces with the SpongeNetwork and Livingroofs.org to host an event on Justin Bere's award winning roof.... ▶

WORDS: BLANCHE CAMERON
IMAGES: BRIONY TURNER





JUSTIN BERE'S AWARD
WINNING GREEN ROOF

On 25th July, Adam Dawson of the Sponge network, Dusty Gedge of livingroofs.org and RESET organised an Integrated Habitats Design Challenge Day. This training for design professionals to evaluate the benefits of biodiversity and ecology in buildings was held at Justin Bere's wonderful 'Muse' in North London, as part of the London 2012 Open Weekend.

The Muse is Justin's beautiful, near-Passivhaus office and home, constructed lovingly and with incredible attention to detail, affordability and health. With its four different living roofs, this was an excellent venue for the training, with live examples of the benefits of ecological design, as well as a solar thermal installation and active bee hive!

RESET director Blanche Cameron kicked off the presentations with a discussion of ecological concerns in development, particularly in communities on the frontlines of climate change adaptation, where an understanding of environment - and local ownership and control - is essential. Adam Dawson then gave an overview of his research on the urban heat island effect and concerns for London facing Lisbon style temperatures by 2020, with poorly insulated, leaky buildings vulnerable to overheating, as well as to the cold.

Dusty Gedge, ecologist, author of the London policy on living roofs and President of the European Federation of Green Roof Associations, then talked through his work on living roofs – both as places for biodiverse habitats as well as playing an essential role in countering the urban heat island, acting as sustainable urban drainage systems, delaying and reducing storm water

After a tour of Justin's roofs, Dusty and Blanche led a design challenge looking at a live site in Soho which Dusty is currently designing for retrofit with living roofs for Westminster City Council.

Engineers, architects, landscapers, policy makers and teachers participated in the course, with its mixture of practical design and theory. RESET thanks Justin Bere for the access to The Muse on a Saturday. We expect to be running more courses on integrated habitat design in 2009 and 2010 - join the RESET email list if you would like to be kept informed of up coming training events. ◀

www.bere.co.uk

www.spongenet.org

www.livingroofs.org

REGISTER YOUR SKILLS

RESET is looking to develop its register of trainers in specific areas, including;

- low carbon building materials and design
- low carbon energy technologies and building services
- appropriate water and sanitation systems
- local food production

Click here
to register
your skills
on-line

RESET TALKS RUBBISH IN BANGLADESH

RESET continues building partnerships and visiting some amazing integrated community development projects... ➡

WORDS: BLANCHE CAMERON
IMAGES: NIKKI LINSELL





DEMONSTRATING PRACTICAL
ACTIONS GREEN BRICK MACHINE
AT THEIR TESTING CENTRE IN
BANGLADESH

Last winter, Blanche Cameron and Nikki Linsell from RESET visited 20 community based organisations and NGOs in northern India and Bangladesh. From this visit, it became apparent that there were opportunities for RESET to support local processes for resilience building, in particular in Bangladesh.

In August, we met again in London with Iqbal Mohammed, Technical Director of Practical Action Bangladesh, where we developed possible ideas for a symposium in Dhaka, to be followed by practical training in cyclone resistant and flood adapted affordable housing for the south west region, hard hit last year by Cyclone Sidr and again this year in May by Isla.

We returned to Bangladesh this September to continue discussions and are now pursuing developing partnerships with Practical Action Bangladesh, the Self Help Promotion Network (a Bangladesh-wide community umbrella organisation), BRAC University Architecture and Disaster Management units and Architecture for Humanity-Dhaka. RESET will now focus on framing and agreeing project proposals with these partners and investigate possible funding streams that might be available to support such a programme.

During the visit we were also lucky enough to visit some of Practical Actions projects, including their Faridpur materials testing centre, slum improvement projects in Jessore through DHARA a local community based organisation, and local waste initiatives. ◀

www.practicalaction.org

www.selfhelp-bangladesh.org

TRUSTEE UPDATE

Over the first two years of its life, RESET has had the fortune to have Linda Forbes as its Company Secretary, one of the founding trustees. Linda obtained a distinction in her Masters of Architecture at the Graduate School of the Environment, focusing on Clean Development Mechanism funding in domestic energy efficiency projects. In September, Linda stepped down to pursue her activities in low carbon energy development, following completion of her second masters on Herriott Watt's Marine Renewables programme. She was instrumental in RESET obtaining charity status and limited company registration and the board is grateful for the time, energy and commitment she gave to RESET in its first two years.

RESET is currently developing its governing members, and therefore welcome Henrietta Lynch as trustee to the charity and director on the board of the limited company. Blanche Cameron, lecturer at CAT's Graduate School of the Environment and current director and trustee, will also be standing again for a second term, having taken on the role of Company Secretary from Linda in August.

Henrietta Lynch has a background in architecture, environmental design consultancy and academia. She has worked for several leading consultants, most recently as an Associate with the Goodhomes Alliance and as a lecturer on the MSc Architecture and Diploma of Architecture courses at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. She is currently undertaking PhD research at University College London and is a visiting lecturer at Westminster University and the University of Hertfordshire.

RESET would also like to thank all the volunteers who have given so much time, energy and enthusiasm to RESET the last two years: Geoff Westcott for all his hard work maintaining the website since 2007 and Martin Kemp for its original incarnation! We welcome comments and suggestions for the new website and will continue to develop and improve the content and resources available. Also, thanks are due to Nikki Linsell, Sarah Kent, Briony Turner, Charlotte Cloughton, Mark Pavey, Sam Tyers, Anna Carton and Edmund Colville. Thanks for all your hard work – there is plenty more to do in 2010!

RESET INTERNSHIPS

RESET has set up an internship programme offering two London-based positions from 3-6 months. Our internship scheme offers a fantastic opportunity to get involved with RESET through working directly with our experienced staff on projects, events and research.

We are now recruiting for the following Internships:

UK Training & Events Co-ordinator

The intern will be assisting to co-ordinate RESET's ongoing UK training programme, in the corporate, public, academic and community sectors. This role requires good communication and marketing skills and experience organising design competitions.

International Training & Events Co-ordinator

The intern will be assisting to co-ordinate and develop RESET's training and symposium proposals, with a current focus in Bangladesh. This role requires strong research and organisational skills. Fluency in Bengali would also be desirable.

Both positions are full-time, starting on the 2nd November at RESET's central London office, with interviews being held on the 27th/28th October. Please either apply on-line, or send your CV and covering letter to nikki.linsell@reset-development.org, by the 23rd October.

RESET is also always looking for enthusiastic volunteers and supporters. Why not come to our next volunteers meeting on Tuesday 27th October, near London Bridge, further details can be found on our [homepage](#).

Deadline for
application:

Friday 23rd
October

Apply
on-line
now

FOR YOUR DIARY

Positive Change Careers Talk 20th & 21st October / London / £25

CAT Lecturer and RESET Director
and Trustee Blanche Cameron
presents
www.positivechangecareers.com

RESET's 2nd Birthday Party 22nd October / London / free

At 7pm there will be a presentation from
Raffaella Bellanca of HEDON
www.reset-development.org

RESET welcomes corporate sponsors

RESET is offering a range of opportunities to support its low carbon built environment training and events programme, including Continuing Professional Development courses aimed at the UK corporate, public and academic sectors.

Through RESET CPD brochures, website, quarterly magazine, and e-news update to 500 supporters monthly, sponsors can expect a wide exposure in the UK built environment sector.

If your company might be interested, we would be happy to discuss this further.
Please contact RESET's Trustee and Director, Blanche Cameron:
blanche.cameron@reset-development.org



Renewable Energy • Shelter • Environment Training