

BARN ED AND SOLAR SIMON

Help make your home an eco-haven



Simon: I like the look of the Windhager wood pellet boiler that we installed at the barn, I know it's bigger than a standard boiler and wouldn't fit in my house, but it is good technology and suits the barn.

Ed: It certainly suits the technology of the barn and what we have achieved.

Simon: Wood is a bit less controllable when you burn it, whereas with gas and oil you can cut off the fuel and stop the heat, once you start the wood burning it keeps burning.

Ed: I gather even a small handful of pellets will burn for about 45 minutes. You will get some sort of guaranteed heat flowing through the pipes as soon as it is sparked up.

Simon: This means that you have to use it slightly differently to conventional boilers by having a circuit without thermostatic valves on so that any spare heat can be used safely.

Ed: I would say that from prices that I have been quoted, wood pellet is cheaper per kW than oil, certainly, and presumably in the case of all these eco products will become a lot cheaper as technology improves and rising costs

of other forms increase.

Simon: With gas and oil prices increasing as demand outstrips supply, I think that I will be wiring more wood boilers.

Ed: You'll enjoy that then! Quite complex by all accounts.

Simon: I like the fact that some of the pellets, if not all, are made from waste wood from joinery workshops.

Ed: Our supplier is only 18 miles from the barn, so that keeps down costs.

Simon: There are a few things that people need to think about when looking at bio-mass boilers: do they want wood chip, wood pellet, log or straw burning? There are several ways the fuel can be delivered to the boiler, as well. Some use an auger, some use suction and some you can load the fuel yourself. You also need to think about fuel storage. If you are using wood pellet, there are several sizes of tanks available, including an underground one.

Ed: If possible, a larger tank is preferable, but it does cost. The 3mx2mx2m one we have installed has cost us about £2,500 – and then you have to fill it.

ECOBARN: THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The final part of the electrical system has been installed, a generator. As the barn is not grid-tied, the back-up for the micro-generation systems is a small generator, which in the event of no wind or sun will top up the batteries. Only time will tell how often the generator will be needed and it will take time for the new owners to learn to use the systems. They will probably be more aware of the weather than most of us, as this is how they will generate their power. So on a sunny day, not only will it mean the washing will get dry, it will also mean that they will have excess power to run the washing machine.



PRODUCT: PROVEN WIND TURBINES

Proven installed its first turbine in 1982 and has more than 1,500 turbines installed worldwide. We put in a 2.5kW Proven wind turbine at the barn with the help of Becosolar and Cholwell Energy. Proven make 2.5 kW, 6kW and 15kW turbines on various-sized masts. They have many design features to help efficiency and incorporate a flexible blade system that helps to generate electricity in low or high winds. Though they are low maintenance they do still require routine care. For more details www.provenenergy.co.uk or www.becosolar.com

TOP TIP

If you're having home improvements done, why not use LEDs to light it? They are more efficient than compact fluorescents can be used small, so are suited for features such as lights in kickboards.

CRACKING THE CODE

Plywood: This is made from wood veneers glued at right angles to each other. This gives a relatively thin, light board

of high-tensile strength in both directions.

Hardboard: This is a thin, brown board made from shredded and pulped timber. It is one of the cheapest boards available and the standard type has one smooth flat side.

Chipboard: This is made from chipped timber pressed with a resin binder into flat sheets. It can be coated with wood veneers or melamine.

■ If you have a question, get in touch with Ed and Simon by e-mailing caroline.culot@archant.co.uk. To contact Ed Masters at Barnmasters, ring 01379 852111 or visit www.barnmasters.co.uk For Simon, either pop into his shop on Church Street, Harleston, ring 01379 854840 or visit www.allthingsgreener.co.uk



Two of the best from Burnham

Burnham Market is a sought-after location, as we all know, in north Norfolk and Bedfords estate agents currently has two properties for sale there – one built in 1828 and one in 1999, yet both offer charm and elegance.

First, Arnolds (pictured above), Joan Shorts Lane, for sale for a guide price of £695,000, is a detached house built before Queen Victoria's reign but perhaps "modern" for its time, as it portrays many of the features and styles of the Victorian period. It is set in a lovely location, with a pretty garden, and views of the countryside, and has a stunning hallway with a black and white chequered floor. It has two reception rooms, one showing a Victorian-style fireplace, a

By CAROLINE CULOT

kitchen, butler's pantry and upstairs, four bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside is a garage.

And then also on the market by a different vendor is a lovely house (pictured right) which was built in 1999, but has a period feel, situated on St Ethelbert's Close and for sale for a guide price of £625,000. This house offers an elegant sitting room in pale lemon with a fireplace, a handmade kitchen/family room painted in blue with white units and a tiled floor, two bathrooms and four bedrooms upstairs. It has a private enclosed garden and a double garage outside.

■ Both properties are for sale with Bedfords on 01328 730500.



Relax in retirement at village mews

Property blues – what property blues? That was the message after the unveiling of a show home at the new retirement development Oswald Mews, Botesdale, near Diss, which recently attracted 60 visitors.

Oswald Mews, created by retirement development specialist, Anglia Secure Homes and previously featured in EDP Property, allows the over-55s to enjoy a full and independent lifestyle in an environment which removes so many of the problems associated with property ownership in retirement years.

Many of the visitors expressed an interest in the company's twin initiatives – part exchange and a Home Purchase Plan.

Anglia Secure Homes director, Paul Edmondson, said: "We have produced an Easy Move package which includes a

number of ways to help people successfully move home.

"Part-exchange removes the common problem of being able to sell your existing property while our Home Purchase Plan allows purchasers to defer payments of up to 25pc of the purchase price for up to 21 years."

Oswald Mews is situated in a peaceful mews-style setting adjoining open fields between The Street and Chapel Lane in Botesdale with a health centre, GP surgery, Co-op supermarket, newsagents, post-office, village hall, church, primary school, pubs and takeaways all within walking distance.

Eleven spacious, thoughtfully-designed cottages have been built, each with an allocated, covered parking space, while a management company will take care of all grounds and external

property maintenance issues, including water bills, window cleaning and buildings insurance. There is a choice of detached, attached and semi-detached with a second reception room downstairs which could double as a bedroom.

All the cottages have a minimum of two first-floor bedrooms and a fully fitted bathroom, with some having an additional hobbies room/third bedroom, an additional en-suite while others have two en-suites.

Each cottage also has an audio alarm call system linked to a 24-hour monitoring station.

■ Prices start at £189,950 or, using the Home Purchase Plan, you can move in from £142,500. The sales office and show cottage are open Saturday-Monday, 11am-4pm. For more information ring 01206 763366.



PARK LIFE: A residential park at Barnham, near Thetford, is open tomorrow and Sunday from 10am-4pm to show off eight new furnished park homes. The homes, at Rymer Point, have two double bedrooms, an en suite shower room, family bathroom and fitted kitchen, including some appliances and are priced from £119,950. Owned by park management company Britannia Parks, Rymer Point offers residential park homes for sale to people aged over 45.

■ Contact Reg or Ann Muskett, park managers, on 01252 512 324 or 07795 634 913.