

# DEVON LIFE

devon.greatbritishlife.co.uk

March 2012

International talent  
**Ben Howard**  
 sings the praises  
 of life in Totnes

Living  
 in Regency  
**Sidmouth**

Four steps  
 to fitness in  
**Plymouth**

Bushcraft  
 Let your children  
 go wild!

How to  
 smoke  
 your own

March hares  
 boxing clever

Bideford's  
 Raw food  
 bakery

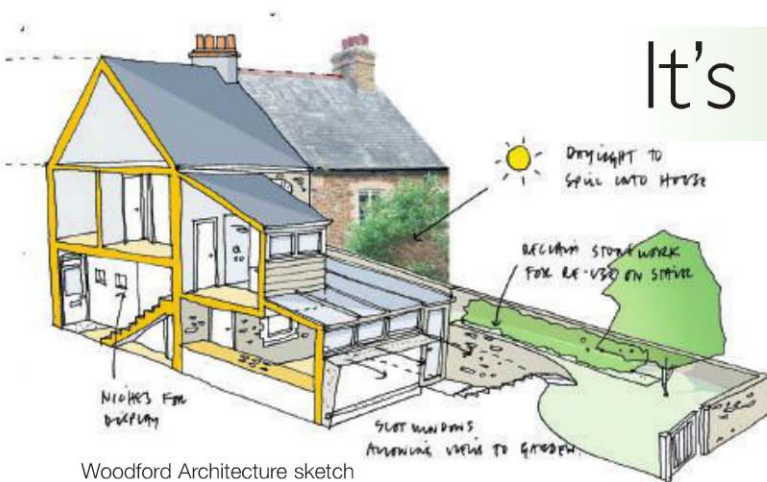
Celebrate Spring

- Bickham House
- Stover Country Park
- A Blackawton woodland





# It's Easy Being Green



Woodford Architecture sketch

**Architect Gavin Woodford suggests sustainable ways to minimise your energy use, lower fuel bills and reduce your carbon emissions:**

### Natural insulation

Insulating your home effectively is the simplest way to reduce your fuel bills and the amount of energy that your home uses. There are several types of natural insulation manufactured in the UK using materials with 'low-embodied energy' (meaning they require minimal energy during manufacture). Sheep's wool insulation (thermafleece.com) uses the blended wool of British hill sheep and recycled polyester to offer excellent thermal insulation performance and acoustic absorption properties. A plant fibre option is hemp insulation, which combines UK-grown hemp fibre, recycled polyester and polyester binder. Alternatively, cellulose fibre insulation – made using cellulose fibres from recycled newspapers – is ideal for lofts and suspended floors.

### Minimise draughts

In order to minimise draughts and heat loss in both new-build and refurbishment



Thermafleece

projects, it is important to install good quality doors and windows that include draught-prevention detailing. Argon-filled double-glazed windows with a Low-E (low emissivity) coating are an energy-efficient option, and FSC-certified timber frames have a much lower environmental impact than uPVC or aluminium frames. Don't just concentrate on doors and windows – draughts occur through chimneys, letterboxes, cat flaps, skirting boards, between floorboards and where services enter your home. A simple, cheap and highly effective way to greatly reduce night-time heat loss from windows is to install lined, well-fitted curtains to all your windows.

In the UK, we receive enough sunlight to use solar energy systems to produce hot water for showers, and hot taps

### Renewable Energy Sources

The sun is a freely available renewable energy source that can help you produce energy in your home. In the UK, we receive enough sunlight to use solar energy systems such as solar water heating to produce hot water for showers, baths and hot taps, and Photovoltaic (PV) panels which convert sunlight directly into electricity. An innovative alternative to PV panels are UK-manufactured solar slates that blend in with standard roof slates and can be installed without specialised training other than traditional roofing skills.

The ultimate how-to guide to making your home eco-friendly, from experts at Ashburton-based Woodford Architecture and Interiors



Biomass heating systems, which use wood as a fuel, allow you to tap into a renewable energy source that can be produced locally; as long as trees are replanted, wood-fuelled heating systems are a carbon-neutral, affordable and sustainable means of heating your home.

### Water Use

With all the rainfall we experience, it's hard to think of the UK as a dry country, but due to a densely settled population, there is less water per person than in Spain. You can install water-saving systems that help you reduce water consumption in areas where a lot of water is generally wasted – baths, showers and toilets. The Green Building Store (greenbuildingstore.co.uk) has produced a



Hippo



water-saving collection that has been designed with in-built water-saving technology. Its ultra-efficient toilet, the ES4, uses only four litres per flush (compared to a standard flush using nine litres), and their Java Eco-Click lever tap regulates the amount of water flowing through the tap, using up to 72% less water than a standard tap. With a typical shower running on mains pressure delivering 20 litres of water per minute, it is worth considering fitting a flow regulator that limits the maximum flow to four-six litres per minute – saving you both water and money. A low-cost water-saving option is a Hippo (hippo-the-watersaver.co.uk). It is a simple but highly effective unit that sits in the cistern of your toilet and reduces water consumption for every flush.

### Lighting

Don't fall for the false fact that light bulbs use more energy to warm up than they use over time – turning lights off will save energy! Consider using low-energy bulbs such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), which use up to 80% less energy than incandescent bulbs, or light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs, which offer greater

efficiency and longer lifetimes. Another factor to consider is the design and placement of fittings – only use strong lighting in key areas (eg worktops, reading lamp) rather than throughout a room.

### Interior designer Sarah Watson offers tips on how you can make your home eco-friendly through thoughtful interior choices:

#### Reclaimed interior

When buying for your home, I'm a great believer in investing in the best-quality items that you can afford, rather than opting for a cheap quick-fix. An excellent saying I learnt from Nico Springman, Director of Interior Decoration at Inchbald School of Design, is "buy cheap, pay twice". Don't think that you have to buy new all the time, especially when

If a chair looks tired or out of place, consider reupholstering it to give it a completely new lease of life rather than buying new



Rapture & Wright

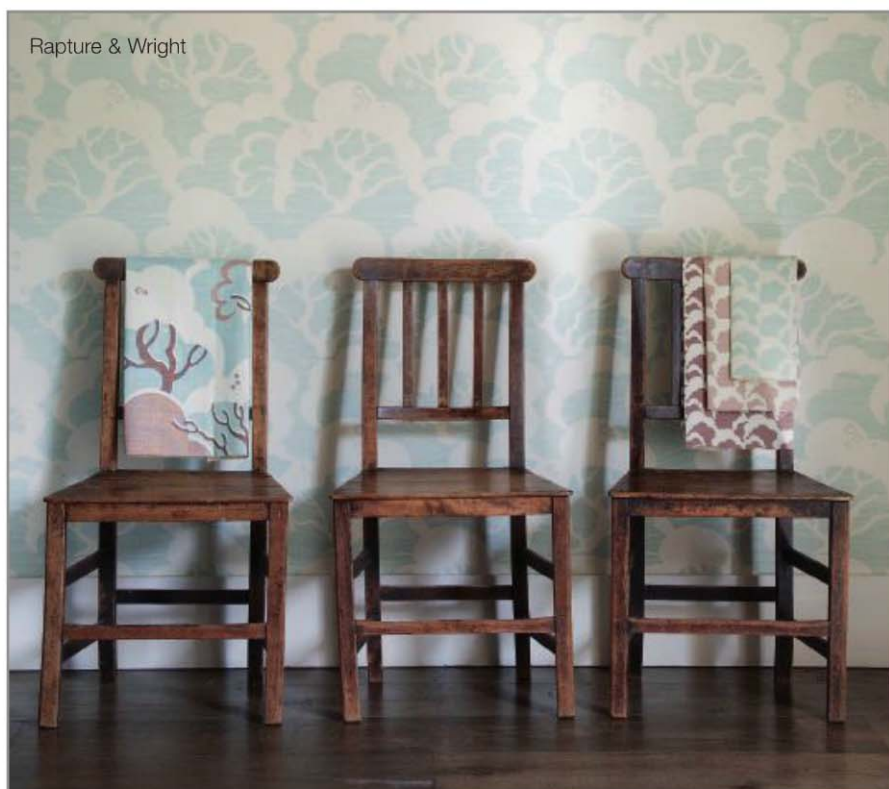
incorporating vintage pieces and antique furniture into your home helps to create an individual interior with character. You can source used objects from salvage yards, recycling centres, charity shops and online auction sites.

#### Upcycling

If a piece of furniture no longer fits with your new style, consider 'upcycling' it by giving it an updated look. For example, if a chair looks tired or out of place, consider reupholstering it to give it a completely new lease of life rather than buying new. Reupholstering with vintage fabrics is a great way to recycle material, but if you prefer to use new material, try to choose fabrics manufactured within Europe, as this cuts down on air miles. European manufacturers tend to use better-quality dyes and have to be responsible with the disposal of chemicals used in the manufacture of their cloth.

#### Buy local

Buying items made by local craftspeople not only supports local businesses, it also helps to keep important traditions alive in the UK. Baskets are a stylish and timeless way to keep things organised in your home, but many examples available in the



Rapture & Wright





Earthborn

shops have been mass-produced abroad. Rather than buying these cheap products that have clocked up many air miles, source items locally – Linda Lemieux ([woodandrush.net](http://woodandrush.net)) creates beautiful baskets made from locally grown willow in her studio in Chagford. For your crockery, consider local studio potters such as the Leach Pottery ([leachpottery.com](http://leachpottery.com)) in Cornwall; these original, handmade pieces will be used and cherished for years.

**Natural materials**

When you are selecting furniture and fabrics, try to choose natural materials from sustainable sources. Opt for furniture made in the UK or Europe from reclaimed or certified timber – organisations such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) or PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) promote responsible management of the world's forests. Similarly, cotton, linen and jute are excellent fabric choices for the home as they are made from natural fibres and are 100% biodegradable. There are some beautiful natural fabrics produced in the UK, including Rapture and Wright ([raptureandwright.co.uk](http://raptureandwright.co.uk)) and Elenbach ([elanbach.com](http://elanbach.com)).

Cotton, linen and jute are excellent fabric choices for the home as they are made from natural fibres and are 100% biodegradable

**Natural home**

Few people are aware of the toxins – known as Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) – that are slowly released into the atmosphere from many of the products we use every day, such as cleaning products, varnishes and paints. Choosing beeswax or Danish oil to care for your wooden furniture and using natural, VOC-free paints, such as those produced by Earthborn ([earthbornpaints.co.uk](http://earthbornpaints.co.uk)), are

better options for you, your home and the environment. Rather than purchasing candles that rely on petroleum sources, opt for soy wax candles – Marianne Guedin ([marianneguedin.com](http://marianneguedin.com)) produces soy wax candles that are presented in a beautiful handmade, unlabelled glass vessel that can be reused long after the candle has burned down.

*Woodford Architecture + Interiors can advise on sustainable architectural and interior designs that maximise the use of renewable energy systems, reduce energy and resource use, cut toxins and result in beautiful, efficient, healthy spaces to live and work.*

*[woodfordarchitecture.com](http://woodfordarchitecture.com),  
01364 654888*



Earthborn

