

## Solar Power

Based in Brighton, Eco Hi Solar install solar thermal systems in and around the South East. Vanessa Langley finds out what their plans are for 2009.

Our over dependence on unsustainable fossil fuels has most certainly had its day and all of us need to consider what we can do improve our fuel efficiency. Most of us know the advantages of solar powered energy, but few of us know where to begin and what would be the best system for us.

Cleland and Sharada Laidlay created Eco Hi Solar in 2006. Having installed loft insulation, cavity wall installation, a condensing boiler, a thermal solar system to heat hot water, a basic rainwater harvesting system, buffer zones, draft proofing and converted the company van to take bio diesel converted from waste veg oil, they would seem more than qualified to advise the less proactive, but nevertheless willing, where to begin their own power revolution. They opened their home in 2007 for the Brighton festival as well as the Brighton Eco Open House Event. Inspired by their travels in far flung places, seeing people living fulfilled happy lives, without the heavy global impact, Cleland and Sharada resolved to not only reduce their own impact, but also determined to help others achieve the same results.

Their business designs, installs, repairs and maintains solar thermal systems for hot water and swimming pools. They use evacuated tubes and flat plates depending on customer requirements. They are now starting to integrate solar with wood burning stoves and are beginning to link solar with central heating and under floor heating, especially in new build.

In its simplest terms a solar hot water system will enable you to switch off your boiler for about 6 months of the year, since the sun will provide all the energy needed to heat the hot water cylinder. In the spring and autumn your boiler may be required to top up this energy and in the winter the boiler will need to do most of the work. So the solar system will reduce the wear and tear on your boiler, will produce hot water without the use of fossil fuels and without giving off pollution. As a piece of technology, unlike a car for example, a solar system is saving you money and pollution from day one.

As part of the Brighton and Hove Renewable Energy Scheme, their customers can benefit from a £1500 grant, which can rise to £5500 if the customer meets the extra grant criteria. Also residents in the Lewes area may be eligible for grants of up to £2500 through the Ovesco scheme. Plus membership of the LCBP (UK micro generation Certification Scheme) entitles their customers to another grant of £400.

As an extra bonus to Smart Sussex Passport Holder Eco Hi Solar are also giving an extra £150 discount on the cost of a solar thermal installation

If you would like to find out more information about what they do visit their website at [www.ecohisolar.co.uk](http://www.ecohisolar.co.uk) or visit them in person at one of the events they will be found at this year.

Brighton and Hove Business Show 13th May  
Loughton Spring Fair 23 - 25th May  
Ardingly Small Holders Show 4-5 July  
RAFA Shoreham air show 22 - 23rd August  
Loughton County Show 12 - 13 September.