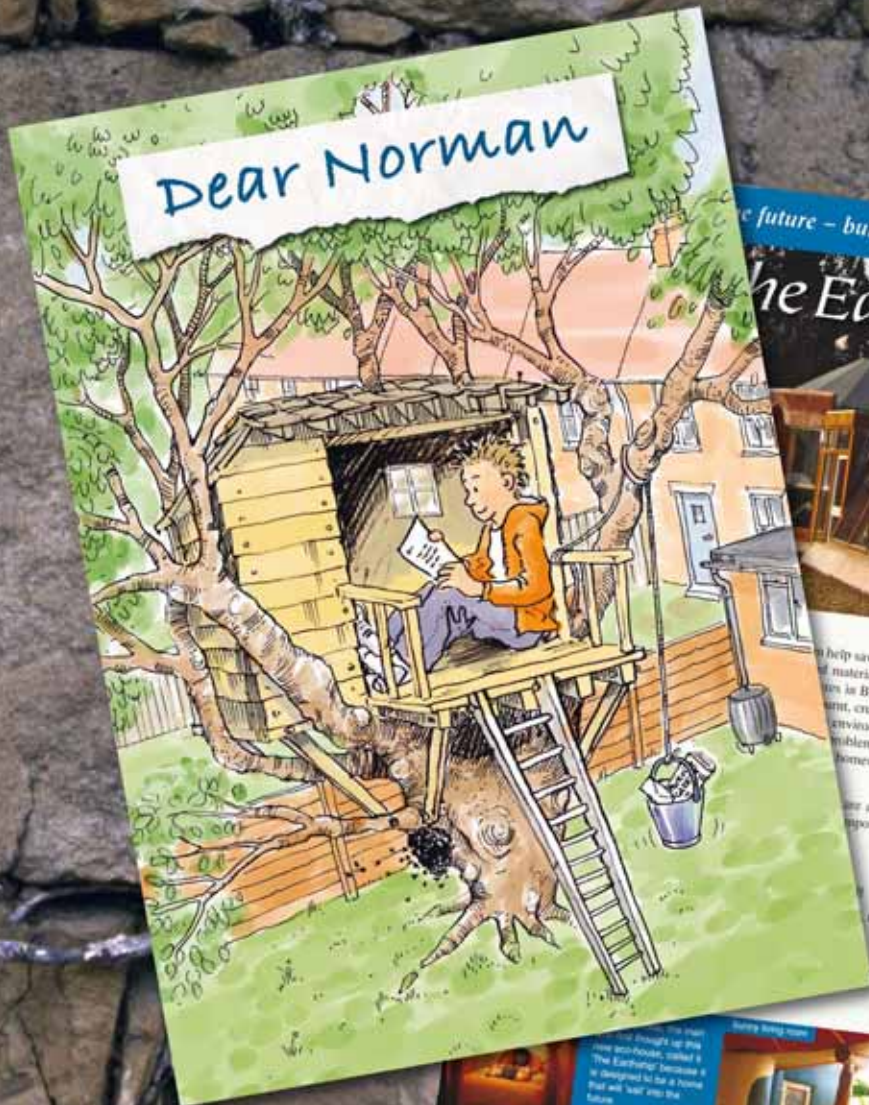


No place like home



the future – built from waste – dirt cheap to run

The Earthship

Photo by Marina Hovell

to help save the future of our materials, especially old materials in Britain that have to be burnt, creating greenhouse gas. Environmental concern, a problem can be used to help homes for people who

are also used in the important advantage

nor too cold

with

A happy customer of a two-bedroom Earthship wrote:
"The lowest temperature in my house was 21°C and the highest 24°C. The total energy bill for the year was only £25."

A happy customer said:
"These walls will still be here in 800 years' time – that's how long rubber tyres last. My daughter's children will be able to come and see what I've done long after I'm gone."

For more information and how to contact us, go to www.earthship.co.uk

They make the perfect building material. They are packed with earth, stacked the bricks and plastered.



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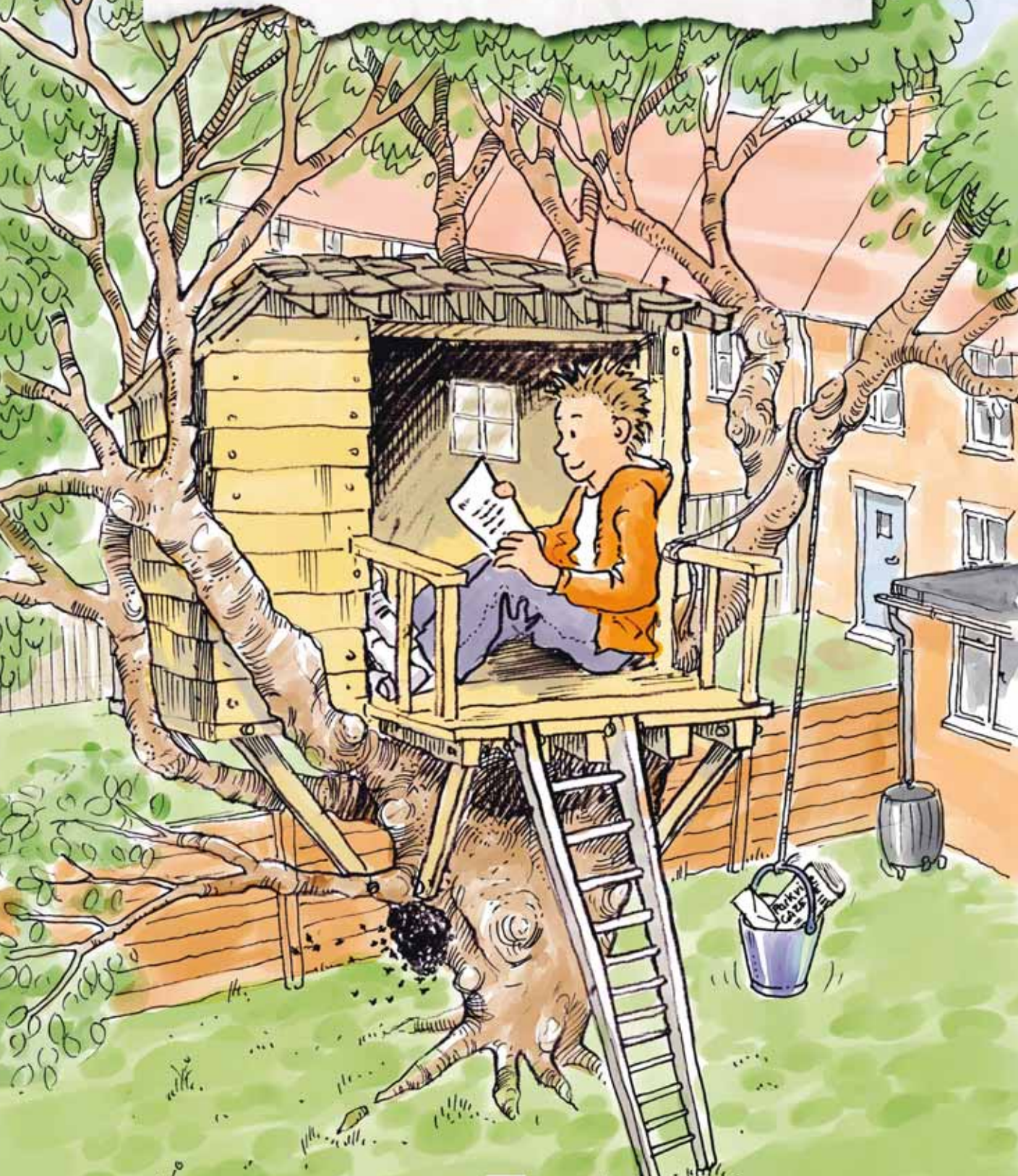
Introduction

People live in all sorts of places: houses, flats, houseboats, trailers, in homes made of brick, wood, reeds, stone or ice.

In this pack you have two texts to read:

- a series of letters telling a story about Norman who leaves his comfortable house to live up a tree
- a leaflet about future houses.

Dear Norman



Monday, 16th June

Dear Norman,

Thank you so much for your letter which arrived just before lunch.

It came as quite a surprise when you left with all of your possessions this morning. We did not understand why you left through the back door. Now we know that it was because you have gone to live in your tree house in the back garden.

I am sure that your decision to leave our family is a serious one. Therefore I would like to wish you all the best for the exciting new life you are starting on your own. Please do keep in touch from up there.

Love

Dad

Dear Norman,

Monday evening

You are very sweet to take the time to write. Thank you for explaining our mistakes in such detail. Your father and I will find your advice very useful.

I hope that life in your tree house is calming down since you moved in earlier today. I could see how difficult it was to carry all your things up that long, steep ladder by yourself. How did you manage to get that big TV set up there? It certainly was clever.

No doubt you took plenty of food with you up into your tree house. I have this extra cheese sandwich and a chocolate bar left over. I am sending them up your message rope with this letter in the hope that you can use them in some way. By the way, did you see those sweet busy bees below your tree house? I suppose they could be hornets or wasps, but don't worry, they look more like jolly bumble bees to me.

If you think of any other mistakes your father and I made don't hesitate to get in touch.

Meanwhile, lots of love from

Mum

Dear Norman,
Mum and Dad say I can have your room.
Ha Ha!

Beth

Parkville School

School Lane, Somewheretown
Countryside CF1 2SC
Tel: 01234 56789
Fax: 01234 67890



17th June, 2008

Dear Norman,

I understand from your parents that I should not expect to see you in school for some time due to changes in your personal life. Please take as much time as you feel you need.

Perhaps school no longer seems important now that you live in a tree house behind your family's home. That makes sense. Geography, Music, History: which of the lessons you missed this morning would be useful in a tree house? None, probably.

What you need are different skills, skills useful for life in the wild: How to keep a small, safe fire burning for light and warmth. How to tell good berries, nuts and mushrooms from deadly ones. Which animals you will compete with for territory. Unfortunately, we don't study any of these at Parkville School. You will have to do most of your learning on your own now, Norman.

Should you decide to continue any of your studies with us, please send me a note. I cannot send you all of the fun and friendship from our class here at Parkville School, but can certainly send you the homework!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Baquet

Hey Kid

Pull yourself together.

You're making a fool of yourself.

Surrender now.

They'll take you back.

Trust me

Signed,

Anonymous.



June 18th, 2008

Dear Norman,

I hope you are well and not spending too much time worrying about your lonely old grandmother. I'm fine most of the time. I do have bad days when none of my grandchildren have visited or telephoned, but I try to remain cheerful.

Your mother says you have been acting strange lately. Stop it; that's not polite.

Next time you speak to my son (your father), please tell him from me (his mother, your grandmother) that it's high time he wrote a letter to his mother (me).

I'm so glad you liked the sweater I sent for your birthday.

I can't wait to see all of you next weekend. You are what keeps me happy!

Love

Grandma

Hey Norm,

What's this about you living in your tree house now? Totally cool! Does this mean you can eat whatever you want? Stop washing? Stop brushing your teeth? Are you going to wear the same clothes every day for a year? Just think: you can spend the whole night playing with your Gameboy! You can stay on strike for months! This is so cool. I wish I had thought of it.

Alfred

P.S. Can I have your bike?



Dear Norman,

Wednesday, 18th June

Thank you for your letter explaining why you do not want any pocket money this week. It made your mother and me wonder how much we would save if you continue this practice for the remainder of your childhood.

10 years x 52 weeks per year x £2 per week pocket money =
£1,040 total savings.

(You might want to check our maths.)

Isn't it amazing the way it adds up?

Love

Dad

The Parkville Gazette

— Your local newspaper since 1912 —

18.06.2008

Dear Norman,

Congratulations! Your article "Peace Now" has won First Prize in The Parkville Gazette's *Solving the World's Problems Contest*! The judges were especially impressed by the section "Peace Begins in Your Own Back Garden".

As you know, the First Prize in the *Solving the World's Problems Contest* is a trip to Washington D.C. where you will visit the White House and actually discuss your article with the President of the United States. You will be able to take one member of your family with you on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Please ask your parent or guardian to contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements for the trip.

And congratulations once again on your wise article!

Best wishes,

The Editor

The Parkville Gazette



Paper Street, Somewheretown, Countryshire CF1 4RG
Tel: 01234 12345 Fax: 01234 54321

Norman,
Dad said I should write. I miss you.
I think you should move back into
our house. I don't think you should
be on strike any more. It's boring.
I haven't decided yet about letting
you have your room back. We can
~~negoshiate~~ negotiate.

Yours sincerely,
Your sister,
Beth



Thursday a.m.

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter. I understand your feelings.
It will be okay just to move back into the house. Don't
forget to wipe your feet.

Love,

Mum







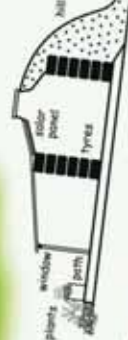
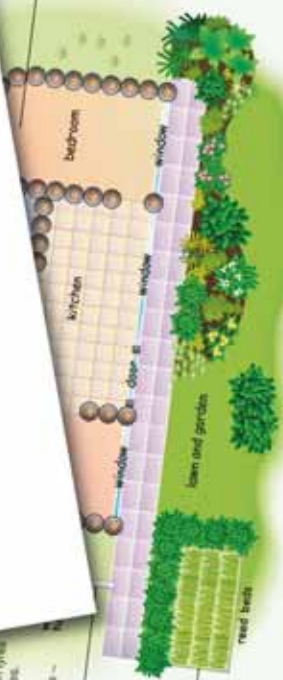
Solar panels on the building collect sunlight. The panels are connected to enough wires and electronics to heat up the water can above and store it for several days.

Living spaces – usually U-shaped rooms dug into the side of a hill and lined with tyres on three sides.

Wood burners – electricity is also made from wind energy.

Reed beds – human waste recycled here.

Each room is a south-facing window, so, during the day, the sun shines in and heats it up. At night, the soil surrounding the rooms radiates the heat back in. No other form of heating or cooling is required. The temperature never falls below 15°C, as the walls are capable of storing heat for weeks.



Earthshelters are built partly underground in the side of a hill.

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'Dear Norman' by Robert Richard from *Independent Story of the Year 2*, Scholastic Children's Books, London 1994.

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