

If you are feeling green and you are looking for an alternative to the increasingly corporate feel of many large music and lifestyle festivals, the Big Green Gathering could be just your thing. Set in the beautiful Mendip Hills in South West England, the Gathering is all about sustainability and a green lifestyle, but doing it with a sense of fun. The organisers aim to convince the world of their message with five days of "music and discovery", showing how eco-friendly can mean entertaining and cool, and encouraging creativity and relaxation, rather than with po-faced lectures.

"This is the largest outdoor green event in Europe, if not the world. It is the sustainable lifestyle in action, and at the same time a tremendous celebration, and of course we want

as many people as possible to be involved with that" says organiser Brig Oubridge. Brig is a key figure in the festival's history and can also be heard commenting in Julien Temple's recently released movie, *Glastonbury*.

The Big Green Gathering was born out of the Glastonbury Festival's Green Fields area 15 years ago. Starting small, it has gone from strength to strength. Up to 20,000 people are expected to attend this year as it returns to Fernhill Farm, near Cheddar, Somerset, for the third year running. It is set in a 200 acre site set in the middle of a designated Area of

**Alternative transport
at the Big Green
Gathering**



Big Green Gathering

Powered by the Wind, the Sun and the People

Outstanding Natural Beauty covering woodland, open spaces and a magical hidden valley lit by lanterns at night.

The 'practical' green element includes alternative technology demonstrations, workshops and forums. These are balanced by musical and performing arts events encompassing Croissant Neuf ('the biggest solar powered sound system in the world!'), traditional folk, reggae, hip hop, Carnival, eastern European folk music and tribal dance. The organisers describe their program as a cultural exchange from as far afield as Australia and as near afield as Glastonbury.

The major theme for 2006 will be 'Energy' and the re-

talisation of the anti-nuclear movement, very topical in the UK after Prime Minister Blair's recent championing of the nuclear cause. The gathering aims to walk the walk as well as talking the talk: all the performances on site will be powered by 'alternative' energy sources.

For anyone worried about spending time miles from anywhere with a bunch of 'alternative types' the Big Green organisers say that the event has been described as "a model of how all festivals should be run" by the authorities, including Mendip District Council, and they have also been praised for the restoration of the festival site and the very low impact on the local community.



**Green energy, permaculture, sustainability...
it's all about saving the planet but with a sense of fun**

Says Brig Oubridge: "This is the chance to really live the green lifestyle, whether that means enjoying a sweat lodge under the stars or discovering a brilliant new band playing in a tipi. People need to experience it and take those memories

away to give the green movement a positive boost for the future."

The Big Green Gathering runs from August 2 to August 6. Tickets are available at www.big-green-gathering.com telephone 01458 830281.