

Switching on to electricity savings



Technologies installed Photovoltaic Panels

Even the oldest house can benefit from the latest renewable technology, as John Pilcher has demonstrated in his 150-year old Co. Down home. 'We installed photovoltaic panels and it's a very satisfactory system for our sort of property. Our installer understood old buildings and was able to cope with everything very well.'



Photovoltaic panels are a perfect match for Pilcher's slate roof.

As a teacher of climate change and global energy for many years, John had long been very concerned about increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. 'The reason we chose the photovoltaic panels is because this is not a good site for wind energy; too many surrounding trees and buildings. But we have an ideal south facing roof, so this was the natural system to go for.' Photovoltaic panels use energy from the sun to produce electricity.



Roof-top electricity generator – the Pilcher's photovoltaic panels

The application process was made even easier with help from the installer to fill in forms and deal with paperwork.

“We had good advice from Reconnect, from other people who had installed photovoltaics, and from installers themselves.”



John Pilcher generates electricity on his roof

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Despite the complexities of dealing with an older structure, the installation process went well. 'We were a little worried at the early stages. Would the roof be structurally sound enough? Would its appearance be affected?' But a structural survey before the works began eliminated John's fears.

'It took about a week. The process was fairly difficult but the installer and I were very pleased with the final installation. The panels blend into the old slate roof and it is quite unobtrusive.'

For the Pilchers, the result has been well worth it. The panels are not only saving money, but helping save the environment by reducing reliance on fossil fuel. 'It's taught us a lot about the amount of electricity used in a home. Now

that we know how much different appliances consume, we can do things like run the washing machine during daylight/sunlight hours so that the energy comes from our panels.'

Sums up John:

"I think everyone should try and use some renewable energy source. It's something we all are going to have to do in the future, so the sooner we start the better. Almost everyone has a roof where they could use solar water heating. We all should make a contribution to this important problem."



Never too old for renewables – the historic Pilcher home

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