

E-MAILED "UPDATE" – JULY 2006

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Some recent news (3 items)

1) Gordon Brown's budget encourages microgeneration

But the amount committed isn't impressive.

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/societyguardian/story/0,,1741299,00.html> (22/3/06)

2) Government's energy review

Clears the way for more nuclear power stations as well as pushing renewables.

<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article1171815.ece> (11/7/06)

3) Miliband investigating personal carbon allowances

Environment Secretary David Miliband is looking into Domestic Tradeable Quotas. "When we buy electricity, gas and fuel, we use our carbon points, as well as pounds. To help reduce carbon emissions, the Government would set limits on the amount of carbon that could be used". This really *would* be progress!

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/07/20/ncarbon20.xml> (20/7/06)

Domestic rooftop wind turbine update

You may have read reports of the problem being encountered by some of these now installed - low power output. I had been getting excited about domestic turbines over the last couple of years, but its not looking too good. It seems that unless you live in an isolated location with no trees around, you won't get the order of output claimed by the manufacturers. Production of the "Swift" brand is on hold for several months - they say "while we verify the performance", which presumably means that the so-far installed ones have not been performing well. Lets hope for the best.

Tesco leads the way!

Tesco has committed £100m to sustainable technology - compare this with Gordon Brown's Budget announcement of £50m for microgeneration and £20m for building insulation. Fortunately, supermarkets are competing with each other to go green.

<http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,1777258,00.html>

David Miliband called chiefs of the leading supermarket companies to a meeting to add to the pressure, including telling them he wanted more local food sourcing.

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/economics/story/0,,1825694,00.html> (21/7/06)

Getting People to Act:

1) Oxford conference "Finding the Community Engagement Strategies which Really Work for Reducing Household Emissions" 4/4/06

This conference, which I attended, organised by COIN, was a day-long brainstorming of ideas from all 100 or so attendees. Report available from: <http://coinet.org.uk/conference/>

2) "Painting the Town Green"

Or "How to persuade people to be environmentally friendly", a thoroughly researched report last January, written by Stephen Hounsham, Communications Manager, Transport 2000, with contributions from many well known people and leading environmentalists. Free of charge summary from: <http://www.transport2000.org.uk/library/PaintingtheTownGreenSummary.pdf>

A few notable ideas from both of the above:

- Try to present as "cool", not "green", which has a hair shirt/sandals image.
- Convey that doing the right things is becoming mainstream - others are doing them.
- Avoid negativity/doom - assume that we *will* get through - offer a way.
- Don't try to persuade - it is human nature to take the opposite position.
- Try to touch emotions - heart focussed.
- Peer-to-peer communication is more effective than from "experts".
- Employ "climate champions" within communities and groups.

Low cost power meter

If you want to find out the power consumed by various appliances, on both full power and standby, and show to children, just buy a simple plug-in power meter from Maplin <http://www.maplin.co.uk>, item L61AQ, now on promotion at £12.49 - previously/mine £24.99!

Highest and lowest UK areas for household emissions

ARTICLE: "The average household in leafy, tidy Uttlesford (Thaxted, nr, Stansted) spews 8,092kg of carbon dioxide each year, more than double the comparatively clean, green dwellings of Camden in London, which on average produce just 3,255kg of CO₂. Second to Uttlesford is Teesdale, with an average of 7,731kg of CO₂ per household, while Surrey Heath, Chiltern and South Oxfordshire are third, fourth and fifth highest polluters. The bottom five include three London boroughs - Camden, Westminster and Hackney - and Eastbourne and Norwich, both of which produce on average less than half of Uttlesford's emissions". Other figures include: Reading 6,189, Leicester 5,565, Bradford 5,539, Sunderland 5,504, Birmingham 5,424, Nottingham 5,419, Leeds 5,333, Greater London 5,318, Plymouth 4,447, Hull 4,395.

Better by car or plane?!

ARTICLE: "Paul Upham, a research fellow at the Tyndall Centre, which researches sustainable ways of tackling climate change, has used the European Environment Agency's preferred measure of fuel consumption, Corinair, to compare a journey from Manchester to Guernsey. A fully-loaded Saab 200 turbo-prop on this route produces 103kg of CO₂ per passenger, while a Nissan Micra carrying one emits 226kg. Obviously, that figure is cut dramatically if two or more people are sharing the car. But Upham admits he was "very surprised" at the finding. The message for travellers with an environmental conscience is this: if you must travel and the trains are unworkable, then at least don't take the car".

Heating is the big energy guzzler

We hear and say a lot about electrical devices and green electricity accounts, but don't forget that heating accounts for over 80% of a household's energy. The average room temperature has increased by 5degC since 1970! - encouraging people to turn down the heat and wear proper clothing must be a top priority. (I know a couple with a solar water panel on their roof, but you get knocked back by the heat in winter when entering the house!).

Hand mowers - still around!

I use a hand mower! (OK, I don't have a big lawn - four little ones). It's as easy to push as a rotary hover mower (which I also possess but hardly use) and easier due to no plugging in or minding

cables. I have had it for ten years or more - had been wondering if they can still be purchased - I was recently pleased to see a stack in a DIY store of the same model and at the same price! - Qualcast Panther, £39.99. So I'm *not* alone - great!

The Science in Brief

A concise and very readable document on the current state of climate change science is available from the Met Offices' main CC research body: "A briefing from the Hadley Centre", Dec05. Read online or order a free copy: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/pubs/brochures/>

The Bad List!

Two more examples of excessively wasteful energy consumption

1) Hot Tubs

We had just finished having an evening meal on the patio of old friends in Somerset, when *she* asked if we wanted some heat on! I gingerly turned my head and saw the enormous, previously unnoticed, patio heater. They knew my position on such things, so *he* said with a laugh "Ah, we can beat that!" They led us to the hot tub! I had not come across one before - a 6ft square jacuzzi which stays in the garden all year round at a constant temperature of 28degC. The rating plate said 3kW (equal to a fast-boil kettle) but they assured us that the insulation is so good that the power only occasionally clicks in. Well!!

Incidentally, I recently took ALDI (our favorite supermarket!) to task over stocking patio heaters (it said on the box "up to 14kW"). I did get a letter back saying "our Buying Dept have stated that they will take your comment into consideration when deciding if they will re-stock this item next year". Just a chance perhaps.

I read somewhere that there are 750,000 patio heaters in the UK - no doubt fast increasing. People have too much money!

2) Sports travel excesses

I'm not anti-sport and follow football a bit myself, but we seem to hear little about the extreme excess travel involved in sports events, some of it avoidable - e.g. a football final held two years ago in Manchester between two Italian clubs!

A Leeds United supporter said on the radio that he regularly drives 440 miles return from the south to see home matches.

George Marshall wrote a brief blog which refers to the nonsense of the so-called "climate-neutral" World Cup. www.climatedenial.org

At least Manchester City F.C. is installing a wind turbine to generate all the electricity for its stadium and facilities, along with giving school children points for the amount they walk, etc.

Climate Change Speaker Network - progress

The speaker network is growing - following some good national publicity from CAT and the Green Party, we are up to 33 confirmed speakers throughout the UK. I will soon be starting to publicise the list on the web and to community groups and the education sector. If you are prepared to speak on climate change or know others who do or might, get in touch! (thousands of people turn up at community group meetings each month to hear a speaker!).

Proof at last of Global Warming (a little amusing):

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/19131021@N00/175242662>

Keep setting a good example and keep in touch with any comments/ideas.

Regards

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