

Climate Concern UK

E-mail Update, March 2006

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Summary of Significant Recent News (5 items)

1) Greenland ice disappearing faster

The speed at which the vast Greenland ice sheet is disappearing has more than doubled in the past 10 years, according to the latest satellite observations. (17/Feb/06)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,,1711842,00.html>

2) Blair rejects aviation taxes

Tony Blair told the Commons Liaison Committee that any measures to agree air travel taxes could harm the economy. "The answer is to make aviation 'environmentally sustainable' by improving technology".

(7/Feb/06) http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1704072,00.html

3) Methane from Plants and Forests

Researchers have just discovered for the first time that living plants emit methane - possibly almost a third of the methane entering the Earth's atmosphere. (12/Jan/06)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,,1684378,00.html>

4) Gulf Stream

A study has produced alarming results - the flow of water in part of the Atlantic affecting ocean circulation which includes the "Gulf Stream" has slowed by 30% since a previous expedition in 1992. (01/Dec/05)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,,1654804,00.html>

5) Nuclear Power Review

Tony Blair announced an energy review to finish in the summer, after which a decision on further nuclear build would be taken. He said "Energy prices have risen. Energy supply is under threat. Climate change is producing a sense of urgency. By around 2020 the UK is likely to have seen decommissioning of coal and nuclear plants that together generate over 30% of today's electricity supply. Some of this will be replaced by renewables, but not all of it can". (29/Nov/05)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4483002.stm

The Sustainable Development Commission has just told the government that "Nuclear power is not the answer to tackling climate change or security of supply".

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/060306.html>

Oxford Conference

The Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) is hosting a conference on April 4th in Oxford, entitled "'Finding the community engagement strategies that really work for reducing household emissions'.

Application form is at: <http://coinet.org.uk/conference/>

Climate Change Speaker Network

We are in the process of trying to set up a Speaker Network, with the support of some of the other main climate change and environment campaign groups.

As emphasised in previous "Updates", there is a big opportunity for engaging with the general public by offering talks to various local community groups who regularly book speakers for their meetings, as well as to schools.

The intention of the Speaker Network is to publicise the search for willing speakers and encourage them to obtain their own bookings, as well as to keep a list of speakers around the country for reference by groups interested in a climate change talk. Advice is available on typical groups to approach and getting bookings, as well as sample talks.

If you are articulate and willing to give speaking a go, please do contact us!

Climate Camp

A comprehensive "climate camp" is being planned for the north of England from 26 August to 4 September. The organisers state: "The camp will be a mix of workshops, meetings, socialising, information sharing and action. It will bring together thousands of people from the UK who want to act to stop climate change before it's too late". <http://climatecamp.org.uk>

Hydrogen

Don't forget that, amid all the talk about hydrogen fuel being a potential answer to transport emissions, the hydrogen must first be obtained - normally from water by electrolysis - and that this requires electrical energy. It has been said that fuelling all UK transport with hydrogen would need a doubling of the 77MW electrical power capacity already in the UK.

"Are We All Hypocrites?"

A thought-provoking article by George Monbiot included the following:

"In an interview with the Guardian recently, Chris Martin, the lead singer of Coldplay and all-round good guy, spoke of his concerns about climate change. On his new album there's "an intense, angry track encouraging people to make the right decisions about how they live their lives and how they treat the planet." A few paragraphs on, he revealed that he was about to "fly by private jet to Palm Springs ... The band can now afford to fly wherever possible". Neither Martin nor the interviewer appeared to recognise the contradiction".

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2005/06/30/save-us-from-ourselves/>

For Climate Change, read Hitler!

Harold Evans, the historian and ex-Times editor gave a short "Point of View" on Radio 4 about lack of action on climate change, during which he quoted, for comparison, Churchill's eloquent lambasting of Chamberlain's cabinet's ineffective attitude to the rise of Hitler: "They decide to be undecided, resolve to be irresolute, are all powerful to be impotent. The era of procrastination, of soothing and baffling expedience and of delays is coming to a close; instead, we are entering a period of consequences". (!)

Green Electricity Links (sorry to keep on about it!)

For anyone not yet changed over to a green electricity account (the best carbon-reducing thing you can do at home, after insulating the building), here are some links to make it even easier:

www.ecotricity.com: price as your existing regional supplier.

www.good-energy.co.uk: the most effective but at a price premium.

www.theenergyshop.com: for pricing comparisons.

Daily climate change news feed by e-mail

A very useful service, with daily articles coming through, mainly from The Guardian and the BBC. Sign up to this Yahoo Group forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/climatechangeopolitics>

Over-Population

Although not often mentioned as a contributory cause of climate change (and sometimes said to be a "taboo" subject), the rapid rise in world population obviously multiplies all the other causes. The UN forecasts an increase from 6.5bn to 9.1bn by 2050. Our member, Roger Plenty, points to the following charities for information and believes them worth supporting:

Interact Worldwide (ex- Population Concern): <http://www.interactworldwide.org/>

International Planned Parenthood Federation: <http://www.ippf.com/>

The Bad List!

Two more examples of excessively wasteful energy consumption

1) Bottled water:

More than half the UK population drink it: 2.1 billion litres last year. Global 154bn, from 2.7m tons of plastic. Imagine the energy consumed in manufacturing the bottles, processing the water, exporting/transporting, disposing of bottles.

In the UK, tap water is just as healthy. Better to remember to fill a bottle from the tap before going out!

2) Overheated schools:

Extract from a letter to The Guardian, March 06:

"When I started teaching in the Seventies, in the winter months I expected to wear a thick shirt, a pullover, and a tweed jacket. By the time I retired recently, I was teaching all year round in a short-sleeved shirt. This change was due simply to the gradual rise in the temperature deemed necessary for "comfort" in the classroom. Such temperatures were both uncomfortable and soporific for the pupils. If we lowered the temperature in all our public buildings and encouraged the wearing of more clothing, we could save immense amounts of energy and would probably be healthier too".

Short Climate Change Quiz

10 questions - just a couple of minutes - a bit of fun and you might learn something new!

<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/quiz.cfm?memb>

Keep spreading the word!

Let us have your feedback/observations/opinions/ideas.

Regards

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