

Peter Hale, Climate Concern UK

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To: "Margaret Hale" <margaret@pmhale.fsnet.co.uk>
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Subject: Wasted energy - mutual frustrations?



I know some say we should think positively and avoid "No", but those of us trying to do our bit to save energy might as well feel some togetherness in our frustration at other people's lack of concern, instead of suffering alone!

OK, we mustn't spoil everybody's fun and I remain guilty myself of driving too many miles, but below are other examples of high energy consumption which work against our own individual efforts and currently bother me! (send me your own frustrations to circulate).

Hot shops and supermarkets: (not to mention overheated offices, schools and hotels). My number one long-standing frustration. Why do they think they need to heat stores in the winter to the temperature of our front rooms, when we enter wearing coats and move around? Their staff can wear fleeces. And apart from wasting energy and making the fridges all work harder, it must reduce the life of *all* the food products. I have commented to some of the large store Energy Managers - at least Tesco say they have reduced their target from 21C to 19C.

Water jet pressure washers: A neighbour was out recently jetting every square inch of his long concrete drive, in several sessions for hours at a time - surely a great waste of water and energy. And I spoke to a chap the other day who cleans drives in this way for other people as a business. Is all this concrete cleaning necessary?!

Extra-cold drinks: or "the coldest beer in town". This energy guzzling trend, strongly marketed by the breweries, is especially galling to me because beer (bitter) as I like it - a bit warm - is now virtually unobtainable. And it's supposed to be an English trait!

Over-cooled trains: It is common to experience uncomfortably cold coaches on modern multiple-unit trains, along with cold draughts from overhead. (Express trains, such as GNER and Virgin, seem to operate at comfortable temperatures). The air conditioning to achieve these excessively low temperatures represents an enormous waste of energy. It appears that individual drivers control the cooling - there needs to be a higher minimum limit set. I am currently trying, with difficulty, to make contact with the right people at the train operators. Anybody on a rail users' focus group?

Excessive Business Travel: I spoke to a woman employee of "Candy King" pick-and-mix sweets, who was in the process of filling a stand at Sainsbury's in my local town of Northallerton, north of York. She was visiting just two stores that day, having driven from her home in Lancashire - the other side of the country. When I suggested that the 200 mile return trip seemed a bit out of proportion, her reply was "Oh, I enjoy it". No wonder pick-and-mix are expensive!

Motorhomes: I spoke with a couple the other day who turned up in their little "Smart" car - I thought: "perhaps they're eco-minded". They then mentioned that its main purpose is to be towed around Europe on a trailer behind their motorhome - which does 17 mpg! (There are apparently motorhome shows and gatherings - some with entertainments - all over the country and Europe). The husband turned out to be a well-informed climate sceptic with all the arguments. (Incidentally, I don't recall ever having come across a sceptic who believes it is more likely that global warming isn't caused by our emissions - they always know that it isn't!).

Sports travel excesses: I'm not anti-sport and follow football a bit myself, but we seem to hear little about the extreme travel involved in sports events, some of it avoidable - e.g. a football final held three 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. I have spoken with people at two of the clubs claiming to be

green, e.g. planning wind turbines - Manchester City and Middlesbrough - they didn't have much to say when I asked if there were efforts to get more fans out of their cars and into coaches.

Freezer temperatures: My own father mentioned that his chest freezer in the garage is set at -30C! And that he doesn't de-frost it. How many fridges and freezers are set far too low out of ignorance of suitable settings? The normally recommended temperatures are: fridge 0C to +3C; freezer -16C to -18C. Thermometers are available at kitchen/DIY stores (ours from Homebase).

Digital Radio on TV: Apparently, millions of people listen to the radio through their power-hungry digital televisions. The power consumption of a modern TV when switched on for radio reception is approx 120 Watts. A typical digital radio takes 8 Watts; a conventional radio 2 Watts!

Truckfests: I keep seeing signs around the country for these - what on earth?!

Exhibitions/Shows: When attending regional exhibitions and hobby-type shows, I am struck by the distances some people travel, not only to visit, but also to take and fetch back exhibits before and after the show, some of them to my mind very minor items. But now perhaps I'm going too far - I've done the same myself!

I'd better stop.

Regards
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