



POOLE AGENDA 21

NEWSLETTER

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IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

The Big Green Fortnight, organised by Bournemouth and Poole councils, and local groups including Poole Agenda 21, was kicked off at the Lighthouse on Friday 15th May by TV's Brigit Strawbridge. Brigit was the speaker at a fast-paced, positive and informative lecture called "It's Easy Being Green!", organised by the Dorset Humanists. She praised the 'can do' attitude of the local councils in arranging the event.

She started by saying that climate change is a very serious problem, the most important issue of our time, by which everybody is affected.

Our energy use is the big issue that we can and should all try to tackle. Here are her top tips:

- Turn down your heating
- Improve the insulation of your home
- Use low energy lighting
- Use a device (like eco-eye) to monitor real-time energy consumption within the home.

An individual's personal transport can account for 50% of their emissions – mainly due to commuting to work. She recommended using The Man in Seat Sixty-One (<http://www.seat61.com>) as a guide for alternative, low-energy travel. On flying, her message was simple and stark: don't do it.

Water usage needs to be reduced, so that we do not waste either water, which is a scarce resource, or the vast amounts of energy we use cleansing water to make it fit for drinking. Her suggestions were:

- Turn the tap off when cleaning your teeth.
- Put all your vegetables into one pan and then

use the water (cooled) on the garden

- Shower rather than bath (but avoid a power shower)
- Reduce the amount of water in your toilet cistern by installing a Hippo bag or brick
- Think about the water embodied in the products you buy, e.g. cotton

Closer to home, Brigit also had a number of household tips:

- Instead of throwaway toothbrushes, use one with replaceable heads
- Try and avoid products made with palm oil
- Wood-burning stoves are energy-efficient and can be sustainable
- Use wormeries for producing compost from food waste
- Plant bee-attracting flowers

Finally, she made this point about our consumer habits:

"Think about what you are buying and where it comes from. If it is cheap, it is highly likely that someone else on the other side of the world is paying the price for you."

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The Speed Limit Is Nonsense

Modern technology may be overestimating rainfall by as much as 20%. Radar used to monitor rain can detect how many raindrops are falling but uses the speed of the drop to calculate how big it is as big drops fall faster than small ones. Mexican scientists have shown that a high proportion of drops in a rain shower fall faster than they should, perhaps due to the fragmentation of big drops. Small drops exceeding their terminal velocity had been seen before but dismissed as a measurement error. Identifying the 'error' will assist in flood prediction & climate modelling.

Old Tomatoes Not So Rotten

Having exported GM technology around the world, the US has started preparing blocks on foreign GM varieties which are expected to arrive over the next decade in increasing quantity and which may be a danger to health or the environment. Perhaps the UK's famous purple tomato may fall foul of a US ban. The researchers in Norwich added a gene from a snapdragon to turn the tomato purple and pack it full of anthocyanin, an antioxidant that staves off cancer. Quite why a GM purple tomato was considered necessary is not easy to see. Tomatoes originated in America and guess what colour they originally were – purple. 'Heirloom' purple tomatoes still exist today, packed full of anthocyanin, as are other purple fruit like blackberries (but not beetroot which is coloured by betalain, a less well researched antioxidant).

Africa's Disappearing Forests

Africa's forests are disappearing faster than those in other parts of the world because of a lack of land ownership, a report says. Less than 2% of Africa's forests are under community control, compared to a third in Latin America and Asia, say the Rights and Resources Initiative. The deforestation rate in Africa is four times the world's average.

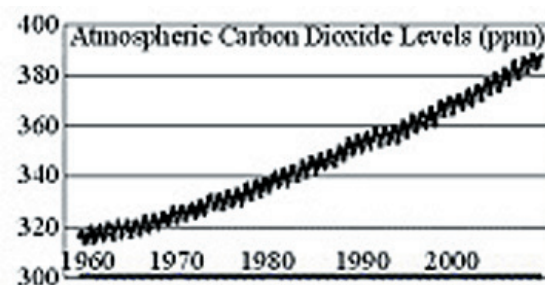
- KNOW YOUR CLIMATE SCIENCE -

CARBON - IT'S WHAT MAKES THE BLACK STUFF BLACK

PA21 Newsletter begins a new series of articles entitled KNOW YOUR CLIMATE SCIENCE which kicks off in this issue by looking at the major driver of climate change: CARBON

The big problem with fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas is the carbon. This carbon has been trapped within geology for hundreds of millions of years and burning fossil fuels releases it into the atmosphere in the form of CO₂. It was over 150 years ago that scientists began to wonder whether changing CO₂ levels affected climate. Geologists saw evidence of past ice ages and wondered if a drop in atmospheric CO₂ have caused the colder ice age climate.

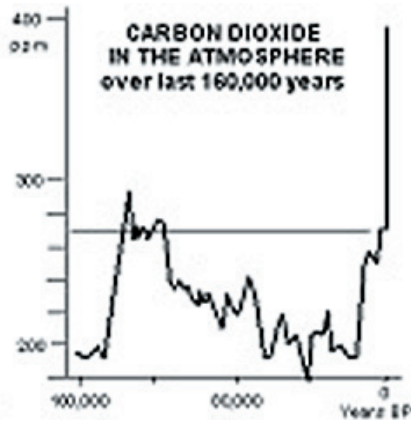
It took until the Cold War to identify the true power of CO₂ as a greenhouse gas. The USAF were developing infra-red missiles to shoot down Russian MiGs and spent a small fortune checking that CO₂ would not cloak the heat signature of jet engines. They also financed the first accurate measurements of how much CO₂ there actually was in the atmosphere. These measurements were taken in Antarctica and on Hawaii. Despite a number of funding crises, the Hawaii measurements have been maintained since 1958 with just a few missing months. The characteristic 'sawtooth' graph is caused by the growing season in the Northern hemisphere, the annual fluctuation being far smaller in the Antarctic.



Ice cores from Antarctica (containing air trapped from past years) have now shown the atmospheric CO₂ levels back 800,000 years, reduced CO₂ contributing some 20% to the 6°C global cooling during the Ice Ages. Present CO₂ levels are 50% higher than pre-industrial levels and 30% higher than at any time in the last 800,000 years. They are probably the highest levels for 20 million years.

Of the 10 billion tons or so of carbon now being released each year (37 billion tons of CO₂), not all ends up in the atmosphere. 25% is absorbed in extra plant growth, 35% is absorbed into

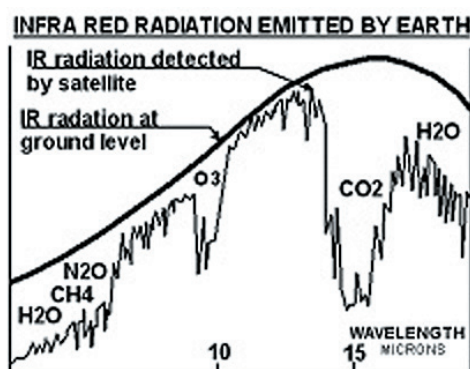
NEWS FROM A SMALL WORLD



the oceans, leaving 40% adding to atmospheric CO_2 . While all of this is pretty much beyond dispute, sceptics will pile in at any opportunity, with such arguments as: CO_2 is not a greenhouse gas (GHG); CO_2 is only a weak GHG; additional CO_2 at high concentrations has little effect; the Hawaii measurements are not globally representative - the measured increases just show part of a natural cycle; man's CO_2 emissions are insignificant alongside emissions from plants and oceans; volcanoes emit more than humans; global temperature drives CO_2 , not CO_2 temperature; CO_2 levels were 20 times higher in the past.

Allowing such arguments to obstruct carbon-reducing strategies is dangerous. CO_2 is an effective GHG acting at 15 microns, the peak wavelength for Earth's infra-red radiation and one where no other GHG acts. Doubling CO_2 from pre-industrial levels will roughly increase temperatures 2°C .

Fifty-five million years ago, catastrophic natural GHG releases totalling perhaps 4,000 billion tons of carbon increased global temperatures by 6°C . In the last 150 years, humanity has released 670 billion tons of carbon through fossil fuel use, de-forestation and cement production. If the rate of release continues to rise unchecked, a comparable rise in temperatures would seem inevitable.



Big Holes Persist

Last year's hole in the Ozone layer over Antarctica was the fifth biggest on record. Despite the 1987 ban on CFCs, the chemical takes years to drift up into the stratosphere and accumulate over the poles. As a result, levels of CFC over Antarctica will decline very little before mid-century. Colder weather, as occurred last year, will still have the potential to form big holes.

Cute, But Costly?

Is it prejudice? Hebridean hedgehogs were said to be 'decimating' ground-breeding bird colonies so a cull was started on some islands in 2003, then halted when people objected to the killing of this cute, prickly predator. The de-hedgehogging continued by catching the little beasts and removing them to the mainland. To date, 900 hedgehogs have been removed costing £1 million. Sadly bird life on the islands continues to slump. Yet nobody cared about the extermination of the 10,000 rats that had established themselves on the nearby isle of Canna. They suffered death by poisoned chocolate and just in case Canna's distinctive native wood mice were also chocoholics, 160 of them were trapped and taken for a holiday at Edinburgh Zoo. After 3 years and £500,000, Canna has been declared rat-free and the mice returned. The only complaint - these are not the same mice that were taken from the island! This is actually true. The Canna mice all died - of old age. The mice returned are the descendants of the originals.

Last Cuckoo of Spring

The cuckoo - known for its springtime song - has joined a "red list" of the UK's most threatened bird species. The lapwing, yellow wagtail and herring gull are also deemed to be in urgent need of conservation action. In the latest assessment of the UK's bird population, the number red-listed has risen by 5% since 2002, to more than one in five.

TRANSITION POOLE IN MOTION

Surveying green spaces in Poole for suitability as eco-zones, spare veg swap shopping, and organising gardening groups were some of the many activities that the new Transition Poole group have decided to pursue as a result of its exciting and positive first meeting, which was held on Tuesday 9th June.

The grass-roots group aims to make Poole more sustainable and more resilient to the pressures of peak oil and climate change. The next meeting, open to all, will be held on **15th July on the beach** - exact details to be confirmed.

Other local events:

17th JUNE - FILM "The Power of Community" at the Regent Centre in Christchurch, at 7:30pm.

20th JUNE - Bike ride in Christchurch, leaving Saxon Square at 10am.

24th JUNE - FILM "Age of Stupid" at the Winchester Pub in Bournemouth at 7pm. Tickets £3 from evesnetworking@gmail.com or £4 on the door.

29th JUNE - Next meeting of PA21 in room 133 at the Civic Centre at 7.30pm. This will include a group discussion on a topical subject.

For details, contact transition-bh@googlegroups.com or any of the PA21 officers listed in the last section of this newsletter.

BOURNEMOUTH NATURAL SCIENCE SOCIETY

Just along from the Lansdowne, at No. 39 Christchurch Road, is a rather splendid listed building built in 1870. This is the home of the Bournemouth Natural Science Society, whose purpose is to promote the study of all branches of Science and Natural History.

The BNSS has an interest in subjects from archaeology and astronomy all the way to zoology, and includes subjects directly addressed by PA21 like conservation and climate. The BNSS building stands in a botanical garden containing many interesting plant species, and indoors there is a well stocked library for society members and a museum containing a large and valuable collection of artefacts and animal specimens (spectacular although perhaps a little oldy-worldy given the modern maxim of 'take only photos, leave only footprints'). Through the year the society organises a programme of events comprising some 100 or more lectures, study groups, field meetings, cultural visits and social events. Talks are open to visitors (Tuesday evenings, Wednesday & Saturday afternoons). Other events and access for visitors to the museum collections (on Tuesday mornings) is by appointment. Annually, BNSS hosts an open weekend

(which this year is Saturday & Sunday 12-13th September) allowing public access to the museum and a chance to meet the collection experts, and see invited exhibitors which in the past has included a PA21 stall. Details of membership and their current event programme can be found on their web site. Contact Details: 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 3NS. Tel (01202) 553525. www.bnss.fslife.co.uk



THE BIG GREEN FILM FESTIVAL

Poole Agenda 21 and the Lighthouse in Poole, worked together to put on the Big Green Film Festival, from 15th–21st May. It proved to be very popular, containing much that was entertaining, thought-provoking, moving and shocking, sometimes all in the same film!

Message in the Waves is a beautifully-shot film about the problems facing Hawaii. These problems parallel those faced by everyone - namely, reductions in biodiversity, increases in species extinction, and habitat loss. The film also has some shocking facts about plastic: 50% of the plastic that we use is wasted, and does not biodegrade. Tons and tons of plastic rubbish wash up on the shores of Hawaii daily, which is devastating the population of albatrosses.

The Age of Stupid is a new, independent film about climate change, set in the future. It stars Pete Postlethwaite as a man living alone in the devastated world of 2055, looking back at 'archive' footage from 2008 and asking: why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance? Described as 'rough-and-ready' and displaying 'passion, urgency and punch' in the Guardian, this is a powerful awareness-raising film.

Who Killed the Electric Car, about an episode in the US auto-industry where excellent electric cars were made, distributed, used and then quietly removed and squashed (literally), is shocking in its demonstration of the mis-use of power by the US oil and auto industries. It is also timely, as one of the key factors in the recent downfall of General Motors has been their decision to promote gas-guzzlers instead of supporting fuel economy.

The Power of Community is truly designed for our time and is of great local relevance. It tells how Cuba coped with a sudden and massive drop in its oil imports. This is what we may be faced with in our communities as a result of peak oil - which would cause prices to escalate - and/or climate change, where mitigation requires that our use of fossil fuel be stopped as soon as possible. The Cuban government and people adapted and survived: food was rationed; all spare land was converted to organic agriculture; large farms were subdivided into smaller farms and there was a reskilling exercise in agriculture and permaculture; bicycle-use was

encouraged; universities were decentralised to reduce travel needs and maintain access to education; public transport was adapted so that more people could be transported using less fuel; all new developments are now mixed use.

During this transition period, expenditure on social services was never cut. Communities benefitted from becoming closer-knit. In small towns, between 80% - 100% of the food is now sourced locally and many jobs have been created. People's health has improved, as has the health of the soil.

The Transition Town initiative, started in Totnes in the UK, is designed to make local communities more resilient so that they can cope with these changes when they are required. A new Transition group is starting in Poole, and the first meeting will be on June 9th at 7.30pm in the Britannia Inn at Ashley Cross. All welcome.

Flip Flotsam is a whimsical film showing how one person's waste can be another's source of income, with an understated message about marine pollution, and the unsustainable combination of throw-away consumerism and non-biodegradable materials.

The festival included two more mainstream climate change films. The 11th Hour, produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, has a broader focus than just climate change. It also discusses that elephant in the room - population - stating that our planet can only naturally sustain 0.5–1 billion people; between a sixth to a twelfth of our current global population. The film is structured as a series of soundbites from many notable commentators, each dealing with a particular topic. The most moving contribution came from Professor Stephen Hawking, who predicted a worst case scenario in which our planet could become like Venus, unable to sustain human life.

Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth is a masterful presentation. It is a smooth and polished production, despite its high science content, which answers many popular queries about climate change with a dash of wry humour and sprinkling of thought-provoking moments.

THE BIG GREEN BUS COMES HOME

As well as organising the film festival with the Lighthouse, Poole Agenda 21 had an information stand with the Big Green Bus, on those days it was in Poole and Bournemouth town centres. The Big Green Bus is a very exciting exhibition space with lots of useful information and practical demonstrations, including a bicycle-powered smoothie maker. People can wander round the bus, take part in the demonstrations, or listen to organised talks on the top deck. It is hoped to convert the top deck to a small cinema, to

show films like those featured in the film festival. The bus toured round Poole and Bournemouth schools during the weekdays, and PA21 discovered that Brigit's Big Green Bus actually used to be a Yellow Bus. Transdev very kindly looked after the bus while it was in the area, taking it to their depot at night and bringing it to Brigit in the mornings, and also performing some maintenance tasks like changing the oil. Some Transdev engineers even remembered which bus it was!

POOLE AGENDA 21 - PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING

What is Poole Agenda 21?

Agenda 21 is the agenda for the 21st century. At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, world leaders agreed that if the earth was to sustain life for future generations, an entirely new approach to our way of living was needed. Here in the United Kingdom, all local communities have been asked to develop a local Agenda 21 in partnership with their local authority.

Please join us and have your say in the building of a sustainable future for Poole.

PA21 Forums are held on the fourth Monday of every month (except during August & December and not on Public Holidays) at Poole Civic Centre, and everyone is welcome to attend. Start time is 7.30pm. If you would like to attend a Forum, feel free to contact a PA21 officer.

POOLE AGENDA 21 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Membership

Renewal

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Telephone Email

I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN: Transport Waste Energy Health

Natural Environment Built Environment Community Action

SKILLS: Art Fund Raising Gardening Photography

Publicity Web Design Other

Suggested annual subscription is £5 (£1 minimum, please). Return this form with your cheque (payable to PA21) to any PA21 meeting or by post to Ron Long, PA21 Membership, 32 Stokes Avenue, Poole, BH15 2EA

CHAIR Tony Hamilton (01202 698617) **VICE CHAIR/SECRETARY** Theresa McManus (07958 138053)

MEMBERSHIP Ron Long (01202 673567) **TREASURER** Dudley Hull (01202 255076)

WEB: www.pa21.org.uk

www.geocities.com/poole_la21

Take Global Warming Seriously Campaign: www.tgws.org.uk

NEWSLETTER Richard Jeffries, Al Rodger, Theresa McManus

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