



### Belated New Year's Greetings

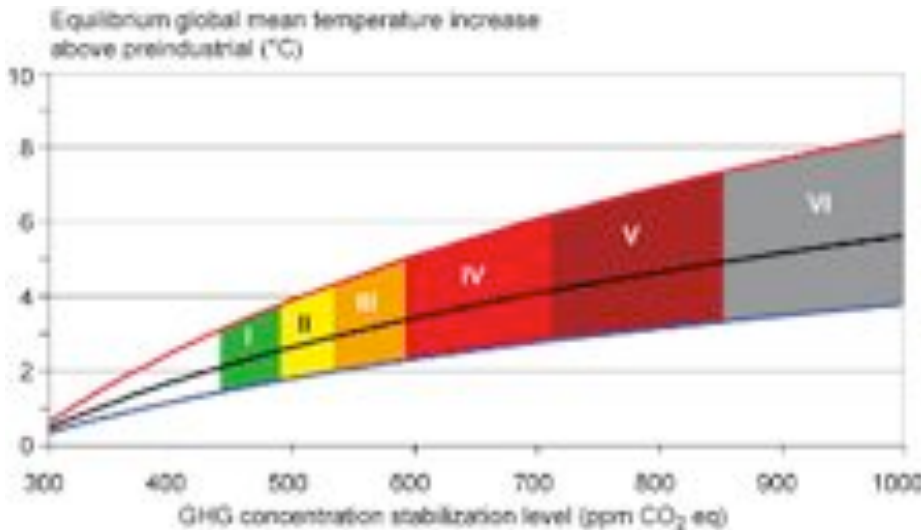
2008 has been billed as the year that the 'perfect storm' could hit: economic instability, soaring oil prices and extreme weather events. According to the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we've got till 2015 to stabilise the carbon emissions within the threshold (445-490ppm CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, Scenario I in graph) that will give us an even chance, at best, of preventing runaway climate change (2°C above pre Industrial Revolution global average).

More than ever we need people with calm hearts and clear heads to lead on the paths to sustainability. Here's to your 2008 being a year of action based on reflection, commitment, hope and love. Try to make sure every step you take has a smaller footprint than the last.

*further locking in [of] carbon intensive infrastructure and reduce climate change and associated adaptation needs .... Delayed emission reductions significantly constrain the opportunities to achieve lower stabilisation levels and increase the risk of more severe climate change impacts.'* (from the Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, p 20, see [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch))

Tyndall Centre research shows that if every other country made an effort equivalent to the UK's to cut their emissions, we would be on our way to a global temperature increase of 4-5 degrees Celsius – when the Government is committed to restricting this to 2 degrees.

The United Nations Development Programme has criticised the UK Government for failing to meet its own current targets and lack of leadership. According to the UNDP failure by developed countries to act on climate change amounts to 'a systematic violation of the human rights of the poor.' More recently both India and China have announced their objections to curbing their own growth to salvage a climate trashed by growth in the West. We need to accept our share of the problem.



Source: IPCC 4th Assessment Report Summary for Policymakers, [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch). The centre line is 'best estimate'

### KEEP THE PRESSURE UP AND THE TEMPERATURE DOWN - CLIMATE CHANGE BILL UPDATE/DAY OF ACTION (5 April 2008)

Thanks largely to the biggest and most successful campaign ever undertaken by Friends of the Earth UK, the Government announced a Climate Change Bill in the Queen's Speech last year. The Bill is currently wending its way through the parliamentary committees so there's more work to do — on the Bill's targets, coverage and scope for responding to a rapidly changing, ermm, climate.

Tough and fair targets - 80% or bust: Carbon emissions must be reduced by at least 80% by 2050, not 60%, the current aim of the Bill. The Government's current position that the 60% target will be reviewed in 2009. The snag is that at the same time as promising to review the ultimate target, they propose to set the 5-year carbon budgets from now right up to 2022.

FOE argue that if budgets are set to an inappropriately low target and have to be redrawn, then a) it will inevitably mean more drastic action late in the timeframe and b) business and investors will not have the certainty they need.

The IPCC warned: 'Early mitigation actions would avoid

Include international aviation and shipping in the Bill: Annual reporting of aviation and shipping emissions will now be requirement of the Bill but they will not be included in the target. Shipping emissions will be ignored until there is an international agreement.

FOE say all emissions which cause climate change must be included in the Climate Change Bill, now. Crucially, decisions on airport expansion will be

made while the emissions they cause will be uncounted. If the Government can find a way to report emissions from ships and planes to Parliament, why can't it simply add them to the target?

Annual milestones within the 5-year budgets: 5 year budgets allow for delays on difficult decisions. FOE want indicative annual milestones to ensure steady progress to stay within the legally mandated 5 year budget.

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW? CLIMATE BILL DAY OF ACTION 5 APRIL 2008 Herefordshire FOE will be supporting this action and will be in touch with local group members. . Meanwhile, **IF BILL WIGGIN IS YOUR MP:** there is an Early Day Motion (EDM736) in the House of Commons, calling for tougher targets in the Climate Bill. Paul Keetch has signed the EDM but Bill Wiggin hasn't signed the EDM, so local group members in his constituency can lobby him to sign by going to [http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press\\_for\\_change/email\\_mp/index.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press_for_change/email_mp/index.html)

# BIG CAMPAIGNS

## EU BIOFUEL TARGET IS CONTRIBUTING TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

On the 23rd of January the European Commission reiterated a commitment to reduce EU emissions by 20% by 2020, rising to 30% if other developed countries agree. Part of the package was a commitment to 10% biofuel mix in petrol and diesel by 2020 despite growing concerns about the adverse impacts of biofuels.

Bio-fuels (or agro fuels) have been presented as the environmentally friendly way to preserve our hypermobile lifestyles while mitigating climate change. They are especially favoured by European car manufacturers who have successfully lobbied to weaken looming mandatory fuel efficiency targets. But evidence is mounting of the destructive effects of this approach. In addition to habitat destruction, food price inflation and a net increase in CO2 emissions, agro-fuel production is one more opportunity for corporate muscle to displace communities and individual farmers as the big oil companies look to secure their post-peak-oil futures.



Credit: Tom Picken/Friends of the Earth

A new report from FOE, LifeMosaic and Sawit Watch on the social impacts of oil palm plantations in Indonesia shows that palm oil production in Indonesia for food and agrofuels is leading to widespread human rights abuses. Over 400 conflicts have been linked to oil palm plantations there as previously self-sufficient forest people are forced off their land and locked into debt as cheap labour.

By 2020, Indonesia plans to expand the area of palm oil plantation to an area the size of England, Holland and Switzerland combined, citing European agrofuel targets as the motivator. Half the loss of orang-utan habitat in the last decade has been linked to oil palm plantation expansion. The deforestation and drainage of peat swamps for palm oil production has made Indonesia the third highest emitter of greenhouse gases after the USA and China. Recent research has found that converting peatlands for palm oil in Indonesia releases 423 times more carbon than the annual savings from replacing fossil fuels.

Together with international environment groups LifeMosaic and Sawit Watch, FOE has produced a film based on testimonies of people in 20 Indonesian villages to empower other communities to stop further plantations and demand the return of their land in existing palm oil areas, helping to save carbon-rich peat forest and the habitat of the Sumatran tiger.

Here in Europe, we can lobby our MEPs to object to the EU's target for 10% of road transport fuel to be agro fuel: [http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/press\\_for\\_change/biofuels/index.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/press_for_change/biofuels/index.html)

The UK's renewable transport fuel obligation (RTFO) will come into force on the 15th of April. It requires 5% of all fuel sold at the pump to come from renewable sources. In the UK, Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly has announced a review of the 'indirect impacts of biofuel production'. FOE are calling for the RTFO to be put on hold. The House of Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee criticised the Government and the EU of moving too quickly to stimulate the use of biofuels and called for a moratorium on policies aimed at increasing their use. *(This article is based on FOE Press Release on its 'Losing Ground' report and an article in the local groups magazine, Change Your World. For more on the campaign, visit <http://www.foeurope.org/agrofuels/index.html>)*

## DEFORESTATION: THE HIDDEN CAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING

The rainforests of Brazil, Indonesia and the African Congo are the lungs of the planet and they are being systematically slashed and burned at a horrific speed. Areas the size of the UK are going up in smoke in the space of a few short years. According to reports in the Independent, deforestation over a 24 hour period releases as much CO2 into the atmosphere as 8 million people flying from London to New York. Stopping the loggers is the fastest and cheapest solution to climate change. A report by the Oxford-based GLOBAL CANOPY PROGRAMME is very, very scary. We are literally killing ourselves by ripping out our lungs. And time is running out. **If we lose the rainforests, we lose the fight to save the planet. Simple as that. Game over.**

That's right. Don't be ridiculous, you say – I've never even seen a rainforest, except on David Attenborough. Well – this is how it works: You sit on your comfortable garden chair, eating barbecued hamburgers and tofu veggieburgers and licking an ice cream cone and watching the rainforests go up in smoke on TV. That's how it's done. Don't believe me? Okay – that nice bargain hardwood garden lounge probably came from the Indonesian rainforests – along with that nice new hardwood floor you've recently had fitted. Ranchers raise cheap feedlot cattle on newly cleared slash and burn Brazilian rainforest ground to obligingly provide your cheap burgers. And those veggieburgers? Tofu means soya and soyabeans are one of the main crops planted by agribusiness once the rainforests are burned down. And that melting ice cream in your hand? Take another look at the packet ingredients – palm oil – it's everywhere in manufactured foodstuffs – and where does it come from? – plantations grown once the rainforests are cut down. Am I over-simplifying? – Of course I am. But you get the idea. We can't keep passing the buck. Do you really think anything is going to change unless you and I stop colluding with the destruction of the precious rainforests? If you want to see just how precious and beautiful they are and how at risk, just go to the website of the Oxford climate scientists - [www.globalcanopy.org](http://www.globalcanopy.org) and play the short video on the homepage. *Terry Oliver*

**GROUP CO-ORDINATORS SOUGHT!** Paige and Janet, our co-coordinators, are both now only part-time residents of the county, and Paige was pressed into an extra (11th) year service at the last AGM, so we will definitely need to elect new co-ordinators at the 2008 AGM (18th June, Canal Road Day Centre, 7pm). **If any members would like to get stuck in to the task of re-energising Herefordshire at a time of unprecedented environmental awareness and ever improving support from the national organisation**, please get in touch with Paige or Janet or come to a committee meeting on a 3rd Wednesday!

# LOCAL ROUND-UP

## Polytunnels Supplementary Planning Document

The draft Polytunnels SPD will be produced for public consultation in April/May 2008 (so check the [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk) around that time if you want to comment). My main comment is that the scale of polytunnel growing is far in excess of any local food need. This implies heavy fuel use and carbon emissions, particularly in transport. The problem is one of scale, not the use of polytunnels as such. Other issues are soil degradation, particularly where soil sterilisation is involved, and water runoff. *Frank Hemming*

## ON THE BRIGHT SIDE! TRANSITION

**HEREFORD** Please have a good read of the enclosed leaflets on the 'Transition Town' movement, now developing apace in Hereford. What is it? Why is Herefordshire FOE involved?

Herefordshire FOE is committed to helping everyone achieve the daintiest environmental footprint possible. The very biggest reason for this is Climate Change. Everything possible must be done to slow the rate of global warming. And we will also have to be prepared to adapt to a dramatically changing world.

Alongside this is the certainty that in the near future we will be living in an energy-constrained world, as well as a carbon-constrained one, because oil will run out and, as people who attended Paul Mobbs' recent sessions here ('Energy Beyond Oil' and 'Less is a Four Letter Word') will know, there are no replacements to fill the gap on the scale of our current energy demand.

'Transition' is the path to low carbon and low energy living. It's the hand-woven basket into which all of our local campaigns very neatly fit.

Herefordshire FOE is providing a platform for Transition Hereford, which started with our October meeting, a showing of 'Crude Awakening'. Come and find out about it and how you are a welcome and much needed part of the picture.



## BULLINGHOPE DEVELOPMENT

If you read the Hereford Times headline after the May 07 elections, "Conservative Victory, More roads and Houses, Bullinghope shows the way" and didn't like the message, you may be interested to know that a local group are in the middle of a legal challenge that will make the Council think a bit harder about this type of deal in the future. Under section 287 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) we have launched a High Court challenge against the Bullinghope housing in the Unitary Development Plan. We feel the housing is in the wrong place and being built for the wrong reason, to fund the completely unconnected Rotherwas Access Road. If the Council think they can get away with this, expect lots more of the same in the future. The challenge will cost us and we have started a fund. If you think you can help please send a cheque made out to the Dinedor Hill Action Association c/o Highfields, Bullinghope, Hereford HR2 8EB. For more information see [www.dinedorhillaction.co.uk](http://www.dinedorhillaction.co.uk)

## EMPTY PLATES TOMORROW?

*Patricia Dodd Racher presented the results of her research into the implications of the double whammy of climate change and peak oil on food security at a first Wednesday meeting last year. Terry Oliver reviewed her talk for us.*

Patricia's slide show presentation, based on her research for her new book, *EMPTY PLATES TOMORROW?* ranged from the appalling cynicism of agribusinesses like Monsanto, with their 'terminator' seeds driving already poverty-stricken third world farmers to despair and their families to starvation; to the brave new world of post-carbon Cuba where ordinary people learned practically overnight how to become self-sufficient when the Russian oil lifeline collapsed along with the whole Soviet regime.

Over and over, Patricia hammered home the message that right here in the UK we risk similar dangers because we have no food security plan. Why? During the Second World War we were nearly self-sufficient in food but today we import most of our food from thousands of miles away.

But not for much longer. Those ships, planes, trains and giant lorries bringing us new potatoes from Egypt, sweet corn from Thailand and green beans from Zimbabwe will very soon grind to a halt. For one very simple reason – the cheap oil that fuelled this topsy-turvy situation is getting more and more expensive. Spiralling transport costs mean cheap supermarket food is coming to an end. 'Peak Oil' says it all – world supplies are at their peak and headed into decline. A power struggle for what remains is shaping up to be what a certain middle east oil dictator termed 'the mother of all battles'. The big boys – China, Russia, Japan – and –oh, yes, the good old USA are all busy doing backroom deals and sabre-rattling to intimidate reluctant suppliers from Venezuela to Nigeria to Kazakhstan in order to grab the lion's share of what's left.

So where does that leave us? Hung out to dry by our own government who says we don't need to worry about food supplies – DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Minister, said no one is working on food security because "the UK has long been a trading nation, and very proud to be so, and in consequence, a nation that imported food, among other things, from elsewhere." So there. – Oh well, at least we know not to expect any help from that quarter. Meanwhile, Patricia said, our weekly family shopping continues to clock up the food miles – nearly 100,000 a week, or almost 5 million a year – each family. All of us together here in the UK are responsible for a horrifying five billion food miles every year, according to DEFRA.

Something has to change – and fast. Patricia's forecast? – at least half the working population would need to work on the land by 2050. People in Britain: "will spend more time carrying out the activities necessary for survival – finding and growing food, preparing it, storing it, cooking it – so there will be less time for 'careers' or for 'leisure'. Repair skills will be in demand. People will mend anything and everything, as long as they can get hold of repair materials. The age of long-distance commuting will have ended, and long-haul holidays will be distant memories." *EMPTY PLATES TOMORROW?* by Patricia Dodd Racher is a powerful plea for us all to act before it's too late. We need a food security policy and we need it now. If you still need convincing, read her book and find out how to avoid the "danger of sleepwalking into a hungry future" and save our children and grandchildren from 'empty plates tomorrow'. Order online at: [trafford.com/06-3024](http://trafford.com/06-3024) *Terry Oliver*

## FARMING FOR A FUTURE, Film and followed by a talk by David Gillen

David Gillen showed a film "Farming for a Future" and then talked about his smallholding at Clun on old forestry land. The film showed a small farm in Austria on very hilly land. The farmer combined the use of modern machinery and hand methods in a very innovative way. He used earth moving machines to create terraces out of the steeply sloping land. On the terraces he grew (or allowed to grow) a mix of trees, potatoes, cereals, vegetables, flowers and herbs, all harvested by hand, using a scythe for the grain. Large stones were included for moisture, heat retention, and habitat. Even lemon trees seemed to thrive in the microclimate created. Oil dependency of conventional agriculture was talked about in the voice-over. At first sight the farm did not seem to be growing crops very intensively, until I reflected that similar hillsides in Britain would be grazed by sheep or be forestry land.

After the film David described his experiences living with his family and keeping pigs on his land. He has been very involved in using alternative energy sources. His pigs graze amongst trees reducing the need for bought in feed. The best he has achieved is a 1:1 ratio of feed to weight gain compared to commercial ratio of 3:1. It was a most informative evening and I look forward to seeing how David's project develops. *Frank Hemming*

## Friends of the Earth Conference September 7th - 9th 2007

This was the best conference I have attended out of three. It brought into focus significant change in the way FOE is likely to expand and go forward over the next five years. An Emergency Motion to the Conference proposed that FOE should actively pursue partnerships with external organisations and business. A move which may produce more cash, but at what cost? The independence of FOE and the significant influence it has had in the past could be at risk. While the motion didn't get much support at the beginning, FOE's director Tony Juniper swayed the vote by promising that the strategy would be implemented with caution. Let's hope this will be a successful way forward for FOE. Sadly history has shown there is considerable ethical risk. Seldom do cash from outside sources and independence make good bed fellows. *Robin Bennett*

## MAKING ENERGY SUSTAINABLE IN HEREFORDSHIRE (MESH)

Three communities in Herefordshire – Brilley, Kingsland and Bartestree and Lugwardine - were carbon footprinted and community buildings audited. The total combined domestic CO2 footprint of the communities is 19942 tonnes – this includes surface, and air travel as well as domestic fuel use. Many public events were held to raise the profile of climate change and train householders in how to lower their CO2 emissions and save money on their fuel bills. 600 low energy light bulbs were distributed to householders saving an estimated 189630kg Co2. Since completion of the project our project carbon service has installed low energy lighting in the community buildings in the communities saving an estimated 76,000 kg CO2 and nearly £19000 in fuel bills. You may like to visit [www.projectcarbon.org](http://www.projectcarbon.org) to find out about our innovative carbon offsetting service.

# DIARY DATES

Herefordshire Friends of the Earth meet on the first and third



Wednesdays of the month at EXCHANGE FOR CHANGE at the Canal Road Day Centre (see map). Local organic vegetarian food (with great puddings) is available from 6.30. Meetings from 7.30 unless otherwise advertised.

**MEETINGS ON FIRST WEDNESDAYS are open to all, usually with a guest speaker covering an environmental issue from a Herefordshire angle. Third Wednesdays are committee meetings open to local group members.**

**5th March Bread From Stones** - a joint talk by **Frank Hemming** and **Brian Lunt**. How do we grow high quality, nutrient-rich foods at garden and small farm scale and maintain or even improve soils in a context of food insecurity and energy descent? Brian is researching methods that increase soil fertility, and Frank is investigating what crops to grow, seed saving and other methods of propagation, and bio-intensive and agroforestry approaches. Come along to hear about their interim findings, followed by a discussion.

**Saturday 8th March SAPS — SEED AND PLANT SWAP** to be held at Cafe Green, St Owen St, Hereford on Sat March 8th 10.00-4.00. Exchange seeds, bulbs & plants, meet other gardeners & growers, learn how to sow, save & store seeds.

**2nd April Bread from Herefordshire?** — Herefordshire Council's Sustainability Officer **Trish Marsh** is trying to live for a year eating only locally grown food. Her talk will be accompanied by film clips, including some from the inspiring film, *Power of Community*, about food self-sufficiency in Cuba after Soviet support was turned off.

**7th May An ecosystems approach to conservation** **Mike Townsend** will give us a talk about landscape scale conservation, from an eco-philosophical and practical angle. His talk is a prelude to our spring walk in Credenhill Wood.

**10th May SATURDAY 2-5pm CREDENHILL WOOD SPRING WALK** A guided walk in a Woodland Trust wood, where we will see some practical results of evolving woodland management approaches. We will organise transport, so please contact Melodie on 01432 850647 to organise getting or giving a lift. Bring your kids and a picnic lunch.

**4th June Making Energy Sustainable in Herefordshire (MESH) NB aim to arrive Brilley at 6pm!** Our summer outing We will be visiting Brilley to join members of the Brilley Eco group for a picnic and walk and hear talk from **Ruth Morgan** to hear about the Brilley MESH project two years on (see article above). Contact Melodie 01432 850647 about getting or giving a lift.

**18th June AGM We will need to elect new officers or think about closing down the group.**

**2nd July** - A welcome return by **Jay Abrahams** who will be talking to us about **Community Methane Harvesting Schemes** and probably also a little on Living Off Grid.

### HEREFORDSHIRE FOE OFFICERS & CAMPAIGNERS

*Campaigns Coordinator/Transport Campaigner:* Paige Mitchell 01432 277857 [co-ordinator@herefordshirefoe.org.uk](mailto:co-ordinator@herefordshirefoe.org.uk); *Joint Coordinator:* Janet Parry 01982 250412; *Membership Secretary & Treasurer:* Melodie Winch 01432 850647 [secretary@herefordshirefoe.org.uk](mailto:secretary@herefordshirefoe.org.uk); *Minutes Secretary:* Ruth Stanier 01432 353837; *Food & Farming Campaigner:* Frank Hemming 07974 628932; *Waste Campaigner:* Rodney Archard; *Climate Change & Energy:* Brian Lunt; *Environmental Limits & Water:* Robin Bennett; *Newsletter:* Anita Sancha 01432 272169 [anita@anitasancha.co.uk](mailto:anita@anitasancha.co.uk); *Website:* Rob Hattersley 01432 378407