

Make Contact

If you'd like to get involved in the work of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh then please email us - info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk or see www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk. For those without access to the internet you can call Jolin Warren on 0131 466 8329.

We'd also be keen to hear any ideas or comments you have about the events and campaigns organised by the group.

Dates for Diaries

Thursday 24th March, 7.30pm

FoEE Public Talk

Topic: "Climate Change: science meets politics"

Speaker: Dr. Richard Dixon,
Head of Policy, WWF Scotland.

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

Monday 11th April, 6.30 - 8.30 pm

'Edinburgh Food Chain'

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

Speakers: Carey Coombes, Soil
Association; Nick Weir, Stroud

Community Agriculture;

Gillian Wilson, Edinburgh Food Chain

Tuesday 12th April, 7.30pm

Capital Rail Action Group AGM

Andy Wood, Transdev General
Manager, Edinburgh, will speak about
bringing trams back to Edinburgh.
City Chambers, High Street

Saturday 23rd April 2005, 11am - 4pm

FoES Local Groups Day

Lamb's House, Leith

(Open to FoES Local Group members only.)

Monday 25th April

'Peak Oil UK - Entering the Age of Oil Depletion'

Conference organised by Depletion
Scotland

<http://www.depletion-scotland.org.uk>

Wednesday 27th April, 7.30pm

FoEE Election Hustings

Friends Meeting House,
Victoria Terrace.

*(Please note that this meeting is on a
Wednesday - not Thursday.)*

Thursday 5th May

General Election Day?

See <http://www.everyonecan.org>

Saturday 14th May, 10.30am-5.00pm

FoE Scotland AGM

Lamb's House, Leith

(Open to FoE Scotland members only.)

Saturday 2nd July

Make Poverty History march

For information see:

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/>

Wednesday 6th-Friday 8th July

G8 Summit, Gleneagles

See <http://www.g8alternatives.org.uk>

Tuesday 19th July,

doors open 7.30pm, start 9.00pm

FoEE Comedy Night

The Stand Comedy Club, Edinburgh

Transport Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact:

JWarren@FoE-Edinburgh.org.uk.

Waste Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact:

KHarding@FoE-Edinburgh.org.uk



Newsletter of

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Issue No. 17

March 2005

○ Renewable energy 'gone with the wind'? - page 4

○ Getting To Grips With G8 - page 6

Edinburgh 'no' - but pollution and congestion remain

Edinburgh has said 'no' to congestion charging - but even the most vociferous of the 'no' campaigners accept that something needs to be done to tackle the city's congestion and pollution problems.

There is no going back to a 'drive-as-much-as-you-like' free-for-all. Some form of local (or nationwide) motoring charge is desirable and inevitable.

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh can feel proud for highlighting the issue. Our members and supporters have lobbied and demonstrated to alert our city to the obvious need for positive change.

We also backed Ken Livingstone on his arrival in the city for a keynote speech,



Ken meets some kindred spirits - but Edinburgh failed to follow up on London's successful congestion charge scheme

and counter-demonstrated against small-minded Tory and Lib-Dem 'no' campaigns.

This group will be campaigning hard for a revised traffic management scheme, helping our council devise one which is workable - and crucially which will mean Edinburgh won't fail its air quality targets.

*Helen Todd,
Coordinator, FoE Edinburgh*

Coordinator's Comments

Welcome to the first edition for 2005 of INFOE, the bi-monthly newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). The group has had a very active time over the past few months. We had a packed public meeting in November, where we heard about the forthcoming G8 summit, and another well-attended meeting in January, which continued the international theme and explored the concept of Ecological Debt. Our last topic was a bit closer to home: on 24th February, the audience had to decide whether big business and the government are undermining the public's goodwill towards renewable energy in the push to develop industrial-sized windfarms throughout Scotland.

Last month, Edinburgh rejected the introduction of congestion charging. The FoEE transport campaign group was heavily involved in the "Yes" campaign, through our membership of the coalition Get Edinburgh Moving. We attended public meetings, leafleted on Princes Street and helped put up posters and placards throughout the city. Despite the result of the referendum, we shall continue to campaign for sustainable transport in the city, and there are plenty of controversial proposals coming up to keep us busy in the future, from a new Forth Road Bridge to a £500m railway tunnel under the airport.

Likewise the waste campaign is busy, preparing to launch a new campaign to encourage recycling in pubs and clubs in Edinburgh. This will involve extensive research in these

establishments, which sounds like enjoyable work for this time of year and beats standing on street corners handing out leaflets! If you'd like to get involved in either of these groups, please see a committee member at a public meeting or email us on info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk

The group also held our 2005 strategy day in January, which was a very interesting and productive time for us to get together and discuss the direction and role we should be taking this year. With a general election and G8 summit on the horizon, we are looking to link in with wider political events.

We also plan to hold more fundraising events during the year in order to finance future campaign work, perhaps in partnership with other local groups, so keep an eye out for any announcements about these events, and come along. In the meantime, I hope to see you at the next public meeting.

*Helen Todd
Coordinator, FoE Edinburgh*



Everyone campaign launch

On the day the Kyoto Protocol came into force, twenty-six of Scotland's leading green groups gathered in Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden to launch a campaign to make our politicians step up actions to cut global climate change. Under the umbrella of the Everyone campaign, the groups have decided to unite around this critical issue.

This year's general election and G8 summit are a key opportunity to convince politicians to act. It is widely believed that our politicians need to step up action on industry, transport, aviation, energy and homes. This includes actions to make the price of all transport journeys more fairly reflect the cost to the environment. And we need them to deliver a CO2 emissions cut of at least 20% by 2010, and put us on-track to cut at least 60% by 2050.

While Holyrood controls many policy areas that affect climate change, many important powers remain with our Westminster MPs. Our campaign sets crucial tests for Westminster candidates at the next election.

A high-level task force needs to bring stakeholders together to assist in developing climate change policies and to monitor delivery. At the moment there is

no mechanism to bring together key stakeholders at a UK level to tackle climate change.

There is no shortage of action that the UK government could take to tackle climate change. We need your help to convince our politicians to step up action to cut global climate change and secure policy changes. The campaign will be organising a series of public meetings across the country where the public will be able to challenge politicians, including FoEE's election hustings on Wednesday 27th April.

Tony Blair has already promised to put climate change at the top of the agenda at this year's Gleneagles G8 summit. You, the voter, are the most important person in the minds of politicians - and you can help do this.

Fred Edwards is the President of Scottish Environment LINK. For more details, go to www.everyonecan.org.



Renewable Energy: Gone With the Wind?

At our public meeting on 24 February Davie Black from the Ramblers Association Scotland spoke about the impact of wind turbines on Scotland's environment. In this article he introduces some of the themes he developed in his talk:

Most rational people agree that there is a dramatic human influence on our climate. The climate change agenda has accelerated in recent years and few scientists or political leaders now deny the evidence for anthropogenic climate change. Concentrations of carbon dioxide - the main greenhouse gas - in the earth's atmosphere have risen by more than a third since the industrial revolution of 1750 to 1850, and the 10 warmest years on record all occurred since 1990, including each year since 1997.

Why, you ask, is the Ramblers Association getting agitated about CO₂? While promoting walking and access to the countryside, we also enjoy the benefits that a healthy environment can bring. We realise that unpredictable weather patterns

may have an impact on the countryside, but what is becoming more and more apparent to us is that, as a society, our responses to climate change can also have an impact.

One strand of the emission reduction programme being undertaken by the Scottish Executive is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and use more electricity derived from renewables. The Ramblers think this is a laudable aim and we support policies that encourage renewable energy development in areas that can accommodate development, without



detracting from landscape, recreation, biodiversity and cultural values.

What is beginning to cause some concern is the *ad hoc* proliferation of wind turbines. Many people will have seen the windfarms at Soutra Hill or Novar in Easter Ross, with

turbines generating clean green power.

Measure them and you'll find that they are between 50 and 60m tall to the blade tip, about the height of a mature conifer tree.

What is more worrying is the later

generations of turbines: 112m, 125m, 130, and latterly 140m tall turbines for Lewis, all

234 of them. Couple this with the 221 separate projects within the planning system and the other 268 speculative proposals under investigation and you can see the real cause for concern.

This is not part of a co-ordinated plan - there is no national renewable energy plan to determine locations or energy mixes. And with wind and hydro being the only commercially viable renewables, the generous financial incentives provided by the renewables obligation are driving the market towards more windfarms. Thus the development of a wider range of renewable technologies is being neglected.

We urgently need to plan for wind turbines in our landscape, and how to connect them to the national grid, otherwise we are heading for the same old problems that previous forestry policies produced for us a few decades ago.

Davie Black is Wildland Campaign Officer at the Ramblers' Association Scotland. See www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland for more details

Ecological Debt: Who Owes Whom?

At our January Public Meeting Teresa Martinez from Friends of the Earth Scotland gave a hard-hitting presentation about Ecological Debt. Here she sets out the main points from her talk:

Ecological Debt is the moral and legal responsibility that industrialized countries have towards countries in the Global South.

This obligation has arisen from the unfair exploitation, current and historic, of oil, minerals, forests, biodiversity and marine resources. Our approach to economic development continues to have a severe impact on the subsistence needs of the majority of people around the world. There are four main sources of ecological debt:

Carbon debt: this is the debt that rich countries have acquired by polluting the global atmosphere. This pollution has contributed to the deterioration of the ozone

layer and has accelerated climate change

Biopiracy: the use of intellectual property laws to gain exclusive monopoly over genetic resources that are based on the knowledge and innovation of farmers and indigenous peoples.

Environmental Liabilities: these are the environmental damages caused by a company through its regular operations or exceptional incidents such as industrial accidents. This includes water, soil and air

pollution, resource depletion and ecosystem deterioration.

Hazardous Waste Exports: waste originating in industrialized countries and disposed of in impoverished countries without minimum environmental and social safety conditions.

Since colonial times Northern industrial countries have used the labour and natural resources of Southern countries to

(continued on page 6)

accumulate wealth. In essence, ecological debt is a new way of looking at past and present relations between countries. Perspectives include:

A different political perspective: through the concept of Ecological Debt, relationships between industrialised and developing countries are reversed: the North as debtor, the South as creditor. Ecological Debt provides a different look not only at the legacy of the colonial period, but also at "the era of development" after the World War II: a lot of this development has been debt-driven, not only in financial terms (South-North) but certainly in ecological terms as well (North-South)

A different economic perspective, in particular in the field of trade: ecological debt shows that trade has often not been mutually beneficial, neither in monetary terms, nor in ecological terms. This points to the need for different analyses and perspectives on trade, which are not to be found in neo-classical trade theories, or in current trade policies.

A different ethical perspective: ecological debt points to the collective responsibility of industrialized countries for past violations of the right to a clean and safe environment in other countries, in particular in the South.

A different ecological perspective: ecological debt is another way of revealing the impossibility and undesirability of copying the development paths of industrialised countries.

To find out more about Friends of the Earth Scotland's work in this area see: http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/inter/global_comm.html

*Teresa Martinez,
FoE Scotland*

G8 Action

The G8 summit was under analysis at the FoE Edinburgh public talk on November 25. We were joined by Claire Coughlan of Jubilee Scotland, which campaigns for the cancellation of unpayable debts that are ruining the world's poorest countries. Claire works with schools to educate children and young people about the G8 summit and their 'make poverty history' campaign. Claire talked about the history of the G8 and the impending G8 summit, to be held in Gleneagles this summer.

Some history: the summit brings together the leaders of the world's major industrial democracies: the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States. The EU also attend the G8 Summit, represented by the president of the European Commission and the leader of the country holding the presidency of the European Council. The G8 began with a 1975 summit in France of six countries (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US). Canada joined in 1976 and the European Community began participation at the London Summit of 1977. Russia began attending the political sessions in 1984 and became a full member four years later.

Leaders have traditionally discussed a wide range of international economic, political, and security issues but the agenda has broadened considerably to include issues such as employment and the information super highway, and more recently the environment, crime and drugs, and a host of political-security issues ranging from human rights through regional security to arms control.

The Presidency of the G8 and responsibility for hosting the Summit rotates each year. Gleneagles in Scotland is

the host for 2005, and it will be Russia's turn in 2006.

The G8 is seen by some as an exclusive grouping of the political leaders of eight the world's most industrialised, wealthy and powerful states, and the summit is an opportunity for the leaders of these states to network and build relationships. The G8 is used to discuss complex international issues and crises that affect these nations, to allow for a more powerful collective response. Critics suggest that when the G8 nations meet, they are doing so to co-ordinate their influence on international institutions such as the WTO, IMF and G20. This ensures that their interests dominate the world order.

The G8 Summits have always been a focus for protests and counter summits. The last time the G8 came to the UK in 1998, 70,000 supporters of Jubilee 2000, from all walks of life, gathered on the streets of Birmingham to highlight the scandal of poor country debt. World leaders were rocked by the sheer scale of this peaceful mass protest, which paved the way for significant debt cancellation after years of inaction.

This year Tony Blair has put climate change at the top of the agenda. The G8 is a key opportunity for UK campaigners such as FoE and

J-Scotland to ensure that global justice is at the top of the political agenda. These issues cannot be ignored, if enough people come together, as in the past, to demand that world leaders take action on climate change, trade justice, debt and aid.

Jubilee Scotland have been gearing up for this G8 for the past few years and are collaborating with various other NGOs to draw attention to the issues that we feel are important. They want you - and as many others as possible - to show Tony Blair and his fellow G8 leaders that the UK public care.

A huge rally has been planned in Edinburgh on **Saturday 2nd July 2005**. See <http://www.jubileescotland.org.uk/> for more information, or to sign up for newsletters detailing G8 campaign information in the run up to the summit.

*Katriona Harding
FoE Edinburgh*



Gleneagles: a well-known haunt of FoE Edinburgh members