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## February Issue

### Energy Efficiency and Micro-generation

How can you as an individual begin to tackle climate change? If you believe the best place to start is in your home, then come along to our public meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, where Sarah Boyack MSP will be talking about her parliamentary bill which aims to cut fuel bills and tackle climate change. The bill is currently out for consultation.

The Energy Efficiency and Micro-generation Bill would require all new buildings to include capacity for small-scale electricity generation and provide reductions in Council Tax and business rates for developments that incorporate certified measures.

It would also amend Building Standards to include micro-generation as permitted development and require the Scottish Executive to set targets for micro-generation and for local authorities to consider the role such technology can play in achieving sustainable energy.

Sarah is MSP for Edinburgh Central, the Convenor of the Scottish Parliament Environment and Rural Development Committee and also Joint Convenor of the Cross Party Group on Renewable Energy. She recently chaired the Inquiry into Climate Change by the Environment and Rural Development Committee.

[www.sarahboyack.net/newsitemEnergySavingsBill.htm](http://www.sarahboyack.net/newsitemEnergySavingsBill.htm)



*Householder fitting Solar Water Panels to his roof.*

## Coordinator's Comments

Welcome to the first edition for 2006 of INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). We had a great start to the year in our public meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January, when Andy Goldring told a packed room all about permaculture and how his experiences of travelling in central and eastern Europe had informed his thinking. See the report of his talk in this issue, along with a report of the previous, also excellent, meeting held in November with Hugh Raven, Scotland's Sustainable Development Commissioner.

Our January meeting was also the date of our AGM, and thanks to those members who came along and helped the business pass speedily along. I was re-elected as Coordinator of the group, and as other officebearers, Katriona Harding (Vice Coordinator), Emma Margrett (Treasurer) and Colin Howden (Secretary) were also elected. Stuart Hay, Jolin Warren, Lang Banks were re-elected and newcomer Susan Warren joined us. Colin Hattersley stood down from the committee, and Brenda Carmichael resigned as Treasurer, a post she has held since at least 1994! Thanks to Brenda and Colin for their work on the committee, and welcome to Susan.

If you would like to know more about joining the committee, get in touch. There are still a number of places available on the committee, so it is possible that members can be coopted during the year. You will need to be a member of FoE Scotland as well as FoEE, but membership of the latter is a bargain



at £5 a year. Membership forms are available at our meetings and hopefully will be on our website shortly for downloading. Even if you are not interested in joining the committee, please think about joining the group and so helping to fund our campaigns and the public meetings we put on.

The group held its annual Strategy Day on 4<sup>th</sup> February, and as always it was an interesting and useful time to think about the direction we

would like to go in over the next 12 months. Since the local authority elections are being held next year and will be using a PR voting system, we have decided to make the City of Edinburgh Council our focus this year, so look out for forthcoming events.

Finally, our annual Comedy Night has been brought forward slightly this year, and will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March. Environmentalists cannot be serious all the time, so please come along and help us raise funds and have a laugh or two in the process.

Helen Todd  
*FoEE Coordinator*

**Tuesday 28 March 2006**

### **Friends of the Earth COMEDY BENEFIT, Edinburgh**

Join a galaxy of stars to raise money for Scotland's leading environmental charity. Tickets: £7/6. Available from The Stand Tel: 0131 558 7272 or email: [comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk) [Organised by Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Local Group] [www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

This event has sold out four years running. Avoid disappointment by booking your tickets today.

The STAND Comedy Club, York Place, Edinburgh.

9pm (Doors 7:30pm)

## Save Our Old Town - Canongate or Caltongate?

Some of you will already be aware of proposals which have been circulated recently by London based development company Mountgrange Ltd, for the redevelopment of a significant area of the Canongate. These proposals were displayed last autumn as an exhibition on two occasions, once for two days at the St James Centre and once at Canongate Kirk after a request for further public consultation from the Canongate Community Council.

The proposed masterplan has been designed by Alan Murray of Alan Murray Architects who is known for the Tun building on Holyrood Road and the Omni Centre and offices opposite St James Centre. His masterplan proposes the demolition of the former Maddocks Tie building on the corner of the Royal Mile and New Street, Canongate Venture (a former Victorian school) both of which are Listed Buildings and the former Fruit and Vegetable Market building (which forms part of Edinburgh's Common Good Land). This will all be replaced with a seven-storey glass and concrete hotel complex with a conference centre and serviced apartments to include full car parking facilities.

In addition, approximately 18 tenement flats which face onto the Royal Mile are to be demolished to allow for the creation of a new road linking East Market Street with the Canongate to be named 'Parliament Way'. The proposed Hotel will span New Street by way of a four-storey bridge link. This and the development of a new five-storey office building to be developed at the bottom of Cranston Street will obscure

existing public views of Calton Hill from the Royal Mile.

Proposals for the former bus depot site on New Street, presently the only area under ownership of the developers, will include a 20,000sq m glass fronted office development (with parking), a new public square (to be created which will afford a new/replacement view of Calton Hill and will be surrounded by cafés and bars) and some new housing. Whilst housing development is to be welcomed in this area, which has a falling residential population, of the proposed 187 new flats none are to be designed as "affordable", and only 28 are to provide social housing. All new housing will be provided with private car parking facilities despite being located close to a national public transport centre, Waverley Station.

The proposed new road also includes the demolition of 18 or so existing 1930s Local Authority developed flats which are now a mix of Local Authority and private ownership resulting from the right to buy schemes. One or two 'right to buy' owners have since sold on to developers/property investors as a result of the development threats. Existing council tenants have been advised to complete housing transfer forms despite no planning application having been submitted yet.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of people accept that this area of the Canongate needs investment and the redevelopment of the former Bus Depot on New Street has been previously approved through the planning process, consideration must be given to the concerns of heritage

groups, existing residents and businesses and the community of Edinburgh as a whole, if the wider redevelopment of this area is to be encouraged.

At a time when it is generally recognized that there is a glut of office developments, a need for small affordable business units within the city centre, a demand for more local and "market" style shopping facilities and there is a desperate need to provide more affordable housing for a mix of household sizes, it is shocking that City of Edinburgh Council has entered negotiations to sell off land on East Market Street (which includes Common Good Land) to a developer set on creating yet another modern glass fronted hotel/office/retail/caf  development at the expense of our architectural and cultural heritage.

A new community forum has therefore developed to look at and discuss what alternative solutions may be considered appropriate and to allow for the full and open discussion of the issues the proposed development raises. The Canongate Community Forum is holding a meeting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February, 7pm, at Old St Paul's Church, Jeffrey Street.

For more information contact Canongate Community Forum:

canongatecommunity  
forum@yahoo.co.uk

www.eh8.org.uk

Please help Edinburgh and Scotland retain its World Heritage Site and pass it on to future generations

Julie Logan  
*Canongate Community Forum*

## Sustainable Scotland

What is the Sustainable Development Commission, and what does it do? These were the questions answered by Hugh Raven, Scotland's Sustainable Development Commissioner who was the speaker at our November public meeting. However, the meeting wasn't all a one-way street, and Hugh also asked the audience for their ideas on why sustainable development wasn't successful across the board in ostensibly win-win situations for sustainability. This was a good opportunity for all of us to share our thoughts on issues, and the discussion was interesting and wide-ranging, hopefully giving Hugh some ideas to take back with him.

So what is the SDC? Founded in 2000, there are 18 commissioners, but currently just one in Scotland since Maureen Child, the second commissioner, stepped down to concentrate on her work on sustainability within the City of Edinburgh Council. Jonathan Porritt

is its chair, and the commission has a high level advisory role to the Prime Minister, First Minister and Welsh Assembly on all aspects of sustainable development. The commission is hoping to have an enhanced role following the publication of its Sustainable Development Strategy, "Securing the Future", acting as a watchdog and external auditor in order to hold the government to its commitments made under that strategy. A Scottish strategy is due to be launched shortly, and the SDC is hoping to build a closer relationship with Audit Scotland and mirror the changes already made at the UK level by holding the Executive to account.

The SDC aims to give an informed and balanced voice, mainly in the fields of energy and transport. Recent work has been a report into wind power, described by Hugh as a "myth-busting primer", and a critique of the aviation white paper. The commission is now looking into nuclear power. In Scotland, they have issued a report on the use of wood fuel to heat Scotland's homes, looked at quality assurance in food and hosted a Celtic Nations Conference in Spring 2005.

Moving beyond simply environmental protection towards a more holistic view of social welfare and economic development, the SDC is looking at how to transform society into a "steady state". Hugh urged everyone to be politically active and engage with politicians. Environmentalists often had the image of being, in his words, "hair-shirted Cassandras", but we need to have fun and celebrate more! (So come along to the FoEE Comedy Night on 28th March! - Ed).

The questions posed by Hugh involved three areas of activity where sustainability was meeting varying degrees of success, despite their apparent sustainability potential. First of all, organic farming was identified as having caught the public's imagination and being on the way to long term growth. Second, the use of wood in heating especially in rural Scotland was highlighted as being an area where the possible advantages were enormous, although there are too many barriers at present. Thirdly, Hugh wondered why cycling had not caught on and in fact, outside Edinburgh, levels of cycling are falling.

These ideas led to an interesting group discussion on the reasons why cycling was not more popular – one of the reasons perhaps being that decision-makers tend to use cars, planes and trains, and this is where the money is invested, rather than in cycling, walking or bus provision. Whatever the reasons, it was good to see Scotland's Sustainable Development Commissioner in such a receptive mode, and let's hope Scotland can move more quickly towards true sustainability.

For more information on the work of the SDC, and to download their reports on wind power, wood fuel or other topics, see [www.sd-commission.org.uk](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk).

Helen Todd  
*FoEE Committee*



photo credit Windsave Turbines

## Peak Oil, Permaculture and the lessons from Transylvania

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January, Andy Goldring (Co-ordinator, Permaculture Association - Britain) travelled from Leeds to talk to the people of Edinburgh about the link between shrinking reserves of oil in the world (peak oil) and the growth of intelligent and sustainable farming methods (permaculture), and his own experience with an amazing project in Austria, where the land, and the animals farmed on it, are managed in such a way to maximise the use of the land, but in a very natural and resource efficient way.

Peak oil is predicted to happen between 2004 and 2012. This is the point of maximum production, and in essence represents where half of the total resource has been used. The end of the 'age of oil' is predicted to be around 2040. With the end of the age of oil looming not so far in the distant future, there is a growing sense of urgency about the need to conserve oil and move towards

a society that is less reliant on oil. Even George Bush himself indicated in his State of the Union address that the US was currently addicted to oil.

The consequences of high energy costs make uneasy reading. Civil unrest is predicted, along with high unemployment and 'energy wars'. If this prediction comes true then we will have no choice but to alter our culture to live more sustainably.

Andy argued that permaculture is the key to our oil-driven worries! The practice of permanent agriculture has been around as long as we have, but seems to have been vastly forgotten by people in the western world. Traditionally, in ALL other cultures across the world, people with low incomes grow their own food. Our society has forgotten how to use the land, the seasons and the behaviour of the animals to produce food in the most efficient way.

The Krameterof permaculture project in Austria is the brainchild of Sepp Holzer. It extends over 50 hectares, is run by 4 people and contains 72 ponds and 65 pigs. It is a perennial system, and produces wide variety of food in the most environmentally intelligent ways possible - for example, using the natural rooting behaviour of the pigs to sow the seeds and using the reflected light off the ponds to create a microclimate suitable for growing lemons. The area is open to the local community to come and pick what they need, and it also provides food for box schemes and local restaurants.

Andy has also gained much inspiration from his travels in Transylvania and Slovenia.

In an eco-friendly world we would all eat such nutritious, seasonal, home grown produce. Most other cultures view it as madness not to. We need to alter our own culture to this way of thinking and remember back to when people from the west lived close to the land and used it to produce food in a non-aggressive and intelligent way.

Peak Oil may just be the thing to force our much needed culture choice back along the lines of our less well-off but well-nourished neighbours.

[www.permaculture.org.uk](http://www.permaculture.org.uk)  
[www.peakoil.net](http://www.peakoil.net)

Scottish permaculture Web group: [scottishpermaculture-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scottishpermaculture-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk)

Katriona Harding  
FoEE Committee



photo credit Greig Robertson

## The Woodcraft Folk in Edinburgh

You may have seen our big tent on The Meadows during the Make Poverty History rally last summer. You may have heard of the Woodcraft Folk somewhere else, and some of you may already be members. But there are many people who know little about us, and I am grateful for this chance to give a brief introduction to the Woodcraft Folk.

The Woodcraft Folk is 80 years old this year. It is a unique progressive educational movement for children and young people – both girls and boys. It is designed to develop self-confidence and activity in society, with the aim of building a world based on equality, peace, social justice and co-operation. Our motto is “span the world with friendship.” Through its activities, the Woodcraft Folk tries to give its members an understanding of important issues such as the environment, world debt and global conflict, with a key focus in recent years being sustainable development.

Contrary to the myths that surround our name we do not, under normal circumstances, hug trees or craft wood. The name 'woodcraft' was used by the influential writer and naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton at the beginning of the twentieth century. Woodcraft in this context meant the skill of living in the open air, close to nature.

In Edinburgh, there are groups for all ages from six to fifteen. We encourage our members to care for their environment, resolve conflict without violence and build cooperation. Woodcraft Folk groups meet weekly, enjoying a varied programme including games, drama, discussion, projects, crafts and singing. Groups also go on trips to activities such as climbing walls, skating and swimming, and in the summer evenings do outdoor activities. We regularly go hostelling in spring and autumn and camping in the summer. In addition, we have a group of 16 – 21 year olds

who meet, travel and help with the running of the younger groups.

At present Edinburgh Woodcraft groups are located in Bruntsfield, Portobello and Wester Hailes. These are, in the main, parent-led co-operative groups.

There are two groups for 6-9 year olds that meet at Bruntsfield Primary School on Fridays who would welcome new members. For information on these groups please contact Charles Roper on 0131 229 2919 or email to [cjksr@aol.com](mailto:cjksr@aol.com)

For more information on the rest of Edinburgh District Woodcraft Folk and group contacts please phone Peter Hutchison at 0131-447-2058 or send an email to [peter.hutchison@boltblue.com](mailto:peter.hutchison@boltblue.com)

For more information on the Woodcraft Folk go to [www.woodcraft.org.uk](http://www.woodcraft.org.uk)

Charles Roper  
*The Woodcraft Folk*



## Radioactive Waste Management

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) was set up in 2003 and has the task of recommending options for managing the UK's solid radioactive waste to the government. Their meetings are held around the country in public, and in April they will be coming to Edinburgh.

11-12 April (Venue: Dynamic Earth)

This meeting will review the reasons why members of the public and stakeholders prefer particular options, and undertake an 'holistic' assessment of options. This will entail building up an overall picture of the pros and cons of each option. The meeting will then compare the findings from the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis and holistic assessments. Areas of agreement and differences will be discussed to develop understanding of how and why options perform well or badly. For more information, see [www.corwm.org.uk](http://www.corwm.org.uk) [contact@corwm.org.uk](mailto:contact@corwm.org.uk)

## Dates for Diaries

### Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

#### Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Public Meeting, 7.30-9.00pm, all welcome

Topic: Energy Efficiency and Micro-renewables, with speaker Sarah Boyack MSP.

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

### Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

#### Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Public Meeting, 7.30-9.00pm, all welcome

Topic: Ship to Ship Oil Transfers in the Forth

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace.

### Tuesday 28 March 2006

#### Friends of the Earth COMEDY BENEFIT, Edinburgh

Join a galaxy of stars to raise money for Scotland's leading environmental charity. Tickets: £7/6. Available from The Stand Tel: 0131 558 7272 or email: [comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk) [Organised by Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Local Group] [www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

This event has sold out four years running. Avoid disappointment by booking your tickets today.

The STAND Comedy Club, York Place, Edinburgh.

9pm (Doors 7:30pm)

### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April

#### Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

FoEE Manifesto Launch: Our Vision for Edinburgh

Friends Meeting House, afternoon 2.00-4.00pm

### 11-12<sup>th</sup> April

#### Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

Meeting held in public

Dynamic Earth

For more information, see [www.corwm.org.uk](http://www.corwm.org.uk) contact@corwm.org.uk

pic credit: Colin Hattersley



## Notices

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](mailto:info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk) or see [www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

For those without access to the internet you can call Helen Todd on 0131 553 6869.

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

#### Would you like to help us out with the next newsletter?

FoE Edinburgh is looking for a volunteer newsletter editor. Duties would entail commissioning articles, chasing up and editing copy, publishing and distributing the newsletter. Editions go out five times a year, and would involve around five hours' work each time. FoE Edinburgh committee members would give support. Applicants would ideally have media training and some experience of using Page Maker or Indesign. Contact Helen Todd for more information on 0131 553 6869 or email [HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste. Editors: Helen Todd, Colin Howden, Colin Hattersley and Greig Robertson.

## A protestor at Dalkeith before being removed by sheriffs.

For the latest update on this campaign see [www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk](http://www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk)