

- Nuclear Power - no thanks!
- Fuel Tax - too high?

- Climate Change Bills - news
- Forth Road Bridge - update

February Issue

“Why Nuclear Power is not the answer to climate change”

February's Public Meeting

Thursday, 28th February, 7.30pm

Talk by **Peter Roche**, energy consultant

A replacement nuclear power programme would only reduce UK carbon emissions by around 4%, yet there is a danger it will divert attention, effort and resources from what we really need to be doing now to tackle climate change - developing energy efficiency and renewable energy programmes. New reactors are unlikely to be able to open much before 2020: we cannot afford to wait that long, when past experience tells us there will be delays, and cost overruns. There has yet to be much progress on finding a final resting place for the dangerous waste reactors produce, and there are important issues about safety and security which have not been resolved. Come and familiarise yourself with the argument's against Gordon Brown's new nuclear programme and find out, why it is still important to fight nuclear power in Scotland, despite the Scottish Government's anti-nuclear stance and what you can do to help stop it from someone who has campaigned against nuclear power for over 30 years.

Peter Roche is an energy consultant based in Edinburgh. He has a degree in Ecological Sciences from Edinburgh University. In 1977/8 he was co-ordinator of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh. He was co-founder of the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM) in 1976, which organised some of the largest anti-nuclear power demonstrations in the UK at the Torness nuclear station, and was a committee member of Scotland Against Nuclear Dumping. Between 1981 and 1991 he worked full-time for SCRAM, Leith Insulation Project, and Edinburgh Draughtproofing Co-operative. More recently he was a nuclear campaigner for Greenpeace UK from 1991 - 2004, a member of the Government's Committee Examining Radiation Risks of Internal Emitters, and since 2001 he has been policy adviser to the Scottish Nuclear Free Local Authorities.

This talk will end around 9.00pm.

Location: **Quaker Meeting House**, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL
Free admittance. All welcome.

News in brief

Capital's bike share

Scotland's first city-wide bike-sharing scheme could be set up in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh City Council is preparing a feasibility study into the creation of a venture which would allow people to borrow bikes and leave them at secure stations across the capital.

Heathrow - 3rd Runway Consultation

Wed. Feb 27th is the final day to submit your views on the proposal to build a 3rd runway at Heathrow Airport.

If this gets the go-ahead, we can expect similar expansions throughout the UK.

www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/heathrowconsultation

Scottish Climate Change Bill - consultation now open

See:

www.wdmscotland.org.uk/campaigns/climate/consult-feb08.php

and

www.wwf.org.uk/core/about/scotland/sc_0000004518.asp

open until April 23rd, 2008

Co-Coordinator's Comments



Can identify the location of this 60's photo?

Welcome to the first edition for 2008 of INFOE, the newsletter for Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE).

Since our last newsletter, FoEE has held its annual AGM, and amongst other changes we now have two Coordinators rather than one.

Alice Searle and myself will attempt to fill Helen Todd's shoes - not an easy task, even with two of us.

Helen is due a huge vote of thanks for her time, energy and commitment she has given as Coordinator of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh. Fortunately she is very much still an active committee member - certainly Alice and I will look to her for guidance this coming year.

I'll leave readers to browse this newsletter at their leisure, and use my column to think aloud. One of the perks of being both Newsletter Editor and Co-ordinator you get space to express your own thoughts.

I'm what I would describe as a "young active citizen" - young in the sense of how long I have belonged to campaigning organisations like FoEE, rather than in years.

What or who are FoEE?

That might seem a rather unnecessary question - as a FoEE member reading this newsletter, you probably think you have a pretty good idea of who or what FoEE is.

But how many of you have ever read our Constitution?

As a member organisation, we can essentially do whatever we want to, within the broad objectives laid down in our Constitution, which are:

- promote environmental protection and enhancement in Edinburgh and the surrounding area
- support FoE Scotland in its promotion of sustainable development and environmental justice.

Currently our public talks, are held towards the end of each month are our principal occasion when we get together. But as ever, we are open to new ideas.

If you have any ideas on how you would like to see FoEE develop, then do bring them forward. You might be surprised to find that others share and support your ideas.

David Atiyah
Co-ordinator FoEE

(and I promise to find a more recent photo for my next personal contribution)

Volunteers sought

This Newsletter goes out 5 times a year to a mailing list of about 300 individuals - almost entirely in electronic format.

As a voluntary organisation, FoEE is always trying to recruit more members - not just to join, but also to become more involved and contribute in whatever way be appropriate to your interests, skills, and time availability.

In the absence of others, most of the regular workload naturally falls on FoEE Committee members, but they are plenty of others ways you can get involved without becoming a committee member.

For example, at present we are actively seeking:

1 Newsletter Editor

Every wanted to publish your own magazine online but never had the audience?

Do you have some basic IT skills which could be enhanced to a higher level with a little bit of training?

Can you find 3 or 4 hours of spare time every couple of months to help us throw together these Newsletters?

Interested: - do please talk to one of the committee at this week's public

meeting on Thursday, or drop me an email datiyah@foe-edinburgh.org.uk

We are also looking for IT expertise: this year we are hoping to migrate our both our website, and mailing-lists to a single, new, integrated system using Open Source Software.

Anyone with both skills and time to contribute here would be most welcome!

David Atiyah
Co-ordinator FoEE

Fuel Costs - budget coming

Earlier this month, we again saw the road haulage industry (the Freight Transport Association & the Road Haulage Association) going cap in hand to the UK Government to try to get further concessions. The Budget is due on 12th March and the truckers want Gordon Brown's government to cut fuel tax.

It's fairly clear that there's little chance of the UK reducing climate change emissions if the Government is prepared to give in to the truckers yet again.

But what is not so often understood are some of the myths and facts about the price of fuel. Here we re-print a briefing from the Campaign for Better Transport, which clarifies many of the nonsense you hear in the media on a regular basis.

MYTH: Fuel duty is much too high

FACT: Fuel duty has not been increasing in line with inflation since 2000, with the small increase in October 2007 the first in years. This has kept fuel duty artificially low. Even with these small increases announced in Budget 2007 (2p increase in October 2007, 2p in April 2008 and 1.84p in April 2009), fuel duty in 2009 will still remain 11% lower in real terms than it was in 1999.

MYTH: We pay too much tax on our fuel

FACT: Tax, as a percentage of fuel, has not been this low since 1993. With unleaded at £1 a litre and duty at 50.4p, and VAT at 17.5%, tax as a percentage of the total pump price is 65%. In 1991 it was 64%, in 1992-3 it was 66% whilst in 1994 it was 70%. Even with the planned 2p increase in April 2008, if oil prices remain the same, tax as a percentage of the total price will still be only 67.7%, which is below 1994 levels.

MYTH: High fuel prices are due to high fuel duty

FACT: Higher fuel prices are down

to high oil prices not because of fuel duty. High oil prices are out of the Government's control, and will increasingly become more of a fact of life. They are due to oil scarcity, wars in oil-producing countries and global inflation, certainly not because the Government has been increasing fuel duty. Given the inevitability of high fuel prices it makes economic and environmental sense to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and move towards a low-carbon economy, rather than wanting to attempt to drive more and get cheaper fuel.

MYTH: Motoring has become much more expensive

FACT: The cost of motoring has fallen 10% in real terms since 1997, whilst the cost of travelling by rail and bus has increased 6% and 13%, respectively. Revenues raised from any fuel duty increases must be ring-fenced for public transport to improve travel choices, which was promised by Gordon Brown in Budget 2000.

MYTH: We pay too much tax for the cost of motoring

FACT: There are many costs to society from motoring that we all have to pay for:

- * Cost to the NHS for the 262,000 casualties, including 3,500 fatalities, each year which result from road accidents
- * Cost to the nation's health due to air pollution
- * Cost to the economy due to carbon emissions
- * Cost of maintaining roads
- * Cost of transport police and traffic officers

MYTH: Road transport is not important in the battle against climate change

FACT: CO2 emissions from transport are rising, and emissions from road transport alone make up 25.7% of the UK CO2 emission total, so road transport is a very important sector to tackle. The small increases in fuel duty announced in the 2007 Budget are expected to result in carbon

savings of 0.16 million tonnes of carbon by 2010.

MYTH: We pay more tax than other European countries

FACT: This is marginally true, although other countries such as Sweden, Germany and France have very close rates to us (within 1%) and sometimes share the same rate as us. Fuel tax is just one tax. Other countries have a much higher vehicle purchase tax, and other countries have tolls on their roads.

Top 5 EU petrol prices, September 2007

Netherlands	102.5p
Germany	94.5p
UK	94.4p
Belgium	93.2p
Finland	92.7p

Tax as a percentage of the price of petrol, Top 5 countries, September 2007

UK	66	Germany	64
France	64	Sweden	64
Finland	62		

MYTH: The hauliers are having a tough time

FACT: Hauliers already receive a lot of support from the Government. From 1 October 2007, the Reduced Pollution Certificate scheme has been extended so that hauliers buying a Euro V compliant vehicle up to 31 September 2009 can claim a discount of up to £500 a year on Vehicle Excise Duty (VED).

VED rates for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) have been frozen since 2001 and in October 2007 the Government announced that the rates will continue to be frozen in 2008/09. The government also offers reduced fuel duty on "environmentally friendlier" fuels, such as biofuels, compressed natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas.

www.bettertransport.org.uk

“We can fix it” - says Bob the Builder

John Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth announced just before Christmas that the Scottish Government would press ahead with plans to build a Second Forth Road Bridge.

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh, together with colleagues from FoES attempted to dissuade Mr Swinney from this decision by mounting a protest outside the Scottish Parliament.

Though good media coverage was received - both on radio, TV and local newspapers, Mr Swinney chose to ignore “Bob the Builder”

Since then developments continue:

- tolls have been removed from the Forth Road Bridge.

- the project to save the Forth Road Bridge’s corroding cables has seen the first section of the bridge’s new dehumidification system switched on.

- Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) have issued their latest report setting out the costs and wider economic impact of replacing or augmenting the Forth Road Bridge’s main cables, should current work to dry out the cables fail.

Councillor Tony Martin, FETA Convener, said:

“These new figures reinforce what we already thought – replacing or



Bob the Builder and his 5 cousins outside Holyrood, asking John Swinney for the contract to fix the Forth Road Bridge.

augmenting the cables without an alternative crossing in place is something to be avoided if at all possible. They also demonstrate the huge value of the Forth Road Bridge to Scotland’s economy.”

www.feta.gov.uk

Duncan McLaren, Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth Scotland, said: “This report confirms what Friends of the Earth Scotland has said about the bridge all along: Can we fix it? Yes we can! The cost of design and construction for cable replacement could be as little as 2.2% of the cost

of a new bridge. To waste up to £4.2bn of taxpayer’s money on an environmentally disastrous second bridge is not a sensible decision.”

- the Scottish Government’s National Planning Framework 2 identifies a replacement Forth crossing as the top transport infrastructure project.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/07093039/0

For further details see the website of The Forthright Alliance:

www.forthrightalliance.org

Climate Change Bills

The **UK Climate Change Bill** has recently been amended. It will now include annual target ranges and a review of the 2050 emissions reduction target.

Friends of the Earth Scotland are looking for local groups to take part in a final “Big Ask Day of Action” on Saturday April 5th - in advance of the vote in the House of Commons.

In particular they are targetting international aviation and shipping emissions to be included, and for an 80% cut in emissions by 2050. (see back-page for Training Event on March 15th)

Local MP, Nigel Griffiths introduced an early day motion (736) in the House of Commons, following close consultation with Friends of the Earth.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMI/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=34898>

To date it has been supported by 210 MPs.

The **Scottish Climate Change Bill** has now been opened up for

consultation.

You are encouraged to make your views known - see the WWF websites:

www.wwf.org.uk/core/about/scotland/sc_0000004518.asp

Consultation closes April 23rd, 2008

As of Feb. 28th, The Big Ask goes to Europe:

www.thebigask.eu

Reports from recent Meetings

January 2008

On 31st January 2008 we were pleased to welcome Ian Gulland Director of Community Recycling Network Scotland (CRNS).

Ian Gulland is a man who knows about waste! Having spent 15 years working for local authorities, LEEP (now Changeworks) and more recently with CRNS, Ian has had to work with landfill sites, recycling programmes, and even at an incinerator, before finding himself helping to set up community recycling schemes. At our January meeting, Ian explained how CRNS supports around 180 community groups around Scotland who are all dealing with waste in some form or another – from composting to furniture recycling to bicycle refurbishment. Each group is different but each one manages to carry out recycling with added social and economic benefit. The sector employs around 1,100 people and has a turnover of £1m – not bad when many of the groups are also helping to regenerate local

communities and putting to use resources that would otherwise be thrown away.

Ian also spoke about his personal commitment to zero waste as a concept. In thanks partly to his lobbying of politicians over the years, this is now on the new SNP government's agenda with targets for 60% recycling of household waste by 2020 and 70% by 2025. However, domestic waste is only part of the story; the commercial and industrial sectors also need to play their part, helped along by leadership and commitment from the government.

Worryingly, incineration is making a comeback in waste discussions, disguised as a "green" source of energy. Ian opposes incineration since it does not affect the supply chain of waste. In other words, resources are still depleted and energy used to create materials, which are then thrown away and burnt. Incineration does not fit with a zero waste strategy. He also suggested that one job in incineration could equate to eight jobs in community recycling.



Questions were asked on a wide range of topics, but the audience was also clearly concerned that a new incinerator may be on the cards in East Lothian. This is a topic that FoEE will be keeping an eye on for some time.

www.crns.org.uk

Helen Todd,
FoE Edinburgh

Scottish Environment Week

Every year for one week, Scottish environmental organisations have the chance to publicise their work and lobby for their causes in Parliament, during Scottish Environment Week. This year, the events ran from 4-10th February and the theme was "A climate for change: enabling sustainable livelihoods".

Organised by Scottish Environment LINK, the umbrella body for environmental NGOs, there was a wide range of seminars, exhibitions and events, which were well attended by MSPs and parliamentary staff. The events explored how government, business and the public can inspire others and facilitate change towards

sustainable development, low impact lifestyles and the carbon neutral society. Topics covered included the forthcoming Scottish Marine Bill, active travel, sustainable development education and rural development funding.

The importance of protecting Scotland's landscape was also highlighted by a competition whereby MSPs nominated their favourite landscapes. The winner was Willie Coffey MSP, with the Loudon Valley, Ayrshire. You can see a slideshow of all the landscape nominations, and further information on Scottish Environment Week at:

www.scotlink.org.

Ship-to-Ship Transfers

Forth Ports PLC has announced it is not proceeding with an application for ship-to-ship (STS) oil transfers in the Firth of Forth.

Charles Hammond, Group Chief Executive of Forth Ports PLC, said:

"Given the uncertainty surrounding the scope of the proposed project, we have decided that this application is not in the best interests of the company and its shareholders."

www.forthports.co.uk

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> or see <www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

For those without access to the internet you can call David Atiyah on **07880 638 450**

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

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste.
Editors: Helen Todd, Colin Howden, David Atiyah

FoES

Friends of the Earth Scotland

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Fax: 0131 243 2725

The door to the office is on the north side of Rose Street, between the Abbotsford pub and Fopp records.

FoE Edinburgh Committee

Alice Searle - Co-coordinator
David Atiyah - Co-ordinator
Colin Howden - Secretary
Emma Margrett - Treasurer
Helen Todd
Jenny Brotchie
Alan Carter

Diary of Events

Thursday 28th February

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: **Peter Roche**, energy consultant - talking about Nuclear Power
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Tuesday 11th March

Capital Rail Action Group

Speaker: Prof Chris Harvie (MSP)
7:30pm
Quaker Meeting House

Saturday 15th March

FoES training day

focus: preparing for National Day of Action on April 5th
FoES Offices, Rose Street
rbrowning@foe-scotland.org.uk

Wednesday 19th March

Spokes spring public meeting

"Climate Change, Peak Oil and Scottish Cycling Policy"
7:30-9:00pm (coffee from 6.45)
Augustine United Church,
George IV Bridge, Edinburgh
www.spokes.org.uk

Thursday 27th March

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: tbc
7:30-9:00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Saturday 5th April

The Big Ask Day of Action

(FoEE contribution still to be decided)

Tuesday 8th April

Capital Rail Action Group

Speaker: Steward Stevenson, MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change
7:30pm
Quaker Meeting House
(this is also CRAG's AGM)

Thursday 24th April

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: tbc
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Big Ask Day of Action - Training

Saturday, March 15th, 2008

Friends of the Earth Scotland are holding a national training day on Saturday 15 March.

The day will focus on preparing for the National Day of Action on 5 April and take place at Friends of the Earth Scotland offices, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR. The event is free of charge.

FoES's new activism and development officer, from March 1st, Rosiaina Browning, is coordinating the day so if you are interested in attending please drop her an email at rbrowning@foe-scotland.org.uk.

Big Ask Day of Action

Saturday, April 5th

What will you be doing?

Any ideas for an effective media event?

Got any air-pilots uniforms in your attic?

Have a think, and get back to us with your ideas.

info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk



Accepting that not everyone is a great fan of Social Networks - Friends of the Earth Edinburgh has set up its own Group in Facebook.

If you are already a Facebook user, we look forward to seeing you Online - anyone like to offer to help administer our Group page?