



**December 2011**

**COP 17** is meeting in Durban as I write. The indications are not that encouraging. With the Kyoto agreement about to expire there seems little will on the part of some big players, notably Canada and the USA, to put a realistic follow on plan in place. That is not because Kyoto has been so successful in securing emissions reduction that we don't need a replacement. Globally we have not met the Kyoto targets. Indeed the talk now is that we cannot meet the original 2 degrees 'safe' target. Unless there is a "bold change of policy direction," the world will lock itself into an insecure, inefficient and high-carbon energy system, the International Energy Agency warned at the launch of its 2011 World Energy Outlook in London in November.

Despite the reluctance of Governments to get serious about tackling the problem, there is some progress. Richard Muller, a physicist who has been a key source for many sceptics and deniers came out publicly to say that temperatures have indeed been rising rapidly. He spent two years studying the surface temperature data and concluded the land is 1.6 degrees warmer than in the 1950s.

I believe the other significant news that broke before the meeting will also spur some action. That is the conclusion by statisticians that the extreme weather events of recent years are related to climate change.

"For the period 2001-2006, extreme weather cost developed nations .1% of GDP; 1% of GDP for middle income nations, to as much as 8% of GDP for severely-impacted small island nations. In the US alone, there have been 10 weather events this year, including record-breaking flooding, heat waves and drought, that have cost over \$1 billion each." Read more: <http://www.care2.com/causes/extreme-weather-events-to-increase-warn-scientists.html> .

Insurance and reinsurance companies are particularly affected by this. They are some of the biggest investors in stock and bond markets, alongside pension funds. The financial implications of the claims to policies already in place, and the prospect of uninsurable loss for future claims is a huge financial impact.

Opening the COP meeting, President Zuma of South Africa said "For most people in the developing countries and Africa, climate change is a matter of life and death". It really does not get more important than that does it?

So perhaps it is not surprising this was reported in environment news October 19. "Hundreds of the world's largest investors, representing more than \$20 trillion in assets, today encouraged governments and international policy makers to take new legally-enforceable steps to combat climate change at the upcoming UN climate summit in Durban, South Africa."

The UK has legally binding commitments on emission reduction. Is it time Jersey did likewise?

We held a small candlelit vigil in town on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to mark the start of the Durban meeting. My thanks to all that turned out in the rain and to Anne who provided a pile of jam jars to keep the persistent wind from blowing out the candles.

## **Web site**

We had a few problems with the web site. For some reason the hosting lost all the pages. Nigel has restored a backup from September, and we should soon get more items up there.

## **New States of Jersey**

We now have a new States. There are some changes of course and we will shortly be sending a brief survey to all members to gauge where they stand on climate change and peak oil. One thing we do know, the sceptical former deputy Gerard Baudains has returned to the house. On the other hand I have been told that our new Chief Minister has taken an interest in the overdue energy policy so we might see some action there soon.

I was at the farming and land use conference recently. I was rather surprised to hear a couple of prominent locals saying they thought climate change would be beneficial to Jersey! Perhaps there will be some positives locally, but they surely will be overwhelmed by the negatives. We are dependent on the world for so much that sustains us - from building materials to food to energy. We have to start thinking like world citizens not just adopt purely introspective self-centred approaches.

## **The heat map.**

The aerial infra red heat map has arrived. A great result thanks to Nick Palmer and our friends in Guernsey who push hard to make this happen. I am told interest was huge and the web site crashed due to the volume of interest on the day BBC Radio covered it.

There was a static display in the Royal Square on the Monday of the launch which stood out very clearly against the grey weather and surroundings. Francis Binney was there and gave a great interview stressing the effectiveness of insulation and its financial payback too.

## **The Economics of Happiness.**

I was not able to make the film showing, but I have heard good reports. One acquaintance delightedly told me she expected to see the 'usual faces' and was pleasantly surprised to find she recognised hardly anybody. It seems we are connecting with a broader range of people than we expected. Our thanks go to a private sponsor for making this event possible.

## **Diary.**

As we reach the end of our third year, it is time to do some of the necessary formal stuff. We have to have a chair, treasurer and secretary to satisfy the bank to run an account. Our AGM will be:

Tuesday 7th February 8.00 pm. in the Maria Ritchie Room, Jersey Arts Centre, Phillips Street, St. Helier;

Other committee/ordinary meetings have been moved to the second Tuesday of month to avoid clashing with JIT meetings.

Tuesday 10th January in the Town House, New Street, St Helier

Tuesday 13th March in the Town House, New Street, St Helier.

Happy Christmas, and a low carbon New Year to all

Mark Forskitt

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