



GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2008

AVOIDING GRIDLOCK IN GUILDFORD

by the Forum's Transport Working Group

TRANSPORTATION is currently the fastest-growing contributor to climate change, and by some measures is responsible for 32% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions. Our current car-based culture also has social implications, with ten people a day dying on the nation's roads, and several commentators arguing that the spread of a car-centred culture has entrenched and furthered gender, race and class divisions, and diminished the diversity of uses of public space.

Guildford and the rest of our towns and cities have been reorganised around the car, increasingly making the car a necessity rather than a luxury. This process has been anything but inevitable or natural. It has been conducted by authorities directly putting resources into road construction and other subsidies to the car, participating in the production-car culture. With cars now built into our everyday lives, governments and society face the challenge of breaking our deeply-rooted addiction to them. So what are national and local

government doing to tackle the negative social and environmental consequences of transport?

Towards a Sustainable Transport System was published in 2007 by the Department for Transport and sets out the Government's transport investment and policy plans to 2014. The strategy has been framed by the findings of the Stern report on climate change which concluded that a 'rich and dirty' world is not sustainable, putting the cost of stopping runaway climate change at 1% of global GDP, but saving us between 5 and 20% of global GDP in the future. As a result, climate change has been identified as the first of five key challenges facing transport in the future, with transport schemes that result in an increase in carbon emissions being less likely to be approved. Indeed, consultation on the strategy has been delayed to wait until the Climate Change Bill is finalised, so that carbon reduction targets for the transport sector can be incorporated. *(Continued overleaf)*

Guildford's gyratory system. The town centre is subject to very high traffic flows throughout the day.



However, there is one problem with the strategy – the door is currently left open for unlimited increases in aviation and shipping emissions!

At the local level, Nicholas Brock's recent BSc dissertation *Counter-congestion Strategy: A Guildford Borough Case Study*, for which the Forum was a consultee, provides an excellent insight. Nicholas conducted interviews with members of Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council (GBC), examining the work being done in the area, including Travel Plans for schools and businesses, cycling events such as Bike2Work Week, and future plans to pedestrianise North Street.

GBC is also actively promoting car sharing and has recently helped introduce the *Streetcar* car club in Guildford, which has already proved extremely popular in London. However, it's not all good news, as the Guildford Cycling Strategy is unlikely to meet its target of trebling the number of cyclists in Guildford by 2010, and more needs to be done. (Perhaps we can learn something from Woking, which has recently been named a cycling demonstration town. Woking also has a car parking surcharge that is hypothecated into transport improvements.)

GBC is keen to develop the Park & Ride

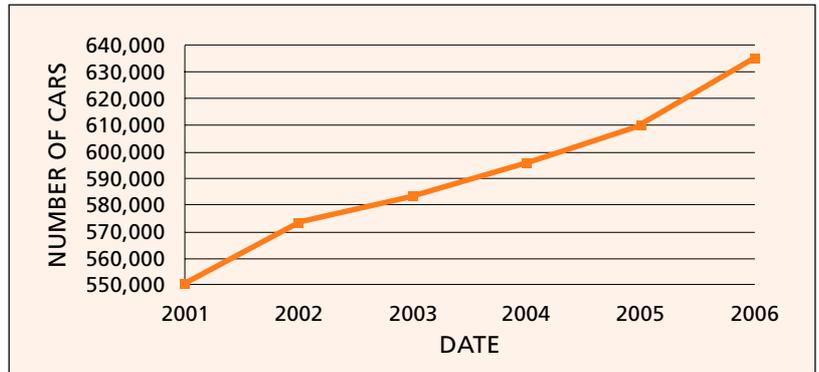
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GUILDFORD'S CAR CLUB

A CAR CLUB is an innovative service, which lets members share cars on a pay-as-you-go basis and experience the benefits of car ownership without the hassle and expense. The scheme in Guildford, launched in September 2007, is a partnership between Guildford Borough Council (GBC), Surrey County Council and Streetcar. The Forum invited Streetcar to present its offer back in June 2006.

Currently two new Volkswagen Golfs are available in special dedicated bays in Stoke Fields and Eagle Road. As both usage and membership are growing (it reached 65 by June 2008) GBC has been able to reduce its subsidy, and residents are encouraged to help develop the scheme by nominating new locations via the Streetcar website.

The scheme is simple to use: members book a car online or over the phone, for as little as 30 minutes or as long as 6 months, and use remotely-activated smartcards to unlock the vehicle. At the end of the journey the car is returned to a dedicated Streetcar parking space and a travel log is automatically sent to Streetcar HQ in Wimbledon.

Members of Streetcar in Guildford also have access to vehicles in other Streetcar-active cities: London, Brighton, Southampton and Cambridge.



The number of cars registered in Surrey between the years 2001 and 2006.

sites around Guildford and is investigating basing parking charges on the amount of carbon dioxide a car emits.

Nicholas concludes, "Guildford's counter-congestion strategies are progressing well . . . gradual improvements in pedestrian, cycling, parking and public transport infrastructure will provide long term counter-congestion and accessibility benefits throughout Guildford . . . Tackling congestion will require continued investment and support from both local and national government (and society) to succeed . . . Escalating oil prices, mounting vehicle tax and parking charges, combined with the desire to 'go green', may provide food for thought for frequent car users across the Borough."

The Benefits

- Car clubs benefit the environment by reducing CO₂ emissions and easing traffic congestion.
- Independent research conducted by Transport for London, shows that each car club vehicle on the road replaces an average of 20 privately-owned cars.
- The average cost per annum of owning an equivalent car with the same amount of use is £2,749 (AA figures) whereas it is only £707 if using Streetcar.
- To drive costs £4.95 per hour, or £35 per 24 hours. Included is 30 miles of petrol per day (19p per mile for additional petrol) plus fully comprehensive insurance and all maintenance costs.

To find out more including how to register and book a car, please contact

Streetcar

Park House
8 Lombard Road
Wimbledon
SW19 3TZ

Tel: 0845 6448475

Email: services@streetcar.co.uk

Web: www.streetcar.co.uk

Wasting one's days

The average car-driving commuter will spend six months of his life sitting in traffic jams.

(Source: 'Britain From Above', BBC1, 10 Aug 08)

Horse chestnuts

Almost half of Britain's horse chestnut trees are in a sorry state, with leaves turning brown amid the green summer landscape. They are affected by the disease called bleeding canker which is caused by a bacterium and attacks the bark. Many trees are killed or having to be cut down.

(Source: *The Guardian*, 2 Apr 08)

FACTS & FIGURES

Woodlarks

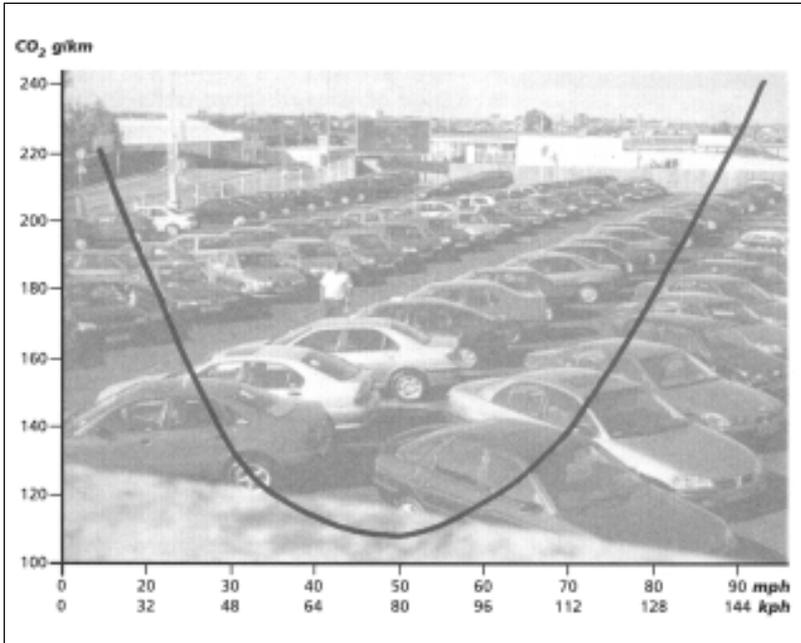
Numbers of one of Britain's most endangered birds, the woodlark, have doubled over the past ten years. They do well on undisturbed set-aside ground, but it is feared the comeback could be short-lived if land is brought back into production for biofuel crops.

(Source: *BBC Wildlife*, Sept 07)

DRIVE SMARTER

by John Bannister

AS OUR FRONT-PAGE article points out, around 30% of the UK's GHG emissions is accounted for by our transport. Most of this is from cars. Now motorists are facing up to the reality of Peak Oil (see article on page 10) and pump prices at record levels. As to be expected, we have seen small reductions in fuel use in the UK (and the US) as drivers start to think more carefully about when and how they drive.

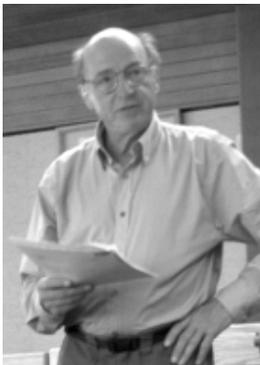


Curve showing average CO₂ emissions for diesel, petrol and LPG fuelled cars versus speed.

Gordon Brown, like King Canute, tries to convince us that he can defy the elements and assuage angry car drivers by asking Saudi Arabia to pump more oil – but the wells there are already virtually flat out so that option is not available. What should a leader in his position be doing? He should credit the public with more intelligence and explain that the world is now in an oil supply and demand crunch that has resulted in high pump prices. He should introduce tough measures to make sure we use the stuff more efficiently. At a stroke he should impose a national speed limit of 50mph on all our major roads – and enforce it.

Spain has just announced a raft of measures designed to reduce oil imports by 10% including precisely such a speed limit, bringing the whole of Spain into line with the law that already applies in Barcelona. The graph shows that at 70mph fuel consumption (which equates to emissions) is about 35% higher than at 50mph. At 80mph it is 75% higher and at 90mph it is 125% higher. (NB It's a similar story for noise – see page 5.)

We published this graph in our September 2003 newsletter and think it deserves to be shown again with flashing LED lights! Inevitably the drivers' lobby, the AA and the RAC, will bleat that such a speed limit would be an infringement of our basic rights. We say the national interest and the global environment come first.



Raymond Smith

Forum Chairman John Bannister presents his annual report, outlining GEF's recent successes. Following the formal proceedings, members were treated to a visual feast of Britain's wildlife, with spectacular images presented by photographer and naturalist Mike Grimshaw.

GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM Annual General Meeting 2008

Wednesday 2 July, in Guildford Borough Council Chamber, Millmead

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

- Over 20 public meetings held
- Membership now 175 – a record high
- New leaflet and excellent newsletters
- Sixth year of 'Playgrounds for Wildlife' award
- Schools energy programme with GBC and ecsc
- Successful partnerships
- Guildford wind study
- GEF as a focal point for sustainability

SOME PEOPLE WE HAVE TO THANK

- Clare Windsor
- Mo Usher
- Our newsletter contributors
- Our 'volunteers'
- Guildford Borough Council and Dave Harnett
- Our officers
- You – our members

GEF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Howard Allison*
- John Bannister*
- Keith Chesterton
- Cllr Sarah di Caprio
- Cllr Matt Furniss
- Richard Hall
- Ed Hayden
- Alwyn Marriage*
- Cllr Wendy May
- Simon Newell
- Stephen Rainbird*
- Richard Seymour
- Raymond Smith*
- Trudy Thompson*
- Katie Watson*
- Cllr Jenny Wicks

* GEF officers

PLAYGROUND FOR WILDLIFE COMPETITION

EVERY YEAR Guildford Environmental Forum runs a wildlife competition for local primary schools who can best demonstrate they have created habitats and attracted birds, insects and creatures into their playground. The winner this year was Chilworth Church of England School.

Mo Usher from the Forum, who had created the competition, said: "Creating a playground for wildlife helps to foster respect and responsibility towards nature, develops practical skills, encourages care for the environment, an understanding of the need for conservation and preservation, and the value of working together as a team. It creates an awareness of the passage of the seasons, helps to remove fear of creepy-crawlies, encourages recycling and of course creates a lot of fun enhancing and protecting the school environment."

Chilworth had ably demonstrated how much they had cared for and were protecting and enhancing their environment. The judges from Surrey Wildlife Trust said: "It is a wonderful, well-designed wildlife area with a meadow, bog area, pond, wigloo, compost heaps, quiet area, hedges and bird tables. It was only recently created, but is already up and running."

The prizegiving ceremony at Chilworth School on 16 July was attended by pupils of the winning school and representatives of the other schools that had taken part (Ripley's Walsh Memorial School and Send Church of England School). The first prize

of £60 and a certificate were presented by John Bannister, Chairman of the Forum, and accepted by two pupils on the school's behalf.

The award ceremony was followed by a tour of Chilworth School's grounds. The children showed everyone round the individual areas and expertly identified various interesting insects, a grass snake in the compost heap and frogs near the pond, and by the end of the tour all the guests were inspired.

Some of Chilworth Church of England Primary School's pupils, displaying their award for winning the Playground for Wildlife competition this year.



Raymond Smith

Our thanks to Mo Usher



Raymond Smith

MO HAS MADE the Playgrounds for Wildlife programme her very own. She has put her passion and creativity into exciting everyone about creepy-crawlies. Thousands of children, parents, staff and governors at Guildford's primary schools have become enthused by Mo to love and not fear the creatures in their gardens, particularly the very small creatures which occupy the base of the pyramid on which all other life depends. Her trademark hat has been an absolute winner with the children!

Alas, it seems the Forum's Playgrounds for Wildlife programme has run its course. After six years it has achieved what it set out to do to help raise the wildlife value of school playgrounds and bring the wonder of small creatures to so many. Our grateful thanks to Mo for all her hard work and for a brilliant success story. She would not want us to miss this opportunity to thank Felicity and Julie at Surrey Wildlife Trust who have lent their expertise to judge the events.

John Bannister

“Thousands of people around the world may be dying prematurely or succumbing to disease through the effects of noise exposure,” says the *New Scientist*.

THE PROBLEM of noise pollution is certainly growing, according to the UK National Society for Clean Air who reported that “noise had a major impact for 45% of respondents to a survey in May 2007 as compared to 35% a year earlier”. Meanwhile, the UK Office for National Statistics reports that noise complaints to local government offices have increased fivefold over the past 20 years.

Yet according to Deepak Prasher, Professor of Audiology at UCL, and supported by comment at the recent 2008 AGM of the UK Noise Association (UKNA): “until now, noise has been the Cinderella form of pollution,” meaning that it is receiving far less attention than it deserves from governments and their agencies and from health organisations.

People in a modern society are exposed to noise from such diverse sources as road traffic, services (police, ambulances, fire engines), different forms of aircraft, with helicopters being a particular problem, plus general neighbourhood activities. That noise from such sources is increasing will not come as a surprise to people in Guildford who see year-on-year increases in housing densities and traffic flows. According to the Highways Agency, some 30 million car journeys a year – way over the capacity for which the road was designed – now pass through Guildford along the A3, creating noise pollution from Burpham to Onslow and all points in between. “If you were to ask almost anyone who lives near one of the main roads in our ancient town of Guildford what troubles them most about the town, the chances are that they’d say ‘road noise’,” was the message from the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing Services of Guildford Borough Council at a meeting with residents in Burpham last year.

What is more, the noise problem is only going to get worse for residents in Guildford and Surrey. At a recent lecture to the Forum, the project engineer for the Hindhead Tunnel said he expected traffic volumes on the A3 through Guildford to increase by a further 3% and south of Guildford by up to 15%. The increase by Guildford would have been more but the view is that, as the A3 is so overloaded in Guildford, only 3% more will get through! Secondly, the Government, in its South East Plan (now going through its final consultation phase), wants to increase the size of Guildford by about a third (some 10,000 dwellings by 2031) and the plan includes no clear commitment to improve infrastructure before the expansion occurs. Such increased densities must bring increased noise levels with them. Yet current legislation reacts to increased neighbourhood noise by seemingly only to require that new housing is better insulated to keep noise out rather than by seeking to counter and reduce growing noise levels in our open spaces.

Government actions therefore seem not to square with the scientific analysis. The *New Scientist* quotes Val Wheedon MBE as saying, “if you have no control over noise, that’s what creates anger and stress and causes people to tip over the edge”. Yet Val Wheedon has just resigned as co-ordinator of the UKNA because she is disillusioned with the attitude of government and its refusal to take any serious action to improve the noise climate.

So what can residents of Guildford and Surrey do to show that they value tranquillity and are concerned that it is under threat more than ever in Surrey? I suggest two things:

- **Firstly, they should insist that the Government complies fully with the European Noise Directive which requires it to have published standards for acceptable noise levels (July 2007) and to set out measures to deal with areas plagued by excess traffic noise.** This should have been done by July 2008 but the report now looks more likely to be published by the end of the year. Residents should demand that the earth bunds along the A3 are rebuilt to modern specifications (one has only to look at the size of the noise barriers being planned by the Hindhead tunnel entrance to see how inadequate are those currently in place to protect Guildford from A3 noise). Also low-noise tarmac should be put down on the A3 and on major A-roads throughout Surrey. To those who say there is no money to tackle traffic noise reduction, I would argue that a 50mph speed limit on the A3 from Burpham to Onslow would, at no cost, reduce noise and air pollution as well as limiting accidents.

- **Secondly, residents should take the time to respond to the consultation on the South East Plan which runs until 24th October and should firmly reject the proposal to make Guildford a growth hub with some 30% more dwellings.** Residents have not been properly

informed about these proposals; the Inspectors have not understood the topographical limits to expansion in Guildford (a gap town in the Surrey Hills with historic narrow streets) where current infrastructure already struggles to cope with

existing population densities and traffic volumes. The last straw is that, as the Inspectors make clear, the proposed increase in housing is not even primarily motivated to meet the needs of Guildford residents but is in fact to accommodate inward migration, mainly from London. Guildford Borough Council is organising an open meeting on 8th September to help residents understand the key aspects of the plan and to allow them to make their views known. Don’t miss it!

Reference sources used for this article are available from the author. Please contact John Bannister in the first instance.

Noise pollution –

the silent killer?



BLUETONGUE DISEASE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

by Gerard R Carroll, Apex Services

ON 28 JULY 2008, Professor Philip Scott Mellor gave the first Annual Public Lecture to the University of Surrey, new Faculty of Health and Medical Science. Professor Mellor is currently Head of the Department of Arbovirology and the OIE/EU African horse sickness (AHS) and bluetongue (BT) Reference Laboratory, based at the nearby Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright, Surrey. He advises the UK and overseas governments.

In line with mean ambient temperature increases that have already occurred during the early part of this century, certain recent and dramatic changes have resulted in the distribution and transmission of bluetongue virus (BTV). For example, since October 1998 bluetongue has caused the death of over 1.5 million sheep in Southern Europe and North Africa. Professor Mellor drew a strong apparent link between the observed spread and Climate Change effects seen in ambient temperature, humidity and rainfall. Wind is also relevant in movements of the insects involved.

Bluetongue disease is a non-contagious, biting insect-borne viral disease of ruminants, mainly sheep and less frequently of cattle, goats, buffalo, deer, dromedaries and antelopes. It is usually only seen in "improved" breeds. It is caused by the pathogenic Bluetongue Virus (BTV). There are no reports of human transmission. It is transmitted by biting female midges, *Culicoides imicola* and other culicoids. The disease was first described in the late 18th century and was believed for many decades to be confined to Africa.

In August 2006 new cases of bluetongue disease were found as far north as Holland, Belgium, Germany and Luxemburg. On the night of 4/5 August 2007 it is believed the first UK infection was introduced to the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex by windborne transmission of the infected midges from Northern Europe. The strain of the bluetongue

virus was the same as that which had existed in Northern Europe, namely BTV-8, since October 2006. Subsequently, after 4 October 2007, further cases were detected in Kent and East Sussex and, perhaps more importantly, in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Trans-placental infection of newborn animals was proven in one of the UK cases.

As of July 2008, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Defra, has established a large English and a smaller Welsh Protection Zone for Bluetongue Disease. In accordance with their current Control Strategy they have started to vaccinate all cattle and sheep within this enlarging Protection Zone to protect animal health for this coming Autumn Infection Season.

African horse sickness, AHS, a highly infectious and deadly disease, commonly affects horses, mules, donkeys and zebras and is transmitted by the same female adult midges (*Culicoides imicola*) as for BTV as well as by species of mosquitoes and ticks. It is endemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and is characterised by clinical signs and lesions associated with respiratory and circulation impairment. Up to 90% of infected horses die. Prophylactic vaccines are available in Africa but none of these are yet approved for use in the European Union. African horse sickness was diagnosed in Spain in 1987-90 and Portugal in 1989. It was eradicated using slaughter policies, movement restrictions, vector midge eradication and vaccination. Insecticides, repellents and screens to repel vector midges are also a crucial element in the prevention of any future Europe-wide infection.

The spread of disease is another aspect of Climate Change that we are going to have to live with.

Reference sources used for this article are available from the author. Please contact John Bannister in the first instance.

How green is Green?

Modern farming techniques, including chemical fertilisers, pesticides and fragile high-risk mono-culture, mean that each of us can be fed from a plot of land not much bigger than the penalty box at Arsenal. In 1950 we would have required two football pitches. Thus, ironically, the industrialisation of food became known as the Green Revolution.

(Source: New Statesman, 22 Jan 07)

London's river

In 2006, more than 100 marine mammals – bottlenose dolphins, common and grey seals and harbour porpoises – were spotted in the River Thames between Richmond and the estuary at Southend.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, Dec 07)

FACTS & FIGURES

Flight – 1

Per passenger, flying releases ten times more CO₂ emissions than train travel.

Flight – 2

In effect, each UK taxpayer subsidises the aviation industry by over £300 every year, as airlines pay no fuel tax or VAT.

Flight – 3

A return flight from London to New York releases 3.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere per passenger. That's the same as running your fridge for 35 years.

(Source: WWF Action, Feb-May 08)

The Thames Basin Heaths – a vital resource

Dr Simon Newell, Surrey Wildlife Trust

Destructive power

Experts estimate that there is now a gun for every three people on the planet.

(Source: *New Statesman*, 3 Sept 07)

FACTS & FIGURES

Meltdown – 1

During the last 50 years, winter temperatures in Alaska and Western Canada have risen by 3-4°C.

(Source: *The Independent*, 7 Jul 07)

Meltdown – 2

Arctic sea ice cover is approaching a new low. Speculation now is not whether it will disappear completely in the summer months by 2080, but whether this will happen by 2018.

(Source: *New Statesman*, 7 Jul 08)

Save the bugs!

Invertebrates form the essential base of all life on the planet, and more than a third of all the food humans eat depends upon insect pollination. As Sir David Attenborough says, "If we and the rest of the back-boned animals were to disappear overnight, the rest of the world would get on pretty well. But if the invertebrates were to disappear, the world's ecosystems would collapse."

(Source: *Buglife*)

Freshwater life

An astonishing 12% of the world's animal species live in fresh water.

(Source: *BBC Focus*, Oct 07)

SIMON STARTED by outlining the importance of heathland. Its improvement and restoration is a national Biodiversity Action Plan target and has many benefits for wildlife, including some species that are important at a European level. It also has a cultural value for local people and visitors in terms of recreation and landscape.

At about 3,000 hectares, the heathland of Surrey is not insignificant but not extensive either. A large proportion is owned by the MoD, which brings some conservation advantages as the inherent dangers of military ranges reduce disturbance by recreational visitors. However, this amount of heathland is only a fraction of its former extent, with about 85% having been lost in Surrey over about the last 200 years, mainly to built development. Motorways have also taken their toll. The remainder has gone to other rural uses, e.g. arable, although some to woodland. This could, however, be restored, and Surrey County Council has a heathland project which aims to clear woodland. This practice can prove controversial, as many people do not like to see trees lost.

The designation of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (TBH SPAs) arose from the EU Birds Directive 2005 (and an associated lawsuit). This has resulted in Britain having strict and effective laws to safeguard the SPAs and similar sites, which we have international responsibilities to protect. The SPAs were identified for providing habitats for three species, (woodlark, nightjar and above all the Dartford Warbler) and for containing substantial proportions of the species' national population.

The SPA covers 8,274 hectares spread over three counties and including 11 district authorities. Managing and safeguarding the heaths means working with all these organisations and with an assortment of landowners and managers, which can prove to be quite a challenge.

The government has a responsibility not to do anything that conflicts with the protection of the SPAs, but there is great potential for conflict with housing requirements. The Draft South East Regional Plan implied the construction of 21,000 houses to be built in 20 years, including housing within the vicinity of the SPAs. This would have a range of negative impacts on heathland. So to facilitate housing and still protect wildlife, Natural England drew up a draft management plan addressing the reduction of the impacts of housing. The impacts considered were:

- i) **dogs, the dogs themselves roaming free, and the people walking them**
- ii) **cats catching animals**
- iii) **"others"; disturbance by people, pollution from cars, hydrological impacts**

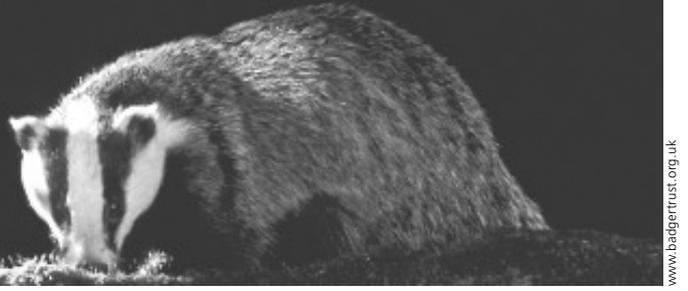
Natural England has set out three routes for the mitigation of these impacts:

- a) **the creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS)**
- b) **access management, reducing peoples' impact with guided paths and areas from which they are excluded, or discouraged**
- c) **habitat management**

It is anticipated that charges on new housing can provide £64 million to be spent on the TBH SPAs over the next 20 years.



DEFRA says **NO** to badger culling in England



www.badgertrust.org.uk

by Raymond Smith

IN JULY the government announced that its policy will be **not** to issue any licences to farmers to cull badgers for TB control. The threat of badger culling has not gone away, however, as they “remain open to the possibility of revisiting this policy under exceptional circumstances, or if new scientific evidence were to become available.”

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, explained that “I now intend to increase significantly our spending on vaccines by putting £20 million into this over the next three years to strengthen our chances of successfully developing them. I will also provide additional funding to set up and run a practical project to prepare for deploying vaccines in the future.” Taken as a sum per head of cattle (or even per joint of beef) this is not an enormous amount.

The policy has, however, been welcomed by the Badger Trust. Trevor Lawson, for the Badger Trust, said, “We are delighted that Hilary Benn has based his decision on sound science. The Government and the farming industry can now move forwards together in controlling the disease in a way which supports rather than harms the industry.”

NFU president, Peter Kendall, criticised Mr Benn saying: “This is a disgraceful abdication of responsibility by Secretary of State Hilary Benn.” He did, however, support and welcome the development of vaccines for both cattle and badgers, but commented that “to suggest this is the answer for an industry being decimated by TB in hotspot areas is no kind of answer at all. For many farmers, the ‘medium to long term’ answer of badger vaccines to which the Secretary of State refers will simply be too long in coming.”

Guildford Environmental Forum responded to the main consultation on Bovine TB and badger culling in March, 2006. Whilst we were just one amongst nearly 50,000 respondents, it is pleasing to note that the government policy is generally in accord with our view “that human society rather than wildlife should ‘pay the price’ of addressing this problem, with pre-movement testing and continuing research on the vaccination of cattle and badgers.”

The problem may be in gaining acceptance throughout the cattle farming community. Apart from obvious economic concerns, many farmers do have a real concern for the welfare of their herds, and care about them at an emotional level. Taken with a long-standing hostility to badgers, this can cloud their judgement.

The policy is, however, based on a sensible approach, with scientific foundations, that is in the interests of both

wildlife and farm animals. It would be sad if it came to be used as a political football by opposition parties. This would be unhelpful and ill-informed. This is not a matter of party. The important thing now is to gain widespread acceptance of the policy amongst farmers, and a clear commitment from other parties to support the vaccination policy would concentrate the minds of farmers on enabling the policy to work.

Further information:

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/statements/hb080707.htm

www.nfbg.org.uk/Attachments/Resources/222_S4.pdf

www.nfuonline.com/x29039.xml

Pop Fest in the Park

They're turning up the decibels
in the park,
Brain-washing pigeons,
Dejected blooms,
The shivering crowd.

Wind shreds the lyrics
To incoherent scraps
Tossed in the air.

But nothing kills that beat
Bold as Niagara,
Flooding all crevices
Demanding world submission.

Only the two great planes
Oldest incumbents of the park
Offer some sanctuary
From wind and rain,
Insanity of sound
Battering their quiet dignity.



Oh planes,
Lifting your strong
And lovely limbs
From clay to thunderous sky,
Teach us to stay the course
With some integrity
As years like driven clouds
Unheedingly race by.

Michael Tanner

Puttenham Camping Barn

The Forum played a leading role in getting Surrey's only camping barn off the ground in 2005. It is located on the North Downs Way in Puttenham village. Sustainability is an overriding theme with solar hot water, solar PV electricity, rainwater harvesting for toilet flushing and outside irrigation, lime mortar floors and attractive, educational displays. We are pleased to report that use of the camping barn by walkers and cyclists is rising steadily year on year, ensuring it will have a secure future.

It is run by volunteers who are always looking for help. To get in contact, whether you want to stay overnight to explore the Surrey Hills, or lend a hand, call 01306 877964 or go to www.puttenhamcampingbarn.co.uk

Recycling and waste collection

A study by Camden Council has found that more energy is used to separate recyclable items after collection than if residents sort them first (as Guildford residents do). Councils using the mixed-item approach argue that it encourages recycling and results in fewer trucks on the roads, but the facility handling the subsequent separation is very expensive and energy-intensive.

Meanwhile, for successful disposal of food waste we can look to Freiburg, Guildford's twin town, which has for the past decade operated its own municipal anaerobic digestion plant. It converts annually 36,000 tonnes of household organic waste into 4 million cubic metres of biogas and 15,000 tonnes of fertilizer. The biogas is cleaned and burned in a CHP engine generating 7 GWh per annum of electricity – a third of the city's renewable electricity capacity – and feeding heat into the city's district heating network.

Pewley Down gets better and better

The Pewley Down Volunteers, with the help of Guildford Borough Council Rangers, are steadily improving the chalk grassland habitat on this beautiful Down overlooking Guildford. There are regular work parties, events and counts of plants and insects. A Dark Green Fritillary was seen in July during a butterfly count led by Peter Curnock. This is only the second time Peter has seen this powerful butterfly on Pewley Down. Its larvae feed on violets. Plans are progressing well to introduce grazing with cattle on the Down. Cattle will improve the habitat and help control the *Brachypodium*, a coarse yellow grass which suppresses flowers. Contact Anne Wright at anne@downsreach.plus.com

The South East Plan – living up to the Vision

SEEDA has the wonderfully crafted Vision that the "South East will be a world-class region achieving sustainable prosperity". As members of SEFS (South East Forum for

Sustainability, comprising environmental organisations and NGOs) we recently participated in a review of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East – the South East Plan. Many points were raised relating to transport, infrastructure, noise pollution, energy use in existing homes, green belt boundary reviews, water efficiency, development hubs, etc. We also noted SEERA's comment that "the SE Plan as proposed would lead to significant environmental costs, approaching environmental limits in parts of the region regarding water quality, water resources, air quality, biodiversity and increased flooding".

The pursuit of **growth** at any price remains the underlying agenda of the South East Plan, with references to sustainability being little more than greenwash.

Lessons from past practice – 1

The 1970s oil crisis led the French to review their future energy supplies. Nuclear electricity generation was identified as a means to reduce oil import dependence. Three decades on, around 75% of electricity generated in

France is from nuclear and undoubtedly their energy security has improved because it is more diversified. However, it is still overwhelmingly reliant on imported fuel, sourcing most of its uranium from Canada, Niger and Russia, and uranium, like oil and gas, is a finite resource expected to be exhausted by 2030.

Furthermore, electricity only accounts for a small proportion of the primary energy used in France. Oil and gas are still needed for heating and transportation, and a surplus of electricity required EdF to persuade households and businesses to use electricity for heating. Radioactive leaks have occurred and rivers contaminated. Moreover, centralised power generation, from whatever source, is massively wasteful, with high energy loss in generation and distribution. John Hutton, Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, hasn't learned any lessons from the 50-year fantasy that is the nuclear pipe dream despite the cleanup bill in the UK (approaching £100bn) representing more than 40% of his budget. Labour has reneged on the statement made by Patricia Hewitt in 2003 that to "...embark on a new generation of nuclear power stations ... would have guaranteed that we would not make the necessary investments in both energy efficiency and renewables. That is why we are not going to build a new generation of nuclear power stations."

Lessons from past practice – 2

When Cyclone Nargis hit Burma last May, a 12ft wave stormed ashore along with 120mph winds. Many thousands died in the flooding which, it emerges, would have been largely prevented had the former mangrove forests not been cut down. These mangroves would have absorbed much of the power of the sea but had been destroyed, initially to provide land for growing rice and more recently for desperately needed fuel.

GOOD NEWS

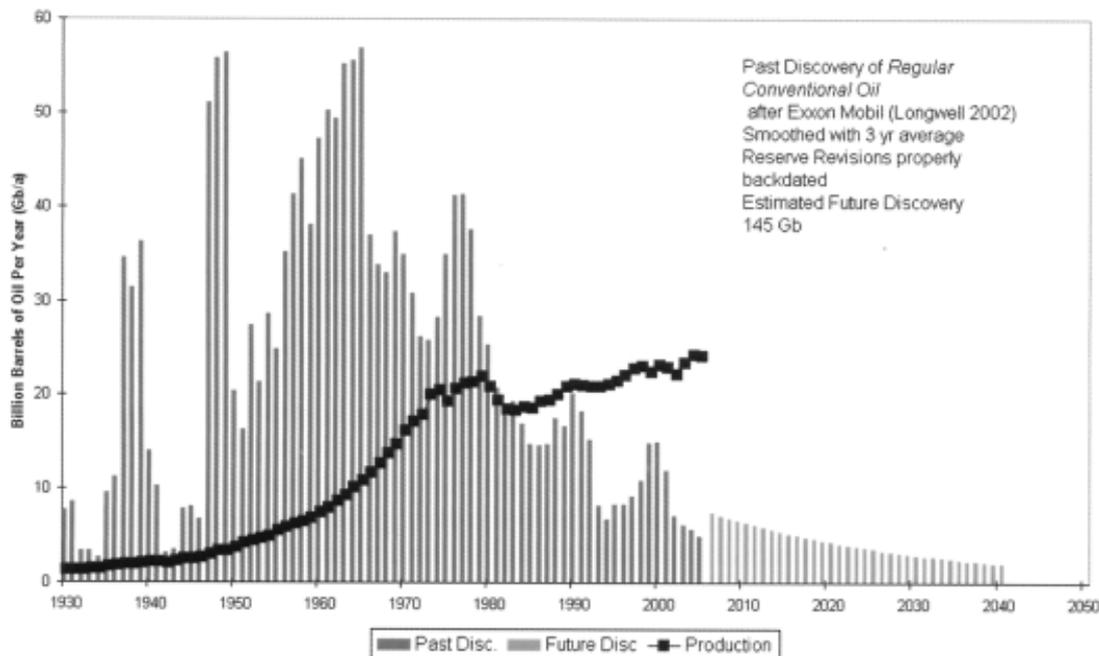



BAD NEWS

compiled by John Bannister

What is Peak Oil and is it imminent?

by John Bannister



Past discovery and production of regular conventional oil worldwide

PRESIDENT BUSH famously admitted that the US is addicted to oil. The truth is that the world is totally dependent on hydrocarbons from fossil fuels for a huge range of things – plastics, paints, glue, CDs, carpets, medicines, our food, lipstick – the list is endless. So having become utterly dependent on fossil fuels what if it became scarce? The consequences would be unthinkable, nothing short of total economic collapse and mass unemployment.

Since January 1970 the price of oil has more than doubled from about \$55 a barrel to about \$125 a barrel. Oil is particularly vital for our transport fuels, so pump prices have soared. But so have gas prices and electricity prices. This is because they are all different forms of energy that are traded internationally and they are inextricably linked. For example, gas (at the margin) is converted to a liquid transport fuel. A small amount of electricity is generated using oil as fuel. A peak in global gas production will follow closely the oil peak.

These energy price rises are occurring now because we have reached a point where global supplies of oil are finding it increasingly hard to satisfy demand. America, with about 5% of the world's population, uses about 25% of the world's oil supply, and now demand from China and India is rising fast. We are seeing a supply demand crunch. We are on a knife edge and it only takes a minor technical hitch or some sort of unrest somewhere in the world and prices spike.

Oil is not running out as such and will be around for some time to come, but supply is

near a maximum and can no longer comfortably match demand. We are at a point where about 50% of the world's oil has been produced. The global supply curve is at the top of a hill and in a few years (the prediction is 5-10) production will start to decline. Many major oil-producing zones are already in decline – the North Sea and the North Slope of America are just two. Production by the big five oil companies appears to have peaked. Over 60 oil-producing countries are now post "peak" and in decline. The graph shows that the world is living off oil discoveries made between the 1930s and 1970s and that future oil discoveries will be much smaller. They will also be much more costly to get to market in terms of financial, environmental and political uncertainty.

As energy companies and countries get desperate, they rush to produce more oil from anywhere – from the Arctic, from tar and oil sands, from coal, from biomass from algae. What happens to the environment and global warming with this mindset? Governments like ours seek diversionary explanations and others to blame. But they won't mention "Peak Oil" because the public could never cope with the facts, so we remain unprepared. Sweden is an example of a country that has seen the future and is openly communicating with its citizens to create long-term plans to go beyond petroleum. The Forum and the embryonic initiative Transition Town Guildford are aiming to fill the vacuum here and create a better society in the process.

Message ignored

Today, pesticides still find their way into more than 40% of our fruit and vegetables. This is a century after the birth of Rachel Carson, whose book *Silent Spring* alerted the world to the dangers of chemicals. Our policy remains preoccupied with "ensuring the safe use of pesticides" rather than weaning us off them.

(Source: *Living Earth*, Summer 07)

More eco-power

Two new wind farms have won the go-ahead. They will be at Keadby near Scunthorpe, and Tween Bridge in Yorkshire, and will generate enough power to supply energy for 70,000 homes.

(Source: *Earthmatters*, Summer 08)

FACTS & FIGURES

Less fish for gannets

Gannets at Bass Rock are foraging further afield due to diminishing fish stocks in the area, according to a researcher at Leeds University. Some are doing a round trip of more than 1,000km to the Norwegian coast and back.

(Source: *BBC Wildlife*, Summer 07)

Space for rubbish

There are around 15,000 bits of junk floating in orbit round the Earth.

(Source: *Earthmatters*, Summer 08)

Responses from Guildford Environmental Forum to the Surrey Minerals Plan Consultation, June 2008

THIS SPRING Surrey County Council consulted on a number of changes to the Surrey Minerals Plan. The Forum commented on these and our responses are outlined in this article.

The Plan proposed to exclude Knight and Bessborough Reservoirs from the list of preferred areas identified for future primary aggregates in response to the outcome of the Habitats Regulations Assessment. We argued that it would also be appropriate to remove the Eashing site from the list of sites at this stage in view of its harmful effect on the adjoining SSSI, outlined in our previous response to the Minerals Plan.

The Plan proposed to keep the list of preferred areas under review in the light of changing regional requirements for aggregates, but to seek to maintain a 7-year land bank target. We felt that whilst the review procedure is a good approach, the desire to maintain a 7-year land bank should not be given too much weight as it could lead to hurried and ill-advised approvals.

In response to the policies for safeguarding sites for silica sand, we commented that with Britain importing large amounts of glass in use as containers, believed to be at a rate far in excess of our glass production, the aim should be to limit the extraction of silica sand to that which is needed to mix with the maximum viable proportion of cullet, in order to encourage the use of this recycle. We noted that significant quantities of recycled glass are going for lower grade uses such as aggregate. It is not a sustainable approach to extract new silica

while there is this excess of recycled glass available that could be diverted into glass manufacture. We also emphasised the importance of maintaining the footpath network as much as possible in the area of Pendell Farm (in the east of the county, a preferred area for silica sand working to 2020).

As to the policies on exploration, appraisal, and production of oil and gas, and the underground storage of gas in Surrey, we were not inherently opposed to the extraction of gas from Albury and the subsequent use of this location for gas storage, but noted that in the long term society should be aiming at reducing its energy demands and increasing the use of renewable sources. In the shorter term the policy is generally acceptable provided that the provisions for environmental protection and mitigation of harm are rigorously (rather than nominally) implemented and take full account of the particular needs of local circumstances.

We also commented on the Plan's policy for building stone in Surrey. We argued that in the event that Eashing is developed for sand extraction, the building stone co-extracted should be retained entirely for use in building repair and conservation. Given the quantities of stone involved, this would entail stockpiling for many years, and should obviate any need for sandstone extraction elsewhere in the county within or beyond the Surrey Hills AONB.

We agreed that the existing rail depots for importing minerals into Surrey at Salfords and Woking should be retained.

As to the policy on recycled and secondary aggregates, we said that obviously we supported the recycling of aggregates and the efficient use of secondary aggregates. We suggested that the targets should be considered to be capable of being reviewed as circumstances might allow for an increase in the future.

Raymond Smith

Guildford Environmental Forum

is starting a new working group

GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

The aim is to encourage people to produce local organic food, thereby reducing food miles and the associated pollution. We hope to have plenty of exchange – not just of ideas, but also of plants, seeds and surplus crops.

Please contact Stephen Rainbird who will chair the group (his details are overleaf).

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Guildford Environmental Forum aims to improve the environment in and around Guildford for wildlife and for people and to build a sustainable future. Forum membership costs only £5 per year or £7 for a couple, and new members are warmly welcomed. Please contact John Bannister on 01483 570468 or e-mail johnw.bannister@virgin.net



CALENDAR



All the Forum's Group meetings are open to the public

Wednesday 17 September

GEF Biodiversity Group. Cynthia Bendickson, Biodiversity Officer, Spelthorne Borough Council:
"Re-greening a Suburb"
 1900. Committee Room 1, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1845)

Monday 6 October

GEF Sustainable Energy Group. Jenny Barnes, Project Manager, recently retired from a major international energy company:
"Energy: The Big Picture and Industrial Strength Solutions"
 1900. Council Chamber, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1830.)

Thursday 23 October

GEF Sustainable Construction Group. Trudy Thompson, CEO Naturally Amazing, Andrew Day, Partner Gerry Lytle Architects, Michael Peters RESOLVE UniS, who represented Guildford at the July 2008 Freiburg Partners Project Networking event:
"Feedback from Freiburg 2008 Partners Event – Outcomes and Future Prospects"
 1900. Council Chamber, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1830.)

Tuesday 11 November

Guildford Geographic Association. Dr. D.S.Carr, Queen Mary College London:
"Protecting our Existence – Climate Change and the Future of the Arctic"
 1830. The Royal Grammar School auditorium.

Thursday 13 November

GEF Biodiversity Group. John Hamer, Blackhorse Apiaries Beekeeping Centre, Woking. John lectures, and runs practical beekeeping courses at the centre and overseas.
"The lifecycle of bees, their conservation value, commercial beekeeping and much more"
 1900. Committee Room 1, Millmead Offices. (Liquid refreshments from 1845)

Friday 14 November

The Guildford Freiburg Association. Peter Ritzer, on behalf of the German Embassy:
"Is Germany on the Road to an Eco-friendly Future?" 1930. The Guildhall.

Tuesday 2 December

The Guildford Geographic Association. Professor Jim Rose, Royal Holloway College:
"Climate Change – Comparing the Past with the Present"
 1830. The Royal Grammar School auditorium.

GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor by Monday 27 October 2008.

The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.