

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth

Cyfeillion y Ddaear Sir Benfro

Newsletter July 2012



Tar Sands Oil

Three of us recently met representatives of the Valero oil company at their Pembroke refinery to discuss the company's involvement in the tar sands industry in North America and the possibility of diesel, refined from tar sands, being imported through the Pembroke refinery. The company has stated that it will not import tar sands, which is similar to orimulsion, for refining at Pembroke but we are less satisfied with their other responses.

Valero has a major interest in exploiting Canadian tar



sands and is also a major backer of the Keystone XL pipeline that has been proposed to carry tar sands from Canada to the US Gulf Coast refineries. Our campaign, working closely with the UK Tar Sands Network, to prevent the importation of diesel refined from tar sands in the

USA continues. We shall be organising a public meeting in September to which Valero will be invited.

Celebrate Merthyr's Campaign Victory

Last year, we supported the successful campaign by Merthyr FoE to defeat plans for a large waste incinerator in the town. This campaign has been captured wonderfully on film and can be viewed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afApMXeup1E&feature=youtu.be>

And Celebrate...

Locally, Nationally, Globally – The First 40 years of Friends of the Earth

<http://youtu.be/rvCzuZ9YoM>

.... even though it should have said more about the many campaign victories in Wales.

25th Anniversary Celebration

This will take place at **the Fourcroft Hotel, Tenby on Sunday 14th October**. We plan to begin at 12.30 with a buffet lunch followed by a look-back over our 25 successful years of campaigning, lobbying, entertaining and having fun. There will then be a few short presentations, including one from Charles Secrett, who was director of F0E for many years. This will be followed by afternoon teas and music provided by musicians who support our work. There might also be a sponsored swim or some other events. More details to follow in next newsletter.



Responding to the Sea Empress oil spill at Milford Haven in 1996 was one of our most important successes. Local group members rescued oiled birds from beaches, we did loads of media interviews, produced the first report on the spill's environmental impact, and worked with our legal team in London to gather sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency and for a change in UK salvage laws.



Bee Campaign Success

Friends of the Earth Cymru's lobbying of the Welsh Government to do more to protect bees has borne fruit.

Environment Minister John Griffiths recently announced at the Royal Welsh Show a Pollinator Action Plan which will be developed in partnership with key agencies.

Span Arts Big Plant Sale

Thank you to all our supporters who donated plants for our stall . We raised £162.

Award for Pembs FOE Campaigner

Pembrokeshire FOE's campaigner and founding member, Gordon James, was recently presented with the Inspire Wales Environmentalist of the Year award by the Institute of Welsh affairs.



Gordon being presented with his award by Mark Hopwood the Chief Executive Officer of First Great Western.



Pembroke power station with Valero oil refinery in background.

Pembroke Power Station

The EC is still pursuing our complaint, indicating that they are taking our arguments seriously. The power station is due to be officially opened later this year, and, if this goes ahead, we shall have to make sure that the Environment Agency and the governments in London and Cardiff are suitably embarrassed for allowing such a wasteful and damaging project to go ahead.

Supporters of Pembrokeshire FoE enjoying a guided tour of Ramsay Island in May, led by wildlife expert Mick Brown. We learned a great deal about the history and geology of the island as well as its wildlife. This is one of a number walks which we organise each year.

New Power Station Proposed

Details of a proposal for a new LNG-fired power station adjacent to the South Hook LNG terminal near Herbrandston can be found here:

www.planningportal.gov.uk/infrastructure - then search for South Hook. Although we support Combined Heat & Power (CHP) stations, we are not yet sure how much waste heat this will use.

We also have to take on board local concerns that have been expressed to us about noise, possible plume etc. There is, apparently, already a significant noise problem with the existing LNG terminal and tankers. This is something we have not heard much about in the media nor from politicians. It seems that they are too busy telling us about possible noise problems at wind farms.

Wind turbines Approved

Locally, we were pleased to learn that Pembrokeshire County Council has approved a proposal for two wind turbines at Princess Gate near Narberth. And we were disappointed to learn that the proposal to erect two wind turbines on farms near Boncath has been turned down by a



planning inspector because they would be seen from a nearby public footpath. At times, one has to wonder whether humanity deserves to survive climate change!

Solar Farms

More plans are appearing for large solar projects to generate electricity. We welcome this low carbon form of energy, but every effort should be made to mitigate any harmful impacts to neighbouring residents.



More Sunshine Please

After weeks of record-breaking rainfall in the UK, scorching droughts in the USA and other weather extremes globally, evidence is accumulating that human-caused climate change is influencing our weather.

Research, led by Myles Allen of Oxford University, shows that climate change made the severe floods that affected England and Wales in the autumn of 2000 twice as likely to happen.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/feb/16/climate-change-risk-uk-floods>

The Met Office recently published ground-breaking research detailing how climate change has significantly increased the odds of some recent extreme weather events. It gives as an example the abnormally warm temperature in the UK last November which was 60 times more likely to happen because of climate change.

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2012/bams-state-of-the-climate>

And, on July 9th, the New Scientist reported that in summers with less sea ice in the Arctic, as is happening this year, a weaker jet stream takes a more meandering path. This could stay in one place for weeks shepherding one low-pressure system after another towards the UK.



Meanwhile, here in Wales.....

Greenhouse gas emissions increased by 8% between 2009 and 2010 to reach a total of 46,639,000 tonnes. In England, they increased by just 2%. The official reasons given for the increase are a very cold spell in the winter and economic recovery after the recession. This is unacceptable. Wales is meant to be achieving a cut in emissions of 3% each year.

Take Action - call on the Energy Secretary to switch the UK energy supply to renewable sources, and make a personal commitment by switching to a green energy supplier:

http://www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/clean_british_energy_switch_full_35921.html

And let your political representatives know that you want far more action on climate change.

The Atlantic Array Windfarm



Following a public consultation exercise last year, the company has decided to reduce the number of wind turbines from 417 to around 278. This will also reduce the output of the wind farm from 1500 MW to between 1000MW and 1390MW

depending on the size of turbines used.

A new round of consultation is taking place and closes at 5pm on 31st August 2012. Details can be found here: www.npower-renewables.com/atlanticarray.

Rio +20

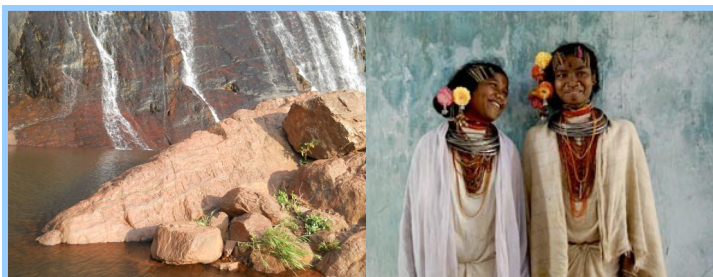
20 years after the first successful Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, its follow-up was a disappointing damp squib. The powerful nations of the world, unduly influenced by large corporations, have responded to the environmental crisis we face by allowing short-term economic interests to dominate.

If we are not to bequeath to our children a "perfect storm" we are going to have to take far more responsibility as individuals to, in Gandhi's words, "be the change we want to see in the world", to create greater awareness, to lobby and to campaign. We are going far too gently into the night. We should be raging.

The Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Bill

The Bill has been criticised for simply wanting to 'encourage sustainable development behaviours' and for focusing on 'thinking and behaviour' rather than 'actions and outcomes'. It will no doubt help to shuffle Wales forward in the right direction but the steps taken are likely to be short, timid and inadequate.

We are not making a full consultation response but are backing the excellent one submitted by The Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire. Well done to Charlie Mason for all the effort he has put in to this.



Talk and discussion, with photos and film by Felix Padel

Friday 7th September,
7.30 at The Queen's Hall Gallery

"Tribal people in Central India are getting dispossessed of their land fast, and sucked into a civil war that is probably the worst war there's ever been in India, even though it's scarcely mentioned in the News." Felix Padel

Felix is an activist-anthropologist who has worked in India's tribal areas for over 30 years.

His book 'Out of this earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel' has woken many people in India to the dangers of rampant mining/metal production,. Another book is forthcoming soon – 'Ecology, Economy: Quest for a socially informed connection'.

FOE Conference 2012

Imperial College, London

14th– 16th September

Speakers:-

Caroline Lucas, Britain's first Green MP

Satish Kumar, Resurgence Editor

Polly Higgins, Environmental, campaigning lawyer

Rob Newman, environmentally conscious Comedian

Lidy Nacpil, Coordinator Jubilee South

Liz Jensen, author of the "Rapture"

Neil Lawson Chair Compass

Polyp, New Internationalist cartoonist

Creative workshops:-

Stunt and prop design, social media campaigning, film making, photography, story telling etc.

Weekend ticket including food:- £30

Day ticket, Saturday only:-£10

Visit :- www.foe.co.uk/conference



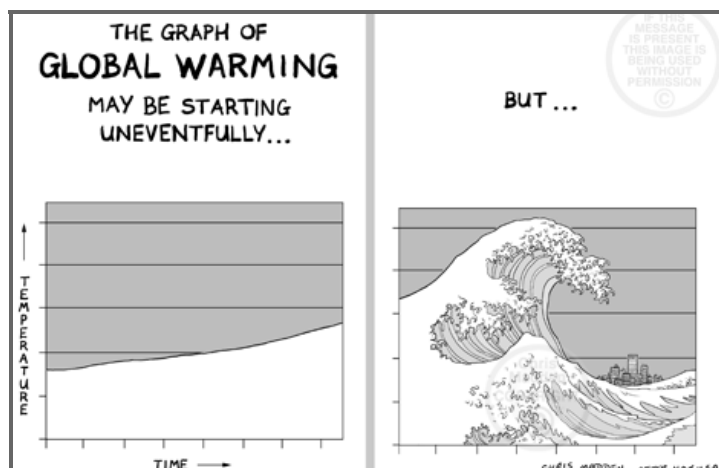
Polly Higgins who is campaigning to make Ecocide an international crime, gave a talk at the Quaker Meeting House in Cardiff in June. (The event was organised by Diana Marquand of Carmarthen FoE)



Help needed for stalls

Tuesday August 28th at Crymych Food Festival

and Saturday and Sunday 22nd and 23rd at the Narberth Food Festival.



The Great Wave by Hokusai

used as a graph of the effects of climate change.

Cartoon by Chris Madden

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