



Green Centre News

Latest News

- Volunteers needed to help with the Green Centre 'Big Tidy Up'.

If you feel you can spare a bit of time to help paint, clean, polish, and generally spruce the place up, please get in touch with the usual suspects at the Green Centre. Either give us a call or send an email. Contact details are on the back page.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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IOM FOE at London Conference *By local coordinator Phil Corlett*

Mid September the yearly FoE Conference was held at the impressively old and beautiful, Imperial College, which sits in the Kensington area of London and right by the Royal Albert Hall... not that Cat Turner (her 1st time going) and I got any free time to do sight seeing as there was a very full itinerary, starting Friday 14th at midday right through to 4pm on Sunday 16th.

There was a choice of 60 sessions to go to which we tried to split up so that we could attend as many as possible. All I found were interesting, but I only have the room here to highlight the most memorable ones.

There were also many guest speakers who greatly raised the interest levels including the Green party MP Caroline Lucas who came across as an intelligent and quick thinking woman; Clive Anderson treated us to his great wit at the Earth Mover Awards and even Vivienne Westwood was on stage on Saturday. She recounted her dress design feat which was unveiled at the Olympics where she had put the words Climate Chaos on a large trail on her dress, unbeknown to the presenters!

Last but not least on the Sunday was the great Satish Kumar who is editor of Resurgence magazine, a renowned environmental publication. His son, Mukti set off in 2007 in a 15' zero emission micro-yacht he'd made himself, first to the IoM from Wales (in a force 7!) and then round the British Isles, all to highlight the necessity of living a low carbon lifestyle.



Oh there's a surprise - Phil in a photo!

I've been to quite a few Conferences now but this is the first in London. FoE are always looking for new and innovative ideas, to make it more interesting and better attended, and this year I think they found the right one by throwing it open to day attendees on the Saturday. This increased the attendance to 600 with many students of all ages and ethnicity, filling the sessions to capacity.

Out of the many sessions I attended two stand out most: 'Breaching Planetary Boundaries' including Mike Childs, who visited the IoM last year, and Oxfam's Kate Raworth. They spoke about using the Earth's resources sustainably and tackled the thorny issue of population growth and ever growing (but not

sustainably) global economies. It's well worth viewing this short 5min clip:-

<http://oxfamblogs.org/doughnut/>

The second outstanding session and most shocking (even to hardened environmentalists) was by Professor Kevin Anderson of the Tyndall Research Centre. I can't emphasize enough how eye opening his talk was. He spoke of the certainty of 2 degree C (Mean) global warming by 2050 (if not sooner) **UNLESS** drastic steps are taken in the next 10-15yrs to radically cut CO₂; and by radical I mean his graphs showed cliff like drops. His calculations show CO₂ has to be cut by 40% in 2015 then 70% by 2020 and lastly 90%+ by 2030 – this is 20yrs ahead of current accepted reports!

We either do this or 4 degrees C global temperature rise by 2050 will be unavoidable.

He has been invited to come to the Island and speak about his views so hopefully you'll get the chance to listen to him yourself and make your own mind up, but for now if you'd like to hear/view more about the Professor then visit the website below (I can assure you he's neither eccentric or an extremist):- <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Stories/Podcasts/Professor-Kevin-Anderson/>

I think I can speak for Cat as well in saying attending the Conference was well worthwhile plus another bonus is we've provisionally booked Craig Bennett (FoE Director of Policy & Campaigns) + Tania Sayle (FoE Board Member and **Manx born**) to come over early next year (see pic).

View of another Island *By Muriel Garland*

I have just had my first visit to Jersey and thought I would share some of my thoughts. What did I notice on that island? Well I certainly couldn't miss their incinerator because it is very prominent on the headland right in the middle of St Helier and visible from the beach. Apparently this vast building encased in glass has won a design award being hailed as a 'structural success visually reducing the impact of the plant.' I couldn't see it myself. To me it was yet another blot on the landscape. And I found it amazing that they had built it so close to where people live in smart apartments.



Jersey's expensive solution to their waste problems

On a more positive note I did see lots of bins for collecting recyclates in the streets and very few 'litter bins' for mixed waste.

The people of Jersey have paid £110 million for this plant to burn waste on the island. That includes £3 million extra because they failed to fix the exchange rate for the island's biggest ever capital project. Following questions in their parliament the local Jersey Evening Post reported on October 12th that there have been more than 2,500 defects on the snagging list since the plant was opened 2 years ago. 154 problems still have to be sorted out. And they still haven't decided what to do with the ash.

On a more positive note I did see lots of bins for collecting recyclates in the streets and very few 'litter bins' for mixed waste. Apparently recycling rates in Jersey have risen since the incinerator was built. At the end of September they had an electrical waste amnesty so people could dispose of toasters, hairdryers and microwaves etc free. Jersey Evening Post runs an Ecycle page that works like Freecycle[®] where people can offer items they no longer need and ask for things they want.

Considering that Jersey has the highest level of car ownership in the world maybe the best thing I saw there was the new bus station in St Helier. Warm and sheltered with seating and a café it was full of travellers. The staff were very helpful although the bus system is very easy to understand. There are only two ticket prices £1.20 locally and £1.70 to go anywhere on the island. When the bus is due to leave a sliding door opens and passengers step on board. It made travelling by bus a pleasure.

Comparing that with the experience of catching a bus in Douglas I must say that Jersey is well ahead of us. And I'd like a modern bus station like the one in Jersey in Lord Street, please.

Solar Panels *by George Fincher MEAC*



At last, they're permitted development

I hope you are sitting down to read this because there is a shock in store for you. After many years of promises the installation of solar panels (either Photovoltaic to generate electricity or hot water panels to supplement the hot water system) are now 'permitted development'.

That's right you no longer need to obtain planning permission to install solar panels either on a house roof or on a ground mounted arrangement. As with all permitted development there are restrictions but the restrictions are not a problem in nearly all cases. The permitted development status became the standard from the 1st July 2012.

Of course it is not all good news. The MEA has tossed a spanner into the works for photovoltaic (PV) installations as they now (as they have always done) check that the grid can safely handle the proposed PV installation. The difference is they now charge a £240 fee to perform this check.

Well it all helps to ensure fewer people will install those nasty systems that stop them buying lecky from the MEA doesn't it!

Grow your own money *by Sarah Calverley*

A local currency is a currency not backed by a government.

It can be a regional currency, or currency run by a group with a shared interest.

I recall a currency called GEMS where each member of GEMS was issued with a cheque book and GEMS were earned by providing goods or services. For example, a member with chickens could sell two dozen free range eggs for 2 GEMS, another member could earn gems by helping someone to carry some furniture upstairs. As I understand it, the agreement was registered with a voluntary worker who administered the scheme and who kept track of the number of GEMS each member had. It must have posed quite a heavy administrative burden on the voluntary worker keeping track of these GEMS.

In this computerised day and age I wondered if it would be possible to operate a green trading scheme whereby people could offer their services for a set number of tokens maybe via a website, and a track could be kept electronically of how many tokens they had. These could then be spent on goods (such as home-grown veg) or services (eg window cleaning) and exchanged via a website.

I was thinking an area such as the Isle of Man would provide just the right type of community for such a scheme.

So I looked on the internet and found quite a few towns do have their own local currencies and the best website I found was that for the town of Lewes, the Lewes Pound. Take a look at this website:

<http://thelwespound.org>

I couldn't see any similar scheme in the IOM. Don't you think it would be nice to have a green scheme, where only ethically produced, cruelty free, environmental friendly goods/services were exchanged?

Footnote: Following on from Sarah's article in the last edition about ethical meat she asks you, if you are concerned about the live exportation of livestock, to visit the following website which has a petition calling for the ban on the practise: <http://www.ciwf.org.uk/EndLiveExportsPetition>

Smart Electric Bike *by Andrew Jessopp*

I seem to have been very busy testing a variety of electric vehicles for this edition of the newsletter but someone has to do the boring jobs!

I was fortunate enough the other day to be allowed a test ride on one of the Whitestone Garage's, in Ballasalla, neat looking £2500 electric bicycles. Yes you read it correctly, a bicycle that costs more than many motorised scooters; and you still have to pedal it!

Smart claim the bike is "set to take the city by storm" and "combines clever functions with advanced technology and outstanding design". Without doubt it features some clever functions and it is the first electric bicycle I have ridden that can recharge the battery whilst on the move. It regenerates power when you apply the back brake or you can set the controls so it generates rather than uses power as you pedal (If I had a quid for everyone that has previously asked me if my own electric bikes can do that (which they can't) I would probably have enough to buy the saddle on the Smart by now.)

This is by far and away the best feature of the bike, although I also like the belt drive (no more oily stains to wipe off your trousers or fingers when the chain hops off) and the very effective disc brakes. The riding position and handle bar grips are also pretty comfortable.

However, the rest of the bike doesn't live up to the hype (or price). The motor, a BionX hub motor, is only rated at 200W which seems underpowered, and it only has a three speed SRAM hub gear system fitted. The spacing of the gears is too far apart so in normal riding mode you are either working hard or spinning away like mad.

The electric motor has four power settings, the lowest hardly noticeable and the highest nothing to rave about. This is a pedelec machine, not a twist and go, so it only gives you power assist when you pedal. It is supposed to measure the effort on the pedals and increase the assistance the harder you are pedalling.

On my test ride, along the back road from Ballasalla to the Blackboards and back and down to Cross Fourways, I tried a variety of power and regeneration settings and in all three gears.

The thing I found most annoying was the way the power kept coming in and backing off even though I was applying a fairly even pressure to the pedals. As a relatively fit 50+ year old I found it hard work to keep a constant speed going, so for someone less fit and expecting the effortless ride proclaimed by Smart's literature they are going to be disappointed.

Obviously this bike is aimed at people with loads of disposable cash and who already have a flash Mercedes in the garage; but for ordinary mortals £600, or a quarter of the price of the Smart, will buy you a more than decent alternative machine.

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Hybrid car seeking a new home

The editor's 1994 Toyota Prius is up for sale (for a very reasonable £3995 ono) as he has bought a vehicle that can pull a trailer.

It's in very good condition for its age, comes with all the usual refinements and a full service history. It averages between 45 - 60mpg, which is pretty good for the size of car.

If it is of interest to you please get in touch with Andrew Jessopp on 622937 for more details.

Campaigning for the Island's environment

Toyota Yaris Hybrid test drive *by Andrew Jessopp*

I am quite a fan of 'range extender' hybrid cars: in many ways they present the best of both worlds - electric drive, particularly useful in slow moving traffic and towns, and a combination of electric motors and petrol engine for longer or faster journeys.

I have also been a fan of the Toyota Yaris so I was really pleased when Toyota announced they were building a hybrid version of the car; so I was genuinely looking forward to my test drive in Caledonian Toyota's demonstrator.

The model they have available for test drive is the top of the range T Spirit, with added gizmos like smart entry and start, a rear view parking camera (which went all bleary as soon as it started to rain) and cruise control.

Toyota has improved the battery pack on the Yaris with a lighter more compact version that still produces the same amount of battery power etc as the old Prius. It is claimed by Toyota this makes for a much more nimble and responsive drive but did it live up to my expectations?



First impressions were good, the dashboard layout is functional enough, with a power meter rather than a rev counter set alongside the speedometer; although the slightly distracting energy monitor is still located towards the centre of the dash. Unlike the Prius the Yaris has a more traditional floor mounted gear stick and hand-break and this took a little bit of getting used to. However, for drivers more accustomed to this set-up it won't be an issue. The seats are comfortable, and the ride and handling are fine.

But, and it is a big but, the most important aspect of the car was a disappointment. Maybe it's because the vehicle is still pretty new and everything is still a bit 'tight', but it appeared to lack the claimed enhanced performance. In fact my wife's first reaction when she took a turn at the wheel, and she is anything but a lady racer, was "it's slow".

Yes, it's fine while just trundling about in town but it seemed to lack any go up a slope or when a burst of speed was needed to overtake an even more laggardly vehicle. Even more annoying though was the failure to get the car to stay in EV mode even at slow speeds - so what is the point of it?

To sum up, the Honda Jazz Hybrid I tested a few editions back was a much more fun car to drive; and I don't recall having any of the issues mentioned here. The Yaris certainly didn't inspire me to trade in my old Prius for one as I just can't see what extra benefit I would be getting for the additional £13,000.

My suggestion to anyone thinking of spending this sort of money on a new 'green' car would be, if it is mainly for use on the Island, to find a few extra quid and buy a full electric vehicle like the Vauxhall Ampera (especially if you can find a way of taking advantage of the UK subsidy and the IOM Gov's free recharging points) or to buy a used Prius, Jazz or even a standard Yaris and save yourself a stack of cash.

Polytunnel produces winners *by Muriel Garland ZWM*

A couple of years ago Zero Waste Mann donated a polytunnel to IOM Prison at Jurby to enable the prisoners to grow their own crops and perhaps develop an interest that they can continue when they are released.

I have visited twice since then and was very pleased to find that the project was well supported by the governor and prison staff.



Some of the produce from the successful Jurby prison polytunnel

So I was delighted to read in the Examiner October 18th that the prison had won a prize for their pumpkin in the Andreas Produce Show.

When the prison was in Victoria Road they always had a great reputation for growing high quality, prize-winning produce. So I am very pleased that they are able to carry on that tradition even in wind-swept Jurby.