

In this issue:

Blairite spin spat	page 4
Saddleworth meeting	page 8
Boo! to a goose	page 11
Argylls meet the Karuk	page 12
Edinbane update	page 14

MSPs call for energy rethink

VoS News analyses the Renewable Energy Report from the Scottish Parliament's Enterprise and Culture Committee

Setback for wind frenzy

The Renewable Energy Inquiry's recent report is the first 'official' political criticism of the Scottish Executive's disastrous renewables policy.

Many of its recommendations are to be welcomed, especially the acknowledgement that the Renewables Obligation scheme is fuelling a short-term dash for onshore wind at the expense of a secure mix of viable renewable technologies.

The committee saw its remit as examining the potential economic benefits of renewables and whether Executive policy helps or hinders their development.

The report is the more convincing for being unanimous despite the diverse views of committee members. It examined evidence from a wide range of sources.

Some of its conclusions are bold and acknowledge the concerns of informed critics of the Dough-for-Blow scam. These include (numbers refer to the report paragraphs):

- The Executive should ... create a comprehensive Scottish energy policy, which would take account of the UK context and the areas in which it operates in co-operation with Westminster. (40)
- The policy should ... shift the focus from large onshore wind farms to other forms of renewable power. (53)
- In circumstances where the private sector is risk averse, the Scottish Executive should take the lead. (49)
- The Renewables Obligation ... scheme has been successful only in promoting onshore wind power. This may be welcome in terms of meeting targets but it ... has not significantly stimulated other technologies ... It may even have hindered [their] commercialisation. (15)
- Energy conservation must be a key part of a Scottish energy policy and the policy should include targets for conservation. (63)
- Scotland cannot take for granted that the development of a thriving marine sector is guaranteed ... (193)
- The committee concluded that, apart from temporary construction work, onshore wind is unlikely to bring much employment to Scotland. (18)
(But it also claims, with no supporting data, that ten full-time jobs are sustained for each megawatt of installed capacity. (295)

At another level, the report has serious weaknesses.

Notably, it failed to examine the risks to tourism from the

Electricity: a sport or Lifelong Learning?

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES scrutinise the work of Executive departments and ministers.

The Enterprise and Culture Committee (constituted *pro rata* to the parliament) has nine backbench MSPs: four Labour, two SNP and one each from Lib-Dem, Conservative and Green.

Its brief restricts it to the responsibilities of the Departments of Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Overall UK energy policy, being reserved, is beyond Holyrood scrutiny: renewables, being delegated, are not.

VOVS OF SCOTLAND has called for this absurd anomaly to be resolved.

But renewables do not fit neatly into any recognised Scottish Executive portfolio. Given the preponderance of onshore wind, they should perhaps come under Environment and Rural Affairs.

And, for a few months, they did – while Ross Finnie, who knows less than most about electricity, dreamt up the ludicrous 40 per cent by 2020 target – a wheeze that the more polite commentators call 'aspirational'.

However, they are now safely back in the Enterprise portfolio under Lewis Macdonald and are seen mainly as a potentially lucrative commodity.

This left the committee little scope for examining the underlying commercial or technical viability of wind power and precluded it from taking anything like a rounded approach to its inquiry.

only significant renewables component (wind power). The report claimed that data on the effect of turbines on tourism were 'inconclusive'.

Mike Watson certainly has a quaint idea of inconclusive: a survey conducted by *VisitScotland* while he was tourism minister found that an alarming 25 per cent of tourists said they were unlikely to return to areas of Scotland polluted with wind turbines. The survey was commissioned by the Scottish Parliament.

The report is also peppered with assertions lifted uncritically from Westminster policy documents which ring hollow when mingled with its more mature conclusions. For example:

- It quotes Westminster on the risk of an over-reliance on gas imported from ‘unstable’ regions but pays too little attention to the engineering issues associated with wind power. Rather lamely, it says only that the grid operators (in Scotland, ScottishPower and Scottish & Southern) have a statutory obligation to maintain supply.
- It cites Scotland's responsibility for fulfilling Kyoto targets but no consideration is given to evaluating the ability of wind power, or indeed any other renewable, significantly to cut emissions. That is taken as Gospel.
- Because renewables are now synonymous with onshore wind, sections of the report become ambiguous. Alongside a call to move away from onshore wind, it stresses the need quickly to upgrade the Beaulieu to Denny grid – without asking how much onshore capacity is needed to make these upgrades viable.
- While stressing the need to cut reliance on onshore wind, the report says that no country has yet bettered Denmark's 20 per cent wind generation. But it doesn't explain that this is only possible through a balancing act that involves importing and exporting large quantities of power at unfavourable prices to and from Scandinavia and Germany – in a way Scotland can neither emulate nor afford.
- Concluding that an 18 per cent target for 2010 is achievable through reliance on onshore wind, which it admits elsewhere could threaten security of supply, the committee fails adequately to explain how, apart from tinkering with the ROC scheme, the suicidal dash for wind might be stopped.

Transport

Once upon a time, Scotland had a department with responsibility for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning, known in the trade as the Ministry for Everything. Enterprise includes renewables (although the knock-on effects of current policy may perhaps make them a candidate for Lifelong Learning).

Transport was hived-off. Perhaps the minister found it difficult to wear two hats when one of them charged him with saving a planet with windmills while the other encouraged him pollute to his heart's content. Oh, yes – and extend the M74 right through Glasgow.

- Some of its data appear flawed. The report warns that, if all live applications were to be developed, Scotland would have twice its 2010 renewables target. This would virtually equal the 40 per cent ‘aspirational’ target which the report says elsewhere is neither sustainable nor sensible.

It says that 90 developments are planned or seeking

approval, 40 per cent at over 50MW and 15 per cent at over 100MW. This is a serious underestimate. Well over 400 sites are under consideration in Scotland.

- Objectors are dismissed as stereotypical NIMBYs, despite several well-informed submissions from objectors covering a range of social and engineering issues. Clearly, the Committee was not listening.
- The report cites the need for communities to be ‘reminded’ of the economic benefit wind development might bring. Highland Council is quoted as saying a turbine can earn £100,000 per annum – in terms vague enough to confuse the reader into thinking that communities, rather than generators or landowners, might expect such an income.

Why was tourism avoided?

The erection of clusters of huge wind turbines cannot but damage tourism and a fragile rural economy. Only those with vested interests or who make a cult of turbine-worship argue differently. Professionals in Scotland's Area Tourist Boards admit privately that they try not to contemplate the effect on rural tourism of the arrival of turbines. The committee's remit includes tourism. One member was, until recently, the tourism minister. Why was the subject avoided?

One of the final conclusions is testament to how little of objectors' concerns the committee really understood:

‘Today, just as it is vital that individuals take personal responsibility for their health, so people must also be encouraged to take personal responsibility for the energy they consume. The attitude of hitting the switch and expecting the lights to come on, but objecting to any power generating development which is within visible distance, is still all too prevalent.’

With respect, this is sanctimonious nonsense. If the parliament were to legislate proper incentives for commercial and domestic energy saving, it would get a response. To shoot the messenger is to abdicate the very responsibility the committee demands of others.

The report speaks of a growing risk that the wind power debate will undermine public confidence in the entire renewables sector. Who is to blame for that? Public confidence in wind power is being dented because it is increasingly becoming obvious that it does not do what it says on the tin.

A footnote

THE REPORT was published as MSPs set off for a break of several weeks and, to be fair, constituency work.

Given the radical change that Westminster's energy policy will make to Scotland's landscape, its economy, its amenity, one might have expected a serious response at least from the Central Belt dailies.

Not a peep. Not a squeak. Bar a passing two-liner in *The Daily Record*, we could find nothing. So there are two questions that need an answer.

Are the MSPs on the committee going to make any real effort to ensure that their recommendations are carried out? And is or is not Jo Moore back in town?

Readers wishing to print out VoS News are recommended to click ‘Yes’ to the ‘Fit to Page’ or the ‘Shrink oversize pages’ or similar box in Acrobat Reader (the message varies with different versions of the program). This will prevent the bottom of the page being cut off, especially on inkjet printers.

VoS News asked Committee members to comment on the report –

MURDO FRASER MSP, Conservative Party Spokesman for Enterprise & Lifelong Learning

AS A MEMBER of the Committee, I was very pleased with its conclusions which are strongly critical of the Scottish Executive's approach to renewable energy.

It is a serious and comprehensive report, the product of six months of research and evidence.

The fundamental problem with the Executive's approach to date is the lack of a proper strategy for renewable energy. This has left us in a situation where new technologies such as wave and tidal power have been neglected and all the investment has gone into developing onshore wind farms.

This policy is hugely controversial in rural Scotland, where communities in areas like Perth & Kinross have felt under siege from a proliferation of planning applications for wind farms.

These will have a devastating effect on the landscape and environment in some of our most fragile areas.

Worse still, as the report makes clear, current policy means that we could be missing out on the economic opportunities offered by the new technologies, because of our 'all eggs in one basket' approach to renewables.

Scotland has the opportunity to lead the world in bringing to market these new technologies and creating a new export market but this will only happen with a radical change in policy.

The Committee also calls for a new national planning strategy for onshore wind farms with the Executive working with local authorities to develop local plans and targets.

When I first raised this issue in Parliament last November, my calls for a national strategic plan were firmly rejected by the Executive. I am pleased that this cross-party committee has now unanimously accepted that I was right to make that call and I hope that the Executive will have a change of heart on this vital issue.

There have been few issues in rural Scotland in recent years which have been as controversial as the threatened development of large-scale wind farms. I sincerely hope that this report will mark the beginning of the end of a policy which is both economically questionable and potentially hugely damaging to our environment, our landscape and our vital tourism industry.

CHRIS BALLANCE MSP, Scottish Green Party

THE COMMITTEE WAS EXCITED at the enormous potential that renewables have for Scotland ... This report is a green light for the renewable economy of the future. We need to explore and exploit all sources, including hydrogen, solar and biomass, which also show great potential.

We need to develop more new windfarms in sensible locations. I am pleased that the Committee agrees with the Greens that a national strategic framework is needed to organise our investment in wind power more effectively.

It's not a case of choosing between windfarms, wave and tidal power – we need them all to generate clean energy and tackle climate change.'

[Taken with permission from a press release. Editor's note: Hydrogen is an energy *carrier*, not an energy source.]

ALASDAIR MORGAN MSP, Scottish National Party, Committee Convener

IT IS CLEAR that the Executive will meet its target of 18 per cent of electricity production from renewable sources by 2010. However, almost all of this will come from onshore wind farms.

This does not make sense. It is not good energy policy to develop only a single source of renewable energy and the focus on wind power is depriving other technologies such as tidal and wave power of much-needed investment. Scotland

has real potential in these areas, potential to develop leading-edge technology, and thousands of jobs. We must not let these opportunities pass us by.

To achieve this we need a fully-fledged Scottish Energy Policy. The Committee recognises that this is an area reserved to Westminster, and it would need to be developed in co-operation. However the Executive already has in practice an ad hoc policy and there is a need for a proper policy if some of these issues are to be addressed. [Taken with permission from a Committee press release.]

MIKE WATSON MSP, Labour Party, Deputy Convener

THIS HAS BEEN a major piece of work by the Committee, which took substantial evidence from all sides of the debate. The strength of the evidence was such that the Committee, despite different political perspectives found no difficulty in reaching a common view – the report is unanimous. [Taken with permission from a press release.]

NEITHER JAMIE STONE MSP (Lib Dem) or his press office responded to our request.

The Views of Scotland Office

VIEWS OF SCOTLAND'S OFFICE, which opened in May, is already a busy point of contact. Our hours are from Monday to Thursday in the afternoons. In practice, information and advice is dispensed or information gratefully received all day (and early evenings) every day.

All calls are welcome but we do ask that you try, wherever possible, to phone 01357 440462 during the above times.

Gale force hits wind scam

WELCOME TO the re-launched VIEWS OF SCOTLAND newsletter, VoS News.

At last, cracks are appearing in the New Labour/'green'/business alliance which drives the wind scam.

Last month, the Scottish Parliament published the report which we examine on page one. The House of Lords Energy Committee has issued a longer paper on similar lines.

In Saddleworth, a UK-wide conference of objectors' groups, organised by local activists and by wind veterans *Country Guardian*, attracted an impressive panel and over 200 delegates – see page eight.

On July 6, Tony Blair, addressing a House of Commons committee, announced out of the blue that nuclear technology is back on the agenda, following 'lobbying from the US'. What? A call from George? Hand me that phone! Where's Peter?

A Raw Deal

It seemed a raw deal for Tony's ever-loyal 'green' allies, who reacted with understandable outrage. Of course, nothing was definite – even if *The Scotsman* did manage to detail which sites would be chosen and why.

Decide! Announce! Defend! The nuclear sector's long-standing tactic has changed not a jot. But, as it also dominates the wind-energy scene, we could have told you that.

Meanwhile, two high-profile campaigns have been launched by business people and academics.

In London, what looks to be a well-resourced body, the *Renewable Energy Foundation*, emerged from an initiative by Noel Edmonds. It is already lobbying for an holistic renewable energy policy, researching relevant topics to

high standards and assisting those opposing 'inappropriate' proposals.

In Edinburgh, Angus MacDonald of *Financial News* organised a press briefing aimed at even-handed debate to inform the press and mould his own stance. It succeeded – though not quite as anticipated. See page ten.

The *Sunday Times* launched a high-profile campaign on 25 July calling for a moratorium on wind power pending a proper renewables strategy.

Some prominent figures – celebrities if you must – have also voiced concern, such as Alan Titchmarsh (in the *Radio Times* no less) and Griff Rhys Jones.

A Damp Squib

The much-heralded Conservative Party announcement on renewables was a bit of a damp squib. Calling for a 'new approach', it said little that was new though plans to make Britain more energy-efficient are promised for later.

It attacked proposed changes in planning law which will severely restrict objectors' rights (PPS22) but notably did *not* promise that a Conservative government would repeal any relevant legislation.

However, the statement does reflect a shift in public perception and in that respect at least it is to be welcomed.

It remains to be seen whether these new lobby groups are up to the long haul though early signs are promising.

Whatever, the days when 'green' business can strut across the landscape crushing opposition at will to a chorus of 'liberal' support might at last be ending.

This is the context in which VIEWS OF SCOTLAND has re-launched its newsletter – to ensure that local stakeholders have a voice, however modest, in a critical debate.

Blairite spin spat?

DEFRA's chief scientist, Professor Howard Dalton, was reported in *The Sunday Times* on July 11 as saying that wind power would be 'expensive', adding that turbines 'are a hell of a bloody eyesore'.

The report suggests emerging differences over energy policy between Margaret Beckett's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Patricia Hewitt's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which is driving the government's ruthless and increasingly controversial promotion of wind power.

DEFRA looks to energy savings as a more effective means of achieving targeted cuts in emissions.

Readers may remember that, in December 2002, David Still, who chaired the British Wind Energy Association for four years (1998-2003), was contracted to the Department of Trade and Industry for two years to help 'deliver' the Government's targets for renewable energy. He sits on the DTI's Renewables Advisory Board along with (you just couldn't make this up) the Minister for Energy, E-commerce and Postal Services and the Deputy Minister for Enterprise & Lifelong Learning, Scotland, both in an *ex officio* capacity. (That's Stephen Timms and Lewis Macdonald by the way.)

AMEC (correctly) attracts the ire of *Friends of the Earth* and other green lobbyists not only for its controversial

record world-wide on environmental issues but also for its predominant role in the UK's nuclear industry.

Its involvement at Sellafield spans almost 30 years and at Dounreay over 40. It recently signed a long-term agreement with British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 'to cover nuclear projects and services within BNFL's multi-billion pound future capital expenditure programme'. It is a major supplier to the Ministry of Defence.

It is also one of the UK's largest developers of wind power and dominates plans to turn the Outer Hebrides into a hundred-mile-long 'windfarm'.

It has formed yet another partnership to do this – with cash-strapped nuclear giant British Energy. Now, there's a surprise.

The plan has the enthusiastic support of Tony Blair's PPS (Personal Parliamentary Salesman), currently in an uphill struggle drumming up business for UK companies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of his few successes followed a recent visit to Washington, where he was accompanied by foreign trade minister Mike O'Brien. Which company got \$1 billion mega-contracts? Go on, take a guess.

Just who is Blair's PPS by the way? Brian Wilson, of course. You remember him – he was energy minister in the DTI when AMEC seconded the manager of its wind energy division (and founder of Border Wind), the said David Still, to 'guide' the DTI's wind energy policy.

It's a small world is the wind world.

Rotors and raptors

There is significant disquiet regarding the impact on birds of the wind-power frenzy. This VoS News special report reviews some of the literature that underpins these concerns.



A GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE shows that wind turbines have a substantial adverse impact on birds. This takes two forms: the destruction of habitat and direct casualties due to turbine blade strikes.

The most notorious example is Altamont in California where some 5,000 turbines kill 40 to 60 golden eagles each year together with hundreds of red-tailed hawks, kestrels, and owls.¹ It has been estimated that blade strike is the highest single cause of golden eagle mortality, causing at least 42 per cent of local deaths for this species.²

While the blade strike rate at Altamont is low compared to many European sites, the conservation value of the species has made it an international *cause célèbre*. The situation has persisted for over twenty years and, in frustration, environmentalists have finally resorted to law.³

Altamont is not an isolated case. In Andalusia, Spain, a SEO/Birdlife study of 373 turbines found 82 bird casualties in a single year, including griffon vulture, short-toed eagle, eagle owl, kestrel, and black kite.⁴ There is some controversy about the report having minimized the estimated mortality figure, as opposed to carcasses found. Small bird casualties were not surveyed.

A confidential report commissioned by the Navarre government studied 368 turbines and found more than 6,000 bird casualties, the majority passerines but including 409 griffon vultures and 24 other raptors including golden and booted eagles.⁵

In Italy, the establishment of wind turbines in Valle del Sangro and Irpinia has been accompanied by a rapid and marked decline of the red kite population in that area.⁶ In Belgium, studies report between three and 24 bird casualties per turbine per year.⁷ There are casual reports of 38 red kite and 11 white-tailed eagle collisions at wind turbines in northern Germany.⁸

A major source of uncertainty in the estimates of blade strike casualties is the rate of scavenger removal of carcasses.⁹ Typically, developer studies search sites only once or twice a month and there is widespread scepticism regarding assumptions about scavenger removal bias. Despite industry estimates of the persistence of bird carcasses for several weeks, there is contradictory evidence of a rapid removal of small bird remains.¹⁰ In particular, passerine mortality remains a largely unknown risk because of the high rate of scavenger removal of small carcasses.

In Germany, Professor Matthias Freude of the Brandenburg State Environment Office reports well-worn fox paths between individual turbines and Martin Altemüller of the Wallnau bird reserve in Schleswig-Holstein reports an increased density of foxes and crows around wind power sites, suggesting that scavengers may be exploiting an increase in bird carrion.

Several studies have attempted to identify reasons for these problems but the results are so far inconclusive.¹¹ Claims that adverse impact can be explained by prey abundance and perching on older types of turbine are not supported by the evidence.

Research into the contribution of turbine noise and hearing and motion smear and visual acuity has also been inconclusive to date.¹² Far from the oft-quoted phenomenon of raptor avoidance of turbines, rigorous study demonstrates that raptors spend a significantly greater proportion of flying time in close proximity to turbines than would be expected from a random distribution although no one can explain why.¹³ It is clear that further research is urgently needed.

In contrast to the international situation, UK evidence of significant impact on birds from existing wind turbines

is sparse. There are isolated and unpublished reports, for example a red kite casualty at Rheidol in Wales and the disappearance of three pairs of hen harrier and one pair of merlin at Novar in Scotland.¹⁴

The atypical historical situation in the UK may be due to particularly careful siting of wind turbines (existing wind turbines were installed under older, more rigorous planning guidance) and/or the low number of wind turbines installed.

An alternative explanation looks to an absence of systematic research into the problem. Monitoring is typically carried out by developers and access to their reports has been restricted. There is little evidence of scientific before-after control-impact studies.

Whatever the reasons, there is no doubt that the situation is changing rapidly. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) confirmed last year that it had been consulted on over 360 onshore wind proposals across Scotland (5365MW capacity currently in the planning system and 1986MW at the pre-planning consultation stage) and developer interest continues to grow.¹⁵ Assuming a typical turbine capacity of two MW, this suggests some 3,500 onshore wind turbines in Scotland alone.

High sensitivity

Many of these proposals are in areas of high natural heritage sensitivity. The Highlands and Islands, Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross, Angus, Aberdeenshire, Lanarkshire and the Scottish Borders are subject to particular developer interest.

Birders are particularly concerned about the impact of these developments on raptors, divers and waders, passerines such as skylark and on migratory species such as whooper swan. There are many sites of concern, ranging from the proposals on major migratory routes such as in the Western Isles and Shetland to important osprey, white-tailed eagle and golden eagle habitats in Argyll, Skye, Mull, and Ardnamurchan.

For example, a development has been approved and constructed at [Site A] in Argyll, inside the core range of a pair of breeding golden eagles. The published version of the developer's Environmental Statement suggested a strike rate of one golden eagle casualty every 33 years.

However, a confidential annex to this Environmental Statement lodged by the developer with Argyll and Bute Council warns of significant adverse impact and predicts an attrition rate of one golden eagle blade strike casualty every 12 years.¹⁶

Similarly, a development at [Site B] in the Isle of Skye has been approved and is now awaiting construction, just 12 km from the Cuillins golden eagle Special Protection Area (SPA). The public version of the developer's Environmental Statement claimed 'the probability for collision with wind turbines for the immature Golden Eagles that use part of the [Site B] proposal area is predicted to be lower [than those for Argyll]'.

However, the confidential annex to this Environmental Statement confirms that [Site B] is an important dispersion area for eagles where a remarkable 67 golden and white-tailed eagle flights were observed in just 60 hours of observation.¹⁷ Contradicting the public Environmental Statement, the confidential annex claimed

that, for golden eagles, 'the current proposal is not predicted to present a collision risk [ten times greater] than that predicted for the wind farms in golden eagle territories in Argyll'. A smaller proposal [Site C] some 300 metres west of the [Site B] project predicts a cumulative attrition in the Skye golden eagle population of one eagle every 18 months and yet [Site B] has already been approved.¹⁸

These proposals are not unique. Other examples are the now-approved [Site D] in important Argyll osprey and eagle habitat and the pending [Site E] proposal (Sutherland) where the turbines are planned between a golden eagle eyrie and the pair's core hunting territory.

Hebrides at risk

Of extreme concern is the situation on Lewis, particularly the British Energy/AMEC proposal for 234 turbines located inside the Lewis Peatlands SPA. A smaller proposal [Site F] has already been approved inside that SPA, in close proximity to an active eyrie.¹⁹

Besides supporting significant golden eagle, merlin, red-throated diver, black-throated diver, golden plover and dunlin populations, the SPA is a main staging post for Greenland-Europe whooper swan migration.²⁰

There are further proposals (Paic Estate and Eiskin Estate) for over 300 turbines ringing the nearby North Harris Mountains SPA.²¹ On the mainland, more than 350 turbines are proposed for Ardnamurchan, Morvern and Mull, all important golden eagle and raptor habitats.

It is fair to say that such proposals are 'mushrooming' across Scotland and birders are concerned that these developments are not being given proper environmental scrutiny. Many observers have commented that the Scottish Executive's targets and their corresponding financial incentives have precipitated a Scottish 'wind rush' in which proposed development is piecemeal and poorly controlled.²²

Planning authorities are understandably hard pressed to cope with these levels of interest, and there are concerns that, in addition to its nature conservation responsibilities, SNH is actively engaged in advocacy for wind energy. In particular, SNH's support for the controversial [Site B] (golden eagle dispersion area) and [Site F] (SPA) developments has shocked many conservationists.

Birders are further concerned by an apparent conflict of interest between the RSPB's core activities and financial benefits it has sought from Scottish & Southern Energy PLC, a grid owner, supplier and leading wind developer.

Of pressing and immediate concern to many is the lack of any national cumulative assessment of the impact of all these developments – most surprisingly, birders requesting this information from SNH have been told that it 'does not keep this kind of information'!

In an attempt to redress this lack of information amateur birders from across Scotland hope soon to collaborate in a national review of wind power Environmental Impact Assessments in order to estimate cumulative impact on a number of key species and to determine the quality of the environmental information being published.

Editor's note: Site names featuring raptors have been withheld as a precautionary measure.

A line from Dr Etherington ...

AS A MERE AMATEUR ornithologist I hesitate to express an opinion, but, as a professional ecologist with substantial editorial experience, I do know bad science when I see it.

Some weeks ago, two English birders approached me about the 2002 Ornithological Impact Study conducted at the Kentish Flats site, 8.5 km off the North Kent coast. Owned by a Danish company, Elsam, this will comprise 30 huge 2.75 MW turbines.

To cut to the chase, I discovered that a 'collision factor' had been used to adjust the risk assessment of a bird being killed so that it predicted fewer than one diver killed every 415 years by turbines. The most extreme prediction was one black-headed gull every 1,775 years.

My first response was astonished suspicion. Then I realised that such minute collision factors probably did not differ significantly from zero (in a statistical sense).

But statistics proved irrelevant as further reading revealed that the collision factor was invalid in any case.

It was based on data collected by Winkelman from 'migrant passerines passing through the

Sep/Oosterbierum windfarm' – some 60 miles north of Amsterdam. But the Kentish Flats assessment applied this factor to seabirds: divers, gulls, terns and gannets.

Very different in size and behaviour from little passerines!

Forget the statistics then – the calculation would be rejected out of hand by any competent academic editor.

As far as I know, neither the RSPB or English Nature nor anyone else has protested against this travesty of science. Elsam's website for Kentish Flats limits its EIA comments to seabed animals – and a picture of a shelduck!

Note that Joris Everaert's study of coastal wind sites just across the water in Flanders shows, at the extreme, many tens of birds per year per turbine. This equates to millions of birds in the time Kentish Flats is predicted to kill one black headed-gull!

But perhaps there is some hope. The collision risk assessment used by BWEA/SNH for Lewis is criticised as 'not yet adequate' in the Scottish Executive's Scoping Opinion.

- ¹ See e.g. W Grainger Hunt et al, *Golden Eagles in a Perilous Landscape: Predicting The Effects Of Mitigation For Wind Turbine Blade-Strike Mortality*, University of California at Santa Cruz, California Energy Commission Report, (2002). See also S Smallwood & C G Thelander, Letter to Alameda County Community Development Agency, *Proposed CUP renewals for wind turbines and bird kills in the Altamont Pass WRA*; C G Thelander, K S Smallwood, and L Rugge, *Bird Risk Behaviors and Fatalities at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Period of Performance: March 1998-December 2000*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report (2003).
- ² W Grainger Hunt et al., University of California at Santa Cruz, *Population Study of Golden Eagles in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area: Population Trend Analysis, 1994-1997*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report (1999).
- ³ Center for Biological Diversity, *Lawsuit Seeks Redress For Massive Illegal Bird Kills At Altamont Pass, Ca, Wind Farms*, 12 Jan 2003.
- ⁴ SEO/Birdlife, *Effect of Wind Turbine Power Plants on the Avifauna in the Campo de Gibraltar Region, Summary of Final Report*, 1995.
- ⁵ J Lekuona, *Uso del Espacio por la Avifauna y Control de la Mortalidad de Aves y Murciélagos en los Parques Eólicos de Navarra Durante un Ciclo Annual*, Gobierno de Navarra (2001), a confidential Spanish-language report unofficially disclosed to local campaigners.
- ⁶ Stefano Allavena, private communication.
- ⁷ J Everaert, K Devos & E Kuijken, *Windturbines en vogels in Vlaanderen: Voorlopigie onderzoeksresultaten en buitenlandse bevindingen*, Instituut voor Natuurbehoud, Belgium.
- ⁸ Tobias Dürr, private communication, and Berliner Morgenpost, *Den Vögeln zuliebe: Windräder gestoppt*, 19 July 2004; *OstSee-Zeitung*, *Seeadler stirbt nach Kollision mit Windrad*, 11 April 2004; Lübecker Nachrichten, *Windräder: Tödliche Gefahr für Seeadler*, 26 May 2004. These casualty data are the result of chance finds rather than systematic search. There is no information regarding cumulative impact. The wind sites involved in sea eagle strikes are at Beerfelde, Kackerbeck, Wolgast, Anklam, Butzow, Heringdorf, Zarpn, Goehl, Damlos, Koselau, Rügen and Kronprinzenkoog. Two of these collisions are also reported in O Krone and C Scharnweber, *Two White-Tailed Sea Eagles (Haliaeetus Albicilla) Collide With Wind Generators In Northern Germany*, *Journal of Raptor Research*, Vol. 37 No 2, June 2003.
- ⁹ See, e.g. M Morrison, *Searcher Bias and Scavenging Rates in Bird/Wind Energy Studies*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2002.
- ¹⁰ Alvaro Camiña Cardenal, private communication. Following a daily inspection of 50 deliberately-placed coturnix species carcasses in a wind-power development, only 58 per cent were in the same place after 24 hours, 16 per cent after five days, four per cent after ten days and four per cent after 15 days.
- ¹¹ See, e.g., C G Thelander, K S Smallwood and L Rugge, *Bird Risk Behaviors and Fatalities at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Period of Performance: March 1998-December 2000*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report (2003); J Hoover, *The Response of Red-Tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles to Topographical Features, Weather and Abundance of a Dominant Prey Species at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area, California*, California State University at Sacramento/National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report (2002).
- ¹² See, e.g., R Dooling (University of Maryland), *Avian Hearing and the Avoidance of Wind Turbines*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report NREL/TP-500-30844 and W Hodos (University of Maryland), *Minimization of Motion Smear: Reducing Avian Collisions with Wind Turbines*, National Renewable Energy Laboratory Report NREL/SR-500-33249.
- ¹³ K S Smallwood, C Thelander and L Spiegel, *Raptor Mortality At The Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area*.
- ¹⁴ The Observer, *Wind farms threaten the red kite* (25 Jan 2004); Roy Dennis, private communication.
- ¹⁵ Scottish Natural Heritage, *Renewables Trends in Scotland: Statistics & Analysis*, Dec 2003.
- ¹⁶ Vance A Tucker, Duke University, North Carolina, *Estimated Collision Risk Between Eagles and Turbine Rotors* at [Site A].
- ¹⁷ [Site B] *Wind Farm Confidential Annex*, June 2002. This was classified as confidential by the developer and Highland Council during the planning process. However, SNH considered that it should have been made public provided that two paragraphs and a table were removed. [Site B] is rare for Skye in that it does not support a range-holding pair of breeding eagles (the area is already fragmented by forestry development). However, Skye supports some 40 golden and white-tailed eagle territories and the undefended [Site B] range serves as an important and heavily used dispersion area for immature and floating adult eagles.
- ¹⁸ Mike Madders, *Proposed Windfarms At [Site C] And [Site B]: A quantitative collision risk model for golden eagle*, August 2003.
- ¹⁹ Approved by Western Isles Council, June 2003.
- ²⁰ *Black-throated Diver* – 11 pairs (6.9 per cent of the GB breeding population); *Golden Eagle* – six pairs (1.5 per cent of the GB breeding population); *Golden Plover* – 1,978 pairs (8.8 per cent of the GB breeding population); *Merlin* – 20 pairs (1.5 per cent of the GB breeding population); *Red-throated Diver* – 60 pairs (6.4 per cent of the GB breeding population); *Greenshank* – 152 pairs (0.3 per cent of the Europe/Western Africa breeding population); *Dunlin* – 3,650 pairs (33.2 per cent of the breeding Baltic/UK/Ireland population). See: www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/sites/Scotland
- ²¹ *Golden eagle*, seven pairs, representing at least 1.8 per cent of the UK breeding population. See www.jncc.gov.uk/UKSPA/sites/Scotland
- ²² See, e.g. evidence by local authorities to the Scottish Parliament Enterprise & Culture Committee Renewable Energy Inquiry.

US bird groups slam wind power

IN AMERICA, THE ORNITHOLOGICAL COUNCIL'S Annual Report of August 2003 said that:

The Ornithological Council, the American Bird Conservancy, Defenders of Wildlife and the Wildlife Management Institute have all become concerned about the impact of wind turbines on bird populations or, more precisely, we are concerned about what is/is not known. Few of the studies are published or publicly available.

Those that are published are rarely peer-reviewed. Of those that are unpublished, none of us know how they've been conducted, where they've been conducted and what the outcomes were. Meanwhile, we have the USFWS about to publish guidance (that we know for a fact the industry had a hand in), we have the National Wind Coordinating Committee issuing fact sheets with blanket statements such as 'at the wind resource areas where studies have been conducted, an average of one to two bird kills per turbine per year is at the high end of the range of fatalities recorded during studies of operating wind farms.'

We will also be looking at the 'footprint' issue not just in

terms of habitat fragmentation, but also with regard to avoidance by nesting birds or lekking species, a big issue in the Midwest, where there are many large wind farms.

We have decided to form an ad hoc group that will –

- review existing data/studies; monitor future studies;
- discuss and assess the policies issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies;
- discuss and assess the guidance, fact sheets and other documents issued by the National Wind Coordinating Committee;
- take such action, individually or collectively, to further actions that will help reduce avian mortality associated with wind turbines.

It concluded:

WE WILL NOT ENGAGE in advocacy regarding the merits of wind energy. Our goals are to be sure that the impact of wind energy on bird populations is understood and to encourage the implementation of practices and policies that will reduce that impact.

The first UK conference of Wind Farm Action Groups

'Selling our birthright for a mess of wattage'

NEVER ONE TO PASS UP a trenchant quote, VoS Patron *David Bellamy* was in ringing form when opening the first UK national gathering of anti-wind-power warriors.

This was held on June 19 at Saddleworth, on the edge of Saddleworth Moor which straddles the Lancashire/ Yorkshire border.



David 'Mess of Wattage' Bellamy, seen here on Whinash

The communities around the wild and beautiful uplands which suddenly open before you as you leave Manchester and which continue down to the Peak District are up in arms over the proposal to erect seven giant turbines on one of the most visible stretches of the moor.

The conference, masterminded by the *Saddleworth Moors Action Group* and *Country Guardian*, set out to show that a UK-wide movement of opposition is steadily growing in numbers and influence.

Report by Anthony Phillips

It succeeded. Over 200 delegates from every corner of Britain, from Cornwall to Skye, from West Wales to East Anglia, packed the hall and meeting rooms for a day of presentations starting with David Bellamy and ending with Country Guardian's vice-President, *Sir Bernard Ingham*.

In between were contributions from Saddleworth's own *Ken Hulme*, landscape consultant *Geoffrey Sinclair*, energy consultant and climatologist *Dr Richard Courtney*, renewables observer *Dr. Vic Mason*, acoustic specialist *Dr. David Manley*, the Moray campaigner *Bob Graham*, the Cumbria MaiwaG campaigner *David Brierley*, engineer *Dr. Mike Hall*, experienced activist *Elizabeth Mann* from Barningham Moor in County Durham and *Dr. Kaye Little* on the horrible impact of the Cefn Croes installation in Wales.

At any well-organised gathering of people sharing a common purpose, the most morale-boosting aspect of it all is the chance to meet others and to exchange experiences.

Winding up the day, Bernard Ingham expressed the universal conviction that 'wind power is not green, it is not reliable and it is not economic.'

Our movement, for all its difficulties, its lack of resources to fight money and vested interest, its necessarily defensive posture in the face of the specious occupation of the moral high ground by the 'green' lobby, is a grass roots movement under way.

Every day that goes by it becomes less easy to squash. Saddleworth proved that it has a national case and a national constituency.

Fighting wind-power – and jumping hoops

An occasional column by
Dr John Etherington

ASK THE AVERAGE PERSON ‘Why do we need wind power?’ and they will answer ‘To stop global warming’.

This is the first of a series of hoops that will lead us to say ‘We don’t oppose wind power in principle.’

However, the first hoop is balanced on a false premise and we, being brighter than trained dogs, need not jump!

The promoters of wind power say we need it because carbon dioxide (CO₂) from fossil fuel is causing global warming.

They claim that wind turbines will prevent this and will also conserve fuel resources.

The reasons why we do *not* need wind power are simple:

- It is untrue that wind turbines in Britain could reduce CO₂ emissions by enough to cut global atmospheric concentration and influence climate change, even if the global warming models are correct.
- Even if the UK target of ten per cent, mainly from wind, were to be achieved, power generation is responsible for less than a third of the UK’s total CO₂ emissions. Thus, the wind’s ten per cent contribution would represent an overall saving of perhaps three per cent.
- As the UK’s CO₂ emission is about 2.5 per cent of the world’s total, our wind turbines would save less than one thousandth (0.1%) of world CO₂ emissions.¹

Proponents of ‘global warming’ admit that a reduction of 20 to 30 per cent of atmospheric CO₂ concentration would be needed, if their models prove correct, to return us to the pre-Industrial Revolution status.²

It is ludicrous to suggest that a one-thousandth part change in emissions could reduce concentration measurably, let alone by 20 per cent or more in the face of other very large natural inputs and outputs.³

Almost all the other hoops through which we jump are unnecessary hurdles set up by admitting the necessity of wind power in the mistaken belief that it is a good strategy not to be ‘against renewables’.

Think of those hoops – landscape and habitat damage; noise; bird and bat injury; health damage, impact on tourism and house value.

DR ETHERINGTON was Reader in Ecology at the University of Wales until his retirement in the early 1990s. Educated at Imperial College in the 50s and 60s, much of his research was in environmental chemistry and physics.

He first wrote about the impact of human activity on CO₂ emissions and ‘greenhouse-warming’ in *Environment and Plant Ecology* (1975, 1982).

John, a Thomas Huxley Medallist of the Royal College of Science, has published several books and research papers and co-edited the *Journal of Ecology* from 1988 to 1991. For the past 15 years has edited a local history newsletter based in the Vale of Glamorgan village of Llancafarn.

VoS News is delighted to count him as a contributor.

Also, the questions ‘What’s the alternative?’ and ‘You support nuclear then?’ Not one of these would arise, nor the accusations of misrepresentation, if we simply say *NO TO WIND!* – not in my backyard, nor yours nor out at sea – because *it solves no problems*.

Wind power is not necessary. It can do nothing that government claims it can and, by harnessing a gigantic hidden ‘tax’ on the electricity consumer, it receives the largest ‘subsidy’ on the entire unaffordable product of an industry that there has ever been.

It is a money pot for the unscrupulous – in simple terms, it’s a scam!

Notes:

¹ The UK target for 2010 is 10 per cent from renewables. By 2020 the ‘aspiration’ is 20 per cent – almost all from wind. Power engineers agree that without provision for backup this will destabilise our grid system. It would still represent only two thousandths of world emission (even less by 2020!).

² Atmospheric CO₂ concentration has increased from less than 300 volumes per million (vpm) to over 360 vpm (a more than 20 per cent increase) since the Industrial Revolution.

³ The annual equilibrium exchange of CO₂ by respiration and photosynthesis is about 20 times the input from fossil fuel and the equilibrium exchanges with ocean water are also of similar magnitude, hugely ‘diluting’ the effect of human CO₂ emission.

Peers and practicalities – the House of Lords report

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee recently examined the potential of a wide range of renewable energy sources.

A major conclusion of its report, *Renewable Energy: Practicalities*, published on 15 July, is that targets to produce ten per cent of the UK’s electricity from renewable sources by 2010 are unlikely to be met because of insufficient long-term incentives for investors.

Committee Chairman Lord Oxburgh said, ‘The Government’s drive should be applauded but it’s not going about it the right way.’

‘Energy from renewable sources is expensive – if the government wants the private sector to invest in renewables ... it needs to provide more reassurance about long-term returns. The current support arrangements favour only those

developments that will give a quick return - in effect onshore wind farms.

‘Wind is the UK’s most abundant source of renewable energy. Wind farms can be built quickly, but there has to be backup from conventional plant for times when demand is high and there is little wind. The difficulties caused by such intermittency would be eased with a more diverse range of renewables.’

‘The Government is not giving energy the priority it deserves. It should improve co-ordination between Departments; it should push on with establishing a UK Energy Research Centre, where progress so far has been disappointingly slow; it should ensure that the regulator, Ofgem, takes a long-term view of its responsibilities. The Government seems to believe that market forces alone will prevent the lights going out – we’re not so sure.’

Wind-power bigwigs take cover

ALARMED BY AN UNCONTROLLED FLOOD of wind-power proposals across the country, Angus MacDonald, CEO of the London-based *Financial News*, convened a press briefing in Edinburgh on July 23 on the merits of generating electricity from wind turbines.

Chaired by former *Scotsman* editor MAGNUS LINKLATER, it was aimed at NGOs and the press. The general public was not invited.

MacDonald had offered platform spots equally to pro- and anti-wind speakers, aiming to make the discussion both balanced and strategic.

Invited for the 'anti-' camp were cultural commentator and architectural historian SIR SIMON JENKINS of *The Times*, SIR MARTIN HOLDGATE, formerly Chief Scientist at the Department of the Environment, and energy specialist Professor IAN FELLS of Newcastle University. Planning lawyer JOHN CAMPBELL QC summed up.

An impressive line up certainly – but not, with respect, an invincible one. Two of them are not even linked to the industry.

And MacDonald had certainly sought out high fliers for the other side, including DUNCAN MCLAREN, Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland (outspoken defenders of New Labour's energy policy), EDDIE O'CONNOR, Chief Executive of Airtricity, one of the biggest independent wind-power developers, and ANDREW GARRAD of wind-power consultants Garrad Hassan. He it was who signed off *Scotland's Renewable Resources 2001*, later adopted as a keynote policy statement by the Scottish Executive.

Last but presumably not least was LESLIE HOWARTH, management adviser at Vestas, the Danish turbine people.

These are big names by any reckoning, well able to see off a few NIMBYs and a gullible scribe or two.

Well, not exactly. Not as such.

At the last minute, the pro-wind team pulled out, claiming that the 'playing field' was not level and that the audience was 'vetted'.

Those present described this as 'a pity'.

In the event, journalists from all over Scotland listened to a discussion centred on the inefficiency of wind power, its ineffectiveness in reducing emissions and the place of renewables – particularly wind – in a national energy mix. Speakers called for firm strategic thinking by government.

Simon Jenkins spoke of the lunacy of covering Britain's most beautiful places with huge towers that achieve little or nothing.

He cited the Irish grid operator's decision to accept no more wind power as evidence of a lunatic policy that focuses on one renewable to the exclusion of others.

Emphasising the importance of security of supply, Ian Fells stressed the impossibility of reaching government



Seen here seemingly unscarred by their vetting, the speakers were (L-R) Ian Fells, Martin Holdgate, John Campbell and Simon Jenkins. The chair, Magnus Linklater, is third from left.

targets even if 400 of the very largest turbines were built each year – more than one a day for over ten years.

Martin Holdgate called for rigorous strategic thinking and the avoidance of Britain's most significant landscapes.

Summing up a what had been, it must be confessed, an unavoidably one-sided argument, John Campbell demanded that politicians provide a coherent and intelligible energy policy instead of making demands on us for wind power at almost any price.

In discussion, (unvetted) guests ANDREW SHAW and CHRISTOPHER WILKENS of North British Wind Power stepped into what looked increasingly like a breach. They presented the case for wind as the lowest-cost renewable, stressed the importance of global warming and maintained that, as a society, 'We could not afford to wait'. Just because a target seemed unattainable, that was no reason not to try to reach it.

Quite.

The Director of the National Trust for Scotland, DR ROBIN PELLEW, spoke of his organisation's concerns for the wild places of Scotland and of the relentless push for a policy which everyone agreed could neither do good nor achieve its aims.

In short, a rewarding morning was weakened only by the inexplicable failure of the renewables industry delegation to turn up.

As one of the speakers put it, 'It is difficult to have much confidence in an industry which seems not to want to defend its own arguments'.

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Don't say Boo! to these geese ...

WHEN DAVID BECKHAM MISSED the goal by a mile at that game in Lisbon, he too tried to blame the pitch – and became an object of derision even for ardent admirers. But at least he didn't score an own goal.

How else can you describe this fiasco?

The pro-wind team presumably gave the organisers their 'we quit' decision on the Thursday. Within hours, it issued a press release aimed at Friday morning's papers – and at scuppering the bash.

All four would-be pro-wind speakers huffed and puffed before blowing their turbine down. *Friends of the Earth* director Duncan McLaren said:

Now it transpires that the audience is being vetted, with those in favour of renewables being excluded.

The organisers have been using the event in the press to promote their anti-windfarm views. This is a far cry from an independent forum.

Well, he may have had a point at that. A VIEWS OF SCOTLAND member, victim of some pretty cavalier treatment from Airtricity staff, wanted to hear its senior management and phoned the organisers. He was told politely that they 'didn't want to invite people with fixed views'.

Undaunted, he spoke to *VoS News*: "This pullout will be a great help to us. It will be more difficult now for the BWEA to say "We go where we are welcome and at present we are welcome in Scotland".

Scottish Renewables Forum spokesman Jason Ormiston said, 'It's a pity the wind-energy group will not have the opportunity to get its strong messages across, but the failure to guarantee a level playing field meant we would not receive a fair hearing.'

Welcome to the real world, Jason. If you cannot handle an even-handed jaunt like this, wait until this debate really gets going.

Let our members tell you and your industry colleagues a little about guaranteeing 'a level playing field'.

Just remember this. We know what it's like to be called

VoS News Editorial Comment

a 'pro-nuclear clique' by *Friends of the Earth* or labelled NIMBYs by 'green' campaigners who then claim the moral high ground as spokesmen for little people.

We watch the increasingly crude alliance between big business and an 'environmental' movement which claims to oppose it. We understand all too well how it gangs up on those who seek merely to defend what is precious from permanent destruction.

We know how it feels when local councillors refuse to meet us on spurious 'ethical' grounds.

We fume when national wildlife and heritage bodies tell us how only they and the developers know all the areas scheduled for these dreadful schemes.

We study your bloated, inarticulate EIAs, full of mendacious crap posing as science which only a few, in this political climate, have the guts to challenge.

We anguish when we watch 5,000 years of peat growth destroyed in an afternoon. We fear for the future of our birdlife and for the protection of bats.

We suffer the despair of turbine noise pollution while you tell the world it doesn't exist.

We see you run to the ASA when little groups of frightened people make errors in amateur leaflets which they dare to pass round a village. And we rage when next you scurry to a docile press, hoping to humiliate them.

We sit in meetings where so-called environmental assessors call the wind-power scam a 'dripping roast'.

We hear you brag of your links with government and boast of the profits you anticipate whilst our homes become worthless prisons. We read your incessant false claims about emissions cuts, about the 'number of homes' that your technology can power.

And, perhaps most of all, we have contempt for the way in which you divide communities over the pittance that this destruction just might bring their way.

So do not presume to lecture us on 'level playing fields'.

**Well, why ever not?
It's their damn-fool
idea**

An appeal

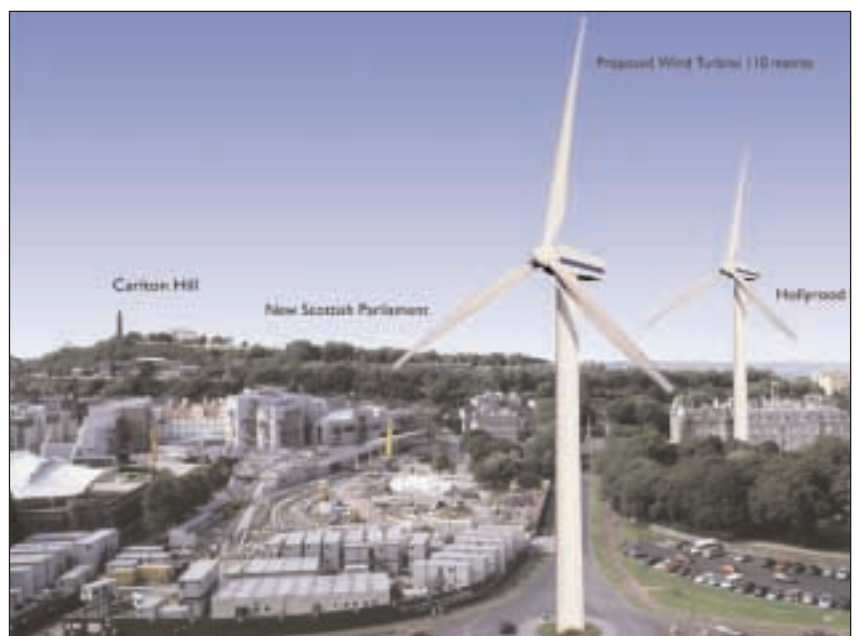
If you think that the UK's present renewables policy is a recipe for disaster, help us to change it.

If you find this newsletter useful and informative, please support us.

Send a donation to VIEWS OF SCOTLAND to help us research and publish the newsletter on a regular basis.

Please send cheques (together with your name and address if you would like a receipt) to:

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LADEN WITH PRESS PACKS, a delegation from Not in North Argyll (NINA) lobbied ScottishPower’s Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh on Friday July 23.

But first, NINA secretary and Avich & Kilchrenan Community Councillor Marilyn Henderson met Leaf Hillman, Vice-Chairman of the Karuk Tribe of California, whose delegates were staging a demonstration outside the theatre.

They have something in common: a fight with ScottishPower. The Native Americans are fighting to save the salmon in the river Klamath and NINA is battling to stop a wind-power development at Inverleiver.



Press and TV coverage was excellent. It seemed as if every newspaper in the country spoke to Marilyn, who was wearing her community council badge and that famous T-shirt emblazoned with ‘Withdraw from Inverleiver – ScottishPower’.

Despite a brief to report the Klamath pollution story, the STV reporter managed to get a soundbite on the evening news – complete with a shot of that T-shirt.

Marilyn told the press, ‘ScottishPower have said that they would “walk away” from any proposal which would damage people and the environment. Now is the time to walk away from Inverleiver’.

Leaf Hillman told her that he had been impressed by his meeting with the Scottish Green Party MSP, Robin Harper.

Inverleiver

Campaigners strike a bond with Karuk visitors

Harper had told Leaf that he would give him all the help and support that he could. See page 13 for a suggestion.

When Marilyn said that Robin Harper was in favour of wind turbines, Leaf was appalled that an MSP could support an American Indian cause and yet be unsupportive to his own people and country.

Leaf pledged that his tribe will do all they can to help us in our fight if we reciprocate in theirs. He hopes to come to Argyll to look at a dam and at its beautiful scenery.

Meanwhile, inside the AGM, Christine Metcalfe and her husband Peter, who have a *small* share in ScottishPower, were doing well.

During Q&A, Christine asked ‘Why is the company seeking to spend more millions on an unwarranted and deeply controversial proposal at Inverleiver, now the subject of a fresh application?’

‘Leaving aside the moral issues, can the Board justify additional risk expenditure against bitter local opposition, thereby contributing to ScottishPower’s deteriorating public image in respect of wind power, when withdrawal is the obvious answer?’

She received an ovation from the other shareholders in the meeting.

ScottishPower said that they would ‘walk away’ from any proposal which would damage people or the environment. Now is the time to walk away from Inverleiver



What's happening to the Klamath River?

LAST MARCH, SCOTTISHPOWER'S US subsidiary PacifiCorp filed for a 50-year operational licence for its Klamath River dam complex. And in April, Klamath River tribes, fishermen and environmentalists submitted their comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

FERC determines whether a dam will receive a license to operate – and Native American tribes are looking to it to protect tribal trust resources.

The Klamath River was once the third greatest salmon-producing river in the lower 48 states. Today it is a shadow of its former self. Two salmon species are extinct, another is listed as threatened and two more are down to ten per cent of their historic population. In 2002, over 33,000 fish died in the river in the largest fish kill in US history.

Groups cite several key flaws in PacifiCorp's application but what river advocates find most troubling is the lack of fish passage studies.

'It's amazing that a four-foot tall, 80-lb document could lack anything but this document has a gaping hole in it,' said Merv George Jr, director of Klamath River Inter-Tribal Fish and Water Commission. 'At PacifiCorp's invitation, we attended meetings for over two years to work out an application we could all live with. We constantly voiced concerns over fish passage. In the end, we're left feeling betrayed.'

Environmentalists are just as upset. 'Several agencies, local officials and Bush's own panel of scientists have urged dam-removal studies. By ignoring fish passage altogether, PacifiCorp is attempting to foreclose on solutions to the Klamath crisis' said Craig Tucker of

A report by 'Friends of the River'

Friends of the River.

Leaf Hillman of the Karuk Tribe said 'The dams do not benefit Basin communities. They don't provide for irrigation or flood control and even the California Energy Commission tells us that they produce very little electricity. PacifiCorp is looking for a cheap way out, not a solution to the problem.'

He added, 'operating these dams provides few jobs but removing them would provide a much-needed boost to the local economy which would grow as the fish come home in greater numbers.'

Downstream tribes such as the Karuk, Yurok and Hoopa have likely suffered the most. According to Troy Fletcher 'while they kill the fish with their hydropower dams, downstream Native Americans go without fish to eat or electricity in their homes.' He points out that on the Upper Yurok reservation 61 per cent of the homes, a school and two churches are without electricity.

Restoring the Klamath fishery would benefit the commercial fishing industry as well. Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations said, 'These damages have never been mitigated. Frankly, for PacifiCorp to ignore this problem is unacceptable'.

The target date for final license approval is March, 2006.

Friends of the River is a California-based coalition of Native American tribal authorities, environmentalists and commercial fishermen dedicated to defending the state's waterways.

By their friends ...

ON 6 DECEMBER 2000, a ScottishPower press release reported that:

'The University of Edinburgh in partnership with ScottishPower has made a major commitment to protecting the environment by signing a deal to use green energy.'

'Over 45 buildings owned by the University now have their electricity supply matched to small scale hydro and on-shore wind sources of generation operated by ScottishPower.'

News of the deal was welcomed by Robin Harper MSP, at the time Rector of the University. He said:

'Our decision to purchase renewable energy has been influenced by the Scottish Climate Change Programme.'

All very laudable.

Two years later, on 6 December 2002, a Scottish Green Party statement reported that:

'Scotland's Green MSP Robin Harper has won the Best Politician category at the first Scottish Green Energy Awards 2002.'

'Robin Harper won the award "for acting as a champion



Photo: SGP Press Release

We are very much pro-business if it's business that is socially and environmentally responsible ...

of renewable energy throughout the life of the Scottish Parliament, including founding the Scottish Parliamentary Energy Group".

Harper commented at the time:

'I am aware that many people assume that Greens are somehow anti-business and anti-technology. This is absolutely not the case and I hope this award goes some way to debunking this perception. In fact we are very much pro-business if it's business that is socially and environmentally responsible.'

Again, perfectly laudable. Indeed, Robin seems proud of the award and fond of the odd harmless boast about it.

But Karuk and other Native American peoples fighting to defend their environment and their way of life might like to know who sponsored it.

ScottishPower did.

Now here's a chance to show genuine anger at the environmental damage being inflicted on California's fragile environment.

Hand the award back.

You can't have it both ways.

As a gesture, it's free. And it could attract no end of attention, giving a real boost to an important campaign.

Edinbane:

A long way to go

Possibly escaping the notice of some *VoS News* readers, the prestigious *Infrastructure Journal* recently reported that AMEC had won a precedent-setting court case in its bid to build a 27-turbine wind site on crofting land on Edinbane in Skye.

John Price, AMEC's head of business development, was quoted as saying: 'It is a landmark case because we have several windfarm developments on crofting land. If the judge had ruled against us, we may have had to abandon them.'

He also told *The Scotsman* that 'This is a significant hurdle we have overcome. It was a landmark case for wind farm development and for crofters who were looking to boost their income on crofting land.'

VoS News cannot say if this is sloppy journalism or wishful thinking but, whatever, it is not true.

There was no 'landmark' case. The dispute was settled out of court.

The Edinbane Estate Wind Energy Company and estate owner Ruaridh Hilleary had applied to the Scottish Land Court to obtain 'resumption of land' from Common Grazings.

(Common Grazings are shared amongst the individual tenant crofters in a crofting township. The uses to which such designated land can be put are restricted by law. At Edinbane, there are 29 shares on some 600 hectares.)

This 'resumption' was necessary to enable the construction of the 27 turbine bases and their connecting roads *if and when planning permission is granted*.

Highland Council has said that it favours construction of the site but it is still waiting for the conclusion of a Section 75 Agreement.

Such agreements are commonly drawn up between an applicant and a planning authority 'to regulate the use of

By
**VoS News
Reporters**

**AMEC manager
jumps gun**

land'. *VoS News* has yet to discover its probable contents.

Most crofters agreed to accept compensation for loss of their rights but three of the 29 did not sign up to the deal – and two of them went to the Scottish Land Court to challenge the Edinbane Estate application.

In the event, they accepted improved terms. Since it was settled, the case neither sets legal precedent nor provides a basis for any similar application.

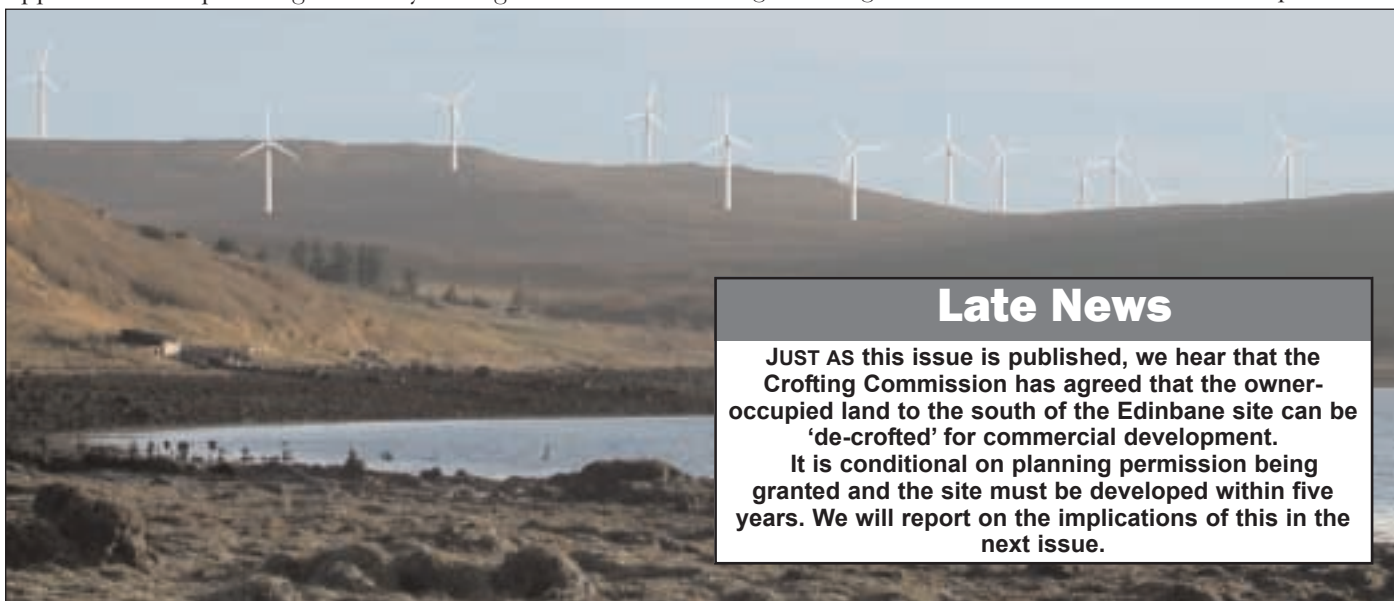
The Land Court has in the meantime continued the case until the final positions of the turbines are known and a definitive map has been lodged.

The southern portion of the proposed site is owner-occupied croftland (only recently purchased from the Scottish Executive!). If the AMEC proposal is to proceed, this has to be 'decrofted'.

Such a decision comes within the remit of the Crofters Commission, a body with statutory responsibilities under the Crofters Act, for and on behalf of the 33,000 people estimated to live on crofts. There is concern amongst locals about how robustly the case will be examined.

However, unlike the Land Court, objections from the community must be considered and there are understood to be at least five of these, including one from a neighbouring crofter.

In a separate development, detailed eagle data for Edinbane have recently been published by the Renewable Development Company, which is seeking to develop the neighbouring Ben Aketil site. This includes a prediction



Late News

JUST AS this issue is published, we hear that the Crofting Commission has agreed that the owner-occupied land to the south of the Edinbane site can be 'de-crofted' for commercial development.

It is conditional on planning permission being granted and the site must be developed within five years. We will report on the implications of this in the next issue.

A mock-up of how Edinbane would look if AMEC win their application

that, between them, Edinbane and Ben Aketil will kill 17 golden eagles over the 25-year lifetime of the turbines.

We understand that the RSPB has written to the Scottish Executive asking that the two proposals are called in for Public Inquiry – because they ‘have the potential to affect the golden eagle population well beyond the population on Skye’.

On top of all this, the application is subject to a formal complaint to the European Union about the poor quality of AMEC’s Environmental Impact Assessment, the cavalier treatment of golden eagles and other raptors and the failure of Highland Council to ensure that adequate environmental information was available before it reached its decision.

There is particular concern because golden eagle data for the Edinbane site were kept secret during the planning process despite SNH’s advice that it ‘could and should’ be made available to the public.

AMEC is a traditional *bête noir* of the ‘green’ lobby due to its international record on environmental issues and its

prominent role in Britain’s nuclear industry. But its increasing dominance of the UK’s wind-energy sector has recently been winning the approval of senior mainstream ‘greens’ despite the controversial nature of many of its chosen sites.

Arguably even more contentious than Edinbane is AMEC’s proposal (in partnership with British Energy) for a massive site on Lewis. This would stride across some of the largest tracts of Europe’s dwindling peat reserves (which are subject to statutory protection at the European level) and across a European Special Protection Area for birds, including golden eagles.

Even those New Labour fellow travellers *Friends of the Earth* have complained about this one – and if you cupped your ears, called for silence and waited for the wind to drop, you might just have heard them do it.

This battle is only in its second round. It has a long way to go.

‘For the greater good of Mankind’

By a local resident

. . . unless you live beside it!

THIS MONTH’S OFFICIAL OPENING of the 35-turbine, £20 million *Cruach Mhor* windfarm in Argyll seemingly marks another stage in a spectacle of efforts to save the planet.

But the interests of the site’s near neighbours have been disregarded.

Many objected because of risks to the water supply: the site occupies a water table which supplied domestic water to several households.

After the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) intervened, the developer agreed to build an alternative supply. It cost about £400,000.

It has been working for about nine months: it has failed on at least 18 occasions – for roughly one day every two weeks, locals have no water.

Several other faults have been reported to do with filtration, colouration and aeration (the water is fizzy).

But while residents suffer, the developer cannot solve the problems although it is looking for big profits. I have made several suggestions:

To ScottishPower before construction, that they move the site 800m to the east and away from the water table (not interested, they would have had to resubmit their plans).

To Argyll & Bute Planning Department, that they use their powers (no success as yet).

To my local councillor. He claims he is not allowed to speak to me because of the danger of having an interest.

Finally, to ScottishPower, insisting that it carries out its planning obligations. They are very apologetic but they suggest privately that they just don’t know why the water supply isn’t working.

Noise pollution is another problem (ScottishPower is in denial).

The huge level of disruption during construction was another.

For objecting, for making views known, for participating in the process of decision making, I and my family have been labeled dissidents, NIMBYs and ‘nukes’.

I have made my opposition to land-based wind farms public. But my impression is that planning law on these matters is stacked heavily in favour of the developer and the local authority appears too intimidated to object for fear of an expensive appeal. Also, the council is constricted by planning guidelines.

The problems can be addressed. The first hurdle is an acceptance that community impact is an issue. Recently one scientific commentator stated that the risk of global warming is so serious that renewables will never cope and that a programme of nuclear power stations

should bypass planning law.

In other words, solutions decided on high should be imposed on localities whether they like it or not. The truth is, as the *Cruach Mhor* experience has shown, the authoritarian solution is already being applied.

For participating in the process of decision making, I and my family have been labelled dissidents, NIMBYs and ‘nukes’ ...

Keep Britain Tidy

Sir – Government efforts to protect foxes by banning hunting are entirely justified. This will ensure that plenty of foxes are available to clean up the bodies of protected birds which are killed by wind turbines. We don’t want rotting carcasses lying everywhere.

Karl T Pipes, Argyll

- This letter may have been published by *The Scotsman* – but it seemed just too good to let go.

CAUSEYMIRE



Photo: Bob Graham

Well-known anti-wind campaigner BOB GRAHAM visited Caithness's new wind-power site at Causeymire in May. He confirmed that the promised jobs bonanza remains elusive – to say the least.

BONUS ENERGY A/S, who manufactured the Causeymire turbines, is also the supplier for the Paul's Hill and Cairn Uish sites near my base down in Moray. So I drove north to take a look.

Twenty turbines had already been erected and one was still under construction when I visited the site in May.

The site engineer told me that the machines are identical to those destined for Moray and boasted that every single component down to the last nut and bolt had been manufactured in Denmark.

This endorses my claim that wind power will bring little benefit to the people of Scotland and even less to the people of Moray. Although construction had involved some local labour, maintenance of the site, which is remotely controlled from Denmark, will be carried out by two people.

A high pressure system had been sitting for several days over the North of Scotland – there was very little wind. My journey to Caithness summed up the futility of the technology: not one of the turbines at Novar, nor the one near Berriedale nor the twenty at Causeymire were moving; *not one* was producing electricity.

I hadn't seen turbines this big before and I was stunned at the stupidity of the location – right next to the main road. They are a distraction for motorists who could face a real threat in winter in the light of evidence that ice on turbine blades can be thrown hundreds of metres.

Every single component had been manufactured in Denmark ... and the site is controlled from Denmark too ...

Causeymire is an historic Blanket Bog and has provided the local people with fuel for hundreds of years. Scottish Natural Heritage has recently reported how huge amounts of CO₂ are released when peat is destroyed, particularly at the depths involved when digging the foundations for wind turbines.

Each turbine needs over 500 tonnes of reinforced concrete: this site will have over 12,000 tonnes buried in perpetuity. Then there are the miles of access tracks.

I can't imagine what Highland Council was thinking about when they gave this development the go-ahead. The vast majority of the benefits are going to Bonus Energy A/S in Denmark, National Windpower, the developer, and the landowner.

National Windpower, first applied for a 48 MW project. This was passed by Highland Council. NWP has now applied to the Executive to increase the size to 55.2 megawatt – three more turbines.

Had Highland Council turned down the larger application, there would automatically have been a Public Inquiry. This has now been avoided. This loophole is being exploited by developers right across Scotland and is, I am convinced, condoned by the Scottish Executive.

Spotted on Ceefax:
'Giving John Prescott power over our countryside is like asking an elephant to tidy your sitting room.'
Former Daily Telegraph editor Sir Max Hastings

Wind Energy Ltd blown out the water

It's 'Marching Orders' for Morvern 'Mom Masts'

On June 21, after receiving a record number of objections, Highland Council rejected four out of five of London-based Wind Energy's planning applications to erect anemometer masts in the world-renowned tourist areas of Ardnamurchan, Mull and Morvern.

They were intended as test masts for a massive proposal for 500 very large turbines in the area.

It had been widely predicted that permission would be granted. In the event, the only one approved is in Glen Sanda in Morvern, already despoiled by tracks for a hydro scheme.

Wind Energy Chief Executive changed

According to the *Sunday Telegraph* (June 20), Mark Shorrocks has been replaced as Wind Energy's Chief Executive. We understand he remains on the board.

A spokesman for local objectors' group *Fairwind* said 'This is as good as it gets – the developers have been resoundingly sent homeward to think again.

'It is a triumph of good sense and responsible thinking for all those who objected because they wanted to protect our precious natural heritage.

'How could our generation ever be forgiven for allowing this world-renowned and unspoiled area to be ruined forever? We are ecstatic at this unexpected but welcome victory.

'Councillors have put the needs of local people and the preservation of pristine environment ahead of money-making schemes by greedy developers who do not care for the environmental consequences or the effects on local tourism.

'We are delighted to see these applications thrown out and we hope it will be the start of an urgent re-think regarding other industrial-scale proposals in Scotland.

'The Scottish Executive has refused to develop a national strategy for renewable energy development despite the advice of, amongst others, the Scottish Society of Directors of Planning, SNH, RSPB and the National Trust.

'As a result, and unknown to the vast majority of Scots, there is now an unprincipled, cash-driven wind-rush in Scotland.

'Proposals for 3,000 turbines are now in the Scottish planning system and, altogether, over 600 wind farms are in planning or under discussion.

'Yet Scotland is nearly at its renewable energy target of 18 per cent by 2010. Scotland's world famous heritage



Photo & graphic: Fairwind

This mockup compares the height of a typical modern turbine to a well-known local landmark, Ardnamurchan Lighthouse

could be irrevocably destroyed to make a wind factory for England.

The wind-rush is not about being green, it's about making money.'

Fairwind's spokesman concluded, 'Wind Energy can appeal this decision – so we still have a fight on our hands. Stay tuned'.

DALMELLINGTON

Vocal minority? My foot!

RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGE of Dalmellington in Ayrshire probably hold the current record for the highest percentage of population to object to the building of a wind-power site.

East Ayrshire Council's planning committee will not consider the Scottish Coal application until the autumn and it is reluctant to confirm the number of objections it has so far received.

But it is understood that a staggering 2,100 of the 3,500 residents have objected to the 25-turbine application at the Chalmerston opencast site.

Local anger is expected to result in an even greater number of objections when AMEC makes a formal application to develop a larger site at nearby Kyle Forest.

Multinational AMEC, it will be remembered, received international condemnation for its plans to build the Chalillo dam in Belize which, a British National History Museum report warned, will cause a 'significant and irreversible reduction of biological diversity' in Belize.

Please send your local stories, pictures, news of developments or requests for assistance to:
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