

News Bulletin

June 2009

In April 2009, the Climate Change strategy web pages received 2,778 external web hits, the Switch It Off web pages received 4,071 web hits and the partnership pages received 6,287 web hits. This represents a total of 13,136 web hits.

Work has recently finished on one of the University of Warwick's largest carbon savings projects since the installation of Combined Heat and Power system (CHP) – the installation of large thermal stores. This major upgrade aims to reduce the University's CO₂ emissions by 800 tonnes per year reducing gas consumption by around 4,420,000 kWh per year, in turn saving the University around £170,000 each year. This will be achieved by storing surplus heat from the CHP engines in large water vessels behind the boiler house which in turn will then be used during peak times.

Activity on the sun is at its lowest for almost 100 years. Telescopes show relative calm on the giant star instead of the often seen tumultuous atmosphere spotted by huge releases of energy known as solar flares. Scientists are clear this won't have a big impact on global temperature, however. Evidence shows concentrations of greenhouse gases have a much greater effect than solar energy.

A new online service has been launched to help everyone from businesses to homeowners decide if a wind turbine will work for them. The web tool, commissioned by the carbon trust and supported by scientific expertise from the Met Office, estimates the yield for a turbine at any given location to help decide whether it would be cost effective and efficient.

Natural England says that England's most familiar landscapes, their wildlife and habitats, will experience wide-ranging changes in the face of climate change. Natural England's Character Area Climate Change project identified the local responses required to safeguard the natural environment and enjoyment of it, taking four specific character areas in England that represented contrasting habitats and landscapes (Cumbria High Fells, Shropshire Hills, Dorset Downs and Cranbourne Chase and the Broads). Reports on each area concluded that significant changes to land management practices are needed to allow the natural environment to adapt, and suggested practical actions that would make these areas more resilient to climate change.

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2009/310309.aspx

A joint report launch recently by 'The Lancet' and University College London (UCL) says that climate change is the biggest threat to global health this century. An inter-disciplinary team at UCL focused on: patterns of disease and mortality, food security, water and sanitation, shelter and human settlements, extreme events, and population migration. Lead author Prof. Anthony Costello said: "The big message of this report is that climate change is a health issue affecting billions of people, not just an environmental issue about polar bears and deforestation. The impacts will be felt not just in the UK, but all around the world – and not just in some distant future but in our lifetimes and those of our children."

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0905/09051501/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8049061.stm>

The European Union's recently-unveiled White Paper on adaptation to climate change is available, alongside a host of supporting documentation, at

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/index_en.htm.

Air Fuel Synthesis (AFS) is a method of making fuels, ranging from petrol to diesel and Jet-A, using renewable energy together with raw materials of water, and the carbon dioxide from the air. The fuel is fully carbon neutral, since its carbon content is extracted from the atmosphere, its carbon is 'borrowed' from the atmosphere, so the net effect of its combustion does not increase atmospheric CO₂ levels.

AFS provides a drop in replacement for oil based fuels. Any nation can make this fuel, since the essentially limitless raw materials are available globally. Air Fuel Synthesis Ltd want to build a small-scale plant to demonstrate the practicality of the concept. This will make a gallon of fuel per day. They intend to build this into a mini container so that it can be demonstrated all over the country. They are looking for support to fund this proof of concept. For more information contact Peter.Harrison@airfuelsynthesis.com. Tony.Marmont@airfuelsynthesis.com

