

Wednesday 31st August

In 1995 there were 28,000 dairy farmers in England and Wales. At the end of 2010 there were just 11,102 and they continue to go out of business at a rate nine per week. The figures hide the suicides, the anxiety, the misery and the wildlife wipeout that has gone with the changes. Whole valleys that were once green have turned brown as the plough has replaced the cow and we import 1.5 million litres of milk into our beautiful country, whose best crop is its grass.

The Countryside Restoration Trust has invested £900,000 in a new dairy facility at Pierrepont Farm in Surrey, putting into practice its belief that farms can be both commercially viable and wildlife-friendly. At its 400-acre arable farm near Cambridge, aptly named "Lark Rise", two pairs of Barn Owls (possibly a third) have successfully bred this year.

www.countrysiderestorationtrust.com

Sources:

Green Health Watch magazine
Positive News
Resurgence
WEM magazine (CIWEM)
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Picture on front cover: Malva by Poppy Pickard

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

August 2011

"He has made everything beautiful in his time.

He has also set eternity in the hearts of men . . .

I know that everything God does will endure for ever.

Nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it."
(Ecclesiastes 3.11 & 14)

"Prayer is like the wire that surrenders to the dynamo,
the flower to the sun, the student to the teacher.

The Gulf Stream will flow through a drinking straw

if the straw is aligned to the Gulf Stream and is not blocked."
(Selwyn Hughes)



Monday 1st August

A report from the UK National Ecosystem Assessment representing the views of 500 experts in ecology, economics and social sciences calculates the value to the economy of mountains, moors, woodland, lakes etc. Rivers, lakes and other wetlands provide £1.5 billion of benefits in water quality. Living within sight of a green space creates £300 of health benefits per person per year. Insect pollinators are worth £430 million a year to British agriculture. Professor Bob Watson, chief scientist at DEFRA, comments: "There is an urgent need to better manage our ecosystems and the natural resources they provide us with. But until now there has been no clear way of valuing the full range of benefits they provide beyond what we buy and sell." The authors stress the need for a collaborative approach to the environment, involving government, businesses, voluntary bodies and civil society. "The UK must also protect overseas environments in order to ensure its own economic prosperity."

Tuesday 2nd August

Bolivia will shortly enact a Law of Mother Earth which will protect people's livelihoods and diverse cultures from the impacts of industry, allowing the people, using Government resources, to regulate industry at national, regional and local level. However, one-third of Bolivia's foreign earnings come from mining companies, so it will need to balance its new obligations against the demands of industry.

Wednesday 3rd August

Ecuador in 2008 changed its constitution to give nature "the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and processes in evolution." A new Union of South American Nations will be formed later this year. If it adopts laws such as Ecuador's across

the region, this could pave the way for a new global regime of ecological justice. Many are campaigning to have Ecocide recognised at the 2012 Earth Summit as a crime against humanity.

Thursday 4th August

Britain's 4th carbon budget legally binds the UK to a reduction of 50% of greenhouse gas emissions from a 1990 base in the period 2023-2027. The UK Energy Research Centre has since reported that energy efficiency measures in UK homes and transport could reduce the cost of building low-carbon power systems by up to £70 billion by 2050. WWF comments: "Any energy price rises due to renewables are dwarfed by the 90% rise in household energy bills that we've seen since 2004 – mainly attributed to rises in the price of gas. By moving to renewable technologies, we reduce our exposure to volatile fossil fuel prices, play our part in addressing the growing threat of climate change and give our economy a much-needed shot in the arm by creating new green jobs and manufacturing industries."

Friday 5th August

Extra safety measures and two fatal accidents at France's new Flamanville nuclear power station have put back completion to 2016 and raised construction costs from the estimated £3.3 billion in 2006 to more than £5 billion now. EDF, the developers, will also build British nuclear plants in Suffolk and Somerset, but it is now assumed that they will not be ready before 2020. Meanwhile, the £1.5 billion per power station required for disposal of the radioactive waste is claimed by Greenpeace to be a hidden subsidy and risks creating a substantial long-term burden for UK taxpayers.

Friday 27th August

The Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee has accused DEFRA of hiding the seriousness of air pollution from diesel fumes, which causes 50,000 premature deaths a year. Its conclusions:
Poor air quality and the harm it causes are likely to breach EU air quality directives, leading to significant fines.
The costs of air pollution are enormous.
Comprehensive cost/benefit analysis should drive both changes in policy and better implementation of existing policy.
Change requires more investment, better coordination of policy, increased public awareness and better research to shape policy.
Local authorities need better support from government to achieve improved air quality.
Poor air quality means poor health and environmental degradation, with long-term consequences for both the UK and the planet.
Government needs to address this major problem urgently.

Saturday 27th August

Sarah Outen, aged 26, has embarked on a two and a half year journey round the globe using only a rowing boat, a kayak and a bicycle. In 2009 she became the youngest person to row single-handed across the Indian Ocean. Before setting out, she said: "We've such a rich heritage of pioneers, mariners and groundbreaking expeditions from the UK, so I'm proud to be flying the flag. It's cool to be spreading the word that women do crazy expeditions too – there are a lot of beards in this field!". Besides raising funds for WaterAid, the Jubilee Sailing Trust, Coppafeel and MND, she hopes to inspire young people to be ambitious about meeting challenges in their own lives.
www.sarahouten.com

Sunday 28th August

Father, we cannot spread care for your creation throughout the world nor can we bring about justice worldwide, but help us to begin where we are. Make us honest and just in all our dealings, true in our words and actions. We cannot alter the course of a suffering and unjust world, but help us to light candles in the darkness, in the Name of Jesus Christ who will bring the dawn of righteousness and peace at his glorious Day of Justice and Judgement. Amen

Monday 29th August

Costa Rica has declared a marine protected area extending to one million hectares around the Cocos Islands. The area includes a group of seamounts (underwater mountains) which host more than 30 unique marine species such as white-tipped reef sharks, hammerhead and whale sharks, leatherhead turtles and tuna. Scott Henderson of Conservation International said: "Costa Rica and its neighbours are important centres of marine diversity and abundance that underpin the fishing and tourism industries. Today's announcement confirms Costa Rica's role as a regional leader in green economic development."

Tuesday 30th August

The International Energy Agency has reported that in 2009 global subsidies for the oil, coal and gas industries were six times higher (\$312 billion) than for wind, solar and tidal power (\$57 billion). It predicts that if fossil fuel subsidies were abolished by the 37 governments that now provide 95% of the subsidies, it would reduce demand for energy in those countries and reduce the world's energy-related CO2 emissions by 5.8%.

Saturday 20th August

“Overpopulation in various countries has become a serious threat to human health and a grave obstacle to any attempt to organise peace on this planet.” (Albert Einstein)

“The idea that population growth guarantees a better life – financially or otherwise – is a myth that only those who sell nappies, prams and the like have any right to believe.”

(Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General)

“The overpopulation of this small island nation, already stricken with a mountain of debt that could blight generations, is the gravest crisis we face.” (George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury)

Sunday 21st August

“Unlike plagues of the dark ages or contemporary diseases we do not yet understand, the modern plague of overpopulation is soluble by means we have discovered and with resources we possess.” (Martin Luther King)

Loving Father, forgive us that while many seek to live more sustainably by travelling less, conserving energy and consuming less, we for so long have turned a blind eye to the impact of our numbers on your world. Forgive us for our ignorance and unwillingness to face the truth. Help us to think deeply and honestly about the choices we have to make if we are to reduce our impact on a finite world. Amen.

Monday 22nd August

Clean-up of former industrial sites is an expensive necessity if we are to make the best use of our limited land area. CIWEM is concerned that Government cuts to the budgets of local authorities and the Environment Agency could lead to pollution effects and environmental

damage. “If the Government reduces its support for contaminated land specialists in the public sector, this could lead to disastrous schemes that pollute and damage the land, leading high profile court cases. We urge the Government to put sufficient legislation and guidance in place to protect against inappropriate and unregulated developments in the UK.”

Tuesday 23rd August

A trial of clean-up techniques at the former Hickson Chemical Works in Castleford, Yorkshire, is coming to an end, leaving the removal of surplus plant equipment as the only obstacle to redevelopment of the site by developers Aeternum as a modern industrial green-tech hub. The total cost will be around £20 million.

Wednesday 24th August

The think-tank Environmental Protection UK is urging the Government to support key research and delivery tools in the drive to ensure safe and sustainable re-use of brownfield land. The contaminated land regime deals with the UK’s industrial legacy, but continuing uncertainties on new government regulations are hampering local authorities from taking a more productive approach.

Thursday 25th August

Nestlé’s York site, which makes over a billion Kitcats a year, has achieved zero waste to landfill status four years ahead of schedule, so saving nearly £120,000 a year, while the sale of nearly 800 tonnes of recovered materials such as cardboard, plastics, metal, pallets and metallised film, has generated additional income. All 14 Nestlé sites in the UK are due to achieve zero waste status by 2015.

Saturday 6th August

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) there are 443 nuclear reactors operating in 29 countries and a further 64 under construction. According to UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon “We must put a sharper focus on the new nexus between natural disasters and nuclear safety. The challenge of climate change is bringing with it greater extremes of weather. Nuclear power plants must be prepared to withstand everything from earthquakes to tsunamis, from fires to floods.” Also “We must undertake a renewed cost/benefit analysis of nuclear energy.” Next year sees the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit. Ban Ki-moon

proposes wider powers for the IAEA to set international standards for construction, guarantees of public safety, transparency and information-sharing.

Sunday 7th August

Loving Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of all who work in science and technology. We pray that misplaced human ingenuity may not lead us up blind and dangerous alleys, but that we may have the wisdom to use your gifts of freedom and inventiveness in your service and in the service of your creation.

Monday 8th August

A Carbon Trust Marine Growth Briefing suggests that up to 68,000 jobs could be created in the UK wave and tidal stream industry by 2050, while the Government’s own Offshore Valuation Report estimates a figure of 145,000 jobs in offshore renewables including wind power. Germany already employs 367,000 people in its renewables industry. WWF comments: “Greater support for renewables and energy efficiency are the winning combination for the UK’s energy policy. The focus on

unsustainable and expensive nuclear energy is an unwelcome diversion.”

Tuesday 9th August

A £15 million Government-funded Renewable Heat Premium scheme will focus on the 4 million UK households not connected to mains gas. Householders can claim up to £1,250 towards the cost of biomass boilers, heat pumps and solar thermal panels. The £300 grant for solar panels is available for all households including those with mains gas. Minister Greg Barker said: “This should be great news for people who are reliant on expensive oil or electric heating as the Premium Payment scheme is really aimed at them. Getting money off an eco-heater will not just cut carbon emissions. It will also help create a market in developing, selling and installing kit like solar thermal panels and heat pumps.”

Wednesday 10th August

On the Isle of Eigg, a new electricity grid is supplied by three hydro-electric generators, four wind turbines and solar PV panels. When these generate a surplus, power is conserved in batteries or used to heat communal buildings. There are backup diesel generators for times when the grid needs a boost. Because people are careful over their usage, renewable generation meets up to 95% of energy demand. Each property can use up to 5 kW at any one time and everyone has an energy monitor to check energy consumption. According to Juliet Davenport of Good Energy: “The energy landscape of the future will be transformed from one dominated by a few large faceless corporations to an energy democracy that supports thousands of independent generators, making clean, green energy in their homes and communities across the country.”

Thursday 11th August

Kenya's biggest foreign exchange earner – above tourism, coffee and tea – is the export of flowers, mainly to the UK. But their demand for water has led to a 2-metre drop in the level of nearby Lake Naivasha in the Rift Valley. David Harper of Leicester University has developed a briquette made from waste paper, cardboard and plant residues for use as a fuel instead of the charcoal which is decimating Kenya's forests. This is part of a wider scheme to encourage everyone to use water less and to give the lake a chance to recover.

Friday 12th August

A letter to the press from fifteen environmental and other charities states that the present way of charging for water fails to target help for those who need it most and that unmetered bills are rising faster than metered bills. Charging by rateable value gives no incentive to reduce wasteful consumption. Water meters should be installed in all homes over the next decade, so protecting vulnerable water customers and the freshwater environment.

Saturday 13th August

A panel convened by the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) reports that 'ocean life is at high risk of entering a phase of extinction of marine species unprecedented in human history . . . The rate of change vastly exceeds what we were expecting even a couple of years ago.' Some pollutants stick to the surface of plastic particles now found on the ocean bed, so increasing the pollutants consumed by bottom-feeding fish. Previous mass extinctions have been associated with trends now being observed, such as disturbances of the carbon cycle, acidification and hypoxia (depletion of oxygen) in seawater. IPSO's recommendations include:

Stopping exploitative fishing now, with special emphasis on the high seas, where there is little effective regulation;

Mapping and then reducing the input of pollutants including plastics, agricultural fertilisers and human waste;

Making sharp reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

"CO2 levels are now so high that ways of pulling the gas out of the atmosphere need urgently to be researched . . . We have to bring CO2 emissions down to zero within 20 years, otherwise we shall see steady acidification of the seas, heat events that wipe out kelp forests and coral reefs. We will see a very different ocean."

Sunday 14th August

Lord, you have given us this beautiful world with the ability to harvest its products for our nourishment and comfort, but we have gone further. In our greed we are robbing future generations, poisoning your world and destroying many of your creatures. Help us, dear Lord, to come to our senses, to know that we interfere with your world at our peril, for it is your hand, not ours, that rules your world, for you created the universe and we are here as your servants.

Monday 15th August

Only ten years after the last severe drought, Ethiopia and its neighbours again face the prospect of famine. The immediate cause is erratic rainfall, but behind that lie the years of unsustainable population growth. In 1960 Ethiopia's population was 23 million – it is now 83 million. In the same period Somalia's population has trebled and Kenya's has grown fivefold. The growth in population counteracts improvements in agriculture and infrastructure and leaves people vulnerable when food

production is disrupted by adverse natural or human events such as war. Population Matters comments: "It is right that we should provide disaster relief in response to humanitarian crises. But we must also consider how best to prevent future disasters. Unless we address population growth, the scale of relief required in future can only increase. Long-term investment in agriculture and infrastructure will be ineffective unless we also fund the family planning programmes necessary to relieve the pressures of growing populations."

Tuesday 16th August

Baroness Tonge and Richard Ottaway MP, chair and vice-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development & Reproductive Health, have called for long-term sustainable solutions, such as family planning, to the famine in the Horn of Africa. "Disaster relief is an essential response to humanitarian crises, but prevention of future disasters is also crucially important. Unless we address population growth and reproductive health, the children we save now will be bringing their families to the same feeding centre in 20 years' time."

The total fertility rate for the women of Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia and Kenya is between 4.6 and 6.5 children per woman and the population of these countries has grown from 41 million in 1960 to 167 million now and is still rising.

Wednesday 17th August

One of the UN Millennium Development Goals is the provision of modern family planning services. It is estimated that meeting the unmet need of the 215 million who lack access to it would cost as little as \$3.6 billion a year, a fraction of today's aid flows. This would contribute to poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and improved health, as well as

laying the foundation for limiting human impact on the environment.

Thursday 18th August

According to the Office of National Statistics Britain's population has increased by almost half a million in just a year – the highest rate of increase since 1962 – made up almost equally of natural increase and net immigration.

Population Matters comments: "Whether we talk about carbon emissions, protecting the natural habitat, food and energy security or the provision of housing and health services, it is not in our interest for the UK population to keep increasing, year in year out. We ask individuals to consider the environment and sustainability when thinking about how many children they have. We also call on government to take the action needed to stabilise the population.

Specifically, they should look at enhancing family planning services and sex education, limiting automatic tax credits and benefit payments to the first two children per couple and taking more effective action to limit immigration."

Friday 19th August

"One of the great challenges today is the population explosion. Unless we can tackle this issue effectively, we will be confronted with the problem of the natural resources being inadequate for all the people on this earth. . . . The growth in population is bound up with poverty, and in turn poverty plunders the earth. When human groups are dying of hunger, they eat everything; grass, insects, everything. They cut down the trees, they leave the land dry and bare. All other concerns vanish. That's why, in the next thirty years, the problems we call 'environmental' will be the hardest that humanity has to face." (The Dalai Lama)