



Environmental
Protection
Scotland

Newsletter

August 2018

Welcome

WITH September marking the arrival of autumn, we examine one of the best air quality campaigns of 2018. Lawson Wight is enjoying deserved success with the BurnRight campaign which aims to educate wood burning stove owners about the air pollution dangers of improper use. We interview Lawson about why the initiative has been so successful, as the country gears up for the start of the domestic burning season.

The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) last week published its long-awaited report on estimated mortality figures from the impacts of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} – putting the figure at between 28,000 and 36,000 annually. We dip into the lengthy report to look at some of the main points.

We also have news of the launch of City of Edinburgh Council's consultation on its blueprint for the future of City Mobility, Low Emission Zone and City Centre Transformation.

EPS also highlights its Use Environmental Data Responsibility conference, to be held at the IET Teacher Building in Glasgow, on Monday October 8. There is an excellent line-up of speakers and registration details can be found below.

Finally, members can try and win a copy of Serhii Plokyh's fascinating new book about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, with a full review in this issue.

DOMESTIC BURNING CAMPAIGN RE-IGNITED FOR AUTUMN

A TRIP made by British chimney-sweeps more than a decade ago to Germany has inspired a new campaign which is having a dramatic impact on the way households burn solid wood fuel.



Edinburgh-born Lawson Wight (left), who is behind the BurnRight initiative, and his colleagues discovered in Bavaria in 2007 that the country was "25 to 30 years ahead" of the UK in the use and regulation of domestic burning.

The discovery came just as sales of wood burning stoves were starting to take off in Britain, a trend which has led to increasing concerns about high levels of Particulate Matter (PM) from poorly maintained stoves or incorrect burning practices damaging air quality.

The Scottish Government is considering ways to deal with the impact of domestic burning in its refresh of the Cleaner Air For Scotland (CAFS) strategy and a ban on the selling of wet wood and restrictions of certain types of wood burning stoves are widely expected to be announced by DEFRA.

Lawson, Chair of the Guild of Master Chimney Sweeps, has been very encouraged by the success of the campaign to encourage chimney-sweeps to spread the message about safe burning to their customers.

Read the full interview with Lawson [here](#)

UK HEALTH COMMITTEE COMEAP ISSUES REVISED MORTALITY FIGURES FROM NO₂ AND PM_{2.5}

A MAJORITY of the UK's advisory committee on air pollution impacts has estimated the number of deaths that occur annually in this country as a result of people being exposed to the long-term effects of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) or Particulate Matter _{2.5} (PM_{2.5}) is between 28,000 and 36,000.

The long-awaited update was published last week by the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) – but not without dissenting voices from within its own ranks.

The report's authors have been trying to establish a scientific approach to measuring the 'mortality burden' from human made air pollution by conducting studies involving experts, including from King's College London, St George's, University of London, Ricardo Energy and Environment, Public Health England, and examining other research from the UK and a number of countries.

EPS's summary of the report on the update can be read [here](#)



EDINBURGH'S RADICAL PLAN TO IMPROVE CAPITAL'S AIR QUALITY

CITY of Edinburgh Council launches a consultation in September on ambitious plans which aim to put people at the heart of its plans to transform air quality and improving health across the city, through the Low Emission Zone and innovative approaches to making its thoroughfares and pavements more accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

Entitled 'Edinburgh: connecting our city, transforming our places,' the blueprint is based on widespread discussions that took place across the city earlier this year with the public and various organisations.

It is no surprise that the plans include 'vehicle-free days' after the success of the city's Clean Air Day event in June, which saw The Mound and part of George Street closed off to vehicles for a range of events.

Also under consideration are further traffic restrictions, a workplace parking levy, wider pavements and improvements to public spaces. The city's Transport and Environment Committee has signed off the report with the public consultation due to begin in September. The LEZ comes into force in 2019.

Transport Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes said: "This prospectus is a truly ambitious document ...about what kind of place we want Edinburgh to be. Frankly, the status quo is just not an option anymore."

The consultation can be found via this link on City of Edinburgh Council's website:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2530/reshaping_edinburghs_city_centre_for_future_generations



USE ENVIRONMENTAL DATA RESPONSIBLY CONFERENCE

Monday 8th October 2018, Glasgow



Big data sets and analytics are being used to protect Scotland's environment, improving air quality, noise mapping, energy efficiency, promoting environmental justice, tracking climate change, monitoring water quality and evaluating land quality.

This event will explore the opportunities and safeguards that are needed in this new, emerging field.

Advances in data gathering and sharing mean that in 2018 we have more information available than in the past. Other examples include details of parks and other outdoor spaces, airport passenger numbers, bus/rail/tram and Subway services, live traffic information, car-park flows, road works and the location of public CCTV cameras.

For details of how to book tickets visit [www.ep-](http://www.ep-scotland.org.uk/events)

scotland.org.uk/events

UK CONFERENCES

ALL ROUTES LEAD TO BIRMINGHAM FOR AIR QUALITY CONFERENCE

BRITAIN's second city of Birmingham hosts a major air quality conference at the end of October.

The two-day Routes to Clean Air event, organised by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), has an impressive roster of speakers from across the emissions, air quality, public health, transport analytics to academic, business and media sector.

Held at the Birmingham Conference and Events Centre on Monday October 29 and Tuesday October 30, issues covered include air quality, best practice examples and the practical challenges faced during their implementation.

With the issue of wood burning stoves a growing concern, particularly in cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as other towns across Scotland, among the speakers is Dr Gary Fuller of King's College London, who will discuss what can be done to monitor PM10 from household burning.

There are 'super-early bird' tickets available. Full details can be found at www.the-ies.org/events/iaqm-routes-clean-air-2018

BOOK REVIEW & COMPETITION

CHERNOBYL – HISTORY OF A TRAGEDY (HARDBACK/ebook)

AUTHOR: SERHII PLOKHY PUBLISHER: ALLEN LANE

Review by John Bynorth

IN the early hours of the morning of April 26th 1986, scientists at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, that was considered to be one of the Soviet Union's best and most reliable reactors, engaged in what should have been routine shutdown of its Unit-4 reactor to carry out repairs following a series of minor radioactive leaks.

Viktor Briukhanov, a senior Communist Party in Kiev who ran the plant in the then Soviet Union controlled region, left the job of halting the nuclear reaction in a steam turbine to allow it to be cleaned, to his staff. He was enjoying the weekend off. However, there were not enough cooling rods in the unit to dissipate the build-up of nuclear energy, a fuel channel in the reactor core then melted and uranium was released into its core – equivalent to 1.5 million curies of radionuclides (with one curie the same as the amount of radiation released by the fission of 37 billion atoms). Despite a previous nuclear failure at an identical plant in Leningrad, the team of engineers paid little heed to the problem and continued the shut-down test. However, Igor Kazachkov, that morning's shift manager, was under pressure to get the job done and failed to realise that he didn't have enough control rods to lower into the reactor....



read the full review [here](#)

BOOK COMPETITION:

We have one copy of the book to give away to a Newsletter reader, who can email the correct answer to this question?

Q: Which country (outside of the Soviet Union) was the first to become aware there had been a nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986?

Please send your answer with your name, organisation and address to admin@ep-scotland.org.uk marked 'BOOK COMPETITION' by September 7.

EXPERT ADVISORY GROUPS (EAGs)

AIR QUALITY (AQ)

WE hosted a very well attended meeting of the AQ EAG on August 8, when members of the group were updated on the Clean Air Day event and heard a presentation on the topic of 'chemical characterisation & measurement of Black Carbon air pollution' given by guest speaker Dr Philippa Ascough of Glasgow University/Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in November. A response has been submitted on behalf of the group to the Scottish Government's discussion paper on environmental strategy, which closed last week.

SCOTTISH NOISE ADVISORY GROUP (SNAG)

SNAG's next meeting is due to take place on Wednesday September 26th at the EPS offices. The draft agenda has been sent out on behalf of the chair, Dr Bernadette McKell, and members of the group are due to hear from a guest speaker.

LAND QUALITY (LQ)

There was a good response from experts interested in joining the LQ group following the article about its work in last month's Newsletter. Chair Roslyn McIntosh hopes to arrange the next meeting of the revised group shortly.

CONSULTATIONS

FOLLOWING the success of the Glasgow 2018 European Championships, when the streets around George Square were temporarily sealed off to allow pedestrian access to the festivities, the City Council has launched an informal online consultation on whether this should become permanent. You can respond here

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GS2018/

SEPA's consultation on its 'route map' for Scotland's river, loch, groundwater, estuary and coastal water bodies https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/communications/river-basin-management-planning-in-scotland-statem/consult_view/

The consultation on SEPA'S river management plan for the River Tweed in the Borders https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/communications/working-together-statement-of-consultation-steps-f/consult_view/

DEFRA's call for evidence on the impact of vehicle brake dust, tyre and road wear on air quality <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/brake-tyre-and-road-surface-wear/>

IN THE PRESS & ON TV

MEDIA PLUGS INTO ELECTRIC CARS AND CHARGE-POINTS

THERE has been an upsurge of interest in the Scottish Press about the rising number of electric vehicles on the roads, with specific attention being drawn as to whether there will be enough charge-points to cope with demand.

EPS gave comments to both The Herald and the Daily Express, two newspapers known for their interest in consumer-led stories, about this issue.

The Express article was based on a Freedom of Information request which found there was only one public charging point for every 71 vehicles, and warned that not enough are being created, leading to gloomy warnings of 'potential chaos' in the years to come.

Scotland continues to lead the way in electric car revolution



Electric car sales are going well in Scotland
The Herald highlighted rising number of second-hand EV sales.

The Herald portrayed the future of EVs in Scotland in a more positive light on August 13 following a survey by a car data firm, which found Argyll and Bute was the second most popular area in the UK for the sale of used EV/hybrid vehicle sales, with Angus in 10th, North Ayrshire in 11th place and Edinburgh in 12th, heartening news for these member local authorities!

EPS provided The Herald with further details of some of the EV charging points, particularly in Argyll and Bute, to back up the survey's claims and the article also led to a very positive leader comment in the newspaper – further raising awareness of electric vehicles.



Lack of charge points is threat to future of electric cars in Scotland

SCOTLAND has only one public electric vehicle charging point for every 4,300 drivers, according to new figures and only 21 public charging points are due to be added to the current network of 703 by 2016 – when driver and petrol cars are due to be scrapped – leading to fears of potential chaos.



Express painted a doom-laden scenario for EV's.

On August 21, Greig Cameron, Business Editor of The Times in Scotland, wrote a story quoting a ScottishPower spokesman who claimed millions of pounds needs to be spent to prevent the increase in EV use putting a strain on the National Grid. It was accompanied by two cases studies, one of which highlighted the increasing network of charge-points in the Dundee City Council area.

With the current levels of media interest, EPS is detecting many opportunities for local authorities to place positive stories about to encourage EV use across Scotland, which can only be a good thing. If you've got a story to tell, please email admin@ep-scotland.org.uk and we can explain your work next time we get a call from the media.

Finally, Dr Xand van Tulleken's excellent BBC TV 'Fighting For Air' documentary about how a group of shop owners in the King's Heath area of Birmingham took it upon themselves to improve air quality by cutting traffic pollution was aired again on August 19. The experiment resulted in a dramatic drop in the levels of NOx and PM. The programme can be watched here www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b09m2djj/fighting-for-air

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

- www.express.co.uk/news/uk/998193/Lack-of-charge-points-electric-cars-Scotland-motoring-energy-environmental
- www.heraldscotland.com/news/16413989.scotland-continues-to-lead-the-way-in-electric-car-revolution
- www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/16414439.herald-view-the-need-to-get-plugged-in-to-the-future-of-travel/
- www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millions-needed-to-protect-infrastructure-xpsgc93j7

NEXT MONTH – URBAN DATA

WE interview Philip James, Senior Lecturer in GIS at Newcastle University, and Jim Mills, of Air Monitors, about the work of the university's Urban Observatory, which provides live data to the city's citizens on a range of environmental indicators from air pollution to noise data from flightpaths and live traffic flows.

There will also be a special feature on efforts by some local authorities to utilise the internet to raise awareness of noise and how the public can report problems. There will also be the latest consultation links and other news.

The next issue is out on **Friday September 28.**

If you have a news item to highlight the work of your local authority, company or organisation in the Newsletter please contact admin@ep-scotland.org.uk marking the email '**NEWSLETTER.**'

EPS is the continuation of an eminent line of charities going back to the days of the National Society for Clean Air and more recently Environmental Protection UK. Our objectives include the support and

development of the work of Scotland's environmental regulators and scientists based on sound science, objectivity and best practice. We seek to work towards a cleaner, quieter, healthier sustainable Scotland.

WE HAVE MOVED

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