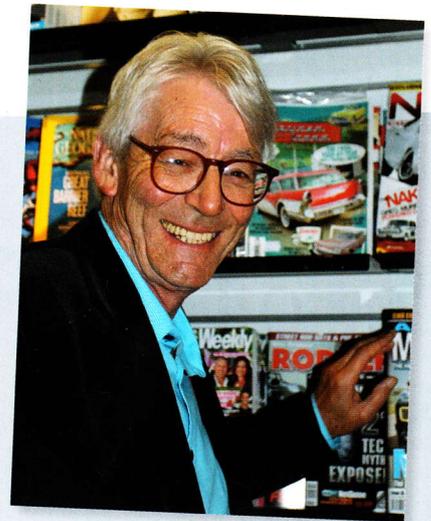


Miracle cures for Cloud Cuckoo Land

Energy observer Jim Hopkins explains why the Greens' economic vision has more loose ends than a dysentery epidemic.



*"The best laid plans o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy."
(To a Mouse - Robbie Burns)*

AYE, ROBBIE, 'TIS A CRUEL WORLD indeed, for rodents and reformers alike. And the advocates of wind power too, who've just copped a whopping serve from an Edinburgh University Prof. It's Culloden in reverse, really; a sassenach assassination, at least in policy terms. Because Professor Gordon Hughes is asserting that Britain's "best laid plans" for wind turbines to avert an ecotastrophe are, in fact, bringing "nought but grief and pain."

Wind power's "promis'd joy" of a shrunken carbon footprint is utter mcBollocks, adds the Prof. He says Britain's wind farms will actually produce a footling 2.8 percent reduction in emissions. (Please don't tell Lucy Lawless or she'll be lashing herself to a spinning blade at the earliest opportunity.)

And consumers are paying a flamin' fortune (£120 billion) for their windy wonderland, nearly 10 times more than the £13 billion needed "to generate the same amount of electricity from efficient gas-fired power stations." Which hasn't stopped the British gummint handing out "monstrous" subsidies - £250,000 per year for any turbined sheik hosting a machine generating £150,000 worth of electricity. Eco-nomics 101, dude.

Mercifully, these revelations have roused little interest here. Our journalists may have quietly dropped Global Warming as the apocalypse du jour (When was the last time you saw a full page, belching chimney OMG, We're Doomed feature?) but they still won't apply a blow torch to the ecovangelist's Y-fronts.

Which is good for the Greens, who love wind, especially if it's producing power for the eco-bulbs. Wind is one of the Smart Green Technologies (SGTs) that Green Leader of the Joint Party, Dr Russel Norman, has been promoting as an alternative to Bill's blighted budget.

It's a slick piece of packaging, this, cool as an iPad, neat as a

Tweet and, like, totally new age, man. You can't argue with 'Smart,' can you? - unless you want to upset your iPhone. And everybody's Green these days. It's the new apple pie. Stick 'em together, chuck in Technology - you know, all that T they make in China - and you've got a fiscal fix guaranteed to get the Gaga gang fizzing at the bung. It's, like, way better than cows with runny bottoms and big rigs frightening the sea horses. Muck is so-o-o-o yesterday. SGT is WIA,** man!

Except it's not. Put bluntly, the Greens' economic vision has more loose ends than a dysentery epidemic. What SGT are we going for? GE? Nuclear? Space Mining? Mooagra - the whey-based cure for erectile dysfunction? The Greens don't say. Nor do they say what the switch will cost. Oh, but they will be redirecting money currently allocated to roading.

This is policy developed by people who hate cars and regard them as yucky, awful, big, bright, shiny things with fins. Duh! Wake up and smell the carbon, guys. If you want Smart, you're driving it. The modern motor car is SGT embodied; fuel use slashed, 80 percent recyclable, full of clever, keyless, wi-fi stuff - the advances are astonishing.

Spend more on the roads, Russ and you may get your revolution.

Meanwhile, we don't know what your SGT is or what it will cost or when its benefits will arrive. Though we do know that 5000 SGT businesses have gone down the Germanic gurgler since Mrs Merkel said, "Achtung! Recession on ze port bow" and canned their subsidies.

A New Jerusalem dependent on subsidies doth not a remedy make, and if it weren't for the fact that a generation of greenwashed schoolchildren has grown up and become journalists, this codswollop would be laughed out of court.

Having frightened the horses with a raft of doomsday predictions about what could happen if we drill, mine or milk, the Greens are now peddling Doctor Norman's Medicinal Compound, the only miracle cure guaranteed to make everyone in Cloud Cuckoo Land feel better.

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