



Energy Revolution: Climate change and our post-carbon future

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New to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

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The British edition of this obviously very international production has a foreword from Ed (David's smarter brother) Miliband. In it he perceptively says, 'On the issue of climate change more than any other, it is young people who will see the effects of action we take now.' And that's the jumping-off point for this multi-faceted assembly of ideas, facts and fancies about our carbon and post-carbon future. With a list of authors, editors, managers, coordinators and contributors long enough to cause Dorling Kindersley embarrassment, it presents, eventually, an intriguingly positive version of how we earthlings can turn the carbon cycle from vicious spiral to virtuous circle.

But this is no easy read, in fact it may not be designed to be conventionally read at all, being full of separate (but related) bits of information, theories, advice, questions and prophecies derived from many sources and churned until a sort of eco-butter results. And, of course, eco-buttermilk.

There's enough butter to spread over three *tranches*. First we huddle round the present problem - global warming. No place for sceptics here as with the help of **New Scientist's** Fred Pearce (now there's a name I know) we pick up the basics of a warming world (every 'regular' American produces 20 tonnes of CO² per year).

Then we move to a postulated solution - a post-carbon future. Familiar features like solar power-towers and cookers (hey, my dad was using solar power to purify beeswax in 1947), geothermal coops and tidal turbines rub shoulders with 'smart' electric grids and the 'smart' meters that we'll all have by 2020 - allegedly, Shai Agassi's electric cars, and algal biofuel. The grisly vision of geo-engineering gets a brief look-in too.

And finally, folks, how do we do it? The meagreness of this *tranche* suggests we may not know yet. The *ignis fatuus* of carbon offsetting gets an airing but really it's down to international political and commercial cooperation and individual flexibility and restraint. Transition towns, solar cities and vegetable villages all have their part to play and the book ends envisaging today's carrot-mobsters as tomorrow's carbon-crunchers.

This book may not be designed for end-to-end reading and those who are weaned on screenformation may fare better

than those not. Its real use is probably as a teacher/leader's discussion handbook. Me, I think I'll put the kettle on and light the fire.

Running Order:

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