

JEAN DEAN TALKS
TO THE CARBON COACH
AND FINDS OUT WHY
GREEN IS THE NEW
BLACK THIS SEASON...

the carbon coach₂

THE BIRDS ARE DOING IT, THE BEES ARE DOING IT,
EVEN HOLLYWOOD STARS ARE DOING IT...

Not just speaking out, (about climate change) but taking action too. The 'low carbon' Toyota Prius Hybrid (petrol electric) is the car to be seen in – that's what Leonardo Di Caprio and Penelope Cruz decided a while ago. In Hollywood (and Notting Hill, increasingly!) this car is almost de rigeur!

Kevin Bacon, Jorja Fox, Orlando Bloom, Misha Barton (from the OC), and Bradley Whitford are just some of the beautiful US people campaigning for action – the US Administration is having to listen!



DAVE HAMPTON WAS RECENTLY
HONOURED TO RECEIVE AN AWARD
FOR SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP
FROM BUILDING MAGAZINE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BUILDING MAGAZINE

REGULAR READERS OF OUR MAGAZINE will know that we enjoy publishing stories which make big differences to people's lives. When Dave Hampton, aka 'The Carbon Coach' first approached me to discuss fun ways of saving the planet I tuned in – the message is becoming louder and clearer every day!

I met Dave towards the end of last year at my home in Beaconsfield. I know how privileged we are and I often feel guilty about the environment. You see, it's something I care deeply about but, as I explained to Dave, I just find it really difficult to find the time to be properly 'green'. It isn't always easy to save the planet when you can just about manage to cope with getting the kids to school, running a business and still remaining sane. But, I liked the sound of Dave and he was passionate about putting his message across.

Dave will tell you that humanity only has a few years left to bring about truly miraculous reductions in global warming gases – but that by doing so we will save the planet as we know it for our children, feel good, and save money. He believes it too. The way in which this global armageddon story has crept up on us is alarming.

For decades we have been told "the science hasn't quite been proven yet" and "the scientists aren't sure how big the problem is". Well those days are gone.* All now agree there is a problem. A mighty big one. Dave thinks it's the biggest of all time.

*Consider how short an interval there was between 'we don't think there's a problem' a few years ago to 'it may well be too late now!' And of course if we all think it's too late to do anything, then it is!

We are all party to this global denial, and we are all busy just coping, as I previously mentioned. We have been assisted in staying in the dark - in that state of denial - by some clever commercial vested interests. From big oil, airlines, car-makers, government even, no-one is in a hurry to *call time* on the longest ever party in the history of the Universe (*as Douglas Adams called it in HitchHikers Guide to the Galaxy.*) But the party is ending. Sound bad? It need not be.

Just as UK led the world into the first Industrial Revolution, Dave reckons we will lead the world out of it. Into the Low Carbon Economy. Culturally, technologically, fiscally. Can we fix it? Yes we can!

Our lifestyles as we know them have grown over the years to depend on vast quantities of oil. Vast. When something is in seemingly infinite supply, and appears to solve many human problems, we adopt it like there is no tomorrow. Well, now soon there might not be!

Oil is starting to run out. The global bonfire of the last 150 or so years – consuming - in just a few generations – millions of years worth of fossil fuel - precious underground stored sunlight energy – all burnt in one carbon blowout extravaganza! The effect of this 'bonfire' on our climate is coming home to roost. We have unleashed climate chaos and there is more to come. No-one will be exempt.



DAVE AND HIS INFAMOUS 'YARD' STICK BALLOON. REMEMBER, THIS BALLOON REPRESENTS JUST ONE KILO OF CARBON DIOXIDE

That was the bad news. The good news, is that you reader, are wide awake, and capable of responding. There are tremendous opportunities for leadership, (just as there are opportunities for head in sand denial!)

So can it be that each of our houses, cars, and airflights are small weapons of mass destruction? Well actually, yes.

To see how, Dave took me through a quick rough audit of my family's annual 'tonnage' as he called it. My carbon footprint. The result:

- Home energy: 40 tonnes.
- Car petrol: 10 tonnes.
- Flights abroad: 14 tonnes.
- Total: 64 tonnes

My family of four, Dave tells me, is a 64 tonne per year family.

64 tonnes: What does that mean? Dave's eyebrows barely flicker! "Yes it's a lot" he says, "but it is probably a lot less than many of your friends" he reassures me. "And they don't know their's yet!"

With four of us in our household our 64 tonnes could be said to be 16 tonnes each. On same basis the national average is 5 tonnes.

So we have some work to do.

How on Earth do we visualise 64 tonnes?

Well, Dave can help here too. One kilo of pure CO₂ (carbon dioxide) gas – occupies a giant balloon of 1 metre (3 feet or 1 yard) diameter. (See above)

This is a large balloon indeed – too wide to pass through a doorway! This is the

'yard' stick Dave uses. 1 balloon is created by each 3 miles in the car. 5 minutes of boiler firing. 12 hours of TV. Each of these end up adding one more of these balloons to our atmosphere – and its filling up!

And my 64 tonnes? Dave invites me to imagine seven of these purple balloons escaping from an upstairs window, falling slowly to the ground. (CO₂ is heavier than air). Every hour! Every day. Each year. That's 64,000 balloons in total and that's 64 Tonnes per year

Dave's footprint for his family is 9 tonnes. Lower, as you would expect from someone with his views. His family – 6 in total – contribute 1.5 tonnes each – but Dave's been practicing being carbon light for a while now, so you'd hope he'd be doing well! Then again 9 tonnes is still a lot: his purple picture is still one balloon per hour!

If CO₂ were visible, if it were coloured (purple say) we would have witnessed the sky changing colour in our lifetime, such is the rate we send CO₂ to air-fill, twice as fast as nature can cope with it. CO₂ has risen from 330ppm, 20 years ago to 380 ppm now. If CO₂ has a colour, the sky would have 15% more 'toner' now - in just 20 years.



Michael Portillo lends his support to Dave's campaign

He talks about the clients he coaches, from the carbon obese (102 tonnes) to the carbon celibate (1 tonne.) Interestingly, neither end of the spectrum look or sound like attractive places to be! Somewhere near average, ideally below, and heading downwards... looks like a cool place to be. A low carbon leader?

Does this mean giving up stuff? Emphatically no. Not in the short term certainly. We all work hard and deserve the treats we give ourselves. The trick will be recognising that our happiness never was linked to the oil excess we have become used to. If we waste less, use less, and get to be more efficient meeting our true needs, we can get down from 'needing' 20 tonnes a year to be happy just as quick as we got there. The parallels with addiction are interesting. Dave talks about "coming off" our fossil fuel habit.

TOP CARBON ACTIONS

Switch to a green tariff

Trade up/down to a low carbon car at the next opportunity

Make sure you have twice as much fun if you fly twice as far. Combine two visits

Cut down on the laundry. Save time effort, powder and power by simply sifting through clothes and washing a bit less. Stop when your partner notices a funny smell, but, jokes aside, you probably wash clothes more often than you need. So this low carbon lifestyle may mean you get to put your feet up more!

Look at getting a new boiler if your old one is on its last legs

Consider CHP/Microgen or a ground source heat pump. Consider a solar panel for DHW

Reassuringly, Dave drives, has 2 cars, has a big 5 bed house in Marlow, and seems a happy chap, not the usual green heep of misery. He says he is 'comfortably off'. He talks affectionately of his solar panel, how it keeps his family in hot water for most of the year even if all power is cut off. His cars are both low carbon, and he and his wife practice getting high mpg. The family hasn't flown for a long while, but plan a special foreign holiday next year as a treat.

Dave has a bi-monthly newsletter that attempts to untangle some of the many myths and pitfalls that we all encounter when we try to change anything. For example "Low voltage" spotlights - in very common use - are not low energy. An easy mistake!

the carbon coach₂

live a more carbon concious life for less

If you want to keep up-to-speed, register to receive Dave's free email newsletter '**Communique**' full of practical tips for action. It's a bit like having a personal trainer in your environmental conscience - fun and with great long term benefits! Sign up on Dave's homepage on www.carboncoach.com

There is no catch. In the new low carbon economy **everyone wins!**

WHY BOTHER?

Do you know any children?

Each tonne of CO₂ saved can save between £100 to £400 worth of fuel now - and rising fast as costs rise. Savings accumulate.

Manage your reputation. If you are someone who ever has to talk about the environment, its wise to prepare the platform you will be standing on by walking the talk as best you can.

BUT BEST OF ALL...

Be a Leader. Someone has to. Who are we being?

Make a stand. In your family, in your community, in your street, in your village.

You'll be amazed how you influence people and make friends. It's just so deliciously cool to be on a carbon-lite journey. The low carbon economy is definitely a sexy place to be this century.

“ Low carbon lifestyles are the sexiest, most fashionable, most now thing there is.”

Neil Crofts, Authentic Business