

Book Review

Heat: how to stop the planet burning

George Monbiot

Allen Lane, 2006, £17.99, ISBN 0-713-99923-3

Because of the extra greenhouse gases humans have been putting into the air, global temperatures have already risen by 0.6°C. We are already seeing effects such as melting glaciers and increased droughts, especially in Africa. Soil in England and Wales has absorbed CO₂ up until now, but has started to emit it instead. Above a two degree increase, this kind of effect would be widespread and irreversible.

In wasteful countries like the UK we need to make a 90% cut in carbon emissions, and George Monbiot outlines a well-researched set of proposals to ensure that this happens. These include personal carbon allowances and several other actions aimed at different sectors of the economy including household energy and transport.

For example coaches are slightly better even than trains in the amount of carbon dioxide they emit per person travelling, but they are the lowest of the low in terms of status and comfort. This could change at minimal cost if the coach stations were moved to the motorway junctions and urban public transport improved to reach them.

Many of us have “love miles” which will have to be saved up for with our new carbon rations. On a return flight to New York, each passenger has a carbon footprint greater than the annual personal allowance needed to keep the climate safe. The number of people becoming active for the climate must grow, and this energising and optimistic book is an essential companion.

Ann Link

This review first appeared in *WENnews*, Winter 2006, the magazine for Women's Environmental Network members. To find out more or join WEN visit www.wen.org.uk.