



# Peak Oil, Energy Descent Planning & Transition Towns

**Roger Cook**  
18<sup>th</sup> September 2008

# Hmmmm.....

1. Do you travel more than 10 miles each way to work?
2. Do you have debts?
3. Do you own property abroad?
4. Is your family spread far and wide?
5. Do you use medicinal drugs?
6. Are you used to foreign holidays?
7. Are you isolated or active in your local community?
8. Is your house totally reliant on gas central heating?
9. Do you rely on a supermarket for your shopping?
10. Do you have access to water other than via the tap?



# Why? – Peak Oil

- What is Peak Oil?
- Nothing to do with climate change – but a great help in reducing the effects
- **Peak oil** is the date when the peak of the world's conventional petroleum (crude oil) production rate is reached. After this date the rate of production is predicted to enter terminal decline, following the bell-shaped curve predicted by the theory.
- When will this happen? 2007-12 maybe later if we plan now to reduce our dependency.\*



# Towards the End of the “Oil Age”

and the effect on Worcestershiire - FACT

## **Quote:**

**“This is really serious, to give you an idea:  
if Climate Change was ranked as a 3 on the scale of 1 to 10,  
Peak Oil is a 12”**

Matt Simmons, Chairman Simmons & Co

# Mothers Natures' Resource Limits



**"One thing is clear: the era of easy oil is over. What we all do next will determine how well we meet the energy needs of the entire world in this century and beyond."**

**- David J O'Reilly, Chairman & CEO, Chevron Corporation, July 2005**

# Peak Shoes, Handbags and Beer - WANTS



# The Lifeblood of Today - Needs



95% of all transport is powered by oil.



We use 10 calories of fossil fuels for every calorie of food we eat.



# In Debate?



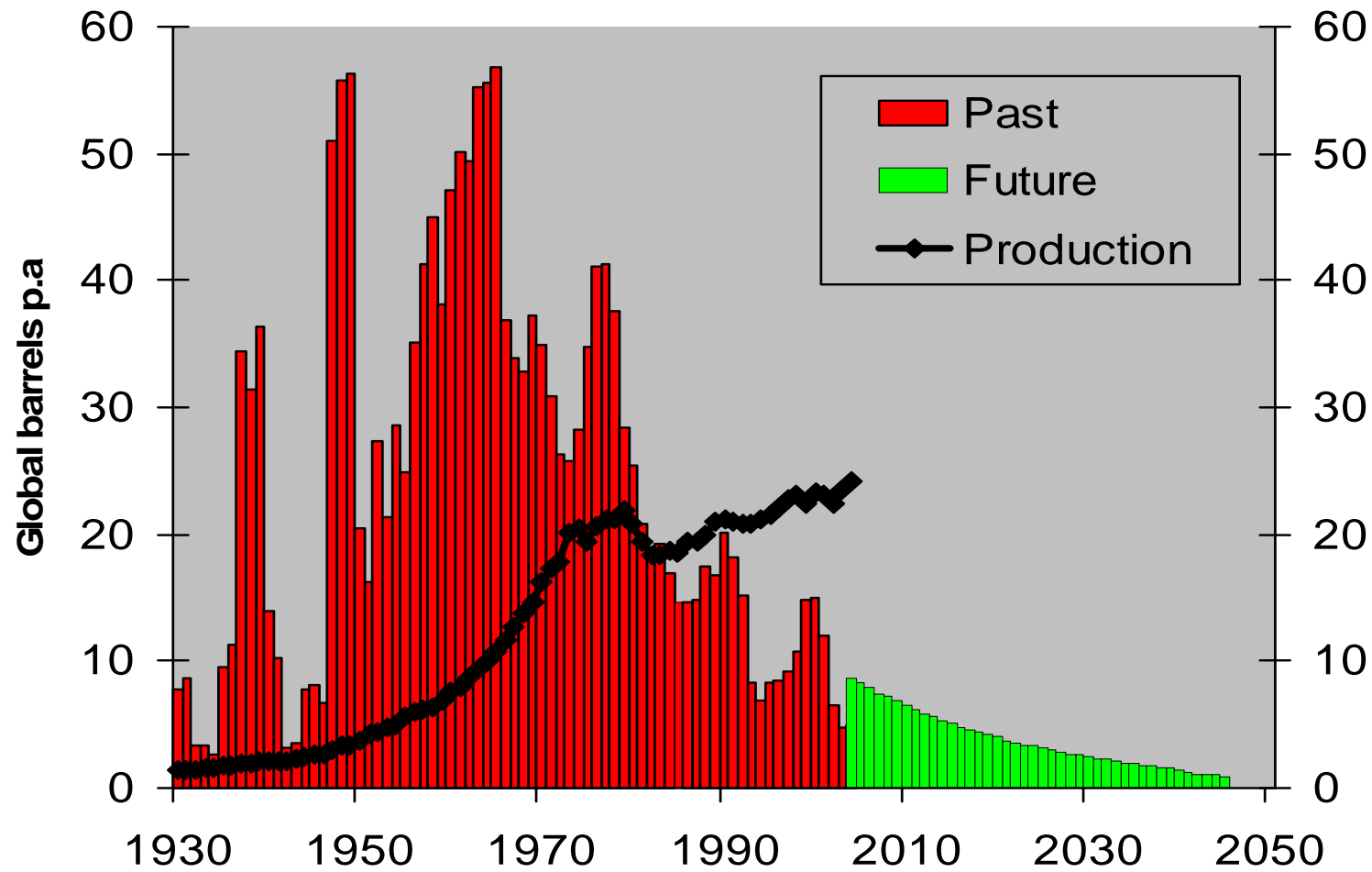
Peak Oil is now debated widely all across the media. The question should not be 'what if?' but 'what now?'



UK oil production peaked in 1999 and has declined rapidly ever since.



# World Real Discovery Trend



Historical Data ExxonMobil



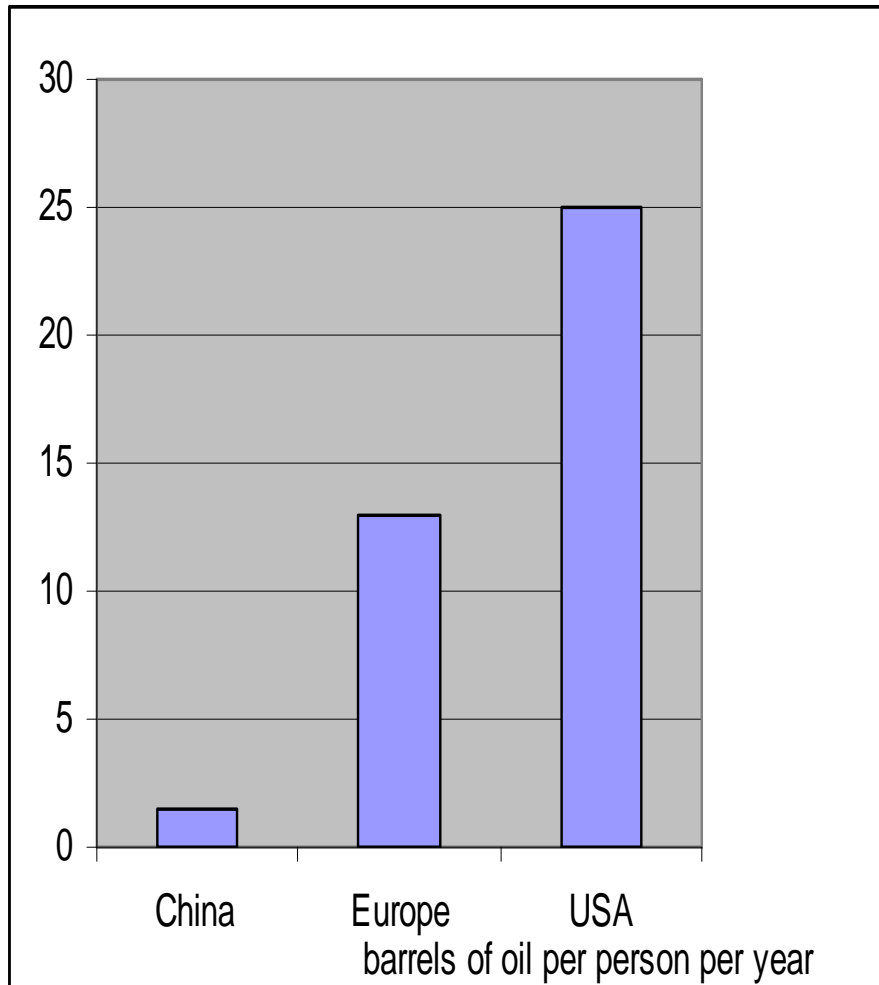
# Why is Peak Oil something we need to deal with?

- We have allowed oil to become vital to virtually everything we do.
- Ninety per cent of all our transportation, whether by land, air or sea, is fuelled by oil.
- Ninety-five per cent of all goods in shops involve the use of oil.
- Ninety-five per cent of all our food products require oil use.
- Just to farm a single cow and deliver it to market requires six barrels of oil, enough to drive a car from New York to Los Angeles.

Jeremy Leggett : What they don't want you to know about the coming oil crisis, The Independent January 2007



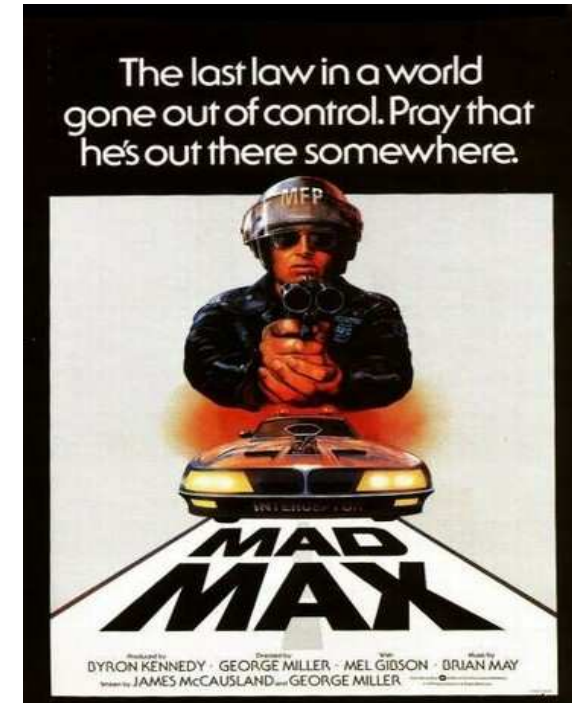
# Perspective on Energy



- Oil makes up 38% of our energy usage, but supplies more than 90% of transport energy requirements.
- Our energy usage goes up each and every year, both as a nation, and globally. The fast growing economies of the Far East, primarily China and India, are rapidly expanding. Can 1/3 of the worlds population consume energy at the rate of the worlds wealthiest?



# Mad Max Culture?



# Or something much more positive?

- Building Resilience

- Learning & supporting

- Unleashing the collective genius!

- Has to be better than Mad Max!

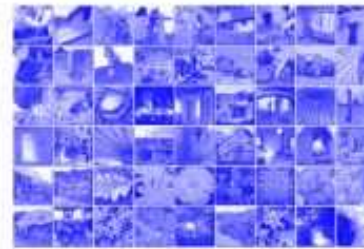


# Peak Oil – A Local Solution

- Step by step changes to manage converging issues.
- Think global, act local.
- Change behaviour – “at all levels”.
- Reduce our reliance – adapt to a new strategy.
- Build local resilience.
- 65 towns working together!



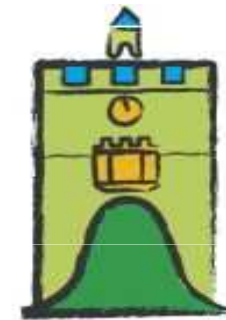
**Kinsale 2021**  
An Energy Descent  
Action Plan – Version.1, 2005



By Students of  
Kinsale Further Education College  
Edited by Rob Hopkins



**TRANSITIONSTROUD**



TRANSITION TOWN  
**TOTNES**



# What is an Energy Descent Action Plan?

**Essentially it's about living well with less**

*Definition:*

“the continual decline in net energy supporting humanity, a decline which mirrors the ascent in net energy that has taken place since the Industrial Revolution. It also refers to a future scenario in which humanity has successfully adapted to the declining net energy availability and has become more localised and self-reliant. **It is a term favoured by people looking towards energy peak as an opportunity for positive change rather than an inevitable disaster”**

source: [www.transitionculture.org](http://www.transitionculture.org)



# Why is adopting an EDAP positive?

- A major behavioural problem with peak oil is simply that nobody has had any practice in coping with such a unique event.
- One of the major contributions of successful applications of behaviour analysis is to structure learning experiences so people are given lots of practice and feedback in acquiring and maintaining skills (e.g., Grant & Evans, 1994; Martin & Pear, 2003).
- With a once-in-history event like peak oil, no one has had prior opportunities to learn to behave successfully toward such an event.

The Behavioural Aspects of Peak Oil: Basic Contingencies: Prof Goose June 19, 2007  
<http://www.theoildrum.com/node/2682>



# What does an EDAP and the Transition Town movement offer a Local Community?

- Raises the level of urgency
- Focus on utilising available “culture energy”
- Brings all sustainability practices together
- A clear local route to reducing impacts on the environment
- Provides a sense of purpose
- Encourages innovative thinking and solution finding



# Portent Opinion

25/6/08

- State of Emergency
  - Energy crisis is not a short term problem.
  - Prevarication about expanding renewable energy resources and nuclear power.
  - Illusions of prosperity while families struggle to feed themselves.
- Future (next 18 months)
  - Rising energy import costs coupled with falls in value of Sterling.
  - Public sector workers strike as 3% wage increases fail to match increased cost of living.
  - Unemployment rises as financial institutions and service industries come under severe pressure.
  - Government struggles to fund public services with falling tax receipts.



# Peak Oil is FACT

- How it affects us is largely based on how we plan to make the transition from a fossil fuel reliant and environmentally damaging lifestyle.
- A transition to “Localisation” using techniques such as “energy descent plans” is not a lifestyle choice, it is a pathway to a more resilient Worcestershire



# Final thought.....

“We just need to ask people to ride to their real potential, and see this is our moment for greatness. If we create a sustainable future for everyone, it will be an accomplishment as great as winning the Second World War”

Alex Steffen [www.worldchanging.com](http://www.worldchanging.com)



# Workshop groups for today

1. Transport
2. Sustenance
3. Health and Hygiene
4. Money and work
5. Housing
6. Personal leisure and consumer goods
7. Awareness & Community

some inspiration!





**Thank you**