



Peak Oil in the Mainstream Business Press

Posted by [Euan Mearns](#) on November 7, 2007 - 11:00pm in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

Tags: [biofuel](#), [food crisis](#), [jeremy cresswell](#), [matthew simmons](#), [peak oil](#), [twilight in the desert](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Aberdeen, often promoted as the oil capital of Europe, has a local newspaper called the Press and Journal that serves the city and Northern Scotland. Once a month, they publish a business supplement called “Energy” that is edited by Jeremy Cresswell.

The impression I have had for a number of years (rightly or wrongly) is that “Energy” has favoured a fairly upbeat and optimistic editorial line on our energy future – though the editor assures me they have tried to carry a balanced perspective. In the November issue published yesterday, three prominent stories caught my eye:

All peaked out and no place else to go but do-o-o-wn

Will the wheels drop off the biofuels wagon?

Simmons spells it out – but when will the ostriches get their heads out of the sand?

Regular readers of The Oil Drum will be familiar with these stories. The point here is that these are published in the mainstream business press. There are excerpts below the fold plus links to the original articles on line. This is good Oil Drum fare, and the article on biofuels, in particular is worth reading.

[All peaked out and no place else to go but do-o-o-wn](#)

“PEAK oil is now”, proclaims a hard-hitting study of global resources by the German-based Energy Watch Group. Its predictions are dire: global oil output peaked in 2006 at 81million barrels per day, will slide to 58million bpd by 2020 and 39million bpd by 2030.

This is in sharp contrast to the International Energy Agency, which predicts 105million bpd by 2020 and 116million by 2030, though offline, there is a growing view at the IEA that its projections are too optimistic.

[Will the wheels drop off the biofuels wagon?](#)

“Harnessing biomass more effectively than we currently do is vital for a variety of compelling reasons, notably global climate-change mitigation and concerns over the long-term availability of oil and natural gas in large amounts.”

“But it seems we're getting things horribly wrong. Two hot examples are the dumping of

US-produced, double-subsidised biodiesel on in the EU this year and the failure to realise how much agricultural land will be swallowed by energy cropping, whether for transportation fuels or power generation.”

“The nub is that officials are examining how to prevent support for biofuels in cases where their production involves the emission of more greenhouse gases than would eventually be saved by using them instead of pure fossil fuels.”

“The board estimates that more than 800,000 tonnes of American-manufactured type B99 biodiesel have been imported thus far in 2007, compared with 100,000 tonnes for the whole of 2006.”

“Here we have a situation where the raw feedstock for biodiesel exported thousands of miles to the EU from the US may also have traveled thousands more miles from a third nation producer for doctoring Stateside first.”

“So a fuel that has dubious credentials to start with because of the amount of energy required for its production is not only heavily subsidised, it racks up a transatlantic crossing - and more besides.”

"It is high time to realise that the world community is approaching a food crisis in 2008 unless usage of agricultural products for biofuels is curbed or ideal weather conditions and sharply higher crop yields are achieved in 2008," Oil World said recently.

“So can somebody tell me how it will be possible to grow sufficient food in the future, let alone devote land to energy cropping? I struggle with this equation, as does UN expert Jean Ziegler, who wants a five-year biofuels cropping ban.”

[Simmons spells it out – but when will the ostriches get their heads out of the sand?](#)

In a private meeting with Matt Simmons, president of the energy bank, Simmons & Co International, Energy has been told that the petroleum game is up. And even if it proves possible to raise global oil output further, it will be for only a short time. Simmons said he regretted not making his predictions for the future of Big Oil much more dire than had been portrayed in his controversial book, *Twilight in the Desert*, published two years ago.

"If I was redoing *Twilight in the Desert* today, I'd sharpen the severity of the warning quite significantly.

Jeremy Cresswell is Chairman - **[Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group](#)**

Editor - Energy - **[The Press and Journal](#)** and a member of the **[Energy Institute](#)**

For those experiencing difficulties accessing the P&J articles on line, the whole Energy supplement may be viewed on line **[here](#)**. This is cool and worth a look.

Over the past couple of years I have sent several emails to the P&J and other national newspapers offering to write articles on energy decline and energy security – and never received a reply. It does seem that Cresswell is well able to carry the energy decline flag on behalf of the

Aberdeen mainstream press and I look forward to many more hard hitting articles such as these in the months ahead. But I do wonder when the public and politicians will take note?

Other things going on in and around Aberdeen these days include:

[**A £395 million ring road and development corridor around the city**](#)

[**Expansion of Aberdeen airport**](#)

[**A Luxury golf complex to be built by Donald Trump**](#)

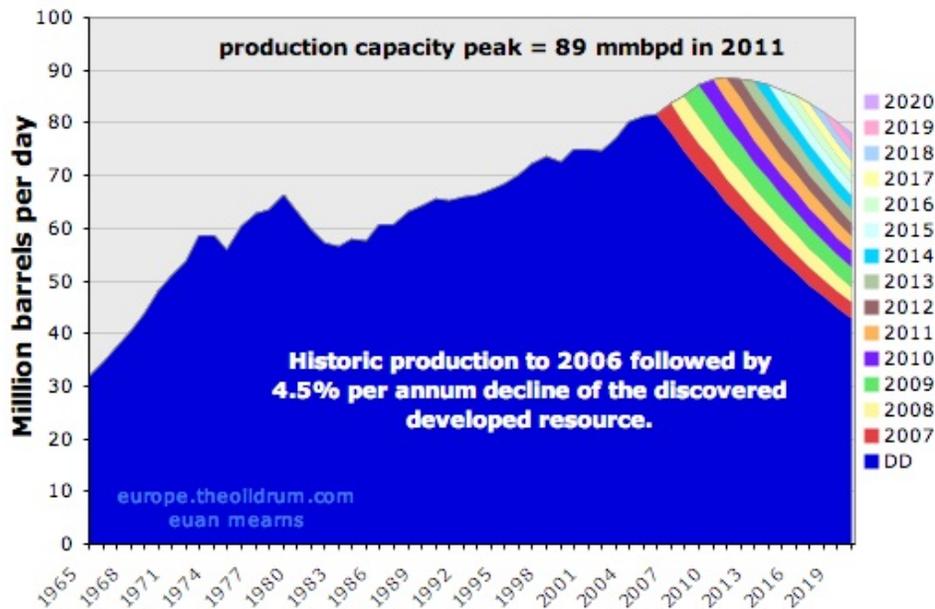
See also [**Aberdeen Greenbelt Alliance**](#)

I wonder where they will get their energy from?



Beautiful countryside to the west of Aberdeen is earmarked for a new highway to be completed by 2012

Global C+C+NGL based on Skrebowski to 2012 followed by speculation



Global oil production looks set to peak by 2011 - if not much sooner! Chart is based on [Skrebowski 2007](#).

A note to all our local and national politicians. West Texas Intermediate just hit a fresh high of \$97 / bbl as I was writing this article. **This is a wake up call.** It is time to start rebuilding our power generation and transportation infrastructure for the new energy paradigm of the 21st Century. Pursuing the fossil fuel paradigm of the 20th Century will doom our society to extinction.

Other reading:

[The latest energy news from ODAC](#)

And an article I posted in July and October on [UK Energy Security](#)

Peak Oil on the UK Network News from ITN - [watch the video](#), posted by Chris Vernon



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