

The new

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Beneath the rule of men entirely great

The pen is mightier than the sword



PUBLIC UNREST FORECAST

Labour Leader Ed Miliband in his New Year message said that 2011 would be a year of consequences for Britain, with millions of ordinary families suffering from the result of the Conservative-Liberal Democratic Coalition's decision to tackle the deficit at an 'irresponsible pace and scale'. The Leader went on to say that many people around the country will wonder what they can do to challenge the programme of cuts imposed by a forbidding and unheeding Government. It is unclear to me just whether Mr Miliband is acknowledging the fact that it was primarily his Party that got the country into the almost untenable (politically speaking) that it is in.

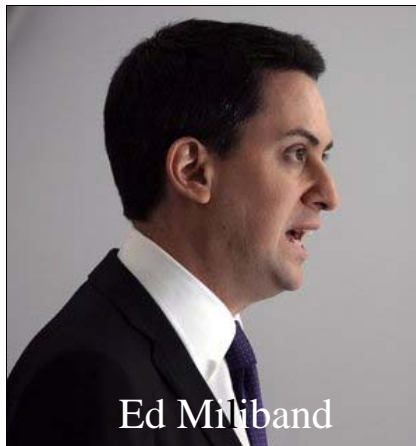
However he did go on and admit that his Party had lost touch and lost trust and that it needed to convince the public that it had changed and had an alternative plan for the economy. Apparently he is confident that the three biggest unions, with their 3.5m members will get active in both opposing cuts and making voices heard on the 5th of May, when there are elections at Holyrood and for local authorities in England as well as assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Its not for this publication to condemn, or praise, Political Parties....criticise yes. However the Labour Party's ship in the past was far to top-heavy, loaded down with hangers-on and benefit fraudsters to such an extent that not only was it impossible to steer but it simply had to topple over onto the rocks.

Its going to take a great deal of work and refitting before their craft will be a seaworthy and pose a threat to the twin hulled Conservative-Liberal Coalition battle cruiser. (I was tempted to use the word 'destroyer' here but we'll have to wait several years to see which word is more appropriate.)

For those of us who can recollect the London riots on the 1st of March 1990, mostly caused by the very unpopular Poll Tax, introduced by the Tory Government led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, may be able to compare the present public unrest with the beginnings of that period.

The Poll Tax –which was scrapped within months, and was crucial to the fall from power of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher–was eventually repalced by council tax, taking some three years to come into force.



Ed Miliband

Union leaders are claiming that Britain is on the verge of civil unrest on par with that of those times. Doubtless there are millions of everyday citizens totally p—ed off with the present political and economic climate prevalent in the UK. And no one can blame them, fat cats get ever fatter pay-offs and ever bigger pensions, while young working couples

trying to make a home for them selves are denied the opportunity.

It makes one wonder just who is supposed to be running the country, bank managers or politicians?

Brendan Barber, Secretary of the trades Union Congress, said in his New Year's message that 2011 would be a 'horrible year' with millions of families reeling from the Government's austerity crackdown.

He added, 'This is going to be a year when many people suffer but it could just be the year when the campaign for change really gets going. The General Secretary's remarks raises the prospect of nationwide industrial action, organised by the trade unions. Many members believe that the present cuts are unnecessary and wrong.

And in fact there is a suggestion that the first union organised strike could be as early as March of this year.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S WHIRLWIND ROMANCE

WITH WIND DRIVEN GENERATORS



Obsession can be a cruel mistress, making the victim's crusade the all important aim in one's life. When one recovers, he/she or Party, will often wonder just how they could have been so blind to all reason during their all encompassing campaign, in trying to achieve their objective at any price.

First Minister Alex Salmond and his SNP cronies appear hell-bent on saturating the Scottish countryside with a deluge of largely inefficient, and certainly uneconomic, wind driven generators.

These monstrosities, (some like me appreciate their elegance) are all very much weather dependent and as the general public know to their cost, UK weather is totally unpredictable for any length of time into the future, as it has been in the past.

Further to their dependency on suitable weather conditions, economically they are, without Government support in the form of ROCs, A DEAD LOSS with virtually no financial gain for investors. Redeemable Optional Certificates is a Government tax imposed on 'dirty' power plants, so it is just a matter of time, relatively speaking before all these 'dirty' plants clean up their act, or are forced out of business. Thereafter no more ROCs I'm afraid and little or no profit for wind turbine operators.

One of the carrots developers dangle in front of the collective noses of the 'donkeys' driven by promised short time gain is, 'community participation in the form of an annual payment.' no wind, no ROCs, no dividend.

The real losers in this scenario are the actual consumers as the cost of every ROC is passed on in the tariff by suppliers, to the users of electricity from the national grid. In other words, you and me, unless of course you have your own wind generator and use the hot air generated by the Scottish Parliament for their green

Only last week one of Scotland's leading conservation bodies called on the Scottish Government to end its obsession with wind power.

The John Muir Trust (JMT) spent 13 months studying 47 wind farms and concluded they were inefficient- (*The Independent Highlander* has been saying this over even a longer term.) running at only 22% of capacity over that period. That figure is almost 10% lower than what trust refers to as 'misleading' industry claims.



Investigators reported that on some days, wind farms generated only enough power to boil a few thousand kettles of water.

Helen McDade, JMT head of policy, said: 'Many wind farms in spectacular wild areas have been approved on inflated claims of wind power's contribution. They are costing huge amounts, yet aren't delivering what the industry claims. The economics are a scandal.'

Naill Stuart, Chief Executive of **Scottish Renewables** blamed calm weather during the winter of 2009-10, saying it was one of the calmest on record and it was no surprise figures were below average during the study.

Does Mr Stuart anticipate weeks and weeks of winds in the future, with no frost or snow?

Never-the-less a Scottish Government spokesman claimed that it was on track to exceed a target of meeting 31% of electricity demand by 2011, he added 'Our approach is to improve energy efficiency and generate more electricity from renewable sources.

What a pity all this endeavour is not directed elsewhere... for example trying to discover what renewable energy source flying saucers use to traverse the universe?

RETIRING OR FAILED MSPs TO GET £60K AWARD, AS A SWEETNER FOR LIFE OTHER THAN AT HOLYROOD!

I make no excuses for republishing the next two pages, if you have read them already please do so again, ta.
Published in the Dilettante Gardener...Issue Number 8

Bread on your table and peat in your hearth was a weel kent blessing, seventy or more years ago. And it all but slipped my memory until around 5.30 one morning as I sat looking at the wood burning stove with a warming kettle of water coming to the boil that I realised our very good fortune (Morag and I) at having just that. *Bread on our table and peat in our hearth.*

An earlier edition of one of my news sheets quoted figures from the Register General claiming that 'only' 19,688 people, mostly OAPs, died during the months from December through to March as a result of cold related ailments last winter.

New statistics however showed that the true figure was much higher and claimed that no less than nine people died every hour from cold related illnesses last winter. 25,400 in England and Wales with 2,760 in Scotland making 28,160. I doubt very much if these poor souls had *Bread on their tables or peat in their hearths.*

And I certain that not one of them got a £60k 'Golden Handshake' on their retirement, not that they would have been sitting spouting hot air at Holyrood, but they possibly deserved a lot more than was doled out to them by (this) and previous Governments

It's a very sobering thought, especially during this Siberian type winter we are experiencing, when not even the most ardent of gardener readers can do anything other than plan for next spring.....

Or perhaps ponder over and consider, the plight of the less fortunate whilst dwelling on the forecast that some twenty eight thousand people will die over the next few months because they do not have *Bread on their table nor peat in their hearth.* A truly shocking statistic for one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Just imagine if these statistics were to be applied to

the aircraft industry, there would not be one 'chet plain' allowed to fly until all were serviced, ensuring there were no unnecessary casualties.

Now that I have got that off my chest I can direct my keyboard to more mundane things like, what have we been cooking over the past weeks since the last 'Dilettante Cook' was produced?

But before that I must say that I make no excuses for publishing yet another photo of our stove, as it is central to the following tales, however boring you may find them.



Personally I am not a 100% certain that I believe all I read and hear about Global Warming. I know its real and that it will probably come to pass, but whether or not conserving a few Megawatts of power in one's lifetime will make a real difference to the end result or not, leaves me unconvinced.

Never-the-less the thought of curtailing our ever increasing electricity bill's impact on finances does encourage the experimentation in the ways to cook food on the 'hearth'. Seventy odd years ago when I was a boy the 'hearth' was mostly what all the family's food was cooked on.

Hence the photo. Putting aside our ornamental cast iron kettle and bringing in the old aluminium camping kettle was the first move, giving us a continuous supply of hot, and often boiling water, that can be used for a multitude of purposes. From making hot beverages to filling the ever comforting Hot Water Bottles at bedtime.

Taking everything a step further we brought out our favourite clottie dumpling pan and decided to try cooking a piece of fresh rolled pork shoulder. I am not going into the recipe we used just to say that we were very pleasantly surprised by the end result. There and then Morag and I decided that it would be fun to try different 'dishes' cooked on the stove top.

Cont.

Peat in your Hearth Makes Bread for your table

Two days later, the pork had done us twice for meals, we potroasted a brace of Mallard ducks with turnip, carrot and whole onions, served along with mashed potatoes. Bootiful.

I'll diverse for a few sentences if I may and say that we have a very good friend in Aberdeenshire, Bob Davidson, he keeps us supplied with all sorts of delectable edible offerings hence the following.

Trying to make space in our chest deep freeze I stumbled across a saddle of roe venison. Normally I cook venison in red wine but didn't fancy trying a red wine pot roast so I refrained and did it the good old fashioned way. Tossed in the pan with a dollop of beef dripping. This time we used sweet potato and mushrooms plus a small onion. Taste and tenderness passes description. We even had enough venison left over for Morag to make a very nice curry the following day.

Bob and I talk on the telephone quite often and although we have many common interests our conversation invariably turns to what we had to eat lately that tasted special.

With the venison and all the other goodies Morag and I cooked on the stove top was a prime reason for me to call and tell him all about it. When I said that we thought the food cooked thus tasted much better than that done on the cooker top, he agreed with me totally.

He went on to relate how when he and his late wife Nancy, first got married they would cook their Sunday roast or chicken in a coal fired Raeburn oven. Later when Bob converted the range to one fired by oil he said that the roasts did not taste nearly so good!

I believed him and went on to ask if he recalled the paraffin heated ovens we used to be able to get some fifty years ago? They were capable of producing some remarkable dishes and baking.

'Weel that' he responded, but to my question if one could still locate such a blessing, he could not say, but did suggest that a gutted out old micro oven placed on the stove top might suffice.

I may well try his suggestion when the weather improves so that I can 'work the tools' in the garage in some comfort.

Seven of our family got together for a wee celebration on New Year's Day and of course there was far too much food available for the few of us.

Personally I find turkey can become boring, as it is available every weekend of the twelve months. Even expertly cooked and served with a variety of sauces and stuffing I would prefer to give it a miss at New Year.

For something different I pickled, in home made brine for two weeks, a prime piece of rolled silverside. Plus a

piece of gammon, boiled for starters and then caressed with runny honey and brown sugar before being finished of in the oven. Filleted chicken drum sticks made up the meats

The meats were served cold as it is so much easier for family to help themselves to just what they really want to eat.



Oat cake bites made to compliment our home made smoked salmon paté

I won't go into too much detail as it sound somewhat like bragging. But we did have home made soda bread and home made oatcakes, both relatively easy to make with a bit of practice.

The owner of Highland Fine Cheeses from Tain swapped some superb cheese for one of our home made cloutie dumplings, I think both parties were well satisfied, I know we were and still some left over. For those readers who may be interested I have numerous 'bits' on <http://www.gardenersclick.com> Members, Euilleam will get to My Blog.

Ed.