From: **John Baxter** u3asecondnature@gmail.com
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To: John Baxter u3asecondnature@gmail.com

JB

u3a Climate Change & Environment

Second Nature 064 (June 2026)

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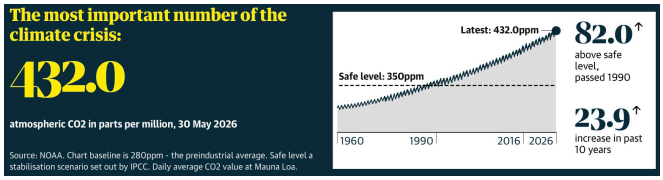
The most important number



Guardian graphic.

An equal and habitable world

An equal and habitable world is possible, according to a report by the World Inequality Lab. At its core is the concept of sufficiency – the idea that people can enjoy a prosperous, healthy life without constantly striving to consume or accumulate more material possessions. The authors propose three steps: more than halving average working time to 1,000 hours a year (roughly to a two-and-a-half-day working week); encouraging people to eat less red meat; and refocusing the economy on low-consumption activities such as education and healthcare. They also call for hefty wealth taxes. Jonathan Watts in the Guardian describes the report as *a push from the modern eco-socialist left in a global battle for ideas that will shape the future.*

World Inequality Report 2026 I World Inequality Lab (includes Exec Summary)
Academics set out sweeping vision for planetary survival I Jonathan Watts in the Guardian, 4 May
Happiness is not just about GDP I Jonathan Watts in the Guardian, 4 May

Two of the report authors, Thomas Piketty and Lucas Chancel, are professors of economics based in Paris. They and others have written this summary:

A good life for the 99% isn't a pipe dream: it can be done I Thomas Piketty et al in the Guardian

Because this material has just hit the inbox I've only skimmed it. If I have more to say about it I will come back to it in the next issue.

The (belt and) road to Morocco

(c) 1942 Paramount Pictures Inc.

Morocco as a renewable energy superpower. Currently 60% of Morocco's electricity comes from coal, but it has expanded renewable energy capacity to roughly 5.5 GW and aims for renewables to account for 52% of its electricity mix by 2030 and 70% by 2050. The government is investing heavily in green hydrogen production and port infrastructure to become a leading supplier of low-carbon fuels for industry and shipping.

Morocco Is emerging as a renewable energy superpower I Felicity Bradstock forOilprice.com, May 30

Chinese investment in Morocco has accelerated since it joined the Belt and Road Initiative. It is emerging as a crucial piece of China's global green industrial strategy, with Beijing increasingly turning to Morocco to strengthen supply chains, expand clean energy investments, and reduce exposure to geopolitical risks, according to new research from the Washington-based think-tank Stimson Centre. Morocco is seeking to accelerate its renewable energy transition and industrial development, while China is looking for reliable overseas hubs to support its expanding green technology industries.

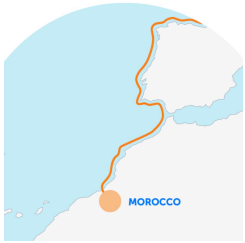
How Morocco became a strategic hub in China's race to dominate green economy I Segun Adeyemi for Business Insider Africa, 30 May

David emails:

Thanks for your comprehensive round up of climate change actions/inactions which are a bit depressing considering the few years the world has to stop our net emissions of fossil carbon.

My concern in the UK is the focus of the "experts" on just making electricity fossil free, when the annual primary electricity demand is only around 20% of our total demand, the rest is supplied from fossil fuels, some from our own production and the rest from imports mainly from Norway and the USA. While we might double our electricity production to say 40% of primary energy, that still leaves 60% that must come from fossil-free fuels, so where will that energy come from? I believe that the UK will have to import around 60% of clean energy from the Middle East and Africa, in the form of liquid ammonia (the hydrogen carrier) produced from huge solar and some wind farms in those desert areas. Huge companies such as american Air Products have been working with Saudi Arabia for many years to develop solar capture at the NEOM project in that country to convert the energy into fossil-free ammonia and export it to the USA, so they are first in the queue to secure this fossil-free energy, but as far as I know the UK is not building such contacts from those hot desert countries, with the exception of the Xlinks project to bring clean electricity by undersea cables from Morocco to North Devon in the UK. With a lack of interest in Xlinks from our Government, I understand that it will now terminate in Europe, possibly Germany.

Xlinks withdrew its planning application because UK government would not offer a set price(a Contract for Difference). It will now invest in a similar project Sila Atlantik which, as David says, will deliver power to Germany. It is promising 3.6 GW of power 7000 hours a year (roughly 20 hours a day) from 15.2 GW of renewable generation and 9.6 GWh of battery storage.



I suspect that national security considerations may have played a part here - it's easy to imagine a foreign tanker 'accidentally' dragging its anchor across an HVDC cable. Of course I have no evidence that this is true.

3.6 GW for 20 hours is 72 GWh. It seems to me that what we need is a 72 GWh battery that can be charged in Morocco and sail to Southampton or Milford Haven or wherever and feed the grid there. A grid-scale battery that fits into a 20-ft container holds 5 MWh; so we just need 14,400 of them, and a large container ship can carry 18,000 containers. Whether such

need 14,400 of them, and a large container ship can carry 18,000 containers. Whether such a thing could be built, and whether it would be safe to sail on it, I have no idea. It's probably a daft idea but it works on the back of an envelope.

NESO reported that the GB electricity system saw its **lowest ever transmission demand**, 12.62 GW between 1pm and 1:30 pm on 24 May. This was due to high solar generation and the bank holiday weekend. The grid doesn't manage home solar, it just sees it as reduced demand from the distribution networks.

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140 of the world's 198 countries have net-zero targets: the only two of the top 20 CO2 emitters that don't are Iran and the US, says Carbon Brief. If the UK scraps its target, as called for some politicians (and Tony Blair) this is the clique that it would be joining. At COP26 in 2021 Indian PM Narendra Modi pledged net zero by 2070; and Saudi Arabia committed to net zero emissions by 2060 (but not to scaling back its oil and gas production). Even Russia has a target: net-zero by 2060, although its actions to get there are rated 'critically insufficient' by the Climate Action Tracker website.

US and Iran are world's only major emitters without net-zero targets I Daisy Dunne for Carbon Brief, 18 May

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The world is getting more circular. Here are four recent stories from resourcemediathat deal with the recycling and reuse of circuit boards and of agricultural waste. Even though these projects are all small-scale I find it cheering that they exist and can get funding.

The Royal Mint is recovering gold and platinum group metals from circuit boards taken from end-of-life TVs. E-waste collected at household waste recycling centres is sent to Preston, where it is dismantled manually in supervised prison-industry workshops. The circuit boards are then transferred to the Royal Mint's plant in Llantrisant, which can process up to 4,000 tonnes of circuit boards a year and extract gold at purities of 99.99%. It also recovers silver, palladium and copper.

Royal Mint recovers precious metals from e-waste I Resource 27 May

Researchers at Queen's University Belfast are leading a project to **recover precious and critical metals from electronic waste in Malaysia**, where an estimated 365,000 tonnes of devices are discarded each year. Chemists at the university's School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering are developing electroleaching and mild leaching methods to extract gold, copper and rare earth elements from circuit boards and components, using lower-impact chemistry than conventional smelting and acid recovery. Researchers in the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering are working on ways to separate and reuse the polymer parts of circuit boards.

Queen's leads project to recover metals from Malaysian e-waste I Resource 2 Jjune

Fashion brands including H&M Group, C&A and Reformation have produced **finished garments using fibre made from wheat straw** that Indian farmers would otherwise burn. Farmers in India burn an estimated 90 million tonnes of crop residue a year, mainly rice and wheat straw. That's a lot of T-shirts.

Fashion brands produce clothes from crop waste I Resource 28 May

A Bristol-based biotech company has raised £4 million to scale production of **low-carbon construction panels** grown from mycelium and agricultural waste. Its first product is a prefabricated partition wall that uses engineered mycelium strains to bind hemp shivs, hay, and waste from the paper and brewing industries. The mixture is formed into framed panels and the mycelium grows through the residues over a period of days. Panels are then treated with a bio-based coating for fire performance and mould resistance, dried, and shipped.

Bristol biotech raises £4m to scale fungi-grown construction panels I Charles Newman for Resource, 29 May

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One nanokelvin at a time: Sainsbury's says that it says that **white eggs have a 12.7%**

One nanokelvin at a time. Sainsbury's says that it says that **white eggs have a 12.7% lower carbon footprint than brown eggs**, so its own-brand eggs will be white as part of its drive to cut carbon emissions across its supply chain. The hens that lay white eggs are typically smaller and eat less feed, and produce less manure. They are also less prone to feather pecking.

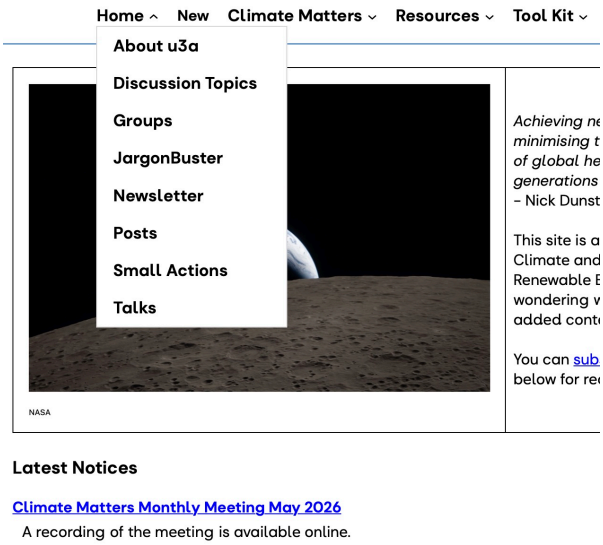
Sainsbury's swaps brown eggs for white I Kieran Howells for Retail Gazette, 4 June

Sources

SN063 uses or links to content from BBC News, Business Insider Africa, Carbon Brief, Climate Action Tracker, Oilprice.com, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Project Drawdown, resourcemedia, Retail Gazette (really - I read this stuff so you don't have to), World Inequality Lab, YaleEnvironment360, and subscribers Chris, David, and Sarah. All of this material is gratefully acknowledged.

Website changes

I've made more tweaks to the website, in the hope of improving navigation. Click on the image to open it. Most of the content that I control directly is now in a submenu under Home:



What these mean should be pretty obvious, except perhaps **Posts**. Posts are pieces of content, usually small and not linked to pages: instead they are assigned to categories such as 'waste management'. Where the category name appears as a link clicking on it will show all other posts in that category. This makes it very easy to add new content (say a new discussion topic). Posts can also be assigned tags: I haven't yet figured out what to do with these (if you know, please get in touch).

New in the main menu and **Notices** on the Home page should take you quickly to the most recent content. If you have content that you would like to appear as a Notice, send it to me or to one of the other editors.

Learning and environment

This came to me from Harriet, Policy Manager at Third Age Trust:

We're excited to be collaborating with and supporting a PhD researcher with her project exploring learning in later life, with a specific focus on learning activities related to the environment. I wonder if you'd be happy to share the information about the study with your members.

As part of this collaboration we plan to share the findings with members and hopefully it will also have some wider media interest. I'm sure Ka Yan would be happy to do a presentation to your network if that's of interest.

And the message from Ka Yan is:

I am Ka Yan Hess, a PhD candidate at Oxford Brookes University. I want to hear your views and experiences about learning activities in later life — how it may relate to your wellbeing and helping the environment from your perspectives.

If you are aged 60 or over and would like to take part in this anonymous survey, please click this link for more information and to complete a short survey (approximately 15 minutes; ethics approved, ref 261960). Participant information sheet and privacy notice can be downloaded from this link for your record.

***As a token of appreciation, there is a prize draw.** Six participants who opt in for the prize draw will randomly be selected to each receive a £50 voucher.*

I am keen to hear a diversity of views and experiences - so all forms of learning are welcomed and all ways you may connect those learning activities with helping the environment and your wellbeing are welcomed.

Your voice really matters — thank you for considering this opportunity.

If you have questions or want to take part but prefer to do it over the phone, you can contact me directly by emailing 19294822@brookes.ac.uk or calling 01865 534707.

Feedback

The most used link in SN063, by a huge margin, was this one:

What your local council can actually do to tackle the climate crisis I Rebecca Willis in The Conversation, 11 May

There is obviously a lot of interest in this topic: I will keep my eye open for similar material. Most of you I presume are already aware of the Council Climate Action Scorecardscompiled by Climate Emergency UK.

In SN063 I also mentioned this article:

Economic growth in low-income countries can reduce pressure on natural ecosystems I Project Drawdown May 19 (summarises Reversing the great degradation of nature by reducing factors related to cropland expansion I Polasky et al, Proceedings of the National; Academy of Sciences, May 18).

At least one subscriber is not convinced: *the study looks very dubious indeed. You can probably "prove" any theory you want, if you look at it, and select data, in the right way. Sigh ...*
Sarah

Sarah there is some truth in what you say: I've done a lot of estimating in my time. If you don't get the result you want, you just change the assumptions and try again. PNAS is a well-respected journal however, and the paper has been peer reviewed. I wouldn't dismiss it out of hand.

A key statement in the Drawdown summary is *Decreasing per capita crop demand in higher-income countries by eating healthier diets, reducing food waste, and reducing biofuel production could reduce cropland requirements ...* That's a big ask I think (or rather three big asks).

Chris comments on Monbiot and the AMOC;

In my opinion you did adhere to principles of science and data when quoting from George Monbiot in SN059, and your concerns in SN061 were unfounded.

The misunderstanding seems to have arisen because Monbiot quotes from two sets of climate scientists without pointing this out.

After linking to the new research, "Observational constraints project a ~50% AMOC weakening by the end of this century", he should have written, "As a result, other scientists now forecast that AMOC collapse is more likely".

Clearly both are true, based on recent observations and modelling.The April paper confined itself to projecting the extent of the slowdown to 2100. Other scientists have forecast best and worst case scenarios beyond this.

Climate scientists often mention the concept of a tipping point, after which AMOC shutdown is inevitable.Stefan Rahmsdorf, who is one of the other scientists linked to by Monbiot has said that a 50% decline would "very likely put us past the tipping point".

Fears Are Growing Over the Fate of a Key Atlantic Current I Nicola Jones for YaleEnvironment360, 7 May

This is not exaggerating the response of the AMOC from "weakening" to "collapse", but in some projections this is the sequence of events.

Considerations like this fed into my decision to "get off the road to impending disaster" by taking up a plant based diet, installing a heat pump, and writing to my MP among other things. Knowing the science will incentivise, not paralyse!

I found that the Carbon Brief AMOC summary was very informative.

I still feel that I was a bit too quick to put the Monbiot piece into the newsletter - that I was too prepared to believe it. Monbiot left the AMOC behind and went into a rant about billionaires - "a billionaire death cult has its fingers around humanity's throat".

All feedback is welcome, if it is constructive (or instructive). Emails sent to u3asecondnature@gmail.com may be used here or on the website, unless you make it clear when you email that you don't want me to use your content. I may edit the material to save space, but I take care not to change its meaning. I won't share your contact details. I keep your emails in a Gmail folder to which only I have access, and delete them when I don't need them any more.

No AI tools are used to compile Second Nature.

Readers who find this newsletter useful may also like the u3a Climate Change & Environment website and the Climate Group Leaders Facebook Group.

My mailing address is:
u3a Subject Adviser for Climate Change and Environment
The Old Hovel
78 Wentworth Road
Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 4NU
United Kingdom