

Read, Don't Drive

A selection of books and articles referred to while thinking about living carfree, plus mini-reviews. If you'd like an even longer list, please get in touch via the contact page.

Abdullah, Saamah, Marks, Nic, Johnson, Victoria, Simms, Andrew, Thompson, Sam, *The European (Un)Happy Planet Index: An index of carbon efficiency and well-being in the EU* (London, New Economics Foundation & Friends of the Earth, 2007) <http://www.neweconomics.org/>

Latest version of the world's best places to live, scored by quality of life and ecological efficiency.

Abdullah, Saamah, Marks, Nic, Simms, Andrew, Thompson, Sam, *The (Un)Happy Planet Index: An index of human well-being and environmental impact* (London, New Economics Foundation and Friends of the Earth, 2006) <http://www.neweconomics.org/>

First version of the world's best places to live, scored by quality of life and ecological efficiency.

Baird, Nicola, *The Estate We're In* (London, Indigo, 1998)

How cars drive society. And why it should be the other way round.

Ballantine, Richard and Grant, Richard, *Richard's Bicycle Repair Manual* (London, Dorling Kindersley, 1994)

Once you've taken the plunge and bought the bike, this will tell you how to keep it in good running order.

Ballard, J G, *Crash* (London, Granada, 1979)

Auto-eroticism meets the erotic auto, where the only thing that's more unsafe than the sex is the driving.

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (London, Paladin/Granada, 1979)

The seminal primer on semiology by le Grand Inquisitor of The Sign. Getting behind the myths of bourgeois society.

Benson, Richard, *The Farm* (London, Penguin, 2005)

What happens to the people, the animals and the land when globalization, cheap food and Tescopoly arrive on the farmer's doorstep.

Blythmann, Joanna, *Shopped: The Shocking Power of British Supermarkets* (London, Harper Perennial, 2005)

How, why and what you are doing when you shop at Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Waitrose et al.

Borgenich, David and Piven, Joshua, *The Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook: Travel* (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2001)

How to stop a runaway train, survive a plane crash or, or foil an alien abduction. Don't leave home without it.

Cairncross, Frances, *The Death of Distance* (London, Orion, 2000)

How telecoms technology and competition are undermining geography, why it matters to all of us, and what it might mean for transporting people and products in the future.

Centre for Alternative Technology, *zerocarbonbritain: an alternative energy strategy* (Machynlleth, Centre for Alternative Technology, 2007) <http://www.zerocarbonbritain.com/>

Blueprint setting out how Britain can reduce its carbon emissions to zero by 2027.

Clarkson, Jeremy, *Motorworld*, (London, Penguin Books, 2004)

Jeremy shows that, contrary to popular belief, and despite his amusing perm, he isn't really very funny.

Clifford, Sue and King, Angela, *England in Particular*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2006)

A compendium of the (good) things that make England such a singular place.

Coleman, Terry, *The Railway Navvies* (London, Penguin, 1986)

As you hurtle along the rails, spare a thought for the Victorian men who made it possible.

Crane, Nicholas, *Two Degrees West* (London, Penguin, 2000)

Have umbrella, will walk. This time, it's along the Central Meridian, right through England.

Crane, Nicholas, *Clear Waters Rising* (London, Penguin, 1997)

You thought you liked walking? Nick takes his umbrella on the mother of all rambles, using Shank's Pony for the 10,000 km trek from Cape Finisterre to Istanbul.

Davis, Adrian, Valsecchi, Carolina and Fergusson, Michael *Unfit for Purpose: How car use fuels climate change and obesity* (London, Institute for European Environmental Policy, August 2007)
<http://www.ieeplondon.org.uk/>

Title says it all. Read and wonder how we managed to get here.

Deakin, Roger, *Waterlog* (London, Vintage, 2000)

A lyrical and fascinating book about the wettest form of self-propulsion.

Diamond, Jared, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive* (London, Penguin, 2006)

Would the Easter Islanders have chopped down their last tree, if they knew that extinction would follow? And are we following in their footsteps?

Diski, Jenny, *Stranger on a Train* (London, Virago, 2004)

Proving that there really is always an alternative, Ms D circumnavigates the world's most car-centric country by train.

Dominguez, Joe and Robin, Vicki, *Your Money or Your Life*, (New York, Penguin, 1992).

Early US advocates of voluntary simplicity and throwing off the shackles.

Elton, Ben, *Gridlock* (London, Sphere Books, 1992)

The shiny suited shouter sets out the road to ruin with a joke laden conspiracy.

Galbraith, John Kenneth, *The Affluent Society* (London, Penguin, 1974)

An economist writes about private affluence amidst public squalor.

Ghazi, Polly and Jones, Judy, *Downshifting: The Guide to Happier, Simpler Living* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997)

How less can be more: why and how to downshift your life.

Gigerenzer, Gerd, *Reckoning with Risk: Learning to live with uncertainty* (London, Penguin, 2003)

Understanding probability and risk. One day, it could be you.

Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point* (London, Abacus, 2000)

Little things make a big difference: how social trends erupt, behaviour changes and ideas take off.

Gleick, James, *Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything*, (London, Little Brown, 1999)

How and why everything is speeding up (except the traffic).

Global Ideas Bank, *500 Ways to Change the World*, (London, Global Ideas Bank/Collins, 2005)

Weird and wonderful, bizarre and brilliant - ideas to make the world a better place.

Hardin, Garret, *The Tragedy of the Commons*, (Science, 13 December 1968)

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/162/3859/1243>

Seminal article on why individual's drive to optimise inevitably imposes costs on society, with outcomes contra Adam Smith's Invisible Hand. Spells out why freedom in a commons brings ultimate ruin to all, and why agreement to coerce and regulate, via consensus, is the only hope.

Harford, Tim, *The Undercover Economist*, (Abacus, London, 2006)

You can't see economics, but you can see what it does. How the hidden forces of economics drive the things that happen all around us, every minute of every day.

Heinberg, Richard, *Power Down* (Forest Row, Clairview, 2004)

What to do when the oil runs out. Or do we just pretend it isn't going to happen?

Hickman, Leo, *A Life Stripped Bare: My Year Trying to Live Ethically* (London, Transworld, 2005)

Leo and family attempt to understand how their comfortable inner-city existence affects the planet - and provide plenty of guidance on how to do something about it.

Hillman, Mayer with Fawcett, Tina, *How We Can Save the Planet* (London, Penguin, 2004)

Contraction and convergence: the recipe to beat climate change.

Hodgkinson, Tom, *How to be Idle* (London, Penguin, 2005)

Much more than a Slacker's Bible, a widely sourced and potentially life-changing read.

Hodgkinson, Tom, *How to be Free* (London, Penguin, 2006)

You don't have to be a Marxist to throw off the shackles of bourgeois convention and lead a richer life.

Honore, Carl, *In Praise of Slow* (London, Orion, 2005)

Slow down, you move too fast, life's better if you make the good things last. The antidote to Gleick (qv).

James, Oliver, *Britain on the Couch* (Arrow, London, 1998)

Why fifty years of affluence has made us all a lot more miserable.

James, Oliver, *Affluenza* (Vermillion, London, 2007)

Affluence is contagious, but the disease can be cured.

Klein, Naomi, *No Logo* (London, Flamingo, 2001)

Profound insights into the nature of late capitalism from the patron saint of anti-globalisation.

Layard, Richard, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (London, Penguin, 2006)

Proving that economics doesn't have to be "the dismal science", Lord Layard shows what makes us happy.

Lovelock, James, *The revenge of Gaia* (London, Penguin, 2007)

A matter-of-fact depiction of how humans are upsetting the balance of the planet, with results that are likely to be the end of many of us. The scariest book you will ever read.

Marchant, Ian, *Parallel Lines: Journeys on the railway of dreams* (London, Bloomsbury, 2004)

Marchant takes to the iron road around the UK to find out whether the railway is a dream or a nightmare.

Marshall, George, *Carbon Detox*, (London, Gaia, 2007)

How to live a low carbon life, and enjoy it.

McKie, David, *Great British Bus Journeys* (Atlantic Books, London, 2007)

A bus-borne meander around Britain's backwaters.

Monbiot, George, *Captive State: The corporate takeover of Britain* (London, Macmillan, 2001)

How practically everything is privatized. Even if we don't always call it that.

Monbiot, George, *Heat: How We Can Stop the Planet Burning* (London, Penguin, 2007)

The things we'll have to do (and not do) if we are going to stop temperatures rising more than 2 degrees.

Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London, Penguin, 1974)

Winston Smith takes on The Ministries of Peace, Love, and Truth, Newspeak, and Doublethink as the clock strikes thirteen and Big Brother watches over us.

Quinn, Bill, *How Wal-Mart is destroying America (and the world) and what you can do about it* (Berkeley, Ten Speed Press, 2000)

Naomi Klein has identified the evils of big box retailers - here's how to fight them.

Schlosser, Eric, *Fast Food Nation* (London, Penguin, 2001)

Schlosser shows why you wouldn't be so keen on burgers if you knew what was in them.

Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful* (London, Abacus, 1977)

The bible of sustainability, "a study of economics as if people mattered."

Semlyen, Anna, *Cutting Your Car Use*, (Dartington, Green Books, 2007)

Handy hints for curbing your car use addiction, even if you aren't quite ready for the car free cold turkey

Solnit, Rebecca, *Wanderlust: A history of walking* (London, Verso, 2002)

A rich and dense history and literature of life at 3 mph.

Sloman, Lyn, *Carsick: Solutions for our car addicted culture* (Dartington, Green Books, 2006)

A brilliant and inspiring manual of soft policy to change car domination of our lives.

Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations*, (London, Penguin, 1986)

The founding father of modern political economy, appropriated by everyone from Milton Friedman to Margaret Thatcher. Smith's usually overlooked *Theory of Moral Sentiments* shows that Smith believed that individuals are not just economic egocentrics, but exist within a society and are bound by complex social and moral ties.

Sprawlsion, Charles, *Haunts of the black masseur: the swimmer as hero* (London, Vintage, 1993)

The history, culture, and literature of the boys and girls in the wet stuff that surrounds us.

Stern, Nicholas *The Economics of Climate Change* (London, HM Treasury, 2006) http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

Sir (now Lord) Nicholas's 579 page magnum opus on why doing something about climate change will be cheaper than doing nothing, delivered to Gordon Brown before he became Prime Minister.

Taleb, Nassim Nicholas, *Foiled by Randomness* (New York, Random House, 2005)

Nothing to do with cars, but a brilliant primer on how the danger of conventional thinking, and of how things really are a lot more unpredictable than they seem.

Theroux, Paul, *The Great Railway Bazaar* (London, Penguin, 1977)

All the way from Platform 7 at London's Victoria Station to Japan and all the way back, by train, without being Duffilled (left behind when the train departs).

Theroux, Paul, *The Old Patagonian Express* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1979)

From Boston, Mass to Patagonia by train, on tracks that are no longer there.

Theroux, Paul, *Riding the Iron Rooster* (London, Penguin, 1989)

A year spent riding the rails in China.

Thoreau, Henry David, *Walden* (Ware, Wordsworth, 1995)

The nobility of solitude in a log cabin in Concord, Massachusetts in the 1840s.

Tiresias, *Notes from Overground* (London, Paladin, 1984)

The rail commuter's lot, a.k.a 'man is born free and is everywhere on trains'

Toynbee, Polly, *Hard Work: Life in low pay Britain* (London, Bloomsbury, 2003)

Life on the minimum wage, without a car. Polly gave it up because she couldn't afford to keep it, and stayed car-less because she liked it that way.

United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

The definitive scientific consensus on climate change. The scientific authors won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, shared with Al Gore.

Whittaker, Nicholas, *Platform Souls: The Trainspotter as Twentieth Century Hero* (London, Orion, 2000)

The Nick Hornby, rather than the Irwin Welsh, of trainspotting.

Williams, Heathcote, *Autogeddon* (New York, Arcade Publishing, 1991)

An impassioned poem on global car fetishism, first published in Whole Earth Review in 1987.