



It's quite possible that the BBC's *North West Tonight* could think I'm unfairly singling it out for criticism over its coverage of environmental issues when there is economic benefit to be had. The fact is, though, it's the only regional news broadcast that I watch on a regular basis, so it has to be the one I comment on. Not only is it because of where I physically reside, but it is also a compliment to the BBC that, despite its faults, I still favour the public service broadcaster over the commercial. I'm a bit like a judge on St
rictly

– I expect such high standards I get picky.

However, I despair when I hear the programme's trumpeting of how much cash is generated in the North West by the nuclear industry and how there are big bucks to be made from the new generation of nuclear power stations. Have we learned nothing?

- The big event in the environmental sphere this week has been the United Nations climate change meeting in Poland – yes, another one. The spin on the website of the UN Framework Conference on Climate Change was that it was a resounding success. The world saw a different picture. The All Africa website, which collates and disseminates news stories from all parts of the African continent, carries a story from Ethiopia headlined *Disappointing Compromises At the UN Climate Change Conference*, reporting that the conference “narrowly avoided collapse”. There was a last-minute deal which, like all last-minute deals, comprised a fudge in a bright wrapper. The series of conferences are styled the COP conferences. Warsaw was COP19: it's more like COP-out 19.

- The Scottish government has unveiled its plans for an independent nation. It comes the day after a report by the BBC that commercial generation of energy from wave power will require a great deal of patience. The two devices being trialled off Orkney are a long way from fruition. On the other hand, tidal power, which harnesses the power of water as it flows and ebbs onto the shore, is set to begin commercial trials, following approval in September.

Despite that, the thrust of the energy policy set out in the White Paper revolves around the oil and gas industries. Plus ça change.

- The EU has finally agreed a deal on limiting CO2 emissions from new cars to 95g/km – well, sort of. After months of wrangling the new limit will be applied from 2021; that is a year after originally agreed after the German car industry kicked up a fuss. There will also be additional ‘flexibility’ (EU-speak for ‘ignoring’) for the luxury car makers, one of whom is a donor to Chancellor Merkel’s CDU party. Germany had supported its industry in demanding the original deal be torn-up, a stance which one environmental campaigner described as “disgraceful”.

An interesting sidelight on the deal was the emergence into the light of day of so-called ‘super-credits’. These are basically a licence to produce higher emissions from one model provided you produce another model, such as an electric car, that doesn’t produce so much. In the EU, everything has a downside built in to negate its upside.

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