



SATURDAY
12th June 2004
Text only



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Acid Rain

Nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide combine with water to produce dilute sulphuric and nitric acid. Burning fossil fuels (especially coal) produces large quantities of sulphur dioxide gas. Vehicle exhausts produce large quantities of nitrogen oxide gas. Some of the pollution emitted by factories and vehicles combines with water in the atmosphere to produce acid rain. In addition to killing many trees where it falls, acid rain enters rivers and lakes, where it kills fish and other aquatic animals.

Dying Forests

Since the Industrial Revolution and the great increase in the use of fossil fuels, industrial areas and great cities have experienced pollution in the form of smoke and sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere. This visible air pollution has been much reduced in the second half of the 20th century with the growing use of electrical energy. In large British towns, such as London, Birmingham, and Manchester, despite the increase of pollution from vehicle exhausts, the air is now much cleaner and fogs less dense and frequent than was the case in the early decades of the century. However when electricity is produced in large thermal power stations burning oil and coal the gases released from the high chimneys are carried downwind for long distance.

It is thought that this is one of the main causes of the acid rain which in quite rural areas has been blamed for leaf loss or the death of trees and the destruction of fish in freshwater lakes where this acid rainwater accumulates. Areas particularly affected are parts of Scandinavia, central Europe, and eastern Canada, and this is blamed on industrial emissions from factories and power stations in Britain, central and eastern Europe and the United States.

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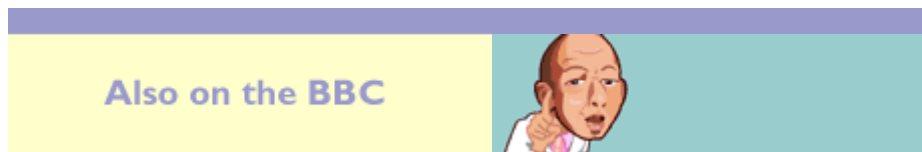
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