

Eco rage

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[caption id="attachment_2137" align="aligncenter" width="300"]

bikes parked in Amsterdam[caption] Eco rage seems to have broken out in Holland. As I have blogged on before the Dutch have always seemed a civilised lot and I put this down to the high percentage of their population cycling. However there have been a couple of stories recently that have shown another side to the Dutch and raised doubts. The first is a story on reducing car parking places in the Hague. The council decided to reduce parking places by offering residents a chance to swap their parking permit for a free space they could do what they liked with. A lawn, a sunspace, somewhere to grow something... In return their car would be parked for free in a multi story carpark. Cue a furious reaction that has shown even in cycling mad Holland people are very attached to their cars with angry comments and an angry public meeting. The second bit of eco rage was over a recycling scheme. If you did not recycle properly you got a yellow card. If you continued you got a red card and your waste was not collected. As you can imagine the reaction in a town ironically called Best has not been good. Death threats have been made against the collectors and even their children. Whilst the scheme does seem a bit extreme the reaction has been more so. We live in angry times. Many of the mass shootings that take place in the US and family revenge killings in the UK seem to me not to be people who have mental problems (at least not largely) but people with anger issues who snap. There was a rather unconvincing article in the Guardian the other week suggesting anger goes in 50 year cycles (for this to work at least one world war had to be ignored). I don't know whether we are more angry or just think in the age of the internet we can express it anonymously. I do think we need to calm down. Difficult decisions need to be made by our leaders but such reactions do not help. Neil

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