



Today, as expected, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report on global warming came expressed itself firmly of the view that it is "extremely likely" that human activity accounts for more than 50% of the increase in temperature over the past century and a half.

The report states: "Warming in the climate system is unequivocal and since 1950 many changes have been observed throughout the climate system that are unprecedented over decades to millennia. Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850."

The co-chair of the Working Group that produced the report, Qin Dahe, commented: "Observations of changes in the climate system are based on multiple lines of independent evidence. Our assessment of the science finds that the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amount of snow and ice has diminished, the global mean sea level has risen and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased."

All week the Beeb had been trailing the report. There have been films on ice melting and clams in Dorset and a tirade from Jeremy Paxman against hapless scientists on the *Newsnight* programme.

An apparent 'pausing' in global warming over the past 15 years was explained cogently by Prof Anastasios Tsonis of the University of Wisconsin and Dr Emily Shuckburgh of the British Antarctic Survey. That didn't stop Mr Paxman shouting "Why?" when Lord Stern, the former UK Government advisor on the economics of climate change stated that the "wait and see" approach was dangerous. We know he's only playing Devil's advocate, but he does it very convincingly.

- The Labour Party's stance on HS2 has been the subject of some debate recently. The 'will they, won't they?' question was raised initially by Ed Balls in his conference speech – in which he warned the project could be scrapped under a Labour government if costs escalated.

The following day shadow transport secretary Maria Eagle and the leader of Manchester City Council, Sir Richard Leese, both voiced support for the project.

It looks for all the world as if Labour is hedging its bets on the idea to see which way the electoral wind is blowing. What nobody in the party hierarchy seems to be doing is voicing an opinion either way on environmental grounds.

- You can't get away from the fracking controversy. At the beginning of September Cuadrilla said it was resubmitting its application to extend planning consent for oil exploration in Sussex as it didn't cover the land above its horizontal shaft. Government guidelines state: "...the area of land identified in a planning application which is to be developed has to be drawn widely to ensure that it is broad enough to cover any potential route of lateral drilling and area of working."

Now, the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has been charged following her arrest in August at the Balcombe protests.

**Chris Stokes**