

## Proof of Evidence

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Having visited Hutchison Ports at Felixstowe to discuss the situation we find ourselves in at Ramsey Park I was hoping for some positive indications as to how they might alleviate the problems we experience now and the increase we know we will endure in the future if nothing is done, from increased numbers of Freightliner engines being refuelled and idling in the sidings 100 yards away. However, I found myself depressed by the lack of any constructive suggestions at all.

It is all very well to draw conclusions from 'modelling' but unfortunately models aren't real and do not in any way reflect the anxiety, disturbance and concern caused by big business operations whose main criteria, by their own admission, are related to profits. Decisions have already been made in relation to, for example, using diesel engines rather than electric ones, with cost as a major criterion. Health of residents in neighbouring areas, especially a small group of residents, has certainly not been seen as of first priority, otherwise different decisions might have been made. And when it comes to board decisions, linked to investors/owners of Hutchison Ports, who actually live and work in Hong Kong, the concerns of a few individuals living in Ipswich, 100 yards from a railway fuelling point, are likely to be bottom of their list. It is, therefore, no surprise to me that the Air Quality report commissioned by Hutchison Ports gives very limited consideration to Ipswich Refuelling Point and that the noise report presented by Bureau Veritas on behalf of Hutchison Ports, bases its model on data collected over a mere 11 nights. We all know that statistics can be used to draw all sorts of conclusions. Focus on certain figures and minimise other more tricky ones and you can come up with the arguments you want.

We fortunately live in a democratic country, however, and I have to thank the democratic process which has given me this opportunity to state some of the personal concerns that I have already experienced and am very afraid will continue to experience for a long time in the future, in the hope that it will have some effect in counteracting the conclusions of the 'modelling' process and persuade those in a position of much greater power than mine, to endeavour to do something to alleviate these concerns.

I moved into my house nearly five years ago now and for the first three years was working full time. I was aware of noise and fumes from the railway station area, particularly at weekends, but they didn't impinge too heavily on me because our bedroom is at the back and the effects of locomotives at night were much less obvious therefore. Vibrations were sometimes noticeable when I was reading in bed and put my cocoa cup on my bedside table and realised the cocoa surface was moving and my alarm clock trembling slightly, but I tended to dismiss these odd occasions as exceptional.

However, two and a half years ago I retired and slowly the situation has changed. Last summer, for example, I was sitting in the garden with two friends. The back of our house faces south and the sun was shining, the birds were singing and we were having a quiet chat. The idyll did not last, however. Suddenly in the background was a clear rumble of sound. Not however a train arriving at the station. No, this was a

constant steady rumble with a whining noise linked into it. Not only this, but a few moments later, there was a clear smell in the air – diesel fumes.

This may not seem very serious in itself but the contrast between what we were enjoying and this new situation was marked and the idea of sitting in the back garden breathing in diesel fumes and smelling diesel fumes is not appealing. We stayed where we were, however, and eventually after five to ten minutes the fumes drifted away. What gift had they left us I wonder? More sooty particles in our bodies? According to medical opinion, the particulates from diesel fumes are dangerous to health. Several substances in diesel exhaust are known to cause cancer. In addition to lung cancer, studies have shown a possible link between diesel exhaust and cancers of the bladder, prostate and colon. When released into the environment diesel exhaust also affects public health resulting in breathing difficulty, coughing or wheezing, and increased heart and lung disease. A doctor speaking in a TV health programme recently carried out her own experiments cycling on a street in Cambridge. The outcome was that the worst problems came from the biggest engines, for example, lorries. As long as she avoided these she was considered to be reasonably safe. Unfortunately, when you live 100 yards from a diesel fuel point and engine sidings, it's impossible to avoid the fumes and it's impossible to avoid very large engines. Mark Dixon, one of our neighbours in Willoughby Road, has described how suddenly, some time after he moved into his house, he became asthmatic. A nurse in the same road also suffers from similar symptoms. The difficulty, of course, is, how do you prove it? Certainly when set against the 'facts' of reports, the personal experiences of individual human beings are very small fry indeed.

But, for those human beings the effects can be really upsetting. Our neighbour, Sarah Butler, approached my husband in tears three years ago because she was so worried about what the fumes were doing to her children who were then 2, 4 and 6. When the latest scientific report of a large study in California found 10 year olds who lived within 550 yards of a motorway suffered significant loss of lung function by the age of 18 and the scientists said their findings pointed to fine carbon particles in exhaust fumes as the most likely culprit, how do you think Sarah felt? We live only 100 yards or so away from the railway sidings not 550 yards. True, the engines aren't sending out fumes 24 hours a day, but they are doing so for continuous periods of time, especially in winter. The thought is not reassuring.

My husband and I both have studies which face the railway sidings. Mine is upstairs and his downstairs. It is not pleasant, nor comforting, to be sitting working and suddenly find the room pervaded by diesel fumes. The smell is unmistakable. We both go to the gym because the older you get the more you become aware of the importance of good health; it's not fun to return from a good workout, to get out of the car and smell fumes.

The fact that we do know is that the Bureau Veritas report on noise relies for its starting point on twelve days of recording on two microphones. I wonder why microphones were not placed in front of the 3 storey house or in the garden of the house next to the sidings. The conclusions are based on a model taken from twelve days' figures. Twelve days out of 365 cannot be a true representation of reality. Temperatures go up and down. Engine drivers will turn their engines on, leave them and go off to have a smoke. Engines may be moved or switched off if they realise someone is checking on them, particularly if they notice a camera flash or have been informed that monitoring is taking place. The number of factors which make up the production of noise from a railway siding where a fuel point is situated can vary enormously.

The fumes monitor has been running for 5 months, 5 months which have broken records for high temperature which has affected considerably the need for engines to be idled. Unfortunately, as well, the monitor has failed to operate for periods of time, once for a period of eighteen to nineteen days. Even so there have been five days when particulates have exceeded the present statutorily acceptable level. It is no comfort to us that the present regulations state 35 days exceedences in a year before something needs to be done, because the proposed Objective for 2010, as the Air Quality Technical Report makes clear, is no more than 7 daily exceedences. The implication of this Government objective, is that there are real concerns about health for people living in the vicinity of diesel fumes. The prediction of the Air Quality report is that neither of the provisional daily or annual mean Objectives will be exceeded at any of the receptor locations in the base year or by 2023 with the scheme fully developed. I wonder why they do not mention in any detail the period of time when these objectives will be exceeded. Will it be for one year, two years, ten years? 2023 is a long way away when you are considering children's lives and the long term effects upon them.

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