

Electric cars

The latest figures for battery car sales in the EU show them down 11% in March, with a market share down at 13%. The fall in Germany was particularly steep. This follows news of price cuts and poor sales at Tesla. The Tesla share price is 62% down from the peak. Tesla announced 14,000 redundancies.

This should be a salutary warning to governments and car companies. It is no good ploughing on with new products that too few people want to buy or can afford. Governments need to do more to deliver enough affordable renewable electricity before trying to force the pace on adoption of battery cars. Why try to sell more EVs when they need to be recharged with electricity from a gas power station?

Governments and international conferences have not been straight with the public. It is not green to scrap a petrol or diesel car early and make a new battery car to replace it. It is not green to run a battery car recharging it with fossil fuel electricity. If many people do get EVs governments will impose taxes on using them to replace lost petrol taxes. Using a battery car will not be easy until there are many more fast recharging points. Going electric requires a huge expansion of the grid and cable systems that serve us.

Car companies spend plenty of money on EV car ads trying to make them look the thing to have. They never talk about running costs. How much does it cost to recharge? What happens to insurance costs? What is the true range? How long will the battery last? How quickly does battery performance deteriorate? How easy is it to repair a damaged battery car? The ads need to be more informative. Many people have many good reasons not to buy a battery electric car. The rich can afford them and often have a petrol car as well for long journeys. Most people think they are too dear, difficult to recharge away from home and no use if you do not have a driveway or garage of your own.