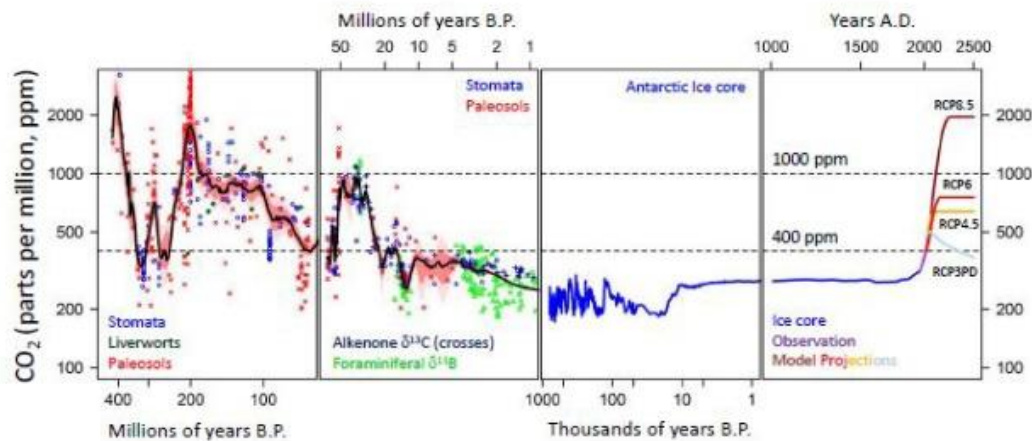


Teignbridge Action on Climate - Carbon Cutters team.

Number 2. Small things

We all had science lessons at school. Perhaps not great memories for us but please bear with me while I briefly revisit those lessons.

The carbon cycle is central to life on earth. Plants have been photosynthesising for millions of years and in doing so, have gradually removed Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere of the earth, locking much of that in or under the soil.

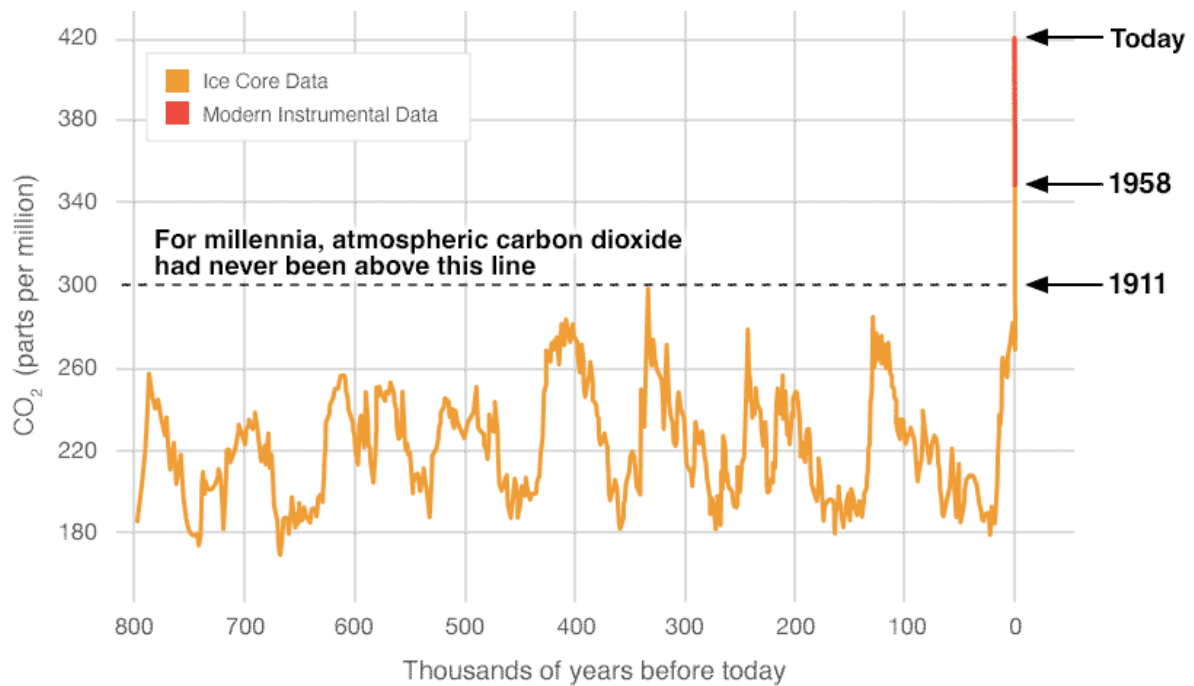


levels on planet earth over the past 4.5 billion years, possible future levels and the source of evidence – Foster et al

Some of this stored carbon, undisturbed for millions of years, became coal, oil or gas.

The CO₂ concentration in our air gradually fell to around 250 parts per million (ppm) one billion years ago and fluctuated between that and 300 ppm over the following years until the beginning of the industrial revolution.

This level of CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere has provided the conditions for life on earth to develop and flourish.



CO₂ levels on planet earth over the past 800 million years and the source of evidence – Credit NOAA

Since the industrial revolution, when we began to burn fossil fuels such as coal, gas, and oil in large quantities to generate energy to power our lives, the CO₂ concentration in our atmosphere has risen to over 420 ppm today.

So why is this interesting for you or me?

Carbon Dioxide is a powerful Greenhouse Gas. Greenhouse Gases act as a blanket, trapping warmth inside the atmosphere of the earth. As the earth warms our climate changes, wind and ocean currents change and storms become more intense.

We developed as a human race during a period of climate stability. The proportion of the earth's surface offering a benevolent climate is now reducing while our global population is greater than it has ever been.

Over the coming months I will discuss some of the things, large and small, you and I can do as individuals to reduce our own CO₂ emissions and impact on climate change. Some of these actions will save you money.

I will also be in the village hall on 9th June and will be happy to chat with you about these things.