

ESEF Cymru

**Earth Science Education Forum – Cymru (ESEF-Cymru)**  
**held in conjunction with**  
**Environment Agency Wales and the**  
**Cardiff Harbour Authority**

**“CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE VISIT and**  
**SEVERN BARRAGE DISCUSSION”**

**Is Cardiff bay an example of sustainable development? What are your views on the Severn Barrage proposal?**

4.30pm - 7.00pm, 26 June 2007

Cardiff Bay is a sheltered inlet covering about 200 hectares on the Bristol Channel at the mouths of the Rivers Taff and Ely. The Cardiff Bay Barrage itself is 1.1km long and extends from Cardiff docks in the north to Penarth in the south. This major civil engineering construction project has created a freshwater lake with over 13km of waterfront. This 220 million pound project has been the catalyst for the 2 billion pound regeneration of the old docklands of Cardiff and Penarth.

The Group met at the Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA) Environmental Education Centre, Cardiff Barrage. During informal networking, attendees were able to look across the Bay towards the modern buildings of the Welsh Assembly, as well as the restaurants, bars and shops of the recently developed Cardiff Bay.

Following a quick introduction by John Harrison (Environment Agency Wales) and Simon Howell (Operational Manager, CHA). John and Simon led groups outside to walk across to the Cardiff Bay Barrage and hear more about the project. The tour included a view of operations at the fish pass, sluice gates and lock gates, discussion on the development and future plans for the area.

The skies cleared and the views both across the Bay and out to sea, were spectacular. Several attendees took the opportunity to stand on the yellow cross and become part of the modern art installation – seeing the yellow painted spiral across the structure of the barrage, which from any other position look like disjointed curves and lines.

Returning to the CHA Educational Centre John Harrison and Simon Howell gave an overview of the Cardiff Bay Barrage and led the discussion.

In answer to the question ‘Is Cardiff Bay an example of sustainable development?’ attendees discussed the definition of sustainable and whether the project was truly sustainable. In general, it was agreed that it is, however there were some concerns including:

- impression that the area had not been looked at as a complete development by planners who appeared to have a ‘bit-by-bit’ approach resulting in a ‘mish-mash’ of building developments;
- infrastructure had not been thought out fully which had resulted in commuter difficulties for those living in Penarth and in the new developments wishing to work in Cardiff;
- lack of a cycling/walking route from the barrage to the retail/refreshment development (continuing the path from the barrage past the CHA Education Centre would remedy this).

Views on the Severn Barrage proposal were diverse, but overall it was felt that there had been insufficient research into alternative developments in tide and wave technology and that the environmental effects of such a large barrage had not been fully researched or recognised. There may be a better option, but decisions seem to have been made prematurely, so the Severn Barrage will go ahead, whatever.

The Chair thanked the attendees: the speakers for their presentations; Severn Barrage for their hospitality; and the Environment Agency Wales for their help in organising the meeting.

End

Cally Oldershaw

30 June 2007

Email [earthsciencesgroup@btopenworld.com](mailto:earthsciencesgroup@btopenworld.com)

Website [www.esef.org.uk](http://www.esef.org.uk)