A CAUTIONARY TALE by Julia Blackburn. Suffolk , May 2025

A converter transforms the wind power gathered by those giant turbines that stand in long lines in our shallow North Sea, into electricity.

Our Continental neighbours all have converters connected to their turbines, but the difference is – and this is crucial – their converters sit on platforms resting in the salty waters that we all share. We are the only country that has seen fit to bring such massive and intrusive structures onto dry land, simply because that enables the Government to save a bit of money while also providing a hefty profit for private enterprise and its shareholders.

The coast of Suffolk between Bawdsey in the south and Walberswick in the north, is famous for its unique wetlands which have Unesco World Heritage status and are managed by the RSPB and the National Trust. These wetlands provide a buffer between land and sea and where they are absent , there are sand dunes and fragile but determined sandy cliffs which often reveal miraculous fossils as evidence of times long before our human time, as well as worked flints made by our first ancestors . The area is a paradise for birds and a myriad of small reptiles and invertebrates and is much loved by the local inhabitants as well as by visitors who come here as if on pilgrimage from all corners of the world.

The Government, under the supervision of our current Secretary of State, has decided that this particular bit of England is the perfect site for positioning a land-based mega-hub of three (or possibly four) massive converters, each one the size of Buckingham Palace , built on cultivated and uncultivated land and concretising the equivalent of eighty football fields; all this on the edge of the market town of Saxmundham, raising serious security questions and causing traffic misery.

We are already seeing the mushrooming of new roads and roundabouts and sites for lorry parks in preparation for the Sizewell C nuclear power station, but if, on top of it all, this unnecessary mega-hub for land-based wind power converter stations is not soon halted, then Mr Miliband will be able to fulfil his dream of turning a beautiful, remote and unique landscape into something he proudly calls The Energy Coast.

I keep thinking of Shelley's poem Ozymandias, in which a traveller 'in an antique land' comes across the shattered remains of a statue of a Persian Emperor who once thought himself to be all powerful. I have modernised this cautionary tale, turning Ozymandias into an equally deluded Ed Miliband.

Ozymandias in Suffolk **(with thanks to Percy Bysshe Shelley)**

I met a Suffolk man in future time

Who said – " Three vast and ghastly concrete cubes

Stand in the desert …Near them, on tarmac,

A shattered face does lie, with frown

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

And on the pedestal where once he stood

These words appear:

'My name is Miliband, Sec. of State;

Look on my Works, you Nimbies, and despair!'

Nothing else remained and round the decay

Of those Converters, boundless and bare

The stripped and levelled lands stretched far away."