

By George!

George Ferguson

WHILE we are enjoying a glorious sunny spell it is a good time to consider how much potential solar power we are wasting.

Everything we do nowadays seems to involve burning up energy – including even the process of writing this weekly column.

So I was heartened by Suzanne Savill's article on Saturday "Shining a light on green energy" in which she shone a light on the suitably named Kerry Burns of local firm Solar Sense.

Burns is a man with a mission to make Bristol into Solar City, with solar power making a major contribution to the way we light, heat and power the city. It presents an enormous opportunity for Bristol to show the way in becoming the solar capital of the UK.

It is an idea whose time has come with some real financial benefits in terms of cost savings and the profitable new feed-in-tariffs, making

Let's all bottle this sunshine



solar panels a good investment even if the grants have now disappeared.

The long-term environmental benefits go without saying. If you have an un-shaded south-facing roof you are sitting on an asset that should not be wasted.

Bristol is the most obvious choice as UK Solar City being the best placed of the country's major cities to benefit. However for this initiative to succeed it needs both public and private commitment – and should

also stimulate our universities and manufacturers to get involved.

Alongside all this we should be looking at other direct benefits to the city such as powering more vehicles by electricity and making proper provision across the city to charge them. We are in danger of being left behind on this front particularly by Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

In Copenhagen they are also experimenting with cleaner and

quieter battery-driven ferries. The nice thing about all this is that the cleaner we make the city's air by reducing carbon pollution, as clean electric vehicles do, the more efficient solar power becomes. It is also so much more efficient to generate our power as locally as possible.

I envisage a city in just five years in which I don't feel like some sort of freak driving my all electric car, a city in which I can charge it at key solar powered charging stations, at which I can leave it while travelling on the train or working or playing in the centre. It is a bad time to be seeking public funding, but this is investment that could have the world knocking on Bristol's door – or do we not mind Germany beating us at this game?

Let's turn this dream into reality by grasping the challenge now – and you could do worse than going to the Create Centre's Solar Powered Party on Saturday, July 10.