



# Friends of the Earth

## CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS IS HOTTING UP

In our last newsletter, Jeremy wrote that the previous few months had been fascinating yet again for the climate change debate. Since then, things have really been getting into high gear with "climate change" featuring more prominently and frequently in the media.

In particular, the Institute for Public Policy Research published a report which has woken quite a few people up. For the first time in a document circulated in the higher echelons of national leaders and governments, a figure has been put on the timeframe available for humankind to do something to prevent climate change from spiralling irretrievably out of control: *10 years*.

Then there was the news that the worst case scenario of global warming has suddenly gotten a lot worse, with a possible global temperature rise of up to 11 degrees Centigrade within the next 90 plus years. This information comes from the findings of [climateprediction.net](http://climateprediction.net), a project run by Oxford University for the UK Climate Impact Programme.

It has involved some 95,000 ordinary folks (including me!) each running a unique climate change simulation program on our home and/or work computers. This has enabled far more simulation time to be done than on a few seriously expensive supercomputers.

These simulations are still ongoing. If you want to participate for free and you have a computer, visit [www.climateprediction.net](http://www.climateprediction.net). The simulation takes place 'in the background' so you don't notice any difference to the working speed of your

computer – assuming it has reasonable processing power. It has some excellent 'real-time' simulation graphics which you can switch on/off any time you like.

At the end of January Tony Blair hosted an international climate change conference down in Exeter. Again the scientific consensus was that the governments need to take REAL action NOW, with some focus on the potentially useful relationship between Tony Blair and US President G W Bush.

And this was backed up with hard evidence including a report by German climatologist Bill Hare which painted a graphic picture of the predicted disintegration of biodiversity over the coming years due to anthropogenic climate change. Biodiversity is intricately linked with all the workings of the biosphere, and thus provides perceptible indicators of change for the better, or worse.

And not forgetting the compounding evidence that the oceans are becoming more acidic, and rather large chunks of Arctic and Antarctic ice have been breaking off into the sea thereby accelerating the process. An architectural competition has just been won by Bath-based civil engineers BuroHappold to design a new Antarctic base station. The old one is about to slip into the sea because of climate change.

And in her recent record-breaking solo voyage around the world, yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur spotted a huge iceberg floating north of her position off the Australasian sea – further *north* than sighted by anyone previously. To the camera, she stated her concern about the changing environment around her.

A brief report of the Exeter conference can be read at: [http://www.stabilisation2005.com/Steering\\_Committee\\_Report.pdf](http://www.stabilisation2005.com/Steering_Committee_Report.pdf)

Thinking back to last year, it was stated that by 2012 (less than seven years from now!), China would have eight hundred and fifty new coal-fired power stations up and running to power their exploding economic and infrastructure development. A contrast to the nine or so coal stations we have in the UK.

China has been suffering severe blackouts due to the gross imbalance between supply and demand, hence the building boom in their energy sectors. A couple of weeks ago the Independent on Sunday reported: "China has abruptly slowed and halted work on building 22 major dams and power stations in a dramatic greening of the policies of the world's most populous nation.

"The surprise move - one of the most dramatic ever undertaken by any government - arises from rapidly growing environmental concern in China. It calls the bluff of President George Bush, who has cited growing pollution in China as justification for refusing to join Kyoto...." This report goes on to note: "Many of the children of top Chinese politicians and officials are members of the environmental pressure groups that are thriving at the country's top universities."

This is heartening for environmental campaigners. Then the Kyoto Protocol finally came into force following Russia's ratification last November, some seven years after the Protocol's tabling in Japan and thirteen years after it's inception at the Rio Treaty! ExxonMobil, branded The No.1 corporate climate criminal by the StopE\$\$O coalition and others, angered many groups by saying that Europe needs to take a 'reality check' with regard to Kyoto, while criticising the British taxation of UK North Sea gas extraction!

True to say Kyoto needs a lot of support to get the job done, and may need to transform into a 'Contraction and Convergence' system as propounded by the UK Global Commons Institute think-tank.

Since then crude oil prices have a hit high again, partly fuelled by China's strategic shopping for future oil supplies. And the UK government has been forced by the EU Commission to accept low pollution level quotas in the new Emissions Trading Scheme.

How much hotter can things get? Chris.

## .... GORDON BROWN TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE?

Well, yes he is! Prior to the next budget, Gordon Brown is expected to make his first speech about climate change on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

National Friends of the Earth has been encouraging the general public to write him a letter in which you insist that he make UK government commitments to:

1. Meet the UK's 20 per cent carbon reduction target by 2010;
2. examine how to set carbon budgets for the different sources of emissions in the UK;
3. to introduce new, innovative and dynamic economic instruments to keep up within budget, like the renewables obligation and emissions trading;
4. to use tax-and-spend policies to ensure all polluters pay and low carbon alternatives are introduced.

Watch the news! Chris.



## Full sparks for Green Electricity campaign

Early December saw the launch of our "Green Electricity Campaign". Run by our energy campaigner Jeremy Doyle, we attracted many of the Saturday morning shoppers outside Green Park Station, from we received around 70 pledges to seriously consider switching to one of five top green tariffs as recommended by national FoE.

Sue Board and John Lancaster provided some welcome help in manning the stall, at which we were visited by B&NES Exec Cllr for the Environment Rosemary Todd and Mayor Roger Symonds and his partner Nic Rattle. The success of this event prompted us to hold a second 'day of action', and Jeremy reports on this below. Chris.

### Stall no. 02

On Saturday 15 January, we had a great day on the Green Electricity stall by the Podium. There were 63 new pledges from the public including the Chairperson of the Council, Marian McNeir. We gave away 170-odd free cfl light bulbs. Don Foster MP and Councillor Paul Crossley also turned up to support the campaign.

Two items went out in the Chronicle on 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January while our event was broadcast on local radio stations. Coupled with our launch stall held outside Green Park Station in December, we now have a list of 140 people who have pledged to switch.

Thanks so much to Steve, John, Chris, David and Richard for doing such a great job on this day of action. We will most likely repeat the event in March, since it has worked so well and gained some momentum.

I would really like to hear from Bath FoE members who are interested in talking to

their employers about green electricity or other climate challenges, since there is a lot of mileage to be had there. Contact me direct at: [energy@bath-foe.org.uk](mailto:energy@bath-foe.org.uk) Jeremy.

## AGM review

In January BathFoE held it's annual general meeting at Envolve. We discussed our accounts and agreed on campaigning posts before pressing on with regular issues!

We are pleased to report that our accounts are fairly healthy, but we will still warmly welcome subscriptions from new members and donations.

Mike Gordon will continue as Group Treasurer, I shall continue as Group Co-ordinator and newsletter editor, and everyone else is happy to continue in their campaigning roles but always with the option of moving to challenges in different campaign areas. The designated roles are as on the back sheet of this newsletter, with the position of Transport campaigner still vacant. If anyone would like to volunteer for this role, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Similarly, we will always appreciate more active support on any campaign issues to spread the workload, reinforce existing campaigns and to advance progress where it is needed. Chris.

## Bikes on Wessex trains: Actions help to relax ban

Last year we reported on the newly-formed Bath Cycling Campaign group. Since then, these intrepid cycle activists have scored a success as a result of some concerted effort in tackling the Wessex Trains rush-hour blanket ban on bikes. The group collaborated with CTC's national consultant – veteran campaigner Dave Holladay – and others to hold

left, the BathFoE Green Electricity campaign launch in December.

below, the follow-up stall in January with Council Chair, Cllr Marian McNeir, expressing her support.



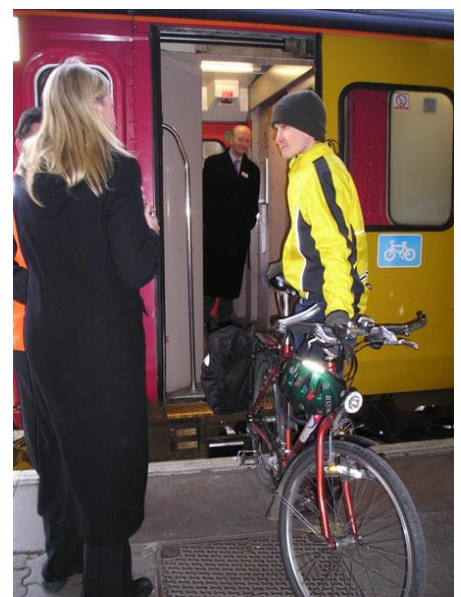
meetings with Wessex management personnel in a bid to lift or relax the ban.

A meeting was arranged to meet the Wessex Safety Assurance Manager, Sarah Coopey, on the afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> January so that she could assess how many bikes could be safely stowed on their various train types, and how long it takes to on- and off-load said bikes.

In attendance were Dave Holladay, Terry Miller of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR), Steve Kinsella of N Somerset Cycling Campaign (and CTC local rep), and myself representing Bath Cycling Campaign and BathFoE.

We and our sundry bikes proceeded to spend three hours testing the various bike storage configurations available on each of Wessex 6 different trains. It transpired that some trains are better than others!

That same morning, Bath Cycling Campaign executed a news-worthy stunt of trying to show-up the absurdity of



Chris about to load his bike onto a train while Sarah Coopey looks on with a stopwatch.

Wessex Trains' bike ban. I myself tried taking my real bike onto the train, fully expecting to be turned away based on my past experience and the Wessex regulations. Another person was going to try taking a full-size cardboard and plastic tube "bike" onto the train, while others took an ironing board, a dining chair, a ladder, and some inflatables which couldn't possibly be deflated.

The objective: how is it that non-bike bulky objects can be permitted onto the trains, but not fixed bikes? It so happens that ALL of us were let on the train, including 3 folding bikes, a Bath Chronicle reporter and a BBC West camerawoman! There was obviously a conspiracy going on!

But the best news is that a couple of days later, Wessex Trains announced that up to a maximum of two bikes would thenceforth be permitted on rush hour trains. Good work by all the Cycling Campaigners! And it shows that some robust campaigning and good publicity can produce results. Chris.

## Zero Waste Workshop

At the end of January Bath and North East Somerset Council held a workshop to discuss its Zero Waste strategy. It was very well attended with more than 40 people turning up for the day, including Roger Symonds, the Mayor; Paul Crossley, the leader of the council; Rosemary Todd, executive Councillor for the Environment; several other councillors; representatives from ECT, the community recycling organisation which carries out the kerbside collections in BNES; Envolve; Somer Housing Trust; Sofa Project; The Environment Agency; and Bath Friends of the Earth and The Recycling Consortium. Andy Thomas, Corporate Projects Manager, spoke about the role of the Local Strategic Partnership. He was followed by a presentation from 'Eunomia Research and Consulting' on Zero Waste initiatives for B&NES in the short term. The consultants from Eunomia talked about the steep rise in waste disposal costs being faced by local authorities over the next 15 years.

Government figures for 2003/2004 put B&NES' recycling rate at 29 per cent, just failing to hit its target of 33 per cent and making it joint fourteenth in the country on a list of 393 Local Authorities. Lichfield District Council was ranked no.1 with 46 per cent, and Daventry District Council came in second place with 42 per cent.

The workshops included brainstorming sessions on innovations to reduce waste and increase recycling, re-use and composting, and the prioritisation of these initiatives. The findings from the day are

due to have been put forward to a council meeting on February 17. Andy.

## Consultations galore – BathFoE responds

I thought December and New Year's were quiet times for relaxing and to reflect on the year past and the year ahead?

Wrong! The West of England Partnership ran it's public consultation on the 20 year vision for the sub-region (comprising Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and B&NES). As you can imagine, a 'vision' of this sort is quite sweeping and required some input from ourselves! Visit [www.woe.plan9.co.uk](http://www.woe.plan9.co.uk)

But don't forget the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study. Oh, and the Local Plan Sustainable Development Appraisal. Unfortunately these key documents are not the only critical policy wordings that will affect the shaping of our communities over the next couple of decades (climate change impacts apart).

Our 'Open Spaces' campaigner, Helen Woodley, has been working tirelessly to produce BathFoE responses to these and other consultations. Currently we're working on the significant 'Retail' section of the Local Plan which could result in local shops near you closing down, and/or a new *superstore* opening up. The Lambridge Park&Ride debate is also receiving our attention, while the Local Transport Plan study has yielded some results for public consultation – see below. Look out for a BathFoE e-bulletin. Chris.

## Important: LTP consultation

A while ago we reported on Local Transport Plan progress. This month only (March 2005) there is a public consultation to which you need to respond – ASAP!



Out of the whole sub-regional area (B&NES, South Glos, Bristol and North Somerset), **only about 200 responses** were submitted to the West of England Partnership consultation in December. A pitifully small number!

Please respond this time round using the straight-forward facility on-line at: [www.greaterbristoltransportplan.org](http://www.greaterbristoltransportplan.org) Of the available options A, B or C, local FoE groups recommend Option C. Equally important in the comments section, stress the need for a major modal shift from private cars to public transport, together with promotion of cycling and walking. Also question the need for so much cross-regional travel in the first place! Chris.

## GM-Free Business campaign launched

Since our GM-Free B&NES campaign resulted in a 2003 Council resolution to go GM-Free, we launched our GM-Free business campaign in November 2004.

We had a good attendance as the picture below indicates, with Bernard Newton, President of the Mendip Beekeepers' Association signing a pledge for Susan Traill. Supporting the occasion were Mayor Roger Symonds and his partner, Cllr Marian McNeir, MP Don Foster, a live scarecrow, and reps from other organisations including Somer Valley FoE, Bath Allotments Association, Bath Greenpeace, Envolve, and the international GM Biteback campaign.

### Action

If you run a local business which retails or serves food, get in touch with Susan at [food@bath-foe.org.uk](mailto:food@bath-foe.org.uk). Equally, ask the company where you work to sign up, especially if they have food vending machines or a canteen. If not, ask them to support us as a matter of principle. Ask your local food retailers and restaurants you dine at to sign as well. Chris.

# DIARY 2005

## March

- Mon 14<sup>th</sup> Bath Greenpeace monthly meeting  
7.30pm Envolve, Green Park Station
- Tue 15<sup>th</sup> ICE Lecture series, University of Bath  
Architecture: title tbc 01225 386156
- Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> RIBA / IStructE lecture, Royal Western  
Academy, Queen's Road, Bristol 6.30pm start  
"Bio-mimetics: stealing ideas from nature" £5
- Sun 27<sup>th</sup> **Recycle Your Sundays Bath Abbey 10.30am**  
Daffodil Ride. 18-20 miles. Bring a picnic and  
an aphorism. Verona 01225 840072
- Tue 29<sup>th</sup> **Bath FoE monthly meeting 7.45pm**  
**Envolve, Green Park Station**
- Thurs 31<sup>st</sup> Deadline: Local Transport Consultation  
[www.greaterbristoltransportplan.org](http://www.greaterbristoltransportplan.org)

## April

- Sun 10<sup>th</sup> **Recycle Your Sundays Bath Abbey 10.30am**  
Tucker's Grave, 25-30 miles.  
Pub lunch. Erica 01225 837944
- Mon 14<sup>th</sup> Bath Greenpeace monthly meeting  
7.30pm Envolve, Green Park Station
- Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Green Drinks, upstairs at The Rummer 8.30pm
- Sat 16<sup>th</sup> **Global week of Action against Poverty**  
Day-long events in Bristol. Probably in Bath  
also. Visit [www.ns-forum.org.uk](http://www.ns-forum.org.uk) for details.
- Tue 19<sup>th</sup> ICE Lecture series, University of Bath  
"Ecology and Poetry" 01225 386156
- Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> **BathFoE "Green Spaces" sketching event**  
**Look out for details.**
- Sun 24<sup>th</sup> **Recycle Your Sundays Bath Abbey 10.30am**  
Eco homes ride, 30 miles.  
Pub lunch. Chris 01225 835633.
- Tue 26<sup>th</sup> **Bath FoE monthly meeting 7.45pm**  
**Envolve, Green Park Station**

## May

- Sun 8<sup>th</sup> **Recycle Your Sundays Bath Abbey 10.30am**  
venue tbc. Hazel 01225 469199
- Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Bath Greenpeace monthly meeting  
7.30pm Envolve, Green Park Station
- Tue 10<sup>th</sup> ICE Lecture series, University of Bath  
"Green Chemical Technology Metrics"  
01225 386156
- Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Green Drinks, upstairs at The Rummer 8.30pm
- Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> **Recycle Your Sundays Bath Abbey 10.30am**  
venue tbc. Hazel 01225 469199
- Tues 24<sup>th</sup> ICE Lecture series, University of Bath  
"Life Cycle Assessments in decision-making"  
01225 386156
- Tues 31<sup>st</sup> **Bath FoE monthly meeting 7.45pm**  
**Envolve, Green Park Station**

## Who Does What

Group Coordinator & Newsletter editor	Chris Benson	835633
Membership Secretary & Treasurer	Mike Gordon	334516
Webmaster	David Beasley	425200
Spokesperson and Press liaison	Sue Board	335962

## Campaign Group / Activists

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Waste	Andy Nelmes	338742
Toxics	Richard Carder	313531
Real Food and GM	Susan Trill	339861
Transport		
Biodiversity, Habitats and Open Spaces	Vicky Stone Sue Board	335962
	Helen Woodley	
Climate & Energy	Jeremy Doyle Chris Benson	429387 835633

Bath FoE meets on the last Tuesday of each month at Envolve, Bath Environment Centre, Green Park Station. Meetings start at 7.45pm. **All are welcome.**

General enquiries: Chris Benson, 4 Somerdale Avenue, Bath. BA2 2PG. Tel 01225 835633  
Email [info@bath-foe.org.uk](mailto:info@bath-foe.org.uk) website [www.bath-foe.org.uk](http://www.bath-foe.org.uk)  
Subscriptions – £6 pa per household or £3 if unwaged.  
Standing Order or cheque payable to "Bath FoE".  
Contact Mike Gordon, 3 Raglan Street, Bath. BA1 6HP.

**When you join Bath FoE you get  
free membership of National FoE for 1 year**  
(Tell your friends)

**Please check your address label to see if your subs are due**

This newsletter is produced quarterly. Send items to Chris, preferably by email or disk as **plain text**. Include photos/images (images can be tiff, psd, gif, bmp or jpg)

For occasional news updates between newsletters please email a request to [info@bath-foe.org.uk](mailto:info@bath-foe.org.uk)

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