



Green Party South-West Area Newsletter

December
1988

South Molton - recycling capital of the world ?

Anna Pawlyn writes about some strange goings-on in a Devon quarry :

For 18 months I have been working for the recycling scheme "Creation Restoration" in S.Molton, ostensibly as their graphic designer, actually as a designer and occasional van driver, telephonist, saleswoman, newspaper humper, yard hand, and lecturer to Mothers Unions etc. I suppose the variety of the job reflects the multi-faceted nature of the organisation.

It started in 1985 as a charity shop but almost immediately went in for recycling newspapers - as well as selling recycled stationery. A year later it expanded to a disused council depot, increased its newspaper collection and opened its bottle bank. In keeping with the determination of its director, Jeremy Bell, to create something that was dynamic, the bottle bank broke away from the skip-with-the-hole approach : it has large painted animals on it.

As the scheme aims not just at recycling but also at expanding the public's growing awareness of things ecological, the outer walls of the depot are decorated with brightly painted cut-out bottles giving facts about S. Molton's consumption of glass and the amounts of raw materials that could be saved by recycling, and on the gate is a large painted tree with similar facts about paper. One of the next projects is a mural showing a jigsaw of the various related ecological problems facing the world. I plan that it will be eye-catching and provocative rather than gloomy - in spite of the subject !

And it's not just newspapers and bottles. Clothes are traditionally donated to charity shops, and clothes continue to be handed in, in large numbers. The shop sells what it can - the rest are sold as rags. We also collect aluminium foil and are soon to open tin and can banks. The charity shops sell bric-a-brac, we are able to take in furniture as well, and electrical goods : washing machines, fridges, toasters, the lot. Before being sold these are checked by our resident electrician, who also does repair work for customers to prevent still useable things from being thrown away.

From the start the profits have gone to local charities, but as the government increasingly turns its back on the needy we get more and more anguished calls from the Social Services or CAB : "Our client has been battered but is moving out into a flat of her own with three children. She has a kettle, a cot and a pram, but nothing else - can you help ?" - and we fit her up with at least the basics, either free or for a small donation.

There is also the Africa connection : the organisation has in the past been involved in the dispatching of a couple of containers of emergency supplies to East Africa. As well as medical instruments we collect tools to be refurbished and sent out by the organisation "Tools for Self Sufficiency", books for the Ranfurly Library, and spectacles.

And this is only the start. We have now got hold of a disused quarry which, when it has been adapted, will enable us to expand the recycling part of the business enormously. Already there is a bulk paper container the size of a children's bedroom, and bays for bottles, tins etc. are being built raised up so the collecting lorries can drive beneath them and be loaded up with maximum speed and efficiency. When all this is ready we shall really start to tap the enormous quantities of glass, tin, paper etc. now so lightly thrown away. Pubs, schools etc. will be personally approached, and we already have a trailer of highly painted ex-freezers ready to go round collecting from the villages on a regular basis. The quarry will also be a place where we can store and sort scrap metals, and store and sell second-hand building materials.

Things are not all plain sailing, of course. MPs and Cabinet Ministers may come down and sound very supportive, but the scrapping of MSC funding, which is proving the death knell of schemes up and down the country, is making life very difficult and confusing at the moment. But we'll survive, and once over the hump, the expansion could well be phenomenal. The ultimate plan is to make South Molton into a model resource-saving town, with super-insulate houses monitored by Exeter University, a new sewage works with a methane digester, electricity generation from the river Mole, a model organic farm and an interpretation/tourist centre. All impossibly ambitious? It certainly didn't seem like that last week when a group including local councillors, county officials and a couple of large-scale financiers got together to discuss it.

comment

The flight of the pig ?

What were you doing, the moment you heard that Mrs Thatcher had turned Green? Nearly choked on your muesli, no doubt. But like the assassination of JFK, could this become one of those world-changing events that touch us all, and so become milestones in the lives of a generation?

Well, no, frankly. For one thing, the actual moves being made, if not the sudden attack of global vision, were predictable. The EEC and other countries are starting to close in on the "dirty man of Europe" with a variety of new legislation on pollution control. The recent nitrate proposals have been forced on the Government by EEC limits in drinking water. Less publicised are new radiation exposure limits set internationally which are forcing lower limits on discharges. It is international pressure that is forcing action on CFCs, and, with 1992 not far away, the Government is going to have to move pretty fast to get in line with Europe on lead-free petrol, catalytic converters, sulphur dioxide scrubbers, and all the other end-of-the-pipe fixes we hear so much about.

So with Mrs Thatcher and all the forces of The Free Market cornered, what else could they do but make defeat appear like a victory? (Despite a few misjudgements: Poor Nicholas Ridley, "the Government's very own Nuclear Disaster" as he's now being called) The Planet is safe in her hands.....

But hadn't we come up in the world? All the media talking about "Green Issues", and "The Environment - number one issue on the agenda", "fragile Earth", "Only One World". As Greens, surely, we were now entitled to think that Our Time Had Come.

And yet - at the same time Conservatives were talking about means testing of more and more benefits, maybe even pensions, and taxing everyone at more and more the same level - the Poll Tax. The exact opposite of a Green Basic Income and Tax System! And Mrs Thatcher was calling Reagan "The Greatest American President", and praising the virtues of US nuclear weapons policies as "forcing the USSR to the negotiating table". Now, even to a political journalist, threatening the planet's

existence could hardly be described as a Green sentiment. Conservatives going Green? Pigs might take wing.

The problem is that the media, and thus the General Public, don't see it this way. To them Green equals environment equals pollution and maybe Green Belt protection and of course those cuddly seals. All right, yes, on those terms we've won the argument, finally. Popular opinion has swung, and even this Government has responded, if only with a few sentiments. But how many agree with us on Basic Income, or on nuclear weapons for that matter, and how many see these as Green Issues?

So, yes, be of good cheer, 1988 was the year we won half the battle for hearts and minds. And next year let's go for the other half too.

Jamie McMillan

Driftwood

Bits and pieces of South-West news

Area re-organisation

No, don't rush out and put the kettle on; this is important so sit up and listen! Conference voted to defer a decision on a new Severnside area for a year, when there will, no doubt, be another vote. There seems to be overwhelming support in the area for a division into smaller, more manageable units. But in doing so we seem to be calling into question the whole role of area Reps, and therefore, the role of Party Council and the entire organisation of the Green Party. Talk about a raw nerve... All this will be discussed at the next Area Meeting. Please send comments to Jamie McMillan before the meeting if you want your views heard and can't be there.

Area Rep.

Duncan McCanlis has very kindly agreed to act as temporary Area Rep. until we elect at the area meeting.

A very big Thank You to Suzanne Dunstan for her commitment and effort over a particularly hectic year for Green Party Council, particularly for her major role in the Magna Carta campaign.

Bath

WALCOT VOTE DOUBLES !

screams the headline of the latest newsletter from Bath, where Derek Wall got 23.6% of the vote in a four-way split, once again beating the SLD (16.2%) and coming close to beating Labour (27.4%). Even the Tory who won was less than 10% away with 32.8%, making this one of those interesting four-way marginals. The article continues:

"Now that we are so close behind Labour their argument that we split their vote has ceased to be credible. Their heckling at the count was still present, though. They also seem oblivious to the fact that the SLD's vote, as well as ours, was much larger than the difference between Labour and Tory."

How are relations with other parties in the rest of the region?

Devon

A nice by-election result from Bideford North, where Judith Christie was pipped by just 15 votes by the SLD, with Labour trailing in third (SLD-204, Green-189, Lab-112). As Peter Christie writes "What a marvellous result - Judith thanks all those who came to help - if only we had seen a few more we could have won!"

European elections

Most constituencies have now selected a prospective candidate and seem to be in the process of putting together a campaign team (sorry, prospective team!). Please consider helping in this, our most important and potentially most successful election ever. The constituencies are vast, and as well as a co-ordinating team, local "groundwork" teams will be needed, especially in the areas of publicity and fundraising. Each constituency will also need an Election Agent, as well as a Treasurer, Press Officer and Campaign Manager at least!

By the time this goes out, you will no doubt have heard that the deposit is going up to £ 1000. A full slate of Greens is evidently beginning to worry the establishment who are now going all-out to stop us. Paranoid? Only when they're watching.

Candidates' Conference

was held in Leeds recently. A report from Krys Bradbury and Val Woodward of E.Dorset:

Pretty much all of the country was covered (except the S.W. of England!) - the good news is that we now have 48 selected PEPCs, 20 in the process of selecting and 5 on their way, making the Green Party well on the road to a full slate of candidates.

Workshops and speakers included the subjects of election procedures, 1992, fundraising, media coverage, the CAP and the environment. The conference was as useful for the valuable contact making with near neighbours and others as well as for the content of these talks and workshops; we no longer feel quite so isolated and alone in our struggles! However, there were too many workshops available for two people to cover adequately - perhaps at the next conference (Likely to be in Malvern, early Feb.) several near neighbours could band together to take better advantage of the help that Euro-elections committee are trying to give us.

Newly - selected prospective candidates are as follows:

Dorset East and Hampshire West:

Krystyna Bradbury has been selected as Prospective Candidate. Krys is 43, and whilst bringing up two children graduated with a degree in Microbiology from London University. Following many years' work in the Path. Labs of Barking Hospital, Krys and her family moved to Wimborne in 1979. Over the last few years she has been an active member of East Dorset Green Party and involved with the Marine Protection Group campaign against the killing of Pilot Whales in the Faroe Islands. She is currently industrial fundraiser for Barnardos in Dorset.

She writes: "I felt that it was vital that I stand in order that the people of this constituency could have their first opportunity of voting Green, as well as endorsing the national call for a full slate of candidates.

Dorset East and Hampshire West provides a microcosm of the European situation. All of the problems associated with the European Community are reflected in this small region. We have the Christchurch/Poole/Bournemouth conurbation showing all the symptoms of over-centralisation of commerce, industry and development, sucking the resources and people from the rural communities to the north and, at the same time, directing intense pressure and potential damage upon the Dorset Heritage Coastline.

It is the vast increase in private development that is destroying the internationally recognised and ecologically valuable Dorset Heathland. In much of the region, one of the direct results of the Common Agricultural Policy has been the loss of important

downland habitat. My campaign will therefore be a two-pronged attack - the effects on the farmer and consumer of the Common Agricultural Policy, and the effects of development and its ensuing pollution on our coastal waters.

I feel that it is vital that we have the chance to affect the course of legislation in the EEC and to put forward Green alternatives in the run-up to 1992 and all that implies."

Wiltshire & Berkshire West

Bill Hughes has been selected as Prospective Candidate. He writes :

" I joined the Ecology Party in 1983 (though I did write 'Ecology' on the ballot paper in the 1979 General Election). I have stood four times for Thamesdown District Council and twice for Wiltshire County Council. I have more than doubled my vote since 1984.

My interests include local and national membership of FoE, CND and Greenpeace and I am a supporter of Amnesty International. I have a degree in Sociology and work as a Careers Officer. I am married and have two children. Apart from political activity (I am secretary of Swindon and District Green Party) I enjoy gardening and general family life. I think it is important that every constituency in the UK is contested by the Green Party. I have lived in Wiltshire for 16 years and know the area well."

In the county newsletter Sue Birley comments :

"What more to say except that we are all looking forward to travelling to Europe on Bill's expense account (oops, naughty un-Green thoughts slipping in)".

Area meeting

Saturday 21st January 1989 -

To be held at Sourton Village Hall, nr Okehampton, Devon. Sourton is on the Okehampton-Tavistock road, A386, a mile south of the junction with the A30, Okehampton-Launceston road. Arrive at 1030 for prompt start at 11.00.

North Dartmoor Green Party have kindly agreed to host this. Please let Frank Williamson (Millcombe Down, Northlew, Okehampton. Tel 0837 810213) know if you intend to come. Veggie food will be available if advance warning given or there is a pub opposite the hall.

Nominations for Area Rep., Co-ordinator, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Election Agent and Press Officer to Frank Williamson. Items for the agenda to Jamie McMillan.

Next issue

Copy date is January 23rd. Many thanks for all the contributions and newsletters. Please keep sending them.

Euro-elections

At time of writing (Nov. 25th) the situation in each constituency is as follows :

Plymouth and Cornwall : No news of a Prospective Candidate yet.

Devon : **Peter Christie** has been selected as PEPC.

Somerset and W.Dorset : **Richard Lawson** has been selected as PEPC.

E. Dorset and W.Hampshire : **Krystyna Bradbury** has been selected as PEPC.

Bristol and Bath : **Derek Wall** has been selected as PEPC

Wiltshire : **Bill Hughes** has been selected as PEPC.

Area contacts

Area representative on Party Council : Duncan McCanlis, Flat 1, 15 Station Road, Lower Weston, Bath. Tel. Bath 28650

Area co-ordinator and newsletter editor : Jamie McMillan, 9 Little Britain, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1NN. Tel 0305 67994

Area membership secretary and treasurer : Steve Shaw, 5 The Green, Hooe, Plymouth, PL9 9PJ. Tel 0752 408581

Avon

Co-ordinator : Bob Wilson, 7 Heathfield Rd, Nailsea, BS19 1EB. Tel.0272 852740

Woodspring : Bob Wilson

Bristol : Mary Wood, 27 Cleeve Road, Knowle. Tel 0272 721079

Bath : Gavin Withers, 35 New King St. Bath, BA1 2BN. Tel 0225 315335

Wansdyke : Mike Boulton, Waterside House, Haydon, Radstock

Dorset

Co-ordinator : Beth McCaffrey, 1 Derwent Road, Weymouth Tel 0305 783676

West Dorset : Rob Cumming, 7 Monmouth Road, Dorchester. Tel 0305 64092

East Dorset : Valerie Woodward, 19 St. Catherines, Wimborne. Tel 0202 841420

North Dorset : Garry Smith, 12 Kings Rd Blandford, Dorset. Tel 0258 53217

Cornwall

Co-ordinator : Howard Hoptrough, 11 Belgravia St., Penzance. Tel Pen 63008

Penzance & St Ives : Howard Hoptrough

S.E. Cornwall : Sharon & Nigel Miles, 1 Rose Terrace, St Annes Chapel, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 3AR Tel Tavistock 833626

Somerset

Co-ordinator : Jim Duffy, 25 Wembdon Road, Bridgwater. Tel 0278 422639

Sedgemoor : Alison Goldie, Mulberry, North Newton, Bridgwater TA7 0BL Tel 0278 663834

Taunton : Clare Bainbridge. Tel T.412531

Devon

Co-ordinator : Tim Brennan, 47 Bartholomew St. West, Exeter. Tel 0392 210143.

Exeter : Steve Potter, 11 Mansfield Road, Mount Pleasant, Exeter Tel 0392 79666.

North Devon : Peter Christie, 30 Lime Grove, Bideford.

North Dartmoor : Elizabeth Aylmer, Widgery House, 20 Market St, Hatherleigh, Devon Ex20 3JP Tel 0837 810624 (long ring)

South Hams : Details not available

Plymouth : Steve Shaw.

Torbay : Harry Holland, 4 Clifton Terrace, Madepose Road, Torquay.

Wiltshire

Co-ordinator : Sue Birley, Marsh Cottage Lower Wanborough, Wilts SN4 0AR Tel Swindon 790438

Swindon : Bill Hughes, 18 Goddard Ave, Swindon. Tel 22989

Salisbury : Tony Miller, 14 Churchfields Road, Salisbury SP2 7NH Tel 22637

Devizes : new party in formation.

Chippenham : Lyn & Ned Barham, 11 The Common, Langley Burrell, Chippenham. Tel Chip.653987

Please let the editor know of any errors /omissions !