



Green Party

South-West Area

Newsletter

April
1989

"We have become a Green"

Tories in trouble ? Maggie off her pram ? Or a genuine desire to lead the world back from the brink ? Come on now - try not to laugh. Whatever the motive, the media have lapped it all up, and now no Green conversation with a journalist is complete without a mention of Herself's conversion. So bully for us - more coverage, more credibility, perhaps even a breakthrough for our policies, if not the Green Party itself. Still feeling uneasy ? Me too.

Loopy she may be, but those two Green speeches in the autumn had all the smell of Central Office and political advisors about them. And I would argue, the same Task-Force, first-strike-attitude behind them. Get them before they get you.

Look at the rest of the world. First, there's another Green surge in Europe. Even in France, arguably our weakest country, Les Verts are getting 8% or so, and threatening to hold the balance of power in local councils. Greens in South America are starting (just) to win important battles against the hitherto unassailable multinationals and the World Bank in saving the forests. Even the blinking Royal Familywhere will it end ?

Well, we know that Green is the most powerful political idea since socialism; that it is, in a word, unstoppable. Perhaps others are now waking up to this too.

If we look at Maggie's speeches as a pre-emptive strike, things start to fall into place. Greens are now the main opposition to the Tories - not yet in votes, but certainly in alternatives to Thatcherism. And Thatcherism's motto : "there is no alternative", starts to ring a little hollow. To nip this Green thing in the bud, they have to work fast - agree with a bit of environmental legislation, promote bolt-on, end-of-pipe tech. fixes and go on about how expensive it all is. A few feints right and left - tell 'em nuclear power is Green, water privatisation is Green, even a Channel Tunnel is, well OK not Green, but certainly Internationalist.

The trouble is that they're at least five years too late. If they'd done this in 1984, say, before the Ethiopian drought, Chernobyl, and holes in the ozone - and before we were the Green Party - Green might at this moment be a Tory hostage. But (and I apologise to any Tories or CIA scrutinising this) I'm afraid that right now the genie's out of the bottle, the bird is on the wing - and we're going to fly a long, long way.

Jamie McMillan

Fallout

Scattered news items from the area

Let's face it, we're all too busy with elections looming at the moment to produce newsletters and swap ideas other than in panics over the phone. But please could local parties send detailed County election results - percentages, place, wards to the editor - only of course after letting Chris Rose know immediately you have them !

Cornwall

Falmouth - Cambron is now the name for the constituency party, and a possible **Truro** Green Party may be forming. Contact on back page or at the wholefood shop in St Austell St., Truro.

Devon

Peter Christie writes that they have £ 1900 raised already and are nearly at the £ 2200 needed for a basic leaflet of each household.

There was good publicity for Devon Greens' structure plan submission - "Devon 2001 - a Greenprint for Devon or a Space Odyssey ?" The county planners are forecasting a huge rise in the population of Devon. Peter says that this forecast is : " a fantasy of assumptions and predictions of more of everything. We utterly reject it".

He says the plans would seriously harm the county : "The recipe is one of spreading urban sprawl, a transport policy centred around car use and a countryside that is for tourism and commuting . The consequence is more green fields covered in concrete, communities destroyed by massive speculative housing development, more pollution and more rubbish. It will, simply, rip the heart out of Devon".

The "Greenprint" says that : " The planning of Devon's future should be a popular process. We must think not only of the Devon that we want to live, work, and relax in, but also of the Devon that our children will see. It is the primary objective of long term planning that we consider long-term interests and do not waste a county that means so much to us."

Copies of the "Greenprint" may be available for purchase from Devon Greens - see contacts on back page.

Also in Devon, local councillor **Hugo Barton** recently put a motion before Bideford Council to recycle aluminium cans there. His proposal was unanimously adopted by the council, and further progress is awaited. Current prices are about 1.25 pence per can - so scour the streets !

Finally - the **Friends of Sid and Otter** : No, nothing to do with the government's next slogan for water privatisation, or even a Green children's TV series, but a snippet from **East Devon** where a FoE group with this name is starting up. Details from East Devon Greens.

Dorset

East Dorset have taken to the streets with a survey on the environment - in a Tory heartland. Briefly, 82% felt that the government is not doing enough to protect the environment, and 72% felt that a form of proportional representation would be fairer than our present electoral system. Only 32% thought the poll tax was fair, and 59% thought that the Green Party was the party of the environment - draw your own conclusions.....

Somerset

Richard Lawson has been out and about campaigning, with lots of posters with name and pic announcing public meetings going up around the constituency. Publicity has been good, with TV coverage of a stunt involving the use of a loo complete with cistern and pipework on the shoreline at Weston-super-Mare, and, as Nicholas Ridley decrees, discharging straight into the Bristol Channel. Richard still hasn't let on what he was actually filmed doing that day.....

More stunts and events to follow involving this more unsavoury than usual aspect of Tory policy, and real possibilities of more TV coverage.

Letter

Dear Friends,

You asked for feedback about the idea of Representative as opposed to Open National Conferences. It's a difficult one, especially if you aim at consensus. Do we aim at consensus?

I was recently at the quadrennial international council meeting of the peace organisation I work for, and we operated a consensus procedure with varying degrees of satisfactoriness. Some participants were there as national branch reps. and some as observers and it was hard to draw the line (total nos c. 150). We wanted general discussion to be open, but when we were getting into the actual decision process, we wanted observers to step back - metaphorically.

In fact I think it would have been better if they'd sat separately (not necessarily on the outside). I think to have a large number of people from one place or a few places making decisions would give unfair weight & push to particular group viewpoints.

So I suppose I'm saying we should probably try & have a representative conference, with space for reps. first and non-rep. participants next, and some clarity (?) as to function.

Diana Francis, 113 Dovens Park, Bathford, Bath, BA1 7UE

Sits. vac.

Newsletter editor

I've done this for a year now, and want to hand on after the next one. It's easy really - just time-consuming (about two working days every two months). All you do is pick stuff out of local newsletters and type it out - put a bit of your own stuff in if you like. It helps to have a word processor but isn't essential. You then send the originals off for someone else to do duplicating and posting - so the really hard work is done for you!

Please give me a ring if you would like to have a go.

Jamie McMillan

Next issue :

Hoping to bring detailed Election results from around the area. Please get these (and anything else) to the editor by **May 15th.**

REPORT ON SW AREA MEDIA TRAINING DAY

On Sunday, 12th March, we handed over our Area meeting to media training. David Oddie had organised the Barbican Theatre for free. Not only that, with Malcolm Baldwin, they had obtained the services of professionals in the three main media outlets, namely the press, radio and television. This report is an outline of their advice.

RAQIQ

Neil - sorry I've forgotten his surname - from BBC's Devon Radio talked us through the needs of a local radio station. The two essentials are to contact the news editors - by listening to the credits, and sending in regular press releases.

Press releases to be:-

Brief.

Make the main point in the first paragraph.

Give a *daytime* contact number.

Most interviews are conducted 'in the field', so, reporter willing, there is the chance to re-do an interview - but you'll have to ask. He did stress that the reporters on the whole were fair and wanted to get a programme that sounded good, so they are on our side. (Bear in mind this is BBC radio, not a Sun 'reporter'!!)

They usually record about three minutes and edit down to a forty second piece.

We were then taken in turn to a downstairs office to be interviewed by Neil on the Greenhouse effect. Very cosy it was too, the two of us huddled round the non-directional microphone they use - so don't eat curry the night before, or your interview may not last long.

Phone-ins are useful, especially at the beginning of the programme when fewer people are ringing. It was also suggested that once a good contact was made you could express your willingness to phone in to a programme to warm it up for them - this way they get to ring you to tell you what subjects they're doing. [Actually this paragraph came from John Francis, but for the sake of logic I've included it here.]

PRESS

Mike Hillson is a professional journalist, ex Tavistock Times, I missed quite a bit of this while I was being interviewed by Neil. However, reading over Jay's shoulder, his three main points were:-

Make it local.

Make it regular and often.

Contact news editors and sub-editors.

Another point made was that letters columns were a good outlet - and usually had a good readership. Make political points as opposed to Party political points.

TELEVISION

John Francis works for the local BBC regional news programme as a reporter. His presentation was in three parts.

1. Making contact.

Green issues are of growing interest. TV stations are looking for stories, but don't have hordes of investigative journalists to get them.

Send press releases - brief, clear and *follow them up*.

Check programmes and target your stories to suit their likely interest.

Visuals are important. Whereas radio will be interested in plans, TV needs action now. The example he gave was that if you're talking about water pollution, then get the TV crew down to the river and they can film you sampling the water etc.

Personal contact is the way to get our message across. If you can develop a relationship with a reporter, then they will start to come to you for stories. You can be their green news source, thus making their job easy and endearing them to their editor. In other words, instead of bemoaning the fact that we get too little media attention, go to them with a story on offer.

Finally photos should be submitted as 35mm colour slides and marked "Free copyright" (if they are).

2. Meeting the Press.

Whilst newspapers prefer to hear news in the evening - so they can beat the TV to the news - TV prefers morning events.

Press conferences, at our lowish media profile, are not good for the TV, they require one to one interviews - as do radio. It's worth noting that the radio don't mind what time you release the news, they'll be first with it anytime. So if you do hold a press conference for press, radio and TV, then take two speakers along - one to do the formal presentation for the press, and one to do the radio and TV interviews.

3. Giving an interview.

Find out who they are, and whether the interview is live or recorded.

Ask what the questions will be. It is in the interviewers interest to have you fluent: it makes for a better programme.

Are you the subject of the story, or a component making comments on a separate story? If you're a component, then you'll probably get a 30 second 'sound bite'.

Make two or three points only. Be clear, succinct and passionate.

ON CAMERA...

The usual frame is head and shoulders.

Hold your own hands - it stops you from giving an impromptu karate demonstration.

Stand still, and keep your head still.

Keep your eyes ahead; don't look down at the floor or up at the heavens (hoping for divine intervention?), and especially not side to side as this looks definitely shifty on camera.

Don't turn away from camera. For instance, to refer to something behind you point at it over your shoulder.

Don't use notes. Paper makes a lot of noise when ruffled near a microphone.

Don't put your hand in your pocket and jingle your change.

Say 'Green Party', as well as 'we'.

If it's recorded don't be afraid to ask to do it again.

Now we were all sat in a circle listening to these words of wisdom. No longer could the moment be put off. The lights went on, the camera set up and John had his questions ready.

We were each given a scenario which revolved around the constituency of South Telstock. The incumbent MP is Sir Geoffrey Hawton-Smith (we had to guess which party). There was a strong SLD challenge, and the items perceived by the media as 'issues' were the maintenance of the small railway to the local large town, the ensuing commuter problem, and an increasing number of 2nd homes.

David and Malcolm were found out as founders of the sadists wing of the Green Party - they produced some situations that gave John Francis every opportunity to get at the Greens. For instance, one briefing was that the local muslims were up in arms over their perception that GP policy on humane slaughter would mean a end to their particular religious demands on killing methods. (Ask Jay for the answer...)

The overall impression from the video playback was favourable. Whilst everyone didn't get a chance to be on camera, those that did showed the growing awareness of the necessity of media acceptability. OK we were not as slick as the trained Tories, but budding Green politicians are obviously capable of becoming blooming good at getting across the green message.

As this was such a success, another possibly more intensive day is needed. Anyone willing to input, or who knows of reporters who would give their services free, please let me know.

Finally may I pass on our appreciation to the reporters and organisers for giving up their Sunday. It was day well spent, a day that made a major contribution to political safety; you know it makes sense. Sue Birley is writing to the volunteers to thank them personally.

Duncan McCanlis
March 1989

Area contacts

Area representative on Party Council : Duncan McCanlis, Flat 1, 15 Station Road, Lower Weston, Bath. Tel. 0225 28650

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

Area membership secretary and treasurer : Sue Birley, Marsh Cottage, Lower Wanborough, Wilts. SN4 0AR Tel 0793 790438

County co-ordinators

We urgently need county co-ordinators for **Somerset** and **Devon**. All it involves is channelling information to and from local parties, and saves the Area Co-ordinator and Membership Secretary a bit of work. Please contact the Area Co-ordinator direct if you would like to help.

Avon

Co-ordinator : Geoff Collard, 2 Cotham Vale
Bristol BS6 6HR Tel.0272 738072

Woodspring : Bob Wilson, 7 Heathfield Road,
Nailsea, BS19 1EB Tel. 0272 852740

Bristol South : Martin Turnbull,
4 Cleeve Road, Knowle. BS4 2JP
Tel 0272 720302

Bristol North : Geoff Collard

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

Wansdyke : Mike Boulton, Waterside House,
Haydon, Radstock

Cornwall

Co-ordination shared between :

West Cornwall : Howard Hoptrough, 11
Belgravia St., Penzance. Tel Pen 63008

East Cornwall : David Oddie, Scomber,
Harewood Road, Calstock, PL18 9QW
Tel 0822 833139

Falmouth-Cambron : Beth Mottart
2 Bridge Moor, Porthtreat, Redruth
Tel 0209 842889

Devon

Co-ordinator : vacant

Contact (for local boundaries) :

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. Tel 73577

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

South Hams : Chris Titmuss, 7 Denys Road,
Totnes Tel 865436

Plymouth: Peter Boone, 12 College Ave.,
Mutley. Tel 0752 269540

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

Somerset

Co-ordinator : vacant

Sedgemoor : Alison Goldie, Mulberry,
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Tel 0278 663834

Taunton : Clare Bainbridge. Tel T.412531

Wiltshire

Co-ordinator : Sue Birley

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

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

Devizes : Erica Harris, 6 Eastleigh Road,
Devizes. Tel 78145

East Devon : Pat Stoolman, 8 St Michaels
Hill, Clyst Honiton, Exeter.

Tel 0392 66783

Torbay : Glenda Locock, 87 Chestnut Ave.,
Brixham. Tel 0803 33599

Please let the editor know of any errors / omissions !