

Elections 1979 Going for Broke

At the conference in 1978 the suggestion was made that the party should target getting 50 candidates for the

general election due the following year. 50 was the threshold to be entitled to a party election broadcast on TV and radio.

There were only 3 television channels, and election broadcasts were transmitted simultaneously on all three channels, ensuring a maximum audience (incidentally creating a surge in power demand as most of the nation went out to the kitchen and put the kettle on).

There was much debate about the merits of going for such a target, the costs would be very high (over £40,000 in likely lost deposits in today's values).

In the event the decision was taken to try and go for it.

The full Manifesto for a Sustainable Society had been revised and updated the previous year and was available in a 127 page booklet form.



From this a 20 page election manifesto was derived entitled **"The Real Alternative**"



It started with an overview, and then talked about the Crisis in our Economy and the Crisis in our Society before moving on to outline specific policy proposals - in each area defining the problem and then outlining Eco policies to address the



Membership had been steadily rising, 373 by March 1978 – even so finding 50 members prepared to stand up in a general election would be a stretch.

The election was called by James Callaghan, Harold Wilson's successor as Labour Prime Minister, for 3rd May, 5 months earlier than strictly necessary.

General Election 3rd May 1979

The glorious Fifty Three

Candidate recruitment went into overdrive, there were last minute hiccups (not least Teddy Goldsmith suddenly becoming unavailable) but in the event the magic number was reached.

Candidates produced their own leaflets, often using a shared template.



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VOTE ECOLOGY - THE REAL ALTERNATIVE



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Fublished by H.Carder, 51, Hipling Avenue, Bath, Fullthes of According 144.29, North St.Wilton, Salabary, Ingroup Contage. State St. Grayony, Taureon, 143 600

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REMEMBER We do not inherit the world from our fathers, we borrow it from our children.

South-West Launch, Bath – some photos



South-West Region	
Cornwall	
St.Iven: Howard Hopfrough (55) 427 votes, 1.0%, isst behind MK	Cornwall North: Jenemy Fault (49) 442 votes, 0.9%.
Bodmin: Chvis Retallack (32) 465 votes, 0.9%. Beaten by MM	Textdy Goldamith was due to stand in Falmouth/Camborne but pulled out late
Devon	
Exotor: Peter Frings (22) 1053 votes, 1.88%.	Devon North: <u>Yony Whittaker</u> (46) 729 votes, 1.2%
Honiton: Hilary Bacon (43) 1423 voles, 2.35%	Torbay: David Abrahams (31) 1181 voles, 1.8%
Somerset	
Taunton: Geoffrey Garbett (26) 1403 votes 2.6%	Somenset North: Richard Carder (36) 1254 votes, 1.6%
Bath: Don Grimes (35) 1082 votes, 2.2%	
Witshire	
Chippenham: Bert Pettit (52) 521 votes, 0.9%	Devizes: Ray Burcham (28) 713 votes, 1.1%
Westbury : <u>Salty Rodwell</u> (30) 554 votes, 0.9% behind Wessex Regionalist	
Donset	
Bournemouth East: Jacky Dempsey (25) 523 votes, 1.3%	Lymington & Christohurch: Jim Keeting (46) 975 votes, 2.2%
Briatol	
Bristol West: John Ingham (26) 1154 votes, 2.7%	Bristol North East - Gundula Doney (36) 469 votes, 1.3%
Gloucestershire	
Gloucestershire South: David Kentidge (35) 695 votes, 1.0%	
Yorkshire & Humberside (Leeds)	
Barkaton Ash: Devid Corry 1829 votes, 2.5%	Balley & Morley: Clive Lord 460 votes, 1.0%
Kelthiey: Joyce Wade 208 votes, 0.48%	Leeds East: Anne Hill 205 votes, 0.4%
Leeds North-East. Sara Parkin 013 voles, 2.0%	Leeds North-West: Kelth Rushworth 847 votes, 1.7%
Pudsey: Peter Lewenz	Ripon: Allstair Laurence 781 votes, 1.85%
340 votes, 0.6%	
340 votes, 0.6% Shipiey: David Pedley 486 votes, 1.0%	
Shipley: David Pedley	

ondon	
leckenham: Biff Vernon	Brentford & Iselworth: Irene Coates
162 votes, 1.75%	454 votes, 1.75%
hingford: Steve Lambert	Dutwich: David Smart
49 votes, 1.5%	468 votes, 1.1%
endon South: Geoffrey Syer	Islington Central: Adrian Williama
53 votes, 1.5%	310 votes, 1.2%
onsington: Nicholas Albery	St.Marylebone: Jonathon Porritt
38 votes, 2.06%	691 votes, 2.8%
Itchin: Brian Goodale	Reading South: Pater Dunn
11 votes, 1.45%	700 votes, 1.2%
fest and East Midlands Regions	
rmingham Edgbaston: Jonathan Tyler	Loughborough: David Whitebread
52 votes, 1.8%	595 votes, 0.98%
lanvick & Learnington: Peter Sizer	Worcester: John Davenport
05 votes, 1.30%	707 votes, 1.2%
orcestershire South: Guy Woodford 722 votes, 2.8%	
outh East Region	
righton Pavilion: John Beale	Chichester: Nick Begnall
38 votes, 1.5%	856 votes, 1.2%
illingham: Colin Fry	Ryn: Anne Rix
21 votes, 1.0%	1267 votes, 2.2%
ast Anglia Region	
owestoft: Tim Pys	Norwich North: George Hannah
35 votes, 0.65%	334 votes, 0.94%

Bedweity: Peter Rout 556 votes, 1.4%	Pembruka: Brian Kingaett 604 votes, 1.1%
Sootland	
Edinburgh South: Stuart Bigger 552 votes, 1.3%	

The results - Overall ECO gained 39,981 votes, an average of 1.5% of the vote where they stood. The best result in votes was 1829 for David Corry in Barkston Ash, followed by Guy Woodford with 1722 in Worcestershire South. Jonathon Porritt got a 2.8% share in St.Marylebone – one of the smallest constituencies in the country. Guy Woodford also achieved 2.8%, followed by John Ingham in Bristol West with 2.7%

Over a million leaflets were distributed and the TV and Radio broadcasts generated much interest with over 4000 enquiries and a resulting surge in membership.

Press and news coverage was generally felt to be good with well attended press conferences. The London candidates staged a demonstration against the use of lead in petrol (lead was subsequently phased out) attracting much coverage.

A month later we went to the polls again for the first direct election to the European Assembly (still the EEC, and not yet a parliament).

1979 First Euro Election – 7th June

A little over a month after the General Election, the first ever direct elections to the European Assembly were held. The election was run on a 'first-past-the-post' basis with single member super-constituencies consisting of clusters of about 6 parliamentary constituencies.

With resources depleted and little enthusiasm for the EEC, the Ecology Party only put up candidates in three constituencies.



An election manifesto was duly produced. 10 things wrong with the EEC, struggling to find 5 good points.

The candidates were Jonathon Porritt in London Central - 4.1% Michael Benfield in Midlands Central with 3.9% and Teddy

Goldsmith for Plymouth & Cornwall who polled 3.0%.

> Teddy found Cornwall difficult thanks to a strong Mebyon Kernow candidate taking 10,000 votes (as in 2009!).



ublic Meetings arranged to date **Benfield's balloon**

GOLDSMIT Ecology Party Candidate



Benfield attracted much publicity with

stunts like touring the constituency in a hot-air balloon.