



# Elections 1979

## Going for Broke

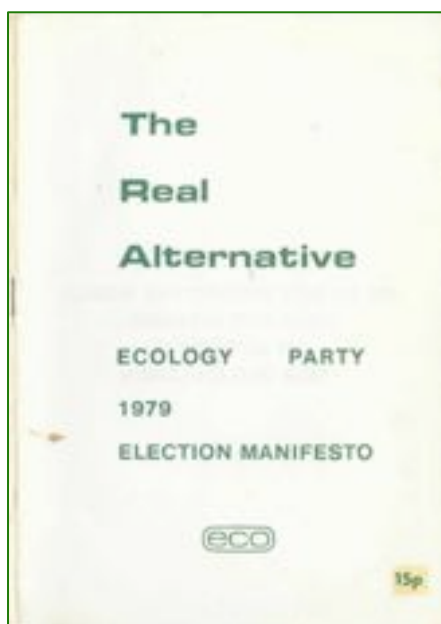
At the conference in 1978 the suggestion was made that the party should target getting 50 candidates for the general election due the following year. 50 was the threshold to be entitled to a party election broadcast on TV and radio.

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 problem.

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 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 5 months earlier than strictly necessary.

# General Election 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.





South-West Launch, Bath – some photos



South-West Region	
Cornwall	
St Ives: <b>Howard Hoptrough</b> (56) 427 votes, 1.0%, last behind MK	Cornwall North: <b>Jeremy Faull</b> (49) 442 votes, 0.9%
Bodmin: <b>Chris Retallack</b> (32) 465 votes, 0.9%. <i>Beaten by MK</i>	<i>Teddy Goldsmith was due to stand in Falmouth/Camborne but pulled out late</i>
Devon	
Exeter: <b>Peter Frings</b> (22) 1053 votes, 1.88%	Devon North: <b>Tony Whittaker</b> (46) 729 votes, 1.2%
Honiton: <b>Hilary Bacon</b> (43) 1423 votes, 2.35%	Torbay: <b>David Abrahams</b> (31) 1161 votes, 1.6%
Somerset	
Taunton: <b>Geoffrey Garbett</b> (26) 1403 votes, 2.6%	Somerset North: <b>Richard Carder</b> (36) 1254 votes, 1.6%
Bath: <b>Don Grimes</b> (35) 1062 votes, 2.2%	
Wiltshire	
Chippenham: <b>Bert Pettit</b> (52) 521 votes, 0.9%	Devizes: <b>Ray Burcham</b> (28) 713 votes, 1.1%
Westbury: <b>Sally Rodwell</b> (30) 554 votes, 0.9% behind Wessex Regionalist	
Dorset	
Bournemouth East: <b>Jacky Dempsey</b> (25) 523 votes, 1.3%	Lymington & Christchurch: <b>Jim Keeling</b> (46) 975 votes, 2.2%
Bristol	
Bristol West: <b>John Ingham</b> (26) 1154 votes, 2.7%	Bristol North East: <b>Gundula Dorey</b> (36) 469 votes, 1.3%
Gloucestershire	
Gloucestershire South: <b>David Kerridge</b> (35) 695 votes, 1.0%	
Yorkshire & Humberside (Leeds)	
Barkston Ash: <b>David Corry</b> 1829 votes, 2.5%	Batley & Morley: <b>Oliver Lord</b> 460 votes, 1.0%
Kelthley: <b>Joyce Wade</b> 208 votes, 0.48%	Leeds East: <b>Anne Hill</b> 206 votes, 0.4%
Leeds North-East: <b>Sara Parkin</b> 813 votes, 2.0%	Leeds North-West: <b>Kelth Rushworth</b> 847 votes, 1.7%
Pudsey: <b>Peter Lewenz</b> 342 votes, 0.6%	Ripon: <b>Allstair Laurence</b> 781 votes, 1.85%
Shipley: <b>David Pedley</b> 486 votes, 1.0%	
North West Region	
Altringham & Sale: <b>Cicely Marsh</b> 796 votes, 1.4%	Crosby: <b>Peter Hussey</b> 1489 votes, 2.4%

London	
Beckenham: <b>Bill Vernon</b> 762 votes, 1.75%	Brentford & Isleworth: <b>Irene Coates</b> 454 votes, 1.75%
Chingford: <b>Steve Lambert</b> 649 votes, 1.5%	Dulwich: <b>David Smart</b> 468 votes, 1.1%
Hendon South: <b>Geoffrey Syer</b> 563 votes, 1.5%	Islington Central: <b>Adrian Williams</b> 310 votes, 1.2%
Kensington: <b>Nicholas Albery</b> 698 votes, 2.06%	St Marylebone: <b>Jonathan Porritt</b> 691 votes, 2.8%
Hitchin: <b>Brian Goodale</b> 911 votes, 1.45%	Reading South: <b>Peter Dunn</b> 700 votes, 1.2%
West and East Midlands Regions	
Birmingham Edgbaston: <b>Jonathan Tyler</b> 652 votes, 1.6%	Loughborough: <b>David Whitebread</b> 595 votes, 0.98%
Warwick & Leamington: <b>Peter Sizer</b> 905 votes, 1.36%	Worcester: <b>John Davenport</b> 707 votes, 1.2%
Worcestershire South: <b>Guy Woodford</b> 1722 votes, 2.8%	
South East Region	
Brighton Pavilion: <b>John Beale</b> 638 votes, 1.5%	Chichester: <b>Nick Bagnall</b> 656 votes, 1.2%
Gillingham: <b>Colin Fry</b> 501 votes, 1.0%	Rye: <b>Anne Rix</b> 1267 votes, 2.2%
East Anglia Region	
Lowestoft: <b>Tim Pye</b> 435 votes, 0.65%	Norwich North: <b>George Hannah</b> 334 votes, 0.94%
Wales	
Bedwellty: <b>Peter Rout</b> 556 votes, 1.4%	Pembroke: <b>Brian Kingzett</b> 694 votes, 1.1%
Scotland	
Edinburgh South: <b>Stuart Bigger</b> 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 – 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

