



friends of
the earth
Bromley



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August 2014

No. 320

newsletter

August Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Population Growth and Global Sustainability

Professor Stephen Brown
Population Matters

Tuesday 5th August - 7.30pm

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 24TH AUGUST *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Four Basecamp reports from Sheila this month

Diary dates:

Aug 5th (Tues) **Bromley FoE's August meeting:** Population Matters
see below

Aug 25th (Mon) **Cudham Fete** – Bromley FoE stall

Sept 2nd (Tues) **Bromley FoE September meeting:** Forum on Fracking

Wed 6th August Hiroshima Day – *see page 7 for more info*

Sat 9th August Nagasaki day – *see page 7 for more info*

August meeting – Population Matters

Population Matters is a charity that aims to raise awareness and propose ways of addressing the problems associated with the still increasing world population.

It promotes a voluntary and gradual reduction in the global human population to a level that enables an acceptable quality of life for all, protects wildlife and is ecologically sustainable.

Project Wild Thing

Paul de Zylva mentioned this film, which was also shown at Basecamp. We will see if it is possible to arrange a showing.

Synopsis: Filmmaker David Bond is a worried man. His kids' waking hours are dominated by a cacophony of marketing and a screen dependence threatening to turn them into glassy-eyed zombies. Like city kids everywhere, they spend way too much time indoors – not like it was back in his day. He decides it's time to get back to nature – literally.

Disclaimer: *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth or of Friends of the Earth*

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor by *** **SUNDAY 24TH AUGUST** ***:

by post to John Street, 82 Babbacombe Road, Bromley, BR1 3LS

by phone to: 020-8460-1078, **by email** to: johnstreet@gn.apc.org.

The editor reserves the right to shorten contributions for space, or other, reasons

July Meeting Report – *Graham Hemington and Sheila Brown*

Beyond Bees – a new era of campaigning for nature

Our speaker this month was Paul de Zylva, FoE's senior campaigner for Nature

The Bee campaign has been a huge success, not only in helping bees and their habitats but in educating people about nature. This theme will carry on, still including the Bees but developing people's interest further in the wider aspects of nature. FoE will work together with other groups including the Women's Institute, the Royal Horticultural Society, scientists and B&Q, with FoE right there in the middle. The Bee campaign was successful because ordinary people identified with it; it was 'real' rather than what they might perceive as more abstract concepts.

FoE has a track record of being the instigator of campaigns which others then take up, instances being Save the Whales and Climate Change.

Many things have changed in the world since Friends of the Earth was first formed, taking us further away from nature; Paul gave us a vivid illustration of this, showing the development in Dubai in a decade with huge skyscrapers and large amount of land urbanised. The dominance and fragility of the money markets also form a significant background to the current social environment. Since FoE first got involved in nature campaigning forty years ago to urge people not to pick wild flowers, there has been a huge deterioration in eco-systems with a 30% loss. All these

things are going in the wrong direction, with an ever widening gulf between people and nature.

Nature needs to be everywhere, not just in nature reserves but in the districts where people live. Using the word "nature" is intentional as everyone understands it – rather than more technical words like 'biodiversity' and 'ecosystems' which the average person does not identify with. The campaign seeks to help people recognise their role in protecting and improving nature in their local areas in a real hands-on way, not by running courses on species of flora and fauna, which is done very well by other environmental organisations e.g. Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, FSC, etc. However FoE plans to include the need to improve links between environmental organisations and to aim for involvement at the highest level, aiming at Government and Ministers, with their edicts helping to ensure an understanding of nature for everyone.

Paul mentioned the Project Wild Thing film (see page 2) about wooing children away from their screens and technology and re-connecting them to nature. He also referred to the London Sustainable Development website www.londonsdc.org.

Proposed too is a report on the State of the Environment to show the underlying environmental condition of the country and expose any shortcomings for the first time. There will be a video project. The campaign will very much emphasise the fact that WE are Nature's Keepers.

Fracking

We are still in the middle of finalising speakers for the fracking forum on Sept 2nd, So far we have Roisin Robertson from Greenpeace who is opposed to fracking and Prof John Sharpley who takes the opposite point of view. We are waiting to hear from an Imperial College climate scientist.

A fracking campaign stall was planned for the Mall Precinct in Bromley from 2.30 - 4.00 pm on Oct 11th. The next Bromley Against Fracking meeting is on August 27th in the Greyhound Wetherspoons, Bromley at 7.30 pm, and the group will have leafleted at Locksbottom on July 28th by the time you have received this newsletter.

Scottish environmentalists have urged ministers to put brakes on fracking after geological experts reported only modest shale gas reserves.

The British Geological Society Survey estimates for the central lowlands suggested around 6 billion barrels of shale oil in the area which spans the width of Scotland.

In the US shale oil exploration has only been able to access up to 10 per cent of explored reserves. Friends of the Earth Scotland have played their part in campaigning to ask the Scottish Government to ban unconventional gas extraction, on the grounds that it wouldn't be economically viable.

Sea- Heated Homes

A National Trust property in Anglesey Plas Newydd will be heated by the Irish Sea via a pump. The system works by extracting heat from the sea water through a system of closed-loop pipes. The sea pump is expected to save around £40,000 a year in energy bills.

This innovation raises the prospect of sea-heated homes right around Britain's coastline.

The Energy Saving Trust's trial of ground-source heat pump systems - which harness natural heat from the underground - have found they perform to a high standard.

Dark Snow

Industrial dust, blown thousands of miles is reducing snow cover and is adding to the rise in sea levels. These particles are turning large areas of old snow black and brown. Basically it is heating the snow and causing it to melt more rapidly, and is a form of carbon pollution.

In a paper in the journal Nature Geoscience, a team of French government meteorologists has reported that the Arctic ice cap which is thought to have lost an average of 12.9bn tonnes of ice in a year between 1992 and 2010 due to general warming, may be losing an extra 27bn tonnes a year just because of the dust, potentially adding several centimetres of sea level rise by 2100.

BEE Cause Update – Judy Palmer

We have heard that the Government has put back the publishing of the National Pollinator Strategy (aka the Bee Action Plan) until the Autumn. Which in the natural world will mean any benefits the bees will see won't occur until next Spring.

Let's hope the Government will use this time to strengthen the strategy, and not listen to the pesticide companies et al and make it a weak policy.

The 'Bees Needs' call to action should ensure that the strategy includes:

- Boosting the farmers' role in helping bees by going well beyond just voluntary measures
- Getting real about pesticides by reversing their rising use in the UK
- Improving how land is used by making sure developers know how to help bees
- Getting better data on the health of all bee species by setting up a UK bee monitoring system.

The FoE Bee Cause has already seen thousands of people helping as FoE have:

- Sent out tens of thousands of wildflower seed packets.
- Helped people create 200 Bee Worlds – great pit stops for bees – nationwide.
- The Great British Bee Count is helping people – over 20,000 so far – gather useful data on which types of bee are where.

Now you can create a Bee & Bee in your garden or window box using the

free Bee & Bee pack – info available from their web site, www.foe.co.uk, or at the next monthly meeting.

Annette has also created a simple example of a bee hotel using a flower pot, grasses and bamboo which we will be inviting children to create at the Whitehall Recreation Fun Day (NB – *this will be before this newsletter goes out*).

So when you are chatting to your boss, your neighbour and friends, let them know the bees need our help please! Create a wild patch in your garden to help them survive.

FoE and the Bee Cause – We Stopped Syngenta

Syngenta have backtracked on their attempt to use banned pesticides in the UK. Syngenta's attempt to undermine the EU pesticides ban has caused public uproar in the past few days. When the pesticide company applied to the Government for the go-ahead to use banned chemicals on UK crops, we stepped in.

Thousands of us emailed the Bees Minister over the weekend and, as a result of this and the work of brilliant bee-loving allies such as Buglife, we think Syngenta and the Government have truly been feeling the pressure. Last night we found out that Syngenta have withdrawn their application.

It means the most bee-harming pesticides will not be used in the UK this year. Syngenta say they'll try again next year - but we'll be ready for them.

FoE – Bees – We're Still Waiting

Yes, that's right. We're still waiting for the final plan. (*Rachel and the Bee Cause Team*)

Last year you helped convince the Bees Minister Lord de Mauley to introduce a Bee Action Plan to protect our bees. He promised us a pollinator strategy. But he's yet to deliver on that promise.

A few months ago we asked you to send him your thoughts on the first draft of the Plan. We were expecting the finished strategy around now. But it's been delayed until October - which means our bees will have to wait until next spring to see any benefit.

Read our update on why the strategy needs to be better. (*See next column*)

Yesterday the Government published advice on five things you can do to help bees, including planting bee-friendly flowers. This is welcome news, and we know you're doing many of these things already.

But the best way the Bees Minister can help tackle the threats bees face is to finish, publish and implement a brilliant Bee Action Plan as soon as possible.

We won't let the Bees Minister and the Government off the hook. We'll be working hard over the next few months to see if we can improve the Bee Action Plan. It needs to be tougher on controlling the use of bee-harming pesticides and include support for farmers to grow crops in bee-friendly ways.

In the meantime please do all you can this summer to help our bees.

Is the Government doing enough to help our hard-working bees? (*Paul de Zylva*)

Bees beat their wings an incredible 230 times a second to stay airborne. Now the bees need the Government to be just as energetic if its plan to save them is to be credible. We back today's call from the Government for people to do their bit for bees. With the other organisations backing the Bees' Needs call to action, we've helped shape the content.

The call says many of the things that we and top bee scientists say are needed to end the plight of our bees – like providing them with the right plants for food and the natural habitats they need for shelter. We've persuaded the Government to go beyond just telling people to 'always read the label' when using pesticides, to say they can be avoided altogether. That took time. The Bees Needs' film about the issues is good too – much better after our feedback.

But what now?

Frankly, the Government needs to give the nation a brilliant Bee Action Plan. Bees need nothing less. A cobbling together of existing weak policies won't do – bees need concerted action on all causes of their decline.

/continued on next page

FoE – Still waiting on bees - *continued*

That means four things:

Boosting the farmers' role in helping bees by going well beyond just voluntary measures

Getting real about pesticides by reversing their rising use in the UK

Improving how land is used by making sure developers know how to help bees

Getting better data on the health of all bee species by setting up a UK bee monitoring system

While getting the Government to accept it also needs to take action, the Bee Cause has seen thousands of people already helping bees:

We've sent out tens of thousands of wildflower seed packets.

We've helped people create 200 Bee Worlds – great pit stops for bees – nationwide.

Our Great British Bee Count is helping people – over 20,000 so far – gather useful data on which types of bee are where.

Now you can create a Bee & Bee in your garden or window box using our free Bee & Bee pack.

We can be the generation that saves our bees – but only if the Government works harder.

London Region CND Hiroshima Day Ceremony

Wednesday 6th August, 1pm,
Tavistock Square, WC1

Speakers include:

Cllr Lazzaro Pietragnoli, Mayor of Camden

Kate Hudson, CND Gen Sec
Jean Lambert, Green London MEP

Valerie Frassati on WWI anti-war movements

Ben Griffin, conscientious objector to the Iraq war

Rev Nagase, monk at Battersea Park Peace Pagoda

Nagasaki Day Ecumenical Service and Peace Walk

Saturday 9th August

6 to 7pm, Ecumenical service
at Sacred Heart Chapel,
Horseferry Road, SW1P 2EF

Followed by an inter-faith Peace Walk to the London Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park for the Floating Lantern Ceremony.

The ceremony seeks to reflect on the horrors of war in an atomic age and to pray together for peace and harmony among all people and nations.

BASECAMP 1 – First report from Sheila Brown

Friends of the Earth's Local Groups Conference has now been replaced by a more informal, closer to nature event called Basecamp, held at a youth hostel in the Hope Valley in Derbyshire. This was an event where people could bring partners and families, and either camp, stay at the Youth Hostel or in bed and breakfast accommodation, so it was good to see some staff members in their family settings with little ones in tow.

Five people came from neighbouring Sevenoaks group and three from Southwark; as the lone Bromley representative, I do urge others to give it a try next year. It's very energising and has the feeling of 'connecting to the Mother Ship'. The group has funds to help towards travel and accommodation.

The site was laid out with marquees, yurts, kids' area, activity areas, a giant bee and over the weekend a bee-friendly garden was created. In the evening there was singing around a campfire a short walk from the main site (through woods lit by environmentally friendly lanterns made at one of the workshops) as well as a Ceilidh in the marquee, appealing to all ages.

The village of Castleton was a short walk away and there was the opportunity to explore the beautiful local countryside.

As ever, the main problem was choosing what to attend, leading to painful choices of which things to leave out. Tempting attractions included

writing poetry, sketching, re-roofing the Celtic Roundhouse, prop- making in the puppet HQ, yoga, singing, making lanterns, craft, knitting and making Bee-worlds. The Real Junk Food Project provided an opportunity to cook a meal using food re-directed from landfill.

Basecamp was easily reached by train from London to Sheffield, with connecting coach to the youth hostel, passing through stunning countryside. Sessions started at 11.30 on Friday morning, but I arrived mid-afternoon in time for the Welcome session, followed by Storytelling from the front line where delegates told of things they had done "on the ground" in their local area.

I then went to a session talking about the composition of Friends of the Earth's Board (of Directors), which is under review with dialogue between local groups and the organisation.

The role of the Board is to set the direction of the organisation as advised by staff; scrutiny – receiving reports and checking things are on course; being the custodian of the long-term values of the organisation, and to represent various interest groups. It looks to include a range of experience.

Of the 17 members, 10 come from local groups and 7 are co-opted because of the skills they bring. There is concern that the Board does not have the skills needed for the future; they need people who care passionately about the environment plus ability to scrutinise, set objectives and work within a budget £10 million.

BASECAMP 2 - John Preedy Memorial Lecture

Catherine Howarth of ShareAction on Getting your pension money out of fossil fuels: the Green Light campaign.

This lecture is a keynote event each year. Catherine started by saying she sees Friends of the Earth as the disrupter of the *status quo*.

Pensions might not seem a very interesting topic but we all have immense power and need to stop handing over our money and power to faceless organisations not knowing where it is being invested, e.g. to finance land grab from subsistence farmers, expensive exploration for oil and gas in the Arctic and multi-million pound bonuses for CEOs. The Green Light campaign aims to stop the investment industry in its tracks. People are angry about bankers (those well-paid people who invest our savings) and public anger is deflected in their direction.

We need to stop the narrow and relentless focus on profits which is so detrimental to the environment and achieve investor accountability. If you are an investor, they should have to answer to **you!**

Friends of the Earth has a long list of victories over recent decades. Catherine emphasised the need to influence political decisions and find where leverage can be exercised. Politicians may be tough but investment firms are more sensitive and there is a relationship between politics and finance; the Occupy movement did a good job in

highlighting people's concerns. Money buys political favour.

Catherine said we need to introduce democratic influence and open up spaces in the heart of finance. We need a Charter of Rights in the financial sector. We need the right to know where our money is invested; we need information about shareholder voting rights being exercised on our behalf and we need access to investment policies, including ethical policies. We need the right to participate in the decisions being made on our behalf and to be invited to the funds' AGMs.

ShareAction launched its Green Light campaign aiming to transform our pension funds into climate-friendly investments, to encourage pension providers to embed climate-awareness into their investment decisions. The campaign is supported by a broad coalition of unions, NGOs and faith groups. Pension savers need a healthy retirement income and a healthy planet on which to retire.

Your pension fund may well be investing in Shell and other oil exploration companies – or even in the Thai slave trade.

What can you do to become a shareholder activist? Write to your pension fund with hard questions; attend and ask questions at AGMs; meet the scheme's trustees in person; make others aware of what is going on.

/final para on page 13

BASECAMP 3 - Big Ideas: can we kick the over-consumption habit?

Wellbeing of people and planet go hand-in-hand. Our level of consumption is far too high for the growing population. Why do people consume? It now seems to be bound up with people's identity. A History of Consumption and Identity identified three different phases. Phase 1 was people moving off the land and into urban environments. Phase 2 was the coming of department stores, advertising and catalogues in the early 20th century, and Phase 3 was post-World War 2 when consumerism took off, moving from utility to "sexier" products and "keeping up with the Joneses".

How can we move away from this pattern of consumerism? By making things that are more efficient and promoting collaborative sharing; by getting a grip on advertising and marketing, having advertisement-free zones, and getting back to real rather than invented needs; by promoting empathy, so that people are more sensitive and careful about where and how things are made.

There was then discussion about things we share, not just consumer goods but time, food, love, conversation. We should get more use out of things by more people using them, promoting ways of sharing things like garden equipment in everyday life and encourage use of public transport, libraries, car sharing, credit unions, seed banks, car clubs. In some places there are shared workshops and studios, even kitchens. Individually, mums often pass on children's clothes.

Benefits are less waste, better resource use plus social benefits, building networks and more sense of community and collaborative working. It can also be a way out of loneliness. Socially, building links between young and old are so beneficial; sharing is democratic. There's a Sharing Cities network on www.shareable.net. (see also www.foe.co.uk/bigideas)

My personal view : I feel we have already moved too far in the wrong direction for this easily to be reversed. As with the strong foothold the financial industry has; the advertising and marketing industries have gained their own momentum and would be a hard edifice to crack (or am I a hard-boiled cynic?).

I think one of the greatest changes in the last three decades has been the proliferation of advertising everywhere – in all public places, on taxis, around sports grounds (one notices the lack when old football matches are shown), sponsorship of major sporting events by big names, and now pop-up adverts wherever one looks on the Internet. Also we now have the huge Shopping Malls (like Bluewater) which are seen as the modern-day equivalent of cathedrals, dedicated to the great god Consumerism.

In a subsequent private conversation, it was suggested that consuming has taken the place of achievement; so many jobs lack job satisfaction and, for example, the fulfilment of having made something, and we try to replace this by getting a buzz from buying and owning "stuff".

BASECAMP 4 – Air Pollution *(led by Jenny Bates)*

Air pollution is still a massive problem in the UK, contributing to 29,000 premature deaths every year and blighting people's lives with ill health.

Friends of the Earth groups in Birmingham, Manchester and Leicester have been much involved in issues to do with air quality. However, it is not just cities that are affected. In rural Sussex, the Cowfold / Storrington area suffers from pollution from the M23 and A24. In Brighton, buses are seen as the biggest polluter, as well as traffic idling at traffic lights.

London recently had smog and one could not see the sunset. In Derby people cannot hang their washing out and they suffer carbon soot on their windows. Where there are high air pollution levels in cities, drivers of public service vehicles – ambulances and refuse collection – are feeling the effects. Mothers with young children are extremely concerned and emotional about this.

Birmingham FoE have done lots of stalls, have worked with residents' associations and others and campaigned for cycle infrastructure to reduce vehicle use. Leicester FoE joined with other groups to form "Healthy Air Leicester". The main pollutant is nitrogen dioxide. 90% of pollution comes from motor vehicles. It is estimated to cause 250 premature deaths a year in the city. Manchester FoE lobbied political parties wanting an action plan. They were mostly supportive. The BBC showed interest in making a programme.

Friends of the Earth is a partner in the Healthy Air Campaign. Other partners include UK Health Forum, British Heart Foundation, Asthma UK, Sustrans and Campaign for Better Transport.

Children and Nature

Children now spend a very small amount of time (if any) in wild places. Does this matter? This discussion followed on from the Project Wild Thing showing, the film which was shown but unfortunately I missed (see page 2). We hope to be able to show this in Bromley.

Participants all recalled in their own childhood having immense freedom to run wild, explore the fields, disappear all day. Today's children have a much more regimented life. There are many factors – fear, modern levels of traffic, disappearing wild areas, working parents organising structured activities, more time spent indoors, watching television and in front of screens. Often today's children only experience "packaged" and "canned" nature.

However there are some counter-measures with organisations fighting back. Camp Wild in Devon organises day and week camps with exposure to country pursuits. The National Trust brought out a Natural Childhood report. Steiner Schools aim to be close to nature and the Forest School Association has various affiliated schools.

We too must play our part by giving our own children and grandchildren exposure to nature in the wild.

From Our Gardening Correspondent *(Bill Priestley)*

Tip for the Month

August- Save energy, put your feet up and enjoy your garden in this hopefully hot weather.

Lawns

Do you have a grass monoculture caused by weed and feed? Is it prone to turning brown in hot weather unless watered? More prone to diseases and requires further regular feeding because the soil has become denuded of its natural life and nutrients?

Or do you have a lush green sward of mixed heath and downland plants whose broad leaves shade and protect the grass in hot weather? Some of these, like clover, also feed the grass by fixing nitrogen nodules on their roots.

This type of lawn will attract green woodpeckers and starlings to eat the insects that thrive in this habitat. Bees love the clover, daisies, Bird's-foot-trefoil etc. I dig out the larger more unsightly weeds in the early Spring or Autumn. When my local wood pigeons come and visit, they spend most of their time nibbling bits from the lawn and only lumber over to the veg patch for a little Brassicas for a change!

So for the sake of a mind set of hating weeds in a lawn people are creating a lawn that is much harder to maintain, much more expensive, denying themselves the wildlife and polluting our waterways. The chemicals get washed through into our aquifers, streams and rivers which already have too much nitrogen in them from farm run off.

Lawns that have not been fed can look pretty ropey I hear you say. I found a good solution to this by copying the farmers. In January and February they do 'muck spreading'.

I'm not suggesting that you chuck slurry, dung or raw horse manure on your lawn. I use home-made compost. As I shovel it onto the barrow I break it up with a spade. Then flick it roughly over the lawn.

A little raking to roughly even it out and leave for a couple of weeks for the worms and winter rains to wash it in. By which time, most will have disappeared and a quick rake over will break up any remaining lumps. By the time of the first cut there will only be a few bits like twigs which a rotary lawnmower will easily tidy up.

I have been doing this on several lawns for about 5 years now and the results have been very good. Lawns can be very poor and have masses of moss either from years of neglect or from years of chemicals. Moss killer barely works for one year. Moss seems to come back quickly however much you poison and scarify it.

With the composting method as the soil comes back to life the plants and grasses are encouraged and the moss discouraged. So much so that one lawn I look after used to need 20 sacks of moss raked out of it each year and this year for the first time has not needed scarifying at all.

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Memories of Glastonbury 2014 – Annette Rose

Hearing some great music- Blondie, Ed Sheeran, Metallica, Paulo Nutini, Rodrigo and Gabriela.
Fun exploring the Green Futures field and the permaculture area.
Chanting in the Buddhist tent.
Sliding through the mud in wellies.
Seeing open drug use.

In the Greenpeace field, watching a huge puppet polar bear, move his head and roar.
Watching a heated debate on energy and fracking in the Speakers Tent.
Making a copper bracelet in the craft field.

Asking a question on waste and recycling to John Sauven, Executive Director of Greenpeace.
Dancing under 'Arcadia'- a massive futuristic robot which shot out flames and laser beams.

Singing along to 'Jolene' with Dolly Parton.
Terrible terrible toilets.
Drinking tea on the top deck of a 1960's bus in a thunderstorm.
Eating tasty veggie food.
Conversations with random strangers.

The audience jumping up and down as one to the fantastic 'Peatbog Faeries.'
Watching a juggling hats act in the cabaret field.

Laughing at Hatty Hatstand.
Being amazed at 'The Black Eagles' acrobatic act in the circus tent.
Sipping hot spiced cider while 'people watching'.

Meditating in a tent full of floating candles at 2am.
Being appalled at the devastation when people left, the fields littered with rubbish, wellies, tents.
Going home tired, dirty, aching.

Will I be going again next year?
Definitely not. Am I glad I went? I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Bill's Gardening info – cont'd

One little refinement a couple of my customers get me to do is to sieve the compost onto the lawn. This is time consuming but it does look neater. Also, hollow tine spiking is helpful on particularly compacted lawns or parts of lawns. Do this before spreading the compost. The sieving and spiking is not essential as just lobbing the compost on has worked very well on other lawns.

So good luck with your lawns and if you don't already, then learn to love the daisies in your lawn.

BASECAMP 2 – Final para
Young people coming out of university with their ideals intact and going into first jobs, with automatic enrolment into pension schemes, need to be made aware of the situation.

It is well-known that investors only look at short-term financial gain, not at environmental impact.

<http://tv.viacampesina.org/10-Years-of-Failure-Farmers?lang=en>

The film entitled "10 Years of Failure, Farmers Deceived by GM corn"

shows the dire situation of corn farmers in the Philippines who have adopted GM corn. Amidst protests from farmers, scientists, consumers and basic sectors, GM corn was commercialized in the Philippines in 2003.

At present, there are about 8 varieties of single, stacked-trait and pyramided GM corn approved by the government for direct planting. It is now planted in about 685,317 hectares of agricultural land allotted for corn.

The film documentary is based on the study done by MASIPAG on the socio-economic impacts of GM corn on farmers' lives and livelihood after more than 10 years of commercialization. In the film, GM corn farmers relate how they became indebted because of the rising cost of GM corn seeds and increasing cost and quantity of inputs being used.

The film also shared the farmers account on the effect of GM corn farming such as emergence of new pests, soil erosion, corn contamination and human and animal health impacts.

Farmers also shared the difficulty to go back to traditional or organic corn farming because of the loss of traditional seeds and practices replaced by GM corn farming and the effects of neighbouring GM corn plantations. The film documentary covers the islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Peter Gandolfi writes: On Saturday May 10th three members of Bromley FoE attended the Imperial College Open Day, on its campus in London. This was as interesting as last year, and an excellent opportunity to discuss many of their leading edge research projects, with the scientists undertaking the work, and take part in hands-on science demonstrations.

Many of these involve areas of environmental interest, and you may remember the previous write up of a tour of their Carbon Capture and storage pilot plant. One of the tours undertaken this year was of a project funded by Qatar, on the use of isotopic analysis to understand their carbonate rock structure. They are concerned that their oil and gas may be running out in 10 years or so, and need to look for extra revenue to take its place.

They are seriously considering that the ships transporting liquefied gas to Europe, could well return, filled up with our liquefied Carbon Dioxide from the Carbon Capture plants on our power stations that we may have installed by then. This will then be pumped down their old oil wells. So we will be paying for giving them back and disposing of the residue from their own oil/gas.

One fact that was mentioned when we asked how long the gas would stay down there, was that at present it is considered that the ability of keeping Carbon dioxide down an old well for 5 years without escaping was considered successful, no matter what happened to it after that!

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John and Sue Bocock, Anne Clark,
Graham Hemington, Annette Rose and
Ray Watson

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

Reuser Column
Don't throw It away - Reuse It!

If you have any items to sell, or anything that you require, please send details to the Editor. Items will be displayed for three months, the number in brackets after an item indicating for how long it has appeared. Could you please contact us if an item has been sold/obtained, so that it can be removed from the newsletter.

Any donations to Bromley FoE generated from this column gratefully received!

Non-members' Section

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth, BFoE, then hello. We are an active local group affiliated to national Friends of the Earth concerned with promoting the understanding of environmental issues. We also campaign on these issues at a local, national and international level.

If you would like to know more about who we are and what we do please contact either of our co-ordinators, Sheila Brown (01689-851605) or Ann Garrett (020-8460-1295); their email addresses are on the previous page. Alternatively, you can come along to one of our free monthly meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley (that's towards the bottom of the High Street and on the right going south). If you would like to join us then please fill in and send us the form below.

Membership Application/Renewal* Form (*please delete as appropriate.)

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group: may be sent by email to *bromleyfoe@gmail.com*, or telephone our co-ordinators at the telephone numbers above.

I wish to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my £8 annual subscription. I also enclose a donation (optional) of To help towards the cost of producing and distributing the monthly Newsletter.

Name.....

Address.....

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Do you have any hobbies or interests that may be of use to the group?

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