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February 2017
No. 350

newsletter

February Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Martin Watts

Ruxley Gravel Pits Nature Reserve

*Bromley's lost nature reserve and SSSI -
Very few people know it is there, lurking behind the infamous 'tip'*

Tuesday 7th February – 7.30pm

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 19TH FEBRUARY *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Diary dates:

Feb 7 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's February Meeting: Martin Watts – Ruxley Gravel Pits Nature Reserve
Feb 25 (Sat)	FoE London Regional Gathering, The Printworks 11am–4pm
Feb 27 to Mar 1	Fairtrade Fortnight
Mar 4 (Sat)	Fairtrade Event Tonbridge – Stall and speaker – see below
Mar 7 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's March Meeting: double bill: Environmental Benefit of Electric Cars + FairShare tackling food waste

Fairtrade event in Tonbridge – Saturday 4th March

On Saturday March 4th there will be a Fairtrade event at the Forsyth Hall, **5 Bradford St, Tonbridge TN9 1DU.** This is off Tonbridge High Street on the western side, just north of the southern arm of the River Medway.

There will be a speaker and a Fairtrade stall operated by volunteers from the Fairtrade Shop at St. Andrews Church, Paddock Wood.

Bumblebee talk – Thursday 16th February

Dr Nikki Gammans of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, will talk to The Friends of Jubilee Park about bumble bees and the successful re-introduction of the short haired bee in the RSPB's reservation at Dungeness.

In the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 2.30pm. Refreshments provided. Entry free but a suggested donation of £3 would be welcomed.

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 19TH FEBRUARY *****
by post to John Street, 82 Babacombe 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.

January meeting report – Anne Clark

Talk on GM – Tamara Galloway

Tamara began her GM talk by reminding us of our body's cells, with chromosomes, a DNA strand, nucleus in the centre and cytoplasm at the bottom – i.e. DNA. With the nucleus in the centre of the cell, DNA is copied mRNA, - like a mirror image which goes out into the body of the cell, the cytoplasm. The mRNA is copied to amino acids, like a mirror image, and are like the original DNA and we call them proteins.

Various slides were shown to explain and the Regulation EC No.1829 2003 concerning GM, says "the determining criterion is whether or not material derived from the genetically modified source material is present in the food or in the feed," (GM animal feed is being imported).

Caterers don't always understand the law, and it is often misapplied in practice, and material from GM sources is NOT labelled. Morley College canteen uses GM Soya oil informing us it didn't have to be labelled as it didn't contain protein, but it does come from a GM source.

In the EU (Food Standards Agency GM labelling 2013), if a food contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or ingredients from same, this must be indicated on the label. With loose sold products, information must be displayed next to the food but cheese produced with GM enzymes does not have to be labelled nor do meat, eggs and milk from animals fed on GM feed and therefore stealthily getting into our diet. Oilseed rape, Soya beans / Tofu, maize, cotton seed

oil and sugar beet are all authorised in the UK. but not tomatoes.

A French study had fed GM corn to 200 rats for two years - longer than previous 90 day trials, and the rats had developed tumours, which of course may have been caused by any herbicide (such as Roundup) too. Glyphosate when used on GM crops was probably carcinogenic to humans (although I, perhaps wrongly, understood that modifying the seed meant less use of herbicides & pesticides - a talk for another time!) and was obviously not acceptable.

There were 9 essential Amino Acids that the body can't make: Histidine, Isoleucine, Leucine, Lysine, Methionine, Phenylalanine, Threonine, Tryptophan and valine. Grains are deficient in Lysine as are nuts, seeds, beans and pulses / peanuts (legumes), but any combination makes a complete Protein.

As for GM saving the world from starvation, the above subjects produced far more protein than milk, eggs, and meat and used less water.

Discussed was the experimental 'Golden Rice' where they were trying to increase vitamin A in experimentation, but in a paper by Dawe, Robertson and Unnevehr, it was said that it would not be enough to meet requirements.

So it was concluded that more research should be spent on growing more plants in the water-starved parts of the world than on animals that used grain and water.

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Questions following Tamara's talk on GMOs ++ AGM report

Peter Gandolfi provided this part of the meeting report: it has been shortened due to lack of space.

A question from the audience asked for an opinion on the rice modified to produce beta carotene (known as Golden rice). This had been developed as a solution to the serious Vitamin A deficiency problem in areas where rice is the major food source. This affects millions of children and pregnant women globally, leading to blindness and the deaths of over 2 million children annually.

This led to much discussion within the audience on the potential risks of GM contamination getting out into the wild and whether those areas affected, could grow vegetables that contain beta Carotene such as carrots and pumpkins as a suitable alternative for dealing with vitamin A deficiency.

A member of the audience pointed out that the example used earlier - GM maize that was resistant to Glyphosate, was just one example of GM being used, and there were plenty of other GM examples of great benefit, that could allow us to feed the world.

These included:

- Crops capable of surviving extremes of temperature.
- Crops that were drought tolerant.
- Crops grown that were salt tolerant, so that crops could be grown in areas where only brackish water was available, as is the case in many impoverished areas.

It was generally agreed that better labelling of GM products was needed, and that people needed to understand the difference between GM crops that did not produce GM material in their product and those that did.

The Annual General Meeting

This followed the January meeting and started by thanking Martin Watts who had come to talk about Ruxley Gravel Pits and Nature Reserve and who was going to give us a Winter tour on the following Saturday. Ten members did go on the tour of this SSSI.

Sheila drew our attention to things we had achieved in 2016 and could be found in the last Newsletter. Grateful thanks were given to those who had worked hard to keep things moving: John for the Newsletter, Dan for the Membership and printing. Our average attendance at meetings, though often more, was 27 as was monies taken - £27. We had given £150 to headquarters including our £20 membership.

There being no nominations put forward, the committee remained the same for the year. We do need more reporters to write up speakers and articles for the Newsletter. Thank you Chris for the farming write-ups, John and Sue for the outings and Graham for connections with the Soil Association. We were waiting for an update on Beaver Water World's future. If anyone has any ideas for future speakers, please tell Sheila or Ann.

Bromley FoE Accounts for year ended December 31st 2016

	2016	2015	2014
Balance at January 1st	984.13	867.86	781.42
Income			
Subscriptions	388.00	229.00	357.00
Donations	171.32	*513.03	221.00
Hall collection	368.23	427.89	334.00
Tea profits	67.49	58.47	57.24
Stall income	146.95	177.38	113.95
Open Garden	421.93	549.25	418.47
Unpresented cheque wr/back	26.70	0.00	0.00
	1,590.62	1,955.02	1,501.66
Expenditure			
Hall hire	485.00	462.00	462.00
Newsletter	452.80	449.90	\$353.60
Stall rentals & other expenses	110.82	102.34	12.97
Goods for resale	0.00	97.99	0.00
Speaker expenses/gifts	8.98	100.00	81.00
Conference subsidy	0.00	0.00	79.50
Payments to other organisations	322.50	399.50	162.50
Donations to National FoE	150.00	220.00	200.00
Other (including gifts)	23.35	7.02	63.65
	1,553.45	1,838.75	1,498.42
Surplus / (deficit) for year	37.17	116.27	86.44
Balance at December 31st	1,021.30	984.13	867.86

* of which LUSH donation £361.03 (2015)

§ Newsletter 2013 overcharged £83.20; this amount deducted from 2014 figure

Campaigns, Climate and Energy – Ann Garrett

Campaigns

There will be a stall with Bromley Against Fracking on Saturday March 18th from 2.30 - 4.30 pm in the Mall Precinct, Bromley. We will be emphasising green alternative energies as previously, as a positive approach.

Climate and Energy

Nuclear Power

The company that designed Britain's proposed £18 billion nuclear power plant at Hinkley Point is facing a criminal investigation on suspicion of aggravated fraud, forgery, and endangering life.

Prosecutors in Paris have opened an enquiry into allegations that a factory owned by Areva, the French nuclear group, has been falsifying safety tests for decades. The factory has already made one key component for Hinkley, but this was scrapped amid safety fears and a replacement was ordered from Japan.

Critics say that the criminal investigation raises searching questions about the trustworthiness of the French engineers behind the scheme.

Fracking

Anti-fracking activists have vowed to fight on after losing their landmark High Court challenge against one of the first planning applications by Third Energy to carry out fracking in England. Planning permission has been given for deep drilling to go ahead outside the village of Kirby Misperton in Ryedale. Campaigners

have now set up a camp there and are to be congratulated on their courage - especially during the bitter Winter weather.

Friends of the Earth campaigner Donna Hume has stated "The High Court has ruled that fracking can go ahead in beautiful Yorkshire and we must rise to this latest challenge. Local residents will do everything they can to peacefully prevent fracking".

Ethical Living

Environmentalists are furious that tax breaks are being given to the seriously wealthy for investing in 'diesel farms', whereas support for green energy has been slashed. Changing an energy provider to Good Energy or Ecotricity is one of the most ethical moves that people could make in 2017. Ecotricity are promoting green gas as an alternative to fracking.

The Invest-Divest Network recently reported that the value of organisations committed to ditching their holdings in fossil fuels, is now greater than the value of all the listed oil and gas companies.

This newsletter is Number 350.

The centre pages (9-12) look back at past issues, numbers 50, 150 and 250.

And, on page 18, the cover of the first ever Bromley FoE newsletter, from June 1972.

Bromley FoE Local Plan submission – Ann Garrett

Concerns over soundness of these parts of Draft Plan

I do not think that these parts of the Local Plan are sound because:

- They would have an unacceptable impact on the town centre's local character, and
- would be in conflict with the heritage , historical value and treasured open spaces which are the town's greatest asset.
- The plan is unsound because it is in conflict with its own draft policies within the Local Plan
- and that within the National Planning Framework.

Site 10 Proposal (formerly Site G)

There is insufficient evidence to justify the Site 10 proposal with respect to:

- 1. Sufficient local open space and play area,
- 2. Sufficient provision for local schools,
- 3. The clear and irreversible impact on the Conservation Area e.g. any new building so close to Church House Gardens would impinge on the seclusion of the present 'green' environment.
- 4. The completely unjustifiable loss of local housing e.g. in Ethelbert Close, and the destruction of a local community.

Site 2 (formerly Site A) Proposal - Bromley North Redevelopment

There is insufficient evidence to justify the Site 2/A proposal with respect to :

- 1. Sufficient infrastructure services for 1,000 new residents in an already very crowded area.

- 2. Inappropriate/insensitive height of proposed new buildings in a low – rise residential area.
- 3. The proposed development surrounds a Grade 11 listed building (Bromley North Station) and is directly adjacent to the Bromley North Conservation Area.
- 4. Sufficient parking facilities in a highly congested area.

General Comments on Bromley Draft Local Plan

Bromley FoE believe the Local Plan to be unsound in that it would have:

- A detrimental effect and encroachment on the Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area.
- A severely adverse effect on the environment, by putting pressure on community facilities, transport, traffic, and parking.
- A worrying and serious health impact on air and noise pollution, an effect on wild life in local parks adjacent to new buildings, the water table and ecosystem.
- A substantial and irreversible alteration of the skyline of Bromley Town Centre which has already been scarred by oppressive high-rise buildings at Bromley South and in Ringers Road and which are now proposed for the Bromley North Station site, Ethelbert Close and the HG Wells Centre site .

There has so far been little effort in designing buildings which adhere to the policy that developments 'should complement the scale, proportion, formal layout and materials of adjacent buildings and areas'.

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Nature Updates – Judy Palmer

If anyone wishes to look at the new Bromley Parks website they can find it at <http://bromleyparks.co.uk> where you will see it is under the name of idverde. This is the new name for The Landscape Group, who took over the running of our parks and open spaces.

Bees & Nature, 2017. This year will be busy, what with Brexit, the pesticides issue, possibly fighting to preserve our precious natural environment, but also to help spread awareness that nature is essential to our wellbeing. Many of us do not see the link between our green spaces and better health, or even how much more expensive food would be without our pollinators!

It is not just rural communities which will suffer either. There was an article published recently (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-38519299>) about an interesting study on urbanisation effects on evolution. It is too long to publish in our newsletter so this is just the beginning quote:

"For the first time, researchers say they have identified urbanisation's signature in evolution. A "clear signal" of urbanisation has been identified in the evolution of organisms, which has implications for sustainability and human well-being.

"In analysis of more than 1,600 cases around the globe, researchers said the changes could affect ecosystem services important to humans. More than half of the world's human populations now live in urban areas, and this proportion is set to grow.

"(The findings appear in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.)"

Well, the Bromley borough is roughly 60 sq miles and about half is green space / green belt land, so we can say we live in an urban community, as well as a semi-rural one. You can find nature everywhere, no matter where you live. Let's help keep it.

Bromley Local Plan submission – continued

- A disappointing impact in failing to enhance and preserve the fine heritage and historical qualities of the town, and the destruction of beautiful vistas and views.
- A serious impact in destroying the confidence of caring long term and new residents due to the absence of a Masterplan as required by the Area Action Plan, and who have seen piecemeal development in all areas of Bromley Borough for many years.
- A concerning impact due to a lack of understanding of what constitutes real 'sustainability'
- and finally a lack of meaningful public consultation in coming to planning decisions.

I or another member of Bromley Friends of the Earth will aim to appear at any oral examination.

Going back in time to Newsletters past – 1/4

This month's newsletter is Number 350. The first newsletter that had a number on the front page was Number 74, February 1994.

On the next four pages we bring you some reminiscences from one of Bromley Friends of the Earth's stalwarts, Judy Palmer, and extracts from Issues 50, 150 and 250.

Remember when....., Judy Palmer looks back

Well, happy reading no. 350 issue! Our newsletter milestones keep growing – February 1992 being issue no. 50, June 2000 no. 150 according to our Editor. (*Editor's Note – The June 2000 newsletter has No. 150 on the front; that's where my info came from. Issue number 50 is probably February 1992 – they weren't numbered in those days and to confuse things, the February 1992 newsletter actually says January 1992 on the front, as does the January 1992 newsletter.*)

So in this *do you remember when* – at the beginning of 1992 we were still working on persuading the Council to improve their recycling plans. They eventually got there – in 2000.

It is worth noting that in June 1992 (*sorry, it's not February*) an historic event took place: what became known as the Rio Earth Summit was held. It was then the largest environmental conference ever held – 30,000 people attended including 100 heads of state. And the Summit produced a number of outcomes, including: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the framework

convention on Climate Change, Principles of Forest Management, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21.

This was a major step towards many nations committing to becoming more sustainable, including the UK. The agreements and guidelines are still adhered to today and have great influence in political and business decisions.

And apparently in (March) 1992 our group took part in a national day of action on transport, under the slogan 'more traffic will drive us around the bend' on a poster with the famous 'The Scream' drawing. We were outside Bromley North station and by the war memorial in Orpington and one of the statistics quoted around then was that in April 1991 'the air quality guidelines were breached on one in every six days.'

And just briefly in June 2000 we learnt that the then Environment Secretary, John Prescott no less, was debating whether or not to call in the latest plans to develop Holwood House – he did. Saving Holwood from unsustainable development was one of the biggest, and longest, local campaigns we have worked on, and eventually won.

I also noticed that at the end of 2000 we were informed that GM food was to be found in supermarket tortilla chips.

Going back in time to Newsletters past – 2/4

Bromley FoE newsletter Number 50 – February 1992

Then the Tropical Rainforest campaign was in full swing. Here's part of the update article –

The Good News

During November 33 local architects and surveyors were targeted with information on temperate and tropical alternatives to timber from unsustainable sources. This included the timber uses and possible timber merchants to contact. Also include were:

- A definition of what sustainable means in FoE terms
- A list of tropical timbers to avoid

15% responded very positively saying the information was very useful and would be used in specifications.

The Not So Good News

FoE's Tropical Rainforests Campaign Policy has recently changed and they will not support our document on a local level.

This means that the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) will not be able to use the information with FoE's name on it.

All Is Not Lost

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) are helping to set up a scheme through the Forest Stewardship Council which will certify timber companies adopting well-managed (i.e. sustainable) practices. It is hoped that this will be set up by the end of 1992.

This means that the Bromley FoE document can hopefully be amended in due course to reflect the relevant companies. RICS and RIBA should then be able to use some of the information with an environmental organisation's support.

Bromley FoE newsletter Number 150 – June 2000

Biggin Hill airport was a bone of contention even then. Here's the Biggin Hill Update from June 2000.

The operators of Biggin Hill airport, which they run on a lease from Bromley Council, are still considering their options after the unanimous rejection by the Council of their request for extending opening hours.

Under their lease they can ask for arbitration and that is their most likely course. The other choices are to ask for a judicial review (very expensive for both the operator and the Council) or to go to the Ombudsman claiming maladministration.

The latter would certainly very much anger the Council – and all those in the borough who saw how carefully councillors kept their opinions to themselves until after hearing all sides of the argument.

Meanwhile, the two action groups formed to fight the airport expansion are readying themselves for the future, knowing that the battle is not yet over. They are working on a merger so as to present a united front.

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Going back in time to Newsletters past – 3/4

Bromley FoE newsletter Number 250 – October 2008 (1)

Yes, it's Biggin Hill again – from that month's Transport column (well, actually it's from no. 251 but Biggin Hill is always with us):

A further complication to the mayor's suggestion (new airport in the Thames Estuary) is the demand for expansion of nearby London City Airport in Docklands. In the face of much opposition Newham Council have approved an increase in flights from 80,000 to 120,000 a year. Mayor Boris has already signalled his approval.

That expansion may well provide difficulties for Biggin Hill Airport's expansion plans because of air traffic control concerns.

Meanwhile, Biggin Hill is continuing its growth, with further applications to build another hangar and more offices. It claims that these plans are covered by the Permitted Development planning rules enjoyed by airports – meaning that local opposition has no say in the matter. Bromley Council, who have to rubber-stamp such applications, may argue that normal planning rules apply rather than the Permitted Development laws..

Also looming is the possible move there of police helicopters, a matter of concern to residents because they are much noisier than fixed-wing aircraft and the helicopters would operate round the clock, whereas the airport is obliged to shut overnight. A further worry is that a larger swath of the borough would be affected because

helicopters are not bound by rules that stipulate take-off and landing routes.

Such a move would entail re-writing the airport's lease from the council – something that residents fear will result in the airport persuading the council to weaken other parts of the lease.

Issue Number 150 – continued

The Council, too, are beginning to carry out their pledge to more carefully monitor the airport operator's ability to stay within the lease terms following many complaints that the limit on the house that aircraft can take off and land is being ignored. There is a likelihood that CCTV equipment will be installed to monitor movements.

FoE HQ has advised the residents' groups on this, using its experience of other campaigns in the country where airports have sought expansion.

A further change in the airport story is that a European directive now in force prevents the Council from allowing development under an area called the Public Safety Zone. The zone is an area under the flightpath which is considered to be the most dangerous point at take-off or landing. This would affect a number of houses on the valley side of the dual carriageway section of Westerham Road.

The Council believes this may result in some house owners claiming compensation for blight. The question is: Who pays – the Council as the airport owner, or the airport operator?

Going back in time to Newsletters past – 4/4

Bromley FoE newsletter Number 250 – October 2008 (2)

This one really is from Newsletter Number 250 (aka October 2008) – it's a report from the FoE Annual Conference.

I went, with Dan, Peter and Sheila to the Friends of the Earth Conference at Loughborough University on the 12th September.

I am 18 years old, and am starting at university next week, studying Politics with International Relations, so this conference was a fantastic preview to what I will be studying.

I loved the weekend, although some of the workshops were a bit beyond the subjects I'm familiar with, but they were generally presented in an understandable way.

The first workshop I attended was "Right to Know", presented by the FoE legal team. This was a really interesting workshop and very well presented.

However, the workshop I really became involved with was titled "Young Friends of the Earth Europe" which was held on Saturday evening. The workshop was only open to delegates under 30 years of age (it turned out that, at 18 I was the youngest person attending the conference).

Young Friends of the Earth Europe is a new initiative, being launched on the last day of the conference. We heard

about many of the plans for the group, some of which involved linking up for actions and events around Europe, and encouraging other young people into local Friends of the Earth groups.

To launch the new group we all got together after the workshop and on Sunday morning to put our secret plan into action.

At the "Motions to Conference" session a motion titled "Student and Youth Involvement" was being proposed by Milton Keynes Friends of the Earth, in which they were calling for more involvement and raising the profile of young people within FoE.

We were fairly sure that the motion would be passed, so we put our plan into action.

The motion was passed unanimously, and as all the conference applauded, our group, who had taken up strategic seats in the audience, stood up with the giant banner we had secretly prepared reading "Young Friends of the Earth Europe Starts HERE!"

By my calculations, as this is Number 350, Number 450 should be published somewhere around June 2025.

And, on page 18, the cover of the first ever Bromley FoE newsletter, from June 1972. Thanks to Dan for this.

An unlikely environmental heroine in Paris

The lady in question is Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris who is making enormous efforts to get the French capital's motorists out of their vehicles. This comes at a time when little similar efforts are being made in Britain. In spite of tough opposition she wants to restrict traffic on some roads with the target to cut private traffic by half.

All of this came to a head in December when fumes generated a noxious cloud that hung over the French capital. To the anger of motorists the mayor promptly banned traffic on several important boulevards and made public transport free to use and restricted the number of cars on the road by rationing by number plate. Plans are now in the mix for more bus and cycle lanes, electric cars and scooters, plus she aims to 'reclaim areas of the city for pedestrians'.

This policy came with a cost – the motoring lobby reacted with fury and so did the mayor's political enemies. The mayor replied that she intended to see it through because 'action is required now and we cannot wait for the deluge to sweep us all away'.

At the very same time in London, air pollution limits were being breached just five days into 2017. Toxic gases are said to cause an early death for thousands of people, with dirty diesel fumes the main culprit. Indeed, in December the mayor of London issued warnings about high pollution levels in certain parts of the capital – a useful move but not one that deals with solving the source of the problem.

So what can be done about restricting diesel usage? Encouraging cycling and walking and introducing traffic-free zones in busy cities would help as would cleaning dirty engines on taxis and buses. The ideas are available but it is said that the Treasury has opposed them because of the cost. A familiar story?

Train ticket prices hoot up and up

Rail passengers have had years to get used to the annual fares increase but the 2017 hike caused more than the usual indignation, coming in at 2.9%, probably more than any salary increase. The reason? The Government wants to shift a larger amount of its rail subsidy burden from the train operators to the passenger. Indeed, 70 per cent of the industry's income stems from the travellers' pocket.

It will therefore come as no surprise that with travellers paying over £4000 for a season ticket to London from the home counties that the average rise in fares from 2006 is 56 per cent, more than double the rates of inflation over the same period. Nor will it be a surprise to learn that we have the most expensive rail system in Europe, bar Italy.

Oddly enough, it is partly the success of the railways that is causing the problems relating to poor service and overcrowding that we hear so much about. Passenger numbers have been growing to record levels. The trouble is that introducing more trains and longer trains causes more delays if something goes wrong.

Miller's mutterings – Chris Miller

The Winter wheat and barley are growing well and have had weed killer applied. During this application, Steve noticed that where the barley trials took place and the chopped straw wasn't removed, the plants are not looking so good.

The reason for this is that as the barley straw breaks down, it produces toxins, which the new plants cannot deal with. Some plants will continue to grow but some will perish. Another reason why we always bale the barley straw, plus barley straw is wanted as cattle food.

We were grateful to see the rain, not only for the crops but we are now delivering more hay and straw to local stables for their horses. As the rain and cold weather increases many horses are brought in from the fields.

A new electric cable needed to be laid, so Pete and Steve dug a 1.1 metre deep trench across the yard. The first section had to cross the main entrance into Chelsfield Motor Works so we hired a pneumatic drill to get through the tarmac, concrete and crushed flint. Quite a job as you can imagine. The second section was across the middle of our yard so for that we hired a digger with a trenching bucket.

Pete was surprised to learn that the bricks he was hitting in one spot was an old soak away. Steve explained about this amazing structure, which measured approximately 20ft across and about 30ft deep.

All bricked with a domed top, a work of art considering that nobody would ever

see it. It was filled in during the early 1960's by Grandma (Ruby Miller) because somehow a pig managed to fall down it and it wasn't being used.

It took the boys about 9 days to complete which I thought was excellent as it was a hard job. Although it is not good news that the pound has weakened, especially if you are buying from abroad, it has helped us as the price of wheat is slowly creeping back up. Every cloud ...

This month's saying is:

*Sun through the apple
trees on Christmas day,
Means a fine crop is on
the way.*

Community Hub in Norman Park

Annette Rose writes:

Bromley Mencap has received funding through the People's Postcode Trust to develop a new social enterprise at the lodge in Norman Park.

This lodge has been unused for many years so it is good news for it to be to put to such good use.

They plan to set up a bike recycling scheme, a horticulture project and to run a café kiosk.

I am sure that all of us in Bromley FoE wish Bromley Mencap all the best in this new enterprise.

Campaign to make London a National Park City

This comes from Daniel Raven-Ellison, London National Park City Initiative Coordinator.

Our campaign to make London a National Park City had a fantastic 2016. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make the campaign a success so far. Every action, large and small, is moving us closer to making London greener, wilder, healthier and enjoyable.

There are many highlights. Here are just a few.

- 213 ward teams have now declared their support. That's 49% of our target and 33% of all ward teams.
- Mayor of London Sadiq Khan gave his backing.
- Over 1,000 people attended our major event at the Royal Festival Hall.
- We made 4 short films, funded by the National Geographic Society, about the campaign.
- We were on the front cover of Time Out London
- Our new big and green map of London's great outdoors was successfully crowdfunded and will be published this spring.

Vitally, a new London National Park City Foundation was formed in 2016. The purpose of the Foundation is not only to help make the campaign a success, but to make any future National Park City a success too. The trustees of the Foundation and I are currently in talks with the Greater London Authority about the best way to actually deliver the National Park City. While it's fantastic to have

support from the Mayor, the campaign to secure support from London's local politicians needs much more effort.

Personally, supported by National Geographic and Cisco, I walked 1686km across all the National Parks and Cities in the UK. This was a unique opportunity to think deeply and search for insights that will not only help to make a London National Park City effectively, but consider how it could benefit elsewhere in the UK too. You can read more about my journey here.

It is 100% possible that 2017 will be the year that we secure the political support we need to make London a National Park City. It would be fantastic if you helped us to make it happen.

*More info at
<http://www.nationalparkcity.london/>*

Bromley in Bloom 2017

Annette Rose writes:

Bromley FoE are excited to be sponsoring a new award in Bromley in Bloom 2017. The details are still to be finalised but we hope it will be called something along the lines of 'Best Bee Friendly Garden'.

We will be giving a £50 prize. We hope this will be an opportunity to spread more information on how important it is to help our bees and make gardens bee friendly and it will help to raise our profile as a group.

Friends of the Earth successes in 2016 – Craig Bennett, CEO

Highlights from 2016 - British bees, frack off, coffee cups

Important wins for British bees and keeping fossil fuels in the ground. Friends of the Earth's successes in 2016, thanks to your support.

2016 has been a turbulent year for people and the environment. Politics has been dominated by self-interest and hate. But thanks to your passion and support we can still celebrate some great successes. Here's a taste of what we've achieved together.

No fracking UK

5 years: that's how long the UK has been frack free thanks to the amazing teamwork of our local groups, local communities, donors, experts and all of our supporters who took action online. Fracking continues to be blocked by legal challenge and local opposition. We're doing all we can to help communities that are resisting fracking.

Coffee cup waste out in the open

2.5 billion coffee cups: the number thrown away every year in the UK. Only 1 in 400 is recycled. Relax, this wasn't the prelude to putting a cap on your 'ccino. But we did launch a campaign. Thousands of you signed our petition to ban non-recyclable coffee cups and reward people for bringing reusable ones.

Vital nature laws saved

The nature laws have led to the recovery of bitterns and over half a million people: the number who saved vital laws protecting some of the UK's best-loved wildlife and nature sites. Thanks to record-breaking public

support the EU won't be weakening these laws and will instead look to implement them better – exactly what we've been calling for. It's a great decision for nature and shows the power of campaigning – thank you.

Protecting British bees and other pollinators from pesticides

2 banned bee-harming neonicotinoid pesticides: the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and pesticide firms wanted permission to use them on oilseed rape crops in England last autumn. They failed. We argued our case to the government's Expert Committee on Pesticides – and published a report on growing crops without neonicotinoids.

Money to stop flooding

£15 million: pledged by the government for flood control, after an investigation by Friends of the Earth revealed that ministers had broken promises to support natural flood management, such as planting trees.

Air pollution – taking the fight to the streets

40,000: early deaths in the UK each year as a result of air pollution. We launched an investigation into garages that promised to boost car performance – by removing a filter designed to reduce fine particles of air pollution. The garages were using a loophole that allowed them to advertise and carry out the modification – even though driving on UK roads without the filter is illegal. We put in an official complaint. And now all garages have been banned from advertising this dodgy service.

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Friends of the Earth successes in 2016 - *continued*

Keeping coal in the ground

3 million tonnes: that's how much coal could yet stay in the ground following an excellent ongoing local campaign in Northumberland, which you've helped us get behind. The government has granted our request to call in plans for an opencast mine at Druridge Bay. It will make the final decision on climate change grounds. We raised over 10,000 objections, provided independent legal advice and even teamed up with TV conservationist Bill Oddie.

Food for bees – more wildflower habitats

205 Bee Worlds: that's how many got the green light this year, lifting the total number to 561. That's roughly 6,226 square metres of bee-friendly habitat – and plenty of local communities helping wildlife thrive, greening their neighbourhood and having fun outdoors.

Cutting funding for fossil fuels

£220 million: that's how much of its pension fund Haringey Council moved out of fossil fuels this year. Churches, universities, pension funds and other institutions are increasingly moving their investments away from coal, oil and gas. You've been helping us support local campaigns to encourage councils to take their cash out of fossil fuels and invest it in clean energy projects.

More people eating better

1,150+ people: the number who signed up to Meat Free May – our annual challenge to show how easy, tasty and healthy plant-based foods can be, and encourage more people to take up a low-meat lifestyle.

More people learning about British bees

383,759 bees: that's how many bees were spotted during our Great British Bee Count. Well done to everyone who took part. We surveyed 2,000 participants in the Great British Bee Count – 97% had been inspired to help bees by taking practical action like growing bee-friendly plants.

Gustavo Castro returns home safely

7,948 people: the number of our supporters who demanded the safe release of Friends of the Earth Mexico's Director, Gustavo Castro. Gustavo was shot in Honduras during the murder of fellow campaigner Berta Caceres. As the sole witness his life was in danger, and officials were illegally preventing him from leaving the country. Thanks to our collective efforts, Gustavo returned home safely.

Hole in the ozone layer is healing

2 million cases of skin cancer: the number avoided each year – according to the UN – as the ozone layer shows signs of recovery. The hole, which lets in harmful UV light, has shrunk since the millennium by an area roughly the size of the Indian subcontinent. It's a proud moment for Friends of the Earth supporters. In the 1980s we ran a hugely influential campaign to ban ozone-destroying human-made CFCs. Back then, industry was using these chemicals in aerosols and refrigeration.

The message is clear: don't give up. We really couldn't do any of this without you. Thank you from everyone at Friends of the Earth.

SPACESHIP EARTH. No.1 2P.

Friends of the Earth

Committed to the conservation, restoration and rational use of the Ecosphere.

A Local Monthly Broadsheet, With Our Environment In Mind.



FOE are in Bromley!

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH(FOE) are an international group based in Britain and 6 other countries. The British headquarters are at 9, Poland St in London, there are at present some 50 area groups around the country including Bromley. We are ordinary citizens who are fed to the teeth with casandra talk of environmental doom. We are doing something about the problem.

From international action to our own back gardens.

SPACESHIP EARTH

SPACESHIP EARTH, will be purely informative, a new broadsheet every month hopefully on sale in newsagents but at least on sale in the street. It will be a mouth-piece for FOE of Bromley both its thoughts and actions, and a mine of information about ecological books, programs and events.

NEXT PUBLICATION DATE JULY 15th.

WATER CHECKS BY FOE.

The United-Nations conference on the human environment, is over. Is this a great political movement towards a new understanding of the Biosphere, or just another flop? In 1968 a U.N. report stated that if current trends of air pollution continued, human beings would begin to die off within 20 years. A lot of influence that outspoken report had. (I would be surprised if you had even heard about it.) It seems that it is still up to us citizen to keep a check on our water and air supplies for the future.

With these thoughts FOE are launching a campaign to check up on all rivers and water supplies in and around the London Borough of Bromley. Over the next few months water tests will be taken and results published. (Let us just hope that they are favourable.)

FOE would be very grateful of any help that is forthcoming in both information and action.

How many people realise to what degree hunting has drastically reduced the Whale population of the World. At the beginning of this Century the Antarctic regions could boast of 200,000 Blue Whales. By 1965 it was down to 2,000. With the decline of the Blue Whale the industry has turned its attention to other species with the result that no less than 12 species are on the list of Endangered Species.

The international Whaling Commission has done nothing to protect these magnificent creatures. Their unofficial policy has been to give a maximum kill number too high for even automated Whale ships to achieve.

It is not a sentimental attitude that makes us fight to protect them, but a realisation that they play an important part in the balance of Nature.

In the following months we will publish a list of all products that use Whales. Also places to write to, in order to help the creation of a 10 year truce with the Whale in order to give it chance to restock and live on.

A.Appley.

POPULATION STABILIZATION
is a pressure group formed to tackle the British problem now.

What
about
Britain?

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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, and 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, and 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..... Telephone Number.....

Address..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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