



**friends of
the earth
Bromley**



Bromley FoE: enquiries:
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May 2016
No. 341

ewsletter

May Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Tony Trinick from Flightpath Watch

Biggin Hill Airport - What Now?

A talk about the aims of the group Flightpath Watch in protecting and improving the environment, amenity and quality of life under the flight paths and close to Biggin Hill Airport

Tuesday 3rd May – 7.30pm

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We are sorry that the advertised speaker for May - Asad Rehman – Friends of the Earth's Senior International Campaigner on Climate Change – is unable to join us in May. Asad is an international player on a world stage and is on an extended visit to Asia. We are trying to re-schedule this talk for the autumn.

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

*** **SUNDAY 22ND MAY** ***

Contact details inside front cover.

Diary dates:

Apr 30 (Sat)	Bill Priestley's Open Garden
May 3 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's May meeting: Tony Trinick (Flightpath Watch)
May 8 (Sun)	Climate Change march , London
May 21 (Sat)	Farm visit to Court Lodge Farm , Orpington
May 22 (Sun)	Visit to Beaver Water World , Tatsfield
May 28 (Sat)	Bee Breakfast at Tugmutton Common
Jun 3/5	FoE's BASECAMP at Castleton, Derbyshire
Jun 7 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's June meeting: Richard Aylard (Thames Water)
Jun 11 (Sat)	Croydon FoE launch Bee World at Heathfield Ecology Centre
Jun 18 (Sat)	Bromley FoE stall at Coolings

Croydon Friends of the Earth

Croydon FoE have invited us to support them in their summer campaign stalls. They will be at Addiscombe Festival Fair in Ashburton Park on Sunday 29th May. On Saturday 11th June they will be at the Green Fair in Wandle Park. Also that same day they are launching their Bee World at Heathfield Ecology Centre, coinciding with Heathfield's Open Day.

May 21/22 – Two visits planned

Saturday 21st May - Court Lodge Farm in Chelsfield, BR6 6EP, where Chris and Steve Miller will show us round. Meet at the farm at 10am.

Sunday 22nd May - Beaver Water World, Waylands Farm, Approach Road, Tatsfield. Karen Wheller, who came to speak to the group in January, will give us a tour of the Centre. Meet just inside at 12noon. Admission £4 per person.

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 22ND MAY *****
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.

April meeting report – Annette Rose

We were lucky to have two speakers for our April meeting. Firstly we had Jan Wilson from the Bromley Countryside Volunteers and a Friends of Crofton Woods. Then we had Ishpi Blatchley, a naturalist with a specialist knowledge of lichen.

Jan began by telling us that she has lived in Bromley for 40 years and has found it a good place to bring up children. Bromley is still the greenest London borough. The Countryside Volunteers has been going for 25 years now. They used to be called 'rangers' and they originally worked on private land to maintain wildlife corridors across the borough.

All the volunteers are retired with different backgrounds and purposes. There are twelve in the group and they work 2 days a week. They are a volunteer group and a Bromley Council officer organises the work, transport and provides a local plan of what needs to be done. The group began at the time of the formation of Bromley's Biodiversity Action Plan.

Nowadays they no longer work on private land but on a variety of types of Council land including bogs, heath, woods and short grassland. English Nature keeps an eye on things and inspects sites to ensure things are done in the right way.

Some of the skills the group have include charcoal burning, laying hedges and coppicing. The type of work carried out depends on the time of year.

Work in the Winter includes hedge laying, mainly at Scadbury and Jubilee Country Park. The purpose of this is to restore thickness to the hedges and to make them impenetrable. We were shown some photos of hedge work at different stages of completion. The stakes used are made of hazel and are harvested from local woods. Coppicing is done in Winter.

The public can get upset when they see this work being done if they don't understand the purpose of cutting trees to a few inches of the ground. The group has worked in Crofton Woods and have set up a circular walk there. A board explains the route and what there is to see.

Jan explained how large Crofton Woods is but many people don't know it is there. It is easy to get lost in the woods as Jan has done! The group also carry out glade clearance to create spaces for plants and butterflies.

In the Spring and Summer, the work consists more of maintaining paths and putting up posts and fences, and maintaining bridleways. Hayes Common is another site they have often worked on. In the past they have put ponds in. They have helped with the maintenance of Keston bog by pulling up grass that shouldn't be there. They remove ragwort which is dangerous to horses and cattle. From April to October, butterfly species are recorded and reported.

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April meeting report – *continued*

In late Summer, the main job is grass cutting on chalk grassland with mowers and strimmers. Jan explained how satisfying this job and showed us a photo of her hard at work. This provides habitats for wildflowers and insects.

Jan concluded by telling us that although it was hard work it was worth it. Without this maintenance work much of the land would revert to brambles and Holly. With the out sourcing to a private company, less countryside work is being done so the group has an important role to play.

Our second speaker, Ishpi, told us about two particular areas in Bromley called South Hill Woods and Kingswood Glen. She explained that although these are urban sites and not prime habitats, they are still interesting. There is an active Friends Group.

The site was originally Toots Wood. It went all the way down to Park Langley. Trees from the original woods can be seen in gardens in the surrounding area that are probably about 300 years old. The woods were altered in the late 1800s when the house was taken over by Charles Dewey. He landscaped it apart from one area which remained woodland. It was developed as a woodland garden with water features.

Today there are still remnants of the original woodland. There is a bowling club and tennis courts. There is a stunning Sequoia tree that was planted in the 1900s. You can still see remnants of wood banks. You can see

bluebells here, Spanish and English varieties.

There is lots of Ivy which is a good nectar source for bees and it provided berries for birds in the Winter. Birds frequently seen include tits, woodpeckers, nuthatches, tree creepers and lots of parakeets. Ishpi has observed that in a survey in 1988, bluetits and starlings were the most common birds but in recent years there have been no starlings but lots of parakeets.

The management of the area has involved a lot of clearing of Cherry Laurel. Kingswood Glen was a site of an Iron Age fort. There are four ponds to be kept clear which involves periodic de-silting. Mallards and moorhens are frequent visitors to the ponds.

The children from Highfield School often walk through. There are all three species of newt found in the ponds- the great crested newt, the smooth newt and the palmate newt. The great crested is the largest of these.

Some Questions asked- Where are frogs and toads found in the borough? We discussed different sites and how ducks often eat frogs spawn. Has Ash Canker been seen? Ishpi says she has not seen it. What types of butterfly are around now? This is very dependent on the weather.

Airport: long-haul battle ahead

It may appear to have gone quiet in the years-long battle over plans to expand Biggin Hill Airport – but that does not mean that nothing is happening below the surface. Last month Bromley FoE revealed that the London Borough of Bromley, the airport's head leaseholder, is not expecting to make public a fresh lease to permit longer operating hours - and, no doubt one for affected residents to oppose.

Now Flightpath Watch, the residents' organisation opposing expansion, have taken the initiative and declared that it will fight their case in the courts.

This will begin by seeking a judicial review on the basis that the council and the airport fought an improper campaign in the period leading up to a council meeting that approved the expansion plan. The argument goes that public opinion surveys gathering residents' opinions were recorded incorrectly.

It is recognised that going the legal route is expensive and Flightpath Watch are appealing for donations from residents' bodies and individuals to cover what is definitely going to prove a long haul.

New car sales hit a record level

Recent figures show what a gargantuan problem environmentalists face when calling for ways to get motorists out of their car in order to cut pollution. In March a record 500,000 new cars were sold, up 5.8 per cent on the same month last year and the

highest monthly total for almost 20 years.

Low interest rates are reckoned to have been a major factor for the increase, plus the popularity of ultra-low emission vehicles. In fact, that is the only positive for environmentalists: sales of electric cars and other alternatively fuelled vehicles were up 21 per cent over a year ago. However, they accounted for only three per cent of the total market.

Cyclists get short-changed by the Government

Critics have branded the Government's newly-published cycling and walking strategy as 'worthless' because it is backed by the sum of £316m over five years, or a meagre £1.38 per person outside London. They argue that it is far too little when, in comparison, the £316m is less than half of what is being spent on refurbishing Bank tube station.

The cycling fraternity has called for £10 per person, rising to £20 if targets to double the number of walking and cycling journeys are to be met. They are demanding nothing less than a serious change of attitude by the Government if Britain is to mirror Denmark, where 19 per cent of all trips are by cycle, and the Netherlands where the figure is 27 per cent. Indeed, the Dutch spend £24 per person a year.

The strategy is out for consultation until the end of May and an independent committee will start work in October on implementing policies in the final version.

Aldi, FoE, Adrian and Neonicotinoids

Aldi, FoE and Neonicotinoids

FoE reported that - Supermarket chain Aldi UK has announced that it is reviewing its pesticides policy, including the use of bee-harming neonicotinoids.

This is a good start but Friends of the Earth is asking the public to let Aldi know they expect to see a strong bee-friendly policy adopted by the retailer. Aldi UK has been under pressure to act, following moves against neonics by its parent company in Germany – Aldi Süd.

At the beginning of the year, Aldi Süd banned eight pesticides - including three bee-harming neonicotinoids - from their fruits and vegetables following a campaign by Greenpeace Europe. But this doesn't mean the same thing here - as Aldi UK operates independently from Aldi Süd.

Friends of the Earth has been calling on Aldi UK to bring in its own ban. Now, in a statement to us, Aldi UK confirmed it has started a full review of its pesticides policy: "The aim of this review is to establish an Aldi UK position on pesticide usage that will take our approach beyond the status quo, particularly in relation to pollinators."

Friends of the Earth Bees campaigner Dave Timms said: "This review is welcome but Aldi's new policy must include a strong commitment to keep neonicotinoid pesticides out of the production of its fruit, vegetable and cereals including wheat and oilseed rape. It's vital that

consumers let Aldi know that they expect them to act to protect our threatened bees."

Aldi, Adrian and Neonicotinoids

Bromley FoE member Adrian Appley asked **Aldi this** regarding the use of neonicotinoids in / on their products -

Like millions of consumers I want to shop knowing that the products I buy are produced in ways that don't harm bees.

It's great to hear that you're reviewing your pesticides policy and want to help our bees. The scientific evidence that neonicotinoid pesticides harm bees - and other pollinators such as butterflies - is stacking up and alternative ways of controlling pests are available. Aldi has a great chance to help Britain's bees.

I want your review to commit to keeping neonics out of your fruit and vegetable supply chain and away from products containing arable crops like wheat and oilseed rape.

Bees are worth hundreds of millions to the UK economy and are a vital part of our lives and environment. Please do all you can to protect them from toxic pesticides.

And this was Aldi's response –

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More Mutterings from Miller's Farm

Great news. As you may have seen, our remaining fields have all been ploughed, drilled and rolled with spring barley or peas. Although it was a little sticky at first, the ground was ploughed in great conditions and the plough soon polished up and turned the soil beautifully.

With plenty of moisture and a little warmth, it was ideal. We hope within the next few days, we will see signs of the spring barley starting to grow. We roll the ground to conserve moisture in the spring.

The field next to the house with the footpath in may look a bit different this year. We are helping out a company with spring barley trials, so are growing three different varieties of spring barley with three different seed rates and three different amounts of fertiliser.

So little spring barley has been grown in the last few years throughout the country, that all data on seed and fertiliser rates are 20 years out of date. This trial will give us some valuable information to share with other growers.

The boys visited a farm at Snodland to discuss the direct drilling method against ploughing. It was very interesting to listen to a farmer who has soils similar to ours. They saw and discussed the problems and benefits of this method of planting cereals.

Still gathering information, especially over which type of new equipment will need to be purchased and the selling of our existing machinery, which will be obsolete if we change.

A quieter time on the fields now, just fertiliser to be applied and keeping an eye out for weeds and disease. Spring is on its way, plenty of bird song and great to hear the skylarks, yellow hammers, thrushes and even had a siskin visit our bird feeder.

We eagerly await the return of the swallows any day now, although we didn't notice them until the 13th April last year. Always feel as if spring has arrived when we see them flying in and out of our barns.

Aldi, Adrian and Neonics, *continued*

Bees are vital for pollinating many of the food crops we sell. So like you, at Aldi we are committed to protecting pollinators, and have recently installed a 'bee hotel' containing a number of bee hives at our Head Office in Atherstone, North Warwickshire.

This iconic conservation activity was chosen by hundreds of our employees, who wish to contribute to improving habitats for pollinators in our local area. We have also planted a wild flower garden at our head office to help all pollinators, including the honey bee.

We will continue to work with our suppliers to ensure our products are grown with consideration for the environment and will continue to monitor the UK Government's position regarding the use of neonicotinoids. In 2016, we will conduct a wider review of our pesticide policy, which will include a review of neonicotinoid pesticide use in our products.

Campaigns, Climate and Energy – Ann Garrett

On May 8th there will be a climate change 'Walk Backwards' march down Whitehall to Parliament Square and Green. This will be a symbolic march to show the Government that it has gone backwards on climate particularly by removing subsidies solar panels and onshore wind turbines. I will be there with our FoE banner for the rally at 2pm. Please email me if you can make it. Your support will very welcome.

Climate and Energy

Earth Hour

Did you remember to mark this on March 19th? I did but only for the last half hour! Lights went out on 366 key landmarks in 178 countries from all over the world from 8.30 - 9.30 pm . This included the Sidney Opera House and Big Ben. Restaurants laid on special candle-lit meals to mark the climate event.

Studies have shown that past Earth Hours have reduced electricity by 4 per cent. But it is designed to be a symbolic action, rather than an exercise in energy reduction. Earth Hour has something to celebrate though as it was revealed in early March that carbon emissions failed to increase in 2015, even although the world economy grew.

Solar Powered Civic Lighting

The Monopoles recently unveiled at a German trade fair, convert sunlight to streetlight via photovoltaic panels. The energy they generate can then be stored in a battery, and used during the night to power the lamps. A small monopole can be erected by 2 people

without machinery in less than 5 minutes.

As a result the zero-emission street light eliminates electricity costs. Not only do they generate enough energy light themselves, but any surplus can be sold to the National Grid, potentially making millions of pounds for the UK's local authorities, for which running street lights costs an estimated £300 million a year. Many councils are now dimming their lights or switching them off early. There has been some criticism about this, raising concerns about an increase in accidents and crime.

Solar Panelled Roads

Over the next 5 years, 621 miles of French roads will be resurfaced with solar panels to provide cheaper electricity there for five million people. The national Institute of Solar Energy and road-building company Colas have developed half -centimetre thick panels to be laid on existing roads. They are able to withstand traffic without breaking and are known as 'Wattway' and will last up to 20 years. Holland has already paved a 230-mile cycle way with solars. What a fine example this is setting!

Climate Change and Human Rights

It is important to remember that top scientists who have spoken out about Climate Change have and are making huge sacrifices.

Ben Santer, a head author from the International Panel on Climate Change, was erroneously accused in

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Clothes Sharing – Rob Clark +++ Solar farm application

I read an interesting article in the i newspaper recently describing a novel idea called ShareWear. Now, for all the IT bods amongst you you'll see the pun here but for others the play on words is that there is software available called Shareware. This is because you can share it free of charge. But this doesn't really matter and the idea behind the name is the important thing.

www.ShareWear.se is a Swedish web site that describes the workings of Sharewear. The process begins with someone posting a picture of an item of clothing they want to share on Instagram, which is a social media web site for us uninitiated. When people happen upon the picture they might like to comment on how nice it looks. The first one to comment gets to borrow the item for one week.

The owner and borrower then agree a meeting place to complete the deal. Once the week is up then the borrower posts the item again. No one is allowed to keep the item no matter how much they fall in love with it and importantly no money ever changes hands, this is all reliant on people's good will.

The scheme was set up in Sweden by a number of their designer clothes labels but although this started in Sweden it has taken off in the major cities of the World and is beginning to pick up speed in London.

Apparently there are other clothes sharing web sites as well, such as www.girlmeetsdress.com which offers

something for that special occasion or www.rentez-vous.com which is similar. These are all very good ideas especially if you only want an item of clothing for a special occasion. I wonder if you could get a wedding dress this way?

Wrotham Heath solar farm application

Following planning consent in November 2015, Good Energy is moving ahead with plans to construct a 5MW solar farm near Wrotham, north of Tonbridge in Kent. Once complete, the solar farm will generate enough renewable electricity to power around 1,200 average homes.

The 25-acre site at Wrotham Heath is situated between two motorways, the M26 and the M20. Currently the land is used predominantly for grazing, which would continue once the solar farm was installed. Good Energy says in its report that despite the land being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it was in the middle of a major road network, would have no impact on the skyline, and was only used for grazing.

Good Energy is committed to providing a community fund with a value equivalent to £5,000 per year for the lifetime of the solar farm. The fund would be controlled by local people and used to support community initiatives. A spokesman said, "I think it's important, if we can effectively turn Wrotham into a carbon neutral village then that's a good thing. It's probably quite a good place for it to go."

London transport - Something's Got to Give? - *Richard Comaish*

Recent articles have explained to London readers that levels of traffic congestion are back up to where they were before the (Big C) Congestion Tax was introduced by (green) Red Ken.

So has it failed? Well, not completely, it did its bit, raising money for the capital while keeping a lid on things for a while.

But what now? Do we keep putting it up to prohibitive levels, making driving into London more and more out of reach of the ordinary Londoner?

I don't suppose Bromley FoE's largely car-driving majority often spare a thought for how wheelchair-bound people get around town.

Since taking to wheelchairs last summer I've really noticed how electrical power predominates, very few wheelchair occupants opting for the self-propelling route like myself. And who can blame them, with failing limbs and often unsympathetic pavement and traffic furniture design.

Not the worst thing in the world, from an FoE perspective, electrical power normally representing a bit of a mystery to the onlooker as to what the underlying power source might be.

Although largely wheelchair-bound in recent months, I have maintained an interest and involvement in Wheels for Wellbeing, the local charity which helps disabled people make use of cycling in safe spaces, such as Herne Hill Velodrome and Croydon Arena (Football Club), even suggesting it

branches out to Crystal Palace and Bishops' Palace Gardens, Bromley. And meanwhile I have noticed that I am not alone among wheelchair users in being able to expand and liberate my movement, with therapeutic side-effects, by the use of tricycles, which includes 'recumbents.'

Tricycles - now there's a thought - something that seems to have been left out of the city's transport masterplan. 'Boris bikes' are all the rage, but isn't there something rather pedestrian in the current thinking, having overlooked the trike option?

Given the constantly rising and increasingly adventurous population of elderly and disabled Londoners, shouldn't someone have factored this more ancient invention (like bikes, trikes were invented by a German, but two centuries earlier, and by disabled inventor Stephan Farffler as an improvement on the wheelchair, first devised in ancient China).

If bikes are for hire on London's streets, why not trikes, and why has it taken so long for the question to arise?

One problem is the 'Road or Pavement Issue.'

Are we to expect elderly and disabled trikers, once thus liberated, to join the road traffic melee, with its proven fatal risks for cyclists? Or can we allow a little leeway for those less confident on wheels, and take our chances when walking?

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Ideas for discussion at Basecamp

FoE's Head of Programmes recently sent out this email -

We currently have 12 ideas, covering a wide range of issues, in the Dialogue Forum that are contenders for possible discussion at Basecamp.

You still have nearly a month to propose and vote on ideas, so we may have more by the time you read this.

Right now, the most popular ideas are:

- Campaign Against Fossil Fuel Subsidies
- Local Action on Air Pollution
- Raising Awareness of Local Groups
- Raising Public Awareness of the Dangers of Fracking
- Assessing which campaign can gain the support to win

Remember that the top four on the deadline of Sunday May 15 are not only guaranteed agenda time at Basecamp, but will be taken as an indication of what is important to our local groups network. So please check out the ideas and vote.

In order to vote, all you need to do is log in to the Dialogue Forum, read through the ideas, and click on the 'thumbs up' icon for the ones you'd like to see discussed at Basecamp. (*Ed - unfortunately, the link to the voting website didn't work when I tried it.*)

Your vote really is important. You can vote whether or not you've decided to come to Basecamp. We do hope you can make it, though, as it's going to be the best yet.

Climate change and Human Rights, *continued*

... 1995 of 'scientific cleansing'. Tactics like those employed by the tobacco industry were used to destroy his reputation by spreading malicious accusations.

At present Rajendra Pachauri, until recently head of the UN 's panel of climate advisers, from which he has been forced to resign, is facing a court case in India, attacking him of criminal intimidation of a young woman.

He is claiming to have been the victim of an elaborate sting. His health is suffering and he has been subjected to death threats.

London transport – *continued*

A quick googling of the Highway Code reveals an anomaly - 'cycling' seems to appear coterminous with riding on two wheels(?): tricycles don't appear to exist as an independent item, and Farffler's genius appears to go unnoticed and in vain, from the perspective of the venerable 85-year-old British rulebook.

How long can this defective state of affairs subsist? In the words of the famous, star-studded but ill-fated feature film from the sixties, 'Something's Got to Give'(?).

News from Jubilee Debt Campaign

Collapse in commodity prices leads to \$61 billion funding gap for impoverished countries

Impoverished country governments could be up-to \$61 billion worse off in 2016 as a result of the crash in global commodity prices and strengthening of the US dollar. This is reducing government revenue and increasing the relative size of debt payments in foreign currencies.

An analysis of low and lower middle income country governments by the Jubilee Debt Campaign finds that there have been significant falls in government revenue, and increases in debt payments, compared to what was expected just three years ago. This leaves many countries facing a large funding gap on what was expected. For comparison, this is \$13 billion more than the \$48 billion of aid which is claimed by the OECD to be spent in the 51 countries included in the study.

Tim Jones, economist at the Jubilee Debt Campaign, said:

“Many impoverished country governments are being hit by the fall in prices for the commodities they export, and large depreciations of currencies against the dollar. This is reducing government revenue, and increasing the relative size of debt payments in foreign currencies. On top of this, less tax is being collected than had been expected.

Tim Jones continued:

“In the 1980s commodity prices crashed and the US dollar rose, and the result was 20 years of debt crisis and large increases in poverty. To ensure

history is not repeated, urgent global action is needed to cancel debts owed to reckless lenders, tackle tax avoidance and evasion, and change global trade rules to enable countries to diversify out of basic commodities.”

Jubilee Debt Campaign calculated the figures by comparing IMF and World Bank predictions from 2013 with those conducted between August and December 2015, since the most recent falls in commodity prices and exchange rates. It found that external debt service payments in 2016 will now on average be 10.8% of government revenue, compared to 6.1% predicted three years ago.

The main reason for these changes is that the fall in exchange rates and commodity prices means governments are receiving fewer dollars than had been expected. In addition, governments are collecting less tax revenue as a proportion of GDP than expected, and external debt payments are also higher. The IMF's commodity price index has fallen by 26% since July 2015.

Jubilee Debt Campaign is “part of a global movement to break the chains of debt” and its main campaigns are currently: Drop Greece's Debt; No New Debt Trap; Global Debt Iceberg; Stop; Vulture Funds; Britain's Dodgy Deals. More info about these can be found on the JDC website at <http://jubileedebt.org.uk/campaigns>.

JDC can be contacted by phone at 020-7324-4722 or by emailing info@jubileedebt.org.uk.

CAAT say: Stop arming Saudi Arabia – Legal action launched

On 8 March Campaign Against Arms Trade began formal legal proceedings against the UK government over its arms exports to Saudi Arabia.

The focus of our case is Saudi Arabia's use of UK weapons in Yemen, which it has been bombing since March 2015. The Saudi-led attacks - using UK-made warplanes and UK-made bombs - have hit refugee camps, schools, hospitals, a wedding and aid facilities. Air strikes killed more than 100 civilians in February alone. There is overwhelming evidence that these attacks have repeatedly breached international humanitarian law.

Licences

UK arms export rules say that a licence for military equipment should not be granted if there is a clear risk that it might be used in violation of international humanitarian law but the UK government has continued to allow weapons sales. It licensed an astounding E2.8 billion of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia in the six months after the bombing started. This is in clear violation of the UK's own rules and of European and international law. It makes a mockery of the Government's claims to "rigorously" control arms exports.

Of course, the UK should never have been arming authoritarian Saudi Arabia in the first place. Saudi Arabia executed 47 people in a single day at the start of 2016; it's a country that flogs bloggers, that represses women and minorities, and that helped crush democracy protests in Bahrain.

For decades, successive UK governments have prioritised arms deals with Saudi Arabia over human rights, and made us complicit in this regime's crimes. Now though, this relationship is under the spotlight like never before.

In February, Parliament's International Development Committee called on the Government to suspend arms sales and support an independent inquiry into Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate bombing. Then, after thousands of us wrote to our MEPs, the European Parliament voted by 359 votes to 212 for an immediate arms embargo to Saudi Arabia.

Thank you to those of you who emailed your MEPs asking them to support the resolution. This helped ensure that it passed despite strong Saudi lobbying in opposition.

Meanwhile, back in the UK, Parliament's Committees on Arms Export Controls, the group of MPs that scrutinise UK arms exports, has finally reconvened. In March the committee announced a full-scale inquiry into UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia. It's vital that we now keep up the pressure.

Spread the word

In April CAAT will publish a new report on the UK's shameful relationship with Saudi Arabia. Order a copy and campaign postcards by emailing enquiries@caat.org.uk or calling the office.

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CAAT info, *continued*

Lobby your MP

Whoever your MP is, if they can, we need them to show their support by signing EDM 1170, a parliamentary petition calling for an embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia. You can find a template email to send in two minutes at caat.org.uk/stop-arming-saudi.

Target your local arms company

Expose the arms companies on your doorstep to raise awareness of UK complicity in Saudi Arabia's crimes and to make it harder for the arms companies to go about their deadly business.

More than 80 companies at more than 400 locations in the UK have applied to export military equipment to Saudi Arabia. Find them all - from Raytheon in Glasgow to MBDA in Stevenage - on CAAT's company map and learn about how they're supporting Saudi's aggression and human rights abuses: caat.org.uk/stop-arming-saudi.

Go to the BAE AGM

BAE's sales to Saudi Arabia include the Typhoon and Tornado combat aircraft that are being used to bomb Yemen, and the Tactica armoured vehicles used by Saudi Arabia in Bahrain to help suppress democracy protests. Join us at BAE's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4 May to hold the company to account.

Contact action@caat.org.uk to find out how you can get involved in protests.

Meat-Free May

In 2013 Friends of the Earth ran a competition asking university students to come up with an idea to encourage people to eat less and better meat.

The winning idea by students from Queen Mary, University of London was Meat Free May. The campaign challenges non-vegetarians to give up meat and fish for the whole month of May, leading possibly to lower meat and fish consumption after May is up, benefitting our planet and people's health.

Friends of the Earth have a Meat Free May Support Pack with hints, tips and recipes. Visit the Friends of the Earth website for full details.

Anna Martin Plant and Garden Consultant

Anna is an eco-gardener. All the products she uses are pesticide-free. She works in the London and greater London area.

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

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Mary Ingledew / Sylvia Chance

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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