



**friends of  
the earth  
Bromley**

**October 2019**

No 381

## **Our Next Meeting**

Tuesday Oct 1st

# **The Dangers of Nuclear Power**

**Dr Ian Fairlie**

**7.30pm The Friends Meeting House,  
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley**

Everyone welcome

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# **NEWSLETTER**

## Diary Dates

**October 1<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday) Bromley FoE's monthly meeting. Dr. Ian Fairlie 'The Dangers of Nuclear Power.'** Independent Consultant on Radioactivity and the Environment, Dr Fairlie's work focuses on the radiological hazards of nuclear fuel processing and risks arising from the radioactive releases at nuclear facilities. - There will also be a Traidcraft Stall at the next meeting.

**9th October (Wednesday) Bromley RSPB TALK: Albatross Task Force, Nina da Rocha.** Location: United Reformed Church, Widmore Road, Bromley, BR1 1RY Find out about the high-seas heroes saving the lives of thousands of seabirds. Nina leads the RSPB's work in the Southern Ocean to save albatrosses from extinction. Time: 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Price: £3.50

**October 24th (Thursday)** Friends of Jubilee Park event. The Small Mammal Walk planned for February was cancelled because of the extremely cold weather. Steven Lofting, an expert in the wildlife of the Park, will give us another chance to see the Small Mammals that live in the woodlands and hedgerows of Jubilee Country Park. Discover how they are an important part of the biodiversity of our local environment. Meet at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 9am. No dogs please. The walk will not go ahead in bad weather – the decision will be made the day before - please ring 07733 004248 to check.

**October 26<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) BFoE will have a stall with Bromley Against Fracking in the Mall precinct, Bromley, 2.30-4.30. Volunteers needed, please, to help run the stall**

If you need any further information on these events, you can email us on [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or ask at the next monthly meeting.

## Campaign Stall

Just a reminder that the Mall Precinct stall with Bromley Against Fracking will be on October 26th from 2.30 - 4.30 pm

## Next Newsletter Copy

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views, articles for sale will all be considered for publication. Please send them to the editor via one of the methods below to arrive not later than **Saturday 19th October**

**Post:** 17 Everard Avenue, Hayes, Kent BR2 7LR

**Email:** [Robert.clark9@btinternet.com](mailto:Robert.clark9@btinternet.com) (please write Newsletter in the subject line)

## Changes

John Street was editor of this Newsletter for a phenomenal 205 editions having taken on the job in July 2002. Sadly (for us) he has moved away from Bromley, so the role has now been taken on by Rob Clark, to whom we are extremely grateful - and Rob was in fact Editor prior to John. John's last edition was the Aug/Sept one.

John showed great dedication and professionalism as Editor. It's a massive job which he carried out with great efficiency, and our Newsletter is something of which the group is rightly proud and values highly, and it is greatly respected by

### **August Meeting Report** Annette Rose

Our August meeting was a little different in that we had several local speakers talking on a variety of topics.

### **Traidcraft** Cecilia Willatt

Cecilia brought us up to date with the latest news from Traidcraft. The good news is that the warehouse is not going to be sold and the organisation is continuing. Some staff are now on permanent contracts and the admin people are back. The producers of the goods for sale are from all over the world and rely on their connections with Traidcraft so this is excellent news.

### **Organic Lawn Care** Bill Priestly

Bill outlined 5 ways that organic lawn care was a good idea. Firstly, it saves money. There is no need for expensive chemicals. Secondly, it saves time. Home made compost can be put on bald patches and the rain and the worms do the work. Thirdly, the lawn stays greener for longer. Broad leaved leaves in the grass shade the roots of grass blades and they have deeper roots. Fourthly, the lawn will be less prone to diseases. Diseases spread

more rapidly through a monoculture. Fifthly, an organic approach helps the wildlife in your garden. It provides a variety of habitat for fauna. The garden will be alive with micro-organisms that support fauna, including insects and birds.

Other advantages are that pigeons tend to stay on the lawn to feed rather than in the vegetable patch. The lawn looks good; it is only when you look closely that you can see the diversity. It is good to cut the grass regularly as this encourages the grass to thicken up. Don't cut during a drought. Home-made compost is much better as it has more life in it. You only need to put a layer of compost on once a year. Rake over if needed.

### **Conservation Projects** Bryony Bonner

Bryony has been involved with two international volunteering projects. The first was in Costa Rica which was a turtle conservation project. The turtles need help to increase their numbers for a variety of reasons. Due to climate change, it was found that more females than males are being born. The eggs of turtles are taken as they are thought to be an aphrodisiac. They are coming to harm due to plastics and netting. Only

one in a thousand hatchlings make it to adulthood. So how does the project help? The eggs are collected from the nests on the beach and taken to a hatchery. When they are born, they are taken to the nest site and then it is ensured that they make it to the sea. Sometimes the turtles go the wrong direction and need help. They are also protected from predators such as crabs, raccoons and birds. In this way the numbers reaching the sea are maximised.

Bryony's other project she has been involved with was in Thailand at an elephant conservation project. This project focuses on the education of tourists and the Thai people and works with the Thai parliament. Baby elephants have been taken and treated badly to break them and then they are used for tourist rides. The sanctuary takes in these elephants. It also helps a range of other animals but does release the animals into the wild when it can. The project works with local schools and employs local Thai staff.

### **Sustainability in Schools** Caroline Mace

Caroline is a parent of a child at Perry Hall Primary School, Eco Leader and Vice-Chair of the PTA. She gave us an interesting summary of recent eco-activities at the school. Perry Hall has just been awarded an Eco Schools Green Flag which is the top award given by Eco Schools.

The school has an Eco Committee consisting of pupil representatives from 14 classes. It also has a Go Green Club which is separate from the committee.

Recently the school has concentrated on the Eco-Schools topics of waste, marine and energy. These were decided on after an environmental review carried out by pupils.

Pupils have a rota for composting food waste. The school is exploring options for getting an industrial composter which means all food waste could be composted. They have an edible garden with Year beds for the children to work on. The school recycles a range of things, mainly through the Terracycle scheme. Pupils use stainless steel water bottles called One Green Bottle. They run an annual Food and Gardening Fair called 'Peckish at Perry Hall School' when visitors are invited to tour the school grounds. The next one is on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 and our group is invited to visit.

### **FOE Tree Campaign** Judy Palmer

The Tree Campaign is a new campaign by FoE and it is running alongside the Climate Campaign. The aim is to double tree cover by 2045. Judy took part in a webinar to hear an overview of the campaign. Our group has been asked to work on local ideas with our council. Tree planting will be part of the new Net Zero Emissions plans from Bromley Council. Only native species known to the local area can be grown. Imported trees could carry diseases so UK certified tree providers are essential. Judy included an article in the July Newsletter about all the good things trees can do so this is an important campaign.

## Situations Vacant!

Are you interested in the issues around Climate Change? We are urgently looking for volunteers to join our climate campaign team. You can read email updates from Friends of the Earth about the campaign and help to keep the Bromley FoE group up to date with the latest news at monthly meetings. You will receive plenty of support in your role and help to produce short articles for our newsletter as needed. Please email us at [bromleyfoe.co.uk](mailto:bromleyfoe.co.uk) or speak to us at the next meeting if you are interested and would like to discuss further.

### **Greener and Cleaner** Parisa Wright

Parisa set up a new group called Greener and Cleaner four and a half months ago. It already has over 3000 members on its Facebook page. Members exchange information and tips on living a greener lifestyle and the page is very active. Additionally, there are local events held in Bromley and Lewisham. For example, they have made produce bags to take to the supermarket. They held a large information exchange day for schools. Future plans include working with local businesses to reduce their environmental impact and working with schools to reduce the air pollution reaching pupils by the installation of green screens and other measures.

Parisa is keen that Greener and Cleaner will be able to work alongside Bromley FoE on some of their future ventures.

### **Second Half**

In the second half of the meeting, Mary Ingledew gave us a summary of some ideas for the updates to our BFoE website. She is keen for us to look at other FoE sites and to let her know our ideas and recommendations.

Annette Rose informed the group about 'Zero Waste Week' which is happening

between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September. The idea is that during that week, participants will try to reduce their waste to a minimum. We are particularly focussing on how we buy our food and prepare our meals. We are asking some members to keep a diary on how they get on and what they found helpful. This could be included in the newsletter. If you sign up on the Zero Waste Week website, you will get daily tips and encouragement to help along the way.

### **September Meeting Report** John & Sue Bocock

As always, it was a pleasure to welcome Craig Bennett CEO of National Friends of the Earth, to Bromley.

He began his talk setting FOE's beginnings in the late 1960s, the era of the first moon landing when we were able to view Earth from space – "A great leap for mankind" and the birth of environmental movements such as FOE and Greenpeace.

Among the first campaigns was "Bottledrop" which was against the use of non-reusable bottles and aimed primarily at Schweppes. This was closely

followed by “Save the Whale”.

The 1980’s saw an increasing focus on acid rain, using litmus paper turning from blue to red. It was a simple approach avoiding too much detail or too many words.

“Mahogany is Murder” took place outside Harrods, the prestigious West End store. It was a reminder of the fragility of the Amazonian rain forest and the diversity of the populations living within it. The large scale development of motorways was epitomised by “Don’t Let Twyford Down”. The campaign did not stop the building of more motorways, but it encouraged more closer scrutiny at the planning stage. Door-step recycling is now widespread, climate laws were brought in and had good cross party support. Only 4 MPs voted against these laws.

Craig emphasised the importance of the “tools” used when planning campaigns. These are generally more effective if they are smaller. The techniques of persuasion, as used by Greta Thunberg, the 16 year old Swedish environmental activist, are derived from Aristotle and they are: Ethos – Story Telling, Pathos – Emotional Appeal and Logos – The use of Reasoning. These are the techniques of persuasion currently used by FOE.

FOE’s Bee Campaign involved two years of saying how wonderful bees are. It is essential to get people actively involved, committed and on board.

MPs received more letters from the Bee Campaign than any other issue, including health and education.

Currently FOE has four main campaign themes:

1. Climate Chaos
2. Doubling UK tree cover
3. Plastic and the environment
4. Stop fracking

What comes next, what can we do? More Fair Trade deals, Gender Justice, giving more people, particularly women and girls access to education. This has huge benefits and helps to limit the size of families.

Our thanks go to Craig for a stimulating and thought-provoking evening.

**During the second half of the meeting** we covered the following topics:

Sam announced that the next Schools Strike is on the 20<sup>th</sup> September, this time with students calling adults to join them. That same day in the afternoon or evening there will be a rally in Bromley to put pressure on the Council to ensure they actually achieve their pledge of net zero emissions by 2029.

Ann added that Extinction Rebellion are also lobbying the Council with the same end. There had been a big Extinction Rebellion event on Blackheath attracting people of all ages.

Parisa spoke about Greener and Cleaner Bromley, which is an Environmental Community group. They are promoting a project to provide a ‘Green Screen’ to filter the air pollution and emissions

from vehicles on the busy road outside Valley Primary School, where windows open directly on to the street where HGVs are idling and producing toxic emissions, causing great concern regarding the potential damage to young children's lungs and general development. This costs an astronomical amount, so a huge amount of fundraising will be needed and they will look for funding. Bromley Friends of the Earth's Rob Clark is running the Hayes Half Marathon and obtaining sponsorship towards this. Please do contact Rob if you wish to sponsor him.

Annette reported on Plastics. She had investigated plastic usage in Tesco and tried to do her shopping there but was appalled by the huge quantities of plastic packaging. In contrast, at Polhill Garden Centre there is a vast array of fruit and vegetables loose and NOT packed in plastic. Annette also told us about a banana bag she had bought in Lakeland which keeps bananas fresh in the fridge for two weeks. She also reminded us about the Shop Without Plastic in Lee Green.

Judy circulated a sign-up sheet for our World Clean Up Day on 21<sup>st</sup> September. This will take place in Shortlands Village.

Ann reported on the Anti-Fracking Campaign and our campaign stall on 26<sup>th</sup> October, which will promote renewables to give a positive message, as advocated by Craig in his talk. Nothing more had been heard as to whether the planning applications for 4 more wells at Horse Hill had been approved.

On Planning, the 9-storey building on part of The Bell site was not going ahead. The Bell will be open to the public on 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> September as part of Open House weekend, with the original interior available to view. The Bell is also available for functions.

*Regarding the Valley Primary School fund raising sponsored Beckenham Half Marathon, I completed it in 1:53:44, which was ok considering the circumstances.*

*The fundraising will be continuing for a few weeks yet. If you'd like to donate to help reach our £1000 target then please go to [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/robert-clark-valleyschool?utm\\_term=BMjaPYv6Y](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/robert-clark-valleyschool?utm_term=BMjaPYv6Y) (sorry about the link length.) We're up to £836 at the time of printing.*

*Alternatively you could pass money for this cause to Sheila Brown our Treasurer or me, Rob Clark, at a meeting. Ed.*

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## **Looking backwards** Judy Palmer

I came across an old Bromley FoE newsletter article from the 1990s recently which still seems relevant today.

Some of you may remember that Jonathan Porritt was once the Director of Friends of the Earth, and a couple of years or so after he had left the organisation, he gave a talk at the Civic Centre to Bromley teachers. We were invited along, and I was lucky enough to be an attendee, as he is a great speaker!

It wasn't long after the Rio Summit in 1992 and he talked about that, Agenda

21 and Local Agenda 21, which later evolved to become Unitary Development Plans for towns. He focussed on four topics which he thought would affect the world. He urged the teachers to do their best in stressing to the children they taught the importance of the environment, while they were still young.

So, these were the four factors – 1. the possible doubling of the birth rate. 2. The inevitability of demand for consumer goods and raising the standard of living. 3. Our eco-systems coming under more stress with no slowing down in the destruction rate. And 4. How will the planet absorb all the waste gases, which it wasn't coping with then...?

It seems to be taking a few decades for this to sink in doesn't it?

### **To looking forwards**

Back in the summer, I read an interesting article on ways farmers are tackling Climate Change. Agriculture at the moment is responsible for about 9% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions which is mostly from methane. Some farmers are looking at ways to reduce this and there is a growing band of scientists who are developing small battery-powered robots that could cut down tractor use, as they tend to run on diesel.

The machines use artificial intelligence to sow the seeds, identify weeds and apply exact amounts of pesticides and fertilisers in the right places. Maybe we will see more robotic 'precision farming' in our fields instead of the tractor soon.

But also, working alongside a tractor or two, we might see a drone. These are being utilised to help farmers work out exact patterns of moisture, weeds and pests. This is so these areas can be worked on and the rest of the field can be left undisturbed.

Alongside new innovations, some farmers are using more simple low-tech solutions, such as planting more trees. For instance, apple trees are grown alongside wheat. Trees boost carbon storage, help with flooding and prevent soil erosion. And if applied to farming, trees are productive above and below ground, and extend the growing season for the farmer. And it all supports biodiversity – a win-win situation!

The issue of high methane emissions from animals is being tackled within the farming industry. This ranges from new feed additives to help reduce methane production in the animals' guts, to keeping animals outside longer to reduce the amount of soya feed they eat indoors in the winter, to sourcing sustainable, responsibly sourced soya, to using methane to generate electricity and to better breeding and genetics. And yes, eating less red meat can help in reducing emissions. But that really is another story.

### **The Green Thing** Sheila Brown

*This was in our Newsletter a few years ago. I saw it again recently and thought what a powerful message it conveys.*

In the line at the store, the cashier told the older woman that she should bring her own grocery bag because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologized to him and explained,

"We didn't have the **Green Thing** back in my day."

The cashier responded, *"That's our problem today. The former generation did not care enough to save our environment."*

He was right; that generation didn't have the **Green Thing** in its day.

Back then, they returned their milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed, sterilized and refilled so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were reused.

But they didn't have the **Green Thing** back in that customer's day.

In her day, they walked up stairs, because they didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time they had to go two blocks.

But she was right; they didn't have the **Green Thing** in her day.

Back then, they washed the baby's diapers because they didn't have the throw-away kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind

and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing.

But that lady was right; they didn't have the **Green Thing** back in her day.

Back then, they had one TV, or radio, in the house.... not a TV in every room. The TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of the state of Montana. In the kitchen, they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't have electric machines to do everything for them. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, they didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. They used a push mower that ran on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; they didn't have the **Green Thing** back then.

They drank from a fountain when they were thirsty instead of using a paper cup or a plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water. They refilled their writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But they didn't have the **Green Thing** back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus, and kids walked, rode their bikes, or rode the school bus instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. They didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad that the current generation laments how "wasteful" the old folks were just because they didn't have the **Green Thing** back then?

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## **Zero Waste Week 2019** Annette Rose

Three BFoE members have taken part this September and are including their diaries in this newsletter which we hope you will find interesting. The idea was to follow a daily theme on the Zero Waste website and make your own personal journey to reduce your waste. The good thing is it doesn't matter where your starting point is, we can all do a little more. I found it an interesting experience and it has definitely made me more aware of each item I place in the waste stream and consider whether I could have avoided it. Here is my diary and thoughts from each of the 5 days...

### **Day 1**

The challenge on the Zero Waste website was to read at least one article on

how waste contributes to climate change. Here are some facts I discovered- 2.12 billion tonnes of waste are produced by the world every year, most of which goes to landfill. Landfill is one of the top contributors to Climate Change. As waste breaks down, it produces toxic gases and run-off. Methane and leachate - the liquid run off is released from all landfill sites. The biggest contributors are food, clothing and plastic packaging.

I went to Tesco, knowing it was not the best place to try and go waste free, but wanted to look at the problem. I was presented with a sea of wrapped fruit and vegetables. I had taken my netting produce bags and was able to find some plastic free, but my choice was restricted and in some cases more expensive. There were no plastic free cucumbers or mushrooms and only one type of tomato was available. The only plastic in my trolley was plastic covered cheese and wrapping round my bread. (I can recycle bread wrappings in Morrisons, Petts Wood.) When I got home, I used a banana bag to store most of my bananas in the fridge. They will last about 2 weeks this way.

### **Day 2**

The online challenge was to read about food waste and consider how to reduce mine. I learnt that the average household throws away 22% of their weekly shop - £700 a year in the UK. Each day the following is thrown away in the UK: 24 slices of bread, 6 million potatoes and 4 million bananas.

I visited Polhill Garden Centre and was pleased to see an entirely plastic free fruit and vegetable section. Many items were from local farms in Kent. I made pledges to do the following-

Use the freezer more, particularly freeze bread and take out as I need it. Remember to take my own container when buying fish at Morrisons, reorganise my tins cupboard so those with short dates are at the front.

Do better planning of meals so all fresh food will be used up.

### Day 3

The online challenge was to look at the issue of waste clothing. £30 billion worth of unused clothing is in UK wardrobes. Consumers buy 400% more clothing than 20 years ago. Oxfam challenged people to buy no new clothes for the month of September. Charity shops should not be used as dumping grounds so that people can buy more. Some strategies suggested were to, buy from charity shops, have a 'one in' 'one out' policy, to hold swishing parties where clothes are exchanged and mended and reuse items to keep them out of landfill. Organic cotton is better than conventional cotton but producing all fabrics has an environmental cost. I learnt that some of the most sustainable fabrics are hemp, linen, rayon and recycled polyester.

### Day 4

Today I looked at household cleaning. Although 8 out of 10 people recycle kitchen plastic bottles etc. only 4 out of 10 do the same for bathroom items. 30,000 tonnes of recyclable bathroom

waste ends up in landfill every year.

I use bar soaps now which are very economic! I am still using up shampoos I already have before I try out a bar shampoo. I recently changed to a company called Splosh for my household cleaning materials. After initially acquiring the bottles, refills are sent in a concentrated form which you add water to. The plastic pouches they come in can be sent back to be recycled. I also bought some white vinegar which can be used in household cleaning.

### Day 5

Today was a review of the other days and a designated waste free day which I think I achieved other than vegetable peelings for the composting box! I still have a long way to go on my eco journey and it would be good to do a review in a few months time with the other diary keepers and any other BFoE members who are trying to reduce their waste.

## **Zero Waste Week – Diary 2** Sophie Nightingale

Monday 02/09 My boyfriend and I prepared for zero waste week over the weekend by visiting our local plastic free shop (Mission Green in Hither Green) and refilling our jars of cereal, rice and pasta as well as our washing up liquid bottle. We already use soap bars, bamboo toothbrushes and dental tablets which we can also refill from Mission Green. None of these have any packaging!

For lunch I took some leftovers to work in a lunchbox with a refillable water bottle and banana. Unfortunately, there is no council food waste facility at my office, but my boss has a compost heap nearby, so I have been discussing getting a compost caddy into the kitchen for staff to use, which can then be emptied into the compost heap.

Tuesday 03/09 I made some oat milk, which I have been doing for a while but this week forced me to make time for it. It's really easy to make and lasts longer and is much cheaper overall than dairy milk. The oats do come in a cardboard box which is recyclable but I can definitely start refilling these too (at work, the office have milk in glass bottles which get collected and reused).

I worked from home today, so for lunch I had some poached egg and vegetables with fresh bread bought loose from the local cafe. This is more expensive than packaged bread but a nice treat!

In the evening I went to the theatre and chose to drink wine taken from a larger bottle rather than a smaller individual bottle of beer. They served it to me in a glass, but I had prepared by bringing my own reusable cup in case they tried to give me a disposable one!

Wednesday 04/09 I had frozen some vegetarian lasagne last week which I took to work in my lunchbox to reheat there.

I have to confess that I momentarily forgot about zero waste week and took a packet of crisps on offer at the office.

My family and I look after an allotment patch, so this week we had some green beans and courgettes to harvest and take home.

I did a clothes wash - using my home-made laundry detergent to reduce waste and toxic chemicals.

Thursday 05/09 Got a train to Edinburgh today so I had to remember my coffee cup, packed lunch and water bottle which is all second nature to me now.

The train tickets were also thrown away, which I should have had sent to my phone!

Friday 06/09 I'm staying with my sister in Edinburgh. We had lunch in a local cafe and dinner at a restaurant so I'm not sure about the waste impact there! I must try to make more of an effort to find out different restaurants' stance on waste and the environment in general.

Overall I'm quite happy with the habits I'm trying to get into - taking part in Plastic Free July recently definitely kickstarted a lot of them.

My next steps are to learn about the waste policies coming from shops and restaurants, and to be more prepared when it comes to making meals to take to work. I'm also talking about going zero waste to whoever will listen!

**Zero Waste Week—Diary 3** Caroline Mace

It was when I read a quote about two

years ago stating “We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change, and the last generation that can do something about it,” that I had a wake up call and I began to make changes in my lifestyle. Feeling guilty about the previous 35 years of my life, living a life of convenience with my blinkers on, I set about focusing on plastic. I began purchasing items with no or less packaging and embraced the Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rot & Recycle mantra.

The R’s (however many you include in your mantra – the list seems to keep growing!) can help us as individuals reduce our carbon footprint. However, I find the term Zero waste off-putting and distracting. It puts a lot of pressure on us consumers mentally and it causes a distraction from looking at the bigger picture. I much prefer the idea of ‘Considered Choices.’

Of course packaging is a consideration and I do my best to add as little as possible to my general waste bin, but this is not the only factor I attribute to the

waste I am creating; the amount of energy and water required to grow, create and transport the item to my house are higher on my priority list. I am also passionate about soil health, choosing ethical companies and reducing food waste.

This is my diary for Zero Waste Week, where I have recorded my purchases and explained some of the solutions I have found to reduce waste, and most importantly my carbon footprint.

My week began with my weekly Abel & Cole delivery which included our fresh produce for that week. The delivery arrives in cardboard boxes which I send back to be reused, along with any paper or plastic trays that some of the fruit and vegetables come in. Whilst not completely packaging free, it’s a far cry better than the

supermarket. Eight of my fruit and vegetables are placed directly in the box, whilst the remaining six come in trays which I will return to be reused, or paper bags which I will compost. The meat, fish and cheese all come in plas-



tic packaging, which of course is a drawback of ordering for home delivery and not visiting a butchers or cheese counter. The oat milk, hazelnut milk and almond milk come in a tetra pack, which will go into the plastics recycling bin. I love Abel & Cole's ethics; the produce is seasonal, organic and their sustainable farming methods are very important to me.

We are also currently growing peppers, tomatoes and chillies (which are great to freeze and use all year round) in our greenhouse.

Twice a week we have milk delivered from Milk & More, which comes in a glass bottle, and is returned to be re-used.

I stocked up on dried goods and cleaning fluids from the refill shop called SWOPmarket (in Lee Green). My purchases were all decanted into my own containers, and included pasta, porridge oats, rice, dried fruit, nuts, spices, cooking oils, body wash, hand soap, rinse aid, white vinegar & bicarbonate of soda for cleaning (which I mix together with citric acid to make my own cleaning solution). I also purchased Eco leaf dishwasher tablets in a cardboard box, and Eco Leaf toilet paper which come in a compostable wrap, which I will use as a caddy liner and put into my compost bin.

My daughter needed a new school cardigan, which I was able to purchase from the wonderful parent who runs our school reusable uniform scheme. This will accompany the other hand me downs I have acquired from friends with older children.



I love cooking from scratch and often make my own bread, sauces, soups, cookies, preserves, smoothies, juices and curries. With the return to school I



decided to expand my repertoire and this week I made my own almond milk, yoghurt, lemon curd, mayonnaise and hummus!

The next tasks on my to do list are to grow more of our own fruit and vegeta-

bles, avoid fast fashion and purchase even more items second-hand.

It's hard to regard one individual's actions as anything significant in the grand scheme of the situation our planet is dealing with, but I know one thing is for sure – I would rather be part of the solution than exacerbate the problem. We are all accountable, and should take responsibility for the effect of our actions on our beautiful world.

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### **Shops with zero packaging** Peter Gandolfi

These were mentioned at a recent monthly meeting. Apart from the standard corner shops of my youth, I remember one in Bromley in the 1970s. This was very useful to us at the time as we were becoming vegetarian and it sold a wide range of pulses etc.

The only one I could find on the internet in South London was Shop WithOut Packaging (SWOP) Lee, 7 Burnt Ash Lane. As I was visiting in the area I went in search of it. It's a small shop in size, but sells a wide range of organic, natural food and household products without packaging. You bring your own containers, weigh and then pay for only the goodies that you've bought.

The walls are covered with dozens of containers full of bulk products so that one can easily dispense the amount you want. They also had a good range of eco cleaning products.

The range was very good with 12 types

of rice, 12 flours, about 20 beans and pulses.

All produce is vegetarian or vegan and local, organic or fairtrade where possible.

Prices seem to compare favourably with Sainsbury's which is on the other side of the road.

I will visit it again when next in the area, and, I wish it was nearer to us.

Look it up on the internet!

*Thanks for the review Peter, similar are always welcome. There is another waste free store 'locally' at Crystal Palace Food Market, Haynes Lane SE19 3AN. It looks very good from their facebook page (The Store Cupboard.) If anyone knows of this shop, then can you tell us what you think please? Ed*

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## **Climate, Energy and Transport**

### **Severe Climate Threat**

A new report by the Global Commission on Adaptation has stated that 'the Earth is careering towards climate change so severe that there will be an irrefutable toll on human life'.

The report involving 18 countries, including Britain, called for investments of £1.46 trillion to deal with the situation. It said this would help people, many the poorest in the world, to cope with extreme weather, rising sea levels and higher temperatures.

It also said that a 'revolution' in understanding, planning and finance was

urgently needed before the COP26 Climate Talks in December 2020.

Meanwhile, it will be interesting to see the outcome of the UN Climate Action Summit in New York - planned for Sept 23rd. This comes after a summer of seeing the Amazon on fire, and Hurricane Dorian leading to the immense loss of life and homes in the Bahamas. While writing this, the news is reporting serious flash flooding in Spain.

## **Wetland Site and Nuclear Reactor Plan**

Campaigners in Suffolk are concerned that plans to build a new reactor at Sizewell will threaten wildlife on a local 2,500 acre wetlands site. This will be due to an increase in traffic while the reactor is being built, and also the digging of three 120ft-deep 'borrow pits' for spoil, covering about 50 acres each on what is currently idyllic countryside.

## **Fracking Earthquakes**

On August 22nd, fracking at the only active UK site was halted. Shale gas extraction at Cuadrilla's Preston New Road site was interrupted after it was hit by a tremor measuring 1.6 magnitude on the Richter scale, according to the British Geographical Survey. All operations were paused to allow for 18 hours of monitoring.

A Cuadrilla spokesperson down - played the incident, but anti-fracking campaigners said that residents in Lancashire do not want earthquakes to be-

come a part of daily life.

## **Climate Change Publicity** from Bromley and Chislehurst MP Bob Neill

A local press report from Bob Neill emphasises the fact that tackling Climate Change transcends age, background and politics.

It means working at an international level. He said that the UK is decarbonising its economy faster than any other G20 nation, cutting emissions by 29% in the past decade alone, and seeing increased renewable electricity. Bob does say, however, that we can't afford to be complacent.

## **Transport**

A letter in a daily free paper has challenged the fact that electric cars may not be the easy answer to air pollution, since millions of spent battery packs will lead to increased toxicity. The batteries, full of heavy metals, will have to be disposed of. If care isn't taken, they could be shipped to other countries, keen to make profits, and buried in landfill sites, where they will leak and contaminate water supplies.

There is no easy answer, except that rigorous legislation will have to be instated to prevent this happening.

## **Water companies pledge to plant more trees**

It was announced back in the summer that water companies will plant 11 mil-

lion trees to improve the natural environment and achieve their goal of a carbon-neutral water industry by 2030. They will be planted on around 6,000 hectares of land across England and the water industry will be working alongside other partners such as the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and the RSPB.

Local councils and regional NGOs will also be involved in urban areas, and the Woodland Trust has agreed to work with the water companies to help identify sites and help manage the developed planting programme. The scheme also includes hedgerows and grasslands which in turn will help provide corridors for nature, ensuring many different habitats are connected.

Guy Shrubsole a campaigner from Friends of the Earth, supports this campaign, and also urges other large landholders to reintroduce trees on their land, as doubling the UK's tree cover is crucial in the fight against climate breakdown.

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## **Miller's Mutterings Double Bill**

Chris Miller

### **August**

It did rain on St Anne's day, 26th July, so let us hope that this particular folklore doesn't come true. Lammas day, 1<sup>st</sup> August, is supposed to be when we start cutting the wheat: well that hasn't happened. The weather patterns are completely different from those days, as are farming methods and we seem to have all the rain in a few days and

then completely dry days instead of scattered showers.

We made a little hay at the beginning of July which was beautiful. We managed to cut this at the right time when the weather was perfect and not too hot to bleach it. There was just enough green left in the stalks to make it look great and it had a lovely sweet smell.

We cut the winter barley very early this year on the 15th and 16th July and it was loaded onto a boat at Sheerness by the end of the week. Great cutting and baling conditions. All things considered, this was not a bad crop despite the dry April and early May. The bushel weight was very variable due to the different soils, as we mentioned last month, but the moisture readings were fine. Half of the straw from this crop is already in Devon.

The winter wheat should be ready by the middle of August. The very heavy downpours haven't yet damaged the crop, so fingers crossed. One of the varieties of wheat that we grew in the past has a problem with sprouting in the ear if it rains when it is ready to be cut: one of the reasons we stopped growing it but it is very widely grown. This is one of the things that we look for when attending the wheat growing trials. Like a lot of farming, you gamble on the weather.

Some varieties are great croppers if the weather is good but rubbish if not. We always measure the rainfall but from May to harvest the amounts help to calculate the risk from mycotoxins. Mycotoxin is a mould that can be present

in the grain if the conditions pre-harvest are wet, so we have to give a score on each load that leaves the farm. The grain is then tested at the grain store for any presence. The oats are starting to ripen and a few small patches have been knocked down, one of the problems with oats. We anticipate cutting this by the end of August.

Anyone seen a gate? One was taken from the field we call the Cricket Meadow, (where the village used to play cricket hence the field name) between the pub and Court Road, so we have put a piece of machinery there for the time being to stop vehicles entering the field.

We saw a very large flock of swifts towards the end of July, weaving round and round over the barns in the early evening, very unusual, but after speaking to Peter Gandolfi he wondered if they were gathering to leave. Sad but true I think. The swallows are delighting us, though, and as in photos, line up on the telephone wires chattering away. Weather lore is a bit sparse for this month, perhaps because not a lot rhymes with August, but here is a saying about storms:

*Beware the oak, it draws the stroke,*

*Avoid the ash, it draws a flash*

*But under the thorn, you'll come to no harm.*

*Steve and Chris Miller Court Lodge Farm*

## **September**

I am writing this at the end of August during a breakdown on the combine. So frustrating. August has proved to be a

challenging month, weather wise, as you know. We managed to make a start on the wheat at the beginning of the month but then the rain and wind put a stop to it. That very strong wind we had on the 10<sup>th</sup> August did some damage to the oats, knocking some of them flat which will make combining difficult. Some of the oats have started to re-grow where it has touched the ground so that will be no good.

We could only sit and watch the rain which was frustrating, as you can imagine, but nothing we haven't seen before or will probably see again. We restarted on Wednesday 21st August and all was going well until Saturday afternoon when a small component gave up on the combine and hot burning oil was spewing everywhere. I contacted our local dealer in Detling but was unable to purchase a new part. We had to order it from Germany and unfortunately although Peter ordered it then, when he went down to collect on the Tuesday, it hadn't arrived. Apparently, someone had forgotten to do it. All being well, Peter will collect it and then we can repair the machine and get on with the job. Fortunately, the weather looks good for the coming week but we will report in October the outcome of the harvest.

The lorries have been trundling in to collect the grain and the quality is reasonable for the sort of weather we have had. The rain had washed some of the protein out and some of the hagerberg readings were a bit low on some loads, but as I said, I will report further once we have finished.

People do ask us why we have our own combine harvester, especially as it is only used for a few weeks of the year, but times like this prove its worth. We can just go out and cut when we know the crop is ready and at its optimum time. If we had to wait for a contractor to come when he was free, the crop could be past its best.

We have plenty of damsons and blackberries in the hedgerows this year so I must find time to collect some. You can't beat an apple and blackberry pie!

On a walk recently, I saw loads of Oak knopper galls which mainly grow on the pedunculate oak apparently. I have mentioned these in the past but I find them so interesting and always forget what they are called. I read that there are around 70 different gall wasps in Britain, the knopper wasps only arrived here in the 1950s, but they cause no long term ill effects to oak trees. The knopper gall is initially yellowish green and sticky but later becomes greyish brown and apparently you can make ink from the galls!

Weather sayings for September are a little different, plants and animals are sometimes used such as when the petals begin to close on a scarlet pimpernel, rain is in the offing and when wide open, fine weather is set to continue. I love this one about a cricket:

A member of the grasshopper family, easily recognisable by its long antennae, chirps at night when rain is on the way.

## Cudham Fete

Cudham Village Fete on August Bank Holiday Monday is a very popular village occasion and as well as a variety of stalls, has arena events culminating in a Tug-of-War and an amazing show with classes for huge or wonky veg, fruit, flowers, cakes, produce and children's craft work, all of which is displayed in the church. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year we have had a stall there.

We have games which draw in children – one where a small prize is hidden under an inverted half egg shell, and our ever popular fishing for ducks, using a children's paddling pool with water. While the children are thus occupied, we engage the adults in conversation about environmental matters and



invite them to sign campaign postcards or pledges. This year it was pledges of ways to reduce people's plastic usage, 30 of which were written on little triangular 'flags' which became bunting with pledges such as: I will remember my reusable cup; Never buy a plastic bag; I won't use clingfilm; Use beeswax food wraps; No plastic bottles for water.

We were disappointed that at the main catering area teas and coffees were being served in polystyrene cups and have mentioned this to the organ-



isers, who say they will be more environmental next year. We'll try and work with them on this. This was our FoE waste bin!

### **Bonnington Square** Sheila Brown

Walk five minutes from Vauxhall Underground Station, and after crossing

two busy roads, turn off, leaving behind the traffic and the noise and you will find yourself in a totally different world – the green oasis which is Bonnington Square. A group of us visited in August. On arrival, we were welcomed by Otis who was to be our guide, and first had tea and coffee sitting outside the extremely busy Italo Delicatessen café, where all the tables were taken by people enjoying a leisurely breakfast. A strong sense of community was very apparent.

The garden in the middle of the square was locked. Otis led us away from the square to some of the surrounding streets, talking about the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens which, from the mid-1600s to 1800s had been extremely popular and lively and covered a huge area. He pointed out the British Interplanetary Society's building; this organisation promotes astronautics and space exploration. Arthur C Clarke was once its chairman.

Bonnington Square, as it is today, stems from the time in the 1980s when it was proposed to demolish redundant railway cottages. There was a huge protest. Squatters moved in and took over lots of the houses, many in an extremely derelict condition. The squatters banded together, formed housing co-operatives and successfully negotiated the right to lease the buildings. They established a volunteer-run café and a community garden. The squatters started planting trees to make the space as green as possible and thirty years, on this has resulted in amazing, and in some places almost tropical, tree

cover, resulting in a magical green haven. There is a very apparent sense of pride in the buildings today, with many having beautiful plants outside. From the square, one can go through a non-descript looking passageway between houses, which leads to a 'secret garden' area, available for everyone's use. This and the garden in the centre of the square are both used by the community for festivals, concerts, plays and community events. The whole surrounding area is now very well cared for; nowadays the houses are mainly owned by housing co-operatives or housing associations, with some private ownership.

Otis was a charming, lively and very amusing guide, and a really good time was had by all. He led us back to the café which, 'Tardis-like', proved to have a large dining room downstairs where we sat around a huge table and enjoyed an excellent lunch, good conversation and further entertaining engagement with Otis. Thanks to John and Sue for organising this highly enjoyable and memorable outing.

## **Bamboo Cups**

Bamboo products are suddenly everywhere, being offered as the environmental alternative to plastic. However, sadly this may not always be the case. A German consumer group, Stiftung Warentest, investigated these cups and concluded that there is a danger of harmful chemicals being released into hot drinks. The bamboo used in the cups is a powder of finely-ground bamboo fibres which then are glued together using melamine resin, a plasticky glue

made from formaldehyde and melamine. Apparently, when the cups are used repeatedly for hot drinks, they start releasing formaldehyde into the liquids. And whatever you do, don't put these cups in the microwave as, when heated to high temperatures, the cup's material will begin to decompose as the cup's surface is destroyed and greater quantities of the chemicals will be released. Also these cups are not biodegradable.

Having bought bamboo cups at the Eden Project at Easter, I emailed them outlining the concerns I'd read about and asking them about their manufacturing and testing process. I received an almost immediate emailed response. They say their cups contain the minimum amount of melamine in order to bind the bamboo fibre and cornstarch (around 20%). The melamine they use is BPA-free and non-toxic. They say they are "absolutely safe and suitable for hot drinks, even though we do not recommend using them in the microwave."

They are currently designing a bamboo cup which uses a plant-based binding agent instead, where the whole product is 100% biodegradable, which if successful will be available in the future.

Full marks to the Eden Project.

## **A Thought** Sheila Brown

If all the adults in England and Wales turned off the tap when brushing their teeth, we could save 180 million litres

of water a day. That's over 83 million gallons! Are you doing your bit?

## Loss of Local Footpaths Rob Clark

I've run and walked all over Hayes Farm and Common ever since I moved here in 2003. Apparently the land has been available for all to stroll on for many years past. Recently, a planning application to develop the farm buildings into luxury houses was won in the courts, despite local opposition. Since then the landowners have been flexing their muscles by putting new gates up and barbed wire over previously heavily used footpaths. This has caused uproar from locals especially those who regularly walk their dogs over this land.

A facebook page has been set up with a view to registering some of the paths across the farm, the common and into Barnet Wood. If you would be interested in this, especially if you have walked some of these paths in the past, then please take a look at the **Lostways 2026** facebook group. They need all the support they can get.

## Bromley Climate Strike

Just before publication, we were able to attend the Bromley Climate Strike event on 20th September organised by Sam Gee.

The turnout was great and many speakers on the Climate Change crisis, most of whom were of the younger generation. A terrific event and very inspiring, following on from Greta Thunberg's demonstration in the US and many others around the world on the same day.

We all got good news coverage and turned heads in Bromley High Street. Here are a few of the many pictures taken supplied by Bethan Clark.



## **The Future of the Bromley Friends of the Earth Newsletter**

We are all very fond of our newsletters and continue to see them as a very important part of our group. But we would like to consider other options for environmental reasons. We would like to ask our membership their views on the frequency of our newsletter.

At present, the newsletter is posted out to you 12 times a year, with an option for members to receive it by email only. A way forward could be to reduce the frequency of the posted newsletter to 4 times a year, but to provide an email newsletter sent out by our admin team on the other 8 months. (We could also ask more of our members to choose the email only version.) For members who do not have email, we could provide a few printed copies at monthly meetings.

Please could you let us know your views and if you have any other suggestions to reduce our environmental impact? Please send your comments to [www.bromleyfoe.co.uk](http://www.bromleyfoe.co.uk) or let us know at our monthly meetings.

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### **Anti Fracking:**

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### **Plastics:**

Annette Rose, Judy Palmer, Sheila Brown  
& Viv Gardner

### **Climate:**

Ann Garrett (acting) Bill Priestley & Vacancy

## Reuse

If you have any items that you no longer need and that could be of use to someone then please let us know and we will publish them in the Newsletter. Alternatively, you could bring them along to our monthly meeting and put them on the table in reception . Any donations to BFoE from sales will be greatly appreciated.

## Non-members Section

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth (BFoE) then hello to you. 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 or Ann Garrett (their details are inside the back page of this newsletter.) Alternatively you can come along to one of our 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, on the right going down. If you would like to join us then please fill in and send us the form below.

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## Membership Application/Renewal\* Form (\*delete as appropriate)

I would like to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my annual subscription (£8 single/£15 couple/family.) I also enclose a donation (optional) of ..... to help towards the work of our local group.

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code: .....

Email address: .....

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

.....

Please return this form to: Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent BR6 7RN. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or contact one of our co-ordinators via their details inside.