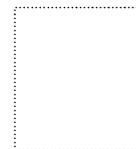




September 2013 No. 309 Newsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
email: r.watson865@btinternet.com website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk



September Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Say NO to Fracking

Darren Ollerton

from the Balcombe Anti-Fracking Group

Tuesday 3rd September - 7.30pm

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER *****

Contact details inside front cover.

In this Issue:

Diary Dates	2	Basecamp experiences	9
Bee Buzzzz	2	Westmoreland Road	10
Find a Friend	2	Blog - Narrowboating	11
August mtg report	3,5	London to Brighton	12
Drilling concerns	4,5	Burghfield protest	12
FoE on Fracking	5	Blog – End arms trade	13
Campaigns info	6,10	Blog – Colombia	14
Make It Better	7	Bromley FoE Contacts	15
Basecamp letter	8,10	Non-members section	16

Bromley FoE are concerned about drilling, too – see page 4

Diary dates:

Sept 3rd (Tue)	Bromley FoE's September meeting Darren Ollerton, Balcombe Anti-Fracking Group
Sept 4th (Wed)	Public meeting organised by Bromley Arts and Community Initiative (Save the Royal Bell), Bromley Civic Centre, 7pm
Oct 1st (Tues)	Bromley FoE's September meeting

BEE BUZZZZZ, by *Judy Palmer*

The bees and other pollinators will still be foraging for nectar into September, so here is a small list of plants which supply this for them:

Anemone **Aster** Betony **Cornflower** Bramble **Heathers** Ivy **Rudbeckia**
Privet **Sea Holly** Snapdragons **Teasel** Tansy **Mahonia** Winter flowering honeysuckles

Don't forget that trees play an important role in their survival too, and that young fertile female bumblebees will be seeking nooks and crannies in your garden to use for hibernation.

Find a Friend!

As part of a wider recruitment drive there is an 'invitation' included in this newsletter which we would love you to put to use!

Our group always welcomes new members to our monthly meetings and we would like to try and persuade our established members to bring a new 'Friend' along to a meeting. So if you have a friend you think would like to join us this month, or next, please would you hand the enclosed invitation to them?

Thank you, and we hope to see you both soon!

Disclaimer: *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth nor 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 15TH SEPTEMBER** ***.

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

August meeting report: double bill – Ray Watson

This was a meeting that hit all the right notes – a double bill of guitar and singing entertainment from a talented green campaigner, plus a strong dose of FoE's success in the battle of the bees with the government.

Musician and composer Jess Gold – who is also a member of the FoE national board and an active FoE campaigner in north London -- told how she recognised that green information could be incorporated into song lyrics to encourage children to learn the environmental message.

Over five years she has put together a collection of songs for children, played with animated film and music that explain subjects like the effects of climate change, how plants die and turn into fossil fuels like unwelcome coal deposits etc. When she takes multi-media show into schools she has the pupils sing along with her – a sort of karaoke session which the children much enjoy while learning the green story.

Jess said she also composed eco songs for adults. She sang and played her guitar – and soon had the group singing along with her. Subjects she put to music included punchy, hard-hitting lyrics about eating less meat and using public transport instead of the car.

Jess has an album of her songs coming out in the next few weeks in good time for a trip to America where she has been invited to tour. She can be contacted at jess@projectearthrock.com

Bees – the inside story

As a contrast from using music and film as a method of campaigning, we heard from national FoE senior campaigner Paul de Zylva on how he devised the hugely successful drive to persuade the Government to adopt a strategy to save the endangered bee population – the National Bee Action Plan.

Planning began 18 months ago with the objective of educating a wide variety influential people -- from MPs and farmers to pesticide manufacturing companies and scientists – to convince them of the dangers and cost of losing natural pollinators, estimated to be £1.8bn. The aim was to have the Government set up a mechanism to investigate the reasons for the decline in the bee population, whether it was due to pesticides, lack of bee-friendly wild flowers, viral infection or changes in agricultural methods leading to a drop in habitat to sustain bees.

Paul organised a number of high-profile events to ensure plenty of publicity, including visits to Wimbledon to demonstrate the effect of bee problems on strawberry growing, to Hampton Court flower show and Chelsea horticultural show where staff dressed in bee costumes.

Meanwhile, scores of FoE groups such as Bromley campaigned in high streets and at events throughout the country, getting the public to sign cards that were sent to the Prime Minister.

/continued on page 5

Bromley FoE and Drilling concerns

It would seem that it will not be long before Bromley gets caught up in the furore over drilling and fracking to release shale gas. Several licences have been granted in Kent and Sussex and the southern part of Bromley borough has been mentioned as an area likely to have rocks favourable to yielding the gas.

Residents and other groups are organising themselves to oppose licence applications because of fears of groundwater contamination, noise, additional traffic etc. Indeed, FoE assisted residents at Balcombe, Sussex, where there were confrontations with police and the drilling company's security staff.

Bromley FoE has met with FoE groups in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Croydon to co-ordinate their knowledge and to understand the issues and potential dangers caused by drilling and fracking. Much to residents' surprise some licences have already been granted with little or no publicity in areas close to our borough. To ensure that licences are not granted without consultation, Bromley FoE is seeking detailed information from Bromley Council, including the need for public consultation. (See Letter to Council below).

Bromley FoE member Graham Hemington wrote to Orpington MP Jo Johnson seeking his view on how licence applications should be handled. The MP replied: 'It is important to have an effective, locally-led system in place. Ministers have already made it clear that responsibility for onshore oil and gas planning

applications, including for the exploration of shale gas applications, will be with local authorities'. As regards safety and pollution concerns, Mr Johnson said various Ministries will address such problems.

Council view sought

Bromley Council may soon be faced with requests for shale gas drilling licences. What procedure will they adopt? This is what we wrote to Cllr Colin Smith, the council's portfolio holder for the environment:

Information requested from Cllr Colin Smith, cabinet member for the environment, by Bromley Friends of the Earth re gas/oil drilling and fracking

Bromley Friends of the Earth notes the rapid growth in the number of gas drilling licences being granted in areas close to the borough and would appreciate information from the council relating to its policies and the licence/planning process. (We are aware that further guidelines are to be issued by the Government in due course).

- Is the council in favour of local authorities being responsible for judging oil and gas drilling licences and planning applications? (We note that Jo Johnson MP is on record as favouring this policy).
- Will the council call on the Government to ensure that a period of public consultation is available as part of the planning process?

/continued on next page

August report, *continued*, ++ more on Fracking concerns

August meeting report, *continued*

Paul also invited celebrities and others to a breakfast demonstrating that only dry toast and tea would be available if bees vanished.

By January this year 125 MPs of all parties had signed up in support of the FoE demand, a figure that is now over 220, a third of the House of Commons.

But the big news broke in June. At a bee summit of 100 different organisations called by Paul, the Government announced that it recognised the danger and would set up the national bee strategy. It was a victory for classic campaigning.

However, the story does not end there. Supporters of the strategy are meeting to ensure that the Government puts together a group who can carry the strategy forward and that it is not left on a dusty Whitehall shelf. The challenge, said Paul is to keep the issue live. It would, he said, be known as The People's Bee Strategy because it was the people who showed the way for the Government to act.

Bromley FoE and Drilling concerns, *continued*

- Is the council in favour of an appeal process being available to both applicants and interested parties such as residents' groups?
- Will the council oppose the granting of drilling licences in Green Belt and conservation areas?

- In considering applications for licences/planning permissions will the council take into account the impact of drilling, transport movements etc on the Government's requirement to reach its legally-binding carbon emissions targets?

The question of drilling / fracking is a matter of considerable concern to Bromley residents and your views on the above questions would be much appreciated.

FoE press release on fracking - Full shale production at Balcombe unlikely after local opposition

Commenting on reports that Cuadrilla has said its exploration site at Balcombe in West Sussex is "unlikely" to become a full production location in the future, Friends of the Earth's Head of Campaigns Andrew Pendleton said:

"Cuadrilla's rhetoric is shifting fast in the face of overwhelming local opposition." Communities don't want to see their quality of life and local environment threatened by fracking, and are rightly sceptical about claims it will lead to cheaper fuel bills.

"The Government should pull the plug on fracking and create an energy policy that generates jobs and tackles climate change by developing Britain's massive renewable energy potential."

Campaigns, Climate and Energy – Ann Garrett

Campaigning

There will be a Bromley Street stall in the Mall Precinct on Saturday October 19th from 2.30 - 4.30 pm. This will focus on the Bee and Make it Better Campaigns and also will continue to hopefully recruit new members. Clean British Energy is still on the FoE website as well as a new International Climate campaign.

Climate and Energy

Balcombe Against Fracking

The vast majority of Balcombe residents support protesters trying to halt oil and gas drilling in their area, a survey has confirmed. 85% oppose Cuadrilla's fracking exploration. The residents' campaign group No Fracking in Balcombe Society (No FIBS) spent six weeks speaking to every household in the village.

Over 800 people responded to the Environment Agency's consultation, and signed petitions opposing the process. They were supported by the local Parish Council. Kate Dunne, their spokesperson, said: "They have explored all democratic processes of expressing their views and feel that the fracking industry is being forced upon them."

They have lost faith in local and national democracy and taken matters into their own hands by mounting a spirited and inventive barricade at the entrance to the site. Their numbers have been boosted by people from other communities threatened with fracking. Tensions have risen though as Cuadrilla successfully began drilling a 3,000 ft oil well.

Nuclear clean -up and running challenges

The Government is likely to take back responsibility for the clean-up of nuclear waste at Sellafield, due to a string of failures by a private US, French and British consortium of engineers. They are alarmed by spiralling cost of over £70 billion and a series of delays to crucial projects. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has drafted a team of consultants to review how Sellafield is run.

Their search for a private sector group to decommission 12 other nuclear power stations including Wylfa in Anglesey and Suffolk's Sizewell A is also in trouble due to the bidders' poor track records.

Meanwhile, the Government has other challenges at Hinckley Point in Somerset. They want EDF to take over the running of the plant and will offer them huge subsidies to do so.

FoE are urging ministers to look at alternatives which could deliver clean and cheap electricity sooner than new nuclear power stations.

Climate Change and the school curriculum

An article in the new 'Transition' magazine reports concerns about the fact that sustainability and climate change are nowhere to be found in the Geography curriculum, at least not up the age of 15. It was hoped that 'stewarding of resources' as one of the key aims in the draft national curriculum, would be included.

/final para on page 10

FoE's Make It Better campaign

This is the recent update from the Make it Better Team. Please go to the FoE website to sign the two online emails to the Minister for company law and Business Minister Jo Swinson MP.



You've convinced the majority of the mobile phone industry to hold its hands up and admit that its products aren't perfect. You've spurred billion dollar businesses into action.

It's great news for the people and environment of Bangka Island.

And it puts us in an amazing position to persuade politicians to do their bit too. They can make laws to prevent disasters like Bangka happening.

So let's build on our success right away. Ask the Minister for company law to help stop another scandal like Bangka.

Repeatedly, the phone companies I spoke to said they didn't know about the suffering on Bangka - or the links to their products - until we told them. **The recent horsemeat scandal proved how giant companies often don't know exactly what goes into the stuff they sell.**

A new Europe-wide law could spell the end for this era of ignorance. But as it stands the law has some big loopholes that need closing.

Please ask Jo Swinson to close the loopholes As Business Minister, Jo Swinson MP has the chance to stop scandals like smartphone tin slipping through the net.

And you have the power to persuade her. You've done it with Samsung. You've done it with Nokia. And you can do it again.

Also from the FoE Make It Better website page

Tell Apple to get its act together Samsung lead the push to make mobiles better.

Thousands of people have forced Samsung to confirm it uses tin from Bangka Island, Indonesia - where tin mining is destroying tropical forests, coral reefs and livelihoods.

Our supporters have also secured a public commitment from the world's biggest-selling smartphone brand to find an industry-wide solution to end the damage.

But Samsung's fiercest rival, Apple, has refused to answer its own customers' questions about Bangka - even though Apple almost certainly uses the island's tin. Apple is already playing catch-up on the high street. Your messages can force it to play catch up on Bangka too.

Letter to FoE members from Neil Kingsnorth, Head of Activism, following Basecamp

It's not that long since I got back from our first ever Friends of the Earth **Basecamp** and I wanted to write to every local group in the country to tell you a little about it.

Basecamp is our new annual Friends of the Earth national gathering - one of a few things we're now doing that replace our old conference. It's got a lot of the best of what we had in the conference but it's very different too. We sold out, bringing together around 300 people from our groups network, other environmental networks, supporters of Friends of the Earth that want to start to do a bit more and staff and board members. But this is just the start - we want to build it.

This year we gathered together in stunning surroundings and a beautiful venue in the Peak District, with wonderful weather too, and took part in over 100 different activities throughout the weekend.

A massive number of sessions to discuss campaigns and environmental issues of the day were spread across the weekend, run by staff, external experts and members of the network. Looking back over the programme now, there was so much on it's hard to even give a taste of the breadth of choices and issues on offer. Even so, I had a few highlights.

I'm confident I wasn't the only one knocked for six by the eloquence, passion and sheer facts George Monbiot fired at us in his speech on the potential for a massive European rewilding project.

You could have heard a pin drop. Elias Diaz Pena – a gentle but hugely inspiring man - came to us all the way Friends of the Earth Paraguay to tell us from the front line the effects of soy plantations in his country and also to reflect on the same threats from fracking that we face here. And as ever, I was there for the Earthmover Awards - our annual awards for grassroots activism.

I made a great session focused on introducing local campaigning led by experienced local campaigners from the groups network and I made it to a couple of sessions that Young Friends of the Earth and the Youth and Education networks hosted in their own dedicated Yurt all weekend. Like everyone, I had to find my way around a programme that was too full of temptations so I had to pass up on a few great sounding sessions too.

But Basecamp was very much about the heart as well as the head and accompanying all of that were an array of things that stirred the heart and let us all get our hands dirty. We had music, a craft area, a guided walk, star-gazing, early-morning gardening, a sketching session, open mic and a bonfire to name a few.

A particular highlight for me was the children's area, run by professionals, entertaining children from 2 years upwards with games and crafts every day. We'll be doing that again next year so I hope many more people will bring their children and all the wonderful chaos that comes with them.

/continued on page 10

Basecamp: my first experience of Friends of the Earth,
Jannat Hossain, from the FoE website, www.foe.co.uk

As a passionate environmentalist, university graduate Jannat Hossain has been following the work of Friends of the Earth for several years but has never really had the chance to get involved - until now. Here she blogs on her first experience of Friends of the Earth's annual gathering for environmental activists and on her ambitions for Young Friends of the Earth.

I was fortunate enough to win tickets through Friends of the Earth's *Get Gobby* competition. My friend and I came up with the idea of 'Meat Free May' as a way of persuading people to eat less meat - people get sponsored for cutting out meat from their diets during May, and the money raised goes to Friends of the Earth's future food campaigns.

By the time we got to Basecamp we were fired up and ready to learn about issues we were both super-enthusiastic about. As recent graduates we were also looking forward to learning in a non-academic environment.

The first session I attended was 'Intro to local campaigning'. I was surprised to find out that a lot of the work Friends of the Earth does is actually directly from the grassroots up. I thought this was absolutely brilliant as I know from working with community organising groups that this type of campaigning can be very effective whilst at the same time bringing communities together.

I really enjoyed speaking about 'Meat Free May' at the low-carbon cook-off and it was inspiring hearing about other people's food-related stories. It was great to see so many people engaged with the issue of the impact of food production on our natural environment. Hopefully, Young Friends of the Earth will pilot Meat Free May next year so watch this space!

The session on incorporating diversity into the environmental movement was especially eye-opening and it was great to hear about other people's stories on encouraging people from minority groups to actively get involved in our fight against climate change.

I hadn't even heard of Young Friends of the Earth until I actually got to Basecamp; by the time I was leaving I had not only decided to run for a position on the Steering Group but I was excitedly telling anyone that would listen about my ideas for the group.

Whilst at university, I campaigned for better environmental practices across the institution and had some big wins. Having put that chapter of my life behind, I'm now incredibly excited to campaign locally and nationally with all the wonderful people at Friends of the Earth. See you all at Basecamp 2014!

High-rise development opposed in Bromley

Bromley FoE has objected to an application by developers to build a high-rise block at 1 Westmoreland Road in central Bromley. Part of the block would be 11 storeys and the rest three storeys. There would be 71 residential units plus office space. This is what we wrote to the council:

Bromley Friends of the Earth requests that you register our objection to the above application for development at 1 Westmoreland Road.

This is an important site at the heart of the borough and great care should be taken to protect nearby St Mark's School building and the church tower. While changes have been made to the original application, the proposed building would still dominate the site and intrude on the protected view of Keston Ridge from the High St.

Further, the development would increase traffic flows in an already busy area. This, in turn, would create further air and noise pollution at a time when the Government is attempting to reach its statutory climate change targets.

Neil Kingsnorth's letter re Basecamp, *continued*

Over 100 people camped at what became a vibrant and colourful campsite. But many more stayed in small, comfortable dormitories of a few people each in the hostel itself and still others chose the B&B option we arranged.

By now, you can probably tell I enjoyed it. It was a fresh, vibrant event buzzing with great people, ideas and energy. It was a lot of fun but importantly it was also a great way of building and planning for our future work together as a network and a movement. If you came along, thank you for making it so.

Because the event's so much to do with working together, we worked together to make it happen too. A working group of group members, staff and others generated ideas, planned the event and helped run it too. **If you'd like the experience of joining a wide team to help to help shape next year's Basecamp, please let me know.** I'm at neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk.

Next year we'll be in Castleton, also in the Peak District, from 13th-15th June. We'll be in touch about it later in the year but feel free to pencil it in right now. I very much hope you'll join us there.

Climate Change – *final para*

When challenged, Michael Gove, Minister for Education, apparently regarded climate change as 'a social ill' on a par with gun crime and obesity!

Blog 1 - Narrowboating: my eco-friendly summer holiday

Katya Johnson (from www.foe.co.uk)

Narrowboat holidays offer the perfect excuse for an out-of-city break, plus they save the planet on nasty flight emissions. Gorgeous, green and not too expensive - kids love them too I hear.

The Kennet & Avon Canal

I am gearing myself up for a trip to Bristol down the Kennet and Avon canal next month. It may not be the quickest way to get to the West Country but I am sure it will be the most scenic. The journey takes us from London to Reading via the River Thames, then 87 miles along the Kennet and Avon canal to Bristol. The route will pass through West Berkshire, the Cotswolds and Bath. It should take two weeks to complete.

Living history

The 200-year-old London to Bristol branch is just one of many possible routes offered by the extensive British canal and waterways system. Looking at the spidery red and blue veins of the navigable waterways map yields some interesting findings.

Did you know that you can go all the way from London to Lancaster by narrowboat? Or that the longest consecutive flight of locks in the UK (30) is at Tardebigge on the Worcester and Birmingham canal? In Scotland there are sections of canal that don't join up to any others, like the remote Highland Crinan Canal.

In the past, canals were vital for transporting heavy goods and raw materials. So looking at the canal map

is like looking at the A-Z of the Midlands industrial revolution: Coventry, Manchester, Nottingham, Milton Keynes. This is what makes any journey on canal routes so special. By cruising along these former trade and transportation routes you are partaking in living history.

I bought my first narrowboat one month ago. Our first mission was to bring it back to London from Egham, Surrey. Easy, I thought, looking at a map. That should take us three days.

A steep learning curve

A month later and we've still not arrived at The River Lee. But somehow I don't mind. With boating, that old truism - that it's more about the journey than the destination - is more appropriate than ever.

And it's been a steep learning curve. In the past month I have learnt the difference between manual and electric locks, navigated tidal and non-tidal rivers and tied anchor knots. I have experienced aqueducts first-hand and learnt how to use a windlass.

The same crash-course awaits every would-be boater. My advice would be to steel your nerves against spiders and locks. Get used to the idea of rationing food, electricity and toilet visits. Other than that, what are you waiting for? Find out where your nearest narrowboat rental spot is (<http://www.ourboats.co.uk>) and take to the river.

**FoE's London to Brighton cycle ride +
CND and Trident Ploughshares Disarmament Camp and Big Blockade**

Editor's Note - By the time you read this, it will probably be too late to take part in this event, but you might be interested nonetheless.

Here's your chance to take on the famous London to Brighton one-day challenge. This popular cycling challenge takes place on Sunday 8 September.

Starting in South London, you'll ride through the beautiful English countryside incorporating Mitcham, Carshalton, Chipstead, Banstead and Haywards Heath. You'll arrive 54 miles later at the Brighton seafront with a huge sense of achievement, having completed this iconic challenge.

Places are very limited for this event and only available through charities. So hurry to secure yours for Friends of the Earth by signing up below.

What do I need to do?

Simply enter your details below (that's on the FoE website) to register. It costs just £35 to sign up and the fundraising target of £100 is very achievable. Plus, we're here to help you along the way with plenty of fundraising advice. All funds go to Friends of the Earth and will help us continue our vital work.

No previous experience is required, however training for this event is highly recommended. With preparation, completing this event should be easily within your capabilities. The pleasure of the event is in the taking part, not the winning - so you can pedal at your own pace.

This was circulated by the CND press office.

We hope you'll join CND, Trident Ploughshares and other anti-nuclear activists to camp, protest, and participate in direct action against Britain's nuclear weapons. The camp runs from August 26th to September 7th.

AWE Burghfield is responsible for assembling the UK's nuclear warheads. Nuclear components are transported by road in convoys from Aldermaston to Burghfield where they are assembled, and then transported by road again to Coulport in Scotland.

The disarmament camp at Burghfield is happening at the crucial time when the government is planning to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system at a cost of £100 billion – money that could be much better invested in renewable energy, improving the health service, and education!

The exact location of the camp will not be decided until the day it is set up, but it will be in the vicinity of Burghfield in Berkshire.

Download an information sheet on non-violent direct action and the disarmament camp, and register for the camp at:
<http://tridentploughshares.org/awe-burghfield-summer-disarmament-camp-2013/>

Blog 2 - Salt water, wheels and a sprint –
My mission to end the arms trade by Rebecca Tully, (www.caat.org.uk)

It's true. I care more about peace and fair food than I do about my own fitness or figure.

I am utterly in awe of people that run...swim... cycle... simply for the joy of it. What is THAT about? When I do something ludicrous, it has to be oddly attached to some sort of cause.

And why is one of those causes Campaign Against Arms Trade – CAAT? Well, sorry to the marvellous team who do wonderful publicity, but my boyfriend has just hit on the best way of describing CAAT's aims...

"Rebs wants to raise some money for CAAT – a charity who if their aims were met would save the UK BILLIONS of pounds; make some rich, immoral shareholders poorer and save the lives and limbs of countless people around the world."

Yes. That. Simple, a bit unbelievable, a hard message to sell, but doing nothing will allow this trade to go unchecked.

So I'm doing something. When you look at the billions swilling around the trade of arms it's small in comparison – but going FAR out of my comfort zone in a sea-swim triathlon feels a bit useful in the bid to raise money – and also talk about the reasons this is so important.

For those that care about facts and stats I will be running the Clacton 'Sprint' Triathlon on 8 September: swimming 750 metres in open sea

water, cycling for 16 kilometres and running the final 5 kilometres.

So how am I doing?

Well, I have a triathlon suit. I haven't worn it yet. And I have a wetsuit. I haven't worn that yet either. Rebecca practices her sprint for the home strait.

But I DO know how to ride a bike, and I'm getting much better at front crawl. And my 5 km runs are getting quicker. I just haven't put it all together yet.

But some generous donations have got me close to my goal... and I'm a combination of unbelievably grateful and more determined to show them in September that their pennies were worth it.

So, please sponsor me if you'd like. Or, please support my lunacy by finding out something you might not have known before about the loopholes private companies can get through, or the extent to which this trade to human rights abusers is subsidised by our taxes.

And in return, I'll keep this nonsense up. Deal? Thank you.

I'm also raising money for the Food Sovereignty movement in the UK – a movement linking with the huge network of small farmers around the world to fight for systems of growing and distributing food to be in the control of those growing and consuming it.

Blog 3 - Join Colombia Solidarity Campaign to protest against the imminent eviction of families from their village

This is from the WDM website, www.wdm.org.uk and was written by Richard Solly of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign

In October 2000, I visited a beautiful Colombian village called Tabaco. It was inhabited by small-scale farmers, mostly of African descent. It was an idyllic little place, with plenty of fruit trees and a crystal clear river running by.

The only problem was that it was next door to an enormous opencast coal mine, El Cerrejon. Dust and blasting were causing problems. Worse was the constant pressure from the company to sell up and go.

I visited Tabaco again the following October. It lay in ruins, people's houses demolished, their livelihoods wrecked. Remaining villagers were camping out in the school house. On 9 August that year, the mining company had moved in with bulldozers and armed police and security guards to evict the villagers and destroy their homes.

Villagers were willing to move, but they wanted to move as a community to new land where they could carry on farming. But their resistance was hurting the company's profits.

At that time, half the mine was owned by US oil company Exxon. Three massive multinational mining companies – Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Glencore – owned the other half. Once the destruction of Tabaco was conveniently completed, they took control of the whole mine.

They are all now listed on the London Stock Exchange.

How they lamented the "legacy issue" of the outrageous treatment of the people of Tabaco! Of course, this kind of thing would never happen again!

But now the mine and the Colombian courts are threatening to evict indigenous and afro-descendent villagers at another village, Roche, on Thursday 29 August.

The company has already bullied many villagers into moving to an urban site which is no good for those who want to carry on farming or keeping cattle. The families who remain in the old village are holding out for an agreement that would compensate them for what they have suffered over the past few years as mining has come ever closer to their homes, and move them to a site big enough for them to carry on their agricultural way of life.

I don't want the same thing to happen at Roche as happened at Tabaco. The eviction has to be stopped. Colombia Solidarity Campaign is organising a protest on Tuesday 27 August. We're going to visit the London offices of the three mining multinationals and tell them to stop. Please join us!

Editor's Final Note: Blogs galore – blame August and the lack of other copy. Not quite the right sort of space for Desiderata, sent in by Sheila, but its time will surely come.

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Food and Ethical Farming:

Peter Gandolfi details below

Planning and development:

Mary Stirling
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Tamara Galloway 01689-855352
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Waste and Recycling

Annette Rose
annette.rose1@ntlworld.com

Bee Cause

Judy Palmer, *judy.palmer@talk21.com*

Monthly Meeting reporters:

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

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

Letters to the Editor

Why not write us a letter if you have a strong opinion on something or just want to share your thoughts. Send them in and perhaps even start a discussion - who knows.

Need a lift to meetings?

If you require a lift to Bromley FoE meetings, please contact Ray Watson or Sheila Brown on the numbers shown above.

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

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

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

Non-members' Section

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

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

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

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email r.watson865@btinternet.com.

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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