

- Gleneagles & Edinburgh 2005
- What's happening and how you can get involved

G8 Issue



G8 Overview

Scotland will be centre stage during the first week of July as the next G8 meeting takes place in Gleneagles, Perthshire. While most of the pre-publicity has centred on the need for trade justice and debt cancellation for some of the least developed countries in the world, climate change is also on the agenda for discussion. Well, that's what Tony Blair is hoping for anyway, although George Bush can't even bring himself to say the two "c" words. Friends of the Earth is calling for Climate Justice – a recognition of the situation whereby the world's richest nations are causing climate change and yet it's the poorest nations that will suffer most. See inside for our wish list of demands to the G8 leaders, and information on what is happening during the G8 week. We are not holding a public meeting in June, but encourage everyone to join us at the City Chambers on 22nd June 7-9pm at a free public seminar on G8, "Making poverty history – G8 or demonstrate?". Eurig Scandrett of Friends of the Earth Scotland is one of the speakers.

Co-ordinator's Comments

All eyes are increasingly on Edinburgh as the city gears up for the long anticipated G8 week. This edition of INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE), should help keep you informed of the various events taking place in the city, and how you can get involved. Let's hope that everything runs to plan, with family-friendly, non-violent demonstrations which nevertheless show the world's most powerful politicians just how much people care about the issues of climate change and world poverty – and how much we demand that they take action. Friends of the Earth Scotland has been closely involved in the planning of events in Edinburgh, and highlights include the Make Poverty History march on 2nd July, the G8 Alternative Summit Counter-Conference at the Assembly Hall on 3rd July, and the chance to sound a Climate Alarm at 13.45 on 7th July. More details inside.

The general election is now a distant memory, but one thing that was really noticeable was how little the environment figured in the campaigning. G8 gives us another chance to tell Tony and his mates that we want them to act now to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to challenge the economic orthodoxy that says we have to keep growing and producing more CO₂ at the expense of less developed nations. To see how the political parties stood up to the questioning of a green section of the electorate at our hustings, see the report inside of our 27th April event.

Friends of the Earth Scotland (FoES) held its AGM on 14th May and two motions put forward by FoEE were accepted. Firstly, following the woeful record of Scottish public policy on the environment (M74 extension, failure of the congestion charge, lack of a clear strategy on renewables, continued retreat from third party

rights of appeal in planning, etc, etc) we urged the staff of FoES to renew their efforts and work with other NGOs and the wider environmental movement in the continued fight for environmental justice in Scotland. We also called on FoES to keep up their opposition to nuclear power. One other notable motion passed was the agreement to pursue legal action against the Scottish Executive with regard to the approval for the M74 extension in Glasgow.

We don't hold any public meetings over the summer and will be back with a new programme of events in September. In the meantime we hope to see you all at our fundraising Comedy Night on Tuesday 19th July. This event always sells out, so make sure you get your tickets in advance – see details on page 6. After all, environmentalists can't be serious all the time!



Helen Todd
Coordinator, FoE Edinburgh

Friends of the Earth's demands for the G8

1. Agreement on the compelling scientific evidence showing that climate change is already happening and that urgent action is now required to substantially reduce emissions.
2. An agreement by G8 nations for specific, substantial and timetabled cuts in their domestic emissions of greenhouse gases.
3. Nations must take radical action at home in order to reduce the impacts of climate change, including a change in consumption patterns and a meaningful switch to the use of renewable sustainable energy sources.
4. G8 nations must stop promoting fossil fuel extraction in developing nations through international financial institutions such as the World Bank and export credit agencies.
5. G8 governments should immediately phase-in public finance for sustainable clean energy.

G8 Alarming facts

G8 nations represent just 13% of the world's people, but account for 45% of global emissions of climate-changing pollutants.

By January 2nd each year the average American emits more climate changing gases than the average Tanzanian does in the whole year.

A warming of just 2-3C in the next 100 years would put 3 billion people, mostly in the world's poorest countries, at risk from water shortages.

Since 1950, the US has emitted over 3 times as much carbon as China, despite having only one fifth of the size of population.

Just 122 corporations account for 80% of all carbon dioxide emissions.

G8 Events

What's happening and how you can get involved

Friends of the Earth will be organising and taking part in a range of events and actions to call for the G8 leaders to take action for climate justice. Find out below about some of our plans and how you can help. Please note that plans are not yet all finalised as we go to print, so check the website to get confirmation of events:

www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8 or call Friends of the Earth Scotland on

0131 554 9977.

Make Poverty History (Saturday 2 July)

Friends of the Earth is a member of the Make Poverty History coalition which brings together over 200 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities. The coalition is organising a giant march in Edinburgh on 2 July where tens of thousands of people will be demanding trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries. The day's events will start at 11am, and will include: rallies with international speakers, celebrity supporters and music; the creation of a giant human white band around Edinburgh city centre, with staggered starts at 12pm, 1pm and 2pm; entertainment, 'market stalls' and activities; and an opportunity for you to send your messages directly to the G8 meeting in Gleneagles.

What you can do: Come along. The event will be a family friendly, safe and fun day. Friends of the Earth supporters and those from other environment and development groups will be meeting on the Meadows at the giant 'carbon dinosaur' to march together under a climate justice banner. Full details of where and when to meet:

www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8

'G8 Corporate Dream... Global Nightmare' counter conference (Sunday 3 July)

The World Development Movement along with War on Want, People & Planet and Friends of the Earth are holding the 'G8 Corporate Dream... Global Nightmare' counter conference'. Speakers include: George Monbiot, Trevor Ngwane, Meena Raman, Walden Bello, Caroline Lucas, Joel Bakan (The Corporation) and The Yes Men . Assembly Hall (entrance via the Mound), top of the Royal Mile, Edinburgh, 11am-6pm. The event is free – no reservation necessary – just turn up for the whole day or the sessions you are interested in. www.corporate8.org

'Global Warming 8' (Tuesday 5 July)

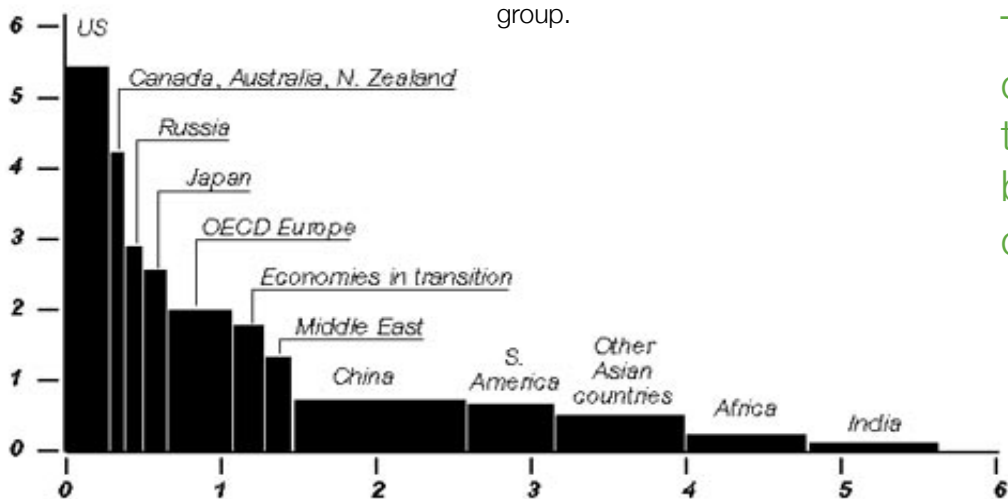
Friends of the Earth is jointly organising a conference on climate justice at Dynamic Earth on 5 July, which will involve representatives of affected countries, including at least one Friends of the Earth International group.

Climate Alarm (13:45pm Thursday 7 July)

At 13:45pm on Thursday 7th July Friends of the Earth is organising a 'climate alarm'. People across Scotland, and the world, will sound warning bells to try to wake the G8 up to the fact that time is running out to tackle climate injustice. 13:45 is symbolic because the G8 nations represent just 13% of the world's people, but account for 45% of the world's emissions of climate-changing pollutants. We aim to make sure the alarm will be heard even inside Gleneagles!



What you can do: Whether you are on your own or part of a group you can take part. Our handy 'action guide' will enable you to come up with the best way of taking part in your local area. This might involve ringing church bells, getting town criers to join in or sounding flood or storm warnings. To find out more about sounding your own climate alarm see www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8



Emissions Table: (tonnes of carbon per capita) vs. Population (billions). Source: Benito Muller (2003)

The G8 nations constitute only 13% of the world's population but emit 45% of global climate change gases.

Election Hustings: how green are your politicians?

Precious little was heard about the environment during what seemed an overlong and, some would say, tedious election campaign. So what do the parties actually stand for and what happens when they face the public on green issues? To address these questions, Friends of the Earth Edinburgh challenged the political parties at a hustings debate, a week before the election, hosted by Sunday Herald and BBC political commentator Ian MacWhirter.

The first questions aimed to discover the distinguishing policies between the parties and find out how far they would go to tackle climate change. First up was Mark Lazarowicz (Labour), who started off strongly with talk of international leadership, utilising Britain's presidency of the G8 and EU as the catalyst for radical action through firm targets, environmental taxation and emissions trading. This was fine rhetoric, which went down well with the audience, but might be sorely tested by his party leadership at Gleneagles when facing the Americans. Let's hope that Mark's party colleagues take more notice of his views on climate change, than his views on opposing the war.

Next the audience heard from Conservative super sub, Councillor Alistair Paisley, who spared his party the embarrassment of being represented by a turnip, by turning up at the very last minute. It turned out Alistair was more environmentally friendly than the turnip, and he surprised and cajoled an otherwise hostile audience with talk of his paper recycling business. Such credentials are exceptional for a Tory, as most people believe the party's only other achievements relate to the reduction in pollution stemming from Mrs Thatcher's campaign to wipe out heavy industry in Scotland. Alistair backed the need for new nuclear power stations, a position that set him apart from all the other candidates.



The Panel

Sheena Cleland (SNP) had a hard act to follow and started by arguing that environmental problems were created by Westminster and could only be tackled by giving Holyrood the powers of an independent nation. This was a bit of a scary thought, given that SNP MSPs have been at the vanguard of the campaign to tarmac Scotland's countryside with new roads. One of the positive solutions she highlighted was more renewable energy developments, which could be made in Scotland from girders. Talk about Scotland's oil wealth and cuts in the cost of fuel were, however, not the smartest move in winning over an audience of environmentalists.

Bill Scott (SSP) spoke a lot of sense about the links between profits and pollution and the problems of inequality. As a starting point he highlighted the need to tackle environmental injustice and climate change through action to end fuel poverty in Scotland. Despite these deep convictions and a thoughtful display, Bill was unlucky at following week's polls.

Michael Crockart (Lib Dem) managed not to anger the audience, which was a first for a Lib Dem this year, when discussing the party's environmental policies. He majored on the Lib Dem's international policy, which was wise, given a record in Scotland that includes opposition to congestion charging, and support for the M74 extension and the Aberdeen western bypass. Working hard to

redeem his party's tattered, but once favourable reputation, Mike cited a number of positive policies.

Mark Sydenham (Green) put on a storming display playing on home territory, to the point of overdoing his attacks on the other parties. In particular he gave his Lib Dem and SSP rivals a roasting on their stance on congestion charging. This was where the nice party of Scottish politics got nasty, which was in fact unnecessary, as both the opposing candidates appeared perfectly able to damage their own credibility on this issue without need of assistance. Through questioning the record of the other parties it became obvious that Greens would make the hard and unpopular decisions needed to tackle climate change, which have so far been ignored. The question is whether a less sympathetic audience could be persuaded by such arguments.

In conclusion this was a good, wide-ranging debate, with all the candidates at least knowing the facts, but at times ignoring them when it came to the answers. What's more, all the candidates appeared to care about the environment and the need to do more, which was encouraging. However, based on this performance Friends of the Earth Edinburgh will have to keep up its efforts to make sure all the parties don't just make promises but also keep to them.

Stuart Hay, FoE Edinburgh

Growing Food, Community Gardens and Permaculture in Scotland

On Thursday 26th May, Friends of the Earth Edinburgh hosted a public talk about Food, Community Gardening and Permaculture in Scotland.

Danny Lowe and Ian Findlay are organic gardeners with a real passion for growing things naturally and the benefits that gardening can bring. They believe that if communities lived in a more natural and environmentally-friendly way, then the quality of life for everyone in that community would significantly improve. This is especially important in communities suffering from problems such as bad housing, high unemployment and poor diet. Permaculture, the practice of living in an ecologically sound way - in our households, gardens, communities and businesses - is especially relevant in these disadvantaged communities.

Danny and Ian work in Glasgow and Renfrewshire with some of the most marginalised and excluded people in society - groups of homeless men, young people with special needs, single mothers and children - all living in some of the worst housing schemes in Scotland. The people that Danny and Ian work with have no previous experience of gardening and most couldn't even tell you what a carrot was! But the benefit that they can gain from working together to clear overgrown or unused garden or waste lands and turning the land into thriving community gardens that the local people can use, are massive. They use environmentally-friendly and reused materials - recycling old pipes to hold plants, and saving seeds in a seed bank to be used the next year. The practice of permaculture encourages communities to be resourceful and self-reliant.

The sense of achievement that is gained when a person can grow their food from seed, look after it and then turn it into food, is huge. Green space improves communities, encourages people to work together and to spend time outside. It also

gives a place for people to sit and talk in peaceful surroundings, and the community develop a real sense of pride in their own creations. The trick to getting people involved, Danny and Ian have found, is to start small - don't dazzle the groups with ambitious plans of turning a dark, overgrown walkway littered with old furniture into a community orchard! Begin with organising a group of local people to clear the rubbish away. Then build on that, getting people involved in cutting back the plants, and letting the project progress in small steps. Start small, support the local people to take ownership of the project themselves and let the ideas grow!

Permaculture tackles how to grow food, build houses and create communities, and minimise environmental impact at the same time. Its principles are being constantly developed and refined by people throughout the world in very different climates and cultural circumstances.

By thinking carefully about the way we use our resources - food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs - it is possible to get much more out of life by using less. We can be more productive for less effort, reaping benefits for our environment and ourselves, for now and for generations to come.

Useful contacts:

Danny Lowe -
bumbler100@hotmail.com

www.permaculture.co.uk

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk

Katrina Harding, FoE Edinburgh

Dalkeith: housing threat to greenspace

A community action group has been formed to contest the proposed planning application to construct 28 houses on Riverside Park, off James Lean Avenue, Woodburn, Dalkeith. The Riverside Park Community Action Group (RPCAG) has got off to a flying start with a petition urging local residents to lodge letters of complaint to Midlothian Council. So far the response has been fantastic and support appears to be growing. This is all new ground to the organisers, but having down-loaded the FoE publication on Environmental Campaigning this has been a great help. We are now in the process of organising a publicity campaign and fund raising to build a website. If you would like to help, please contact Mike Cressey:
michael@cressey.fsnet.co.uk



FoE Comedy Benefit 19th July.

Make a Stand for a Better Planet

Unwind after the G8! Come along to our annual fundraiser comedy benefit night. The Stand Comedy Club, York Place, Edinburgh, doors open 7.30am.

Tuesday 19th July, doors 7.30pm

Tickets: £7/£6, call 0131 558 7272 or email comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk

Dates for Diaries

NB: We have no public meeting in June, July or August. Next meeting Thursday 22nd September.

Wednesday 22nd June, 7-9pm

Making poverty history – G8 or demonstrate

Join FoE Edinburgh for this free public seminar
City Chambers

Saturday 2nd July

Make Poverty History March

Edinburgh
www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8

Sunday 3rd July 11am-6pm

G8 Corporate Dream, Global Nightmare

Counter-conference, Free entry
Assembly Hall, Royal Mile
www.corporate8.org

Tuesday 5th July

FoE Day of Action on Climate Change and Global Warming 8 Conference.

Dynamic Earth
www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8

Wednesday 6th July

G8 summit begins

Gleneagles.

Thursday 7th July 1.45pm

FoE Climate Alarm

Edinburgh.
www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8

Tuesday 19th July, doors 7.30pm

FoEE Comedy Benefit

The Stand Comedy Club
York Place, Edinburgh
Tickets £7/£6
Call 0131 558 7272 or
Email: comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk

Thursday 22nd September 7.30pm

FoEE public meeting

Topic tba
Friends Meeting House

Make Contact

If you'd like to get involved in the work of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh then please email us - info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk or see www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk.

For those without access to the internet you can call Helen Todd on 0131 553 6869.

We'd also be keen to hear any ideas or comments you have about the events and campaigns organised by the group.

Transport Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact Jolin Warren:
JWarren@foe-scotland.org.uk

Waste Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact Katriona Harding:
KHarding@foe-scotland.org.uk

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