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GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

newsletter

DECEMBER 2019 – FEBRUARY 2020

## EXTINCTION REBELLION IN OCTOBER

*A personal account of last month's London events by Hazel McGee, of Guildford XR*

LIKE JONATHAN MITCHELL in the June GEF newsletter, I have long been 'frustrated by the lack of urgency shown by governments on both climate change and biodiversity loss' and also felt that 'letter writing, marches, petitions, supporting NGOs and personal shopping choices' are not 'stopping humanity sleepwalking to planetary disaster'. Since 1962 a copy of Rachel Carson's seminal *Silent Spring* has been on my bookshelf, and also *Satyagraha* by Mahatma Gandhi. In April this year, with the spectacular advent of Extinction Rebellion (XR) onto London bridges and streets, it at last seemed possible to combine the two.

In May I attended a powerful presentation entitled 'Heading for Extinction, and what to do about it' at the Quaker meeting house in central Guildford. I thought I was familiar with the arguments, but the graphs and recent science

presented here just blew me away. The second part of the programme showed mass non-violent direct action in use around the world, including not just Gandhi's hugely successful push for Indian independence, but the black emancipation campaigns under Martin Luther King in the USA, and against apartheid in South Africa. 'With your help, change can start now!' demanded Extinction Rebellion. I joined the Guildford group, which meets weekly at a venue in central Guildford (details at [www.xrguildford.org](http://www.xrguildford.org)).

Activities and preparation through the summer led up to a second 'International Rebellion' in early October, not only in London but in Paris, Berlin, New York, Sydney and 60 other cities around the world. Ambitiously, the plan for London envisaged disrupting and holding 12 strategic sites in the city for 14 days. Sites were allocated nationally



by region, and the South East region, with which Guildford is affiliated, was assigned the centre of government power and influence in Whitehall.

### The first day

On October 7, we are briefed to mingle inconspicuously with the passing crowds and move into the road on a signal. I wander slowly up past the Cenotaph to Downing Street, the gates locked and guarded, but all quite normal on a bright October morning. Then suddenly at the Women’s Memorial north of Downing Street whistles pierce the air and the road fills with people old and young, many revealing home-made placards and colourful flags whipping in the wind. A long blue banner is unfurled: ‘Rebel for Life’.

Well-practised teams tip canvas, poles and guy ropes from inconspicuous bags and rucksacks, and within minutes gazebos, chairs and paraphernalia are ranged along the street, which already starts to resemble a country fair more than a prime thoroughfare in a capital city. As screaming police vans form a phalanx and disgorge their yellow-jacketed passengers, two or three hundred very ordinary-looking citizens of southern England sit down carefully in the road – some with the flexibility of youth, and many like myself with difficulty and leaning on others for help. Helicopters clatter overhead, the abiding sound of the next ten days. We begin gently singing: ‘The people are rising like the water – Shut this system down! Hear the words of my great-granddaughter – Climate justice now!’. This haunting tune is also destined to be with me day and night throughout the coming time.

Slowly our camp develops and consolidates. We allow a couple of blue-light ambulances through the blockade but having established the principle, the police clearly decide it makes more sense for them to go another way round (always possible in London) and don’t encourage them to try to make the point again. Handing out leaflets for a couple of hours, I find tourists and casual passersby to be interested and receptive. Only a few middle-aged civil servants haughtily refuse the sheets with a curt ‘No thankyou’, as the police stand by and watch bemused.

### Day 2

The following day I return to an even larger and stronger camp – some infrastructure was confiscated overnight, and a few arrests made, but new arrivals filled the gaps. Then suddenly in the early afternoon we hear that police are in the camp and are dismantling and removing tents. With an abrupt change of mood action groups move into place, and cheers and shouts go up as the first arrests begin.

This time it’s obviously for real. With some trepidation I settle on a camping mat in a small tent, with my arm ‘locked on’ inside a heavy steel tube,

which can only be removed with industrial-scale cutting equipment. A second rebel lies down facing me with his arm locked into the other end of the tube. A new sound dominates, as heavy rain drums onto the roof of the tent. For a while we doze listening to the rain and feeling smugly dry; then my partner says ‘Here we go’ and I wake up to see and hear a police team, clad in elaborate black raingear, rapidly and roughly tearing away the tent around us. The soaked and soaking canvas falls across us where we lie, and onlookers move in quickly with umbrellas to protect our faces from the downpour, which fortunately by this time shows signs of dying out.

Rapidly I take stock of my surroundings. My partner and I lie directly alongside the Women’s War Memorial, at the centre of a ring of onlookers three or four deep, held back by sturdy black and yellow-coated policemen. As autumn sunshine thankfully replaces the rain, phones snap and friends wave.

A nervous young policeman bends down and asks if I am prepared to move, which I am not, and requests my name and details, which I have resolved to withhold to increase the level of non-cooperation. Haltingly he tries to read the relevant section of the Public Order Act under which he is arresting me, although I barely hear him over the noise of the clattering helicopters. Eventually I am fitted with ear protectors and a welding mask as an efficient and professional team cut me free from the steel tube to which I am secured.



Cutting Hazel out of lock-on in Whitehall

Then three ‘heavies’, who are anything but efficient and professional, carry me roughly and inelegantly away from the action and deposit me a couple of hundred yards down the road onto a very hard and wet pavement.

Finally we reach the police station where I am held overnight and released ‘under investigation’ the following day. Actions continue in various locations through the week, including at London City Airport, where dozens are arrested, including a hero who glues himself to the top of an aircraft. In the financial area of the City resisters demand divestment from companies whose activities promote the climate emergency. On October 15 I am arrested again, also under the now-notorious Section 14 of the Public Order Act, at Millbank Tower outside the offices of MI5. Further events continue to the end of the week when a final rally and reassertion of our right and duty to rebel is held in Trafalgar Square.

Together with Greta Thunberg’s Youth Climate

strikes, the spectacular actions and powerful messages worldwide of Extinction Rebellion have brought the reality of the climate emergency to the top of the political agenda. We now have a general election in this country which many believe is the most critical for both the UK and the planet since 1945. XR as an organisation does not support any political party. The climate and ecological emergencies must be central to the election campaign, which means we must question and hold all candidates to account. The world is on fire. We must demand of those who would govern our country: What is your plan?

FURTHER READING: *This is Not a Drill – an Extinction Rebellion Handbook*, Penguin Random House, 2019. ISBN 978-0-141-99144-3.

## Your vote on 12th December

Brexit may have been the cause of the General Election, but we believe that the Climate Emergency should be your top priority when deciding who to vote for on 12th December. This could be the most important vote that you will ever make. David Attenborough says that Climate Change is humanity’s greatest threat in thousands of years. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018 stated that we now only have 10-12 years to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The Government has declared a Climate Emergency and most local Councils, including Guildford, have now done so, too. However, we know that total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rose by 2% in 2018 and that we first have to stop the increase and then rapidly reduce this figure every year from 2019. In a democracy like ours, Governments and Local Authorities move very slowly, but they do react to public pressure and the vote on 12th December is your best opportunity to exert influence.

As we go to press, we have heard on the BBC news that The World Meteorological Organization has released a new report that “heat-trapping greenhouse gases have reached a new record high level”. The Paris agreement is looking too optimistic and Sir David King (Special Representative for Climate Change to the UK Government until 2017) has told BBC Radio 4 that he is now “scared for our future”.

The Guildford Environmental Forum is not political and will not recommend who you vote for, but we do have the following clear advice:

1. PLEASE ensure that you do vote on 12th December.
2. Please read the Election manifestos of all the possible candidates in your constituency. GEF will e-mail a summary to members, in case you do not have the time.
3. Please pay particular attention to the policies on climate change and loss of biodiversity.
4. Please contact your local candidates to assess how knowledgeable and sincere they are on these two issues.
5. Please talk about the importance of this vote with your family, friends, work colleagues and neighbours.
6. Please check how effective the various parties have been on climate change and biodiversity in the past and assess how effective they will be in the future.

We therefore encourage all our readers to vote on 12th December and to make tackling the Climate Emergency your top priority in your voting choice. Please see the summary of Professor Chris Rapley’s excellent talk on page 8 for further background.

Your grandchildren will almost certainly say “What did you do when you had a chance to stop our Climate Crisis reaching a tipping point?” Please make sure that you use your vote wisely on 12th December and encourage as many as possible to do the same.

Adrian Thompson

# Another very busy year for Rosamund

Text by John Bannister, photos by Mark Barrs

IT HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL YEAR at our Rosamund Community Garden and not just on the 1.5 acres bounded by a deer fence, where we grow fruit and veg, but across the 19.4 acres of the entire site. The greater portion of the land is on the scarp slope with views of Guildford Cathedral and the Ash Ranges. There is a certain quality of peacefulness and tranquility here where people feel restored. Rosamund Arvidsson, after whom the garden is named, bought the site in 1987 and her son and daughter, Mark and Julia, who grew up here and inherited it have generously allowed us to create the garden and do what we can to manage the larger site for the benefit of wildlife.

## Enhancing biodiversity

We've made scrapes and sown kidney vetch successfully for the small blue butterfly. The aim is to create a necklace of sites from The Mount to Box Hill to help the small blue return and spread along the chalk escarpment.

An elm, resistant to Dutch Elm Disease, was planted in one of the hedge lines four years ago as part of a national scheme and is now getting on for 6m tall. The hedges are full of dead elm suckers that have succumbed to the disease. In winter 2019/20 we will start planting oaks, beech and other tall trees in the hedge lines, provided to us free under the Conservation Volunteers project. To love trees is to invest hope in the future. They will not negate climate chaos on their own but will store carbon, help clean the air, filter and slow down rainwater, help prevent flooding and increase biodiversity. Trillions need to be planted across the globe and the first priority must be to save the rainforests in South America, Africa and Indonesia. They are the lungs of the world.

Meanwhile negotiations are progressing between Mark and Julia and Surrey Wildlife Trust to take over the management of the whole larger area, which needs regular attention to keep the grass in check to benefit the orchids, other wild flowers and the skylarks that nest there.

## The vegetable garden

It has been a very good year for fruit and veg with soft fruit to the end of October. Other highlights include onions, cucumbers,



strawberries, courgettes, sweetcorn and much else beside.

In this garden our volunteer numbers have risen to a much healthier number who come up regularly on a Tuesday and others again at the weekend. Extra pairs of hands make for greater enjoyment from growing and sharing the produce, so do come and join us.

## Other Rosamund news

The two scything courses this year went very well. With Mark Allery, our teacher, we trained another 18 people in this environmental grass management technique. We run these courses in June and September.

Sadly, five of our 30 orchard trees have died and will have to be replaced. Drought, lack of compost and grass encroachment are all thought to be contributory factors. So we still have much to learn.

Our annual Open Day on 19th October was hugely enjoyable. There were lots of children and we made quite a bit of money for the garden from freshly juiced apples and food. Several new members have joined us as a result. The weather was kind and the sun shone. Roger, who looks after the two hives of bees, has done well. Maybe we'll get to taste the honey again this year. Nearly all the honey is left to sustain the bees through the winter.

Our pond, fed by rainwater from the roof of our compost toilet, goes from drought to overfull as the rain comes and goes; the birds and bees love it, but still no sign of frogs.

Finally, the garden won the gold award for the best Community Garden from Surrey Wildlife Trust, and four of us went along to Nower Wood to collect our certificate, now proudly displayed at the site.

## Future plans

Blackthorn and ivy encroach continuously from the hedges surrounding the garden, so it's time to ask if the Probation Service can help us again to halt these advancing hordes. We really enjoy having the milder offenders.

Another objective is to construct a community building where we can hold horticulture-,

wildlife- and health-related courses. We have a design provided by a resident of the Trelay Farm Co-housing community near Bude and we're discussing whether we can build it ourselves. As one of our newest members is a builder by trade we're hopeful that self-build is a viable option. At the same time we need to think about upgrading our compost toilet.

## Rosamund Garden's brilliant open day on 19th October . . .



## . . . including the ever-popular apple pressing



**Anyone who would like to help us in the garden with planting trees, growing food, managing the probation service people or building our proposed new community centre, please get in touch with either Clare Millington (phone 07879 881073, email [mingtong\\_uk@yahoo.com](mailto:mingtong_uk@yahoo.com)) or John Bannister (phone 07443 914347, email [johnwbannister40@gmail.com](mailto:johnwbannister40@gmail.com))**

# Climate Emergency – Quarterly Update

In summary, there has been a lot of hard work and some progress but we all need to do so much more. The achievements since the last quarterly newsletter are as follows:

- The Terms of Reference of Guildford Borough Council's Climate Change and Innovation Board (CCIB) have been agreed.** These list the many areas that need to be tackled and the Council has established the five priority areas on which the CCIB will focus initially. Two members of the GEF Climate Crisis Group have been co-opted onto that Board. Guildford Borough Council issued a press release on 17th October, which can be read on <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/23306/Collaborating-for-Climate-Change>
- Two meetings of GEF's Climate Crisis Group have been held and have finalised the plan to spread the word of the Climate Emergency to Parishes and Residents and Community Associations across Guildford.**
- Nineteen presentations have now been arranged over the next 6 months of which three await the final venue and date.** The first was at 19.30 on 28th November in Worplesdon.
- Publicity material will be circulated in each local area and we anticipate that over 1,000 Guildford residents will attend over the next 6 months.** Each presentation will include key ways in which we can all make an impact on our carbon emissions.
- Four presentations on the subject of Climate Change (as outlined in the calendar page of our September newsletter) have been held in the last three months.** All have been well-attended.
- New biology graduate and GEF member Matthew Ambrose has volunteered to take on the vacant position of Marketing and Communications Officer and join the executive committee.**
- Some 25 new members have joined GEF since May 2019, taking our total membership to 215.**
- Thanks to some great pressure across the country over many years, the UK government has finally stepped back somewhat from its long-standing support for fracking, which remains totally inconsistent with the UK's Climate Emergency declaration.**
- GEF supports Guildford Borough Council's policy of working with other local Councils on the Climate Emergency.** The resources of local Councils are so depleted by years of austerity and reductions in Local Authority funding that this is a key step to making swifter progress.
- A new initiative has been started by the University of Surrey under the name 'Clean, Healthy, Sustainable Surrey' – CHeSS. The first meeting was held on Wednesday 13th November. CHeSS aims to achieve the following:**
  - To be a force to achieve collaboration in Surrey
  - To leverage funding
  - To encourage research to decarbonise Surrey
  - To make a pathway to clean energy
  - To share expertise and publish a regular newsletter

However, despite the above, GEF remains hugely concerned at the slow pace of progress in tackling the Climate Emergency, at national, county and borough level. It is good news that our local Council was unanimous in recognising the threats posed by Climate Change and declared a Climate Emergency on 23rd July. This was not seen to be the case at this time last year.

GEF will be spreading the message of the urgency of the Emergency through our presentations across the borough. It remains essential that the residents of Guildford continue to press our local Councillors and prospective MPs to move faster and we ask readers to support us in pressing for Climate Action.

Adrian Thompson

## Our exports

When a container ship leaves a British port, over half the containers are empty. In other words, the UK's biggest export is fresh air.

(Source: Radio Times, 28 Sept - 4 Oct, 19)

## Oops!

Climate change activists from the protest group Reclaim the Power brought traffic to a standstill in London in July, having chained themselves to the wrong building. Their intended target was the energy company Drax, but this had relocated some months earlier, and the group instead besieged a Norwegian hydropower company.

(Source: Evening Standard, 30 July '19)

## Questionable carbon offsets

A 2017 European Commission report concluded that 85% of carbon offset projects failed to reduce emissions.

(Source: [transportenvironment.org](http://transportenvironment.org))

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Air quality

Areas found to have poor air quality must be declared 'Air Quality Management Areas' (AQMAs) and the local authorities must set out recovery plans. Guildford has two AQMAs: Compton, The Street, declared in February 2018, and Shalford, The Street, declared in July 2019.

(Source: Surrey Advertiser, 18 Oct '19)



Fiona Haynes, of Butterfly Conservation, with Guildford in Bloom's Nature Conservation gold award, alongside volunteers (L-R) Geoff Pierce, Simon Riley, Adrian Thompson and John Tallon

## Guildford in Bloom awards, 2019

by Anne Wright, of the Pewley Down Volunteers

THERE WAS A GREAT CELEBRATION in Guildford, at the Yvonne Arnaud theatre, on 17 September. Over 200 contestants, from nursery school to pensioners, all dug their way to victory, and agreed about it. Due to the kindness of Guildford in Bloom and the generosity of its sponsors, we had a very happy party, about 450 of us, so there was a lot of clapping to be done.

Before the prize giving started, the Vivace Chorus put us in a botanical mood by singing to us: first 'Linden Tree' by Vaughan Williams, then 'My love is like a red, red rose' by Donald Swann and 'Country Gardens' by Percy Grainger. Joe Talbot from BBC's Radio Surrey was the guest Master of Ceremonies. The Mayor, Richard Billington, presented the awards.

There were 93 Allotments/Kitchen Gardens, 37 Front Gardens, 13 wildlife gardens, 12 pub gardens, 12 neighbourhood projects, 9 container gardens, 15 schools (the prizes had been awarded in Clandon Park Garden Centre, in June), 10 Nature Conservation Sites, 1 Student garden entry, 7 themed entries. We were observed by a visitor from outer space, who had come via Headway, to support the theme '50 Years of Lunar Landings'.

To give you an example of what has been achieved: St. Josephs Primary School, Year 3, 7/8 year olds, work on an allotment at the Aldershot Road site. The allotment was specially prepared for them by volunteers at Aldershot Road. It has paths, a potting bench, a shed and a greenhouse, so that when the children arrive, with such good background support they are able to learn the skills of planting and harvesting their own vegetables. They learn, their parents learn, and the community becomes part of the allotment site.

We are so lucky, in Guildford, to have these parks, gardens and allotment sites and to have all forms of gardening supported by the Borough Council and Guildford in Bloom. This event raised awareness of the need to protect all these sites. It helps us to pass on to the next generation, still at school now, the skills to grow flowers and vegetables.

For the first time, a new and most important category was included: the Best Site for Nature Conservation. The overall winner in this was Butterfly Conservation, which has prepared sites in this area for the Small Blue Butterfly. This is the smallest butterfly in the UK. It relies solely on Kidney Vetch as a plant to lay its eggs on. Kidney Vetch does well on bare ground in a chalk grassland habitat. The 'Small Blue' project has been running for two years, during which time groups of volunteers have prepared habitat for Kidney Vetch. The Small Blue then finds its own way to the food plant. The project officer, Fiona Haynes, was there to collect the prize, with the volunteers.

Other sites and their groups of volunteers were: Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground, Fox Corner Wildlife Area, Pewley Down Volunteers, Snaky Lane Community Wildlife Group, St. Mary's Church at Holmbury, Albury Vineyard, Friends of Chitty's Common, Tongham Woods Improvement Group, and University of Surrey Lakeside.

This is an important moment for the care of the environment in the Guildford area, as it is the first time that these sites have been brought together as a group. The majority of them are looked after by volunteers, and it is good to know how many volunteers are working in this area.

# Talk on Guildford and the Climate Emergency by Professor Chris Rapley

Summary by Forum member Colin Summerhayes, of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge



ON MONDAY 28th OCTOBER, some 50 GEF members and guests were treated to an excellent presentation in the GBC Council Chamber by Professor Chris Rapley. He is Professor of climate science at UCL, Chair of the Policy Commission on the Communication of Climate Science and Chair of the London Climate Change Partnership.

**He stressed that action from all levels of society is now urgent.**

He began by stating that leaving all fossil fuels in the ground would be ideal. However, we had to recognise that this will not work immediately. There had been massive investment in built infrastructure. The oil industry, in particular, was still investing heavily despite the last five years having been the warmest on record. There had been a 2% increase in total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2018 and emissions were not likely to peak until 2030. He stated that the physical impacts in the form of wild fires, polar melting and more intense rainfall were hitting harder than most climate scientists had predicted 10 years ago.

## Tipping points

With a series of expert slides, Prof. Rapley graphically outlined that the primary tipping points in the world were the Greenland ice sheet, Arctic sea ice, alpine glaciers, coral reefs and in West Antarctica. There were, at a slightly lower risk level, many secondary tipping points which included the Jet Stream, the Indian Monsoon, El Niño and the Amazon forests. These would affect highly populated areas and could quite soon lead to mass migration and social instability.

In summary, what the world is doing currently is not working. In 1989, there were 15 border walls in the world and now there were 70, including the 2,500 mile wall between India and Bangladesh. It was clear that a Risk Management approach was urgently needed to avoid the worst scenarios. All major countries need to come together to prepare a plan. He recommended the reading of the Global Risks Report 2019, which is available on <https://www.marsh.com/au/insights/research/global-risks-report-2019.html>

Action was needed now to avoid leaving this problem for future generations. It was encouraging

that recent UK polls showed that 85% of the population were now concerned about Climate Change (compared with 60% in 2013) and that 52% were very concerned. In Prof. Rapley's view, the key target is to abolish the use of fossil fuels as fast as possible and that meant overcoming the major vested interests – especially of the oil companies. He praised the Park and Ride electric buses in Guildford and encouraged the concept of "Electrify Guildford".

## Issues for urgent action

There followed a range of excellent questions, from which the following highlights were forthcoming:

- Although the UK only provided 1-2% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it was essential that the UK should set an example to the world. We are admired for our organisation and our achievement in reducing our reliance on coal as a source of power and our switch to renewables in our electricity power mix.
- There had been very little progress on transport matters, agriculture and social change. It is important that all concerned should talk to others about the Climate Emergency and especially press for changes in business and professional life.
- It was urgent that the UK and the world introduce carbon taxes as fast as possible. In the UK a carbon tax could replace income tax in a phased introduction.
- Fossil fuels get \$6 trillion of subsidy every year. This needs to be ended rapidly and we should start in the UK. The subsidisation of air travel is distorting travel choices.
- Does the UK have enough naval presence to protect our offshore wind power?
- Within China (but less so in their overseas influence), their system of 5-year plans is effective and reducing coal-fired energy generation. However, we need to recognise that change is more difficult in a democracy. The Chinese record on solar and wind power is good.
- Professor Rapley encouraged all present never to give up and to continue to press politicians and elected officials to prioritise the Climate Emergency in all that they do.

Forum member Michael Tanner says that Climate Change is

# 'A RACE WE MUST WIN'

THE TITLE OF THIS ARTICLE is taken from the theme announced for the United Nations Climate Action Summit held in New York from 23rd September. All the world knew that a Swedish teenager called Greta Thunberg was about to set sail for New York on a racing ocean yacht which had zero carbon emissions. This stripling was actually going to address the assembly of adult international experts. Most of us, though not a French right wing cabal, wished her well. She seemed like a mixture of Judy Garland and Joan of Arc and her mission as glamorous as following the yellow brick road, yet she proved more informed than many of us and exuded a conviction which many envied. Those at the Summit meeting included representatives of immensely wealthy lobbies in the States who, despite all predictions of the world's best scientists, continued to market the sales of investments in gas and oil producers and seemed blind to the need to switch such investments to renewable sources of energy.

It did not escape the attention of the media globally, that a little more than 50 years ago, on 16th July 1969, a rocket took off for the moon with three human beings on board, and just over eight days later returned bearing its passengers safely. Of the



many dramatic images taken on that voyage there was one which continues to rival even that of man's first footstep on the earth's satellite: the picture of a small, blue planet way out there in black space, catching the light of our great star the sun. Yes, our birthplace and home – the only birthplace and home for the only forms of life anywhere as far as we actually KNOW.

There were many reasons for the building and launching of Apollo 11, the least noble perhaps being the desire to get into space before Russia and establish the power of a particular nation. Science and technology undoubtedly learned and are still learning from that enterprise. The expense was enormous, the team effort awesome and the national will to do such a thing equally awesome.

The poignancy of the coincidence of that event with the rapidly growing understanding of what a threat we earthlings now pose to our own existence has not escaped the serious observers of the media. To some, however, it is equally disturbing that further missions into space should be conceived on the following bases: exploitation of rare minerals; the setting up of safe havens in the event of the earth becoming uninhabitable through climate change; internecine struggle; possible disastrous collision with a meteor. To some it seems equally clear that if human beings are capable of the will, the technology and the team effort exhibited through Apollo 11, why should they not be capable of directing such capabilities into reaching the global target of zero carbon emissions by 2050 or earlier? That is a greater goal than getting a man to the moon and certainly requires combined intelligence, resources, and good will on a global scale.

So there is the question which should have only one answer, but close behind it will follow the voices of those who all along were thinking short term, or those who could not renounce the piling up of all the wealth and power which their faculties could amass at the expense of the weaker and less privileged.

And perhaps a majority of humans may see themselves responsible, because of their creator-given endowments, for the wise and merciful tending of all that is living on this planet rather than simply toiling for their own apparent profit. So much remains to be learned about all forms of life and the grand ecology of life and about our human selves. What a cynical waste to see all those possibilities dashed by distorted and limited thinking, by arrogant action, by national or individual selfishness. Why, even our knowledge of ourselves is ascertained by processes only in their infancy, and certainly, our social awareness can only be in its infancy and might even have regressed since the time of the Greek philosophers. As for our educational systems, the systems we apply to our young, are they achieving what ideally they should be achieving? Are they achieving something greater than the efficient production of labour, geared to something called GDP, which results in a vast number of -human beings spending a so-called 'working life' producing or servicing in conditions which are tedious and repressive to the human spirit? Is it not the grossly inadequate aspects in these areas which have in fact brought us to the point of imminent disaster through the ignorant or careless despoiling of this beautiful blue planet? Is it not that our social ethics and the ethics of our relationship with other life forms and their habitats shared with us needs to be reviewed?

We have to come to a very different understanding of what realistic economics is. Modern economists would agree with that. And where do right and wrong types of behaviour come into the guidelines?

I have just questioned the priorities of our current educational systems. If maths and English are core subjects, that is presumably because they facilitate the process of communication and the process of solving problems. That is a simplistic statement of course, not least because it omits other areas of study such as science. But where does that leave ethics, music and the other arts and other languages? What are the essential foundations we should inculcate from the beginning? How about some basic ecology? Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to continue along this rich vein. I might just add that the 'tick box' fashion of measuring, and measuring itself, play too great a role in our regulated education. How about the study of wastefulness and its implications? Certainly we have, in the West particularly, become experts in wasting all our resources, from water and soil to human capacities. We have become masters of exploitation and made a great virtue out of speed and instant satisfaction, while the genuine quality of what we each create seems to constantly diminish. Of course the causes are manifold but the reasons are much harder to find – and this in the world of the silicon chip – most unfortunately as prone as any other

human world to greed, impatience and lack of genuine care for the world it serves.

So, foremost among the main questions facing all interested parties (which is most of us) is: how can governments, and the people they should be representing, make the impact required to reduce global carbon emissions to zero at the latest by 2050 when up against those parties funded by billions of dollars? Violent measures are out of the question, however much one may be inclined to desperation by the timescale of only 30 years. Certainly, one of the major weapons is enabling people to be increasingly aware of the situation and by disseminating accurate information. So much of the information in its disseminated form is inaccurate, although the obtaining and publication of relevant vital statistics has improved greatly in the past few years. Some of the inaccuracy is because of wilful distortion, some through carelessness. The independent scientific sources (rare beasts) strive to be accurate. BUT there are very wealthy agencies, especially in the States, which promulgate the economic and even the 'morally principled' (according to them) virtues of investing in fossil fuels. In connection with that, it may be comforting to see other agencies inviting investment in solar energy in such developing countries as Kenya, Nigeria, Myanmar, Guatemala. Closer to home, I see that Green Investment Bonds are offering interest rates of 8.5% growing to 12%.

The top four banks investing most heavily in fossil fuel projects are all based in the United States: J P Morgan Chase; Wells Fargo; Citi and Bank of America. Across the UK itself, councils are investing more than £16 billion in the fossil fuel industry. These facts should provide at least a glimpse into the array of daunting obstacles facing those genuinely concerned about climate change – facts which are no longer seriously disputed, even by some of the bodies just mentioned. Of course these will say 'OK, where are you going to invest your pension funds?'. A question to which the concerned YOUNG might like to respond, 'What a pity we do not have the funds to publish heavy and glossy magazines promoting investment in our assured future.' Yet these young people are also the grandchildren and godchildren of those who fund US agencies such as Forbes, who actively encourage investment in carbon-producing energy.

Greta Thunberg is precisely one of that generation who have the greatest right to articulate their thoughts and feelings regarding the world of 50 or more years from now. Backed by sound statistics and calculations she is simply proclaiming a logic based on them: 'We should no longer measure our wealth and success in the graph that shows economic growth, but in the curve that shows the emissions of greenhouse gases.' These are Thunberg's own words, as are the following delivered to a British audience:



'The UK's active, current support of new exploitation of fossil fuels – for example, the UK shale-gas fracking industry, the expansion of its North Sea oil and gas fields, the expansion of airports as well as the planning permission for a brand new coal mine – is beyond absurd.' Even as I write this, the latest news from the Government that there is to be an immediate halt to fracking in this country is being announced. What a pity that the powers that be did not earlier announce such a halt and make it a permanent cessation! Does that indicate political cunning or an utter lack of the kind of logic and courage that Thunberg evinces? In her case it evidently is not a matter of words; her stand is exacting and has exacted a deal of discomfort and self sacrifice from her – a demand which increasingly to many of us seems inevitably, undeniably and ultimately to be one we all should face to the best of our abilities and opportunity.

Across the globe it seems that the general public supports those changes which climate change experts state must be implemented within 30 years at the most, if humans are to continue their existence in tolerable conditions, or even at all. Friends of the Earth and the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) have done much independent

research and compiled statistics which are readily available on social media. These show, for example, the contribution to energy production that the following can make: Onshore and Offshore Wind; Solar; Water and Tidal; Biomass. The mean contribution of these alone would be 78% of the total required. Voltaic cell receptors and storage batteries are rapidly becoming more efficient and less expensive. They also indicate that the Nuclear option is too expensive and too vulnerable to imperfection, as is the storage of radio-active waste. Moreover, uranium is hardly a sustainable material.

Of course, sustainable energy production does require boosting subsidies in its earlier stages and this is where those who have already invested heavily in fossil fuels need to help and be helped in making the vital switch of their investments. Such switching requires the assistance of governments and the public. PAT (Public Attitude Tracker) states that the overall trends across GB pretty consistently support sustainables and show diminishing support for the nuclear and fracking options. Unfortunately there is also evidence that energy policy makers are not listening to the public. For the moment, anyhow, Fracking has been halted in this country, on the grounds of uncertainty about safety!

Distractions from a single-minded approach to tackling climate change are currently only too evident. 'Brexit' is the obvious one, but there are a host of others, not the least of which are irresponsibility by social media controllers plus that journalism which indulges in trivia, hyped-up information or deliberate distortion. Young and old have to be at their most alert in discerning what is deliberately false or carelessly inaccurate. The apparatus for this is often in their pockets, if correctly utilized. So where do we go, with so much information of so many colours and shapes coming at us?

Would you argue against any of the following half-dozen pointers while not necessarily agreeing with their order of priority?

- 1) Reduce your own carbon footprint (house, transport, diet, purchases)
- 2) Reduce the waste your lifestyle produces (food, fuel, destruction of habitat)
- 3) Respect all habitats whether of soil mites, skylarks, fungi, or the more obvious one of trees and indeed of all living things, even if you have a personal aversion. (pets, movement through any habitat on foot or by vehicle, off-road cars, off-shore power boats).
- 4) Reduce your travel, particularly by plane (what offset compensation are you prepared to make?)
- 5) Help to spread awareness of the global climate change position
- 6) Investigate the root meanings of Sustainability, Biodiversity, Pollution

# Amphibian and Reptile Conservation in Guildford

Rob Free, Weald Reserves Manager, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation



Common toad

THERE ARE JUST 13 SPECIES of reptile and amphibian native to mainland Britain. Possibly a few more would have made the list had the English Channel not got in the way after the end of the last glaciation. And possibly a few would have left the list in the twentieth century had it not been for some herculean conservation efforts.

Residents of Guildford may be surprised to learn that 12 of these 13 species can be found within a 10-mile cycle ride of the High Street. Only the pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*), native to just two sites in Norfolk, is at a distance.

Some species such as the natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*), sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) are protected at a European level under the Berne Convention, due to significant population declines. In Britain these species are confined to certain habitats including heathlands and sand dunes. Others such as the common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) are termed 'widespread species' as they occur in many parts of Britain.

For many years since its founding in the late 1960s Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) has been

involved in managing nature reserves to maintain rare herptiles (as reptiles and amphibians are collectively known) as well as captive breeding and reintroductions. ARC has been particularly active in the west of Surrey and adjacent parts of Hampshire and West Sussex.

## Our lowland heaths

At ARC's inception sand lizards remained in just four locations and smooth snakes in three in the South East, all of these being lowland heathland sites. The natterjack toad, once so common on nearby heaths as to have its own local name of the 'Thursday thrush' due to its distinctive call, was reduced to just one site in the South of England (with around 60 coastal sites in the North and Scotland). The reasons for the declines were associated with a reliance on heathland habitat and the loss of this habitat to development, afforestation and agriculture and the subsequent vulnerability of relict populations on islands to such events as wildfires.

ARC now manages 21 heathland nature reserves in the Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex area. Sand lizards and smooth snakes have been reintroduced to



Above left: Hatching sand lizards  
Above right: Adult male sand lizards (shame we can't show here their bright green breeding livery!)  
Left: Natterjack toad  
Below: Preparation for release



## Adders

Over the last few decades much conservation effort has gone into implementing the Species Recovery Programmes for the above three species, which enjoy European protection. The most recent cause for concern has been the adder (*Vipera berus*). Anecdotally herpetologists have felt for some years that populations have grown smaller with less recruitment of young. Being a species that can live for 30 years or more in the wild, such effects have been slow to show themselves in the records. Possibly it is related to either small, isolated and sedentary populations being vulnerable to persecution, or to chance events or to poorly considered habitat management aimed more at other species' needs. Some research in Scandinavia showed that isolated populations of adders there were suffering from the effects of inbreeding, resulting in low birth rates. Considerable effort is going into mapping adder hibernation sites in particular around Surrey in order that these areas can be treated sensitively in future.

For more information about ARC and the work we do see [www.arc-trust.org](http://www.arc-trust.org)

42 and 14 sites respectively in the South East over the last 50 years, the former through captive breeding at a vivarium in Shalford and the latter through translocations of adults as they are difficult to rear in captivity. The most recent reintroduction of sand lizards was at the RSPB's reserve at Farnham Heath in 2019.

## Natterjacks

Natterjack toads have proved more difficult to bring back from the brink. The reintroduced populations at Frensham Country Park and Crooksbury Common sadly number in single figures – such that volunteer surveyors have given the Frensham animals individual names! This may be due to predation from non-native signal crayfish in the case of Frensham, the shallow breeding pools drying too quickly during recent heatwaves, and possibly poor water quality related to acidification and nitrate pollution. The donor population for natterjack toad reintroductions in the South was Woolmer Forest, an MoD site managed by ARC. With nearly 50 years of conservation effort by ARC the Woolmer population is stable and producing between 50 and 100 spawn strings per annum. Ironically, limestone ballast present on Woolmer, a relic of the old military railway, may be buffering the breeding ponds against excessive acidity.



# Consequences of sea level rise due to climate change

by Richard Seymour, GEF Executive member and President of the Guildford branch of the Geographical Association

THE CAUSES OF SEA LEVEL CHANGE were explained in the last GEF newsletter, but little was said about the consequences for people living close to the coast. Low-lying islands such as the Maldives are at acute risk as continued rise in sea level results in flooding and loss of land and livelihoods. According to the World Bank, 'The Maldives stands at the frontline of the battle of climate change being one of the most vulnerable countries on Earth which needs to adapt to climate change.'

Climate change refugees have already been identified in a number of Pacific Islands where severe flooding has taken place. Other atoll nations such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands are also at extreme risk. The problem is further exacerbated by the increasing intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes which can devastate these low-lying communities.

When coastal flooding occurs aquifers can be contaminated by salt water, and this in turn impacts on drinking water supplies and water used for irrigation. In Bangladesh 20 million people are already affected by salinity in drinking water and this has resulted in serious environmental health consequences. In addition, crop yields are lower and there is loss of income from agriculture. Many

people in this highly vulnerable region have very uncertain futures, and already artificial islands in the delta area can be completely submerged especially during intense cyclones that impact on the Bay of Bengal. In fact many major cities of the world which are located on or near the coast and river mouths are vulnerable to rising sea levels including London, New York, New Orleans, Mumbai, Osaka and Guangzhou (a port city in China).

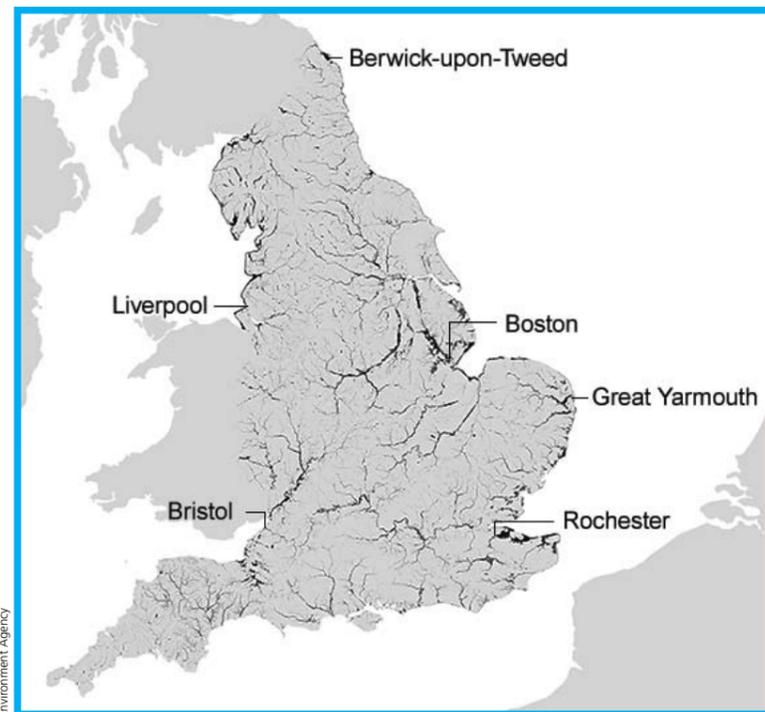
Sea level rise has consequences for coastal ecosystems. For example, the Everglades in Florida could become submerged, and with rising temperatures coral reefs such as the Great Barrier Reef are in grave danger.

Around the UK the coastal flood risk is increasing, especially where there is low-lying land close to the coast such as East Anglia, Lincolnshire, the Somerset Levels and the coast between Liverpool and Blackpool. Storm surge events such as the 1953 flood on the east coast claimed over 300 lives, which was the result of both weather and tidal conditions as well as a lack of appropriate coastal defences.

Whilst Shoreline Management Plans are in place there is a lack of funding in many places to adequately protect our coastal areas. As well as houses, infrastructure is also at risk including roads, railways, gas terminals and power stations. On Guernsey I have seen old landfill sites falling into the sea due to coastal erosion and sea level rise.

A specific part of the coast I have observed for many years is Furzy Cliff near Weymouth. The cliff is largely Oxford Clay which has been retreating due to the combined action of the sea and the weakness of the clay when saturated. The cliff here is retreating and as a consequence there has been a big reduction in property prices as the cliff has moved inland!

## Areas at high risk of flooding in England



Environment Agency

### Even fewer badgers

The badger cull in England has been expanded. Culling will take place in 11 additional areas, meaning that up to 64,000 animals are likely to be killed this autumn. Last year it was 42,000. (Source: *The Guardian*, 11 Sept '19)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Wise kids in Italy

Italy is to become the first country to make climate change lessons compulsory for schoolchildren. All state schools will dedicate nearly one hour per week to climate change issues from the start of the next academic year. (Source: *i*, 7 Nov '19)

### Wrong place, wrong time

Flight LM156, with 30 passengers on board, had left the flight stand at Stornoway Airport and was slowly heading to the runway, when the pilot spotted a hedgehog in front of the aircraft. After waiting for several minutes for the animal to safely cross the pathway, the pilot told everyone the reason for the stoppage and the journey was resumed. (Source: *The Scotsman*, 20 Sept '19)

### Out of sight, out of mind

Most plastic becomes 'rubbish'. An estimated 79% of the world's plastic waste resides underground, in landfill sites. (Source: *New Statesman*, 1 Nov '19)

### Cruising

The cruise industry transported over 26 million customers last year, and this number is projected to grow steadily. Cruise ships are often described as floating cities, and they are at least as polluting as cities on land. A passenger's carbon footprint triples in size when taking a cruise and the emissions produced can contribute to serious health issues. Cruise ships have also been caught discarding rubbish, fuel and sewage directly into the ocean. (Source: *Forbes.com*, 26 Apr '19)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Call that a refuge?

The Trump administration has announced that it will spend \$4m (£3m) on building projects in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in preparation for oil drilling in the nation's biggest wildlife park. (Source: *i Weekend*, 9 Jun '18)

### Cocktails

Around a quarter of all food, and over a third of fruit and vegetables, consumed in the UK contain pesticide 'cocktails', with some items containing traces of up to 14 different pesticides. Current regulations examine the safety of individual pesticides without testing whether exposure to multiple pesticides is safe. (Source: *Soil Association*, 24 Oct '19)



# THE YEAR 2018/19 HAS SEEN SURREY WILDLIFE TRUST CELEBRATING ITS 60th BIRTHDAY

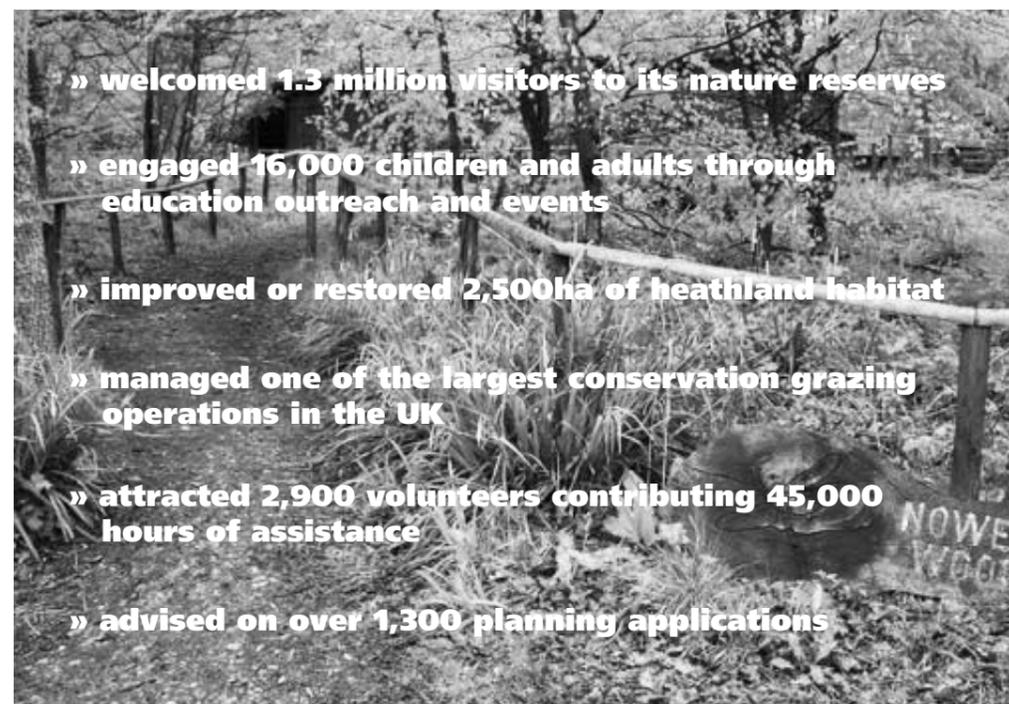


In March 1959, a band of likeminded ecologists, conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts came together to form the Surrey Naturalists' Trust, with a mission to record and protect Surrey's wildlife and inspire people of all ages about nature.

Sixty years later the name has changed, reflecting its partnership with 45 other Wildlife Trusts in the UK, but the vision that drove its founders remains.

With beginnings in simple nature trails in the 1960s, it continues to engage people young and old through its work, inspiring more than 15,000 adults and children every year. Membership has grown from a humble base of 100 in 1960 to over 26,000 in 2019.

## In its anniversary year the Trust has:



» welcomed 1.3 million visitors to its nature reserves

» engaged 16,000 children and adults through education outreach and events

» improved or restored 2,500ha of heathland habitat

» managed one of the largest conservation grazing operations in the UK

» attracted 2,900 volunteers contributing 45,000 hours of assistance

» advised on over 1,300 planning applications

# WILDING: the inspirational, and thought-provoking, effects of letting nature take its course

by Forum member Nicholas Thompson

I MEANDERED MY WAY towards the recent book *Wilding*, by the excellently named Isabella Tree, which tells the story of a bold leap away from intensive farming.

First, for me, came George Monbiot's powerful *Feral* (2013). Then discussions with my cousin, an arborist in the Lake District, about his efforts to restore trees to some of the 'sheepwrecked' hills. A newspaper article about Knepp, the 3,500 acre estate which Isabella's husband Charlie Burrell inherited in 1987, and in particular its purple emperor butterflies, prompted a visit to the estate a few years ago.

In January I heard Isabella speak at the Jaipur Literature Festival, where I suspect she was as surprised as some in the audience to find a book subtitled "*The return of wildlife to a Sussex farm*" pitched against some of South Asia's literary greats



(and Jeffrey Archer). Then, in August this year, it was back to Knepp itself, which in the meantime has launched glamping and half day 'safaris' to introduce many more people to the wonders of its burgeoning wildlife.

Yet even with all that preparation, I found myself repeatedly surprised and taken aback by the implications of what Isabella was writing, just as she and Charlie have been over the last 15 years.

Isabella has a background in journalism, so she knows how to tell a story and she has a great one to tell, as she takes her readers chronologically through the massive change from an intensive dairy and arable farm to a pioneer experiment in nature restoration. But she also knows the importance of linking the reality of what visitors to Knepp see in either tiny or commonplace creatures on the ground with the global issues we are struggling to face. Who could have imagined the importance of saproxylic insects, dung beetles and geese?

For bird lovers the stand-out news stories, as fields revert to scrub, are the return of turtle doves and nightingales. For butterfly fans it has been the purple emperor: Knepp has gone from zero to hero in a decade and has now overtaken Britain's previous number one location. But there has been so much more than that: hedgehogs have come back too, along with slow-worms, grass snakes, newts and rare

dragonflies. Knepp now has 34 species of butterfly and 441 of moths, with explosions in the numbers of brown and purple hairstreaks – and so the list goes on.

How have they done it? The key is 'conservation grazing': introducing animals that mimic as best as possible the medium and large herbivores that would have controlled the landscape if we hadn't killed them all off. They started with fallow deer and now have red deer too. Longhorn cattle came in as a proxy for the wild auroch, and Exmoor ponies for the tarpan.

As we learn about how these animals, and the lack of human intervention, change the landscape, most readers would expect some wider farming issues to be addressed: agribusiness and the livestock industry;

rural unemployment; chemical fertilisers and insecticides; organic farming; subsidies and government policy. But the book gradually takes us into more and more wide-reaching discussions.

And about every ten pages or so, Isabella bowls a real snorter of a delivery: something that rears up and makes us re-think things profoundly. To take a few:

- Red deer don't like moorland, so we should forget Landseer's *Monarch of the Glen*. Just as purple emperors – wrongly considered by recent textbooks as a woodland species – have loved the new willow growth at Knepp, red deer would rather be wallowing in lowland lakes than patrolling Scottish moorland. And the Scottish moorland isn't natural anyway. In both cases we have pushed the species so far back from their original habitat that we think they belong in the tiny pockets where they have clung on.
- Closed canopy forest is not what we should be creating, nor what – contrary to received wisdom – Britain or Europe used to have. Rather it is wood pasture: a mosaic of grassland, scrub and groves of trees that is what we used to have, what is coming back at Knepp, and is far more bio-diverse.

knightfrank.co.uk

- Oaks are not woodland trees. They won't regenerate there naturally because they need much more light. And they specifically need jays. A jay can plant 7,500 acorns in four weeks.
- If you see any ancient tree in the middle of a farmer's field, it is being slowly killed – by soil compaction, by the destruction of mycorrhizae and by chemical fertilisers.
- The average productive life of a dairy cow is only about five years. One longhorn at Knepp reached 21.
- You don't find holes in most cow pats these days because the anti-worming agents fed to cattle kill off dung beetles – and the mycorrhizae that all plant species depend on. (The fact that African dung beetles can navigate by the stars is another 'wow' moment but not one from Sussex.)

Rewilding has had its critics, but Isabella (or, more accurately, Knepp) seems to have all the answers to them too. No: Rewilding Britain, of which Charlie is a Trustee, doesn't want to take prime agricultural land out of food production. The Sussex Weald is Grade 3 and 4; much of Knepp was not farmed before the war and it was loss-making. No: leaving some ragwort in fields will not poison horses. No: fields won't just revert to unsightly thistles for years (they did have one really bad year, but an influx of painted ladies brought caterpillars that munched most of them). No: a patchwork of fields is not what this area had always

looked like, and no they don't want wolves and lynx and bison trampling our neat but useless lawns. (Well, they might actually but they recognise they need to be practical.)

Don't we need to plant as many trees as possible in the face of the climate emergency? Well, maybe not if soils can store more carbon than forests and wood pasture is also much better for biodiversity, and you get better results for much less money by allowing nature to choose what trees will grow where.

Invasive species; rivers and flooding; the food we eat; our disconnection from Nature; antibiotics; veganism; biofuels; forests and ancient trees; biodiversity; the lack of mental well-being in modern life and the restorative power of nature; the state of our soils; and ultimately the climate crisis itself – in a loose ascending order of importance, almost all the major environmental issues of our time are addressed here, from a viewpoint and on the basis of facts we do not often hear.

That soil and the climate are at the top of the list was probably the biggest surprise for me. One of the questions in my mind had been whether the boom in wildlife could be sustained in the face of a warmer climate. I still ask if the question is relevant, but *Wilding* has pointed me to the counter argument: if we could have enough low-grade agricultural land around the world turned into other Knepps, we would go a long way to solving the climate crisis itself.

"It's the *Silent Spring* of our times", said one of the guests on the safari. I think she was right.



rewildingeurope.com



# TWO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOK IDEAS FOR CHRISTMAS

by Adrian Thompson

## THERE IS NO PLANET B by Mike Berners-Lee

About 20 GEF members attended the Guildford Book Festival on 10th October to hear a presentation by Mike Berners-Lee in the Electric Theatre. Many of us bought a paperback copy of his recent book, published by Cambridge University Press. Caroline Lucas, MP wrote of the book "I absolutely loved this book... a beacon of common sense, clarity and - crucially - hope."

Mike is a professor in the Institute for Social Futures at Lancaster University and has written two other well-received books including "How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything". His third book is wide-ranging and informative and can be used as a reference book as it has an excellent index, covering everything from artificial intelligence to misinformation. This book is full of interesting facts and suggestions.

There are chapters on food, climate and the environment, energy, travel and transport, growth, money and metrics, people and work, business and technology, values and truth and trust. This excellent book includes two very useful summaries entitled "The Big Picture" and finally "What Can I do?" These are followed by an Appendix of 14 Climate Change Basics, which Mike Berners-Lee suggests that "every politician needs to understand before they are fit for office".

There are countless examples of interesting statements. Here are just a few.

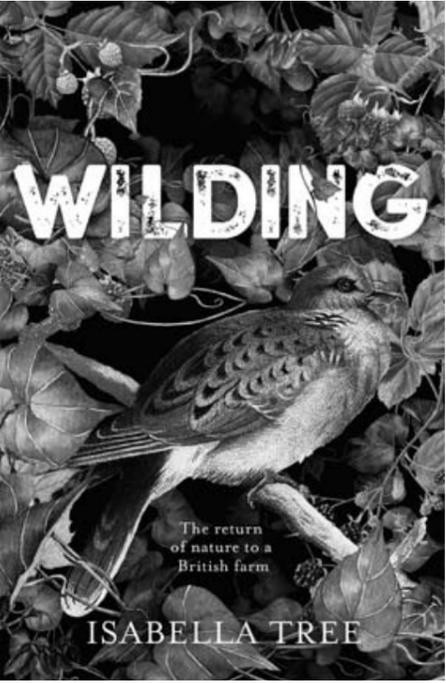
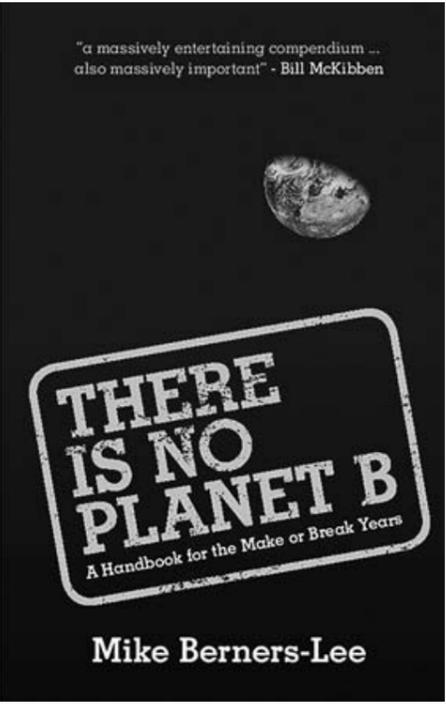
- "The median Italian is about twice as well off as the median American" (p133). This is because, although the USA is one of the richest countries in the world, per capita, so much wealth lies with so few.
- "We need to both leave the fossil fuels in the ground and grow our clean energy supply to replace it. The latter will not cause the former" (p95).
- "A continuation of 2.4% growth per year would mean we will be using seven times as much energy in 2100 as we are today" (p93).
- A study of flying insects found a frightening 75% decline in just 27 years (p54).
- Sea freight is over 30 times more energy efficient than air freight (p114).

The list is almost endless and there is so much interesting content that I plan to re-read this book as soon as I have time!

## WILDING by Isabella Tree

Isabella Tree is an award-winning author, travel writer and owner of the Knepp Wildland project, together with her husband, the conservationist Charlie Burrell. This fascinating book was first published by Picador in 2018. Chris Packham wrote "A poignant, practical and moving story of how to fix our broken land. This should be conservation's salvation; this should be its future; this is a new hope". George Monbiot wrote "The remarkable story of an astounding transformation."

A much fuller account of this book and the project can be found on page 16



# HELP URGENTLY NEEDED

Over the past year there has been unprecedented interest in our two core areas of activity ie the Climate Emergency and the Loss of Biodiversity. As a result membership has risen, we have enjoyed excellent attendances at our meetings and talks and the Group is in closer consultation with GBC. We are also increasing our links and working more closely with other local organisations, who take an increasing interest in what we do.

We have been delighted by the expertise and dedication of our Climate Change group. We have also been very pleased by the positive response to our offer to take Climate Change presentations to various parish councils, residents associations and community associations. The majority have accepted our offer and we now have a programme of talks planned well into next year. However, as with most organisations, this success is due to hard work 'behind the scenes' and some of those who have worked the hardest are now deciding that the time has come either to retire completely or to take more of a back seat. So far, attempts to find replacements have been unsuccessful. Our most pressing needs are:

- ❖ A new editor for our quarterly newsletter. (Clare Windsor has done an outstanding job for GEF, but the March 2020 newsletter will be her last as editor)
- ❖ A Membership Officer
- ❖ At least one GEF member to fill a vacancy on the GEF Executive (Strategy) Committee

We do appreciate how busy many people are, often with other environmental groups, and we appreciate all the support that you give us already but GEF may shortly be struggling to continue at the same level, let alone at an increased level, without some offers of help. It would be very sad if at a time when climate change and other environmental matters are finally beginning to make the news headlines, GEF may not be able to play its full part. If you feel you could offer any help at all - perhaps even on a 'job-share' basis, do please contact me: ([adrian@lampcottage.net](mailto:adrian@lampcottage.net)) or any other member of our Executive Committee

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**Guildford Environmental Forum aims to improve the environment in and around Guildford for wildlife and for people and to build a sustainable future.**

Join us in our work for the town and have this newsletter posted to your door four times a year. Forum membership is only £10 per year or £15 for a couple, while for age 21-25 it's £5 and for under 21s it's free. New members are warmly welcomed.

Please contact Adrian Thompson on 01483 222687 or email [adrian@lampcottage.net](mailto:adrian@lampcottage.net)



# CALENDAR

*All the Forum's meetings are open to the public*



## Tuesday 3rd December

Geographical Association of Guildford.

Talk by Dr Alasdair Pinkerton, of Royal Holloway University of London:  
**"Geopolitics".**

1730. Guildford County School, Farnham Road, Guildford GU2 4LU.

## Tuesday 4th February

Talk by Gillian and Ken Elsom:

**"Merrow Downs: Flora, Butterflies and Conservation".**

They have recorded plants on Merrow Downs butterfly transect for the last four years, and helped with conservation work for Butterfly Conservation and Surrey Botanical Society. Both are keen photographers who have recorded progress with the award-winning Small Blue Butterfly Project. The conservation work continues to improve our local chalk downland habitat for the future.

Enjoy the prospect of spring and summer in mid-winter!

1900 to 2100. The Council Chamber, GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

## Tuesday 11th February

Geographical Association of Guildford.

Talk by Mr Chris Mansfield, of Bracknell Forest Council:

**"The Regeneration of Bracknell's Central Business District".**

1730. The Great Hall, Royal Grammar School, High Street, Guildford GU1 3BB.

## Monday 24th February

Talk by Dr Jason Tisdall, CEO of Tanjent

(a specialist solar and battery storage provider <http://tanjent-energy.com>):

**"The New Energy Revolution".**

Jason will give a brief history of energy usage. The talk then dives into how new technologies are enabling an approach that combines both the National Grid and the domestic consumer as contributors in the same model.

1900 to 2100. Room 6, Hurtmore, GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

## Thursday 27th February

Talk by David E Harris, Group Head of Sustainable Business, London Stock Exchange Group:

**Can Investors Drive the Green Economy Revolution?**

David will discuss how global capital markets can play a powerful role in driving positive change. He will look at how pension funds and sovereign wealth funds are waking up to new ways to catalyse market-wide change to support sustainable development. He will also discuss what individuals can do to support the transition.

1900 to 2100. The Council Chamber, GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

## Tuesday 17th March

Geographical Association of Guildford.

Talk by Mr Sam Lee-Gammage, of Waitrose:

**"Sustainable Food Supply".**

1730. The Great Hall, Royal Grammar School, High Street, Guildford GU1 3BB.

## Thursday 23rd April

**Guildford Environmental Forum AGM.**

Talk by Dr Kate Basley, Citizen Science Coordinator, Surrey Wildlife Trust:

**"Bees, Bugs, Butterflies and Pollinators".**

1830 to 2100. The Council Chamber, GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

**Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor (details overleaf) by Monday 10 February. The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.**