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GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM
newsletter

DECEMBER 2018 – FEBRUARY 2019

Guildford Environmental Forum celebrates its first 25 years



ON 11th OCTOBER, GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM CELEBRATED ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY.

In a week when coincidentally the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its alarming special report on the impacts of global warming, the Forum had invited a celebrated speaker to address the prime issue of today – climate change.

James Smith CBE, former chair of Shell UK and of the Carbon Trust, proved to be an admirable choice, speaking on **'MUST WE, CAN WE AND WILL WE AVOID DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE?'**

to a packed room including the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, representatives from Guildford and Woking Borough Councils, Surrey University, Guildford Diocese, Surrey Wildlife Trust, Surrey Hills AONB, Guildford Society, Guildford Rotary and several local businesses. Apologies were received from the leader, deputy leader and managing director of Guildford Borough Council (GBC) as well as many others who were unable to attend.

As we settled back to enjoy the lecture, the speaker, known for his commitment to exploring and promoting low-carbon technologies, challenged the audience

by setting an exam consisting of four questions:

How do we avoid dangerous climate change; but still get the energy we need; at least cost; and with a high likelihood of success?

This resulted in a lively interchange of views throughout the evening.

It quickly became evident that all were agreed that we must avoid dangerous climate change, which the IPCC report has demonstrated as a global average temperature rise of more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (we are already committed to a 1°C rise). The speaker demonstrated, using a series of authoritative studies and quotes, that it is technically possible to avoid dangerous climate change provided that we use, as a matter of urgency, all the wide range of technologies available, including renewables, nuclear, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage (CCS). Decarbonising electricity is relatively straightforward but heat and transport are more difficult.

He also quoted various studies which have shown that the cost, although non-trivial, is affordable. However, both he and the audience were more sceptical about the strength of the will to keep below the 2°C, let alone the 1.5°C, level.

It was stressed that we require both the will and action at global, national and local levels. We need to consume less, have a sufficient and visible price on carbon for all goods, a logical, low carbon strategy based on both price and regulation, with the right



There were plenty of questions for James Smith to ponder.

policies and infrastructure, to bring this about.

It is unfortunate that the leaders at Guildford Borough Council were not present to hear this message as the Council, local businesses and residents need to work together to reduce Guildford's carbon footprint.

The speaker left us with one final thought – MAKE IT URGENT – as the changes are massive and we have left it very late and are close to running out of time, and may require carbon removing technologies ('negative carbon'). The climate doesn't have a reset button and we have one shot at getting it right for our children and grandchildren.

After an absorbing two hours the chairman regretfully had to bring the proceedings to a close, thanking the speaker for a thought-provoking presentation setting out the challenges the world faces. GEF will need to work hard to spread this message so that Guildford can play its part.

Report by Bill Kyte, photographs by Raymond Smith



The IPCC October 2018 report – a summary

- 1 Our human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming** above the global average for 1900, which is as warm if not warmer than the climate was at its hottest some 12,000 years ago at the end of the Ice Age. The recent warming has reversed a long term cooling trend lasting some thousands of years.
- 2 Global warming is likely to rise above its present increase of 1.0°C to reach 1.5°C** between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate, so we have a margin of just 0.5°C to work in if we are to not to overshoot that demanding target.
- 3 Climate-related risks** to the planet's natural and human systems are higher than at present for the anticipated global warming of 1.5°C. The risks include steadily rising sea levels, decreased availability of water for populations in arid regions, added heat pressure on agricultural plants in those same regions, an increased incidence of severe heat-waves and forest fires, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification affecting the base of the food chain in places. Dry areas will tend to become dryer, wet places wetter. Our global food security will be diminished, while the threat of forced migration will increase. The combination of increased heat and humidity will likely expand the spread of certain disease vectors (e.g. malaria, dengue fever) north and south from their current tropical to subtropical locations.
- 4 Climate models** suggest how global warming may develop if we overshoot the 1.5C target and move towards a global average warming of 2°C. Those global averages conceal the fact that the Arctic will warm twice or even three times as fast as elsewhere, with a high probability of melting yet more Greenland ice, further raising sea level. At 2°C above 1900 levels, currently hot extremes will be significantly exceeded, rain will be heavier leading to increased severe flooding in currently wet areas, presently dry areas will suffer more extended droughts, freshwater supplies will decline in dry regions, and higher sea levels will increase the likelihood of coastal flooding on low lying coasts.
- 5 By 2100, global mean sea level rise** may reach 1.0 metre or more (less if the temperature rise then is 1.5°C or less). However, sea level will continue to rise well beyond 2100 even if emissions ceased today. The slower the rate of sea level rise, the greater the opportunities for us to adapt to it.
- 6 Limiting global warming** to 1.5°C or at most to 2°C above 1900 levels will limit the impact on terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal ecosystems, enabling us to rely more on their services. Biodiversity will continue to decrease under the pressure of population growth.
- 7 Limiting global warming** to 1.5°C compared to 2°C will **reduce the rate of increase in ocean temperature and of loss of oxygen from the ocean.** In addition the proposed reduction in carbon emissions will decrease the rate of increase in ocean acidity. These changes will reduce risks to marine biodiversity, fisheries, and marine ecosystems.
- 8 To limit global warming to the 1.5°C target,** anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ emissions must decline by about 45% by 2030, reaching zero around 2050.
- 9 To limit global warming to below 2°C,** CO₂ emissions must decline by about 20% by 2030, reaching zero around 2075.
- 10 Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C** with no or limited overshoot will require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy use, land use, urban development, infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems. The required transitions are unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed. They imply deep carbon emission reductions in all sectors, multiple options for mitigation, and a substantial increase of investments in those options.
- 11 To reach the 1.5°C target, renewable energy sources** must supply 70–85% of electricity by 2050.
- 12 The voluntary global emissions cuts** offered by the world's nations **under the 2015 Paris Agreement** would lead to global warming of about 3°C. Larger efforts are required.
- 13 The demanding 1.5C target can only be met by joint action** from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples, local communities and individuals. International cooperation is essential for this target to be met. We did it for the Ozone Hole, and we can do it for the climate.

The full report can be downloaded from http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf

Comments from GEF's Climate Change Group

The GEF Climate Change Group has discussed the IPCC report on climate change [see below] and the 25th anniversary presentation by James Smith, and can summarise its views as follows:

- a. We totally support the key focus of our 25th Anniversary talk "that we must avoid dangerous climate change", which the IPCC report (issued on 8th October, 2018) has demonstrated requires a temperature rise of no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- b. We also fully endorse James Smith's emphasis that we must **MAKE IT URGENT** as the changes are massive and we have left it very late and are close to running out of time. We agree that this urgency may also require carbon removing technologies ('negative carbon') like those listed in the October 2018 report by the Royal Society on 'Greenhouse Gas Removal'.
- c. We support James Smith's key statement that our climate doesn't have a reset button and we have one shot at getting it right for our children and grandchildren.
- d. GEF firmly believes that individuals can and must make a difference, especially through the following actions:
 - We should all use our votes to pressure our Councillors and MPs to ensure that climate change is given much higher priority in policy and decision-making in Guildford and in the UK as a whole.

- We must increasingly adopt lifestyles and technologies that accord with "One Planet Living".
- We should, as far as possible, ensure that our investments are placed in "ethical funds", which should prioritise green technologies.
- e. Advice on how to achieve sustainable living for the 21st century, entitled 'Transformation is Feasible' was also published in October, by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, as an update to the 1972 Club of Rome report 'Limits to Growth'. It supports the thrusts of James Smith's talk, and of the October reports of the IPCC and the Royal Society. All three reports are available on the Internet.
- f. The GEF Climate Change Group supports the idea, proposed to GBC, that Guildford forms a "Guildford Low Carbon Forum". We are disappointed at the lack of response and support by GBC councillors and executive and GEF will continue to promote a Guildford Low Carbon Forum.
- g. GEF will hold climate change-related talks in the next quarter on "Population Matters" (24th January, by David Hepper) and "Welcome to the Anthropocene" (18th March, by Colin Summerhayes).
- h. We encourage all our readers to ensure that the threats to future generations posed by climate change are talked about as widely as possible. We hope that the summary of the report, set out below will be useful. *Adrian Thompson*

Climate change: are we too late?

John Bannister

IF LIKE ME you have reacted in horror at the recent report from the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) and are wondering where this will end, all I can say is that we are not alone in being scared.

The average global temperature has already risen by 1 degree C since the industrial revolution, So what hope is there of staying below 1.5 degrees C, which is the rise that the IPCC is telling us is the safe level if we are to avoid the worst from global warming? None at all in my view. We are already seeing a multitude of problems from forest fires, some in most unexpected places, loss of ice at the poles, sea level rise, droughts, extreme weather, wildlife impacts, etc. I think there is now no hope of staying below 1.5 and we will soon exceed this and head up to 2 degrees C and beyond, where the climate will be out of control. By 2100, we may well be looking at a 5 or 6 degree average temperature rise.

The IPCC report makes it very clear that if we allow the average global temperature to increase by more than 1.5, then one or more tipping points will kick in even more aggressively and the temperature will race away. Even a rise of 2 degrees C is too much (unless you believe the US President who claims the climate will change back).

Several tipping points are already occurring: the progressive melting of Arctic ice, so less of the sun's

heat is being reflected back into space and is absorbed by the sea instead; sea encroachment and severe droughts affecting our food production and its cost. My children and grand children will have to face living with the consequences of my generation's total failure to act in time to avert this crisis when the IPCC has been trying to tell us to act. So much so that we are going to have to fall back on man's ability to suck CO₂ out of the atmosphere, carbon capture and storage, and unproven geo-engineering projects that business and some governments love the idea of.

The UK government is quick to point out that the UK's CO₂ emissions are falling, which is true, and that we are in a leadership position, which is exaggerated. This is because the UN protocol for reporting each nation's CO₂ emissions only includes those emissions generated within its borders and excludes emissions associated with imports and exports. So for a nation like the UK that is a net importer of fossil fuels, food and manufactured goods, for example, we are grossly under-reporting a lot of the emissions that we are responsible for. China and South East Asia by comparison are having to report more of these kind of emissions because they are big manufacturers and exporters.

We need to be aware of this so we can better direct our attempts to mitigate climate change.



BEST PLAYGROUND FOR WILDLIFE

THE JUDGES HAD SUCH FUN judging all the hard work and seeing how the schools are encouraging the wildlife into their playgrounds and creating a safe space for them. We were delighted to see lots of weeds growing in the grass, bird feeders, bug hotels and even bug mansions, flowers to attract the birds and the bees, wild patches and lots of recycling.

In the competition there were such amazing and inspirational ideas meeting the theme of 'The World Around Us'. And the most important thing is that everyone really enjoyed creating their projects.

Even though my co-judge, Suki Lowres, was so unwell, she was amazing and it was my privilege to have shared 2 years working alongside her as co-judge. The Awards Ceremony took place at Clandon Park Garden Centre. It was obvious the children loved it, with the guest speaker 'Beekeeper' being a great success; and it was so great to see the children getting their hands dirty as they planted up pot plants generously donated by Clandon Park Garden Centre.

The winner of the 2018 Best School in Bloom was **Wonersh and Shamley Green**. The judges were very impressed at how well informed the children

were and at the pupil's involvement. They should be very proud of their achievements.

Sadly, only a week after the Schools Awards Ceremony Suki passed away, but she was able to see the fruits of all her hard work. She had been on the Guildford in Bloom Committee for 17 years and in that time had worked tirelessly to encourage schools to create playgrounds for wildlife.

BEST GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

With 12 entries for this category, it was the best ever, although it had been a harsh year with the very late spring frosts and blistering summer temperatures rendering most of the gardens to a crisp! Conservation was evident with gardens being watered with washing up water or bath water, and an elderly couple with a very steep garden had cleverly harvested rainwater from their shed to save carting heavy watering cans up steep steps.

Our youngest gardener was nearly three who, with the help of his Grandma, had created a small front garden for wildlife to encourage his insect friends. No pesticides, insecticides or slug pellets were used and they had planted perennial plants and shrubs

for colour, scent, shelter and food with such plants as rue, scabious, verbena, thyme, sage, lavender, penstemon, geranium, rosemary and clematis. The result was an inspiration to children passing on their way to and from school, but for little Freddy the experience with his Grandma would probably last a lifetime.

Encouraging children to garden to attract wildlife has many benefits:

- It creates a respect and responsibility towards nature
- It develops practical skills
- It encourages care for the environment
- It encourages an understanding of the need for conservation and preservation
- It encourages working together as a team
- It creates an awareness of the passage of the seasons
- It helps to remove fear of creepy crawlies
- It enhances and protects the environment
- It encourages recycling
- and it's lots of fun!

Both myself and my co-judge, Raymond Smith, were impressed at the role volunteers were playing in protecting wildlife. **Snakey Lane Community Wildlife Group** totally demonstrated that: with the help of their volunteers they had created an oasis of peace and therefore deserved the Dorothy Walden Trophy for Best Themed Garden, which this year was 'Peace' in memory of all those who had lost their lives in the First World War. The site has attracted foxes, deer and badgers along with a variety of birds, dragonflies and butterflies. A totem pole had been erected with carvings of all this incredible wildlife, and local residents who had lost loved ones were being encouraged to have a plaque



Raymond Smith

placed on the pole in their memory. Snakey Lane is a Community Group run for the community.

The winners of this year's Best Garden for Wildlife were **Pewley Down Volunteers** who had done an incredible amount of hard work to attract 500 species to the site, along with creating three scrapes to ensure the flora and environment required for the precious Small Blue butterfly. We were delighted to see that youngsters were being involved through the Duke of Edinburgh Award. By means of careful management, the volunteers had created ideal conditions for the Down's flora and fauna and a beautiful space for human beings to be at one with nature.

WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

Everywhere the judges went, young and old were passionately caring for our wildlife. However, despite this we really need to up our game if we are to protect our environment and what makes Guildford and its environs so special.

I am very concerned at Guildford Borough Council's commitment to putting parts of our Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty under concrete, which goes against protecting our environment and wildlife.

It's now proven beyond doubt that global warming is a harsh reality and that what's going on is caused by human activity. Another shocking fact is that wildlife is in serious trouble and again this is due to human activity. The 'Living Planet' report by the World Wildlife Fund states that many species are in danger of extinction. The UK has lost more nature than the global average and we are now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world! Another chilling fact is that 97% of our wildflower meadows, on which our pollinators rely, have been lost in the UK since the 1930s.

With alarm I've witnessed this depletion with my own eyes at the University's Manor Park development, where the endangered species never returned to the area. Now in the Local Plan a vast area of rare and nationally important chalk ridge, our iconic Hogs Back, is committed to development.

The big question is, are we only doing lip service to protecting our wildlife and environment if we build on our precious Green Belt and AONBs? Both are our inheritance for now and future generations and with global warming being so critical, it is insanity to throw this away.

It's a salient thought that not so long ago nightingales used to sing in Guildford. That was until the erection of lighting on the A3. No-one hears nightingales in Guildford now.



What success has GEF had in protecting our environment? Adrian Thompson takes a measured look

I have re-read copies of GEF newsletters dating back to 2005. I was most impressed by the content and the quality of the articles (and they can be read in full via the GEF website – go to <http://gefweb.org.uk/nsltr.html>).

However, what struck me most was that in some cases, significant environmental improvements had been achieved . . . but in other areas, very little has changed and ten years have been lost. At the end of this article, I suggest a few reasons for this. Let me go into a bit more detail on a few particular issues:

1 "The world must act quickly on Climate Change". In January 2006, a talk by Bill Kyte. The article concluded that *"We must not underestimate the time it takes to perfect and deploy new technology – typically 40 years – so we must find the political will and start NOW."* Over 12 years later, in 2018, the recent IPCC report stated that we now have 10-12 years to avoid catastrophic Climate Change. GEF directly invited 34 GBC councillors and staff to our 25th Anniversary Talk on Climate Change and 13 accepted the invitation initially. On the day only 3 (2 of whom were already GEF members) actually attended. The GEF Climate Change Group will continue to press for greater awareness of the challenges that Guildford should now be addressing, but we are not confident of any additional support in the short term.

2 "There is only between 2 and 5 years of landfill space left in Surrey and Guildford achieved a 24% recycling rate in 2004/5". In December 2005, Trudy Thompson wrote an article in response to the EU 2004 waste directive. Thanks to the long-term policy of GBC to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, the recycling rate in Guildford has risen to 57% (see article in June 2018). This example does show the power of the EU, when supported by community pressure, to succeed with an environmental issue. Surrey County Council is expected to open an ECO Park at Charlton in 2019 and GEF are planning a visit. This is an important step, but it will have taken some 13 years to achieve!

3 "Here in the South-East we need 3½ Earths to support our lifestyles". In December 2005, John Bannister wrote this headline on the front page of that GEF newsletter and explained that Bioregional (with WWF support) had launched the BedZED project. Pooran Desai, Director of Bioregional, returned in Nov 2016 to update GEF and Guildford on the lessons learnt. In Sept 2017, GEF returned to BedZED in Sutton with GBC and Woking officers to review this ground-breaking housing project. The original scheme has been repeated across the world. Pooran has been looking for a site in Guildford, but there appears to be no interest within Guildford Council to support this fine example of "One Planet Living".

4 "Wood Chip and Wood Pellet Production in the Surrey Hills". In March 2007, Lucy McKenzie wrote in the GEF newsletter that The Surrey Hills Wood Fuel Group had received a grant from DEFRA to develop this carbon-neutral fuel source on our doorstep. GEF long-term member Mark Lebus has used this grant to help develop a thriving business (LC Energy) based locally in Albury, which now delivers high quality renewable heating services and fuel supply to local universities, airports, hospitals and businesses. GEF was represented by John Bannister at the 10th anniversary celebration of LC Energy and this was reported in our December 2017 edition.

5 "Changing from a high meat diet to a standard vegan diet would save 1.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person per year". John Bannister reported in June 2006 on research undertaken by the University of Chicago in late 2005. He correctly pointed out that one third of our personal carbon emissions were the result of our food consumption.





The articles in the March and June 2006 issues criticised the Western diet, for including too much saturated fat and sugar that caused diabetes, cancer and obesity. Not only have successive UK governments failed to tackle these issues, but UK and US companies have exported the problems to developing countries, thus compounding the problems of diet, food miles, and inefficient land and water use. It is noteworthy that the IPCC report of October 2018 (over 12 years later) listed the reduction of meat in our diet as one of the most effective ways of reducing our CO₂ emissions so as to limit climate change.

6 "For many years, GEF have been helping homeowners and schools in Guildford to install solar panels". In a letter to the *Surrey Advertiser* in early 2009, John Bannister, the Chair of GEF advised Guildford residents that "after working with GBC the rules on installing solar panels have now been modified to allow solar panels on sloping roofs without having to obtain prior planning permission". Guildford was slow to respond to a national trend, but many properties have since benefitted from the FIT support provided by the government. Solar PV currently provides about 3.5% of the UK's energy needs (7% in Germany) and this may well have been Guildford's biggest single contribution towards fighting climate change in recent years.

7 "Cycling as a Means of Transport". Exactly 10 years ago, GEF member Ian Waghorn argued that cycling to work reduced petrol costs, improved health, reduced all of air pollution, noise, energy consumption, stress and travel time (especially in London). There are some projects such as the excellent Bike Project (109 Southway, Guildford GU2 8DQ, tel 01483 440742) and the plan to link the town centre and the University of Surrey for cyclists. 24% of Guildford residents (SCC survey in Summer 2015) stated that they were likely to consider taking up cycling. What they wanted was more cycle paths to be separated from traffic and this has hardly been addressed at all in Guildford.

The seven examples above of key environmental issues show three significant areas where GEF members have been successful in fighting for, and supporting or implementing, environmental matters

over the last 15 years. These are recycling, wood chip production and solar PV energy. All of these required initial investment funding and are now paying back that investment for the benefit of future residents.

Guildford would be a much more attractive place to live now, had the environmental costs of failing to address the other four issues been accepted 10 years ago. However, it is not too late to do so and we would encourage Guildford residents and our councillors to live more sustainably as regards:

- a Climate Change – Other articles in this issue (especially the recent IPCC report) make it clear beyond all reasonable doubt that we MUST invest NOW to help avoid catastrophic climate change occurring in our lifetimes.**
- b One Planet Living – GEF advocates this way of living and more information can be found at <https://www.bioregional.com/oneplanetliving>**
- c Eating more sustainably – by watching issues such as food miles, healthy diet and efficient land and water use. We need a lead and investment by central and local government to reduce the pressures of our growing population.**
- d Sustainable transport – GEF encourages more walking, cycling and public transport but, as individuals, we should be aware that the single biggest step that we can make is to reduce or eliminate travelling by plane.**

As James Smith said in our 25th anniversary lecture, "Changes are urgent as the changes needed are massive and we have left it very late and are close to running out of time".



EFFINGHAM COMMONERS' DAY 2018

John Bannister

COMMONERS' RIGHTS for the population at large to access and make use of land were largely taken away with the Enclosures Acts in the 18th and 19th centuries. These Acts were part of a movement by the landowning gentry on the presumption they could make much better use of such land as farmland. But some of these rights have miraculously survived and are still around to this day. Effingham Common is one of the few local examples still intact.

GEF helped exercise commoners' rights on Effingham Common at their Open Day on 30th September. Roger Gates and I did this by demonstrating how to take a hay crop using scythes, which would have been the traditional tool to harvest grain for humans and food for animals over winter. The Parish asked for our support at Effingham Commoners' Day a few years back when we offered to demonstrate our scything skills. This year it was a slightly bigger event and scything by GEF was the only traditional skill on offer and we were glad to maintain and share this tradition, as we do twice a year with GEF scything courses at our Rosamund Community Garden.

Patronage for commoners came under the Lord of the Manor, who could grant rights to: **pasture** for horses, ponies, geese, sheep or cattle; **estovers** for furze,

gorse or wood for building or heating; **piscary** for fishing rights; **pannage** to fatten pigs in the autumn on acorns, beech-mast, etc; and **turbary** to take turf for fuel. A decision to Enclose had to be made by three-quarters of the landowners. Many poor yeomen and farmers were forced off the land and had to find work in the towns and cities. It must have been a very hard time.

Effingham Common and Bookham Common have been shown in records since before Domesday, and were originally part of a larger open area including what was then Yaffingham and Bochum. Today it is a long curved area of rough grassland with thin woods either side running roughly north-south from Effingham station to the village of Effingham. Clay pits used to support several brick kilns on the common, and in 1888 the London & Guildford South West Railway (L&SWR) built Effingham Junction station. Guildford Borough Council acquired the largest part of the common in 2003.

It was good being part of the affirmative action to keep the commoners' rights alive in the 21st century. There are only four properties today with commoners' rights in Effingham, but these rights are recorded on the Surrey County Council Register of Common Land.



John Bannister (right) and Roger Gates demonstrate scything at the Effingham Commoners' Day event

Commons are wonderful places for children to explore and play in. When I was at Primary School my mother let me have the run of Wimbledon Common; she kept a sweet shop in the High Street. There I learned my love of nature and to climb trees – I still have the scars to prove it and the memory of being hit with a hair-brush for tearing my new school trousers!

Not quite so worrying

There is a healthy population of nearly 3,000 polar bears in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska, a study has found. Many others elsewhere in the Arctic remain threatened by diminishing sea ice. (Source: *i Weekend*, 17 Nov '18)

Go for tap, not bottle

Western consumers are increasingly buying bottled water, adding to the problem of plastic waste. Yet experts at the University of Nottingham estimate that to make a 1-litre plastic bottle requires 162 grams of oil and 7 litres of water. (Source: *New Statesman*, 20 July '18)

FACTS & FIGURES

Monopolistic merger

In April, Bayer purchased Monsanto for \$62.5 billion, creating a company that controls more than a quarter of the world's seed and pesticides market. (Source: *Soil Association*, Apr '18)

The UK Red List

Twelve species have been put on the first Red List of wild mammals in the UK. Among them are red squirrel, wildcat and grey long-eared bat – all facing severe threats to their survival. Almost one in five UK mammals is now at risk of extinction, say the Mammal Society and Natural England. (Source: *BBC News*, 13 Jun '18)

Community Energy Awards 2018



Kathy Smyth (Springbok) with Paul Phare, John Malone and Mike Smyth of Energy4All

We congratulate Energy4All – often featured in these pages – on receiving the 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Energy Award, 2018'. Mike Smyth said, *"We are thrilled to receive this special award. Making such a contribution has relied on: the original vision of Baywind (the founders of Energy4All); the amazing support of the members of E4A's 24 co-ops and bencoms (Community Benefit Societies); the work of the volunteer boards of those co-ops; collaboration with like-minded partner organisations; and the tireless hard work of the dedicated staff at Energy4All."*



Intercession

At first we didn't mind didn't really notice. Like us they searched for water and food – the dew, streams, lakes, roots, fruits, carrion, each other, sometimes, used shelter already there – caves, leaves, trees the carcasses of monsters. Then, gradual as time, we found life harder – less for all our needs – food, shelter, space itself, freedom from fear, freedom to raise our young.

We moved and moved again kept on moving Some of us moved so far THEY never saw us again.

No longer was it ice or fire, Sun or rain not coming, we saw THEY were the cause – Like all our other woes Joined and multiplied, saw this would never end.

YOU, the inventors of words, Do not the words fit YOU, 'Illegal Immigrants'?

Michael Tanner

Take-away meals

Urban sparrow-hawks are now reproductively more successful than their country cousins, due to an abundance of avian prey in cities and a landscape that favours the hawks' hunting technique.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, Mar '18)

Hidden expense of badger cull

The cost of policing the badger cull in Cheshire – one of the 21 zones undertaking the slaughter of badgers – in autumn 2017 was £800,000, i.e. more than £1,000 for every animal killed there.

(Source: i Weekend, 5 May '18)

FACTS & FIGURES

We're outnumbered

One in four animal species is a type of beetle.

(Source: 'Insecta' by Charles and Adrienne Nesbit)

Presidential advice

"We'll be fine with the environment. We can leave a little bit, but you can't destroy businesses."

(Donald Trump, having slated America's Environmental Protection Agency.)



Making Guildford an Eco Diocese

Alwyn Marriage

AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER this year, the Guildford Diocese of the Church of England launched a project to become an Eco Diocese, with an event at St Peter's Church, Frimley. About 40 parishes from around the diocese attended, to learn more about what is happening in those churches that are attempting to lighten their footprint on the earth, and to hear a talk by Bishop Jo Bailey-Wells which, as well as warning of the severe dangers we are in, and acknowledging the gloom and grief we are having to face, also offered some words of encouragement and optimism.

In order to qualify as an Eco Diocese of the Church of England, it is necessary for a certain number of parishes to become involved in the Eco parishes scheme at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. At the first level, 10% of local parishes need to register for, and 5% be awarded Bronze. Looking further ahead, 20% need to register for, and 10% be awarded Silver; and 30% need to register for, and 20% be awarded, Gold.

Sixteen dioceses have so far registered for the scheme, and at the beginning of November, Salisbury Diocese became the first to qualify for Bronze. I'm very pleased to be able to report that Guildford Diocese now has 13 parishes with awards and another 14 parishes registered, which means that Guildford qualifies for an Eco Diocese Bronze award. We look forward to moving on towards Silver and Gold without too much delay.

The parish of Holy Trinity and St Mary's, Guildford, which was represented at the event, achieved an Eco church Bronze award earlier this year, and is now well on its way to the next stage of achieving a Silver award. There has been an environmental group at Holy Trinity for the last couple of years and the church took out membership of GEF earlier this year. As well as encouraging and advising over important matters pertaining to church buildings and activities, the environmental group has recently conducted a questionnaire for parishioners at Holy Trinity and St Mary's, so that we can assess (and in time improve upon) the environmental credentials of our congregations. Among other initiatives, Holy Trinity has installed one of GEF's swift boxes on the church tower, and St Mary's has been developing its wildflower area of the graveyard. Church schools are not included in the assessment, but it is perhaps worth noting that Holy Trinity School, Guildford has for a number of years been a beacon of environmental awareness, including harvesting electricity from solar panels.

Caring for God's creation is an important part of Christians' commitment, and we are delighted that awareness and action are both now growing in our local churches.

If you would like to know more about the Eco Diocese as it develops, please contact the Diocesan Environmental Advisor, the Revd Dr Lesley Crawley, at lesley.crawley@cofeguildford.org.uk.

THE YEAR GONE BY:

extracts from *A Country Diary* by Forum member Michael Tanner

Saturday December 16th 2017

BOUNDLESS ROAD AREA, GUILDFORD SIDE OF HINDHEAD

Mysteriously empty and unsupervised on the road verge, two large and smart trucks for transporting large and smart horses, no-one to be seen. The day is cool and dry after a morning frost. The mystery is solved for me when I return more than an hour later from a walk further to the south, up Beech Hill. Half a dozen beautifully groomed horses with male and female riders appropriately attired in attendance are waiting for a vehicle to pick them up. The one they came in has broken down.

I have a brief chat with them but remain unclear as to whether their activities actually concerned hunting. None of the riders or the horses look as if they have a speck of earth or sweat on them and they all seem in good fettle. Perhaps it was a rehearsal for Boxing Day.

There was a white frost this morning, and recently some heavy rain, but day temperatures have frequently been quite mild.

Sunday January 7th 2018

AFTERNOON ON HANKLEY COMMON

This is the essence of Surrey heathland, with its undulating slopes covered in dark heather, deeply incised by storm water, its extensive woods of fir and pine, its iron-stained sand littered with pebbles and chipped flint and its ability to deprive the walker of his/her sense of direction. No stutter of automatic weapons today, or the thudding of helicopter blades, though the seemingly indestructible length of the 1940s simulated Nazi Atlantic Wall still lurks forbiddingly just within the edges of woodland. Even here, man is reminded that his synthetic rock takes less than a man's lifetime to begin its metamorphosis into a kind of limestone which alkaline-loving plants are already colonising.

Though there are walkers out with their dogs today, and ponies on some of the trails, you can go for long stretches seeing no-one.

Gorse in bright bloom can still surprise you, even in this month. The human being here is absorbed by the landscape as he has been for many hundreds of years, back to the time when his scraggy cattle foraged here and he managed to find sufficient fuel in the dried twigs of gorse and the dead roots and branches of old pine.

These days his trail ponies, his rambling dogs and his own feet must be significant factors in the heathland ecology to a degree he still does not fully understand or appreciate.

Sunday January 28th, early afternoon

SEALE AREA AND HOG'S BACK

Temperature today up to 13 degrees; no wind. The hazels of the central reservation of the A31 hold a gentle luminosity. Their catkins dangle over long sections. A solitary cluster of celandines in Seale Lane below catches and holds the eye; so do the white scars of the chain-slash pruned hedgerow above it. The plough land is sodden. On it rooks mingle with vociferous jackdaws, a buzzard drifts over the carriageway from north to south. After recent heavy rain, the wide valley to the south of the ridge holds a number of extensive pools. One or two of these are already inviting mallard and maybe a pair of Canada geese. Hedge sparrows and thrushes are singing. Woodpigeon couples are obvious in the leafless trees.



Sunday February 4th, mid afternoon

THE WEY PATH ON WEST SIDE BETWEEN GUILDFORD AND THE STEPS UP TO OLD PORTSMOUTH ROAD

A host of mallard are gathered on the island near the Britannia Pub. Intense and sometimes vicious rivalry between the drakes. Two drakes will often shepherd one duck and see off any third drake that seems interested in their adopted duck. Further upstream solitary ducks skulk amidst reeds, apparently wishing to take no part in the main group's activities.



Today the river is full and the current fast and powerful. The sluice beyond the boathouse releases a maelstrom of frothing water. Molehills are everywhere on the patches of grassland. There are many rowers out on the water despite the strong current (perhaps because of it). An exasperated coach looks out over the water. I try to pick a stem of

euphorbia growing from a crack in the lane's edge above the steps: it proves too tough and exudes a sticky milky juice, like its smaller cousins.

Saturday March 3rd, late afternoon

RUNFOLD AREA

Temperature about 6 degrees – after several days of freezing and snow on Thursday and Friday a fast thaw has set in. Some snow showers were heavy but in our locality nothing like so bad as in the south-west or even as close as mid Hampshire and East Sussex. Here it has become much warmer despite occasional sharp, cautionary gusts.

Naturalised daffodils round here are again vertical. Small birds can again be heard – a great tit or two and others difficult to identify. In some lucky back gardens small charms of goldfinches are swaying on the heads of dead sunflower species and blackbirds

suddenly seem to be everywhere. Footpaths are slushy though little snow remains. Ponds retain a skin of ice. A single swan is on the pond in Waverley meadows and sheep have ventured out onto exposed pastureland.

Sunday March 18th, late afternoon

PUTTENHAM GOLF COURSE

About an inch and a half of snow encrusts the mown sward. The wind bites in this exposed area. Even so, several young rabbits are visible near hedgerows on the edge of tracks. Perhaps they are the reason for the two kites patrolling the area. The white surface would be pristine but for the easily identifiable tracks of a man with some children and a toboggan and the telltale prints of a pheasant, crows and a fox. Hazels still bear long catkins just past their lovely lime-luminous prime. In the pervading stillness, something seems to be in the balance. It makes one stand still and listen.

Good Friday March 30th, late morning

WEY VALLEY BETWEEN EAST FARNHAM AND WAVERLEY ABBEY

There has been plenty of rain upon already sodden ground and even now there is a slight drizzle. In the middle of the flood plain where the footpath crosses the river, the waters create a fearsome maelstrom today as they plunge to a lower level. Still there are many trail and road cyclists about and walkers with young children who cannot resist testing the capabilities of their frequently



colourful wellies. Towards Stella Cottage the river flows through dense willow woods and the air is full of goose language in a range of pitches and patterns, though you cannot see a single goose. Huge sweet chestnuts, beeches and sycamores flank the path, which is a favourite with walkers. On its northern side are wooded red sandstone slopes, sometimes forming cavernous cliffs. Today the area holds a definite sense of drama which is sustained in the approaches to the ruins of Waverley Abbey. Presumably Jonathan Swift must once have known the locality intimately, in those moments of stretching his legs after so much sitting at a desk or tutoring Stella.

Wednesday April 11th and adjacent period

GUILDFORD ENVIRONS IN GENERAL

Earth in all the area has received enough water to suffice quite a while. Marvellous for blackbird and song thrush but frustrating for people, who include farmers, gardeners and those who like to tread rural footpaths. Daffodils have been flowering for weeks just about everywhere. Tulips are out and magnolia and camellia blooms are beginning to brown. All birds are getting on with it, whatever the weather, though it will not favour such as owls. Whitethorn blossom is resplendent everywhere you go. Woodpigeons in pairs are also ubiquitous and it seems, grey squirrels (which does not bode well for a number of other species, both animal and vegetable). Ponds and pools are full to overflowing and much low grassland oozes water. There is no doubt that now we really require some dry weather and some sun.

SAME AREA AS ABOVE ONLY FOUR DAYS LATER

Warm, dry and sunny all day. Saw two brimstone butterflies today travelling at some speed (12 mph) in one direction, for about 300 yards. By what miracle do such fragile creatures store or replenish such vigour over winter with its lack of sunshine and its wet?

Wednesday May 9th and previous days from May 3rd

IN GUILDFORD ITSELF

Sunshine and warmth have returned. The May Bank Holiday broke records with 28 degrees recorded at Northolt. All plants, insects, birds and mammals (including us) are not slow to respond. Orange tip,



small white and small blue (?) butterflies already seen in my back garden. First small dragonflies on the garden pond and a number of newts in it, plus one frog. Magpies and crows are hunting for the earliest eggs of other birds. Chiffchaff and blackcap singing in the woods. Laburnum already flowering locally. The colour of red tulips is burning out.

Monday May 28th, late afternoon EASTBURY HILL, COMPTON



Parsleys are particularly abundant along footpaths this year, with their tall slender stems, delicate flowers and perfume - too often taken for granted. The swathes of yellowish field garlic and bluebell which only recently dominated either side of the climbing footpath are now gone.

Strange and unidentifiable sounds from the tall woods on the west side. The tall meadow buttercup seems to be flourishing everywhere. In many spots the footpath is sprinkled with the little green boomerangs thrown down by the maples. Tall grasses are in flower. Stitchwort and campion still grace the hedge banks with their contrasting white and varying shades of pink. Conditions are now such that many birds are capable of having and supporting a second brood, sometimes even more.

Friday June 22nd, after 4pm SANDY LANE TO CONDUIT FARM AND SOUTH FLANK OF HOGS BACK

A bright, warm, dry day. The oilseed rape crop is almost ripe; it dominates the grand sweep of the down above. That earlier vivid yellow of the flowering crop has been replaced by a nondescript dull green of stems over a metre high, bearing pods which are long and fat. If you break a pod or stem you have the smell of a brassica plant. The footpath to the top on the west side of the boundary hedge has been rendered impossible by the jutting hedge with nettles and thorns protruding. The walker has to climb by the space left on the west side of the tall hedge, between it and the rapeseed crop.

In the past week or two hay has been cut in many fields and we are now in dry conditions which seem to presage drought; indeed only a week passes before we have three hot, dry weeks under our belt, discounting any slight ineffectual shower.

AND MEANWHILE IN THE GUILDFORD SUBURBS

Lawns are dusty and bleached and small yellow flowers have appeared all over the place: 'mouse ear' I believe. The singing of thrushes has been replaced by the repetitious calling of collared doves and woodpigeon in the early mornings and evenings. On the local arable farms, potatoes and



maize are taking the brunt of lack of water. The potatoes are producing flowers and sustaining a dark dull green and the maize, about a foot high is desiccated though still vertical. Crows and magpies seem happy enough and loudly dispute their findings in back gardens. Dahlias, geraniums and petunias need daily watering

and most lawns are left to wither. But not all is brightness and doom: fruit-bearing shrubs such as blackberry and spindle trees are full of green berries and if rain should come will yield well. Footpaths are dry (though ponds are tending towards the same) and demoiselles are gracing garden ponds. Certain species of butterfly are also doing well (commas for example twirling in fours, higher and higher in their courting behaviour above woodland paths).

Monday July 9th, late in the evening PUTTENHAM GOLF COURSE

Again today temperatures up to 30 degrees. Much of the golf course, excepting actual tees, is pale, bleached and dusty.

Thrushes are still singing in the adjacent woodland. The presence of rabbits is more evident in their scrapes, bank holes and droppings.



Bracken six feet high encroaches the public footpaths which are lined with a powdery soil. Sunset evolves in a pinky orange watercolouring the blanched undulations of the golf course. Ragwort, abundant this summer, still makes bright spots at dusk along the grass verges in many areas.

Tuesday 21st August, about 7pm SEALE SANDS AREA

What a quintessentially English summer's evening in the south-east! A good cameraman could have found it marvellous material for a documentary. The local rural roads are tranquil - not even the calls in the closing minutes of a cricket match. The grain and hay harvests are toils long achieved; there is virtually no traffic on this weekday evening; a suitable pattern for Paradise on earth (and nothing like the West Indies). Apart from one screeching jay, all is in harmony - in fact it might be part of the recipe. Plump ponies browse in paddocks beneath flourishing chestnuts. A few cyclists drift by; not even a helicopter going on its fussy business up in

denbighshirecountryside.org.uk

woodlandtrust.org.uk

wagwalking.com

that evening summer sky, or a petrol-driven hedge trimmer buzzing like an angry hornet. Hazel nuts in hazel trees, and still plenty of blackberries this season, even if the potatoes and the maize are going to be greatly disappointing. Back yards of well established residences are neatly stocked with well-seasoned logs for good winter fires. Just what would someone from Tower Hamlets think if they ever sauntered through?

The city dweller, on the whole, has probably long forgotten what he/she is missing.

Thursday 13th September GUILDFORD SUBURBS AGAIN

Well, post-drought autumn is in the air and early. At least it seems so. No one really knows how local nature in the form of plants, insects, birds and mammals is going to respond to such unusual weather conditions since the rains virtually stopped. Acorns started to fall a week ago, quickly followed by horse chestnuts. Suburban 'lawns' are no longer lawns despite the bright patches of grass re-occurring in the more shady spots. Certain flowers such as dahlias and roses have had a notable resurgence. October's wild geese skeins over the town have come before October. Below the lily pads, water in ponds is crystal clear. There are still large green leaves on the rhubarb. A good harvest of apples is probable. A local falcon is already busy slaying pigeons and doves at dawn when no-one is witness. Two months of little or virtually ineffectual rainfall - how will everything adapt to that, including us, the greatest consumers of all? However, I heard one noted horticulturalist say that warm nights are at least as important as sunlight - so that bears thinking on.

Saturday 29th September, late afternoon WEY FOOTPATH

Eight or so black and mixed cattle in the water meadows seem content to sit or stand chewing the cud. Walkers (with or without dogs) joggers and cyclists are making the most of narrowing possibilities - they all know this instinctively, without calendars. Poets draft their autumn reflections. Well, English poets, at least. Sluices have so far held back the precious stuff coming slowly downstream. Beech mast is making sections of the footpath crunchily uncomfortable. Down by



agimrc.org

the boathouse some rowing novices are earnestly absorbing instruction. Just south of the big sluice the seasonal sheep have reappeared in the usual pasture - they are novices who need no instruction. Ducks, no longer in couples, form busy flotillas. The outdoor areas of the pub are very popular. The usual ambulance sirens call from the town streets. Already a vivid pink/orange sunset provides a show for comment. Crimson dahlias in some gardens catch and cherish that evening glow for precious minutes. You might easily think that nothing has changed.

Saturday 27th October IN GUILDFORD

Here, autumn continues to occupy the stage in all her beauty: brilliantly lit mornings (only a touch of frost so far) dramatically organised sunsets of aqua-marine, salmon, even green tints before a brief conflagration of rose and startling orange, while a three-quarter moon ascends in the east. Three named varieties of dahlia are making a prolonged display in the front garden: here 'Bishops of Llandaff' and 'Oxford' (crimson and orange) vie with the pure, translucent yellow of 'Mystic Illusion', definitely female. In the avenues of the outskirts, what a harvest of horse chestnuts, beech nuts, acorns and finally drifts of leaves in many shapes and tints.

Wednesday 7th November GUILDFORD SUBURBS

Very heavy, intermittent showers, too much for the drainage infrastructure in many roads especially with the impeding clutter of fallen leaves. But temperatures have remained unusually mild. White frost on several mornings has scarcely survived sunrise. The media gives increased mention of climate change, as though it hasn't been evident for well over a decade. Most of the public fail to give serious heed to the effect on ecologies everywhere. Some respond to a good David Attenborough film on TV but feel there is little they can do to reduce carbon emissions. True, of course, for each person as a single unit but, how many billion now inhabit the earth? If each one could NOW make a decided and dedicated alteration in lifestyle it would probably effect the desired goal of evading the tipping point and actually provide a deal of real self-respect and satisfaction - would it not?

December 2018

Write your own diary for this month or wait for next year's 'The Year Gone By'.



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 costs only £10 per year or £15 for a couple, and new members are warmly welcomed.

Please contact Adrian Thompson on 01483 222687 or email adrian@lampcottage.net



CALENDAR



All the Forum's meetings are open to the public

Thursday 24th January

"Population and Climate Change: More Feet = More Emitters".

In discussions of man-made climate change some commentators either make soothing noises to discount the effects of ever-rising global population or wave their hands in the air as if the problem is too hard or too politically sensitive to be faced. Others find this a cop-out. David Hepper's talk will look at ways of reducing our individual carbon footprints through various kinds of "green living", before proposing acceptable national and international policies that can help to defuse the "population bomb".

1900. Council Chamber, GBC Millmead Offices.

Tuesday 12th February

A film: "The North River to the English Channel".

A tiny part of the Borough of Guildford is not in the Thames Valley, but is in the Arun catchment. This film pursues a leisurely exploration of the valley from this corner of Guildford to the English Channel, looking at the landscape and history of the valley as it goes. Environmental historian Raymond Smith, who created the work, will introduce it.

1900. Room 6, Hurtmore, GBC Millmead Offices.

Tuesday 26th February

Geographical Association of Guildford. Talk by Mr Pete Loader, chief examiner WJEC/CBAC and chairman of the Education Committee of the Geological Society: "**Tectonic Hazards . . . and a nice cup of tea**".

1730. The County School, Farnham Road, Guildford.

Monday 18th March

"Welcome to the Anthropocene".

A talk by Colin Summerhayes of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. We humans have greatly modified the Earth's surface and the water cycle, but with the development of advanced industrial practices in World War II, a 'Great Acceleration' began in the spread and deposition of multiple new materials, which grew exponentially as the consumer society took off. We believe that the beginning of the 'Great Acceleration' can be dated to about 1950, and a formal case is being built to propose that this marks the lower bound of a new human-influenced geological period – the Anthropocene. Among our human influences now are global warming and ocean acidification.

1900. Council Chamber, GBC Millmead Offices.

Tuesday 19th March

Geographical Association of Guildford. Talk by Mr Alan Kinder, chief executive of the Geographical Association: "**Cities in the 21st Century**".

1730. The County School, Farnham Road, Guildford.

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Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor by Monday 11 February.

The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.