

Earth First!

ACTION UPDATE

www.earthfirst.org.uk

May 2011

Coal Action Scotland defends Douglas Valley

Coal Action Scotland has continued the fight against opencast coal mining in the Douglas Valley, with actions throughout March and April. Scottish Coal is mining three sites in the area: Mainshill, Broken Cross and Castle Bridge, and is pushing for three new mines including a one million tonne extension to Broken Cross. Over the past few years, twenty seven opencast applications have been approved by local councils in Scotland, with full Government backing. This makes a mockery of the Scottish Government's target to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050.

Action round-up:

2nd March: gates locked shut at Mainshill and Broken Cross.

8th March: As South Lanarkshire Council approved the application for Happendon Wood, activists let off two stink bombs in the committee room and occupied part of the roof, unfurling a banner saying: 'South Lanarkshire COALcil – Pushing through Dirty Development!'

9th March: two activists managed to reach and scale a huge 260 tonne "prime mover" in the bottom of the

pit, one of the two biggest machines on site. Other activists there to support them were brutally attacked by security.

20th March: two huge graders at Broken Cross were trashed. One of them, as big as a three storey building, is used to load coal on to lorries, headed for railheads and power stations. Hydraulics, electrics and steel cables were cut, and anything breakable was broken.

The same day, extensive damage was done to four dumper trucks, two large excavators, two heavy duty bulldozers, a generator and a pump at Castle bridge. "Tyres were drilled, hydraulics and electrics cut. Inside the cabs we found all sorts of expensive goodies like GPS, radios and various dials and screens to rip out and smash. The excavators had a bewildering array of electronic panels and engines the size of cars. We did what we could to immobilise these machines that destroy our health and that of the earth."

10th April: the Edinburgh offices of Weber Shandwick had their locks glued, preventing the start of work on Monday morning. Weber Shandwick is a public relations company representing Scottish Coal.

Happendon Wood Action Camp continues to welcome anyone coming to support the campaign in whatever way. More details here: coalactionscotland.co.uk



Earth First! Summer Gathering 2011

Wed 10th - Mon 16th August

East Anglia

Want to do something to stop the planet being trashed?
So do we. Let's find each other.

A week of workshops, training and planning for a life of ecological defence.

www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk

A quarterly round-up of ecological and other direct action from around Britain and beyond

Rossport

The future of the Sruwaddacon Estuary and the people living near it may be hanging in the balance for the final time. Plans, led by Shell, for an onshore gas refinery, linked up from offshore gas fields with a controversial high pressure gas pipeline, are already a decade late and three times over budget, thanks to exceptionally active local resistance. The final section of pipe, going across the estuary and onto shore, near homes and roads, was given the go ahead this spring, but this decision will be revisited in a judicial review in October. In spite (or because) of the fact that this review could overturn the permission for the pipeline, developers are pressing ahead full speed on preparatory work. Meanwhile, local residents and other activists are doing everything to slow their progress, with actions to delay Shell's work happening all the time. In one week, for instance, the Shell compound was blockaded three times, once for sixteen hours and another time for twelve, and 'bogmats' used to give heavy machinery access across the marsh were overturned twice. Rossport Solidarity Camp is calling for people to come and support in any way they can.

See rossportsolidaritycamp.org or contact rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com

Nuke news

Activists Blockade Queen's Backyard in Nuclear Protest

Campaigners brought rush hour traffic to a standstill to protest against EDF Energy's plans to build a new generation of nuclear power stations in the UK. All four lanes of the A302 outside EDF Energy's headquarters in Grosvenor Place, which runs alongside the gardens of Buckingham Palace, were sealed off, using fourteen-foot tripods. The cleared zone was then declared a 'nuclear disaster area'.

Campaign group, Boycott EDF, says the energy giant is spearheading a 'nuclear renaissance' which could see the construction of at least ten new nuclear reactors, which the group claims will spell disaster for the UK.

noneedfornuclear.org.uk

boycottedf.org.uk

no2nuclearpower.org.uk

Nuclear Riots in India

19th April: Hundreds rioted against a planned nuclear power plant in India, burning police cars and trashing a police station. Police used tear gas and clubs to disperse the crowd, before opening fire with live rounds and killing one protester.

The 9,000 megawatt plant, planned by French company Arewa (see below), will have six reactors and is touted as being the 'largest in the world'. Residents from five villages surrounding the proposed facility are concerned that the plant will have a harmful impact on their health, mango farms and fishing.

Arewa Office Boarded Up

8th April: The office of Energy company Arewa in Rennes-St-Gregoire, France was boarded up by protesters opposing the company's nuclear drive around the world (see story above for an example).

French Nuclear Conference Hijacked

9th April: as Mr Masuda, former director at the International Atomic Energy Agency was due to address a packed audience on the Fukushima incident and its aftermath, twenty people threw paint-filled eggs and caused a commotion, exploding stink bombs.

Italian Nuclear Conference Nearly Hijacked

23rd March: Around seventy protesters attempted to hijack the 15th Research Reactor Fuel Conference. The protesters tried to enter the conference venue, but were pushed back by police. After redecorating the building the protesters moved on to a spontaneous demo through the streets.

German Nuclear Protests

12th March: tens of thousands of demonstrators formed a twenty seven mile human chain between Stuttgart and the Neckarwestheim nuclear plant, in opposition to nuclear power. The demonstrators say that events in Japan have shown nuclear power to be unsafe.

14th March: Germany halted plans to extend the life of its nuclear reactors for three months. Seven reactors were also shut down for three months pending safety reviews. Most commentators viewed this as a tactical manoeuvre, due to upcoming state elections.

26th March: more than 200,000 people took part in Germany's biggest ever anti nuclear protest under the slogan "Heed Fukushima – Shut off all Nuclear Plants".



Global direct action news

Thousands blockade coal mine in Bangladesh

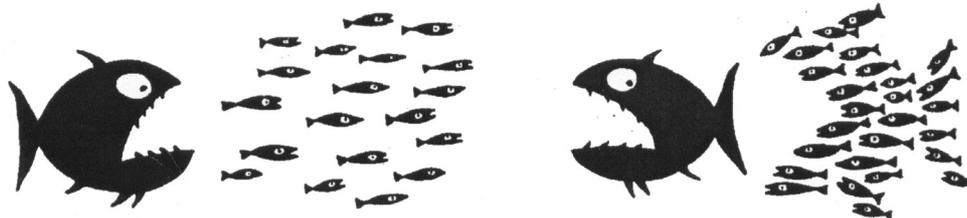
In February the main highway of Phulbari, Bangladesh was blockaded by two thousand people opposing the construction of the world's largest coal mine. Locals have been resisting the proposed 6,000 hectare mine for six years. A recent report published by Truthout.org, along with the Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (National Indigenous Union), estimated that 50,000 people belonging to twenty three tribal groups would be evicted due to the mine. A 2006 Expert Committee formed by the government of Bangladesh estimated that two and a half times this number of people would be directly affected, and nearly a quarter of a million (220,000) people would suffer reduced access to water for drinking and irrigation.

Peru: week long highway blockade stops copper mining project

When the vast Tia Maria copper mine was proposed in the Islay province in Peru, locals took action to protect their water supply from contamination and theft. Activities ranged from burning government buildings to general strike, and culminated in a week long blockade of the main highway. This, according to the President Garcia involved "miniscule minorities" trying to blackmail the country by highway terrorism. The BBC, on the other hand, reported thousands of residents involved in the blockades. Whatever the true numbers of people, they were dealt with by 2000 police officers, discharging tear gas from helicopters and shooting dead at least three people. The government finally agreed to put the project on hold for at least three months until a new environmental assessment takes place. Southern Copper are said to be thinking of withdrawing from the project entirely. See www.minesandcommunities.org for more detail.

Kulon Progo: Ongoing Struggle

Clashes continue between police and the farmers of Kulon Progo as they seek



to defend their land from mining operations. Located in central Java, the area has been resisting Kimberley Diamond Indomines since 2007. This winter the community destroyed the offices of the mining company and attacked their cars. Solidarity actions around the world have included burning two Bank Central Asia (CBA) cash machines in Indonesia. CBA handle the finances for the mining project. See "A Tale of Sand", a brief history of how the close knit community have self-organised to resist exploitation of the land they live on: <http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/9701>

Italians Sabotage Incinerator

6th April: A forty metre deep rubbish dump, the site of a planned incinerator, was sabotaged by activists. Two excavators, a truck, seam compressor, various hydraulics and electricians were given some attention. Sand was poured into the tank of one vehicle. Documents from the service yard, including building plans and photos of the intense activities in the yard, were also liberated.

Greeks Oppose Landfill

30th March: hundreds of residents opposing a landfill site clashed with riot police sent in to remove rubble from a blockaded road. At 3pm the town church rang its bells (!) to mobilize locals to resist the police infringement. Hundreds of demonstrators of all ages fought police around Lavriou Avenue, in fields around the landfill site and on the outskirts of the town, and hurled firebombs and rocks at riot officers.

Rickshaw Riot

28th march: When the local Indian Government in Dhaka decided to ban rickshaws from the streets in order to prioritise cars, hundreds of rickshaw owners, whose lives depend on their trade, descended on the town in a rage and ran rampage, smashing over one hundred cars. The demonstrators left the area when transport workers, local hawkers and shop employees started to gather.

Southern Forests actions stop logging in Tasmania

In February the Southern Forests Convergence took place in Tasmania, bringing together activists to exchange skills and learn about the latest issues affecting Tasmania's ancient temperate rainforests. Tasmania has a long history of forest defence, since blockades against logging in the early 1980s, and is home to Tasmania's longest running forest blockade, Camp Flozza, which has been going for over four years.

The day before the conference, twenty five people stopped logging in the Picon Valley by climbing on machinery and generally being a nuisance. Monday's action saw activists lock on to logging trucks shipping rainforest timber out of the country, while on the Tuesday around thirty activists shut down a nearby mill in a similar manner. Six weeks afterwards thirteen activists returned to the Picon Valley where they have currently set up a tree camp and halted all logging.

rainforestinfo.org.auhuon.org

Readers Rant

“Frack Off!”

Cameron’s “greenest government ever” is content with the assertion that there will be “no likelihood of environmental damage” from hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) of the bedrock to extract gas. Or have they just got the sweet ringing of tills in their ears? Cuadrilla Resources has opened three exploration sites in Lancashire; Preese Hall Farm at Weeton, Singleton and Lytham Moss all near Blackpool. They have undergone no environmental assessment, according to a report by the Tyndall Centre, which has called for the process to be banned due to the risk of contamination of drinking water. There has been a massive rush for fracking in the USA where thousands of new sites have been opened over the last ten years. Critics in the US have long complained that fracking poses unacceptable risk to water supplies.

Fracking is a controversial process where a high pressure mixture of water, sand and chemicals is pumped into the ground to ‘crack’ the underlying bedrock to release gas which is then extracted. Significant amounts of methane are also released into the atmosphere by this process, making fracking between 20% and 200% more carbon intensive per unit of energy than coal, according to recent research at Cornell University. The resultant sludge goes to landfill. Geologists believe the UK has large reserves of exploitable gas. MPs from the Energy and Climate Change Committee have begun an inquiry into the issue. No bets are being taken on the outcome of that. Known involvement from; Cuadrilla Resources, Island Gas Ltd and Composite Energy.

save-the-ribble.blogspot.com

Mobile Phone Masts Sabotaged Again

In March two repeater towers belonging to T Mobile and Vodafone were burned out in Hambrook and Siston Common, and Longwell Green near Bristol, while in April near Nottingham two T3 mobile phone masts were set on fire with used tyres and petrol-soaked rags, in a repeat(!) of a similar action last year.

<http://sysiphus-angrynewsfromaroundtheworld.blogspot.com/>



Dale Farm Digging in

Have Basildon Council and their bailiffs Constant & Co bitten off more than they can chew? Dale Farm traveller site is threatened with eviction, but is now heavily defended with scaffold towers, barbed-wire, chicane-barriers, an array of supporters on the ground and more to come. Gypsy spokesperson Grattan Puxon claims that journalists from CNN, Al Jazeera, France 24, as well as local television stations are expected to be embedded behind the barricades should an eviction happen.

Potentially the biggest eviction in British history, the attention of the world’s media, international human rights scrutiny, a direct action defence of the site, the nonsense of paying £8 million (plus another £10 million earmarked) for policing, when it would be far cheaper simply to let the residents stay or give them another site.

See dalefarm.wordpress.com

First time hunt sabber’s diary

For Fox Sake!

Off we set, a motley crew enjoying meeting each other, chatting and sharing stories.

Heading for a hunt which hoped to kill that rural menace the hare. Was it the were-hare, we wondered? No mistaking that we had arrived; onlookers with binoculars, 4x4s tailing us, horses, hounds, red jackets, silk cravats the lot. I was shocked by their degree of vitriol, in front of their kids too....! and using their horses to intimidate and edge us into ditches.

A fun afternoon ensued. Wherever they went we followed; running over fields and hills, cutting through woods. Calling the hounds, getting in the way, we generally ruined a good afternoon’s sport.

The cops were around, not to prevent any crimes being committed under the hunting act, but to stop us from doing that ourselves. They pulled our van over and spent fifteen minutes checking the driver’s details, much to the incredulity of a couple of local bikers: “I thought hunting was illegal now?” The cops said nowt.

It felt at once frustrating, frightening and exciting. Frustrating because although hunting with hounds is now illegal, it continues unimpeded by the cops. Frightening because the hunters are a vicious bunch, along with their performing monkeys- the ‘terrier men’. Exciting because it is direct action with a very immediate impact. We successfully prevented two hunts from killing.

Sadly, the legal system is not going to implement it’s own ban, so if you thought cross-country running was consigned to the bin of school-days history, think again.

hsa.enviroweb.org

EF! Contacts:

EF! Gathering Collective:
earthfirstgathering.org.uk
summertgathering@earthfirst.org.uk

EF! Action Update Collective:
earthfirst.org.uk/efau
actionupdate@earthfirst.org.uk

Bath Activist Network
PO Box 426, Bath BA1 2ZD
07794 774938
bathactivistnet@yahoo.co.uk

Derby EF!
derby@earthfirst.org.uk
07852 460871

Lancaster EF!
Basement, 78a Penny St,
Lancaster LA1 1XN
lancasterbasement@aktivix.org

Manchester Climate Action
manchester@climatecamp.org.uk

Norfolk & Waveney EF!
PO box 487, Norwich NR5 8WE
norfolk@earthfirst.org.uk

Nottingham EF!
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham
NG7 6HX
notts@earthfirst.org.uk

Preston EF!
preston@earthfirst.org.uk

Scotland EF!
scotland@earthfirst.org.uk

Thames Valley Climate Action
oxford@climatecamp.org.uk

Worthing Eco-Action
PO Box 4144 Worthing BN14 7NZ
worthing@eco-action.org

Kernow Action Now!
c/o Unit 1356, PO Box 7169,
Poole BH15 9EL
kernowaction.wordpress.com
kernowaction@gmail.com

Networks:

Coal Action Network
coalaction.net

Fighting Government cuts
networkx@gmail.com

Genetic Engineering Network
geneticsaction.org.uk
(website out of date)

Network for Climate Action
networkforclimateaction.org.uk

Plane Stupid
planetstupid.com

Rising Tide UK
62 Fieldgate Street, London, E1
1ES
risingtide.org.uk
07708 794665

Saving Iceland
savingiceland.org

Stop GM
info@stopgm.org.uk

Stop Nanotech Campaign
eco-action.org/nanotech

Support:

Activists Legal Project
activistslegalproject.org.uk

Activist Mediation Network
activistmediation.org.uk

Activist Security website
activistsecurity.org

Advisory Service for Squatters
0203 216 0099
squatter.org.uk

Activist Tat Collective
atcoop.org.uk

Activist Trauma Support
activist-trauma.net
07962 406940

Corporate Watch c/o Freedom
Press, Angel Alley, 84b
Whitechapel High Street, London,
E1 7QX, 0207 426 0005
contact@corporatewatch.org

Earth Liberation Prisoners:
Prisoner support
spiritoffreedom.org.uk

FreeBeagles
Activist legal stuff
freebeagles.org

Indymedia UK
For (non-eco) news & views
indymedia.org.uk

Schnews
Free weekly news sheet and
website schnews.org.uk

Seeds for Change
Action training
seedsforchange.org.uk

Tripod Training
For creative social action
tripodtraining.org

UK Action Medics
actionmedics.org.uk

Protest Camps:

**Bilston Woods Anti-Bypass
Camp**

c/o ACE, 17 West Montgomery
Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA
0775 3280009
bilstonglen-abs.org.uk
*Occupied since 2002 to
block road building and a new
biotech research facility*

Defend Huntington Lane
defendhuntingtonlane@hushmail.com
defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com
Site contact 07727 295232
*Protest camp resisting planned
coal mine near Telford, Shropshire*

Faslane Peace Camp
Shandon, Nr Rhu, Helensburgh,
Scotland G84 8NT
01436 820901
*Opposing nuclear weapons
since 1982 at Faslane Naval
Base, 30 miles from Glasgow*

Grow Heathrow
transitionheathrow.com
*Squatted site of proposed third
runway, now productive market
garden and home to many people*

**The Happendon Woods Action
Camp (THWAC)**
Douglas Valley
South Lanarkshire
contact@coalactionscotland.org.uk
*Protest camp resisting coal in the
Douglas Valley and beyond*

Global Contacts:

See earthfirst.org.uk for EF!
groups in North America, Mexico,
Australia, Philippines, Nigeria,
Slovakia, Czech Republic, Italy,
Poland, Netherlands and Belgium.

AUntie Miffy's Problem Page

Dear AUntie Miffy,
*I'm in an affinity group in a small town and
until recently I've been well chuffed with
what we've been up to. We've done
shitloads of actions together, and we've
even got a one-size-doesn't-quite-fit-all suit
for days out in court. But now we're faced
with a new development that will knock
down the only bit of ancient woodland for
miles around, and we've suddenly realised
that up to now all our actions have ever
done is help out a bit with another
campaign or get a story in the local rag.
Now we're faced with trying to stop
something all on our own, and we know we
need to do more than rampage about with a
D-lock being angry, but we're not sure
what. How can we raise our game?*
Anon,

Dear Anon,
Getting a strong affinity group together is the
first half of the battle and it sounds like you're
already there. Next step is to plan a campaign
strategy. Start by gathering info: what do the
developers need for their plans to go ahead,
and are there any vulnerabilities you can
exploit? Who are your potential allies and how
can you get them to do more? And when
you've used this info to work out suitable
targets and tactics, think about how you can
plan your campaign so that the pressure
escalates – build up gradually instead of setting
out with a massive action and spending the
next year trying to all squeeze into the one-
size-doesn't-quite-fit-all suit for your multiple
court appearances. Lots to think about there,
but the better your plan now, the less likely
you are to get burnt out knocking your heads
against brick walls.
Very best of luck,
Miffy

Upcoming dates:

4th- 6th June
Party Against the Pipe
Pollathomas, Co. Mayo
email:
partyagainstthepipe@gmail.com
Tel: 08511 41170

28th July- 1st Aug
Peace News Summer Camp
Crabapple Community, nr
Shrewsbury
email: peaceneWSCamp.info

5th- 8th Aug
Animal Rights UK Gathering
nr Northampton
argathering.org.uk

10th – 16th Aug
Earth First! Summer Gathering
East Anglia
earthfirstgathering.org.uk

13th- 16th Sept
Disarm DSEi
ExCel Centre, Docklands, London
dsei.co.uk for full details

GM: back on the radar

Activists in Bristol, Oxford and London having been doing their bit to stop the slow creep of GM products onto the supermarket shelves. In February, in Bristol this involved a small crew using shopping trolleys and each other's shoulders to sticker GM oil drums on top shelves. Meanwhile, in Oxford an even smaller group dusted off their drama GCSEs and staged a row as outraged 'shoppers' discovered the minutely printed "contains GM ingredients" labels, much to the concern of the real shoppers. This was followed up by some fake tannoy announcements through a loudhailer: "Bing Bong. This is the store manager. It has been brought to our attention that there are currently GM products in this store. We advise you never to shop here again. Thank you for calling at Tesco's and have a pleasant life." In April, London activists in space suits labelled biohazard handed out leaflets and put stickers on meat making customers aware of the use of GM feed in animal products. This was swiftly followed by a similar action in a Tesco's in Belfast.

All of the activists involved were keen to point out that what they were doing was about much more than food safety. "I missed the anti-GM campaigns first time

around – I was a school and all that filtered down to me was the Daily Mail Frankenfoods stuff," commented Gary, a young nurse from Oxford. "What's got me into campaigning on it now has been realising the impacts it has when it is grown. Most GM crops are engineered to be resistant to Monsanto's own brand weedkiller. This means it can be sprayed indiscriminately and everything but the GM plants will die. Sounds all very clever, until you realise they are doing this from aeroplanes, and spraying right over people's homes and crops. This can cause serious skin problems, paralysis, birth defects, and even death. And if that is what it does to humans, the ecological impacts don't bear thinking about."

"These action won't win the campaign in themselves, but they are simple and easy to replicate," commented Fred, from Stop GM. Stickers and other materials highlighting the impacts of glyphosate spraying can be found at www.stopgm.org.uk/take-action.html

Activists in Belgium doing a call out for an open field decontamination on the 29th May at Wetteren, where there is a field planted with GM potatoes. Details at fieldliberation.wordpress.com

About Earth First!

Earth First! is about direct action to halt the destruction of the Earth.

We believe we can make a real difference by doing it ourselves rather than relying on leaders, governments or industry.

We're a loose network of people, groups and campaigns coming together for ecological direct action and we believe in non-hierarchical organisation.

The name Earth First! is a banner for anyone who shares a similar philosophy to work under.

In the UK people have been taking direct action using the Earth First! name since the early 90s – stopping road building, the quarrying of coal, rock and peat, freeing our fields of genetically modified

crops, protesting against climate criminals, fighting corporate power and much, much more.

If you believe action speaks louder than words, then Earth First! is for you.

The Earth First! Action Update brings you a quarterly collection of news and updates on ecological direct action from the UK and beyond.

You can pick up copies from your local social centre, or even better: subscribe and get it direct.

The next issue will be out in June, so if you've got news to share send articles (150 words max.) to:

actionupdate@earthfirst.org.uk

or send to the address below, or post straight onto our website: **earthfirst.org.uk**

Subscribe to the EF! Action Update

By email: send a message to actionupdate@earthfirst.org.uk

By post: Fill in the form below and post to **EF! Action Update c/o The Basement, 78a Penny St, Lancaster LA1 1XN**

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