

# Camp for Climate Action

by Genny Bove



*This Planet has No Emergency Exits*

## Getting There

I took my bike and camping gear on the train to Slough and cycled the last 7 miles to the camp. The cycle ride was far easier than the train journey - what used to be a case of simply lifting your bike into the guard's van has now become a challenge to rival the *Krypton Factor*, where the bike has to be squeezed into an impossibly small space - and woe betide you if anyone needs the wheelchair ramp - or completely unloaded and suspended from a hook, then reloaded against the clock at your destination. Before anyone can seriously talk about 'integrated transport', something radical needs to be done to provide proper space for bikes on trains.

## Police Harassment

It would have been impossible to miss Sipson Lane, where the camp was being held. A line of police officers formed a barricade across the end of the road. I knew searches were being carried out - inappropriately - under terrorism legislation, and was worried that I'd be forced to unpack everything on the roadside. I approached with some trepidation, but was just waved through. A repeat of Fairford: searches deemed vital one day can be completely abandoned the next, giving the lie to the counter-terrorism argument. It's all about harassment.

Sipson Lane crosses over one of the Heathrow approach roads and as I cycled up over the bridge, I spotted the camp across the fields. I parked my bike and got my camera out to take a couple of pictures through the drizzly haze. I was in the road ready to re-mount my bike when a vanload of cops pulled up, two came towards me, one of these climbed over the parapet of the bridge onto the approach road embankment, and the

other sidled up and told me to go back over the barrier onto the pavement. "We don't want you getting run over." Not much chance of that as the police barricades were stopping virtually all the traffic.

It turned out I was suspected of causing unspecified criminal damage, "and if we find anything, you'll have some explaining to do." I'd passed a couple walking their dog moments before, and they were still visible further down the lane, so I suggested that these people should be asked to be witnesses. The two cops clearly had no intention of following this up, at which point I realised that the whole thing was a wind-up and just designed to intimidate me. I politely showed the cops the pictures I'd taken, declined to give them the personal details they were asking for, tried very hard not to lose my temper, and the second that a couple of other campers came past and stopped to ask if I was OK, the cops suddenly decided to leave.

This doesn't have a lot to do with climate change, but it does show how the police are liable to misbehave and abuse their powers at any event, demonstration or protest which threatens the status quo in any way. Later the same day, 30 police in rubber gloves tried to invade and raid the camp site, backed up by cops in riot gear, but were effectively resisted by a mass of campers who moved forward peacefully with their hands in the air until the cops retreated off the site. Heavy-handed policing during the days of direct action resulted in a number of injuries including several head injuries and someone trampled by a police horse. The policing tactics came as a shock to locals, who stand to lose their homes if the 3rd runway is built at Heathrow. They were supportive of the camp and many openly voiced their disgust at the police behaviour they witnessed. So much for civil liberties and the right to peaceful expression. Welcome to Britain, police state.

## Camp Life

One aim of the camp was to show how we can live in an environmentally friendly way, minimising our impact on the planet. Almost all the power within

the camp was provided from renewable sources - mainly the wind and sun. Everyone on earth could be properly fed if we all adopted a vegan diet, which also has the benefit of a much smaller carbon footprint than a meat-based diet. The camp offered three organic, vegan meals a day for just £4. Over 100 workshops at the camp covered everything from the science of climate change to strategy, action and practical solutions.

The camp culminated in 24 hours of direct action on the Sunday and Monday. Targets for the myriad actions which took place during the camp included BAA, who run Heathrow Airport; BP, who fuel aircraft; BA world cargo depot; travel agencies; Israel's Carmel Agrexco, who fly in produce grown in occupied territories; Farnborough and Biggin Hill private airfields; XL, which is contracted to fly out deported asylum seekers. I was back at home by this time but worked with the indymedia dispatch team to get action reports up on the website as they came in - our news in our own words.



## Peace, Justice & Climate

The Tyndall report '*Living Within a Carbon Budget*' makes clear that we need to drastically reduce our dependence on fossil fuels such as oil. If we don't, then we'll see rising sea levels, unpredictable weather patterns and even more flooding, and the people who will suffer most will be those in the developing world who have done least to contribute to these problems. The West's insatiable thirst for oil has time and again led to war, most recently the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels will reduce the West's desire to wage war and wreak environmental havoc in other lands to secure oil supplies. The issues of peace, justice and climate change are inextricably linked.

Full reports: <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/actions/2007/climatecamp>

# Bottom Up or Top Down?

## ***It's Down to Us***

*Camp for Climate Action leaflet*

Yes we need to take responsibility for our own environmental impacts, but changing light bulbs alone won't bring about the scale of change that is needed.

The harsh truth is, there are industries and people who will watch the planet burn while they count the money they make from the fire...

Politicians either have too much to gain from the status quo or are too spineless to act. It's obvious that endless growth cannot occur on a finite planet. Without a mass movement out on the streets taking direct action and pushing grass roots solutions, it will be business as usual...

The combination of poverty and climate change will, in the coming decades, cause untold suffering to millions. But around the world people are refusing to be victims and are fighting back... They cannot do it alone. We in the emitting nations have the power and responsibility to tackle offending governments and corporations... Solidarity is just a word unless we animate it with action.

## ***Gordon Brown is our Superhero!***

*by Alex Fairclough*

Changing your light bulb for an energy efficient one, or separating your rubbish into separate recyclable piles is indeed one small way to help reduce your carbon footprint, but can these things really SAVE the planet's future?

The three main factors affecting the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere can only be influenced by the people at the top – and that's our government.

Firstly, the way we generate the electricity we use is by burning coal, gas and oil. These are all hydrocarbons and they pump out greenhouse gases. We need to change to renewables. However, this changeover can only happen through government policy.

The second factor is the manufacturing industry, with its belching chimneys. Changing to eco-friendly factories would require a great investment and corporate decisions at board level. Again, nothing you or I can do.

Thirdly, the wheels that roll on our roads have to be powered by something. If it is not the existing hydrocarbons, then biodiesel, ethanol and propane gas. Only the government can make it worth the oil giants' while to deliver an alternative fuel in every filling station.

So, every household can indeed do its bit to reduce its carbon footprint, but the world-saving decisions are down to Gordon Brown.

**Have you told him how he can save the planet?**

## ***Some Facts about Flying***

- Carbon emissions from Heathrow flights are higher than the combined annual emissions of 50 of the world's poorest countries.
- Aviation is the fastest growing cause of greenhouse gases and, unlike other industries, there is no technological fix.
- One return flight to Florida produces CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent to a year's average motoring.
- In 2001, 10% of the British population flew at least 3 times; while 3% made more than 6 trips. 4.5% of the population take nearly 45% of all flights.
- Flying fruit and vegetables to Britain uses many hundreds of times as much energy as growing our own.



Olga Solbarrieta