



MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

NorthEast

Climate Change Special Edition

Summer 2007

“We are angry with the people who are doing this. We have made no contribution, but suffer the highest impact.” (Dr Atiq Rahman, Bangladesh)

The average Briton produces 48 times as much carbon dioxide as someone living in Bangladesh.

North East Committee Member's 1000 Mile Walk for the World!

As weather patterns change, what's a girl to wear? Eighteen year-old Rachel Tavernor from Jesmond, Newcastle, a MPH-NE Committee Member for the past year, can see the time coming when she won't know whether to buy sarongs or socks, sunglasses or wellies!

Climate change is already adversely affecting people's lives, but there is still time to prevent its worst effects. Rachel is one of 20 people marching across the country, covering 1000 miles in 81 days. Ten of the marchers are from the developing world and ten from the UK.

Rachel says “We must cut carbon emissions dramatically and we must start now.” Her outfit also says something else: poverty campaigners make the best climate campaigners!

As a member of Stop Climate Chaos, MPH-NE is delighted to throw its full weight behind Christian Aid's historic 'Cut the Carbon March'. Look out for it on the national news; help make it news in the region, from 28th July-6th Aug (see Page 2).



If you are on email, *please* let us have your address – see back page.

MPH-NE acknowledges with thanks the financial support of the Energy Saving Trust in the production and distribution of this newsletter.

Cut the Carbon - *Meet the March!*

- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|
| ■ Sat 28 July | 7.30pm | Norham: | Meet the Marchers, St Cuthbert's Church |
| ■ Sun 29 July | 4.30pm | Wooler: | Civic Reception, Padgepool Car Park |
| ■ Mon 30 July | 7.30pm | Wooler: | Meet the Marchers, Cheviot Centre, |
| ■ Tues 31 July | 12.30pm | Eglington: | Lunch stop, Village Hall |
| | 7.30pm | Alnwick: | Meet the Marchers, Costello Centre,
Bailiffgate |
| ■ Wed 1 Aug | 1.00pm | Amble: | Lunch stop, Parish Hall, Dovecote Street, |
| | 7.30pm | Morpeth: | Meet the Marchers, Methodist Church |
| ■ Thur 2 Aug | 1.00pm | Blyth: | Lunch stop, St Wilfrid's Church Hall,
Waterloo Road, |
| | 7.30pm | Cullercoats: | Regional Youth Event with The Steels,
Methodist Church, |
| ■ Fri 3 Aug | 9.00am | Tynemouth/North Shields: | Family Parade from
Tynemouth Priory to North Shields |
| | 12.00pm | Jarrow: | Lunch stop, Bede's World |
| | 3.45pm | Gateshead/Newcastle: | Family Parade from Baltic
Square, Gateshead to Newcastle Civic Centre |
| ■ Sat 4 Aug | 11.30am | Newcastle: | Cut the Carbon Rally, St Thomas'
Church, Haymarket |
| | 1.00pm | Chester-le-Street: | Lunch stop, Parish Centre,
Church Chare |
| | 1.00-4.00pm | Durham: | Cut the Carbon Festival, Market Place &
St Nicholas' Church, |
| | 4.00pm | Durham: | Family Parade from Wharton Park to
Market Place |
| | 5.00pm | Durham: | Cut the Carbon Celebration, St Nicholas'
Church, Market Place, |
| ■ Sun 5 Aug | 2.45pm | Aycliffe: | Tea stop, Village Green |
| | 6.00pm | Darlington: | Songs of Praise Ecumenical Service,
United Reformed Church, Northgate |
| ■ Mon 6 Aug | 9.00am | Darlington: | Civic Send-Off, Market Place |

Please note all timings (apart from evening meetings) are provisional –
turn up early to be sure of catching the march.

Further details of events, timings and routes from newcastle@christian-aid.org,
tel 0191 228 0115 or visit www.pressureworks.org

Campaigners a 'Delight'

Pre-G8 events showed a most heartening level of commitment by British and international campaigners. 582,287 messages were sent in to 'Your voice against poverty' team from the UK alone. Many simply stated "Keep your promises!" If you were one of them, 'Thank you!' [And if not, why not?]



Then up to ten thousand people, including about 30 from the NE, gathered at 'The World Can't Wait' event on a beautiful June 2nd. We got good media coverage, highlighting the urgency of our calls, the diversity of the crowd (see photo's) and the peaceful nature of the event.

Meanwhile, Oxfam volunteers Heather and Dan worked the crowd at Newcastle Monument, gathering about 400 signatures.



Veteran campaigner, Colin Brannon (above), cycled to and from London (as he did to Cologne in '99, etc!) Right, The Blanchflowers, our 'campaignin' family', all of them veterans of Genoa, '01. Photo's courtesy of Tim Kenny & Veronica Golding



G8 Leaders a 'Disgrace' (Bob Geldof)

Briefing from Oxfam:

G8 leaders left Germany having failed to do enough to shore up their wavering credibility or guarantee that they will keep their promises to Africa, said international agency Oxfam. Despite headline announcements of funds for HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the G8 has not got anywhere near back on track to meet overall promises on aid to Africa, and has missed the mark on areas like health and education.

Max Lawson, Senior Policy Advisor at Oxfam said: "The hard and sad fact is that as leaders fly away from Germany they are still set to break their Gleneagles promise to the tune of \$27bn. Creative accounting will not save lives - only delivering on promises will. G8 taxpayers are

demanding more aid. Africa needs it. There are no excuses for what happened here in Heiligendamm." [Note by Editor: Britain is generally thought to be on track with its Gleneagles' commitments and we thank the leaders of all our political parties for that.]



The Oxfam G8 'Big Heads' dress up as Pinocchio: G8 leaders' noses grow longer by the day as they break the promises they made in 2005. Courtesy, Craig Owen / Oxfam.

On climate, Oxfam welcomed the G8's affirmation of its commitment to a UN process to negotiate a post 2012 deal, and the pledge to make 'substantial emission reductions'. However, Oxfam warned that the climate change text fell well short of what is required... and specifically

highlighted the lack of numerical targets. [However] it said the German government deserves credit for persevering to achieve a deal on climate change. What we have lays out a clear pathway for the urgent action that is needed.

For Oxfam's full report, Google:
"G8 miss mark as 'new' announcements disguise overall failure"

Climate Change – A Very Inconvenient Truth!

The Magnitude of the Subject: On 12th May 1789, ‘a sickly shrimp of a man’, rose to his feet in Parliament and began one of the greatest speeches ever given: “When I consider the magnitude of the subject which I am to bring before the house, a subject in which not only the interests of this country... but of the whole world and posterity are bound up... it is impossible for me not to feel both terrified and concerned at my inability to such a task.” The man was William Wilberforce, and he was proposing the abolition of the slave trade – a measure that would finally be passed eighteen years later.



*Ioan Gruffudd as Wilberforce,
Courtesy, Bristol Bay Productions*

These words seem entirely appropriate for the subject at hand. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that the importance of our ‘subject’ – that of climate change and our response to it – is an order of magnitude greater than that which Wilberforce addressed. According to Lord Robert May, when President of the Royal Society, “Never before have we [humanity] faced such a global threat.” Similarly, Sir David King, the Government’s Chief Scientific Advisor, says that “Climate change is the greatest challenge facing Britain and the World in the 21st century”.

The Strength of the Science: The scientific community is clear about the science. On 7th June 2005, the (British) Royal Society, the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, the national academies of science of all the other G8 nations, and those of Brazil, China and India, put out the statement that “The scientific understanding of

climate change is now sufficiently clear... It is vital that all nations... contribute to substantial reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions”. Such a joint statement is *without precedent in the history of science*. [Go to www.royalsoc.ac.uk/document.Asp?id=3222]

We have a choice. We can accept that the evidence for rapid global warming is irrefutable and that the evidence for its human causation is overwhelming, the main culprit being increased carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions resulting from the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas). Alternatively, we can believe that virtually all the top climate scientists – many hundreds of them, in every country in the world - are all involved in a gigantic global conspiracy. Most sensible people regard the views of the holocaust deniers with utter contempt; I believe the views of the climate deniers deserve nothing better.

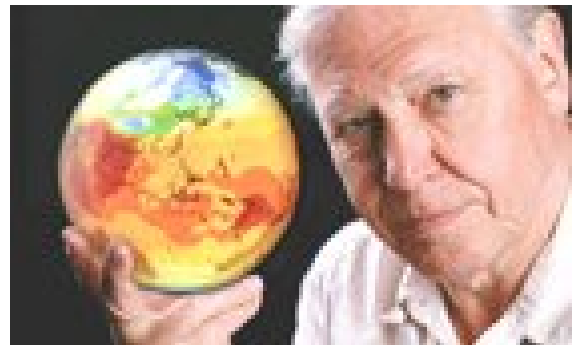
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The issue is not only important, it's desperately urgent! Sir John Houghton, one of the world's leading experts on global warming, said recently that "We are getting almost to the point of irreversible meltdown, and will pass it soon if we are not careful.

"Climate change is for real. We have just a small window of opportunity and it is closing rapidly. *There is not a moment to lose... We are risking the ability of the human race to survive*". Dr Pachauri, Chair, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Reality of the Suffering: There is scientific evidence of the highest calibre that climate change is *already* having terrible effects on the world's poorest communities, and that these effects will increase dramatically in the future unless urgent and radical action is taken. Dr Pachauri predicts that "The impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor... within all countries." Desmond Tutu has warned of an impending "catastrophe that will exacerbate human suffering to a magnitude that perhaps the world has not yet seen." We personally will probably be spared the worst effects of this catastrophe, but 'business as usual' will mean that it will eventually and inevitably engulf our own children or grandchildren.

"How could I look my grandchildren in the eye and say I knew about this and did nothing?",
Courtesy, Sir David Attenborough.



Rising to the Challenge: "If you had stood on a London street corner in 1789 and insisted that slavery should be stopped, nine out of ten listeners would have laughed you off as a crackpot. Yet within a few short years, public opinion had undergone a sea change." (Adam Hochschild).

So how can we take up the daunting challenge that faces us? First, *there is the danger of sentimentality* - of rightly doing what we can at an individual level, whilst remaining silent while our government 'fiddles whilst Rome burns'. We must take very opportunity to press our leaders to both take the lead and to draw others into vigorous

and concerted international action. But *there is also the danger of hypocrisy* – a hypocrisy that rails against complacent government policies, whilst refusing to reform its own gluttonous and polluting lifestyle.

Wilberforce completed his great speech with these words: "The nature and all the circumstances of this challenge are now laid open to us. We can no longer plead ignorance; we cannot evade it. We may spurn it, but we cannot avoid seeing it, for it is now brought so directly before our eyes." A far greater challenge, that of man-made climate change, 'is now brought so directly before *our eyes*'.

The *Real* Global Warming Swindle – by Channel 4!

“Say to the prophets, ‘Tell us *pleasant* things, prophesy illusions!’” (Isaiah 30, 10)

I approached viewing of Channel 4’s “The Great Global Warming Swindle”, on 8th March, with considerable scepticism. The ‘Swindle’ word, with its echoes of conspiracy theory, was not encouraging. Swindle? And I suppose Princess Diana was assassinated by the British Secret Service; and the HIV virus that causes AIDS is an invention of the drugs industry!

The programme claimed to provide strong evidence that the mainstream scientific view of global warming, according to which the latter is caused mainly by CO₂ emissions resulting from the burning of fossil fuels (the ‘greenhouse effect’), is a gigantic hoax. Instead, the programme claimed that climate change is caused by changes in the activity of the sun.

I admit it – I was shaken by the programme! But that was because I completely underestimated the capacity of its makers for incompetence and prejudice. I was also unaware that Channel 4 had been forced to issue an abject public apology for a previous film by the director, Martin Durkin, and that one of the few reputable, active scientists who appeared on the programme, Dr Carl Wunsch, would claim that his views has been “completely misrepresented... distorted” and that “the movie was terrible propaganda”.

Warming during the 20th century:

The programme showed a graph, with most of the warming taking place during the first half of the 20th Century, whereas CO₂ emissions were much higher in the second half. It gave the source as “NASA”. The graph was based on inaccurate figures which actually stopped in the 1980s, but the graph had been extended giving the impression they went up to 2003. “There was a fluff there”, said Martin Durkin, the film’s maker. Indeed there was. In fact, NASA *does* have up-to-date, highly accurate figures for the rise in global temperatures (I have seen them for myself). They show that the greatest rise in warming by far to have taken place *since 1975* - a fact that completely destroys the point the film was trying to make.

CO₂ from Volcanoes: The programme stated that natural discharge of CO₂ from volcanoes exceeds that resulting from human activity. In fact, “emissions from fossil fuel burning, etc, are estimated to be around 100 times greater than emissions from volcanoes” (British Antarctic Survey). CO₂ levels in the atmosphere have shown a steady rise, with no sudden jumps after major volcanic eruptions as one would expect if the programme was right (I’ve seen the graphs for myself).

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Temperature changes in the troposphere: Dr John Christy was shown explaining that comparison of temperature changes in the troposphere (the lower atmosphere) with those at the earth's surface had given results inconsistent with the greenhouse effect. Dr John Christy is indeed an able climatologist, but there's a problem: the great man was a co-author of a major study last year, "Temperature trends in the lower atmosphere", published by the US Climate Science Programme. It stated that "previously reported discrepancies... have been used to challenge the reality of human-induced global warming", but explained that "this significant discrepancy no longer exists because [previous] errors... have been identified and corrected. New data sets... do not show such discrepancies". (I've read the report for myself.)

Computer 'Modelling': Computer-generated predictions were claimed to be so unreliable as to be virtually useless as a basis for public policy. One of the pioneers of this approach, Professor Smagorinsky, was shown saying as much. But why did the Prof look so young? Because it was a shot of him in the 1980s, when the procedure was in its infancy! "Climate modelling has developed enormously since then... The 30 or more major

modelling groups in the world regularly compare their methods and their findings. Contributors to the programme with their parodies of climate models just demonstrated their complete ignorance of the significance and capabilities of modern models." (Sir John Houghton, Formerly, Co-Chair of the IPCC).

"Any scientist found to have falsified data in the manner of the Channel 4 programme would be guilty of serious professional misconduct" (British Antarctic Survey, National Environment Research Council).

Climate Change and Solar Activity: The programme asserted that climate change has nothing to do with CO₂ – it's all caused by changes in the activity of the sun. In fact, "change in solar activity... cannot, on its own, account for all the changes in global average temperature we have seen in the 20th Century... Measurements from satellites show that there has been very little change in underlying solar activity in the last 30 years – there is even evidence of a detectable decline – and so this cannot account for the recent rises we have seen in global temperatures" (The Royal Society's Climate Change Advisory Group, 2007).

For further information, enter the following into your web browser, or request hard copies from David Golding: "Climate change controversies: a simple guide", by the Royal Society (Britain's national academy of science); or "JRI – The Great Global Warming Swindle" by Sir John Houghton, formerly Co-Chair of the IPCC. For a brief discussion of the scurrilous allegations of malpractice in the preparation of the 1995 IPCC Report, see our website.

Live Earth, 07.07.07: A Global Chorus on Climate Change

"Times like these demand action," said Al Gore

An estimated two billion people watched the Live Earth concerts organised by Al Gore (right) to highlight the problem of climate change. The 24-hour marathon spanned seven continents – including even a performance by a band of scientists at a research station in Antarctica! - and was the biggest musical event ever staged.

'I Count' - the campaign of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition - is a UK partner of Live Earth UK. Ashok Sinha, I Count Director, said: "Live Earth is not just a great day for music. It's a springboard for action. Through 'I Count' we will give visibility to people's personal actions to reduce their carbon footprint and call on political leaders of all parties to listen and act". [See page 10 for details.]



Al Gore, when Vice-President, 1994

Thunderous performance by Tony Campolo

Professor Tony Campolo, the renowned American sociologist and social reformer, gave a characteristically thunderous performance at a lunchtime 'lecture' at Newcastle University on Friday 8th June.



L-r, David Golding, Martin Callanan MEP, Tony and Peggy Campolo, and Jo Grant (Aquila Trust)

Tony took as his starting point Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History" thesis. He pointed out that the propagation of the endless acquisition of 'stuff' is not only killing our fellow human beings in the poor countries, but killing us as people here too. He asserted that there is a better way and concluded with a message of hope, expressed in the words of the pastor of the black church he attends: "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming!"

The event was chaired by Martin Callanan MEP, one of Make Poverty History NE's Patrons, and co-sponsored by the University Chaplaincy and the regional social action grouping, Incarnate.

Photo, courtesy of Tim Kenny; Tim's DVD of the event available from the Editor.

Speak up! Sign Up! Watch out!

Active participation in our campaign is hardly a bed of nails. Our last newsletter requested five actions, relating to G8, climate, trade, AIDS and debt. If you had access to the web, you could have completed all five in 15 minutes - I know, because I timed myself! This issue only involves three campaigning actions.

Speak out! Please write to Hilary Benn, the new environment minister, incorporating the points in the draft letter appended. Fax 020 7238 6609, or use postal address given below;

Sign Up! MPH-NE is a member of Stop Climate Chaos, but you can become a personal member: go to www.icount.org.uk

Watch out! Beg, borrow or steal (well, not steal, exactly!) a copy of Al Gore's oscar-winning documentary, 'An Inconvenient Truth'. [Try Amazon, Blockbusters, etc.] And then gather friends and family to watch it.

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Secretary of State,
Department for the Environment, Food &
Rural Affairs
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Date

Dear Mr Benn,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for the Environment, the most important job in government!

I am writing to you as a supporter of Make Poverty History North East and of to urge you to make climate change the top priority in your new job. Global warming is not simply "the greatest challenge facing Britain and the World in the 21st century" (Sir David King), it is the greatest challenge to have faced humanity since the dawn of civilisation.

Furthermore, climate change hits poor communities the hardest, so I welcome the experience on development issues that you bring to your new role. Please use your influence to obtain an international agreement that will keep the global temperature rise below 2°C and deliver the necessary support for poor countries to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The UK's new Climate Change Bill has the potential to profoundly impact the lives of poor people around the world. Yet the Bill's current proposal of 60 per cent cuts by 2050 would mean that the UK would not deliver its fair share of cuts needed to keep global temperatures below 2°C. Furthermore, the proposed rolling five year targets will not provide the discipline both government and people need if we are to meet this challenge.

Please confirm that you will deliver a Climate Change Bill:

- With a target of at least 80 per cent emissions cuts by 2050;
- Which includes emissions from international aviation and shipping;
- And that incorporates legally binding *annual* targets adequate to deliver the required objective.

You have a huge and historic task leading the struggle against climate change. For the sake of the world's poor, and for our children and grandchildren, please don't let us down!

Please do keep me informed.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Declare your (Carbon) Neutrality!

All levels of human society, from international bodies to individuals, must play their part in countering the threat of global warming. Furthermore, the adoption of a carbon-frugal lifestyle by individuals offers the greatest opportunity for the rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, since nearly half the CO₂ produced in Britain results from actions under our personal control. The CO₂ we emit today will remain in the atmosphere, heating up the earth, for a thousand years!

For what it's worth, the editor has done the following, with the exception of microgeneration. In this way, I hope to have halved the size of my personal 'carbon footprint' by the end of the year and to have eliminated it altogether (ie, become 'carbon neutral') by 'offsetting' the rest.

Home energy use:

- 1) Bring your home up to the highest possible standard of insulation - contact Energy Saving Trust (0800 512 012) for independent advice on grants and suppliers. This is a win (for the environment), win (for your pocket), win (for the country) situation!
- 2) Fit energy efficient light bulbs (shop around – the price varies enormously).
- 3) Switch to a green electricity supplier, such as Good Energy (Tel. 0845 456 1640; www.good-energy.co.uk). [According to an in-depth National Consumer Council study (2007), "Good Energy is the only supplier to receive three unqualified ticks for its green supply... For those consumers who want a green electricity supply, pure and simple, this is probably the closest they will get to it."]
- 4) Turn your central heating thermostat down 2 degrees (and buy a light fleece!); use a shower rather than a bath; wash clothes at 30°C; don't leave appliances on stand-by; draw curtains at night.
- 5) When replacing your boiler, refrigerator, washing machine, etc, buy the option with the highest possible energy efficiency. If your boiler is 10 or more years old, replace it.

Travel:

- 6) Walk, cycle or take public transport whenever possible.
- 7) If you insist on running a car, choose a modest model with the best fuel economy you can get, but minimise its use.
- 8) Air travel is exceedingly damaging to the environment and its use should be minimised.

Microgeneration:

- 9) Solar panels, wind turbines, heat pumps.

Carbon Offsetting:

10) The concept is simple: we cause the emission of large amounts of CO₂ by the use of fossil fuels. However, by investing in projects elsewhere, mainly in the developing countries, which will reduce CO₂, we can 'offset', i.e., reduce or eliminate, our net 'carbon footprint'.

On no account should offsetting be at the expense of support for charities, etc! Furthermore, you should not use offsetting to salve your conscience whilst you 'carry on pollutin'! Offsetting should be used as the final step, when you have reduced your carbon footprint as much as you can.

I rate the best scheme as being The Clean Planet Trust [www.puretrust.org.uk]. However, church groups, etc, could consider Climate Stewards [www.climatestewards.org.uk], which also seems to do good work.

My *personal* conviction is that almost everyone should at least single-offset his/her emissions due to home energy use and motoring, and triple offset any air travel because of the greater damage it does. If we can't afford to do so, we should accept we can't afford the luxuries in the first place. After all, have vulnerable people in the poorest countries given us the right to ruin their lives for the sake of our comfort, convenience and pleasure?

For a detailed discussion of offsetting, visit our website.

EMAIL - Please, please, etc!

If you are on email, please let us have your address. This will enable us to give you advance notice of forthcoming events, etc. Send it, with your names and postcode, to:
mphne-mailing@yahoo.co.uk

Should we include you on our 'postal mail + email' list, or 'email only'? Please bear in mind that, whilst we wish to avoid unnecessary expense, we are most anxious to maximise the likelihood of our mailings being read.

Speaking personally...

It would be foolish to deny that global poverty campaigners have entered what is perhaps the most 'challenging' phase of their endeavours since Jubilee 2000 set it all in motion in 1996. Although this year's G8 saw an important step forward on climate, the failure by world leaders to honour in full their Gleneagles commitments is a terrible blow. However, we must remember that the situation is still far better than that which existed before 2005 and that, if Britain still continues to keep its promises, this will put a lot of pressure on other countries.

If 2007, the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, has taught us anything, it is the need for perseverance. "What most attracted me to William Wilberforce", says John Piper, "was his reputation as man who simply wouldn't give up". Surely we can all aspire to no better a reputation!

With every kind wish, David (David Golding, Editor)

Regional Study Conference Roadshow, October-November

One of our most successful ventures last year was our 'Roadshow' at venues ranging from Teesside to Alnwick. Each event typically involved a couple of short talks with opportunities for discussion and action (letter writing, card signing, etc.), and some were attended by MPs. However, we can't do it all! We need people to find a venue in their locality and to invite us.

Detailed plans have yet to be made, but possible topics include:

- Corruption – is it a bar to progress in Africa?
- Carbon offsetting – can it make a contribution?
- 'Lift the lid' – illegitimate debt.
- HIV/AIDS – progress and challenge

Note that the International Week of Action on Debt will be 14th-21st October, and that Global White Band Day ('World Poverty Day) will be Wednesday 17th October.

Make Poverty History *NorthEast*

Chair, Judith Sadler; Vice-Chair, Kevin Haigh; Secretary and Website Manager, Tim Kenny; Treasurer, Mike Waller; Development Coordinator, David Golding; Minutes Secretary, Maureen Osborn; Mailing List Manager, Veronica Golding.

Website: www.mph-northeast.org.uk Contact: 0191 222 5282; d.w.golding@ncl.ac.uk