

Poland Street Days

By Walt Patterson

(Walt's 'London Letter' from the crowded and uproarious two-room office of Friends of the Earth UK in Poland Street, in the middle of Soho in London's West End, appeared in Not Man Apart, published by US Friends of the Earth in San Francisco in the early 1970s. The following are surviving 'Letters', in chronological order)

December 1972

No doubt about it; FOE UK has made the big time, parodied in *Punch* magazine. According to *Punch* (1 November) the "Friends of the Sea" aim that, *inter alia*, "All members should make a living wholly financed by the Social Conscience Departments of leading industrialists and confectionery millionaires and that world consumption problems should be kept in the public eye by the use of colourful stickers in the windows of the Friends' fleet of cars." (We are also on the cover - as a graffito.)

Punch undoubtedly got its info - biographically near the bone - from a feature in *New Society* a fortnight earlier, giving FOE a lengthy writeup as a leading example of the new breed of British pressure groups. Nonetheless we have had little time for preening. The first half of October was devoted extensively to organizing a demo - more a one-vehicle parade - to draw attention to a Parliamentary question about banning whale-product imports. Alas - the lorry, with its 25-foot whales either side, carrying an impromptu blues band yclept Blue Whale Unit, plus FOE stalwarts, made its 'swim' a bit too late to catch the papers, although it turned a lot of heads in Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square. To compound the disappointment, the Parliamentary question turned out to be the Non-Event of the month, eliciting a terse written answer to the effect that the Government could see nothing wrong with the status quo. The whale campaign is now regrouping for a fresh foray.

Within FOE UK headquarters the main development of significance has been the an administrative and staff reshuffle. On the last Friday of October we bid a boozy farewell to Pete Wilkinson, one of the old originals and a key man in FOE UK's formative period. He takes with him our best wishes, and an inscribed pewter pot that will keep him ahead of the field when rounds are being bought. Graham Searle, director and number one flak-catcher since FOE UK was founded, is moving to one side of the target area as of November. He will then be concerned primarily with fund-raising among the Social Conscience Departments, and with campaign work, particularly in and for Snowdonia. Colin Blythe becomes "operations manager," head office supremo; for the moment he also retains the role of local-group coordinator.

The local groups are becoming more and more important in FOE activities; preliminary work is now underway to develop more areas for campaigns, particularly campaigns with an urban

orientation. Topics very much under investigation include transport, sewage, and energy. Since these will all require a good deal of intensive homework, it is gratifying to note that FOE's application for a research wing of charitable status has been approved by the Powers That Be. Within the coming weeks the structure and initial operations of the FOE charity should begin to take shape.

Two other developments of unexpected interest are closely related. FOE is suddenly finding itself in recurring colloquies with MPs, and with the Labour Party national organization (although not, thus far, with the Conservatives). At the same time FOE has been invited by the National Union of Railwaymen to participate in a national coalition to oppose Government policy favouring road over rail. Contacts in the political and union areas are giving a new and still more potent cast to FOE representations. Not that they don't already have a certain potency: the hapless Zuckerman Commission on Mining and National Parks, for instance, walked into a withering media crossfire, sparked by the three-page FOE press release which coincided with publication of the Commission's fatuous report.

The next noise you hear will be the Friends' sticker-laden fleet of cars driving triumphantly into the sunset.

January 1973

Endeavoring to practice what we preach, FOE UK has been devoting some attention to our local environment, and painting the office. The resulting congestion has been almost as comprehensive as that in the Soho streets below. But now both the outer office and the inner sanctum gleam with pristine whiteness, and the endless stream of visitors ought to be duly impressed.

The month has been marked mainly by small events and on-going in-fighting. Probably the single most significant episode was the British publication, at long last, of *Eryri, The Mountains of Longing*, the first British entry in the series *The Earth's Wild Places*. The book was due to appear early last summer: then, within 48 hours of its intended launch, the co-publishers, George Allen & Unwin, received a 19-page letter from Goodman, Derrick, the most feared libel lawyers in Britain, acting for Rio Tinto-Zinc. The letter alleged "serious errors of fact" in the book, and the publishers, denied the time to study the complaints, had no recourse but to suspend publication. Subsequent backstage battling established that RTZ could substantiate at most one single incidental misstatement of fact (on a highly technical point unrelated to the subjects at issue); but to expedite matters Allen & Unwin agreed to tip in a one-page RTZ insert at the back of the book, rebutting - as RTZ saw it - the charges against them. Amory Lovins, author of the text of the book, then prepared a rebuttal of RTZ's rebuttal, and distributed it at the launch press conference on 21 November: to which RTZ sent three representatives, who stressed, with rather aggressive emphasis, that they had 'come to listen,' and would offer no comment. But ping-pong connoisseurs have no doubt that the ball, presently on the RTZ side, will return shortly, probably with a nasty spin on it.

Still on the subject of Snowdonia, a new front seems to be opening. The Central Electricity Generating Board have put forward plans for a pumped-storage hydroelectric facility at Llanberis,

just straddling the boundary of the Snowdonia National Park. An uninformative and increasingly curt exchange of letters between FOE and the CEBG terminated without clearing up the basic question: whether an adequate cost-benefit analysis of the scheme could justify it, in view of its obvious environmental impact. Accordingly, some more roundabout avenues are now being negotiated, on tippy-toe.

Pressure is now mounting, prompted by (who else?) FOE, for an Endangered Species Act in Britain, to parallel the one brought in in 1969 in the US. A leading Parliamentary draftsman has donated his services and prepared, in consultation with Angela King, a draft Bill to establish such an Act. A number of MPs have expressed interest and support. Plans are underway for a Christmas Wildlife Rally at the Royal Albert Hall on 19 December, to be preceded by a quarter-page advertisement in *The Times* inviting donations to further the campaign.

FOE were represented at a planning meeting organised by the National Union of Railwaymen, on behalf of a move to rally support for railways. But the difficulties of uniting both action- and establishment-oriented environmental groups and trades unions behind a common programme proved as awkward as the most pessimistic might have predicted. FOE remains convinced of the necessity to create an alliance with trades unions - even if it costs us a few posh friends.

Local FOE groups are entering the fray with growing vigor. Colin Blythe has been dropping in on various locales, and reports that matters seem generally in good hands. Walt Patterson and Amory Lovins have been closetted with two different lots of TV teams (from competing companies!), developing programmes on nuclear power which ought to annoy the industry. Also on the energy front, gen has begun to pour in about the British 'North Sea bonanza,' gas and oil, upon which the multinational corporations are descending like a cross between sea-gulls and vultures. A few of us, including our operatives in Scotland, are not so convinced by the drum-beating. The North Sea is mean, and its submarine geology is almost unexplored. If the oil comes ashore in pipelines, perhaps it will be all right: but what if it comes ashore by itself? with the help of those wonderful people who brought you Santa Boobara? Watch this space.

Speaking of which, when are they going to paint *my* wall? My Broomhilda clippings deserve a more complementary setting.

February 1973

Every time the FOE UK office succumbs to another spasm of poster-painting, I return to an on-going subliminal campaign. It has not yet won through; but one of these days Angela Potter or Colin Blythe will snap, I have no doubt. Then the media will have the chance to publicize a demo whose participants purport to come from that most feared of pressure-groups, FIENDS OF THE WRATH. I offer the suggestion free to all our brethren.

The posters this time were for the *soi-disant* Christmas Wildlife Rally at the Royal Albert Hall on 19 December: about which, by almost unanimous assent, the less said the better. Fortunately for our self-esteem, FOE were only incidental participants. Perhaps 1200 people attended, the majority of

whom seem to have been there for the wine-and-cheese beforehand; they paid dearly for their grosser appetites. The tedium hung in the air like the morning after, but did so the night before. The phone rang repeatedly in the following days, shell-shocked voices at the other end asking if that was typical of FOE. We were able to say with grim truth that it was not. Call it an off-night for all concerned.

With the exception of the Christmas Wildlife Bummer, it was a generally encouraging month. In the *Sunday Times* for 17 December, Kenneth Allsop, one of Britain's most dedicated environmental journalists, published a scorching feature on Rio Tinto-Zinc's metaphorically subterranean activities, to wit what looked like heavy-handed attempts to stifle public discussion of their physically subterranean activities. The article was, of course, based extensively on information provided by FOE, and at last Rio Tinto's elephantine hide was pierced. With a three-page bellow of rage via yet another team of solicitors they turned on their tormentors and thundered down on Times Newspapers Ltd with a writ for libel. Unfortunately for fanciers of courtroom pyrotechnics - and for those who delight in the spectacle of corporate feet in corporate mouths - the case may never reach the courts. Pity.

In August of last year - possibly stirred by the example of the 'Commission' set up by Rio Tinto-Zinc and its industrial cohorts to examine 'Mining and the Environment' - the Government in turn set up the four-man Stevens Committee to look at planning law as it applies to surface mining of minerals other than coal. Thus far, almost 100 organizations have submitted evidence, swamping the committee and necessitating a three-month postponement of their deadline. FOE, primarily through the Christmastide efforts of Amory Lovins, have just submitted some 35,000 words of evidence, and at once received a phone-call from the Committee secretary, asking for eight more copies. We seem to have struck a chord.

Anthony 'Phil' Tucker of the *Guardian*, another of our particular friends, wrote a year-end article in which he intended to pinpoint as the year's most alarming revelation the possibility of losing track of special nuclear material. He based his story on Volume II of the *Stockholm Conference Eco*, and its piece entitled "And Now For A Little Diversion". As it happened, the subs butchered his copy; it came out among other deviations that FOE had broken this story "at the Stockholm Conference on ecology". Phil blew his stack, and forthwith got us a correction in a subsequent issue. Granada Television picked up the story, and your reporter did a four-minute interview on one of their news programmes, affirming that, yes, given some "diverted" plutonium, it would be quite possible for our more extreme fellows to construct an all-too-believable, do-it-yourself A-bomb. One way and another this looks like the year that the atoms of Britain find their split hitting the fan.

Meanwhile, for our legions of admirers, we have made yet more appearances in the nation's periodical press. Undoubtedly the most improbable manifestation we have yet managed was a picture-plus-writeup in the Christmas issue of *Reveille*, a weekly tabloid notable mainly for its acreage of feminine epidermis. We appeared fully-clothed. Fiends of the Wrath must have their secrets.

March 1973

What a month! What a performance! There they are, back to back to back to back to back to back to back. taking on all comers. KaPWEENGG! Concorde shudders! KerrUMP! A crater appears in Foulness Airport! Bupbupbup! The reactor builders stagger back! POW! The British Fur Trade Association clutches its pelt! Who needs the Magnificent Seven?

Actually, it wasn't quite that exciting. Fun though. Well, not entirely: we took a couple of casualties. Colin Blythe turned progressively greener for the first week of the year, and then was rushed off to hospital for a one-ayem appendectomy. While we were still regrouping we learned that Barclay Inglis, chairman of FOE UK, had experienced a coronary. Fortunately he seems to be on the mend and the hospital ushered Colin back onto the street while his appendix was still warm. The rest of our stout band held the fort, and even managed some telling forays.

The month began with a letter in the *Times*, on New Year's Day, from the chairman of the British Fur Trade Association, which caught us from an unexpected quarter. We cannot be called their most enthusiastic fans, but we have been working together toward a ban on trade in endangered species: or so we thought. The BFTA, however, opined that FOE were johnny-come-latelies catching a band-wagon that the fur trade had set rolling: and concluded a lengthy tirade about a FOE advertisement by saying "It is deplorable that in an attempt to raise funds from the public, Friends of the Earth should make statements which are so completely unfounded." In other words, according to the BFTA, FOE have been falsifying information for gain. In mid-January the *Times* printed a letter from Colin asking the BFTA to substantiate their charges or withdraw them. They have not since done so; accordingly, they have just received a letter from FOE's solicitors, suggesting that both their original remarks and their subsequent silence have been distinctly ill-advised. For once it may be fun to watch the fur fly.

Throughout the month the office has resounded to the writing of books. Your reporter finally wrapped up his Red Alert treatise on "All You Wanted To Know About Nuclear Reactors But Were Afraid To Ask"; Amory did the same with his companion volume on open-pit metal mining; and Graham wrestled with the pregnant publishers due to bring forth his "Project Earth" for school-children. Speaking of the gravid, both Colin and Simon are awaiting their firstborn, due any day now.

Through the good offices of John Aspinall, Graham was introduced to a tableful of millionaires at a fund-raising dinner on FOE's behalf. The following morning the office air was punctuated with squeals and chortles of disbelief and delight as a fistful of three- and four-figure cheques was passed from one hot little hand to another. It won't quite pay off the mortgage on the homestead, but the farmer's daughter is an encouraging bit farther from the villain's clutches.

Granada TV broadcast on 22 January their excellent 25-minute documentary (upon which Amory and your reporter had acted as consultants) on the safety - or otherwise - of American light-water reactors. In the week since the transmission one MP has devoted two pages of Hansard to the matter (quoting your reporter) and another, a former Minister for the Navy, has issued a stern warning to the House about the possibility of hijacking plutonium, especially in connection with nuclear power development. The *Financial Times* science correspondent has forecast that in the next decade the

Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) will order between 27 and 67 new reactors; and an *FT* editorial has urged the nuclear moguls not to be shy of "foreign technology". "The Americans, for instance, have accumulated a great deal of experience with their types of nuclear reactor." To which we say "Quite so: Reactor Operating Experience is excellent reading, highly recommended to anyone who likes lots of thrills, chills, and spills." Zut alors. The CEGB wrath about the Granada film makes one wonder nonetheless. Is there, perchance, a PWR in our future? Or 67 of 'em? That faint glow on your eastern horizon is Britain ...

The end of the month brought the real goodies. As this is written, the Pan Am axe is halfway through Concorde's cervical vertebrae; but it's true that indications are the corpse is likely to flop about for some time, leaving an excessively messy trail. As if to compound the aerospace agonies, the Government's proud plans for an "environmental" airport at Foulness, north of the Thames estuary, have suddenly run into difficulties. The Foulness site, the only wild coastline within easy reach of London, is the home of one-fifth of the world's population of Brent geese, many other wildfowl, and some very stubborn humans. The Defenders of Essex, fighting a desperate rearguard action to save their homes and their wetlands, suddenly found themselves with support in the House of Commons, just before the go-ahead Bill for the airport was due for a second reading. FOE have been allied to the Defenders for some weeks - better late than never - and published a Manifesto which coincided with a massive surge of support, including a *Times* first leader suggesting second thoughts. Now the airport Bill is to come before a select committee, guaranteeing further delay and calling the whole idea in question.

April 1973

Hi there, all you Friends in SAN FRANCISCO and everywhere. It sure is nice to talk to our Friends in SAN FRANCISCO (and everywhere) again. Hope it's nice weather you're having over there in SAN FRANCISCO and everywhere. (How'm I doing, DRB?)

After the maniacal activity of January, February has been comparatively peaceful, at least at the Poland Street office. Mark you it has been considerably less peaceful elsewhere: Simon and Colin in swift succession became fathers, and have been appearing with that unmistakable haggard look that bespeaks protracted nocturnal perambulation. The Angelas hid themselves to Wiltshire for R&R, while the rest of us soldiered on.

Probably the number one environmental event of the month in Britain was the publication of the Layfield Report on the future of London. After more than two years of public hearings, submissions, debates, and demos, the future of London is, with the publication of this definitive report, as blurred as ever. The various official view-points on urban motorways in London now offer a bargain-counter selection of possible routes, sections of routes, crossroutes, feeder roads, interchanges, and what-have-you. The Layfield permutation differs from both of the two alternatives supported by the two major political parties who populate the Greater London Council. Meanwhile a variety of additional views are also in the pot, which is bubbling merrily.

In the continuing cliffhanger of London, Friends of the Earth are interconnected with several groups, including the Conservation Society, a politically influential local London group called Homes Before Roads, and at least two different transport-oriented groups. One, called Transport 2000, was set up by the National Union of Railwaymen as a counter-balance to the British Road Federation, whose name should tell you where they see the national interest. The other group is chaired by the Bishop of Kingston, Hugh Montefiore, a cleric whose sense of apocalypse is much closer to contemporary realities than that of most of his colleagues.

This transport question, particularly *vis-a-vis* urban motorways and public transit, has led for the first time to active and effective coalition efforts between British environmental and other pressure groups. Heretofore we in the British environmental scene have tended to operate on our own clearly-defined turf, with no overlap, and even a certain sense of territoriality. But we and our fellows are finding at last that - as has long been the case in the US - loose alliances on matters of common concern can bring enormous benefits. It seems likely that henceforth we shall be operating in multiple harness for many of our activities; thus far the consequences have been - as with the Foulness airport operation - very encouraging.

It is worth noting also that, because of Britain's relatively cosy geographical limits, it is possible to have a sizeable national impact even with a comparatively mild local manifestation. That may be one reason why, in Britain, a number of the local FOE groups have long since established a momentum of their own, keeping up two-way contact with head office primarily so we all know what's going on. Then, when the particular capabilities of head office, *in re*, for instance, media or Parliamentary ingress, become of use, the local groups invoke the name of Poland Street. If they're lucky, one of us struggles out from under and obliges. Conversely, when we in Soho need to know what is going on in Dundee or Liverpool, we have our agents on call.

So what's going on in SAN FRANCISCO?

May 1973

Well, we won one. On 15 March, Anthony Stodart of the Ministry of Agriculture announced in the House of Commons that the Government were to ban as of that midnight imports of almost all whale products. Stodart referred in his speech to the deluge of letters received in the preceding week: guess who was responsible for his fan mail? Mark you, from the state of the office at the moment, you'd have to call it a Pyrrhic victory. The place looks as if we've been under siege by explosive harpoons. It's only rewiring, we keep telling ourselves; but from the topsyturvy that has prevailed for weeks we might be justified in suspecting that our friendly local electricians were in the pay of the whaling industry.

The Government ban, as it happens, does not cover sperm oil, spermaceti wax, ambergris, or "those products incorporated abroad into manufactured goods". Angela Potter rang up the Ministry, in one of her multiplicity of disguises, to ask for clarification of this last. The Ministry chappy, bluff and hearty, suggested "Look here, why don't you just ring up the Friends of the Earth? They know all

about that sort of thing". If this continues we'll have to apply for a government grant to do their work for them. Meanwhile on to the IWC for our spermacetaceous friends.

Unfortunately, while winning the whale-ban we nearly wiped ourselves out. (It's been that kind of month.) When we sent out the alert signal to call for the write-in prior to Stodart's speech, we referred - on the basis of info from a previously-reliable source - to whale meat being used by one of the big petfood manufacturers, despite their earlier claim to the contrary. For a week thereafter we teetered on the brink of a massive libel-action, and rescued ourselves only by dint of fanatical effort, especially by Colin Blythe. It seemed, you see, that the company in question, who shall be nameless because we're damned if we're gonna give them any more publicity, *did* have 33 tons of whalemeat, *yes*, and was moving it from Grimsby docks into one of their London bases. But *no*, they were not intending to use it in dogfood. They were gonna sell it. Right? So what have you to say about that, Friends of the (sneer) Earth? Well, the missives whistled from solicitor to solicitor, and in due course we prepared and sent out a follow-up statement apologizing for our error in claiming that the company were still using whalemeat in their dogfood. However - call it poetic justice if you will - our apology-statement was mailed out with another, a brief and self-explanatory note directing attention to Mr Stodart's House of Commons announcement just made. We got a telephone call from the company within an hour of Stodart's announcement, congratulating us through clenched teeth.

Graham Searle, Amory Lovins and Ollie Thorold spent one Wednesday with the Stevens committee, at the committee's invitation, discussing planning legislation with regard to mineral extraction. It seems the committee weren't satisfied with 40,000 words-worth of FOE evidence; they have asked our lot to prepare about five more sets of commentaries on relevant aspects of the problem. The committee has asked for another year to consider its report; at this rate FOE ought to come under the committee's operating budget.

Just at the end of February the House of Lords held a long debate on energy policy, introduced by Lord Tanlaw of the Liberals. Before the debate Lord Tanlaw and his colleagues contacted us, and Amory Lovins and your reporter got together with them a couple of times to discuss issues and possibilities: very cordial purposeful meetings, and likely to be continued and expanded as energy policy suddenly leaps into the center of attention here in Britain. We are now also in working contact with the Open University, Britain's unique nationwide university-by-correspondence, whose media programmes and publications show an unparalleled awareness of the social and environmental implications of their courses. However, the British government has just handed over Britain's nuclear industry to the eager grasp of Sir Arnold Weinstock, managing director of a British company called GEC (no relation to US GE); and Sir Arnold has no patience for people who question the advisability of selling and building more reactors. He is a businessman to his fingertips, and no farther (as numbers of sacked employees can testify); balance sheets loom large before his gaze, and he is on record as seeing no reason to mess around with troublesome British technology when American light-water reactors are so well-proved (sic). Need more be said? Well, as a matter of fact yes. And it will be. Don't change that dial.

While we were juggling whales and writs mid-month we found ourselves also tossing up another delicate item. The forthcoming elections for the Greater London Council have been polarized neatly by the incumbent Conservatives, who want urban motorways, and the opposition Labour Party, who don't. Our particular friends the Liberals don't either. Neither (need we say it?) do we. Hitherto FOE

UK has remained doggedly non-party. But on this issue, and for this election, there seemed no option but to nail our colours to the anti-motorway mast, and call upon FOE supporters to help throw out the motorway-backers. The resulting agro would have paralyzed all but the most dedicated innocents. But we seem to have weathered it, and convinced our variously aggrieved party-political cohorts that we are not suddenly opting for a party whip, if you know what that means. Now all we can do is wait and see if we, our allies, and lovers of London everywhere can win another one. If we don't, book your tourist tickets quick. London won't be here much longer.

June 1973

How would the little Dutch boy have felt if, while he stuck his finger in the dike, they'd suddenly taken away the dike, water and all? We feel a bit like that at the moment: Rio Tinto-Zinc, for once displaying a touch of the ept in their PR, announced quietly the day before Good Friday that they had decided not to mine copper in Snowdonia. Needless to say, with no newspapers the next day, and amid the usual long-weekend ennui, their announcement received scarcely a whisper of attention, at least from the national media. It is quite clear that the RTZ decision - ostensibly for economic reasons - can be chalked up as another win for us; but it doesn't half feel strange, pushing like hell and suddenly finding no one pushing back.

What with the whale ban one month and the RTZ opt-out the next, we have abruptly found ourselves a pressure group unexpectedly depressurized. As any deep-sea diver can tell you, that leads to an acute case of the bends. However, after a certain amount of writhing, we have gotten ourselves untangled again, and the campaigns seem to be achieving the necessary change of focus. One of the colloquies contributing to this end took place on a mid-April Saturday, when some 60 local-group representatives from all over Britain came to London for an all-day planning session with the head office bods. Tom Burke of the active and effective Merseyside FOE group put forward a plan for a three-level structure involving local, regional, and central groupings; but the assembled reps felt that such a hierarchy would have to evolve, rather than be brought into being by fiat. Nonetheless the meeting did manage to strengthen our mutual understanding of FOE's goals and of the means by which we can best work towards them. From that viewpoint the whale ban and the RTZ decision, however unsettling, are of course morale-boosters, demonstrating that we can not only make environmental voices heard, but also make them carry the day. If we allow ourselves to lament victories just because they complicate fund-raising, we are getting dangerously close to the mentality of our brethren in the Pentagon.

Speaking of victories, you can all postpone your trips to London: Labour won the Greater London Council election, and their very first pronouncement was that they were scrapping the ringways as promised. Say what you like about politicians: they have good ears. Incidentally, it turned out - as we subsequently learned - that the Conservative conservation candidate we'd also supported, in Winchester, also won: by 70 votes. Without FOE support she wouldn't have made it, and she has called to say so, and thank us. Considering our numerical punyness, the number of times we got press mention before the GLC election was quite remarkable: always underlining the reason for our political alignment. It might sound presumptuous to say so but it might be fair to claim some credit

for the prominence of the transport-policy question in pre-election in-fighting. All in all, the aggro was worth it.

After a protracted and uncomfortable labour, FOE Ltd are proud to announce the birth of *Packaging in Britain: A Policy for Containment*, some 64 pages of concentrated information and argument which has well and truly reawakened public interest in one of FOE's first loves. Perhaps 'love' isn't quite the right word. In any event the report, written and edited by your reporter and Graham Searle, has received excellent coverage in the media: including not only newspaper stories about its publication, but also follow-up features which seem likely to continue for the foreseeable future, on television and radio and in magazines - from the *New Scientist* to *Reader's Digest*. Since Parliament was to consider in mid-May a Private Member's Bill calling for the control of packaging, we seem to be moving into a whole new phase in the Packaging Campaign. Meanwhile Schweppes have just dropped their 'secret of Schhh. . .' ads in favour of new ones revealing that the secret is 'weppes.' They ordered six copies of the FOE Report. Presumably they read it and wepped.

July 1973

We tripped merrily into May, and merrily out of it. Into May we tripped via Snowdonia. Plans had been laid for a grim, purposeful visit by Simon, Graham, your reporter, and other FOE bods, to make certain that our Snowdonia contacts were not lost by Simon's imminent departure for Australia. However, the grim, purposeful aspect of the trip evaporated with RTZ's decision to fold its drill rigs and steal silently away. We made the journey nonetheless, and celebrated a triumphant progress through the forests and valleys of Cwm Hermon on a day of azure skies and balmy air, with welcoming buzzards looping lazily overhead. Standing in the light dawn by the stone cottage on the hillside, looking down into Cwm Hermon, you could not shake the thought: what kind of head could gaze on that panorama and think, 'What a great place for a copper mine!'

(In passing, how's this for time travel? We departed Cwm Hermon in the warm Welsh dawn, leaving a cottage with no electricity and with a loo at the bottom of the garden. Six hours later, your reporter was trotting through the gangways at the Culham establishment in Berkshire, headquarters of Britain's research into controlled thermonuclear fusion. The next time someone points a gas laser at you, duck.)

We spent one day of the North Wales sojourn beside and above Llyn Peris, the serene lake which the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) want to make the lower reservoir for their Dinorwic pumped storage hydroelectric scheme. We also made our way, seven of us aboard my Land-Rover, to Marchlyn Mawr, which would be the upper reservoir. The CEGB have already been at work, and the drive, at five miles per hour horizontally and up to fifty vertically, over the worst alleged road the Land-Rover has ever tasted, was punctuated throughout by wails and shrieks of agony and the thud of heads against the roof. But the CEGB shall no longer have things their own way. Throughout mid-May a Parliamentary Private Bill Committee heard evidence about the CEGB application, including detailed dissection of the plans by Amory and counsel for FOE and the North Wales (Hydro-Electricity) Protection Committee. The Parliamentary Committee approved the application; but it must still go through the House of Lords. An article by Amory in the *New*

Scientist (31 May) discloses aspects of the argument which were thought to be 'too complex' to present to the Private Bill Committee. Judge for yourself: the CEGB want peaking facilities but discount the alternative of gas turbines. However, it emerges that the CEGB have not had anything to do with industrial gas turbines for 20 years, are estimating their cost 50 percent too high, and appear to be thinking not of industrial gas turbines, but of transplanted jet engines. The economic arguments demonstrate a similar 'complexity.' It is to be hoped that their Lordships have less trouble than the Committee with two-syllable words.

Within days of its publication the Packaging Report (he said without a blush) seems to have become a Standard Work. Six weeks later, we are still getting daily orders, media inquiries, and approaches from industry about it, and the waves are lapping relentlessly around the ankles of Eldon Griffiths. Sooner or later he must, surely, be compelled to take his promised step and set up the long-awaited Working Party.

On 12 May, FOE joined with its ZPG-like sister organization Population Stabilization, and with the Family Planning Association, Birth Control Campaign, and other groups, to hold Population Day. Coordinated demonstrations were held in many British cities. In London, 370 demonstrators, each holding aloft a two-dimensional baby - Britain's daily increment - descended on Downing Street to ask our bachelor Prime Minister to preach what he (presumably) practices, at least insofar as procreation is concerned.

Angela K and her allies spent the month laying plans - not to say boobytraps - for the International Whaling Commission's meeting in London next month. The IWC won't know what hit them. There'll be schoolkids rallying in Battersea Park, a poster competition, a huge inflatable whale, a half-page advertisement in *The Times* signed by all the world's most heavyweight whale-fanciers, a presentation of porcelain whales to the Russian and Japanese delegations, and free dogfood for everyone...

Simon has now, alas, left us, bound for his native Oz with wife and little one. He will not be easy to replace. Nor will a very good friend of ours, the journalist and broadcaster Kenneth Allsop, whose death at 53 stunned us all. Ken's vigorous, perceptive reporting had been one of the most effective allies Britain's environment had; and his ready cordiality toward the work of FOE was an invaluable morale-booster. We shall miss him, even those of us who knew him only through his writing.

In late May, Dave Brower threw an uproarious beanfeast for the FOE family at a secluded restaurant in the depths of West Kensington. The festivities even lured our decentralized colleagues from *The Ecologist* out of their hideaway in darkest Cornwall. Many flagons were emptied, much bread broken, many reminishenshesh reminished. Many thanks, Dave; the next one's on us. (How do you feel about egg and chips?)

Colin, Amory, and your reporter tripped out of May via Dundee and environs. After muttering for months that we must get to grips with North Sea oil (a slippery prospect) we took part in an all-day meeting in Dundee with representatives from environmental groups from Dundee, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other Scots localities, and agreed on the basis for a collective challenge to the oil barons. We've laid out an early warning system for the detection of lurking oilmen, set up what ought to be an effective two-way flow of information between London and Scotland, and lodged, as an opening shot, a formal objection to plans to build concrete production platforms on

the mainland across from the Isle of Skye, at a spot called Drumbuie. The next time you sip a noggin of Bonnie Prince Charlie's liqueur, imagine it with a 500-foot concrete monster floating in it. Doesn't that stick between your teeth?

August 1973

A whale came to London for the meeting of the International Whaling Commission. The day before the IWC meeting started, the Sunday papers told of the whale, sighted swimming in the Thames. But the Monday papers told the end of the story. The *Daily Express* had a half-page photo of a harbour patrolman standing on the river bank, arms extended, thumbs down over the body of the dead whale. As a symbol it was, of course, appallingly corny. It was also, for the events of the IWC week, grimly apt.

The month of June was, for most of the London Friends, centred on the IWC meeting and preparations for it. Most of the burden landed as usual on Angela King, but almost everyone else in the place spent the month up to the earlobes in whalery. (The solitary exception, he admitted with some sheepishness, was your reporter, who did not paint posters, nor telephone dignitaries, nor design advertisements, nor write letters, nor carry banners.) Colin Blythe in particular gulped in vast volumes of gen and spouted it impressively forth, becoming within the month a bona fide cetologist, or at any rate a damned convincing mouthpiece for Angela. He probably won't admit it, but we think he really knows what he's talking about. In any case, he certainly convinced a number of Peers of the Realm. Invited to address the All-Party Conservation Committee at the House of Lords about the whale situation, Colin elicited not only applause but a striking tribute from their Lordships. His host, Lord Creighton, remarking on Colin's discourse, said 'We [the Establishment] ought to be eternally grateful for groups like Friends of the Earth. They can get away with things we would never dare.'

For the IWC, FOE 'got away' with some remarkably 'establishment' doings. The morning of the first session, Monday 25 June, the *Times* carried a half-page advertisement, an open letter to the Commission, calling for a ten-year moratorium on the killing of whales, and signed by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, the Duke of Edinburgh, Thor Heyerdahl, Jacques Cousteau, and many other world-famous names, as well as by many concerned organizations, including Friends of the Earth International. The advertisement was quoted in most of the other newspapers, and given coverage on radio and television. The previous Saturday, on a completely different level, Friends of the Earth held a party for school-children in Battersea Park on the south bank of the Thames. Several hundred youngsters came, bringing the posters they had painted about whales, most of them delightful and some frankly heart-rending. (The winning poster by a seven-year old said MY WHALE IS KIND BUT MY WHALE IS DEAD.) Television celebrities and entertainers donated their services, and firms, notably including our sometimes-adversary Schweppes, provided enough goodies to send all the youngsters - and some of the oldsters - home with joyous bellyaches.

On Monday morning the delegates entered the IWC meeting past a silent vigil of banners and posters. The Russian and Japanese were to be presented with porcelain models of blue whales, inscribed in the appropriate language *Have Mercy On Us*. The Russians accepted theirs; the

Japanese refused, and a London tabloid subsequently reported that the Buddhist text on the model read, not *Have Mercy On Us*, but *Damn You If You Kill The Whale*. The paper has a doubtful track record of credibility, but none of us really regretted the ostensible rephrasing, especially after the Japanese performance in the ensuing days.

Colin and Angela took turns acting as official observers, and their recitals of the debates were enlightening and depressing. It seems, now, that the hollowness of the IWC's stance has become too apparent for anyone to take the IWC seriously as a force for control of any kind. After voting down the moratorium - albeit with a much closer margin than last year - the Commission adopted a zero quota for fin whales, only to be told that the Japanese would not abide by it. Instead of porcelain models of whales, it would now seem more appropriate to offer the IWC a copy of that newspaper photograph: a man standing over a whale, and signalling thumbs down.

September 1973

After the obsessive cetacery of June, July turned centrifugal again, so much so that by the end of the month the office was almost empty. Fortunately 'twas holidays, not antipathies, which scattered the bodies: holidays both overdue and not a moment too soon. This screed will be your reporter's last Friendly undertaking before hying himself a-castling in Wales with wife and sprog for a long-awaited week. *A-castling we will go, a-castling we will go...*

Ahem. Probably the most dramatic environmental event of the month - for 'environmental' read 'anti-environmental' - was publication of the Government's megalomaniac plans for paving over southeast Essex. By hindsight it's apparent that only FOE, the Defenders of Essex, and our more perceptive colleagues had really understood the implications of plans to site a new London airport on Foulness Island and the Maplin Sands. As rumblings of discontent spread even through the Tory backbenches, as Ministerial evasions and circumlocutions - not to say downright lies - piled up, it became clear that Heath and Company are now viewing 'Maplin' through the same grandiose spectacles that have so long been used to bestow a rosy aura around the looming hulk of Concorde. The consequences are similar; it is impossible to get straight answers about costs, about social effects, about ecological effects, even about economic justification and indeed *need* for the project. Instead we get patronizing assurances that the government knows best (better, in this case, than the airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority, British Rail, the harbour authorities, the Essex County Council, Essex MPs, and hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of Essex, all of whom want no part of 'Maplin'); and we get warnings that the residents around Heathrow and Gatwick must not be forced to put up with more noise; and we get appeals to national pride and glory that would have brought tears to the eyes of General de Gaulle.

No one has explained, apart from all the other arguments, how noise-abatement implies that you build a huge new airport on the coast - and then build under its flight-paths a city of half a million people. However, this could be a whole issue of NMA on its own, and your reporter is starting to froth at the mouth. Suffice it to say that apart from Ted Heath and his soi-disant Secretary of State for (sic) the Environment, Geoffrey Rippon, plus presumably the collective construction industry, no one in Britain seems to regard the Maplin plan as other than deranged. The coming battle, in

which FOE will figure prominently, should be a lulu. Just to keep our hand in, some Friends staged a pantomime - St George slaying the Maplin Monster - in the forecourt of the Department of the Environment buildings, and got some useful press coverage as well as freaking out at least one junior bureaucrat and disciple of Mayor Daley, who would gladly have used tanks against them if tanks had been available. What with Concorde, Maplin, and the Channel Tunnel, don't be surprised if you next hear that Mr Heath is planning to link London and New York with a bridge. Probably named after himself.

While we're considering the care and feeding of the construction industry let it be said that the South-east is not their only habitat. British contractors are now roaming up and down the western coast of Scotland, trying to find a place to set up shop to build concrete oil production platforms for use in the North Sea. Mention was made in these columns of an application for planning permission for a site opposite the Isle of Skye. The same firm - still without an order on its books - has now filed another application for a site at the resort hamlet of Ullapool, to the north. It looks to our North Sea Oil Coalition people as though the companies are into a shotgun technique, applying everywhere, knowing that the small communities cannot find the resources necessary to mount opposition everywhere where opposition would normally be indicated. We down South are going to have to do something about this: perhaps a campaign to demand that companies making such applications contribute to a fund from which local opponents can receive support. Be assured that we are not going to back down without one helluva fight.

Pete Wilkinson, Colin Blythe, Colin Hines of Population Stabilization, and your reporter have initiated a series of informal but promising discussions with staff members of several of the major trades unions, to seek out common ground and - possibly - to devise ways of cooperating for mutual benefit. We already have a good, on-going liaison with the railmen's unions in Transport 2000, the public-transport pressure group; now we've been meeting with the National Union of Mineworkers, registering our support for coal as a vital long-term resource, and generally establishing some open channels of communication. We have also met with other unions and with the Trades Union Congress, the overall coordinating body, and it looks as though - particularly on matters of transport and energy policy - we may have begun a valuable colloquy. The example of the Shell strike and the OCAW-environment group teamwork in the US has been of inestimable value in establishing our bona fides.

With the usual trauma we brought forth a four-sided tabloid Annual-Report-cum-membership-dinner in the format of a new monthly which will be appearing regularly as from this autumn, called *Spaceship Earth*. It won't, at least initially, be any threat to NMA, but it might be fun. Who knows? We might even find a relief man for your ever-faithful reporter. *A-castling we will go, a-castling we will go, hi-ho the merry-o...*

October 1973

The spectacle was frightening. There was the world, going to hell in a handcart, and there was the London office of FOE manned only by a skeleton staff, whose name was Pete Wilkinson. In the nick of time, of course, the rest of our gallant little band reconverged to raise the siege on 9 Poland

Street. To our relief, not to say astonishment, we found that civilization (such as it is) was still holding out without us, at least for two weeks. But it was undoubtedly a near thing. Fortunately, while we were variously luxuriating in our holiday hideaways, others carried on. (In passing, let me just note that you don't know what it means to rough it until you are awakened in your small, rainsoaked pup tent at two in the morning by your four-year-old, sitting up between you and your spouse and throwing up two days' accumulated nosh over the entire interior of your canvas abode.) We returned to find our most pressing current concerns in good shape and in good hands, notably the matters of Maplin and North Sea oil.

After the initial jolt of the full Maplin monstrosity last month, FOE, the Defenders of Essex, and others met to form a coherent coalition, to combine forces against the common enemy. Mr Rippon, in his capacity as Secretary of State for (sic) the Environment, declared that a new breakthrough in public participation was at hand. His minions were to circulate questionnaires in which the shuddering populace of Essex could choose any one of six different routes for the swath of devastation linking London and the main coastal disaster area of Maplin. FOE and allies determined to help out, by providing the other half of the questionnaire: in which people could choose among six reasons for junking the whole maniacal plan. The FOE/Defenders questionnaires have been coming back in fistfuls, and will be tabulated by computer to weigh against the eventual spurious triumph when Rippon declares which line of country has drawn the short straw in the official poll.

Meanwhile, just to keep the media alert, a joint armada of boats sailed along the river Crouch north of Foulness from Burnham, site of the Royal Burnham Yacht Club; at Paglesham, as a surrogate 'Ted Heath' was stepping ashore from a surrogate 'Morning Cloud' bound for a drink at the local hostelry, to demonstrate his matiness, he was seized and thrown bodily into the briny. The real Ted Heath would be well advised to confine himself to ocean racing for the moment; it will be less risky than showing his proboscis around the Essex coast.

Just as our Essex coalition colleagues were keeping up the pressure on Maplin matters, so our North Sea Oil Coalition colleagues were doing likewise farther north. Early in August the *Sunday Times* wrote up the Ullapool situation and quoted our Coalition anchor-man in Dundee, Dr Terry Hegarty, at length. The North Sea Oil Coalition at that point acquired, courtesy of Dr Frank Fraser Darling, a crisper cognomen for the benefit of the media. We still call ourselves the North Sea Oil Coalition; but if you ask the newspapers or TV we're known as Boomwatch. Your reporter, assiduous as ever, worked his way hand over hand through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972, until he reached section 267 subsection 7: which reveals that the Secretary of State for Scotland, one Gordon Campbell, has absolute discretion to direct who shall foot the bills for local inquiries. We have no doubt that said bills should be footed not - for instance - by the 950 inhabitants of Ullapool, but by John Mowlem & Co Ltd, whose group profits last year totalled nearly two million quid. If Campbell determines otherwise he had better know beforehand that the decision will be recognized as his alone. The information flux through the Coalition grapevine is intensifying daily.

We're also preparing a plain man's Guide to Offshore Oil and its Onshore Implications, plus a growing reference library. (Hey! I just realized that the acronym for this briefing document is splendidly appropriate: GOOOI.) Ideally we'd like the government to announce that it will issue no further exploration licences for five years, to give the country (and the government) time to catch up. But in the meantime we and our growing band of co-conspirators will continue to scatter metaphorical sand in the otherwise frighteningly well-oiled works.

The month ended with an improbable splash: FOE was invited by Andrew Lloyd Webber to accept his half of the proceeds of a gala performance of the film of "Jesus Christ Superstar," newly opened in London. The proceeds are to be used for the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Fund, of which FOE share the administration. The hope is to be able to buy a hill in Thomas Hardy country in Dorset, to be set aside as a nature sanctuary in memory of Ken.

November 1973

Your forbearance is requested. The next few paragraphs are likely to contain rather more solipsism than is seemly in a commentator. But during September your reporter spent six idyllic, headlong days in the Western Highlands and has come back with a wild light in his eye. Anyone - any concrete-minded bureaucrat - who can contemplate a massive building site at Drumbuie or Ullapool needs to be led away and incarcerated, somewhere with a view of the said concrete. As far as this column is concerned, it remains difficult to get readjusted to the claustrophobic vistas of the south, after an expansive sojourn among the magnificence of Wester Ross. However, much of the essential action is taking place down here at the other end of the United Kingdom.

To recapitulate: production of oil from the North Sea requires offshore production platforms. British construction companies are in a frantic scramble to tender for platform-construction contracts, which may be worth as much as 40 million quid per platform. Traditional designs, like those in the offshore platform-plantations of the Gulf of Mexico, are made of steel; indeed, American firms like Brown and Root and J. Ray McDermott were early in the field in bidding for North Sea jobs. But among the ten or more companies who want a piece of the action is John Mowlem & Co Ltd, who have the British licence to construct a Norwegian design made not of steel but of concrete. This design drew two orders earlier this summer for North Sea sites - orders placed in Norway, which, greatly perturbed the British construction industry.

Unlike most of their competitors, who have already got construction sites (and, in some cases, orders), Mowlem are thus far without a site (and without an order). The problem is that the design they want to build was worked out in Norway, to be built in a fjord. Mowlem have been looking for a fjord in Britain and have not found one. The best they've been able to do are two sea-lochs on the northwest coast of Scotland, Loch Carron and Loch Broom. In almost every way both these locations are appalling, poor choices for the introduction of massive civil engineering operations. But Mowlem can just taste those millions of quid, and the governmental overseers appear to be doing everything in their power to satisfy Mowlem's appetite.

The South West Ross Action Group, centered on Drumbuie, and the Lochbroom Action Group, centered on Ullapool, have from the outset manifested a unique and heartening solidarity. Never has either group lapsed into the selfish - and hitherto uncomfortably typical - stance of suggesting 'Put it somewhere else!' Both groups, on the contrary, have shared information and planned their separate opposition in consultation with each other. But both felt, until your reporter's visit, that no one south of Inverness would even notice what happened to their small communities. It was necessary to spend many declamatory hours convincing them not only that they had each a very good case

against the constructors, but also that they had a better than even chance of winning it. In fact, as the final meeting on the sixth day drew to a close your irrepressibly garrulous reporter succumbed at last to an overdose of declamation, and returned almost voiceless to London.

Since that time, the phone lines and the postal service have been alive with two-way contact from this end of the country to that. The 4 October issue of the *New Scientist* will carry a cover article by your reporter with cover by Richard Willson; the *New Scientist* editor informed us today that the article will be entitled 'A New Monster in the Lochs.' The Drumbuie public inquiry begins 12 November; the Action Group have set up a Drumbuie Fighting Fund, anticipating that being represented by counsel and technical witnesses will set them back upwards of five thousand quid - of their own money. (The constructors, of course, will charge costs to business expenses.) It will be an epic battle.

December 1973

By Colin Blythe (*included to keep the narrative flowing; Walt was in Canada*)

There we were, knitting woolly socks and waiting for the Electricians Union to cut off the power and the Arabs to cut off the oil, when the telephone rang.

"What does FOE think about the Packaging Crisis?" asked the BBC. Hullo, we thought. . . *another* crisis? It was the first intimation that our oldest and, hitherto, most successful campaign was about to blow up in our faces. Headlines in the *Sunday Mirror* of October 14 shouted "MILK RATION FEAR - BOTTLE SHORTAGE HITS THE DAIRIES." The article went on to say that, because of a national shortage of glass bottles, the cherished institution of milk delivered to your very own doorstep might soon cease to be. The next day the story broke in earnest and the sad tale of Britain's profligate packaging propensities was unfolded to a totally unsurprised and unmoved public. Not only, it emerged, was the supply of bottles threatened, but all type of packaging material. That sober chronicle of capitalism, the *Financial Times*, never a paper to go overboard for the emotional approach, carried headlines such as "Paper - the forests reach their limit," "Benzene shortage hits plastic," and "Why the styrene shortage will hurt." The *Daily Mirror* observed simply "CRISIS CHRISTMAS," and went on to say that with milk rationed, no bottles for the kiddies' drinks, not enough plastic for their toys, no newsprint for dad's paper, and no petrol for the family car, the British Christmas looked like being as convivial as a slab of cold cod.

The "Great Milk Bottle Shortage," as historians came to call it. was, literally manufactured. Greedy for a quick profit, the glass manufacturers diverted this year's stocks of raw materials to making non-returnable soft drink bottles which, for them, was very sensible. Last year, summer was all over in one day: many people, inadvertently staying indoors, missed it altogether. But this year! Summer lasted week after bone-dry week. The purveyors of beer and soft drinks chuckled. The bottle makers chuckled . . . O how they chuckled. But not the dairies. Not only could the dairies get no new milk bottles, but the public, brainwashed by ad-men chants of "no deposit - no return," threw away such bottles as they had.

The Milk Marketing Board promptly launched an anguished poster campaign. "Save your daily Pinta - Return your milk bottles."

The guy who coined "no deposit - no return" must surely be canonised by the packaging industry. Whole factories could stay in business replacing lost milk bottles alone. One and a half million milk bottles are lost every day; 500 tons of glass a day; 180,000 tons a year; and all carried about our small realm in heavy, smelly vehicles. And that's only *milk* bottles, a mere 10 percent of the market. When you consider that the rest is actually *intended* to be thrown away, the wastage can only be quantified in terms, comprehensible to astronomers and their ilk.

For a week FOE basked in publicity. Were we not the people who had said all along there would be shortages if we did not curb our wasteful ways? Suddenly, radio and television wanted our authoritative opinions. Newsmen beat a track to our door. "Is it really true we're running out of paper, tin, light bulbs, plastic buckets, and fish fingers?" they asked. "Sho nuff" we said. Truly, a host of pre-packed chickens were coming home to roost.

In a week, the story was dead. Liz Taylor had upstaged Callas, Princess Anne promised to "obey" her man, oh, and the world teetered on the brink of holocaust a few times. Nothing too important, but all the same, packaging was passe.

Which leaves us with a campaign still to win. For, although there are still not enough milk bottles, nor enough paper, plastic, or tin; neither is there any legislation which will curb the excesses of the industry and the supermarkets and save some of these resources. When the fuss had died down, FOE sent a very thoughtful letter to the Government Minister concerned. Our letter pointed out that, with the packaging industry running scared about the costs of its materials (not to mention the near impossibility of *getting* some materials), now might be a good time for the Government to extend a gentle, restraining hand over some of the industry's excesses. We have a Conservative Government, free enterprise and all that. We await with considerable interest the Minister's reply. We'll let you know what happens.

February 1974

Take your pick: is it to be reactors, or oil platforms, or endangered species, or packaging, or paper recycling, or have you some other issue in mind? Chances are that FOE Ltd has been embroiled in it this past month, whatever it is.

Let's begin, for the helluvit, with endangered species. After many months of intensive study, debate, writing, re-writing, and arm-twisting, we have prepared, in consultation with our allies, an Endangered Species Bill, which will be introduced in the House of Lords to receive its first reading before Christmas. Angela King concedes that the Bill, as a Private Member's Bill, has only a slim chance of being adopted - very few Private Member's Bills become law. But the battle will continue; and if the Bill receives suitable attention, it may eventually be the basis of a like Bill with government sponsorship. Our Bill provides for lists of endangered species, whose remains cannot be legally imported into the UK, and for policing to prevent such import, in the form of licenses and

designated ports of entry. The US Endangered Species Act of 1969 has been taken as a model but the British Bill attempts to avoid a weakness of the US Act, which requires that a species be threatened with "worldwide" extinction before it qualifies as "endangered." In the meantime the FOE-supported Bill has already gained the backing of many peers and MPs - and will serve to enlighten them about the consequences of our present casual attitude toward the trade in slaughtered rare animals.

The public hearings on the Taylor Woodrow/Mowlem applications for a site to build concrete oil production platforms at Drumbuie began 12 November. Needless to say, it began at a hotel seven miles from Kyle and ten miles from Drumbuie, convenient for the company QCs, but less so for the local people. However, the hearings have not gone the companies' way entirely, not by any means. For one thing, the hearings look like carrying on well into 1974; for another, it has become clear that the villain of the piece is not the construction companies themselves, but the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), whose clammy hand has been manipulating the levers behind the scenes for months, until the objectors' QCs drew aside the grubby curtain by their cross-examination.

The DTI even circulated a confidential document on concrete platforms, whose existence came to light during the hearings; when required by the hearing officer, the Reporter so-called, to produce it, the DTI came up with xeroxes with four missing pages - "confidential" information, which, the Reporter sternly warned, the DTI's witnesses might later be called upon to disclose. One way and another, the Drumbuie hearings look like becoming a major test case of central government crassness and ineptitude in the oil rush, and a head-on clash between the establishment view of the "national interest" and the rights and future well-being of a small local community.

FOE are represented by a very able Scots QC, in alliance with the local South West Ross Action Group and several other local groups of objectors. Your reporter sat in on part of the hearings, and was pained to note how slavishly the Scots newspapers recounted the assertions of company witnesses, however subsequently discredited by cross-examination. The Scots papers made great play with claims that the project would bring 1,050 jobs to the area, and millions of pounds in income; it went almost unnoticed that the witness making these claims, who also pooh-poohed worries about social and economic disruption of the community, had spent precisely two days in South West Ross, and talked to virtually none of the local people.

The unimpressive calibre of the witnesses would have been laughable were it not grimly clear that Peter Walker, Secretary of State at the DTI, wants Drumbuie with a ferocious hunger; and that when all is said and done, no matter what transpires at the hearing, or what the Reporter reports, Walker, through his mouthpiece Gordon Campbell, the Scottish Secretary, can simply declare the constructors' application accepted. The only hopeful aspect is that the land in question belongs to the National Trust for Scotland and can only be taken from the Trust by an Act of Parliament. The companies, betraying an arrogance that will win them few friends in Parliament, have already begun proceedings for the necessary Act, and they may well not get it. Rest assured that we, for our part, will get underfoot every step of their way.

The sudden onset of shortages of practically everything except industrial unrest has turned us into prophets with honor. What with Schweppes *asking* for their bottles back, and paper companies desperate for the wastepaper we've been urging everyone to collect, and energy running out on all sides exactly as we'd suggested it would because of the way it's wasted, we're being visited and

called continually by newspapers and teevy and radio wanting our opinions. Did you hear someone say "I told you so?"

Then, of course there's the Great Reactor Hassle, which - after months and years of prologues - has finally well and truly hit these shores. However, with your permission, we'll get into that next time around; it will not, believe me, have died down. Just a taste: in mid-November Earth Resources Research Ltd, the new charitable wing of FOE Ltd, published *World Energy Strategies*, by Amory Lovins, a pungent analysis of the present and future energy situation - "Facts, Issues and Options," as the subtitle goes. The paper devotes considerable attention to reactor-problems, in terms which will be old friends to NMA readers, but which clearly came as news to most of the British press. As a result we suddenly elicited an almost embarrassing fulsome tribute from an old adversary, Keith Richardson of the *Sunday Times*; his column about us was headed "Nuclear power needs these Friends". Considering that he has for years been an outspoken enthusiast for nuclear power, we seem to have instilled some profound doubts in his mind. And he is by no means the only Briton to exhibit the symptoms. It looks as though the coming reactor-arguments will be a lively workout for all concerned.

March 1974

And now, the moment you've all been waiting for: The Great British Reactor Show is on the road! It all began, for the sake of argument, in August 1972. Arthur Hawkins, newly appointed Chairman of Britain's Central Electricity Generating Board, told the Parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology that the CEGB could see no reason for ordering any new power stations whatever for at least 12 months, and certainly no nuclear stations. Twelve months later, in the CEGB annual report for 1972-73, a slight change had taken place: now the need for new nuclear stations was so urgent that only American light-water reactors (LWRs) 'off the shelf' would suffice. At no time since August 1973 has the CEGB's change of stance been explained. In the same annual report the CEGB also revealed that its present system capacity is about 56 gigawatts, and that the maximum electrical demand it has ever hitherto had to meet is about 40 gigawatts. Furthermore, it expects to complete another 15 gigawatts of capacity before 1980. Not a few observers have wondered, aloud and in print, why the CEGB can possibly think it needs still *more* excess capacity, and that right urgently.

Be that as it may, the CEGB is frothing at the kneecaps to buy Westinghouse pressurized-water reactors (PWRs); and the new British National Nuclear Corporation (NNC), guided by Sir Arnold Weinstock, is equally keen to build same. It should be added that the CEGB is not thinking of one, or two, or even three PWRs. It is thinking - wait for it - of *eighteen* twin-reactor stations between now and 1982, using 36 1,300-MW reactors. Does this sound like a rational programme, in the circumstances? Us neither. And we are by no means alone. Indeed the most gratifying consequence of the whole schemozzle has been the range and variety of opposition the NNC-CEGB proposals have elicited. The Select Committee is back in the fray, and its hearings have brought forth not only the aforementioned details, but many others, both from the LWR-advocates and from the skeptics. Among the skeptics are numbered E C Williams, the Chief Nuclear Inspector, who must give the eventual Yea or Nay to any reactor-plan (and who is, unlike his American equivalents, totally independent of the industry), and Sir Alan Cottrell, the government's Chief Scientific Advisor, a

metallurgist of international standing who told the Committee that he was not convinced that PWR pressure-vessel integrity could be guaranteed. Frank Tombs, new chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board, added his voice to those with lingering doubts; his position is made more invidious because if the choice falls on LWRs he and his comparatively small Board will have no option but to fall in line with the much bigger CEGB and order LWRs for Scotland.

The quality - that is, the factual credibility - of some evidence adduced by Mr Hawkins has been questionable, and questioned, not least by us. His comparison of LWR performance with that of Britain's workhorse Magnox nuclear stations averred that PWRs were available 62 percent of the time, and Magnox only 58 percent. But an article published in the journal of the British Nuclear Energy Society in January 1974 gives exhaustive figures - presented by CEGB staffers - indicating that the British stations have a record of better than 80 percent availability. Mr Hawkins also referred to the 'proven' PWRs of the size desired; but you know, and we know, that no PWR has thus far operated at a power level of more than about 700 MW - anywhere in the world. And so on.

To counter such wild allegations Amory Lovins and your reporter drafted a 45-page memorandum to the Select Committee, itemizing in thorough detail the actual numbers for performance, cost, reliability, and safety that we have been so long preoccupied in gathering and studying. Our memo will be published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office as part of the Select Committee's evidence, on the basis of which they are to report next week rejecting flatly the choice of LWRs. Their rejection, following that of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, and many eminent individuals, will make it increasingly difficult for the Government's new Secretary of State for Energy, Lord Carrington, to give the CEGB the go-ahead it seeks. But if, by some pigheaded stubbornness, the government does decide in favour of LWRs, the ensuing uproar will make thus far a mere prelude. We have already established working contacts with local people in the Sizewell and Dungeness areas, the two most likely venues for the first wave of LWRs; in the event of such a development, the CEGB will find itself with a bitter battle on its hands. Newspapers, magazines, television, radio, MPs and engineers and medics and housewives; if you think you've had nuclear battles in the US, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

The Drumbuie hearings about concrete oil-production platform construction drag on, although another company has applied for another site only six miles from Drumbuie, implying another hearing, with all the effort and expenditure thereby entailed. Still, we don't intend to quit; and Drumbuie is rapidly assuming the dimensions of a *cause celebre*, so that's encouraging. Our Endangered Species Bill got its second reading in the House of Lords and is now entering the committee stage, without yet showing signs of bogging down; so that's encouraging.

A motley assemblage of worthies from every sector of the packaging industry met at the House of Commons in an attempt to confront the materials shortages and general public dissatisfaction with current trends in packaging; when a working party was put together, the man from Schweppes proposed at once that FoE ought to be included; so that, for what it's worth, is encouraging.

We are assembling a study group of well-informed energy-watchers, whose project will be the drafting of an energy strategy for the UK. It will be part of an operation called Energy 2000, and some of our most enthusiastic support seems likely to come from the National Union of Mineworkers; so that's encouraging. We had, mid-January, a weekend colloquy attended by nearly 50 representatives of local FOE groups to bring everyone up to date on what we, collectively, are

doing, at HQ and locally. A good time was had by all, and the busted loo cistern only cost 30 quid to fix, so that's, if not encouraging, at least enough.

April 1974

Parlez-vous francais? Neither, I fear, does your reporter, not so's you'd recognize it. But one February weekend a great deal of very dodgy French was spoken to highly useful effect, when five of us from FOE UK journeyed to visit with our colleagues Les Amis de la Terre. We convened at the sprawling farmhouse of Alain Herve, in the hamlet of St Ouen, about an hour's drive west of Paris. Besides the British contingent the assemblage included Brice Lalonde and his national French team, groups from several of the regional Amis, and Ed Matthews of the international network. All in all there must have been some fifty participants, if you count kids, dogs, and cats. Despite the summery weather we established ourselves purposefully at the long wooden table in the main salon and set to work to analyze our respective operations, compare notes, and generally find out what we are respectively up to.

Matters got off to a somewhat obscure start, mainly occasioned by the spectacular air pollution from the gaping fireplace, which made it difficult to see across the table. But multinational technology finally got the chimney drawing; we identified ourselves and plunged into an intensive dissection of organization, funding, campaigns, tactics, policy, and where we proposed to sleep.

One topic which received minute examination at this stage and thenceforth was the question of nuclear power policy. It became clear that collaborative effort across the Channel might well offer the first genuine possibility of unsettling the stubborn single-mindedness of French reactorphiles. The issue of reactor choice is of course still very much up in the air in Britain as this is written; if, as seems entirely possible, the decision goes against LWRs [light-water, American-made reactors], with some emphasis laid on the safety questions, Les Amis will gain considerable added leverage in their appallingly difficult task of slowing down the furious French stampede into fission. Electricite de France are apparently planning an installation. at Gravelines on the north French coast, which they intend to provide 10 gigawatts of output, far and away the largest power station in the world, involving a whole covey of giant LWRs. Since this installation would be just across the narrowest neck of the Channel from Britain, within easy reach of a radioactive cloud, British interest in the notion ought to be much more pointed than it has thus far been. One suggestion mooted at the St Ouen meeting was to take note of the proximity of Gravelines to Dunkerque, and send a flotilla of small boats over from Kent to join a massive protest scheduled to take place at the site next month. Of course, if the RAF had to send out a squadron of helicopters to fish Friends out of the drink the PR might not be ideal. . .

We discussed the international ramifications of FOE activity, making plans for a subsequent convocation at Nairobi in March prior to the meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme governing council; Richard Sandbrook will be there to show the flag for FOE UK. We also agreed to plan another interFOE meeting, possibly for the Netherlands in May. The St Ouen meeting will probably be remembered as a major step toward international integration of FOE

activity and policy.

Meanwhile, on the home front, as this is being written the elections results are coming through, and the forthcoming Parliament looks like being a shambles - which must be at least preferable to a dictatorship. We are already scheming to get a fresh foothold among the new Members, to get our own legislative proposals taken up, and to head off some that worry us. We'd like to get our Endangered Species Bill back into the pipeline - ditto the Protection of the Environment Bill. On the other hand we know with grim certainty that the Civil Service is determined to ram through a bill, announced on 31 January just before the dissolution of Parliament, giving Government the power to bypass planning procedures and requisition land for onshore oil developments. The implications are clearly aimed at Loch Carron. But a gratifying note this morning was the victory of a Scottish Nationalist over the former Secretary of State for Scotland, who announced the plan to requisition land but has now found his own foothold yanked out from under him. Poetic justice, no? Robbie Burns would have been delighted.

May 1974

For us in Britain, March came in like a lion and looks like going out likewise. The chaotic aftermath of the General Election turned out, as we halfway expected, to be a Good Thing, for the moment at least. Although the dissolution of the previous Parliament cost us our Endangered Species Bill, it now seems possible that the new Government will not only readmit it but may even support it. The same seems to be true of the Protection of the Environment Bill, and even of the Health and Safety at Work Bill, under which improbable title is concealed the foundation for a broad-based upgrading of thermal insulation standards in Britain.

In this connection, for us the first week of March was dedicated to final preparations for Housewarming Weekend. On 9-10 March some 50 local FOE groups all over the country insulated the attics of old-age pensioners, for free, to demonstrate how easy it is and how little it costs. (It cost us a few bob; the insulation industry, after rhapsodic early participation, backed away when it came to donating materials, and most of the groups had to fork out their own funds to purchase insulating material. C'est la commerce . . .) We got extensive coverage on TV and in the press, especially the local press, who loved it. So far as we can ascertain, only one FOE foot went through a ceiling - not bad, really.

One of the statistics worked out by Chris Thomas in support of the Housewarming campaign showed up in stark relief against the background of a sprawling British Nuclear Energy Society conference mid-March. Chris pointed out that the energy saved by improving the appalling insulation of British homes would be almost equivalent to the current peak electricity demand for the whole of England and Wales or, to put it another way, the electrical output of nearly 50 of today's largest reactor stations. Well, the participants at the British Nuclear Energy Society's vast Fast Reactor Power Station conference, 11-14 March, would have had no doubts which to purchase - all but two of the participants, at any rate. Your reporter and Amory Lovins hovered in the melee, like spectres at a feast, asking the amiable head of the Power Reactor Development Corporation

what it was like dismantling the Detroit Edison fast breeder reactor, asking Dr Krasnayarov whether the steam generator leaks on the BN-350 had backfired into the intermediate heat exchangers, asking the UK Atomic Energy Agency Dounreay executives whether plutonium shipments from the Prototype Fast Reactor would not require armed guards, and generally being quiet nuisances. We understand that a senior BNES official circulated throughout the first day warning people about us.

On the Wednesday of the conference the *New Scientist* made available a stack of advance copies of the week's issue, with an article by Amory describing in uncompromising detail the trackless wastelands of ignorance about essential safety-phenomena which still cover the fast-reactor landscape. But probably the most gratifying aspect of the conference was a paper presented on the final morning, by the Central Electricity Generating Board, which effectively said that they *might* accept a fast breeder power station, eventually, if a lot of unanswered questions about safety and reliability were resolved to their complete satisfaction, and if the government would buy it for them. The UKAEA team who proposed a programme of 40 one-gigawatt FBR stations before the year 2000 don't look like getting much joy out of their idea.

In a similar connection, the change of government produced a somewhat healthier climate vis-a-vis energy policy generally. (It could hardly have been worse, given Lord Carrington.) Eric Varley, the new Energy Secretary, is an ex-miner and no lover of foreign technology; so the prospects for a British decision in favour of American light water reactors are dimmer now than they have been throughout. Then again, Varley and his Oil Minister, Gavin Strang, decided against introducing the Drumbuie land-grab bill after all, and the inquiry is once again oozing on its way. Your reporter will be in the West Highlands next week, delivering FOE testimony to the inquiry, which has become a classic test case, whatever its outcome. The same journey will lead to Sullom Voe in the Shetlands, and to a liaison with our most northerly British FOE outpost, which looks like being in the front lines ere long.

During the month, after a protracted series of production cockups, we published the *FOE Campaigners' Manual*, a looseleaf guide to every kind of action short of bombing, hijacking, and kidnapping. Now, to give a graphic illustration of how it works, we are in the final run-up to a demo that may take its place beside the historic Schweppisode. On the last Saturday in March we launch the Great Paper Chase, to persuade Britain's local authorities to get serious about paper salvage. The main event will be the building of a Paper Mountain in the carpark of the headquarters of London's government: County Hall. They love the idea. If all goes well you'll have heard about it over there long before you read this. Now if you'll excuse me - I'm off to rummage through dustbins, as is my wont; that mountain is gonna be BIG.

June 1974

Until 30 March 1974 anyone in Britain mentioning Friends of the Earth in an unfamiliar context would be prone to say - 'You know, they were the ones who took the non-returnable bottles back to Schweppes.' Henceforth, in a similar situation, it will be - 'You know, they built a paper mountain at County Hall.' As anticipated last month, our Great Paper Chase has given us a whole new popular image in Britain. Even the most sanguine among us could barely have hoped for the response the

paper-salvage campaign has elicited. All the weeks of plotting and scheming and grafting, all the phone calls and letter-writing, painting of posters, pursuit of politicians, pacification of police, all the unimaginable backstage work came to uproarious fruition on a glorious sunny Saturday morning by the Thames.

We assembled, a couple of hundred of us, under the somewhat dubious eyes of the cops who'd had to be up early to ride herd on us; their sombre mien, however, underwent a heartening metamorphosis when, finding that it was the inspector's birthday, our marching band led us off onto the Thames Embankment with a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday To You.' That set the mood for the day. The band was excellent, the posters like a forest, the sheaves of salvaged paper in prams, on bicycles, on wagons, or just tucked under arms. Ed Berman and his Inter-Action street theatre troupe strode along beside the main column, barking insults through a loud-hailer on behalf of the 'Bonkers Holding Company,' warning that salvaging of waste paper would lead to the downfall of civilization as we know it . . . admirable stuff.

On we rolled, over Westminster Bridge. Onlookers selected more posters from the back of the tail-end Land-Rover and joined our procession; scavengers scrupulously collected busted bundles and tossed them back into the Land-Rover - 'twould not have done to create a real paperchase in our wake. Upon our arrival in the carpark of the Greater London Council headquarters, County Hall, we marched ceremonially around the already-rising mountain, heaving more and more bundles of the precious fibres onto the heap. Let me tell all you keen FOE mountaineers, you ought to try scaling a mountain of wastepaper - it's an extraordinary sensation. The County Hall mountain eventually contained more than 12 tons of paper. Benedictions were uttered over it by Richard Sandbrook and by Eric Moonman, MP, who pointed out that the shaky finances of the British newspaper industry would be among the beneficiaries of a new enlightenment vis-a-vis paper. When the formalities were over, including the gift of a cheque for 250 pounds - payment for the mountain of paper - to a widows' charity by the Al Paper Company on our behalf, we swarmed onto the mountain and heaved it bit by bit aboard two flatbed lorries from Al. By midday the only sign of our morning's doings was a patch in the centre of the carpark which was abnormally free of litter

Meanwhile, all over Britain, about 50 local FOE groups were engaged in simultaneous manifestations: mountains, parades, street theatre, the lot. The consequent publicity is still running at a level unheard of even in our previously successful campaigns. We have been repeatedly on TV and radio, we have already accumulated enough newspaper clippings to be worth selling to a wastepaper company by themselves. We've been quoted in the House of Commons, with approval, by a Government Minister and other MPs; we've been deluged with correspondence and orders for our manual 'The Great Paper Chase.' The obvious advantages of persuading local authorities to take a new and serious look at paper salvage have been acknowledged on all sides; several authorities have already decided to set up pilot schemes. The clippings, the calls, and the queries keep coming in. The only slightly embarrassing side-effect is the occasional nurdled customer who rings up to ask why we've not been around to his house to collect his salvage . . . from the wilder shores of Foots Cray or Wormwood Scrubs, and don't be too long, eh? . . .

Scrambling down from the paper mountain your reporter took off northward for some real ones. With a devotion to duty of truly heroic proportions it was possible to resist the lure of balmy Mediterranean weather in the West Highlands, to write and deliver some 7000 words of testimony

to the Drumbuie hearing, pointing out that the 'national interest' does not of necessity coincide with that of Drumbuie platform-proposers. The hearing closed, after 43 days, and is now in the lap of the Reporter, who has a trunkload of transcript to study. So far as we are concerned he's welcome to take his time.

The northward journey continued, stopping just in the nick of time before running right out of Britain. This occurs at a spot with the splendid name of Muckle Flugga, on the northern coast of Unst, the most northerly of the Shetland Islands. We - Sue Flint from Orkney FOE and I - traveled the length and much of the breadth of Shetland, viewing sites earmarked for oil developments, talking to Shetlanders and generally assessing the situation - which looks better than might be expected. The Shetlanders know what is going on, and know what they're doing; henceforth FOE will be helping them do it, by means of the newly-fledged Shetland FOE.

There are, to be sure, some problems. We wound up spending three days waiting for a flight southward, while Shetland's Sumburgh Airport remained impenetrably wreathed in 'haar' - sea-fog. Some of our fellows had to wait six days. Still, all in all, if you have to be stranded somewhere, let me enthusiastically recommend the Shetlands.

Stop Press: FOE UK is to mount a boycott of Japanese products, following the example of FOE US, to apply economic pressure on the Japanese whaling industry. Blubbering Nipponese take note.

July 1974

What none of us can understand is: if nothing happened in May, why are we all so pooped? We didn't build any paper mountains, write/deliver any major testimony, win or lose any notable battles, launch any new campaigns, publish anything earthshaking . . . why are we all so pooped?

From the point of view that no news is good news, and being firm believers in the exhortation 'Don't just do something; stand there!', we could nonetheless call May a good month. Eric Varley, Secretary of State for Energy, led off a debate on 2 May about Britain's future nuclear programme by asserting pointedly that no reactor design had yet been chosen; he and his colleagues persisted in this view throughout the month, and as far as we're concerned the longer they keep it up the better. There was no decision forthcoming about the application for a platform-site at Drumbuie, not even a recommendation from the Reporter after the public inquiry. He has 43 days of transcript testimony to consider and weigh up; once again, we hope he takes his time. Meanwhile Shell Expro have ordered not one, not two, but three (count 'em - three) new concrete platforms from other suppliers, two of them British and one to be constructed on Clydeside for a water-depth of about 500 feet - whereas the third, Shell's second Condeep, is for a water-depth of 460 feet. The case for Condeep's unique necessity for deep water - ergo the unique necessity for sacrificing Drumbuie - looks ever more hollow.

Meanwhile our campaigning momentum is shifting northward, toward Orkney and Shetland, to press for underground instead of surface storage for oil, to press for methanol production instead of

liquefaction of natural gas, and to challenge outright any wild-eyed schemes to build refineries there. The requisite homework alone is proving a multiple full-time job . . . come to think of it, that explains what became of May.

Incidentally, would you believe, knowing what you do about the US coal industry, that FOE UK are beloved by Britain's National Coal Board? It's true; and, with the obvious reservations, the converse is also true. The next time you talk with an American electric-utility executive or coal-industry spokesman, ask him about fluidized-bed combustors. From here it appears inevitable that this British invention will be yet another to be adopted by the US and eventually sold back to Britain when its unrecognized virtues prove at length impossible to ignore. The fluidized-bed design - compact, versatile, offering brilliant solutions to emission control for sulphur and nitrogen oxides and particulates, able to burn otherwise unusable fuel, able to produce not only heat and feedstock-fuels but also usable aggregates - looks to us like a gift from the vintage years of technological advance. Alas - no one over here wants to know; the electrical utilities hate coal with such implacable enmity that they refuse to consider any possibility of rendering it socially, economically and environmentally palatable. (Hence their stubborn hunger for oil and nuclear power.) We may be wrong, but right now f.b.c. looks very exciting indeed. Check it out.

Behind the scenes we continue to exert disproportionate leverage on the legislative process. A whole covey of bills now making Parliamentary headway are exhibiting the signs of our quiet persistence: the Control of Pollution Bill, the Health and Safety at Work Bill, the Dumping At Sea Bill and various amendments to other Bills are demonstrating that FOE viewpoints are shared by a respectable number of the nation's legislators. Parliamentary Questions with the FOE stamp materialize with gratifying frequency, albeit not always rewarded with the answers they ought to get. We've begun to compile an ongoing dossier on our Parliamentary populace, drawn from Hansard [the official record of Parliament's proceedings], meetings, and correspondence; if you want a Lord to recommend generation of methane from sewage, we can supply him.

Lest anyone suppose we are losing our countercultural roots, we are pleased to point out that friends of Friends staged a free festival in south London on Bank Holiday Monday, with live bands, theatre, and general good fellowship; proceeds from a collection brought FOE a hundred quid. The preceding week Steve Winwood's band Traffic did a benefit for FOE, which may bring us well over a thousand quid. It's always reassuring to know that our roots are rooting for us.

At a meeting in Sussex earlier this year, organized by the Sierra Club, FOE UK became the pivot for an Environmental Coalition On the Law of the Sea, an all-too-evocative acronym, if national pre-conference posturing is any indication. Be that as it may, FOE has commenced circulating all the relevant documents to all the participants of ECOLOS, notably an intensive monograph by Brian Johnson called 'Third World and Environmental Interests in the Law of the Sea'. David Ennals, the British Government official with responsibility for British representation at Caracas, convened a meeting of UK NGOs including FOE, and indicated some government sympathy with the FOE approach. We shall see.

In a quiet, low-key way, a blunt poster has begun to appear in more and more UK locations, calling upon the public to join a boycott of Russian and Japanese goods, until those countries cease killing whales. Everyone knows, of course, that giant corporations like Sony, Datsun, Hitachi and Toyota will be unimpressed by such shenanigans. Or will they?

We had a meeting with the top brass of the Greater London Council, who seem genuinely eager to give us a hearing and our ideas a trial run. As a test bed for urban salvation you could hardly do better than London. Let's hear it for buses, tubes, bikes and feet, instead of cars and cars and lorries and cars; for homes, parks and playgrounds, instead of offices and offices and hotels and offices; for canals, railways and the Thames instead of motorways; for insulated solar-heated houses instead of high-rise all-electric flats; doesn't the very thought make you feel better?

Oh yes - sometime around May we finally topped the hundred-mark in local groups: FOE now covers the UK from Land's End to Muckle Flugga. So if it doesn't look as if anything's happening, just put your ear to the ground. That persistent nibble you hear is us, rearranging the foundations.

August 1974

That heavy breathing is not an obscene phone call. It's your correspondent waiting for his metabolism to catch up with him. The heading this month should read, 'Teesside-Paris-Oslo-Edinburgh Letter'; so even more than usual some of what follows will be second-hand, if not downright hearsay. June was an eventful month - or rather, perhaps, a non-eventful month. Some of the non-events: no announcement about the choice of reactors for Britain - but copious leaks and opinings that the choice when it came would go against light-water reactors, particularly for safety reasons [the announcement that England would not use American LWRs came July 10 - Ed.]; no announcement about the application for a Drumbuie platform-site - but preliminary draft reports and news-stories indicating probable thumbs-down; and (the prize-winning Non-Event Of The Month) FOE's Great Whale Manifestation. We'll get to that one, noting in advance that seldom has a cock-up been so superbly functional.

In the *Financial Times* of 7 June Sir Alan Cottrell FRS, metallurgist of international standing and until his April retirement the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, published a letter expressing the hope 'that the safety of the public in this country will never be made dependent on almost superhuman engineering and operational qualities,' and finishing by saying 'When the consequences to the general public of such a failure are as uniquely grave as in the reactor case, it would be wise to choose a system less critically dependent on human perfection than the steel pressure-vessel water reactor.' The reverberations of this letter are still being felt; a rebuttal by the AEC's Herbert Kouts has by no means reassured the mass of British opinion.

Meanwhile, the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB) carried on its plan to outflank objections by earmarking sites for new power stations without having any particular plans in mind. The FOE Edinburgh local group objected to SSEB plans for a new fossil-fueled station west of Edinburgh. Then, in June, national FOE got into the act, objecting to SSEB plans for a new nuclear station at Torness, on the coast east of Edinburgh. The SSEB application was for a station of unspecified design, of unspecified size, at an unspecified time; since the SSEB already has more than 40 percent more capacity than it has ever had to supply - and is building more - we can't see the urgency. Nonetheless the Torness inquiry had to take place - without waiting a month, to find out which reactors might be used, and indeed without waiting for the current SSEB Annual Report,

which was published the day *after* the SSEB Chairman testified, and which showed the SSEB with a 10-million-pound loss on the year, occasioned by interest charges of 44 million pounds, which wiped out an operating balance of 34 million pounds.

As a result FOE's attack was right across the board: on the whole approach to forward planning, on the policy of central electricity generation by ever-larger stations at ever more remote locations, wasting low-grade heat, involving distribution systems and losses, et cetera et cetera - to say nothing of the silliness of further investment when the capacity is not needed and when interest charges are more than 10 percent, et cetera et cetera. The more we got into it the more nonsensical it looked. As a result, we concluded by demanding that the present excess capacity ought to be recognized as giving an opportunity for second thoughts: about the whole policy, and in particular about nuclear energy. It is always difficult to foretell the results of public inquiries; but after the day of FOE testimony the SSEB staff looked a good deal less smug.

My week in Paris included lengthy sessions with Brice Lalonde and Les Amis, focused on nuclear matters. Brice and I visited the opulent offices of the CEA - French for AEC, and as back-to-front as it looks - and walked off with armloads of glossy bumpf on French nuclear activities. We shall undoubtedly be teaming up soon for some serious challenges to French plans, especially with regard to the awesome sprawl proposed for Gravelines, just across the Channel from Dover. Two weeks later Tom Burke carried on the liaison, visiting Lille and Paris and discussing details of organization and tactics with Les Amis. I moved on to Oslo, and established a link-up with the coordinator of the Scandinavian coalition opposing nuclear developments in Norway and elsewhere. My Oslo visit was to take part in a debate before the Norwegian Physical Society, on the nuclear option for Norway, as advocated by the Director of the Norwegian Institute of Atomic Energy. It was gratifying, for a change, to discuss nuclear matters in an atmosphere of forthright acknowledgement of problems, and in a broad energy-policy context. The Norwegians have much to teach the rest of us; it must be hoped that their own superabundance of energy doesn't weaken their concern for a rational policy.

Back in London, Richard Sandbrook, with the help of Bob Holman from the Center for Law and Social Policy, took part in a weekend meeting of international NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), to draft an environmental position paper on the law of the sea, to be presented at Caracas via the US delegation. An important ancillary aspect of the position paper was to exert some leverage on the British delegation, whose approach has been both closemouthed and narrow, disappointingly so.

Pete Wilkinson had a major article published in *Labour Weekly*, calling for careful consideration of energy options; another article of Pete's will be out soon in *The Miner*, the weekly paper of the National Union of Mineworkers. Our working relationship with the trades unionists is still at a delicate stage, but with Pete's attentive nurturing it shows considerable promise. We're increasingly keen on (believe it or not) coal, far and away Britain's most important long-term energy resource. Remind me to tell you at interminable buttonholing length about the beauties of fluidized-bed combustion.

Well, there's no help for it - we must now talk about the Great Whale Manifestation, (I wasn't there - it wash all thoshe othersh offisher.) The idea was a beaut. We had a 30-foot inflatable plastic whale, used at our garden party a year ago. Why not float it down the Thames opposite the meeting

of the International Whaling Commission and offer the Japanese delegation a shot at it with a dummy harpoon gun? Righto - all the arrangements were made, boat hired, harpoon gun, posters painted, river fuzz squared, media alerted. Came the morning of 24 June, IWC convening: and here came the Whale . . . but wait! What's this? Avast ye lubbers - we're aleak! With a ghastly wheeze the FOE Whale sagged into an amorphous plastic baggie. Arggh! Then lo - the river police, heaving alongside, passing their entire First Aid adhesive tape, frantic surgery ... alas, in vain. FOE afloat and ashore as deflated as their artefact; how do you say cock-up in Japanese? Forlorn countenances trailing into the office - then the first newspapers appear. Front page *Evening News*: 'The Whale That Blew a Leak.' Full-page head in the *Evening Standard*: 'Come in Captain Ahab - your time is up!' And then television news, radio news, more coverage in the nationals the next day, then the provincials, and magazines, and the dawning realization (picture in the *Scotsman*; picture in the *International Herald Trib*) that we'd never have received one-fifth the coverage if the whole episode had not had the stuff of legend about it. It's chastening - albeit gratifying - to find that even when we blow it, it works.

September 1974

Wheeeee! Yayyy! Whooppee! (what? Oh. Ahem . . .)

As readers of this august journal must by now be aware, the British government, in the person of the Right Hon Eric Varley, Secretary of State for Energy, announced on 10 July 1974 the Government's decision to reject the proposal of the Central Electricity Generating Board for a programme of up to 36 Westinghouse pressurized-water reactors in the coming decade. (Muffled giggles. Unidentified chortle.) Instead the government proposes to permit the construction of at most 4,000 MW of British Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor stations, to be ordered by 1978 if they can be shown to be required. (Hoarse whisper: 'Hahh!')

In other words, Phase One of our reactor campaign has ended with virtually exactly the outcome we'd sought: no LWRs for Britain, with the safety issue, whatever Mr Varley may say for public consumption, clearly playing a major role - and a severe brake on the sudden headlong nuclear enthusiasm of the British electricity industry. This latter implication of the government's decision is fully as welcome as the thumbs-down to LWRs. The forward planning of British electricity generating boards has a batting average that even Marvelous Marv Throneberry would disown - and the CEGB project management of late, for whatever type of generating station, would disqualify them for putting up a new coathook. They have generating capacity coming out of their ears; yet Arthur Hawkins and Company paid a return visit to the Select Committee, their nemesis, in mid-July and threatened all manner of dire consequences as a result of being denied their heart's desire. Just you wait until 1985; if you're freezing to death don't come crying to us. (No one pointed out that they had no business encouraging electric space-heating anyhow, or that their recent renege on off-peak pricing for electric storage heaters had provoked a public storm that forced the Government to stamp on the CEGB's grabby fingers yet again.) Just you wait, too - your electricity bills will be more than 3,000 million pounds higher in the 1980s because you wouldn't let us have our LWRs . . . m-hm. Of course we all know that Westinghouse gives LWRs away for cornflake boxtops.

Meanwhile, back in Poland Street, we move on to Phase Two: In Which The British Public Considers The Niceties Of Nuclear Power Per Se. Perhaps that should be Naseties. For a country which, less than a year ago, knew little about nuclear safety, radioactive waste, plutonium security, and other incidentals, and cared less, Britain has roused itself for another, closer look. Watch this space.

About the middle of July we fired the opening shot in yet another campaign, one which is going to prove near the hearts, stomachs, and other organs of the British public. Colin Blythe, Mike Allaby, and Colin Hines produced 'Losing Ground,' the first of three discussion papers on Britain's land use and food supply - and a disturbing document it is. It discloses that Britain now imports either directly or indirectly well over 50 percent of her food, is going to find it increasingly difficult to pay for such imports, and is meanwhile sacrificing more and more irreplaceable agricultural land for burial under concrete. The report's argument is detailed and incisive, and has drawn a considerable response - much of it, including that from many farmers, in enthusiastic and worried agreement. The implications of the new food-policy campaign will have a profound impact on the essentials of the British life- style. It's not recommended for reading over dinner, except possibly to concentrate the mind on delectation which may in a decade be beyond us.

Linda Starke, co- director of FOE's sister organization Population Stabilization, has been invited to join the official British Government delegation to the UN Population Conference in Romania. The accolade is impressive; PS has long been an outspoken advocate of an explicit population control policy for Britain and has never hesitated to make its opinions known in unambiguous terms. The Government invitation is a gratifying acknowledgment of the expertise which Linda and her PS colleagues have established. The next step is for the Government actually to listen to them and act accordingly.

Our Endangered Species Bill, designed to provide in Britain protection similar to that afforded by the US Endangered Species Act of 1969, has been adopted by the Government. It now remains for us to make sure that they do not subsequently water it down and that we get our share of the credit for having drafted and pressed for it. Meanwhile Angela, John A, David, and Pam are proceeding with their catalogue of world wildlife legislation, which will be when it is complete a valuable dossier vis-a-vis the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Oh yes - the very first Condeep concrete oil production platform, being built in Norway, was launched in May. You will recall that this design was acclaimed the best of the lot, and its unique virtues were the basis on which Mowlem wanted planning permission to build Condeeps at Drumbuie in Loch Carron. Well sir. The first time the Norwegian builders flooded the outer chambers of the Mobil Condeep, in order to proceed with construction of the upper part, the chamber walls cracked, and water poured through. They had to pump the thing out again, toot sweet, and are now contemplating cracks extending 20 meters from the bottom vertically upward. Our cup, if you'll pardon the expression, runneth over.

October 1974

They had a ceilidh at Drumbuie on 12 August - at Drumbuie, and at Duirinish up the road, and at Plockton over the hill. FOE were invited - wish we could have made it. It went on all night, and the malt, you can be sure, flowed like a Scottish burn. On 12 August William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland, announced his decision to reject the application from John Mowlem and Taylor Woodrow for a site to build concrete oil production platforms at Drumbuie. A year ago there were not many people around Kyle of Lochalsh who would have given a plugged farthing for Drumbuie's chances. The Drumbuie victory, in which it is fair to say FOE played a substantial part, will go down in the annals of environmental action as an epic with few parallels.

It might be said that the 'inalienability' of the National Trust's ownership, requiring Parliamentary action to abrogate it, probably played a key role in the ultimate decision; but the delay generated by the opposition has at last revealed to all but the most obtuse that the companies' case was superficial and self-seeking and that 'national interest' was - as usual - a smokescreen for commercial gain. By this time, a year later, the Government are able to state with some confidence the number and type of platforms required; and it is abundantly clear - even to all but the most diehard civil servants - that the UK North Sea will get along very well, thank you, without building the Condeeps in Loch Carron. Without actually saying 'we told you so,' we are watching with fascination as the first platform-sites approach potential shutdown - potential dereliction, unemployment, a major Government headache. Before long even the Civil Service will thank us for having prevented them from getting in yet farther over their heads.

Sure enough - surprise surprise - it turns out that platforms for the Viking Graben can indeed, as we'd insisted, be designed and built on the Firth of Clyde; the Government, on the day of the Drumbuie decision, adopted this notion as the basis of their platform policy. Next time you feel abashed at taking on the massed might of industry and government on behalf of a handful of people in a remote community, just murmur 'Drumbuie'; you'll feel better immediately.

Speaking of Condeeps, I've now seen 'em, during a flying visit to Stavanger to take part in an Alternative Oil Conference with Norwegian colleagues. Anyone who tells you that those giant columns would not be incongruous in Loch Carron needs his eyes tested. You can see the Condeeps from half of Stavanger - or at any rate the first one, which is floating high in the water while they plug the cracks. We ought henceforth to be able to work closely in tandem with our Norwegian opposites on oil matters.

Incidentally the new Shetland group (number 101?), on the other side of the Viking Graben from Stavanger, drew more than 80 people from all over Shetland to their formal inaugural meeting in Lerwick. Are they the world's most northerly FOE group? Any advance on 60° 50'? Going once . . .

Apart from well-merited holidaying, other FOE UK travels recently included a flight to Malta for Angela King and a jelly-kneed John Burton (John hates flying), to get together with Sidney Holt at the International Ocean Institute for a joint reworking of the Whale Manual (new edition due out later this year). Tom, of course, continued his rounds of the local groups: he was on hand for the inaugural meeting of the new Exeter group (number 102?), which took place the same evening as

that of the Lerwick group, but about 800 miles away, which in Britain is almost as far away as you can get.

You may recall earlier observations herein, to the effect that for our part we're rather keen on coal. In early September John Price and I took up an offer from the headquarters of the National Union of Mineworkers to visit a colliery in Leicestershire. But the organizers led the Leicester mine to expect a group of skeptics who had apparently been sounding off about miners on TV. As a result - and, amazingly, to our delight - the miners put us through an assault course, to demonstrate just how indescribable underground conditions can be. (They then laid on a sumptuous banquet at the Miners' Welfare Club nearby.)

Before we arrived I murmured nervously to John 'I hope we aren't going to go through one of those narrow seams . . .' and he said, 'Oh, they wouldn't do that, they know we're novices.' Hah. We squirmed through a longwall face 200 yards long and less than three feet from floor to roof, with the coalcutting machine at arm's length to the right and the roof failing in beyond the roof support just beyond arm's length to the left. What is most difficult to comprehend, much less convey, is the extraordinary feeling of exhilaration we both felt, in this other-worldly surrounding. Part of the stimulation was undoubtedly the vibrant *esprit de corps* of the miners - but not all. I can only recommend that, the next time you get the chance, you go down a mine and find out for yourself. Until you do, believe me, you can have only the most tenuous awareness of what coal-mining involves, both good and bad. For what it's worth, both John and I have realized that, the next time we get the chance to go down a mine, we'll be underground faster than you can say 'White Rabbit.'

November 1974

It is profoundly embarrassing to admit that I did not really believe in Nenad Prelog. I was prepared to go as far as Earl Moorhouse, with difficulty. I never for a moment considered Peter Konijn, Kitty Pegels, or Egbert de Bloeme. For my lack of faith I hereby abjectly apologize - and offer thanks for all of them, including Nenad - indeed *particularly* including Nenad. And all the others.

It all happened in a youth hostel on the outskirts of Haarlem [the Netherlands] Friday to Sunday 4-6 October. Tom Burke, Dick Jones, and I, rationalizing furiously that by getting cheap late bookings and flying we were filling seats that would otherwise fly empty, descended on Schiphol Friday evening, and made our way overland (which in the Netherlands is tricky) to De Zanderij, the place of assignation. There we met Ralph Monö from Jordens Vänner, and Brice Lalonde and Laurent Samuel from Les Amis de la Terre, Earl and Lynn Moorhouse, late of FOE South Africa and en route to Nairobi, Mike O'Malley from FOE Ireland, Holger Strohm and Ralf Egel from die Freunde der Erde, Nenad and Davorka Prelog from FOE's Yugoslavian committee, Ed Matthews of the FOE Inc Paris base, and Kitty Pegels, of Vereniging Milieudefensie, our hosts for the weekend. Friday evening we spent in a babble of tongues - mainly, and for the anglophones chasteningly, English - getting to know each other.

Saturday morning, after breakfast, we were joined by Peter Konijn and Egbert de Bloeme of VMD, and convened around a broad baize-topped table in the hostel, for a day's intensive colloquy. The

first item on the impromptu agenda was comparative structure and operations of the various FOE national organizations - including that perennial crowd-pleaser, funding. For us of FOE UK this potentially some-what bureaucratic topic was quite unexpectedly absorbing. Vereniging Milieudefensie must be one of the best-funded FOE-linked organizations in the whole family, publishing elegant and tough reports and studies and a superb bimonthly magazine. We of FOE UK were staggered to learn of their activities and their successes, as were FOE colleagues all around the table. VMD have not thus far laid particular stress on their FOE affiliations; we in the UK hope that they won't hesitate to do so henceforth with emphasis, because their track record will be a valuable boost to FOE morale worldwide. Consider: they convinced the Dutch government to ban the Shell No-Pest strip in Shell's own native land. They got 130,000 signatures, complete with addresses, on a petition to have the Dutch government ban the use of cars for one Sunday per month: a 'Zonderdag,' with a delightful 45rpm record of the themesong. They're hot on the tail of Joop den Uyl, who'd be well advised not to trifle with them. Meanwhile they have precipitated an internal kafuffle within the Dutch government, who seem as a result of VMD's pressure to be on the verge of declaring at least a three-year, and possibly a five-year moratorium on the construction of the Borssele II, Maasvlaakt, and Flevopolder nuclear stations. Will that do for the moment? If not contact Herengracht 109, Amsterdam. Oh yes, you might also ask them how they feel about paying a 3 percent surcharge on electricity bills in order to pay the Dutch share of the cost of the Kalkar SNR-300 fast breeder power station over the border in Germany. They may, of course, answer in Dutch, to spare your tender ears.

Meanwhile, as a result of the meeting in Haarlem, Brice and Les Amis are teaming up to help VMD and their colleagues with media coverage for a lawsuit which is ground-breaking in Europe: VMD and partners, under a common market regulation not hitherto applied so far as we know, are suing a French polluter in a Dutch court. To be specific, they're suing the French potash mining company for pollution of the Rhine - and the case is to be heard in Rotterdam. Over to you, Kitty and Brice...

It was fascinating to hear from Nenad the way he and his colleagues operate. For administrative reasons it is not permitted to establish in Yugoslavia a 'branch' of an international organization like FOE International. But Nenad and his colleagues have set up a Yugoslavian committee 'for' Friends of the Earth, analogous to Yugoslavian committees for the UN *et alii*. Nenad himself is based at the University in Zagreb; his committee has a government grant. Casual assumptions about the inability of a pressure group to operate in a communist country are countered by the success the Yugoslav FOE committee had in their interaction with the local electrical utility. Although the FOE committee were unable to dissuade the authorities from building a new nuclear power plant, they did nonetheless head off the original plan, which would have amounted to diverting almost the whole of the river Sava through the condensers at times of low water. Instead the authorities are including a cooling tower - which is certainly better than boiled fish.

And now - if you want to hear about what everyone else is doing, and what's happened in the meantime, and how we've begun, at last, to work as a real international organization, inscribe the following in your diary:

FOE International Joint Meeting
28 February-2 March, 1975
London, England

On behalf of FOE UK, let me say that we are proud and delighted to act as hosts for the next FOE International jamboree; and we hereby extend an invitation to FOE Friends

everywhere to make your way by land, sea, and air to 9, Poland Street, London W1 V 3DG, the last Friday in February next. (Bring this column for a free pint, on the management.)

January 1975

Sorry - what was that again? 'Wheels Within Wheels,' eh? 'Britain and the World Food Crisis,' hm? Population Day, huh? 'Dig-In For Victory,' forsooth? All that in six weeks since mid-October, you say? Plus *Pan* at the World Food Conference, visitors from Norway, Sweden, France, and the US, a local victory over a mining company, and a hair-raising brush with death for four of our Friends? It must have been exciting. Pity I wasn't paying attention.

Well, I was, really . . . it's just that for the last month or so I've been slaving-over a hot typewriter, writing a Pelican original for Penguin books about nuclear reactors (NB PLUG NB) due out next September; in consequence most of what follows is cobbled together from the wire-services and stuff like that. I'll try to do better next time.

Meanwhile: Mick Hamer's book-length dissection of Britain's road lobby, entitled 'Wheels Within Wheels,' came out mid-Oct, and was greeted with fascination by all the right people - local government officials, trade organizations, civil servants, the ones who are in the front line when the road-pushers push. The first printing sold out so fast it didn't have time to gather dust; and in Soho that's usually about 48 hours, if it's raining. It's already been reprinted, and Mick is looking over my shoulder to make sure I mention that it costs \$3.00 by surface mail, and a small fortune by air. Well, we'll settle for five bucks

'Britain and the World Food Crisis,' Chris Wardle's British version of the piece you saw in the November NMA, came out just before the commencement of the World Food Conference. It pointed out that the average British diet includes far more protein than necessary and presented some pretty hard-edged analysis about our eating habits and how they may change, of necessity if not otherwise. Unfortunately the news media pounced on a paragraph on the penultimate page, which said that the foregoing arguments must also, for completeness, encompass the diet of British cats and dogs. The paragraph was construed to mean that we were advocating the gas chambers for the nation's mutts and moggies, and the wrath of outraged animal-lovers was unnerving to witness. We had neither meant nor intended to say any such thing, but it took a week or more for the kafuffle to subside.

On World Population Day Susi and Ingrid were among FOE agents who became bunnies for the day - not bunnies Hefner style but bunnies bunny-style, except for the placards. They hopped through Downing Street proclaiming 'RABBITS WARN - STOP AT TWO' and who should know better than rabbits? The warning, at any rate, made the *Herald Trib* and elsewhere; to what effect, we'll only know nine months from now.

Which brings us to a vacant lot next to the Old Vic: not, by any means, the sort of spot you'd choose for a garden, being much more like a combination junkyard and carpark. But a garden it shall be, if

FOE and our friends from south London have the last word. One weekend in early November, led by Pete, a FOE team descended on the vacant site and set to with forks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. The land has lain unused since World War II; it was compulsorily purchased more than ten years ago by the Greater London Council to have houses built upon it, but since then it has served mainly as a repository for old bottles, cans, and assorted neighbourhood rubbish. To turn it into a garden will take much longer than a weekend; so we have set up a rota, for people to put in regular stints tending the incipient garden. By next spring it ought to be sufficiently invigorated to respond to injections of seeds. All being well, by this time next year we and our friends from the local neighbourhood will be able to give the neighbourhood pensioners some free vegetables.

This is not, of course, the central point of the exercise - and I do mean exercise. It is rather the opening shot in a campaign - which will be given a full-dress launch next spring - to convert Britain's thousands of acres of unused urban land back to their most essential purpose: growing food. We won't do it all ourselves, but the response we've already received suggests that many Britons share our opinion. Mark Twain once said, 'Buy land. They've stopped making it.' Well, we don't intend to buy it; but we may well be able to make a good deal of it over again.

FOE's local group in Poole, Dorset, are neither very large nor very wealthy; but they have confronted one of the largest mineral-mining companies in the country, and thus far stopped the miners in their tracks. English China Clays Lovering Pochin, to give the miners their full title, have their eye on a Dorset beauty spot called the Arne peninsula, whose beauty happens to be sitting upon a potentially very profitable mound of ball clay. Poole FOE, on their own initiative, produced a dissenting document to give to ECCLP shareholders at the company's annual meeting; they held public meetings and rallies; and last week the Dorset County Council planning committee not only refused ECCLP planning permission to gouge out Arne, but also revoked planning permissions previously given. ECCLP will of course appeal; but Poole FOE have the light of battle in their eyes, and have tasted blood. The clay miners are not going to find their proposed dig-in nearly as easy as FOE's.

The London office has been a bit like Heathrow Airport lately. Ralph Monö came through on the dead run from Stockholm; Harald Celsius from Trondheim came over to compare notes on oil developments; Dave and Anne Brower looked in; Ed Matthews from Paris did likewise; and Earl and Lynn Moorhouse and their two youngsters spent a couple of weeks in town. Oh yes: Our Founder, none other than Graham Searle, re-emerged from the Antipodes bearing good tidings, short hair, and the silliest flat hat you ever saw. (Don't hit me boss, I'll delete it, honest!) You may have seen the agency reports about the Nairobi 747 crash; Earl, Lynn, and the boys were on that flight. All four of them escaped unharmed. One way and another it's been a pretty good six weeks. That way especially.

February 1975

If this copy is slightly grubby, don't worry; it's not printer's ink, just good rich south London loam - enriched with bricks, bottles, bits of wire, and rotten boots. I've just returned from a jolly couple of hours with FOE colleagues, digging our patch across from the Old Vic. It still doesn't look like a

garden, not really, but in the balmy January weather it looks a lot less like a rubbish dump than it did. The local people have taken heartily to the idea, and the Greater London Council have offered other sites for our local groups to tackle elsewhere in town. By the time our national land-use campaign is launched later this spring the idea ought to be well established. With any luck, the beans and Brussels sprouts will be likewise.

Shortly after the initial Dig-In which first broke sod (and concrete, and fingernails) at the Old Vic, we staged another public manifestation, to coincide with the publication of the new FOE report *Material Gains: Re-Use, Reclamation and Recycling*, by Chris Thomas. The report is a successor to *Packaging in Britain: A Policy for Containment*, tackling not just packaging but other aspects of the use of materials, compiling a survey of the state of the art of making the materials available for further use. One of its key points is the need to confront the problem at the design stage, while all the factors are still amenable to integration and rationalization.

We reactivated one of our favourite motifs: on a bright Saturday morning in early December we descended on an unsuspecting supermarket in Edgware Road, and presented the manager with some two thousand bottles - each one different in size or shape. We'd been meticulously collecting them for months, so much so that the Poland Street office had begun to resemble a liquor store, with shelves sagging under the chaotic accumulation. The supermarket manager was a trifle stropky to begin with - the usual routine, 'why me?' it's not right, I wasn't notified' - until we presented him also with a set of our proposed standardized bottles, gaily gift-wrapped and filled with goodies. That sweetened him enough to make for good vibes after all; and we took the bottles back ourselves, to a cullet merchant. Oh yes - Susi got her pitcha in the papuhs, too, except that (since she was concealed inside a perambulating six-foot standardized bottle-shape) the likeness wasn't very good.

Jo Gibson, our front-office commander-in-chief, departed these shores for Paris amid much weeping and gnashing of FOE teeth. We held a tearful farewell party at Ingrid's and presented Jo with an armload of just the sort of sentimental clobber she'd find impossible to leave behind - exactly what she needed, more ballast, topped by an engraved chalice for French booze. Fortunately, office morale recovered swiftly with the addition of Tess Garton, who took over the controls with exactly the sort of steady nerves you'd expect from one who's just gained a PhD with a thesis about Apulian art. There may not be many of us, but you have to admit we're improbable.

Parliamentary friends of ours had success in the ballot for Private Members' Bills, and otherwise, with the result that the Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Protection Bill is now in the Parliamentary timetable. This bill is an outgrowth of our earlier draft Bill, which became known in Poland Street as the Slimy Animals Bill - designed to afford protection to animals which were not so cuddly as the spotted cats, nor so dramatic as the whales, but were nonetheless in danger from man's activities, right here in Britain. Our consorts John Burton and Reg Boorer are preparing a glorious poster, depicting the distinctive beauties of bats and toads, especially the natter-jack toad which runs instead of hopping, and which is having ever more trouble finding anywhere to run.

We were unnerved, as were many of our Scots colleagues, when the government came up with its Offshore Petroleum Development (Scotland) Bill, and romped through its early stages with little opposition. As originally drafted, the bill gave the government sweeping discretionary powers to take over land in Scotland for onshore oil developments, and to 'expedite' - read eliminate - planning procedures. The government track record, this government and its precursors, is anything

but impressive as regards accurate identification of critical pathways in oil development; they are still, for instance, totally obsessed with concrete production platforms, although most recent oil-company orders have switched back to steel. Fortunately, the tide of objection to the 'expediting' part of the bill became too much for the government to withstand, and in the concluding stages of the House debate the government itself introduced an agreed amendment to the effect that land take-overs could only be initiated after planning permission had been given. This is not wholly reassuring because arms can still be twisted to give such permission without too much irritating public participation. But it is a welcome retreat from the previous monolithic posture.

In addition to *Material Gains* we also somehow published two more major reports in December, the first two in what will be a continuing series of energy policy studies. We led off with *Nuclear Power: Technical Bases for Ethical Concern*, a 50-page survey by Amory Lovins of the whole range of problem-areas, in a way a follow-up to *World Energy Strategies*, focusing on the trickiest of the energy options. A fortnight later we published *Dynamic Energy Analysis and Nuclear Power* by John Price, a study of the inputs and outputs of energy associated with construction and operation of nuclear power stations singly and in series. This report has sparked an on-going controversy in Britain, admittedly a somewhat esoteric one but not one that ought to be ignored.

The ideas are almost embarrassingly simple. In essence the analysis suggests that it is easy, in an expanding nuclear programme, to find that nuclear stations already on stream do not provide enough energy to fulfill the requirements of those still under construction. Then, when the growth phase ends, you encounter wild swings of energy supply and demand, which may be economically - and otherwise - disruptive. We're still thinking through the implications. President Ford, with his 200 nuclear stations for Project Independence, ought to do likewise.

In early January the *Daily Mirror*: the British national newspaper with the largest readership in the country, kicked off a daily feature called 'Survive in '75,' giving basic advice on every kind of useful individual ploy - thermal insulation, vegetable gardening, comparison shopping, inexpensive recipes, household energy conservation, low-cost transport - all based on material prepared by FOE, especially by Pete and carrying a daily credit-line 'Research by Friends of the Earth.' *Mirror* readers might in general think of FOE as a middle-class lot trying to preserve middle-class advantages. We hope the *Mirror* series, which is scheduled to run for three months and ultimately appear in book form, will help to dispel any such impression. In any case it's extraordinary publicity - and it will also net us some substantial income from publishers. Can you imagine doing the equivalent with, say, the New York *Daily News*? If not, why not? If so, well - we'd be the first to congratulate you.

We held an all-day head office meeting on 3 January, to look forward to the coming year. I think it's true to say that, unlike most of the pundits sounding off over here, we have enjoyed 1974 - a downer here and there, but not bad at all from where we stand. And 1975 looks even better. Our plans are, as usual, daunting in their scope and extent - to misquote Browning, 'else what's an Earth-Friend for?'

March 1975

Tough and battle-hardened they came, veterans of the trenches, the FOE coordinators, 70 strong, to the annual council of war in Poland Street, a sight to make the mightiest captain of industry quail. (Do you hear the bugles?)

Pitching it a bit less frenetically, on 25-26 January we held what was undoubtedly the best coordinators' conference yet, two days of intense discussion involving the leaders of most of the local groups in Britain, in preparation for what looks like being a lively year. Speaking personally I found it an enormous boost to morale: in my parochial London nook I'd not realized just how many first-class people we have taking care of business in other parts of the country. After the coordinators' weekend I can testify that as far as FOE is concerned the country's in good hands. Us lot from Poland Street distributed ourselves among the visitors, some of them old friends and some new faces, to hear about their progress and their problems, and to improve contacts between us. We talked about funding, and publicity, and funding, and research, and funding, and membership, and funding, and campaigns, and funding. On the Saturday evening we held a party - but in fact it was mostly more of the same, milling clusters of intent faces and straining ears, developing the dynamic consensus which unites Friends all over the country into an organization very fluid in formal structure but fast on the draw, and accurate. It was good for the soul, the whole weekend, even if we were all utterly drained by Sunday night from the high-key intensity of the gathering.

Scarcely had the last cup been cleaned after the coordinators' conference when Tom Burke and John Price set off on a whirlwind fortnight, doing a Grand Tour of the local groups to brief them in more detail about the scope and angles of our vast new Energy Campaign. It's the most wide-ranging campaign we have yet mounted, at any rate in variety of targets and the anticipated time-scale. It includes our challenge to the nuclear option, but goes far beyond the classical question of reactor safety into questions of electricity generating policy overall, the role of central power stations, the grid, illusory economies of scale, social effects of security measures, a whole microcosm of present-day policy conflicts right across the landscape. We'll keep you briefed.

As expected, given the way the inquiry was held, the Secretary of State for Scotland gave planning permission for a twin-reactor SGHWR [steam-generating heavy-water reactor] station at Torness near Edinburgh in mid-January. (Faithful readers will recall that the inquiry, at which we testified last June, was held a month before the choice of reactor was announced, and heard the utility chairman as a witness the day *before* the utility's annual report came out, revealing a 10-million-quid loss caused by interest charges on refinanced capital loans.) A week later the utility announced that it intended to ask permission for a huge nuclear complex on the west coast of Scotland. We shall see.

As you may otherwise have heard, nuclear unease has at last begun to raise its head in Britain. Two radiation workers at Windscale died, of leukemia and myelomatosis, within 24 hours of each other, and the plutonium hit the fan. In the ensuing uproar BNFL brought forward a planned press visit, and yours truly went along for a look. I have now seen my first plutonium oxide - and, if I have my way, probably my last; once is enough. Among the tidbits divulged at the concluding press conference, thanks to some fairly uncompromising questioning, was the revelation that Britain cheefully exports plutonium to countries which have not signed or ratified the Non-Proliferation

Treaty: countries with 'stable, friendly, predictable' governments, to be sure, like Japan and Italy. M-hm. A few days later I journeyed to Ireland, to take part in a TV programme live from Wexford about utility plans for an LWR station at Carnsore Point. Irish FOE are in the forefront of the opposition, doing an A-One job. Fortunately the Irish utility team are doing their homework, and will happily forego the nuclear option given any encouragement - or so at least it sounds to me.

FOE Shetland scored a win within their first six months of active operations, publishing a report that succeeded in facing down quarry operators proposing a road through a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The quarry operators have now backed off, and FOE Shetland are gearing up to take on Shell and British Petroleum, who want to run offshore pipelines through two different fishing grounds instead of side by side.

By the time you are reading this we shall be having what promises to be another rousing get-together here in Britain, to which the tough, battle-hardened veterans of the trenches (copyright W Patterson 1975) will have come from FOE national organizations over a goodly portion of the planet. If the Haarlem shindig last September was any indication it will be a ball. Wish you were here.

April 1975

To the unfortunate majority of Friends who were not in London the weekend of 1 March, our condolences - you missed a ball. It comes, to be sure, a bit amiss from me - as one of the hosts - but nonetheless, setting aside all seemly modesty, the latest FOE International conference was the sort of weekend that restores the faith, revitalizes the commitment, and makes all the aggro worthwhile. It also, in my case, drains the sinuses, and not a moment too soon; in the week before the conference our family fell prey to such a virulent strain of respiratory microorganism that we wondered whether the conference would serve to disseminate biological disaster worldwide. It doesn't seem to have happened, although reports from the remoter outposts are not yet in. When I say 'remoter' I mean 'remoter': the London convocation brought no less than three Friends from the diametrical opposite side of the planet, including one from Tasmania. I know that the majority of readers of this column are Friends of FOE Incorporated; let me assure you F/FOEIncs that our organization is now well and truly international. I hope - and indeed expect - that in the months and years to come the pages of NMA will include more and more news and information about FOE operations from all 'the round earth's imagin'd corners'.

Friends from afar began to congregate before the weekend; by Friday evening the Poland Street office was like Old Home Week. In due course those present included FOE UK, FOE US, FOE Ireland, FOE Australia, FOE New Zealand, Les Amis de la Terre, Freunde der Erde, Jordens Vänner, Vereniging Milieudéfensie, and probable FOE affiliates from Canada, Norway and the aforementioned Tasmania. True to form yours truly got signals crossed and had to spend Saturday as a participant in another conference in London. For this and other reasons I don't propose to delineate the substance of the FOE International deliberations, either Saturday or Sunday, except to say that those on Sunday - on energy and nuclear matters especially - were absorbing and encouraging. I understand that we'll be compiling and filing a separate report on the substance of

the conference; that is, the *formal* substance. But rest assured that the *informal* goings-on were equally substantial.

After the formal meeting Saturday some three dozen of us boiled out of Poland Street en masse, made our way in an uproarious rabble via Baker Street and the Tube to the Patterson domicile in Amersham, and thence to a leisurely nosh-up at a commodious local trattoria. Towards midnight we straggled back along the glistening pavement to Chez Patterson, and reconvened for yet more talk, wine, beer, peanuts, potato crisps, music, and talk. The numbers began gradually to dwindle, as one after another the participants faded off into the darker corners of the house. By about 2:30 am there were some 26 people bedded down in the Amersham Hilton, known in the vernacular as Patterson's Flophouse. Susi and her friends provided further facilities in the nearby precincts of Chorleywood. The last sight I recall before turning in was the antipodean contingent, their metabolisms signalling midday, plunging into a rekindled dissertation with some European diehards in the kitchen.

As promised Mine Host arose at 8:00 am Sunday morning (an extraordinary act of devotion), lit the fires, emptied the ashtrays, and stacked the glasses. By the time the conferees were stirring, the oven was filled with gleaming savoury sausages, coffee was steaming in thermos flasks, and Mine Hostess was lathering up a basin of scrambled eggs. The Continental Friends, staggered by the genuine English breakfast (eggs, sausage, bacon, cereal if desired, fruit juice, coffee or tea, breadnutter, marmalade or honey - have I forgotten anything?) were heard to declare that there might be something to be said for English cooking after all.

The meeting duly reconvened at 10:00 am as advertised. After an intensive morning's discussion we thronged back into the dining room and thence, gradually, into the garden, which was soon the scene of a ferocious session of catch-as-catch-can frisbee, in which Ed, Richard, Tom, and Brice made the NHL look like a minuet. About this time we got a desperate call from Heathrow, from Stephen Myers of FOE Australia; Mine Hostess nobly took off in the establishment Land-Rover, and within an hour had added yet another far-flung voice to the colloquy.

All too soon, alas, the diaspora was to begin again. By Sunday evening centrifugal Friends had departed toward almost every point of the compass. But before we separated we agreed that yet another such gathering must take place ere long, as our international muscles become ever more powerful. The proposed time is the weekend of 3-5 October, six months hence, and the venue suggested is France. We have an invitation to Ed Matthews' mountain retreat not far from Chamonix, although travel-costs make it necessary to mull over this otherwise alluring proposition. Mull we shall, and the outcome and firm plans will of course be announced in NMA. As indicated above, the formal substance of the March deliberations will be recounted in a separate article; and next month's *London Letter* will probably be mainly about FOE UK. (It occurs to me in passing that this letter is usually from - but by no means narrowly 'about' - London. However, I'd prefer to refrain from calling it, for instance, the UK Letter, if only because somebody is bound to pronounce UK 'uk'.)

July 1975

Ten years ago, on 25 May 1965, the British government gave the go-ahead to Britain's second nuclear power programme, based on the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors. The first station was to be Dungeness B. A decade later not one of the five AGR stations has yet started up or generated a kilowatt. Some knowledgeable people doubt whether Dungeness B will ever start up. We decided that the tenth anniversary of the second programme ought not to be passed by in silence, when we're on the threshold of a third programme. So we held a birthday party for Dungeness B.

We were given the use of an elegant house in Belgravia. We invited Mr Wilson, Mrs Thatcher, and all the other leading Parliamentary figures, especially those with responsibilities for energy; leaders of the nuclear and electricity industries, and the trades unions involved; other leading consultants and policy-makers; and representatives of the media. Not one of the Top People came, but we pasted up their two dozen or more refusals into an impressive mosaic, about two square metres of it. Some did send deputies, to find out what we were up to - from the Atomic Energy Authority, British Nuclear Fuels, the Nuclear Power Company, and so on.

I think the party made their trip worthwhile; it lasted for more than two hours on a Friday afternoon, and the dialogue was intense. We also offered the guests a brief cabaret. The centrepiece was a 33-pound birthday cake in the shape of Dungeness B, with ten candles on it - we debated importing them from Alabama, but decided that would be overdoing it. Graham and Colin delivered citations to seven other British nuclear installations for 'distinctive performances' - concluding with Windscale, which had on the previous day reported a radioactive leak from the concrete drains under the site.

Printing problems slightly interfered with our intended publication of a new FOE tabloid, *Nuclear Times*, a popular introduction to the nuclear issues in Britain, but we should have it ere long. We displayed a mockup of its front page, and distributed stenciled copies of front page and back page articles. We concluded by decommissioning the cake, which was delicious. Chris Thomas of FOE observed to the deputy editor of *Nuclear Engineering International*, as they devoured slabs of succulent goodie: 'If AGRs always tasted this good I'd be in favour of building lots of them!' The comment, like most of the day's proceedings, left the electronuclear people slightly at a loss for words.

January 1976

For those who may have been wondering, I am happy to confirm from my own belated personal observations that Yes, Virginia, there is a *Not Man Apart*. These pages you are holding are not merely regurgitated by a deft computer; they are woven together by human hands, gainfully employed under the shadow of San Francisco's remarkable pyramid building in a side-street yclept Commercial, over a Pakistani restaurant. I know, now, because I've just come from there. I guess they figured that the only way they could get a column out of me was to fly me over, incarcerate me

in a back room and force-feed me on the remarkable local concoctions called Disgustoburgers until I submitted. Okay, I submit. Now can I have some real food?

Since the last time I put thumbs to typewriter many developments have occurred in and around Poland Street, mostly encouraging. In September, after hinting at the possibility for some two years, we underwent fission - in the biological rather than nuclear sense - and now consist of two symbiotic organizations. FOE Ltd continues as before, the campaigning arm of the operation; but it is now joined by Earth Resources Research Ltd, under the direction of Graham Searle, whose function is to carry out the background work on issues. Since ERR is not directly involved in lobbying and related activities, it qualifies for charitable status, with concomitant advantages *re* taxes and such. Several of the staff from FOE Ltd moved over with Graham to set up ERR: Chris Thomas, Chris Wardle, and Colin Blythe are now all working out of the gleaming new office in James Street, just north of Oxford Street, about a 3-minute cycle-ride from Poland Street. Jenny Mackewn, who had been working in the FOE front office, has taken on the FOE end of the materials campaign in concert with Chris Thomas; similar partnerships are in the making for the other campaigns. Tom Burke has moved over to executive director of FOE; Tom's place as groups coordinator has been taken by Nick Warren, like Tom an alumnus of the Merseyside FOE group. Richard Sandbrook has joined the staff of the International Institute for Environment and Development, Barbara Ward's organization, with whom FOE Ltd now shares interlocking directors and mutual commitments.

What, you may ask, has all this bureaucratic musical chairs to offer in the way of constructive prospects? Well, obviously, to begin with, we have more room and more bodies - both of which have been at a premium as our earlier efforts have ramified. We're now working on five major campaign fronts: energy, food, wildlife, transport, and materials. Until the split we had one person with overall responsibility for each of these fronts; from personal experience of the energy campaign I can testify that you have to stretch yourself paper-thin to cover an area so vast. We'll still be stretched, but at least now we'll have backstops.

In order to improve the position further we are now preparing to undertake a whole new category of in-house FOE activity, which we call Campaign Workshops. The first such workshop is scheduled for the coming weekend, in Birmingham. We have invited a select handful of FOE people from the local groups, who have expressed a willingness to become "field specialists" in a particular campaign; the first workshop will be on energy. We'll spend two days in four intensive briefing seminars, covering the basic background, present policy, policy alternatives and the FOE campaign, in the hope that the participants will conclude the weekend better briefed than all but a handful of people in the country on energy issues overall. In this way we propose to decentralize our specialized know-how, while building up strong regional foci of action on the issues. Interest within the local groups seems to be high. We've had to keep numbers down, to ensure the sort of intensive participation required; but we've also assured everyone else, especially those not able to be included in the first workshop, that we'll keep on holding workshops as long as there are people eager to join in.

While we're on the subject of energy (near and dear to my heart), herewith an update on the situation in the UK. The country has presently an excess of electric generating capacity some 50 percent over and above the peak demand it has ever required. The Central Electricity Generating Board has 58.5 gigawatts available, and has never had to supply more than about 41; it also has

another 10 gigawatts under construction. The demand for electricity at the end of September 1975 was down 13 percent on the demand at the end of September 1974 - no doubt partly as a result of a price increase of well over 30 percent in early 1975. The CEBG is nevertheless bent on proceeding with plans for the 2.6-gigawatt Sizewell B nuclear station, estimated to cost 1,000,000,000 pounds: while at the same time announcing plans to shut down 28 small urban-sited stations, and phase out another 20, in the next two years. To us this whole business is so irrational as to be schizoid, and we are not alone in thinking so; the tough-minded weekly *New Civil Engineer*, published by the Institution of Civil Engineers, not long ago ran an article describing the entire schemozzle as "Megawatt Mania."

We are pressing instead for quite a different approach. Instead of shutting down all those small urban-sited stations, we want to see the CEBG gut them, take out their traditional steam systems, and install prototype variations on the basic concept of fluidized-bed combustion. Some middle-level CEBG people are in complete agreement with us; the difficulty comes from the hide-bound tunnel-vision at the top. But it seems to us obvious that if the country is to invest 1,000,000,000 pounds in the energy production capacity which it does not strictly speaking need, it ought to spread the money around the country, and create as many jobs - skilled long-term jobs, not just a few years pouring concrete - as possible. It ought also to seize the opportunity to develop a valuable new technology, while the chance is at hand.

However, allow me to dismount from my hobbyhorse and add a hasty survey of other action before the paper runs out. We have at last - thanks to a splash front page story in the *Daily Mirror*; whose origins (although not its final garbled form) were not a million miles from Poland Street - broken open the question of nuclear fuel reprocessing in Britain. More on this shortly. Mick Hamer and John Adams and their cohorts have the Department of the Environment on the run. The Department (which, despite its name, oversees and pushes the road-building programme) has (1) admitted that its traffic forecasts are generated by "reasoning" which is an entirely circular and self-fulfilling tautology; (2) declared to a public inquiry that it cannot put forward any witnesses competent to answer FOE cross-examination on the said forecasts; and (3) advises its "independent" inquiry inspectors behind the scenes that evidence on forecasts ought no longer to be heard in road inquiries. The FOE fangs are firmly in the DOE ankle, and not about to be shaken loose.

Materials are taking shape; wildlife is hopping; food - hm - yes, well, food . . . food . . . for heaven's sake don't let Commercial Street find out that I've developed a craving for Disgustoburgers....