

Earth First!

August 2007

Action



Update

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

The EF! Action Update is back (again)!

Welcome to the new Earth First! Action Update.

After a bit of a lull a new editorial collective is in place and ready to roll. The Action Update is produced quarterly to aid the sharing of news, information and ideas amongst those interested in taking action. The next newsletter will be out in November, so if you've got news to share about your groups, campaigns and actions send us your articles (max 150 words) or post them straight onto our website: www.earthfirst.org.uk.

To receive copies of the EF!AU in the post send us the subscription slip on the back. To get a PDF file for printing yourself send us an email to actionupdate@earthfirst.org.uk

This time we've not included a contacts list, but we'd like to next time. So drop us a line if you'd like your group/contact address included.

Iceland:

Summer of Dissent

In Iceland a summer of dissent against heavy industry and large dams has begun. In a much disputed master-plan, all the glacial rivers and geothermal potential of the largest wilderness of Europe would be harnessed for aluminium production. This is already resulting in large scale destruction of pristine areas of Iceland. for the third year running activists from around the world including many from the UK gathered to protect Europe's

largest remaining wilderness and oppose Rio Tinto/ALCAN, ALCOA, Century/RUSAL and other transnational companies. Lots and lots of successful direct action has been happening – here is just a selection:

On 19th July Saving Iceland closed the single supply road from Highway 1 to the Century/Nordural smelter on Hvalfjordur and the steel factory Elkem – Icelandic Alloys. Activists used lock-ons (metal arm tubes) to form a human blockade on the road and occupied a construction site crane.

20th July - 25 protestors went into Reykjavik Energy (OR) and hung up a banner inside stating: 'Reykjavik Arms-dealers' to highlight the sale of energy to companies involved in arms production and serious human rights violations. Protesters stayed in the building for an hour.

The same morning the Icelandic embassy on Queen St, Edinburgh was

What is Earth First?

Earth First! stands for the use of direct action and non-hierarchical organisation to confront, stop and eventually reverse the forces responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants.

It is not a cohesive group or campaign but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under.

In the UK people have been using the Earth First banner for direct action since the early 90s – directly confronting and stopping road building, the quarrying of coal, rock and peat, freeing our fields of genetically modified crops, protesting against climate criminals, fighting corporate power and much, much more.

targeted by members of Saving Iceland. Paint was thrown on the building, the lock was glued and a message was affixed to the exterior reading "The Whole World is Watching". "Iceland Bleeds" was also painted on the steps. The action served as a response to recent acts of police brutality against Saving Iceland activists in Reykjavik who continue to oppose the assault on the Icelandic wilderness by heavy industry.

24th July 20 Protesters lock their arms in metal tubes and climbed onto cranes on RioTinto's Straumsvik smelter in South-West Iceland.

26th July Blockade of Hellisheidi Power Station - activists locked on to different vehicles and one climbed a crane on the worksite and unfurled a gigantic banner: "STOP PRODUCING ENERGY FOR WEAPONS".

For more info and amazing images of Iceland check out www.savingiceland.org



www.earthfirst.org.uk

Britain GM free again!

After three years of no GM crops being grown in the UK, BASF announced two test sites for GM potatoes this year - in Hull and Cambridge. This testing of the waters was followed by swift action locally and nationally.

One down...

Over 100 people followed the rallying cry for a protest and picnic at the Hull site in April. Just weeks later BASF announced that following extensive local and national resistance, they would not be conducting a GM potato trial in Yorkshire this year, but that they may have another go next year.

Sorted!

Not to be outdone by their northern friends, on the night of 30th June protestors destroyed the GM trial in Cambridgeshire. Campaigners scaled a fence to enter a field between Girton and Histon and pulled up all of the crop.

This action follows a series of protests at the site. The previous Sunday saw a march on the field where the protestors faced overwhelming numbers of police and two participants were arrested.

B.A.S.F. has now stepped up security at the site and have obtained an injunction banning people from the field.

E\$\$O Pipeline Protests

With the gas pipeline converging on two fronts the protest tree camp in the Brecon Beacons has just been served with an eviction notice and are now on high alert for eviction. Activists are now dug-in and locked-on up trees with support from local people, ready to resist. They need your support. If you can get down there, ring the camp hotline on 07917383517, or email bristol@risingtide.org.uk

For more info on ESSO's pipeline www.fightthepipe.co.uk

London E\$\$O station blockaded

On 8th June red nosed clowns and ESSO tigers blockaded an E\$\$O station in West London for over two hours to highlight Exxon Mobil/E\$\$O's role in bankrolling climate chaos. E\$\$O's support for the Liquid Natural Gas pipeline is paving the way for new Gas Fired power stations, locking us into another 30 years with these

emission-spouting beasts.

The blockade went on for over two hours and activists handing out leaflets got a positive reaction from most people, including car drivers.

london@risingtide.org.uk

Norwich petrol station shut down

Twelve activists from Norwich Rising Tide shut down a Jet petrol station during rush hour as part of the International Day of action against climate change and the G8 on 8th June.

Despite a police presence when they arrived, the activists stretched banners across all three entrances, stopping vehicles from filling up. While blockading the pumps they handed out leaflets pointing out the inability of G8 leaders to truly tackle climate change and showing up the G8's so-called climate deal for the sham that it really is.

Climate activist super-glued to door

An environmental activist was so enraged that lastminute.com continue to push short haul flights whilst knowing the damage they do to the climate that she super-glued herself to the front door of the company's London HQ.

The woman, a member of climate action group Plane Stupid, superglued her hands to the front doors of the building - blocking staff from entering their offices as part of the G8 climate action day.

She said, "Whilst G8 leaders have simply spouted more hot air, I've showed what one woman alone can do to shut down climate criminals. www.planestupid.com

... sticking with the same theme

On 16th June climate campaigners caused disruption to the short-haul East Midlands airport by gluing themselves to its doors. Supporters handed out leaflets to airport customers encouraging them not to fly next time, and a banner with the slogan "Let's fry" was released in the departure lounge where it floated to the ceiling carried by helium-filled balloons.

This was part of a day of action against short-haul flights called for by Airport Watch and demos took place at airports across the UK and Europe.

Free train tickets at airports across the UK

On 19th June impromptu ticket exchange booths popped up in airports across the UK. Greenpeace volunteers at the booths explained to passengers about to take domestic flights that flying causes 10 times more damage to the climate than taking the train - and then offered to exchange their plane tickets for climate friendly train tickets instead!

Happy Birthday Camp Titnore!

After years of local campaigning failed to persuade Worthing Borough Council to oppose the development, people saw direct action as the only way to continue the fight.

They didn't really think the camp had any chance of lasting more than a few days, or weeks at the most. And when the landowners won possession in the High Court in London in August, everyone was braced for an eviction, but it didn't happen.

The landowners, and potential developers, hoped the protesters would all melt (or freeze) away, during the winter, but they didn't.

The fact that the camp is still up and running is testament to the battling, never-say-die attitude of all those involved.

But now there is a need for more people to lend a hand and get involved, to ensure that the camp is still there, resisting this development, in another year's time.

www.eco-action.org/porkbolter/camp-titnore.html. tel: 07913 534083.

Oil Barons Fooled

14th June saw pranksters the "Yes Men" pose as ExxonMobil and National Petroleum Council (NPC) representatives and deliver the keynote speech to 300 oil bosses at GO-EXPO, Canada's largest oil conference, held in Calgary, Alberta.

In the speech, the "NPC rep" announced that current U.S. and Canadian energy policies are increasing the chances of huge global calamities. But he reassured the audience that in the worst case scenario, the oil industry could "keep fuel flowing" by transforming the billions of

people who die into oil.

"We need something like whales, but

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infinitely more abundant," said "NPC rep" "Shepard Wolff" before describing the technology used to render human flesh into a new Exxon oil product called Vivoleum. 3-D animations of the process brought it to life. "Vivoleum works in perfect synergy with the continued expansion of fossil fuel production," noted "Exxon rep" "Florian Osenberg". "With more fossil fuels comes a greater chance of disaster, but that means more feedstock for Vivoleum. Fuel will continue to flow for those of us left."

The oil bosses listened to the lecture with attention, and then lit "commemorative candles" supposedly made of Vivoleum obtained from the flesh of an "Exxon janitor" who died as a result of cleaning up a toxic spill. The audience only reacted when the janitor, in a video tribute, announced that he wished to be transformed into candles after his death, and all became crystal-clear.

Tesco Blockade in Porthmadog

On 14th July activists blockaded Tesco in Porthmadog, Wales. The action was to protest about Tesco's destruction of small local shops and businesses as well as their token use of Welsh on signs in their stores and their link to Adecco recruitment agency who recently banned their staff from speaking Welsh. The activists blocked the entrance and put up posters announcing that the store was shut.



Work stopped at Tara

On the 18th July activists protesting the building of the M3 motorway near the Hill of Tara in Co Meath stopped construction on the site. Protesters climbed on top of construction vehicles and stood in the way of moving machinery in an effort to prevent work on the route of road. People also tried to stop construction workers from entering the Soldier Hill archaeological site on the Hill. 7 campaigners were arrested for

blocking traffic, even though they weren't on the road when protesting!

The Hill of Tara is still to be won but there is not much time. Get down there now with camp tat like rope; tarps; food etc. Contact Vigil phone number 086-1758557

Mobile phone masts destroyed by tank

On the 15th July a man used a tank to demolish six mobile phone towers in Sydney, Australia. After taking the tank the man toured six Sydney suburbs and managed to ram the tank through fences and into six mobile phone towers, telecommunication relay sheds and an electrical substation - all in just two hours! The damage caused major disruptions to mobile phone services in parts of Sydney. More than 20 police started chasing the tank before realising they couldn't stop it and running away to a safe distance to watch.

West London residents stop traffic outside DfT

On the 20th June West London residents protesting against Heathrow expansion plans stopped traffic outside the Department for Transport offices before trying to invade the building.

After discovering that the DfT had secretly passed key information supporting expansion of Heathrow to BAA the protesters decided to carry a bed with the slogan "DfT in bed with BAA" to the DfT offices.

A dozen residents halted the traffic and painted a runway on the road before leaving the bed outside the building.

Earlier in the year the residents, who are working with Plane Stupid activists, invaded Chatham House and disrupted a speech by Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander.

Dutch Earth First! Defeats NATO!

For two years GroenFront! (Dutch & Belgian EarthFirst!) have been fighting with the local community in Schinveld, in the South-east of the country, to preserve a forest that would be destroyed for the sake of the NATO air force base across the German border. The new base is planned to allow AWACS radar planes to lift off with more fuel in order to fly

directly to Afghanistan and Iraq.

A direct action camp was evicted in January, and 15 acres were destroyed, but 35 acres saved. GroenFront! was preparing to reoccupy the woods awaiting the final outcome of a legal battle between the local council and national government, but now to great surprise, the protesters have been vindicated and the forests are definitely saved from NATO's bloody claws.

On 18th July the highest court in the Netherlands ruled that the logging of Schiveld forest is illegal and therefore must be stopped. www.groenfront.nl

Protest at weapons manufacturers HQ

On 24th July about 30-40 people gathered at the Nottingham UK headquarters of Heckler & Koch, the world's second-largest manufacturer of handguns, assault rifles, submachine guns, machine guns and grenade launchers.

It was recently found out that their HQ is based on an industrial estate in Lenton, Nottingham so some people decided to pay them a visit.

There were about the same amount of police officers as protesters, in an attempt to keep them off the actual estate where the company is based.

Diary Dates

24th-26th August - Dutch EF! gathering.

Workshops and discussions eg the five coal-fired power stations planned to be built in the Netherlands, current campaigns, climate neutral squatting, DIY windmills, economic shrink and much more! www.groenfront.nl

19th-24th September - Gatwick No Border Camp 2007

The first No Border Camp in the UK will be a chance to work together to try and stop the building of a new detention centre, and to gather ideas for how to build the fight against the system of migration controls.

www.noborder.org

Palestinian Flag Hoisted at Agrexco

A Palestinian flag fluttered over the Agrexco Carmel depot in Hayes, Middlesex, for a few hours on the afternoon of Sunday 15th July. Activists entered the Israeli, 50% state-owned fresh produce importer's premises shortly after 1pm. The action is part of an ongoing campaign against the company which is the major distributor for settlement produce. After replacing the Israeli and British flags, the activists entered the warehouse and conducted a brief inspection before some of the group D-locked themselves to a storage trailer. After disrupting business for about 3.5 hours, the group left voluntarily without any arrests.

Latest from Co. Mayo

This summer has seen the **Shell to Sea** campaign gain increasing momentum as construction of the proposed onshore gas refinery in County Mayo, Ireland begins. Resistance was stepped up following a jail sentence given to three local fishermen accused of assaulting Gardai (Police) during a Shell to Sea picket last year. In a show of strength on 12th July people came to show their solidarity to the men and to their resolute opposition to Shell's project. The following day a local resident and someone from the solidarity camp locked on to a car, blocking a bridge on the way to the refinery site. They remained locked on for six hours, supported by forty protestors (held behind police lines) whilst others set up spontaneous blockades on alternative routes to the site. Construction lorries returned to their quarries with full loads. In the evening one hundred cars met the

three fishermen who had been granted bail that morning. Around one hundred protesters entered and marched around the site for about twenty minutes. Taking control of the site was a fitting end to a highly successful day. www.shelltosea.com.



Siberian protest camp against uranium plant attacked by nazis

Early morning 21st July, neo-nazi skinheads launched a vicious and unprovoked attack on an anti-nuclear protest camp in Angarsk, Siberia, Russia. The nazis violently attacked activists in their sleeping bags and tents with iron rods, knives and air pressure guns. Ilya Borodaenko suffered a head-fracture during the attack and later died in hospital from his injuries. At least nine others have been reported to be seriously injured, one of which has had both their legs broken. Tents were set on fire and several belongings were stolen. The camp started last week and is aimed at protesting against a planned centre of uranium enrichment in Angarsk. Ever since the arrival of the activists, the police have tried to intimidate them and have entered the camp in an attempt to gather information about planned actions. The organisation who planned the camp, the 'Ecological Wave of Baikal', had planned various rallies in the surrounding area to inform locals about the plans and

drum up support for the campaign. Financial help and other forms of solidarity are urgently needed. Contact xmakimax@gmail.com or ogopogos@gmail.com if you are able to offer support.

EF! Gathering report

This year's EF! summer gathering took place on a beautiful site, converting many to the wonders of Norfolk - trees, green woodpeckers, at least 3 types of horsefly, and even some undulations! Local history includes the longest strike in history at Burston. The area was also a centre for rural rebellions like the Swing Riots and the tearing down of fences around common land by peasants (not to mention Boudicca...).

Much of the focus this year at the gathering was of course around climate chaos, and in particular much plotting and planning was done for the Camp for Climate Action. Hopefully as you read this those discussions are bearing fruit!

There were lots workshops on practical skills: from tool sharpening, through blockades, climbing, night navigation, researching corporations, arrest role-plays, conflict resolution to squatting & squat electrics - these were much appreciated, as were workshops ranging from Iceland, nukes, aviation & other climate chaos, Palestine, arms trade, anti-fascism, No Borders, roads & other protest camps, to travellers & resistance against genetics.

There was the same good mix we've seen for the last 3 or 4 years of old hands and younger enthusiasm, with people getting involved in new EF! groups, campaigns and next year's gathering collective and a relaunch of the EF! Action Update. Hoorah! The atmosphere was enjoyable, productive and supportive. See you all next year for more fun and plotting.

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