

August

1989

**Green Party**  
**South-West Area**  
**Newsletter**

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## **Welcome to the Green heartland !**

In four out of the seven South-West European constituencies, the Green Party candidate came second.

Our average vote in the area was 21 % .

Overall, in the six constituencies other than Bristol, Greens are the second party, 1.3 % clear of Labour.

That means that over a vast tract of England we are now the main opposition to the Tories, not just in ideas, as always, but in terms of votes as well.

Membership has more than doubled already this year - if you are reading this, the chances are that you are a new member.

So welcome to our heartland.

There's lots to do now to build on our success. So please get stuck in and help your local party (even a tiny bit).

And if you were a part of the Green breakthrough in 1989, as a candidate, agent, press officer, leafletter, stunt organiser, jumble collector or just phoned in to support us - thanks and again, from all of us.

## Euro - election fallout

How was it ..... ? A quick pedal round the SW constituencies:

### Wiltshire

**Bill Hughes** with 22.3% was desperately unlucky not to get 2nd place, and was beaten by Labour by 152 votes out of 47 000 !

Election agent **Sue Birley** writes :

We began with the firm conviction that we would not save the deposit and with no hope of leafletting. On June 18th I was trying not to lose a cheque for £ 1000, and we knew that the whole of the constituency had received a Green message on a beautifully produced piece of recycled card (except for the ones that we knew had not received it !).

Features of the campaign that were special to Wiltshire ? I know that we had some marvellous candidates all over but I think that Bill's exponential improvement was staggering. It was thrown into relief by seven all-party public meetings (if it's Monday, it might be Salisbury). There was nothing but pleasantness and helpfulness from the Returning Officer and his staff. Bill became a full-time candidate during the last two weeks and was thrilled with the eager response he received as he travelled round the constituency. We lost 2nd place by 152 votes. I'm sure we could have found those with more effort, and with the experience we have now.

The tragedy of it is common to us all - if you were not in first place, it did not matter one vegetarian sausage, except for this : Wiltshire is now rarin' to go. Find us an election quick !

### Somerset and Dorset West

**Richard Lawson** came second with the highest national Green vote of 54 496. 23.0 %. Press officer **Jamie McMillan** writes :

A dark wet December night, and panic was setting in. We'd been listed as the Green Party's number one seeds, with a target percentage of 6.9. We'd got a strong candidate, but virtually no organisation on the ground, and only one local party for the whole of Somerset - and they were trying to fight the entire nuclear power industry at the Hinkley inquiry at the same time.

But as the days lengthened, confidence grew. Ace Campaign Manager Bob Wilson and his team of microchips were churning out draft leaflets and newsletters, and was predicting "we will be giving Labour a very good run for fourth place". We were getting a string of media hits on farming, and especially on Richard's pet topic, Marine Pollution (stunts with chain loo on beach, and an inflatable chasing a sludge ship...). The other candidates were nowhere.

Then in April it exploded. After a rather sedate media hit involving the illegal sale of a traditional Martock bean in its home village the phone rang with a nice sounding BBC researcher called Tamsin on the other end. They wanted to do a bit on the Green Party. Thirty seconds at the end of local news after the skateboarding dog slot? No - thirty minutes including an in-depth interview with Richard ! It went out at the end of April and from then on in we were laughing.

Suddenly we looked like the main opposition to the Tories. Labour ran a fair campaign with a very sharp candidate, but the SLD panicked. Their main leaflet attacked Richard and the Greens in the front page and claimed that SLD were "set to win". Their early morning leaflet put SLD at 41 % and Greens at 7%. Nice Mr Ashdown was bad-mouthing us on TV. Little wonder they collapsed, both here and nationally.

Talking of collapse, Richard was rushed to hospital with appendicitis on the day before polling day and got more media coverage. Is there nothing the man won't do for publicity ? He hounced back for the count, and despite the unpleasant Tory lady poking him in the side survived to drink the organic Champagne at the end (filmed by TV of course). OK, we didn't get the highest percentage, but with the highest national Green vote, we didn't do bad.

**Gilly and Richard Lee**, campaign treasurers tell me we are still in debt - but are already starting to raise funds for 1993 ! Please send donations to Gilly and Richard at Crowlink, Charlynch Lane, Spaxton, Bridgwater Som TA15 1BJ

## **Dorset East and Hampshire West**

Perhaps the most astonishing result nationally was **Krystyna Bradbury's**. With only one local party, and about three people in the campaign team she came from nowhere to get second place with 22.5%, the fifth highest national percentage. This made Dorset the only county to have two Green Euro-candidates placed second!

## **Devon**

The only candidate in our area who had been here before, in 1984, was **Peter Christie**, who got 3.5% for the Ecology Party and came fourth (but beat Wessex Reg.). This time he managed to beat the Wessex again, not to mention the other fringe candidates - Loony, SDP and SLD, and overtook Labour to get second with 22.4%. He told the newsletter:

"Yes, a marvellous result, and now we've got to build on it. The campaign started early - we had our leaflet written and funds mostly raised by February! I did lots of public meetings, and had superb press back-up - Roger Giles was incredible as Press Officer! We started getting stories in February, and had covered all the issues by May. When all the other candidates started to comment the press came back to us for a reply, because we'd got in first. We'd covered all the bases.

Of course five years campaigning builds a good core following, and I'd got a high profile as a local councillor. People still remember me from the last time I stood! Now we're going to have a whole series of policy meetings to get new members informed on policy, and start to counter the "greening" of the other parties. I've just done an interview for Radio Devon replying to the local Labour Party's call for a Severn Barrage! TSW are filming me on what I think our Tory MEP should now do - with such a high percentage and no representation they reckon I have a moral right to get our policies through!

Please could I send thanks to all our helpers in Devon, and to everyone who sent money - thanks!"

## **Cotswolds**

Best percentage of all in the South West, and beaten only by West Sussex was **Sue Limb** with 23.4%, second to Lord Plumb. She said:

"We learnt an enormous amount. We thought there was no point in canvassing with 300 000 doors to knock on, so thought up a programme of exciting, symbolic, eye-catching stunts. I would visit an alternative technology pioneer, I'd go and see one of our last good meadows full of orchids and be scathing about the fact that there were only 3% of them left in Gloucestershire. I'd go and work on an organic farm. The idea was that the press would be terribly interested and follow us around while I made symbolic comments on all this.

In the end the local press were totally and utterly apathetic. All they'd say was "Can you let us have 200 words about yourself by Thursday morning". After a week of this we realised it was extremely unproductive - and also very lonely for me. I'd go and talk to a water turbine engineer, go home and write my press release and hadn't actually seen anybody all day.

The turning point came when I visited a small hospital in Tisbury that was threatened with closure. I met a woman who had broken her hip, who looked at my rosette and said: "My dear, you've won a prize." "Well no, I'm the Green Party candidate in the European Elections." "Oh, how awfully nice of you to come and see me!" I thought, my goodness, here's someone who was actually chuffed to see me - maybe we should descend on the population at random.

So for the last two weeks we threw overboard all our cherished ideas and went out and canvassed. We'd descend on a village one evening, knocking on doors, handing things out on the streets. We could get round the whole village in one evening and everyone knows you've been. This was actually quite productive - North Nibley seemed to go Green overnight!

So we got the campaign totally wrong. We should have done all the exciting stunts over the previous few months, instead of five a week at the end - the local papers just can't handle it. And we might have got more if it wasn't for Lord "he's such a nice man" Plumb.

Did Dulcie Domum vote for her, did Sue happen to know? "Well I'm not quite sure which constituency Rusbridge is in, but she definitely voted Green. Yes and the plumber, of course." Maybe next time the Spouse vote too.

## **Cornwall and Plymouth**

It comes to something when 10.8% is a disappointing result, but Cornwall is a

peculiar place. An admittedly good SLD candidate came second here in their only remaining stronghold, leaving **Howard Hoptrough** in a disappointing fourth place. Perhaps we have learnt lessons about starting the campaign earlier - local parties didn't select a prospective candidate until the spring, and then that candidate had to withdraw. Howard valiantly stepped into the breach, but with an awful lot of ground to make up.

### **Bristol**

**Derek Wall** performed the amazing feat of being both a candidate and a national speaker. This meant that as well as working in his own constituency he was zooming round the country doing meetings, being photographed by the media peering out from behind trees etc. Squeezed by the fight between Labour (who won) and a fairly typical Tory (who was reported afterwards as going berserk on an aircraft, invading the cockpit and shouting "I'm an MEP") he did well to get nearly 40 000, 17.7%.

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## **Paste -up** - various items from under the in-tray

### **Bananas and Splits**

Once again at conference there are moves to split the area into more manageable chunks. One good reason for doing this is to save Sue Birley, SW membership secretary and treasurer, from spontaneous combustion trying to get on top of 1400 or so members (should I rephrase that..?).

The splitting off of Severnside (Glos, Avon, Somerset) would leave behind a giant banana-shaped region from Swindon to Penzance. So the consensus within the rest of the area seems to be to split off Devon and Cornwall and send Wiltshire and Dorset packing into a new Wessex region with Hants and the Isle of Wight.

Brig Oubridge has put a motion to Conference to do just this, but it's virtually pure chance whether this is discussed, never mind passed. Duncan McCanlis has also put a Severnside motion as a "fall-back" - so by the law of averages we should be split by the next area meeting.

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### **County Co-ordinators**

At present these do two things: channel urgent communication from local parties to the centre and vice versa as part of a phone tree. And help local parties within a county work together to cover the whole county and help set up new local parties in gaps. They have an annual expenses budget of £ 100 to cover phone and postage.

At present it is entirely up to local parties within a county how they choose their co-ordinator. If there isn't a co-ordinator in your county, please could LPs sort one out and let the area co-ordinator know.

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### **Starting a local party**

is a doddle, and goes like this: member in Little Pidlington doesn't want to travel 20 miles across the moor to get to meetings. Puts message in local paper/shops asking if anyone is interested in a Little Pidlington Green Party. Gets names of existing local members from nearest local party and tells them of **meeting**. Orders **Local Party Start-up pack** from Balham which includes draft constitution.

At extremely friendly, welcoming meeting member gently twists arms to take on jobs: the most important are Treasurer and (Membership) Secretary. The former goes and opens a bank account. The latter makes people-lists and tells Area Membership Secretary, Area Co-ordinator and Green Party Office that Little Pidlington Green Party is in existence. They then sort out with county co-ordinator which area they cover - try to stick to **postcode** areas for the moment please (even if you can't stand that bloke from Much Pidlington). The treasurer can then expect a cheque for **£ 25 as start-up grant** from the area, and (a bit later) the **capitations** from all those members in your area who joined centrally after you started.

Lastly, make sure you are accessible - put contact numbers in libraries, the phone book, wholefood shops and so on.

## South West Area Education Workshop

On Saturday 18th March a SW Area Education workshop was held at the Friends Meeting House, Bridgwater. The feeling of this meeting was that the Green Party should be looking at very radical changes to present Educational practice, and that there were a lot of ideas to explore

It was decided to set up a SW Area education working group which would aim to work out a positive core of educational aims and to link this to present party policy on Education, Economics and Work. The group would also attempt to survey educational experiments being carried out in the SW area. It would meet at least twice a year.

**Please contact us if you are interested :**

**Viv Rosser, 17 Garratt Close, Exmouth, Devon EX8 5PJ Tel 0395 267885**  
**Gilly Lee, Crowlink, Charlynch Lane, Spaxton, Bridgwater, Somerset,**  
**TA5 1BJ Tel 027 867 276.**

First meeting : Saturday September 9th 10.30 - 4.00. Green Scene, 123 Fore St. Exeter.

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The DECENTRALISATION WORKING GROUP has asked for a mention in our area newsletter. It produces its own newsletter which is available from Steve Dawe, 12 Clyde St., Canterbury, Kent CT1 1NA. Subs are £2 per year, cheques payable to S. Dawe. The next meeting will be in London, please telephone Steve 0227-456226 if you would like to go. Saturday 2nd September

### "Green/Ecology Groups"

Wonderful though these may be, they are not local parties and are not recognised by the Green Party as such. In fact, a Green Group tends to act as a substitute for a local party and is in many ways an obstacle to the formation of a local Green Party. And it is a gift-wrapped way for local Labour/SLD or even Tory supporters to sabotage local Green electoral efforts - but don't get paranoid unless they're after you....

If you are a Green Party member belonging to one of these and there is no local party in your area, please get your "Green Group" to convert to a local party, or if it's already a good cross-party forum, form a local Green Party alongside the group.

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### Area Meeting

Next area meeting will be on **Saturday October 14th, 11am - 5pm at Shepherds Hall, Old Market, Bristol** (Near Evening Post Building).

We will need to elect area personnel for the new split areas, at least until they have their own meetings. Nominations (with proposer and seconder) are invited for both Severnside and South West (Devon & Cornwall) Area Representatives, Co-ordinators, Membership Secretary and Treasurers, and Newsletter Editors. These and items for the agenda to Area Co-ordinator. We hope to circulate the agenda in the next newsletter.

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### Next issue

will be guest-edited by Ted Chapman, 9 Trevethan Rise, Falmouth, Cornwall. Tel 0326 312938.

Please send copy and local newsletters direct to him by **September 15th**.

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### Gloucestershire contacts

**Stroud** : Sue Atkinson, 8 Castle St., Stroud, GL5 2HP Tel 751189

**Forest of Dean** : Richard Mason, Sunnyside, Barley Hill, Yorkley, Lydney, GL15 4RT  
Tel Dean 562263

**Gloucester** : John Hillier, 50 Simon Road, Longlevens, Gloucester. Tel 414505

**Tetbury** : Valerie Michael, 37 Silver St., Tetbury GL8 8DL Tel 502179

## Area contacts

**Area representative on Party Council** : Duncan McCanlis, Flat 1, 15 Station Road, Lower Weston, Bath. Tel. 0225 28650

**Area co-ordinator and newsletter editor** : Jamie McMillan, 9 Little Britain, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1NN. Tel 0305 67994

**Area membership secretary and treasurer** : Sue Birley, Marsh Cottage, Lower Wanborough, Wilts. SN4 0AR Tel 0793 790438

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### Avon

**Co-ordinator** : Geoff Collard, 2 Cotham Vale Bristol BS6 6HR Tel.0272 738072

**Woodspring** : Bob Wilson, 7 Heathfield Road, Nailsea, BS19 1EB Tel. 0272 852740

**Bristol South** : Martin Turnbull, 4 Cleeve Road, Knowle. BS4 2JP Tel 0272 720302

**Bristol North** : Geoff Collard

**Bath** : Ed David, 51 Lansdowne Lane, Weston, Bath BA1 4TL 0225-23294

**Wansdyke** : Mike Boulton, Waterside House, Haydon, Radstock Tel Radstock 36681

### Cornwall

**Co-ordinator** : vacant

**West Cornwall** : Ted & Anita Rose, 12 Lafrowda Terrace, St Just-in-Penwith. Tel 0736 788841

**Truro** : Robbie Robinson, Seal Cottage, Porthloe, nr Truro. Tel 501417

**Lostwithiel** : Jude Martelli, The Dower House, 22 Fore St, Lostwithiel. T 0208 872035

**Falmouth-Cambron** : Beth Mottart 2 Bridge Moor, Porthtreat, Redruth Tel 0209 842889

### Devon

**Co-ordinator** : Alan Tootill, Little Snodwell, Cotleigh, Honiton, Devon EX14 9LF Tel 0404 83 302

**Exeter** : Steve Potter, 11 Mansfield Road, Mount Pleasant, Exeter Tel 0392 79666.

**North Devon** : Peter Christie, 30 Lime Grove, Bideford. Tel 023 72 73577

**North Dartmoor** : Elizabeth Aylmer, Wiggery House, 20 Market St, Hatherleigh, Devon Ex20 3JP Tel 0837 810624 (long ring)

**South Hams** : Chris Titmuss, 7 Denys Road, Tolnes Tel 865436

**Plymouth** : Peter Boon, 29 College Ave., Mutley, Plymouth PL4 7AL Tel 0752 269540

**East Devon** : Pat Stoolman, 8 St Michaels Hill, Clyst Honiton, Exeter. Tel 0392 66783

**Torbay** : Glenda Lowcock, 87 Chestnut Drive, Brixham. TQ5 0EQ Tel 08045 58853

**Tavistock** : Tracey Paddon, 3 Ralph Court, Ford St., Tavistock Tel 617033

**Tiverton** : Sharon Mulvihull, Lower Oakford, Oakford, Tiverton EX16 9EW Tel:03985 436

### Dorset

**Co-ordinator** : Beth McCaffrey, 1 Derwent Road, Weymouth Tel 0305 783676

**Dorchester/Weymouth** : Rob Cumming, 7 Monmouth Road, Dorchester. Tel D. 64092

**East Dorset** : Valerie Woodward, 19 St. Catherine's, Wimborne. Tel 0202 841420

**North Dorset** : Garry Smith, 12 Kings Rd Blandford, Dorset. Tel 0258 53217

**Bridport** : Audrey Urry, Brunel House, Wych Hill, Bridport DT6 4UJ Tel Brid. 24279

### Wiltshire

**Co-ordinator** : Sue Birley

**Swindon** : Bill Hughes, 18 Goddard Ave, Swindon. Tel 22989

**Salisbury** : Barbara Hickman, 12 King's Road, Salisbury Tel 333931

**Devizes** : Erica Harris, 6 Eastleigh Road, Devizes. Tel 78145

**North Wilts** : Ned Barham, 11 the Common, Langley Purrell, Chippenham Tel Chip 653987

**West Wilts** : Alan Shephard, 14 Beckford Close, Warminster Tel 215679

### Somerset

**Co-ordinator** : vacant

**Sedgemoor** : Alison Goldie, Mulberry, North Newton, Bridgwater TA7 0BL Tel 0278 663834

**Taunton Deane** : Claire Bainbridge, Flat 10 Walford House, Walford Cross, Taunton TA1 5AZ Tel 0823 256595

**West Somerset** : Paul Welbourne & Caroline Hawkes, 11 Castle St., Stogursey, Bridgwater Tel 0278 733102

**Mendip** : Jennifer Snelling, 32 Green Lane Ave., Street BA16 0QT. tel 0458 45776

**South Somerset** : Nick & Laney Nile, 116 Hendford Hill, Yeovil, BA20 2RF Tel 0935 26594

**Bruton** : Teresa Swainson, 37 High St., Bruton. BA 10 0AH Tel Bru.813230

### Gloucestershire

Please see page 5 (Sorry, Glos, you are welcome in the area, honest!)