



# Campaigns

## There's more to politics than elections

By the 1980s green-ness was breaking out everywhere. As well as the political party (still called Ecology) and the long-standing a-political organisations, a whole raft of new voices were being heard.

Feminism was resurgent, Animal Rights had become a matter of concern, the increase in cold war tensions had given the peace movement a boost and green groups were to the forefront in the battle against Cruise.

As Thatcher fought an Imperial war overseas and then took on the trade unions at home, the Labour Party found itself riven by splits. In 1981 the breakaway SDP formed and fairly quickly started an SDP-Greens wing. The Socialist Ecology Research Association (SERA) was simultaneously giving voice to green politics within the Labour movement.

The Ecology Party itself always had internal tension between those who wanted to create a movement, and those who focussed on being a party.

In Oxford the separate Oxford Ecology Movement had refused to join with the Ecology Party for the 1979 election – insisting that a ne political party was not what was needed. The EP agreed not to contest the seat to allow OEM a free run.

This was well illustrated by the founding of the Green Gatherings. The influx of new members after the 1979 elections included many from the 'alternative lifestyle' scene wanting to actually engage with politics, but not in a conventional way.

A proposal was put to the spring 1980 conference that rather than another conference the next event should be an open air gathering, rather like a festival but with a green movement rather than music core

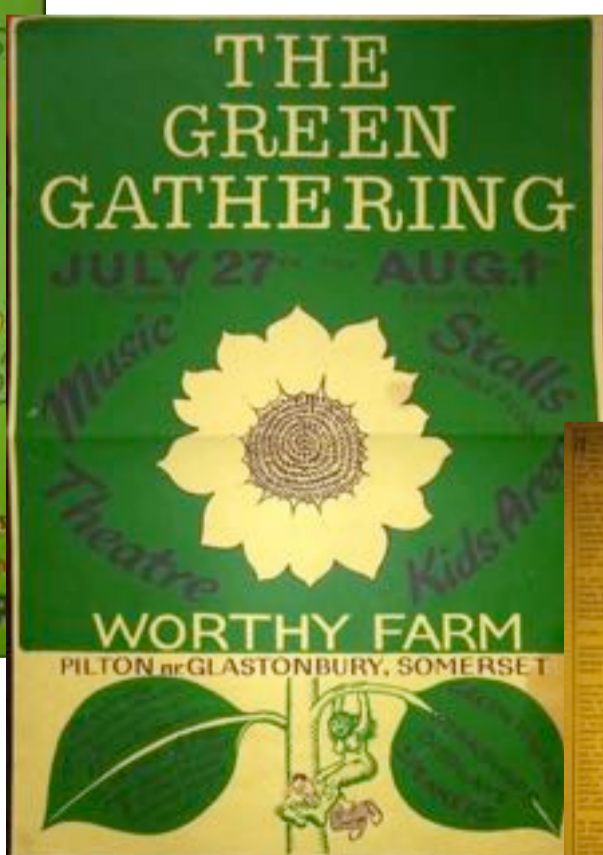
# Gatherings

The move to replace a conference with a gathering was rejected by conference, but the instigators decided to go ahead and do it anyway. Thus, the first Ecology Party Gathering was held in summer 1980 at Worthy Farm near Glastonbury.



The gathering was deemed a success with over 500 attending, so it was decided to repeat it the following year but make it open to all, not just party members.

For 1982 it was done again, the organising group now forming itself as 'The Green Collective' and breaking away from Ecology Party organisation.



The 1982 event was rebranded as 'The Green Gathering'





