

Greenprint

News from the Scottish Green Party • February 2011

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Cuts: There *is* An Alternative



Hands up who voted for savage cuts to our public services? How about the most serious attack on the welfare state since it was created? The Tories and LibDems cannot

claim a mandate for their social and economic vandalism, as they didn't come clean about their plans before last year's election. The Scottish Greens are determined that the Holyrood election won't be another sham, and we'll oppose any attempt to simply hand on the cuts to Scottish public services.

The Liberal/Tory coalition is pushing an agenda that nobody voted for. Their actions are putting the economy at further risk and could do even more damage to jobs and livelihoods than the recession did. The SNP Government seems willing to do the coalition's dirty work in Scotland, and their spending plans will slash the housing budget while leaving the roadbuilding programme unscathed. John Swinney talks about the economy and public services but he is following pure Osbornomics – cut and hope.

The Green alternative would shift those priorities, but we also need to assert the political will to defend Scotland against the LibDem/Tory agenda. With the Scottish Parliament's limited powers, it will be a challenge for Scotland to stand up to the coalition. They'd love to see us slash public services just as they are planning for England. But if we're creative with existing devolved powers, we believe that Scotland can

achieve a more progressive approach which protects the most vulnerable and helps move toward a more equal society.

It's essential to take this opportunity to make the tax system genuinely fair. Right now, the richest people and companies are allowed to avoid paying their share, while some of the poorest people in society pay and pay again. There's huge concern in Scotland about the gap between rich and poor, but income tax isn't the only option available which could close that gap and raise revenue to protect public services. There's a huge opportunity to empower Councils and local communities to raise their own revenue locally and fairly.

This agenda's needed at UK level too. We're also pushing for a 'Robin Hood Tax' on casino banking. Greens are sick of other parties making speeches about the recklessness of the banks but then doing nothing to change it!

The evidence from around the world has never been clearer – equality is better for everyone. It makes society healthier, happier, safer and greener. And the values which have created inequality were values of selfishness and greed – those are things we can no longer afford to ignore. So the Greens are opposing the Liberal/Tory cuts. We're helping to shape an alternative Scottish budget which would protect public services. But we're also speaking up for the values of a better society. Let's use this campaign to shape a smart, progressive Green agenda for Scotland.

Patrick Harvie

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Greens are standing in all Scottish Regions, and are bringing the message home:

The only realistic future is a Green future.



scottish
green party

Dave Owen was among the bumper crop of new members at our November conference. This is his report on a weekend of Making It Happen:

I'm standing at the front of a large lecture hall, SGP members, including current and former MSPs, tiered above me, holding aloft coloured voting cards. In my hand is a radio microphone, which I've been passing to them as they speak with passion and articulacy, about policy and constitution motions. We are now voting to decide in advance how far the party is prepared to go with power sharing following the May 2011 Scottish parliamentary elections. It's a heartfelt issue, especially following the impact of such a deal on the Liberal Democrats at Westminster, and I've been swayed by speakers on both sides. Many previous votes have been overwhelming, but this is close – a two-thirds majority is needed, and I'm called on to count the cards with my fellow volunteers. We hurriedly do so and report to the chairman's table. It's so close, a recount is called for. Impassioned delegates stare through me as I struggle to deliver the number. It's a surreal moment. I am part of the recording of a decision that could make or break the party's credibility

I am part of the recording of a decision that could make or break the party's credibility and influence, and yet this conference is my first.

and influence, and yet this conference is my first gathering of Scottish Greens having only joined the party earlier in the year.

To a new member, having just taken the step from voting Green to joining the party, a two-day conference, even when on one's doorstep at Napier University is a daunting prospect. Just as well, then, that the first timetabled event on Saturday should be an introductory session for newcomers. There were several dozen of us and Chris Ballance's informal pastoral address made no assumptions, gently easing us into the business of conference and the process of the party.

Subsequent sessions, both in the main hall, and at lunchtime fringe meetings were less gentle, certainly in terms of information, washing over me like tidal waves. This university venue was entirely apt for a weekend of focused learning; about the party, about the landscape of Scottish national and local government, and about the issues which confront us and which we choose to prioritise in contrast with other parties.

Learning, as well, what Scottish Greens are like. Although we are formally convened rather than led, I was inspired by the way in which members who hold or have held political office addressed issues off the cuff. They typify an intelligent, thoughtful group of people. And a friendly one.

I came away engaged and energised. My earlier nebulous urge to more actively support the green cause had been sharpened and focused, and never more so than in the electric atmosphere of the main hall during motions. Consider me baptised. ■



Cancun: Success or Failure?

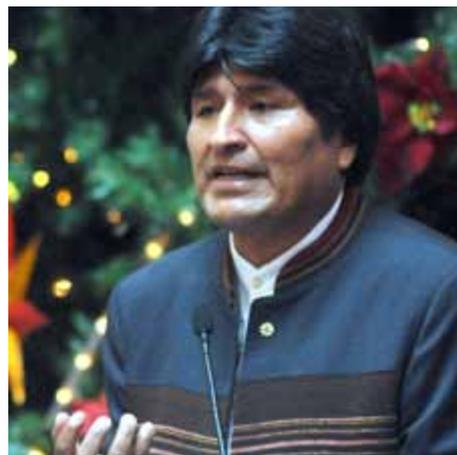
David Jardine examines press coverage to find the chronicle of a death foretold.

"If Cancun wasn't a car crash, why do I feel like road kill?" asks *World Development Movement* press officer Kate Blagojevic – who attended the climate summit – in her article published in *Bright Green*, a blog edited by Scottish Green Party members.

The Guardian newspaper headlined the Mexico summit as "Yet another opportunity lost" and said in its editorial of 13 December: "Nations agreed once again that world average temperatures should be allowed to rise by no more than 2°C but once again declined to commit collectively to real and binding targets for emission cuts ... They agreed on a green climate fund to share new technology, help conserve forests and ease stresses on the poorest countries ... but not on how exactly to deliver the money".

193 of the 194 nations present signed the two Cancun agreements.

"The Bolivian government ... did not sign the final document because the indigenous government of Evo Morales is fundamentally attempting to save the planet, not to save capitalism," Cuban Joaquin Rivery Tur explained in his piece *'Message of Cancun: We need to continue fighting'*, published in *www.granma.cu*. "NGOs *Friends of the Earth* and *Global Justice Ecology Project* were unequivocal in their rejection of the agreement," he maintained.



Marcello Casati Jr./Afr

Editorial

Welcome to the first 2011 issue of Greenprint. Over the next three months we'll all be working hard to get more Green MSPs into Holyrood. This issue of Greenprint focuses on five candidates and the issues on which they'll be campaigning. We also have Green insight on public spending cuts, China and Cancun. It's a big read, not many pictures, but packed full of the details and real life examples we'll draw on as we talk with voters across the country. Happy New Year.

Varihi Scott

12.5% of First Preferences in Moray

Moray Greens' first candidate to stand in a local authority election achieved 12.5% of the first preferences at the count on 11th November. In a crowded field of nine candidates we received more than double the Labour vote and with another 33 votes would have beaten the Tories to be fourth. This is a promising position from which to fight the Moray Council elections in May 2012, when we hope the Forres ward voters will help us to elect the first Green Councillor in Moray.



Top of the list candidate for the Holyrood election Eleanor Scott commented: "The result is testament to the hard work put in by Moray and Highlands & Islands members and is a great boost to our morale as we prepare for the Scottish Parliament elections in May. If we were to get this share of the vote in the Scottish elections, we would get 2 MSPs from Highlands & Islands, and another 14 or so from the rest of Scotland – wouldn't that be something!"

Fabio Villani

Central Campaign

We are gearing up for the Central campaign with an excellent team and some talented new volunteers. We've planned some great activities including a carbon cycle tour of Grangemouth industries in March and a campaign ride in April along the Forth-Clyde canal stopping at local towns on the way.

We'll also be encouraging members from across the region to help spread our message on social housing, home insulation and alternatives to unsustainable incineration and large-scale biomass.

Anyone living in Central region who'd like to help with the campaign (donations, leafleting, press work, stalls or placarding) please contact kirsten.robb@scottishgreens.org.uk.

Kirsten Robb

Highlands & Islands

We're delighted that the long-running campaign by Easter Ross residents opposed to the building of an incinerator plant at Invergordon scored another victory in December when Scottish ministers agreed to review approval of the development.

We continue to oppose development of the A96 corridor, especially proposals to build new towns rather than regenerate and expand existing communities. A96 corridor development will increase traffic congestion when we should be investing in public transport infrastructure.

In November, Argyll and Bute sub-branch held a very successful Green Fair in Dunoon. *Children in Need* received a donation from the Fair.

Myra Carus

Amigos da Terra Brasil



In *The New York Times*, Elizabeth May of Canada's Green Party is reported to have described the Kyoto Protocol as "the only legally binding instrument available for ensuring that nations reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the climate can't afford for it to fall victim to economic concerns."

Oxfam's Tim Gore told *The Guardian*: "The UN climate talks are off the life-support machine. The agreement falls short of the emissions cuts that are needed, but it lays out a path to move towards them."

Initial reaction from Greenpeace International climate policy director Wendel Trio, as reported in *The New York Times*, was: "This saves the Kyoto Protocol."

Conservative minister of state for energy and climate change, Greg Barker, writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, welcomed the agreement enthusiastically as: "... music to the ears of those businesses preparing to invest billions in the new global green economy".

Independent columnist Dominic Lawson was less enthusiastic: "In short, every decision which would actually involve invigilated action by identifiable countries has been kicked down the road to Durban, the venue for the final UN climate summit to renew the Kyoto Protocol before it lapses in 2012. Strikingly, it was the country which hosted that agreement, Japan ... which declared at the outset of the Cancun summit that it now had no intention of agreeing any further cuts in emissions, unless China and America agreed to be bound by the 1997 Kyoto targets – which neither of the two biggest emitters have shown any inclination to do in the intervening period."

Lawson then goes on to worry about lost economic growth if the Kyoto Accord were fully implemented and to bleat about wind farms – disappointing after such a promising start.

Cancun – success or failure? I'd say failure.

"There is not a single effective instrument for containing man-made global warming anywhere on earth," Green guru George Monbiot wrote in a *Guardian* online post on 20 September, well before Cancun. "The response to climate change," he wrote, "is the greatest political failure the world has ever seen." ■



Alison Johnstone, Lothians:

A fairer society within a finite planet is the only alternative.

I've witnessed a remarkable change since I joined the Greens in 1999.

I've changed, first of all. Not the usual stuff like having a family, moving house and changing jobs, although I've been doing that too. But also starting from where I was – a former competitive athlete, watching appalled, as the green spaces in which I had trained and run shrank around me, to where I am today – a Green councillor and now candidate for the Scottish Parliament where, in some ways, the Green space is expanding before us.

Because I genuinely believe this is our time as never before. We may all have started from different places: with me it was the privatisation of community space. With you it may be the assault on higher education, the corruption of our food system, the failure of imagination on energy or transport policy or the tolerance of deep poverty alongside preposterous affluence.

What we all realise is that the Greens accept those challenges and try to make sense of coming to a fairer society within a finite planet. This is why we are unique. And this is why I see Green space before us.

But the party has changed too. It is much bigger than when I joined. That brings challenges but good challenges. We can do things that we could only contemplate before. In Edinburgh, we've just finished our single biggest ward newsletter run: 86,000 delivered in target areas.

Green policies offer the right fit for our times. Our challenge is to demonstrate that these policies can reconfigure our flawed economy, provide worthwhile employment and, at the same time move towards

the safe and sustainable low carbon future that is the only alternative to the economic model responsible for the global recession.

All the other parties peddle the myth that a crisis born of casino capitalist excess can be remedied by slashing public investment and introducing yet more market reform. Don't be fooled: it is snake oil with a seductive label.

So it's our job, as the only alternative, to make sure the electorate hears that there's another view on the direction our society and our economy, can take. That a return to the 'golden days' of 2007 is simply to herald the next cycle of boom and bust, each peak more bloated, each trough deeper than the last.

In Holyrood, the Scottish Government is simply passing on cuts to local government, with no thought given to an alternative progressive and imaginative revenue raising approach. In my work as an Edinburgh Councillor I see all other parties, including our Lib Dem/SNP Administration using their energies debating how best we can pass on these cuts, rather than railing against them and posing ways of raising revenue. What a lack of ambition!

We Greens have never been short of ambition. It is perfectly within our grasp to return Green MSPs in

all eight regions in Scotland and in places like Glasgow and Edinburgh to go beyond that.

To do that we need the right policies and the right story. We have both of these things. But most importantly we need you, reading this piece now, to turn opportunity into action, to fill that Green space looming before us.

We need action in three areas: *We need our community activists doing what we do well:* delivering Green material on the doorstep, canvassing, putting up lamppost placards (where we are allowed to do so). If any of that sounds scary, don't worry! Our branches will offer all the help you need.

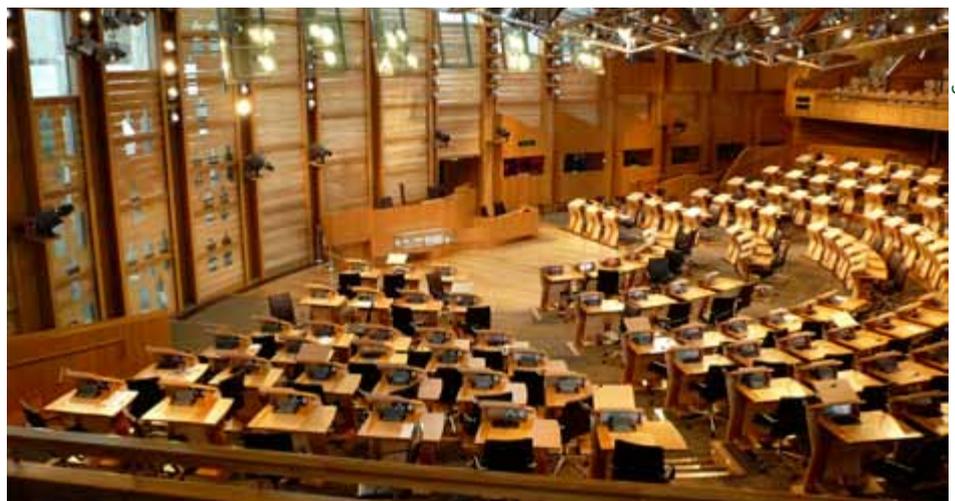
We need those with special skills to offer those skills: anything from high tech IT skills to sticking stamps on mailings. All offers are welcome.

And we need funding. The business-as-usual parties will coax corporate sugar-daddies to boost their campaign coffers. But we still need to pay for printers, postage, venues and a host of other things. The better our budget the more we can use it to unleash the energy of our campaigners.

Elections are ten-a-penny now. But every so often one comes around where the Green space shines through. That's this one.

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this is our time as never before



TFDuesing



Martin Ford, North East Scotland:

Vote for Change in the North East

It is nearly always true that the best predictor of the result of the next election is the result last time.

But here in the North-East, there are good reasons to expect a shift this May.

Firstly, the Green Party is more visible and has more members than it did a couple of years ago. We are more likely to be an option considered by voters. Moreover, we have taken distinctive and increasingly popular positions on some key issues. And as well as the positive reasons for giving us support, there are the other four parties. The SNP has failed to deliver

in government. Labour lost in 2010 after mismanaging the economy. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have adopted the wrong approach to deficit reduction. And whilst taking the axe to public services probably won't upset most Tory voters, it will certainly leave many Liberal Democrat supporters looking for an alternative.

Locally too, there is dissatisfaction with the incumbents. In Aberdeen, in particular, after lurching from crisis to crisis, the Liberal Democrat/SNP-run City Council has lost the confidence of many. In Aberdeenshire, councillors' preparedness to accommodate

the demands of Donald Trump has undermined trust.

To my knowledge, none of the current North-East list MSPs has spoken out on behalf of ... their constituents at Menie.

Nothing illustrates why new representatives are needed better than the on-going saga of whether compulsory purchase will be used to remove Mr Trump's neighbours, so he can further expand his already vast planned golf development at Menie. To my

knowledge, none of the current North-East list MSPs has spoken out on behalf of the human rights of their constituents at Menie. It is surely time to elect one who definitely will.

Martha Wardrop, Glasgow:

Supporting Communities' Transition to Lower-Energy Lifestyles

Through my background as a councillor, peace campaigner, and employee within the voluntary sector for two decades, I can make a significant contribution to ensure the Scottish Parliament works to meet the challenges and opportunities that Glasgow faces.

I have supported communities as part of the Transition Movement. The development of Transition Town Initiatives are taking root as we seek to rethink the way we live and are making conscious choices about what kind of community and world we would like to live in. There are examples of initiatives in my council ward, including where I have contributed to transforming a derelict gap site into a community garden and an energy efficiency programme involving residents, businesses, community organisations and schools. Glasgow's future has the potential to be more rewarding if we work together to support our city's sustainable economy. Transition Town Initiatives can raise awareness within our local business community

about how peak oil, carbon emissions and climate change will likely affect them and their profit margin. I will campaign to ensure that new business opportunities resulting from our transition to lower energy lifestyles, products and services are adequately assisted.

Over the last ten years, I have worked closely with allotment groups and social enterprises involved in food growing to encourage individual and community action to grow their own food. In the last two years, residents have been brought together with my assistance to develop a Garden Share scheme to encourage more people to get access to growing spaces. Glasgow City Council completed its allotments strategy after effective dialogue with council officials and seeing evidence of a real demand.

I'm a long-time supporter of the Peace Movement and campaigns to stop Trident. Recently, I have worked on stopping violence against women through assisting with the management of refuges for women

and children in the city. Much more needs to be done to ensure that violence in the home and in the wider world is prevented. I will seek to promote peace and justice in my work to represent Glasgow residents in the Scottish Parliament.

My committee work includes making decisions about the licensing of rented flats, street traders, taxis, pubs and clubs, which has given me invaluable insight into how Scottish Parliament legislation affects small businesses and private sector developers of accommodation, retail and leisure services.

I have strong links with arts and cultural sectors in the city, and through my council activities, film-making, visual arts and dance programmes have been supported. I will help to promote the arts and its valuable impact to individuals and groups in my role as an MSP.





Steen Parish, West of Scotland:

The West Campaign Has Started

Over the past few months I have worked hard to draw up plans for the 2011 Holyrood campaign. I have canvassed our members for their support, which is needed to return an MSP for both Glasgow and West.

In fact we started by leafleting Brodick one weekend in September and a dedicated local member is covering the rest of Arran over the winter. It redefined rural leafleting for me when my third property at the end of a long drive turned out to be a large chicken shed. If you're wondering, yes, I did leave a leaflet with them.

Several appeals have gone out to the West membership for donations and volunteers. A few have stepped forward and we are making the most of their time by making sure local leaflets are produced so we reach as many voters as possible in a region almost untouched by the Greens.

We are currently fund raising in order to print and deliver mainly by Royal Mail as many broadsheet style pre-election campaign newspapers as possible in the region. As always this is proving tough and the final numbers will depend on how many advertisers we can entice.

voting for the Scottish Green Party in the Holyrood election is the only way to introduce some genuinely smart ideas and solutions

Our main campaign issues are:

- An alternative to the public sector cuts.
- A properly integrated regional public transport network.
- Fair trade for our own farmers and other small enterprises.
- Control of supermarket developments to support a localised economy.
- Community controlled renewable energy revolution.
- Rejuvenating engineering and manufacturing jobs.

The Hunterston coal fired power station proposal is a regressive and outdated idea, which virtually every local resident and business in the area is opposed to. We believe that local people know perfectly well why we must embrace alternatives, reduce energy usage and look to new smart technologies, if we are to achieve even the Scottish government's own Climate Act targets. We have been a close supporter of CONCH (Communities Opposed to New Coal at Hunterston) and will be mentioning this and Patrick's contributions in every campaign leaflet.

One particular idea we are promoting is a bottle return system, based on those successfully operating in other countries. Such a scheme will reduce waste, energy usage and thus CO₂, while creating real employment, increasing our recycling levels and would go some way to help

The Hunterston coal fired power station proposal is a regressive and outdated idea, which virtually every local resident and business in the area is opposed to

reduce the endemic litter problem we suffer. Scotland would benefit tremendously by pioneering this in the UK and the general public seem to understand that litter is a tangible environmental problem.

We can show people that voting for the Scottish Green Party in the Holyrood election is the only way to introduce some genuinely smart ideas and solutions. We are convinced that the majority of people did not benefit from the so-called boom time we are supposed to have experienced until the financial crisis. In fact it seems we continue to go around in a vicious circle of failed politics and finance policies of the past.

The message is that we are the only alternative to the continued failed politics and West of Scotland voters can make a positive statement for genuine change by casting their second vote for the SGP in 2011 and returning their first ever Green MSP.

Greenprint welcomes submissions on any topic, but reserves the right to edit or reject submissions.

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Veronika Tudhope, Central Scotland:

Our parliament needs more people like you and me.

Never underestimate what you can do by the power of your own good example, is one of my favourite sayings, alongside: what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Maybe both apply to standing for the Greens as a list candidate?

I'm standing because I can.

I'm standing because I believe in the principles of the Scottish Green Party.

I'm standing because I want to show other people that they can do it too.

In my opinion everyone should take an informed interest in and an active part in running their society. Everything is 'political' and everyone should at least know what he or she believes and at best act on it.

All decisions should be informed by what you believe to be right: how you go shopping, what sort of work you do, how you treat other people, to name but a few. These actions are just as important as voting, though standing as a national candidate is probably one of the more extreme forms of political expression. I believe that our country should be run by a representative cross-section of its inhabitants, albeit thoughtful, competent and educated ones. In the end this should mean that any woman like me could walk out of her kitchen in Kilmarnock and go to serve in Holyrood.

A bit of previous experience will certainly help with this process. During the whole of my adult life I have been active for social and environmental justice. The thrifty, thoughtful use of resources comes as second nature to me and I have a strong left leaning philosophy, which informs my political outlook.

As an Austrian immigrant I speak

German but I was educated in the Scottish state system, culminating in an Honours degree in archaeology and a teaching certificate. Another major achievement is my family: a husband and two daughters, now 17 and 20. Work highlights include sole administrator of a national breastfeeding charity for 7 years, running an online bookshop and writing an English reading book for German children.

As I write this I am approaching my fourth Christmas at the Royal Mail as a postman. This has been an unexpectedly rewarding environment. Beside obvious fitness benefits and transferable skills regarding leaflets and letterboxes I have been active in the union. I have learnt a lot about industrial relations and the realities of working in a job with little self-determination, low pay and part-time hours. It also gives me the opportunity to talk to lots of people with a variety of opinions every day, which is proving very useful as I practice canvassing on my unsuspecting customers.

I have been most consistently active in the peace movement.

Before the second Iraq war began I organised an hour-long local vigil, including television coverage, in Kilmarnock. I joined the local CND group, as did my husband and parents, swelling their numbers by 4. I went on to organise weekly vigils in the town centre and together we have gone from strength to strength. I've taken part in two peace walks across Scotland,

the latest this summer, meeting people in their own communities and raising awareness of issues such as Trident replacement and nuclear convoys on our roads. Currently I am involved in a knitting project to make cheaper and safer alternatives to conventional weapons. Look out for

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the arrival of the knitted aircraft carrier equipped with helicopters, at an event near you.

At the last Scottish election in 2006 I co-founded the Anti-Trident Party, which fielded one candidate against Jack McConnell in Motherwell and Wishaw. That taught me a lot about the Scottish electoral system. It also taught me the dangers of different types of microphone!

My fellow candidate in Central, Kirsten Robb, has worked hard to build up a Green enclave in East Kilbride with a hard working loyal band of supporters. She has made herself well known and deserves to do really well. I hope I can contribute to her success. Finally, I hope I will meet a lot of you during and after the elections and you will think to yourselves, 'well, if she can stand so can I!'

our country should be run by a representative cross-section of its inhabitants



When a Billion Chinese Jump: How China Will Save Mankind – Or Destroy It

Jonathan Watts, Faber & Faber £14.99 483pp

When we congratulate ourselves for recycling, where do we imagine our discarded plastic bottles end up? In one of many disturbing passages in Jonathan Watt's tour of the environmental blackspots of China, he takes us to a town where he saw small recycling shops 'breaking down the world's discarded plastic bags, bottles and wrappers'. These were turned into hundreds of thousands of plastic pellets sorted by colour, and made into low grade sheeting for holdalls and wrapping. 'The cost was ditches full of garbage and a population plagued by health concerns.' In another town, where 'hundreds of millions of computers, mobile phones and other devices [had been] discarded', he saw women and children stripping circuit boards and exposing themselves to a 'toxic cocktail' of chemicals. Children in that town had 50 per cent more lead in their blood than the limit set in the US; it can result in mental retardation.

This is a well written book, which takes you to every corner of China. If you are planning a trip there, it is essential reading. Jonathan Watts, the Guardian's award-winning East Asia correspondent, tries hard to inject a note of hope, but the relentless documentation of rivers blackened by pollution, farmers dying of liver and kidney cancer, endangered animals served up in official banquets gives little cause for optimism. Linfen, a coal town in Shanxi province, is said to be the most polluted place in the world, where birth defects run at six times the national average which, in turn, is three to five times the global norm; where the cost of damage to human health and

the environment in the province in 2005 was estimated at £2.9bn.

Of course, every industrial revolution has caused environmental damage and destruction, and it is interesting to read how middle class, prosperous Chinese no longer want factories in their back yard. But the scale of the destruction in China is enormous – "To be in early 21st century China is to witness the climax of two hundred years of industrialisation and urbanisation, in close up, playing at fast-forward on a continent-wide screen."

The environmental consequences are obvious, but how about the economic consequences. We are accustomed to thinking of China as an economic environmental tiger, but the World Bank, as Watts shows, has calculated the annual bill for Chinese pollution – health costs, premature deaths, damaged infrastructure and crops – at 5.8 per cent of GDP, which lowers the Chinese miracle to our level. And if you add in erosion, desertification and environmental degradation, the World Bank calculates there is an 8 to 12 per cent bite into China's GDP, stopping the miracle in its eroded tracks. Watts suggests that if we include climate change and the consumption of non-renewable resources around the planet, 'it becomes conceivable that China's environmental crunch contributed to the global financial crash of 2008'.

Although Watts tries hard to be optimistic, the reader reaches a conclusion that, as in the title, When a Billion Chinese Jump, the world could indeed be knocked off it's axis.

Rosemary Burnett

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The **Scottish Green Party** is affiliated with other Green Parties in the UK, Europe and around the World. Currently we have two MSPs and eight Councillors elected in Scotland, with more joining us as the basic integrity of Green politics becomes ever clearer.

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