

The Plebs News



Mar 24

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International Women's Day 2024- March 8th



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For over 100 years, women and feminists around the world have marked International Women's Day on March 8th, celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and focusing attention on the work that still needs to be done to accelerate gender equality. Like most battles for equality and social justice the fight ebbs and flows. So how has 2023 been for the fight?

Internationally, there has been much focus on the return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the detrimental effects on women and girls in education, work and the family. In Iran, women and girls have challenged the status quo since the death of Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Tehran's religious morality police sent shockwaves through Iran and launched a revolutionary movement, characterized by the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom".

At home, and in the West generally, the battles for narrowing the gender pay gap and other inequalities in the workplace continues but there has been progress on some issues. In Plebs News this month you can read about women who have achieved in the field of economics, sometimes seen as the preserve of men, and in particular the work of Claudia Goldin. One of only three women to win the Nobel Prize her research of women in the labour market has challenged some of the male stereotypes explaining the pay gap.

I recently came across a journal article "Tackling Taboo Topics: A Review of the Three Ms in Working Women's Lives". The taboo being mentioned are menstruation, maternity and menopause. Although women now make up almost half the workforce the three Ms—and their taboo nature—constrain women's careers by simply being unique to women. According to feminist theory, work organizations are traditionally masculine such that "women's bodies . . . their pregnancy, breast-feeding, and child care, menstruation . . . are suspect, stigmatized and used as grounds for control and exclusion".

But progress is being made on some of those fronts. In 2022 Cllr Jayne Dunn passed a resolution on recognition of the effects of menopause on women in the workplace and the campaign for greater understanding continues with the support of the trade unions and councillors across the city of Sheffield.

The Period Product Scheme which provides pupils and students with period products when they need them in their place of study. Since its launch in January 2020, 99% of secondary schools and 94% of post 16 organisations have ordered products using the scheme.

On maternity services the progress has not been so good with many NHS units understaffed and several the subject of inquiries due to poor practice.

In terms of class many working class women spend their lives caring for other people's children trapped in low pay and subject to poor working conditions and the campaign for recognition of unpaid work in the home continues.

Women Who Changed Economics

Elinor Ostrom (1933-2012)

Elinor Ostrom (1933–2012) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 2009 “for her analysis of economic governance, especially the commons.” She was the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

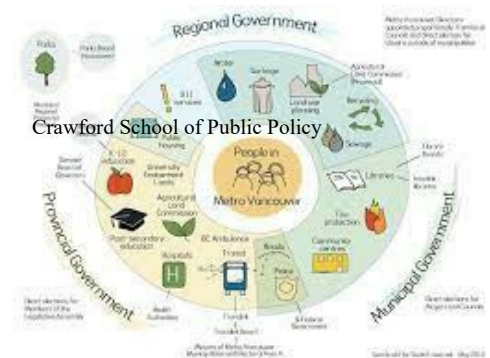
As a political scientist Elinor Ostrom’s research methods differed from how most economists work. Usually they start with a hypothesis, an assumption of reality, which is then put to the test. Elinor Ostrom started with an actual reality instead. She gathered information through field studies and then analyzed this material. In her book ‘Governing the Commons’ from 1990, she demonstrated how common property can be successfully managed by user associations and that economic analysis can shed light on most forms of social organization. Her research had great impact amongst political scientists and economists.” She argued that long-term sustainability needs rules that match attributes of resource systems and users. Large-scale governance systems may facilitate such arrangements, but they could also be destructive, e.g., colonial powers did not recognise local resource institutions that had developed over centuries.

— Extract Nobel Prize website



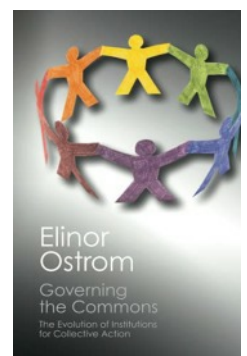
The Ostrom Frameworks

The framework proposed by Ostrom (2009) has become one of the most utilized tools to address the complexity of social-ecological systems. Elinor Ostrom introduced the SES framework to guide the analysis of relationship between resource, resource users and governance systems.



The governance of natural resources used by many individuals in common is an issue of increasing concern to policy analysts. Both state control and privatization of resources have been advocated, but neither the state nor the market have been uniformly successful in solving common pool resource problems.

After critiquing the foundations of policy analysis as applied to natural resources, Elinor Ostrom here provides a unique body of empirical data to explore conditions under which common pool resource problems have been satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily solved. Dr Ostrom uses institutional analysis to explore different ways--both successful and unsuccessful--of governing the commons. In contrast to the proposition of the "tragedy of the commons" argument, common pool problems sometimes are solved by voluntary organizations rather than by a coercive state. Among the cases considered are communal tenure in meadows and forests, irrigation communities and other water rights, and fisheries.



Elinor Ostrom’s work on Governing The Commons: An Appreciation

LSE Blog and Obituary

Joan Robinson 1903-1983

A British economist known for her wide-ranging contributions to economic theory. One of the most prominent economists of the century, Joan Robinson incarnated the "Cambridge School" in most of its guises in the 20th century. She started out as a Marshallian; became, after 1936, one of the earliest and most ardent Keynesians; and ended up as a leader of the Neo-Ricardian and Post-Keynesian schools.



Robinson in the 1920's

Wikipedia

In 1933, her book *The Economics of Imperfect Competition*, Robinson coined the term "monopsony", which is used to describe the buyer converse of a seller monopoly. Monopsony is commonly applied to buyers of labour, where the employer has wage setting power that allows it to exercise Pigouvian exploitation and pay workers less than their marginal productivity. Robinson used monopsony to describe the wage gap between women and men workers of equal productivity.

In 1942, Robinson's *An Essay on Marxian Economics* famously concentrated on Karl Marx as an economist, helping to revive the debate on this aspect of his legacy.

In 1956, Robinson published her magnum opus, *The Accumulation of Capital*, which extended Keynesianism into the long run.

In 1962, she published *Essays in the Theory of Economic Growth*, another book on growth theory, which discussed Golden Age growth paths. Afterwards, she developed the Cambridge growth theory with Nicholas Kaldor. She was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1964.

In 1984, Robinson was elected to the American Philosophical Society.

Near the end of her life, she studied and concentrated on methodological problems in economics and tried to recover the original message of Keynes' *General Theory*. Between 1962 and 1980, she wrote many economics books for the general public. Robinson suggested developing an alternative to the revival of classical economics.

In June 2019, the United States Supreme Court used Robinson's monopsony theory in its decision for *Apple v. Pepper*. Justice Brett Kavanaugh delivered the majority opinion, stating Apple can be sued by application developers, "on a monopsony theory."

Robinson made several trips to China, reporting her observations and analyses in *China: An Economic Perspective* (1958), *The Cultural Revolution in China* (1969), and *Economic Management in China* (1975; 3rd ed., 1976). Among the best known of her many books are *The Accumulation of Capital* (1956; 3rd ed., 1969), *Economic Philosophy* (1963), and *Introduction to Modern Economics* (1973). The five volumes of her *Collected Economic Papers* (1951–79) were reprinted in 1980.

Claudia Goldin 1946-Present



Wikimedia

Claudia Dale Goldin (born May 14, 1946) is an American economic historian and labor economist. She is the Henry Lee Professor of Economics at Harvard University. In October 2023, she was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences "for having advanced our understanding of women's labor market outcomes". She was the third woman to win the award, and the first woman to win the award solo.

Goldin's historical work on women and the American economy is what she is best known for. Regarding that subject, her papers that have been most influential have been those about the impact of the contraceptive pill on women's career and marriage decisions, the education of women and men together in higher education, the history of women's pursuit of career and family, women's last names after marriage as a social indicator, the reasons most undergraduates are now women, and the new life history of women's employment.

In 1990, Goldin became the first woman to be tenured in Harvard's economics department. In 2013 she was the president of the American Economic Association.

In the U.S., women currently make about 82 cents for every dollar a man earns. Historically, Goldin found that differences in education and occupational choices could explain this gender gap in earnings. More recently, Goldin found that the bulk of the current earnings difference is between men and women in the same occupation. That is, when women and men hold the same job, men get paid more. Therefore, education and occupational choice cannot be totally to blame.

Instead, her research suggests that the earnings difference can be blamed, at least partially, on motherhood. In one study of MBA students, Goldin and a fellow researcher found that men far outearn their female counterparts a decade after they graduate from business school. The disparities in income were predominantly tied to women's career interruptions and a reduction in weekly work hours linked to the birth of a child.

Even when mothers who previously reduced their hours transition to full-time work, they have trouble catching up to the men. Goldin explains this phenomenon in a research paper that compares a parent's life to a hike: "Parenthood is part of the steep climb during which mothers slow down, reduce their hours of work, and occasionally leave employment for some time or shift into less time-intensive jobs and firms. But there is a moment when childcare demands greatly lessen, and women can increase their hours of paid work and assume greater career challenges. We can think of that moment metaphorically, as when mothers reach a summit and then run down the other side of the mountain. But even though they increase their hours of work, they never reach the rich valley of gender equality. "

Among her most highly cited papers. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions" (with Katz, 2002) and "The U-Shaped Female Labor Force Function in Economic Development and Economic History," (1995) are some of her pioneering papers. She then began to focus on college women's quest for career and family and the reasons for the persistent gender gap in earnings. Her American Economic Association presidential address, "A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter" set forth what the last chapter of employment must contain for there to be equality between men and women in the labor market. Her book *Career & Family: Women's Century-Long Journey toward Equity* (2021) traces the history of college-educated women dealing with the problem of balancing career and family throughout the twentieth century in the United States, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's careers.

Esther Duflo 1972- Present



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Esther Duflo was born in Paris, where her mother was a pediatrician and her father a professor of mathematics. After studying history and economics at the École Normale Supérieure and elsewhere, she completed her doctorate in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1999. Aside from a leave at Princeton University, she has continued to work at MIT. Esther Duflo married her research colleague, Abhijit Banerjee, with whom she also shared the Nobel Economics Prize in 2019.

After studying in the B/L program of Lycée Henri-IV's Classes préparatoires, Duflo began her undergraduate studies at École normale supérieure in Paris, planning to study history, her interest since childhood. In her second year, she began considering a career in the civil service or politics. She spent ten months in Moscow starting in 1993. She taught French and worked on a history thesis that described how the Soviet Union "had used the big construction sites, like the Stalingrad tractor factory, for propaganda, and how propaganda requirements changed the actual shape of the projects." In Moscow, she also worked as a research assistant for a French economist connected to the Central Bank of Russia and, separately, for Jeffrey Sachs, an American economist who was advising the Russian Minister of Finance. The experiences at these research posts led her to conclude that "economics had potential as a lever of action in the world" and she could satisfy academic ambitions while doing "things that mattered".

In 2003, she co-founded Poverty Action Lab at MIT, which has since conducted over 200 empirical development experiments and trained development practitioners to run randomized controlled trials. The lab has branches in Chennai, India and at the Paris School of Economics. In 2004, together with several colleagues, Duflo conducted another experiment in India. It showed that taped speeches by women were more readily accepted in villages that had experienced women leaders. Duflo became increasingly convinced that communities supporting women candidates could expect economic benefits, but she experienced difficulty in convincing her peers.[29] Focused on assessing developments addressing social welfare, in 2008, she received the Frontier of Knowledge award for development cooperation. Duflo entered the public sphere in 2013, when she sat on the new Global Development Committee, which advised former US President Barack Obama on issues regarding development aid in poor countries.

Duflo is an NBER research associate, a board member of the Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD), and director of the Centre for Economic Policy Research's development economics program, where she serves as both a board member and a director.

She was the founding editor of the American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, editor of The American Economic Review, and a co-editor of The Review of Economics and Statistics and the Journal of Development Economics. Also, she is a member of the editorial committee of the Annual Review of Economics and a member of the Human Capital Research Programme within the International Growth Centre.

She writes a monthly column for Libération, a French daily newspaper and since August 2023, she holds a weekly chronicle on French radio station France Inter, "Le biais d'Esther Duflo"

Ann Pettifor 1947_Present



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Ann Pettifor (born February 1947) is a British economist who advises governments and organisations. She has published several books. Her work focuses on the global financial system, sovereign debt restructuring, international finance and sustainable development. Pettifor is best known for correctly predicting the financial crisis of 2007–08. She was one of the leaders of the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign. In the 1980s she held several posts as adviser to Frances Morrell, the leader of the Inner London Education Authority and later advised Greater London Council, Ken Livingstone. She also advised the Right Hon. Margaret Beckett MP who went on to serve in the 1997 Labour government. She also worked as a lobbyist for Ian Greer Associates.

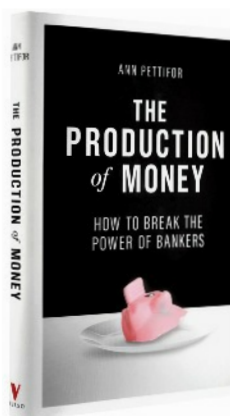
Pettifor co-founded the Jubilee 2000 worldwide campaign for the cancellation of the debts of the poorest countries. In 1998 Jubilee 2000 organised a human chain of approximately 70,000 people, which surrounded the 1998 G8 summit in Birmingham, United Kingdom. In 1999 at the Cologne G8 Summit the G8 agreed to write off approximately \$100 billion of third world debt owed by 37 countries, in large part due to the campaign. Jubilee 2000 had supporters including Pope John Paul II, Muhammad Ali, Bono, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Bill Clinton. The Independent would later describe her work on the campaign as 'genius'.

At the conclusion of the Jubilee 2000 campaign Pettifor joined the New Economics Foundation in London where she headed their research unit on global macro-economics.

Pettifor became a member of the Green New Deal Group of economists, environmentalists and entrepreneurs that published *The Green New Deal* in July 2008. The group argued that "The triple crunch of financial meltdown, climate change and 'peak oil' has its origins firmly rooted in the current model of globalisation. Financial deregulation has facilitated the creation of almost limitless credit. With this credit boom have come irresponsible and often fraudulent patterns of lending, creating inflated bubbles in assets such as property, and powering environmentally unsustainable consumption."

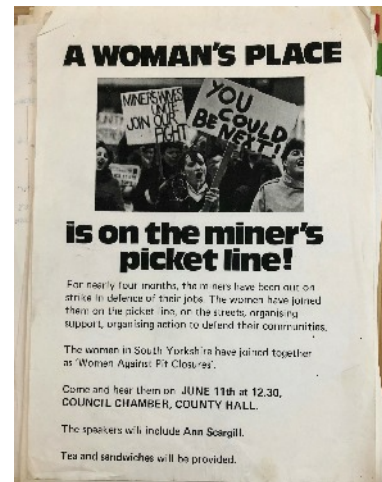
Her work has also focussed on climate change and how the change to a net zero economy can rebuild a productive rather than extractive economy.

Her blog and website can be found here <https://www.annpettifor.com/> and her You Tube videos are widely viewed. Her book *The Production of Money* is a great introduction to macroeconomics and banking and nails the great Thatcher lie that nations finances are like a household economy.



What is money, where does it come from, and who controls it? *The Production of Money: How to break the power of bankers* – available to purchase at Verso Books.

Women Against Pit Closures: 40 years On



The incredible legacy of women in the miners' strike still shines

Women gathered in Durham on Saturday March 2 to celebrate their role in the miners' strike of 1984-5 – and what a celebration it was.

FOR a “small do” it was a pretty big event. Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) mobilised hundreds of veteran activists, their daughters, grand-daughters and friends, to march through the streets of Durham, banners raised, in a reunion and a celebration of the role played by women in the 1984-5 miners' strike whose 40th anniversary begins on Wednesday.

Common wisdom has it that without the mobilisation of the women of the coalfields, the year-long miners' strike against pit closures would have ended in October 1984, seven months after it started. Instead, it continued until March 1985.

On Saturday the banners they raised in Durham were an indication of the breadth of the women's mobilisation during the strike: Vane Tempest Vigil, South Wales Support Groups, Corpull and Chorley Miners' Wives from Lancashire, Durham Miners' Wives' Action Group, and Durham Support Groups.

Joining them were Grimethorpe Women's Pit Camp, “Houghton Main Women's Pit Camp, and Sheffield WAPC from Yorkshire. There were more than 20 banners in all. Another was Barnsley Miners' Wives — and UMWA Women Miners.

UMWA is the United Mineworkers of America, and one of the eight-strong US delegation was banner-bearer Libby Lindsey, a woman former coalminer from West Virginia and long-time friend of WAPC.

She had made the journey, she said, “To celebrate these women who are so amazing. They inspired us during the strike. They inspire us now. They stepped up.

“They did so much more than just soup kitchens. They saw what needed to be done and they just did it. They built their solidarity, and it went all over the world.”

The reception the marchers received as they marched through the crowded streets from Durham Cathedral surprised some of the women.

The hurrying shoppers, students and tourists came to a standstill. They lined the streets. Then they burst into applause.

“There were hundreds of them,” said one marcher. “They just kept clapping us.”

There was a pause part-way through the march outside The Swan and Three Cygnets, a pub known to anyone who has attended the Durham Miners' Gala. There the women sang the WAPC anthem, Women of

the Working Class, also known as We Are Women We Are Strong. It was one of many renditions of the anthem on Saturday, sung by the women with clenched fists raised.

The march passed through a guard of honour of Durham ex-miners who stood with their pit lodge banners either side of the route in tribute. Easington Lodge, Sacriston, Black Hall, Wearmouth, Horden — pits long closed, but their community spirit as alive as ever.

At the end of the march, surrounded by women, men and banners, and standing in the street, socialist singer-songwriter Joe Solo performed a song he had written for the occasion. He was cheered and applauded.

Then the celebrations really began. The women, their banners and their supporters filed into Durham University Students' Union for an afternoon of speeches, music, song and poetry. The main hall was filled to capacity. An overflow room was also full, and the proceedings were passed through a video link.

On the tables, there were cakes, thick with icing bearing the logo of the WAPC movement.

Heather Wood from Easington, who is secretary of National WAPC, opened the proceedings and told how her husband John had advised her to "keep it small" when she raised the idea of an event.

"But just like WAPC, it kept on growing," she told the audience.

What followed was a glorious medley of spoken memories, moving speeches and equally moving performances, including a choir from the Cheesy Waffles Project which involves children with special educational needs, who sang in hard hats and orange boiler suits.

The event drew overseas women supporters not just from the US but also from Germany and the Netherlands, and a TV crew from France — the French CGT union was one of the biggest overseas supporters of the miners, their families and their communities during the strike.

"This is an important event for us," one member of the crew said.

Sabine Leopold had travelled from Herten in the industrial Ruhr in Germany.

She told the Morning Star: "In Germany during the strike we organised solidarity. We collected clothing and food. Our comrades, we went into the streets in the mining communities and collected. Everyone gave — 20 Deutschemarks, 30.

"But in Germany, the mining companies tried to divide us. They tried to take scab coal to Britain from Germany. The German miners said: 'No. We will not send this coal to break the strike.'

"We were together. The wives and the miners organised together. As miners' wives, we are still organised together. The women's miners' movement in Germany was inspired by the miners' wives of Britain."

The delegation from the Netherlands included Halinka Augustin.

"I was 27 when the strike took place," she told the Morning Star. "I am the wife of a docker from Rotterdam. We had a campaign in Rotterdam and a women's committee to support the miners. We went to Kent, to Snowdown Colliery, with goods and money in support.

"It was an exchange visit. They also came to the Netherlands. Then we got in touch with miners in Scotland, and in Barnsley.

"We heard the song We Are Women We Are Strong from the women in the mining communities. We learnt it, we learnt to sing it. We support women in other communities and we brought them that song. Now we sing it always."

Speakers included Durham Labour MP Mary Foy, the general secretary of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union Sarah Woolley and the general secretary of Civil Service union PCS Fran Heathcote.

Also, there was Betty Cook, one of Yorkshire's original WAPC.

During the strike Cook, now in her eighties and frail, suffered a broken leg when she was struck by a police truncheon on the picket line. The next day, on crutches and with her leg encased in plaster, she was back on the picket line.

The formation of WAPC brought her a lasting friendship with one of the movement's founders, Anne Scargill.

Cook told the gathering about her life as the young wife of a miner, of poverty in the early years, and shocking living conditions.

"Like everybody else I hated Thatcher," she said. She began her involvement in the strike by working in one of the food kitchens.

"Some of the women didn't want to get involved in other things. But then we went picketing because all the men were getting arrested. We could do anything we wanted because they couldn't sack us. From there we went speaking all over to raise money for the cause."

Along with other women she was arrested for her activities — and created mayhem in the police station, refusing to accept a caution, resulting in her release and the release of all the women arrested with her.

After one incident in which the she and other women were arrested they had left a brazier burning.

"As the police van drove away with us I could see that the brazier was still blazing," she said. "They did not put that light out then and they will never put that light out."

The gathering erupted with applause.

Peter Lazenby- Morning Star 4/3/24

Women Against Pit Closures: the Jean McCrindle archives

Learn about the Women Against Pit Closures movement through a tour of some of the archives held at LSE Library. The movement grew out of a network of local groups that had been set up by women in mining communities. A key figure was Jean McCrindle, who had helped to set up the first support groups in Barnsley.

Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) was established during the 1984-85 miners' strike. The strike was an industrial dispute led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) that began 40 years ago in March 1984. WAPC organised rallies and marches, petitions, fundraising events and ran soup kitchens to feed miners and their families.



Nature: communities' natural energy partner

Dr John Carlisle- Yorkshire Bylines

All the news today about the environment seems to be designed to induce guilt, and guilt often leads to feelings of helplessness. With COP28 looming, most of us feel like bystanders, especially as, once again, it seems that so many of the large corporations continue their profiteering and despoliation. Shell has just announced that it is cutting hundreds of contractors from its workforce amid a major efficiency drive by the oil giant's new CEO as he targets bigger shareholder returns. Note: not to increase productivity, not to increase safety, not to help consumers but to feed hedge funds.

But there is good news. Both with companies and communities, environmental preservation efforts are happening outside of headline promises.

Interface aiming for carbon negative

Interface is one of the world's largest manufacturers of carpet tiles with annual revenues of over \$1bn and employing more than 4,000 people worldwide. Its green founder, the late Ray Anderson, set the company a goal called 'Mission Zero' in 2001, which aimed to ensure it had zero negative impact on the planet by 2020. The brand claimed to have achieved this in 2019, a year ahead of target, and has subsequently set itself a new target to become carbon negative by 2040.

Many Shell employees must be cringing. The CEO, Wael Sawan, busy laying off contractors to increase the shareholder value, will be unmoved.

Yorkshire's own Citu

Then there is the sustainable developer Citu, also in Yorkshire (i.e., Leeds). Their mission: tackling climate change, by creating living space which radically reduces residents' carbon footprint. Their project in Kelham Central, Sheffield has been a success.

Again, what a contrast with Shell's mission.

Environmentally conscious farming

Farmers are also now beginning to recognise the destructive impact of fertilisers and insecticides, and understand the importance of the topsoil, a living regenerative force. Even in the USA, where farmers are subsidised by the government to use these chemicals, the word is getting out that they could farm naturally and make more money by not using the chemicals and not taking the subsidies.

In Australia, regenerative farming is now being accepted, not least because of the crop yields and the increase in potable water. But, for ex-farmers like me, it is the overall environmental effect that is most persuasive.

Here is a photo from Danthonia farm in New South Wales, Australia, after practising natural sequence farming:

This is because the farmer came across another Aussie farmer named Peter Andrews, who had given 40 years of his life to understanding how to regenerate the landscape, naturally. And his pastures showed it.



Aerial views of Danthonia in 2000 (left) and 2017 (right) showing the community's growth in a healing landscape. Photograph originally published on Plough.com in Beating the Big Dry; 6 May. Used with permission.

Introducing Eddie Andrew

Now, in Sheffield, we have our own farmer Andrews, Eddie Andrew, who farms just outside the city and practices two of the key attributes of any successful farm or business, namely, meeting customer expectations profitably – and cooperation.

Customers: One clear expectation is that the milk must be from grazing, not ‘factory’, cattle. So, as much milk as possible comes from grass, with some 2/3rds of the farm comprising grazed pasture or silage.

Cooperation: The marketing strategy includes the family’s well known Our Cow Molly brand and the farm works with two neighbouring dairy farms to reduce its environmental footprint and input costs. Milk and ice cream are sold and marketed under the family’s Our Cow Molly brand. The next step is shared machinery. This is what could be called an ‘eco-zone’.

Cooperative strategies

But Andrew has an even stronger cooperative strategy. He partners with a key customer – Sheffield University – to help reduce the plastics carbon footprint by resorting to old-fashioned churns.

As Andrew said: “I saw Peter Anstess, head of retail at the University, and with an old milk churn and a Tetley’s hand pull demonstrated a very agricultural first version of our idea for reusable milk churns.” (It is not for nothing that Andrew was first trained as an engineer)

This has now developed into a fully functional circular system and is saving plastic waste every day by over 80,000 bottles a year, reducing the carbon footprint of the milk delivery by over 65%.

Here is a great case study of the power of supply chain partnering when it is matched by interdisciplinary, collaborative working by the university. Heeley Farm with its Heeley Energy House is the standout example of a Sheffield energy and community initiative. But there are also other examples of local Yorkshire green initiatives. Three community energy examples were presented – Sheffield Renewables in Sheffield, Can’t Wait to Insulate in Rotherham and then there is Energise Barnsley, which former South Yorkshire mayor, Dan Jarvis described as “a fantastic example of a community energy initiative between the council and a community benefit society”.

And here we go again – cooperation works!

The challenge

We are the victims of some of the worst government neglect since the 1920s. This and the decade of deliberate underfunding of the local councils has led to great inequality and diminishment in the quality of living. The price of energy has probably been the biggest shock to household budgets. So, it really is time to take our fortune into our own hands, so this is where our thinking must start to get really radical.

The first step is to stop feeling guilty and helpless about the damage being done to nature. We need to begin again and start understanding and having the deepest respect for the gifts she has for us. Yorkshire is rich in nature. Sheffield alone has 60% green space and 250 parks, woodlands and gardens, plus 4.5 million trees. Can the residents identify many of the trees or flowers? A hundred years ago the answer would be yes. Today it is no – but I can see a photo on my smartphone.

We live as foreigners in nature. We must get back to ‘knowing it’, as Rachel Carson urged us to do 60 years ago, and develop a sense of wonder at, not just its topography, but also its gifts of water, sun and wind, all of which have supplied the energy the world needed for millions of years.

Community and natural energy

Central government is not delivering. Even at the local government level too many councils have become corporatised, using models of so-called efficient businesses to run their towns and cities, disastrously. Sheffield today is a far cry from the city of 1926 when the first Labour Council resurrected a broken citizenry – with almost no funds.

We need to get back to our resilient strong, self-sufficient, neighbourly communities again, says Chris Cook, Senior Fellow at the UCL Institute for Security & Resilience Studies (ISRS) and alumnus of Sheffield University. This begins with communities using local natural energy – the energy of the place – to provide the power needed, a natural grid. We hope this will be a model for Labour’s well thought-out Local Energy Plan, led by the Co-operative Party’s Dr Alan Whitehead.

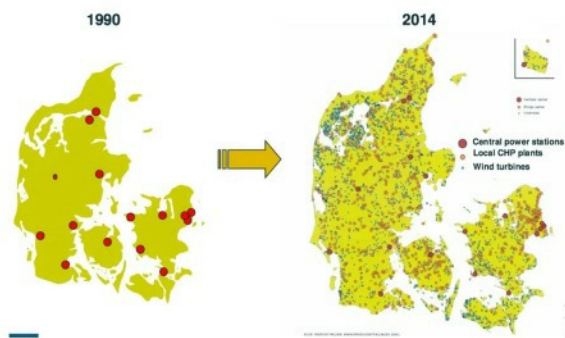
Here is how it is done.

The economics of natural grids in Denmark

Denmark’s transformation of a centralised fossil fuelled national grid towards a distributed natural grid, drawing on their natural power and other energy resources, owed everything to the 1973 ‘Oil Shock’, ie 400% increase in \$ oil prices and Denmark’s need for economic and resource resilience.

If resilient local infrastructure is networked in local energy generation then the result will be regional and national resilience. In other words, resilience, security and independence are bottom up – not top down.

Denmark was the first country to adopt this principle. In 1973 the oil price increase from \$3 to \$12 per barrel exposed Denmark’s 90% reliance on fossil fuels. Denmark focused on least resource cost, as opposed to least financial cost per BTU (British thermal unit) used. This is a vital difference. The diagrams below show the huge increase in local energy generation as against the centralised power generating centres from 1990 to 2014.



Map of Denmark showing transition from power stations to wind turbines from 1990 to 2014.

open source

This meant changing from a few national power generating centres to a host of local natural grids using the local capacity and empowered communities.

Economic rationale

The government mandated that, for any given use of heat, transport, power, light and other energy services, the purchase of oil and gas as a commodity would be minimised. This principle was applied across all possible energy services and led to the development of renewable energy systems and companies. It also led to heat infrastructure throughout Denmark, notably combining heat and power; district heating, heat storage and finally a massive investment in energy efficiency in buildings, and in zero waste generally.

The outcome has been that since 1973 while Denmark’s GDP has doubled, their use of energy has declined and their use of carbon fuels (and CO2 production), in particular, has declined significantly.

Eco zones will benefit Yorkshire

By re-energising communities and restoring natural resilience, Eco zones address the degraded, socio-economic and natural ‘ecologies’ of our places – whether they are islands, towns, cities or semi-rural hinterlands. With Eco zones, Yorkshire will be on its way to real independence.



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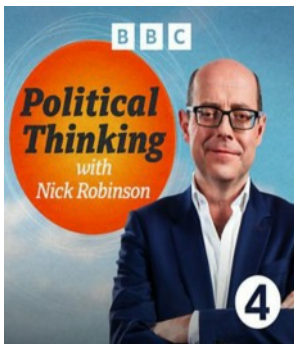
EXPANDING COMMUNITY ENERGY IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

A DAY OF SHOWCASING AND EXPLORING COMMUNITY
ENERGY FOR THE REGION WITH PRACTICAL
WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS, AND STALLS

2024

16TH 10AM-4PM
MARCH

Media and Reading



The Mariana Mazzucato One

One of the world's most influential progressive economists outlines her pitch to leaders across the world - and Starmer's Labour Party - to focus on ambitious 'missions' that can transform society for the better.

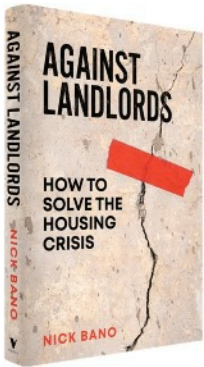
Despite the patronizing by Nick Robinson attempting to “mansplain” economics to her Mazzucato manages to give a valuable insight into what is wrong with today's politicians and economists.

Young Again: Melinda French Gates

Kirsty Young talks to philanthropist Melinda French Gates about what she's learned from her life so far. A computer scientist by training, she dated her boss and became one half of one of the world's most famous power couples. But as she travelled a road paved with gold, French Gates describes the tough lessons she learned along the way, the danger of untrustworthy acquaintances and how she had to dig deep to not lose herself in the maelstrom of extreme wealth and influence.



Media and Reading (Cont)



When landlords always win and renters pay the price, what can be done?

Housing means prosperity and security for some; poverty, precarity and sickness for others. More people live in private rented accommodation than ever before, and rents rise without apparent reason. Homes are smaller every year, and nearly 20 per cent of tenants live in hazardous conditions. Homelessness is at a new high. Yet the government's only solution is to promote homeownership.

Against Landlords shows that this crisis is not the product of happenstance or political incompetence. Government policy has intentionally split British citizens into homeowners and renters, two classes set on very different financial paths. In the UK, one out of every twenty-one adults is a landlord, and it is this group, and those who aspire to join it, represented by the political class.

In his radical new interpretation of the housing crisis, lawyer Nick Bano explains how this environment set the conditions for the Grenfell Tower fire and how it means a life of anxiety for the nation's renters. It is a problem that stretches far beyond London and one inherently racist in nature.

Building more housing is not the solution. It is firstly a problem of the law, Bano argues, and reforms must sweep away the landlordism at the heart of the housing crisis and British political life.

The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments and Warps our Economies

The 'Big Con' describes the confidence trick the consulting industry performs in contracts with hollowed-out and risk-averse governments and shareholder value-maximizing firms. It grew from the 1980s and 1990s in the wake of reforms by both the neoliberal right and Third Way progressives, and it thrives on the ills of modern capitalism, from financialization and privatization to the climate crisis. It is possible because of the unique power that big consultancies wield through extensive contracts and networks - as advisors, legitimators and outsourcers - and the illusion that they are objective sources of expertise and capacity. To make matters worse, our best and brightest graduates are often redirected away from public service into consulting. In all these ways, the Big Con weakens our businesses, infantilizes our governments and warps our economies.



\The Way- BBC1

At first glance, everything about the storyline of 'The Way' seems dystopian in the extreme: civil war in a Welsh port town, Britain locked down and borders closed with the military and police patrolling the streets. But on closer inspection, the BBC drama, written by James Graham and Adam Curtis and directed by Michael Sheen, is a disturbing allusion to elements of modern Britain.

The series follows a family based in the South Wales town of Port Talbot, who are forced on the run after being blamed for igniting civil unrest. The unrest is in fact fuelled by the death of a young steelworker who fell into molten slag and dies and his father's consequent self-immolation, being destroyed by grief and anger. The multinational company running the steelworks fails to provide an adequate response and are blamed for the death, due to their chronic underinvestment.