

HISTORIC BRIDGE SENDS WARNING TO THE WORLD

Extinction Rebellion Bath suspends shocking pink banners across the World Heritage site of Pulteney Bridge to call attention to the Climate Emergency and the lack of Government commitment to BUILD BACK GREEN.

Bath woke up this morning to find three giant pink banners strung across the river Avon at the World Heritage site of Pulteney Bridge, displaying CLIMATE CRISIS, WE'RE UP SH*T CREEK and BUILD BACK GREEN. The banners were hung alongside the weir at dawn today by Extinction Rebellion activists in kayaks.

A small team from Extinction Rebellion Bath planned the action to highlight the admission in the Government's own Committee on Climate Change report, published 25th June, that they are woefully short of meeting their own emissions targets by a long margin. The CCC report reveals a staggering lack of progress, with only two of 31 milestones being achieved and only four of the 21 vital measures on track for net zero emissions. (1)

Ros Pears came up with the idea and plans to stay in her kayak alongside the banners for the rest of the day. She said: "We recognise some may be offended by the wording but we wanted a message that would make people sit up and take notice. Time is running out. One of the world's foremost energy experts has told us we have just six months to act or face catastrophic changes for our planet and every life form on it." (2) *(See end for how and why they did it.)*

Extinction Rebellion is gearing up across the UK for mass protests later this summer. They are highlighting that on our current course by 2050 up to 1 billion people will be displaced (3), almost half of all species on Earth will be extinct (4) and 5 billion people will be at risk of food and water shortages. (5)

"The team was careful not cause damage to the bridge. We recognise it's a World Heritage monument but there is no heritage on a dead planet," said Extinction Rebellion's Mat Thomas. "As the Covid crisis continues we mustn't forget the far larger and growing threat of climate breakdown."

Local resident Ralph Oswick said on seeing the banners, "I know some people in Bath will get agitated about it; it is a very old bridge, after all. I'm getting on a bit myself and I love this beautiful city, but what's the point of having these historic buildings if everything around us is going down the chute? We've got to sort out our priorities, that's the way I see it."

Bath resident Emma Dodds-Smith said, "I was pretty shocked when I saw the banners but good on them. The Government's not doing nearly enough and I hope they will start to listen to the public. I've got young children and the more I read about how bad it's likely to be and the lack of action, the angrier I get."

Many residents have noticed cleaner air quality since lockdown and Extinction Rebellion Bath is also campaigning for the Council to improve walking and cycling facilities.

CCC Chair, Lord Deben, said, "People have had the opportunity to think about themselves, their children, the future and they have come to the conclusion - very widely - that what we need is a step change in all kinds of ways. And that there is a different world out there and it must become a better world. (...) There is no option."

But many climate scientists claim the situation could be turned around if the Government is willing, as we have seen with the response to Covid. Kevin Anderson, Professor of Energy and Climate Change, said, "If we were serious about this crisis we could do this in a year – if we were really serious we could do it in a month, but we are not and our emissions just keep rising." ⁽⁶⁾

Along with economists and environmental campaigners worldwide, Bath's Extinction Rebellion activists want to see the post-Covid economic reconstruction focussing on green jobs and technology which they believe will ultimately deliver more employment than current fossil fuel and carbon intensive jobs - and give us a more secure future on the planet.

EDITORS NOTES:

The weir alongside Pulteney Bridge was the scene of one of the most dramatic scenes in the 2012 film "Les Misérables", when Javert, the police inspector played by **Russell Crowe**, throws himself to his death in the river.

Why and how did we do it? What drives a group of ordinary people down in the West Country to undertake a secret and risky mission in the middle of the night, to launch boats and paddle downriver in silence at dawn to escape detection, with a heavy cargo of tools and ladders, clamp themselves to the arches of an historic and iconic bridge and suspend huge banners across the full width of the river, within a few metres of a dangerous weir? We are just ordinary people of all ages driven to extraordinary measures through a united anger at the lack of action on climate change. We are mums and dads: a gardener, a builder, a sculptor, a maintenance man, a tour operator, a graphic designer. A story about XR from the inside. **(pics available of the whole action from design to delivery)**

Who are Extinction Rebellion?

Extinction Rebellion is an international citizens-led movement active in over 75 countries and recognised as the #1 global influencer on climate awareness. It aims to achieve radical change through nonviolent resistance, in order to avert disastrous climate breakdown and minimise the risk of mass extinctions and ecological collapse.

(A) In a recent stark warning over climate change, the previous Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, said the world's capital markets are currently financing activities that will lift global temperatures to more than 4°C above pre-industrial levels. ([link](#))

(B) In January 2020 a leaked report from JP Morgan, the world's largest financier of fossil fuels, warned clients that the climate urgency threatens the survival of the human race. It stated "We cannot rule out catastrophic outcomes where human life as we know it is threatened [. . . and it is] "likely the [climate] situation will continue to deteriorate, possibly more so than in any of the IPCC's scenarios. (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/21/jp-morgan-economists-warn-climate-crisis-threat-human-race>)

(C) A poll by Opinium for 'Compassion in Politics' found that 48% of the public agree that the government should respond 'with the same urgency to climate change as it has to Covid-19', with just 28% saying it shouldn't. (<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/coronavirus-climate-crisis-uk-government-poll-environment-a9467371.html>)

(D) Pulteney Bridge, built 1774, is one of just four bridges with shops to be found in the world. The others are the Ponte Rialto in Venice, the Ponte Vecchio in Florence and the Krämerbrücke in Erfurt, Germany.

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SOURCES:

(1) <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/>

(2) Dr Fatih Birol, Executive Director, International Energy Agency <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/18/world-has-six-months-to-avert-climate-crisis-says-energy-expert>

(3) <http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/08/climate-migrants-might-reach-one-billion-by-2050>

(4) <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/1/5/e1400253.full>

(5) <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2020/>

(6) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/26/leading-scientist-criticises-uk-over-its-climate-record>

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