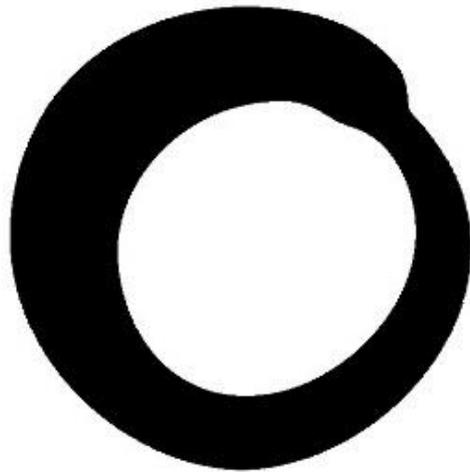


**Birmingham Friends of the Earth
and the Warehouse
Then and Now**

TIMELINE 1972-1991



LOTTERY FUNDED

Thanks

To all past and present BFoE volunteers and workers who have contributed to this project.
To the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham.
This project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Contact details

Birmingham FoE

If you'd like to get involved with or keep up-to-date with BFoE's current activities, please get in touch.

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BFoE Heritage project

Please contact us if you have any amendments to this booklet or want to get more involved in the heritage project – it will continue beyond the life of the HLF funding. In particular, we're looking for memories and/or memorabilia from the 1970s-1990s.

Email: heritage@birminghamfoe.org.uk

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Introduction

The first Friends of the Earth group in Birmingham operated from private houses in the early 1970s. By the late seventies they ran a paper recycling project that rapidly outgrew a house in Passey Rd, Sparkhill. In 1977 the group took the momentous decision that, in addition to campaigning for a better world, they would demonstrate in practical ways a better way of living. A derelict building in Allison St., known as The Warehouse, was acquired as a base for this and for many more work projects and campaigns. The building itself soon was seen as a model to demonstrate what could be done with a more efficient use of an older building. All those in the building worked together to demonstrate that a more cooperative way of organising could be successful.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth (BFoE) has now been at the Warehouse for 40 years and as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Project celebrating this achievement a group of volunteers have spent time in the Library of Birmingham going through the archived material of BFoE. This largely covers the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. The archive mostly consists of newsletters from this period, but there are also photographs and minutes. Topics for research were allocated to each individual researcher covering: Campaigns, Projects, Admin & Governance, and Education & Publications.

The results of that work is shown in a series of pamphlets. Together they constitute a record of the early years of BFoE and the Warehouse. This timeline is a summary of the key events and activities recorded from the period we researched -1972-1991.

We are however aware that the archives don't record everything. If you see any omissions or errors, please let us know and we can amend. We see these as 'living' documents.

This research period concluded in 1991, so this pamphlet does not cover the period after that. But there have been many successes since then. We're still actively campaigning in our newly refurbished Warehouse. If you'd like to be involved, please get in touch.

Information taken from BFoE Newsletters 1976-1989 and some meeting minutes

BFoE Timeline for the period covered by the Heritage Project 1972-1991

1970s

1972

- BFoE starts (in wake of Schweppes non-returnable bottle campaign)

1973

- BFoE sets up base in Passey Road

1974

- Campaign against Moseley/Kings Heath by-pass

1975

- Decision - not just to campaign, but provide practical demonstrations, starts with paper collection, recycling and then the sale of products made from recycled material

1976

- Waste paper collection started
- Started selling recycled paper products, e.g. reams paper, loo rolls
- Started selling insulation materials
- For London protest vs antarctic whaling BFoE constructed a 12 foot sperm whale

1977

- 1st April BFoE move into Warehouse
- Home insulation project (ICPP funded) started
- Ragwork project - making sacking bags, oven gloves, tea cosies for sale
- "High roughage" recipe book published and "Where to get bread and flour in the Kings Heath area" in "Whole Wheat Baking"

1978

- January BFoE registered as an Industrial and Provident Society
- Food Warehouse set up (later called Muesli Base)
- Urban Wildlife Group starts
- Ragwork project - making sacking bags, oven gloves and tea cosies for sale.
- BFoE published:
 - Sweet and Low in Sugar Cookbook by Lyn Roberts
 - Resources, Reclamation and Recycling; an educational pack and
 - Birmingham Waste Directory by Environmental Information Project
 - Cuddly Whale sewing kit over 4000 enquiries

1979

- June 1979 Save the Whales - train hired to go to national whale rally in London
- 14th August Pushbikes* inaugural meeting - Bicycle Beano - In October persuaded BCC to produce pothole cards.
- Conservation, why bother? course (Peter Raine)
- Birmingham Anti-Nuclear Group - BANG - Talks (Val Stevens)

1980s

1980

- Greenhouse set up on roof
- Pilot project - taking waste plastics for recycling
- Wholefood cookery course
- "Nuclear Information file"

1981

- Green site Project employing 31 workers on six sites
- In April Recycling - two bottle banks opened in Birmingham
- In May break-in and fire at Warehouse*
- In June first Great Midlands Bike Ride
- In July Anti Nuclear - West Midlands County declared a nuclear free zone by the council
- In November a Pollution pack produced concentrating on land reclamation, toxic waste and waste dumping
- In December 1981/January 82 Pushbikes have a place on the WMCC Highways Advisory Group
- BFoE produces "Saving the Whale Pack".

1982

- Start of 3 area-based Manpower Service Commission (MSC) projects - Kingstanding, Sparkbrook Smethwick Energy Action*
- Urban Wildlife Group move out*
- November Citywide insulation project has done 2500 jobs in 4 and a half years

1983

- Food Shop (Bag End)* started
- Birmingham Environmental Education Project (BEEP) "Wildlife in Cities" video
- "Down to Earth vegetarian cookbook" by Roger Mcfadden

1984

- January BFoE Home Insulation Project employed 40 in 7 teams (Southside Warehouse), citywide and volunteer teams

- January to February Pushbikes - first signed bike route in Birmingham from Moseley to city centre
- 10th Birthday Street Party*
- 9th April One Earth Shop opened*
- BEEP double decker bus bought

1985

- Lives saved by insulation project workers identifying issues with clients
- November to December Peace Tax Campaign - walked through city with large inflatable earth and a sack with a cheque for tax owed to Inland Revenue and previously held back as part of Peace Tax Campaign.
- BEEP "Pollution" video

1986

- September Purchase of Warehouse in last days of West Midland County Council
- Oversight Group set up
- May /June Moseley Bog - campaign successful, no land will be sold to developers
- September Acid Rain - Hosted 50 young European environmentalists on a UK tour
- November Acid Rain - study visit to Holland, Germany and Czechoslovakia to be trained in identifying trees damaged by acid rain
- Paper and aluminium collections started from 40,000 households (Pilot project for Birmingham City Council?)
- "Teaching about Tropical Rainforest" with video

1987

- January/February 4 garages in Birmingham started supplying lead free petrol

1988

- November 1st Amazon Cafe started*
- Weekly delivery of recycled paper to Birmingham, Leamington Spa, Stratford, Wolverhampton and Nottingham

1989

- November Energy Savers started* - partnership Paul Roberts
- Recycled paper supplies become a Coop.
- New extension built on Warehouse for meeting room

1990s

1991

- June Management Committee established to oversee running of building