

**OWEN PATERSON - a political obituary?****I'm Proud of Standing Up to the Green Lobby by Owen Paterson***First published in the Sunday Telegraph on Sunday 20 Jul 2014*

*Owen Paterson is a former secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs.* Every prime minister has the right to choose his team to take Britain into the general election and I am confident that my able successor at DEFRA, Liz Truss, will do an excellent job. It has been a privilege to take on the challenges of the rural economy and environment. However, I leave the post with great misgivings about the power and irresponsibility of – to coin a phrase – the *Green Blob*.

By this I mean the mutually supportive network of environmental pressure groups, renewable energy companies and some public officials who keep each other well supplied with lavish funds, scare stories and green tape.



This tangled triangle of unelected busybodies claims to have the interests of the planet and the countryside at heart, but it is increasingly clear that it is focusing on the wrong issues and doing real harm while profiting handsomely.

Local conservationists on the ground do wonderful work to protect and improve wild landscapes, as do farmers, rural businesses and ordinary people.

They are a world away from the highly paid globe-trotters of the *Green Blob* who besieged me with their self-serving demands, many of which would have harmed the natural environment.

I soon realised that the greens and their industrial and bureaucratic allies are used to getting things their own way. I received more death threats in a few months at the department for *Environment, Food and Rural Affairs* (DEFRA) than I ever did as secretary of state for Northern Ireland.

My home address was circulated worldwide with an incitement to trash it; I was burnt in effigy by *Greenpeace* as I was recovering from an operation to save my eyesight. But I did not set out to be popular with lobbyists and I never forgot that they were not the people I was elected to serve. Indeed, I am proud that my departure was greeted with such gloating by spokespeople for the *Green Party* and *Friends of the Earth*.

It was not my job to do the bidding of two organisations that are little more than anti-capitalist agitprop groups most of whose leaders know little of nature and the countryside. I saw my task as improving both the environment and the rural economy; many in the green movement believed in neither. Their goal was to enhance their own income streams and influence by myth making and lobbying. Would they have been as determined to blacken my name if I was not challenging them rather effectively?

When I arrived at DEFRA I found a department that had become under successive Labour governments a milch cow for the *Green Blob*. Just as Michael Gove set out to refocus education policy on the needs of children rather than teachers and bureaucrats and Iain Duncan Smith set out to empower the most vulnerable, so I began to reorganise the department around four priorities: to grow the rural economy, to improve the environment, and to safeguard both plant and animal health.

The *Green Blob* sprouts especially vigorously in Brussels. The *European Commission* website reveals that a staggering 150 million euros (£119 million) was paid to the top nine green NGOs from 2007-13. *European Union* officials give generous grants to green groups so that they will lobby it for regulations that then require large budgets to enforce. When I attended a council meeting of elected EU ministers on shale gas in Lithuania last year, we were lectured by a man using largely untrue clichés about the dangers of shale gas. We discovered that he was from the *European Environment Bureau*, an umbrella group for unelected, taxpayer subsidised green lobby groups. Speaking of Europe, I remain proud to have achieved some renegotiations.

The discard ban ends the scandalous practice of throwing away perfectly edible fish, we broke the council deadlock on GM crops, so decisions may be repatriated to member countries and we headed off bans on fracking. Judge me by my opponents.

When I proposed a solution to the dreadful suffering of cattle, badgers and farmers as a result of the bovine tuberculosis epidemic that Labour allowed to develop, I was opposed by rich pop stars who had never been faced with having to cull a pregnant heifer. (Interestingly, very recent local evidence suggests the decline in TB in the cull area may already have begun.)

When I spoke up for the landscapes of this beautiful country against the heavily subsidised industry that wants to spoil them with wind turbines at vast cost to ordinary people, vast reward to rich landowners and undetectable effects on carbon dioxide emissions, I was frustrated by colleagues from the so-called *Liberal Democrat Party*.

When I encouraged the search for affordable energy from shale gas to help grow the rural economy and lift people out of fuel poverty, I was opposed by a dress designer for whom energy bills are trivial concerns.

When I championed brilliant scientists demonstrating genetic modifications to rice to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in developing countries, I was vilified by a luxury organic chocolate tycoon uninterested in the demonstrable environmental and humanitarian benefits of GM crops.

When faced with the flooding of the *Somerset Levels* I refused to make the popular and false excuse of blaming it on global warming, but set out to reverse the policy inherited from a Labour peeress and serial quangocrat who had expressed the wish to “place a limpet mine on every pumping station”, while deliberately allowing the silting up of drainage channels.

When I set out to shatter the crippling orthodoxy that growing the rural economy and improving the environment are mutually exclusive, I was ridiculed by a public school journalist who thinks the solution to environmental problems is “an ordered and structured downsizing of the global economy”. Back to the Stone Age, in other words, but Glastonbury-style.

Yes, I’ve annoyed these people, but they don’t represent the real countryside of farmers and workers, of birds and butterflies. Like the nationalised industries and obstructive trade unions of the 1970s, the *Green Blob* has become a powerful self-serving caucus; it is the job of the elected politician to stand up to them. We must have the courage to tackle it head on, as Tony Abbott in Australia and Stephen Harper in Canada have done, or the economy and the environment will both continue to suffer.

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### **Sacking Owen Paterson is an insult to the countryside by Christopher Booker**

*first published in the Daily Telegraph on Saturday 19th July 2014*

Owen Paterson was a popular Environment Secretary who understood rural matters. Of all David Cameron’s moves in that bizarre reshuffle, one told us more about his judgment and character than any. It is hard to recall recently a more direct political insult than his contemptuous sacking of Owen Paterson as our Environment Secretary; a man who, below the media radar, has been the most effective of all his ministers.

The feelings of those aware of what Paterson achieved in two hectic years were expressed on Friday when he attended the Game Fair in Oxfordshire. Mentions of his name twice brought standing ovations from hundreds of disbelieving country folk, once in response to a fulsome tribute paid him by Nigel Farage.

When Paterson was made Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs he was, in practical terms, far better qualified for the post than anyone in the House of Commons. Some years earlier, as a countryman himself, he was a superbly well-briefed front-bench spokesman on agriculture and fisheries, travelling the world to meet experts on the scourge of bovine TB and fisheries management.

In September 2012, he took over a department that for years had been a sadly dysfunctional backwater, not least because, more than any other ministry, almost all its vast and complex responsibilities, from farming and fisheries to water and waste management, are subordinate to policies originating in Brussels.

One of his more remarkable achievements, as a “Euro sceptic” but also as a good French and German speaker, was the way he quickly came to play a leading role in all those endless meetings with his European counterparts, working the Brussels system as cleverly as any British minister has ever done, winning respect by his practical grasp and good humour even from those who disagreed with him.

Gradually, he galvanised DEFRA out of its long sleep, turning it into an effective player, as we saw nowhere more than in my own county of Somerset, where he made such a decisive intervention in last winter’s floods crisis and won the gratitude of hundreds of farmers for his masterminding of our remarkably successful badger cull.

This summer, dairy farms that have been losing scores of cattle every year to TB are reporting that, for the first time in decades, their herds are free of infection. In “Westminster bubble” and media terms, none of this has counted for anything. Enraged green activists and their media allies tried to paint Paterson as “the worst environment minister ever”, while out in the countryside he is rated as easily the best. But the tsunami of vitriolic green propaganda is all that the denizens of No 10 seemed to notice.

Mr Cameron and his urban advisers were so embarrassed by the anti-Paterson hate campaign, over everything from badgers to wind farms, fracking to GM crops, that he had to be fired. The respect Paterson had won in fighting for common sense and British interests, not just from millions of country folk but from his opposite numbers in Brussels, was far less important than what were perceived to be the electoral interests of his party.

He is replaced by a woman who appears to have no qualifications for the job and who will be totally out of her depth in Brussels. DEFRA will once again sink back into its dysfunctional torpor, under a minister wholly in the hands of officials who will have to tell her what to say, think and do about everything.

Cameron's treatment of his most effective minister is not just an insult to Paterson - it is also an insult to the countryside and to the political process; a surrender to those who put mindless spin above the need to see our country sensibly and intelligently run. When the epitaph comes to be written on Cameron's bid to create a "Not the Conservative Party", the ignominious sacking of Owen Paterson will be seen as one of the most revealing of all his many mistakes.

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**cesc symposium**  
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**From William Shepherd to Anton Pinschhof**  
20th July 2014 at 0833

I have added an additional paragraph to my blogpost on *Green Fascism*. It reads as follows: 'Unfortunately the Fascist Tendency within the Green Movement runs much deeper than a few skirmishes within the BBC. The unceremonial sacking in July 2014 of the best Environment Minister Britain has ever had is just one more manifestation of how effective this unelected, underground, anti-scientific and lavishly-funded, pressure group has become in British and European politics. [3].' End note Nr 3 links to a new Shepherd dispatch entitled *Letter from Chipping Norton*.

*Green Fascism*: <http://climate.blog.co.uk/2014/07/09/green-fascism-18835612/>  
*Letter from Chipping Norton*: <http://cesc.net/dispatchweb/letters/shepherd/59.%20letterfromchippingnorton.pdf>

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**From Anton Pinschhof to William Shepherd**  
20th July 2014 at 0847

It ain't as simple as that, although I agree that the Enviro movement has fallen into several traps laid for it by its mentors (such as Maurice Strong), and that it has, in many ways, turned out to be a weapon of mass distraction. Nonetheless, after reading your *Letter from Chipping Norton* I'd venture to draw up a balance sheet for the outgoing minister's achievements.

**Not bad:** # Curbing the automatic approval of wind turbines; # reacting well to the Somerset floods; # stopping the fish discard scandal. # Badger culling, apparently well managed, despite missing the point: a) it only touches upon a vector, b) it entirely misses the point about the cause of Bovine TB, suspected since the early 1970s to be mineral imbalances in soils where decades of synthetic fertiliser use have been short-cutting the fine root systems of plants which otherwise grow further in search of nutrients, including mineral trace elements. This also applies to Foot & Mouth Disease & Bovine Leukaemia. I have it on good authority that public funding for British research into this was never forthcoming, if only because the Labour Party then in power has an urban bias (despite Callaghan) and the press is only interested in diseases affecting people.

**As bad as bad can be:** # ridiculing & insulting the de-growth (*of capital*) discussion which, while half-heartedly promoted by the Green Blob, is a serious discussion that goes far beyond them, including elsewhere in Europe; # promoting shale gas extraction as also do his chums the Canadian & Australian ministers; # supporting the phoney repatriation of GMO decision-making (in fact a typical Brussels stratagem aimed at letting GMO into Europe via the back door, i.e. via the small number of inevitably useful idiot countries whose arms can be twisted by the industrial seed monopolists. Pollen crosses frontiers just like radio-active clouds do, as also do truckloads of contaminated feed & seed under Common Market rules of free circulation of anything that moves.

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**From William Shepherd to Anton Pinschhof**  
21st July 2014 at 1455

I agree with you on your two lists (and comments)...on the pros and cons...but claiming that Owen Paterson is the best Environment Secretary we've had is also a reflection on all the others...and on the nature of electoral politics as a way to improve the world. I could recast the dispatch as a blog and add your email as a comment!?

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**From Anton Pinschhof to William Shepherd**  
21st July 2014 at 1815

OK for an entry as comment in the weblog.

Re yr own comment: Electoral politics is not a favoured method of the Green Blob either, they prefer "awareness raising" (=propaganda) and are themselves woefully under mandated, being self appointed, unelected NGO experts of the same technocratic habit as those they claim to oppose, preferring interminable technical arguments when the real questions are: Who decides & how? Where does sovereignty reside & how was it established, with the people & by their consent, or with their Lords of Chaos and Masters of Capital & by their brutality?

The Left Wing approach is from the utterly legitimate and unconditional sovereignty of the People, with their consent, whilst the Right Wing approach is that of the hereditary or opportunist elite in any given topside configuration of power, with "hidden persuaders" hypnotising & dividing the impotent masses, and/or with mounted police riding roughshod over the non-consenting

who would reasonably manifest & elaborate better options if they had a sovereign local parliament.

In the mass non-society, all and sundry dissidents & volunteers are cast into innumerable sectarian degrees of radicality and social class, then divided again by innumerable specialising & shifting objects of attention, rather than united by the strategic common priorities of the inhabitants of a given territory, manifesting their presupposition or resumption of popular sovereignty.

Therefore most so-called "green issues" are rather unripe debates between the wrong people, oozing from the false dichotomies created by divide & rule. Even class conflict, real enough and necessary, mostly avoids the search for dialectic resolution that neighbours sharing the same territory ought to obtain when defending common resources & territory.

These above thoughts ran away with me, and I'm filing it all away for a rainy day and another context.

Meanwhile, I reckon only the first paragraph is relevant to what you wrote. The minister was beset by greenish NGO propaganda & the automatic press, not so much by the electoral Green Party as such, though I may be mistaken, being overseas and abroad.

I shall look again at my previous notes.

Too much going on here, family, haymaking, gardening, events...

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**From William Shepherd to Anton Pinschhof**

22nd July 2014 at 0834

The 'thoughts that run away' invariably produce your most thought-provoking remarks. But this exchange has wandered rather far from the original one-sided polemic...I wouldn't for a moment suggest that it was a balanced piece of journalism.

In fact what I was mainly doing was giving some extra exposure/awareness (left wing approach) to some objectionable green tendencies, which I have been objecting to for years.

As I am focussed on other things at present, and as I have little interest in opening up the debate to idiots by providing them with a blog platform (right wing approach), it's probably best to drop the matter.

So I now propose to just amend/improve the original William Shepherd cesc dispatch by adding our email exchange of the past few days as a rather long coda...an Extra...to the *Letter from Chipping Norton* currently online...without further comment or editing.

You may have one more 'go' between hay-making, if you like, so you have the final word.

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**From William Shepherd to Anton Pinschhof**

22nd July 2014 at 0943

I recently updated a 4-year old William Franklin dispatch after reading an article in The Tap that Sabine passed on to me...alongside several others. I might start doing this sort of updating more often for the left and right-wing reasons mentioned in my previous remarks on the Chipping Norton letter. The updated 2014 version of *Letter from Budapest* is at:

<http://cesc.net/dispatchweb/letters/franklin/66.%20letterfrombudapest.pdf>

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