

Scottish  
Environment

**LINK**

**Scottish Environment LINK**

**Annual Report 2006**

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	Ylva Haglund (from June 2006)

## HQ & registered office

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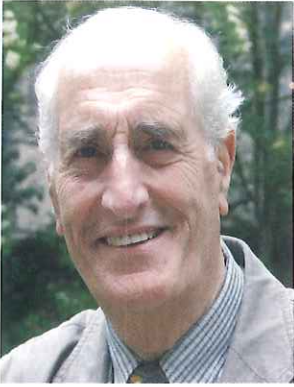
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## Reflections of the President

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Having spoken on several occasions about working for an ecological renaissance, I am having second thoughts. Perhaps for all the excitement, dynamic thinking, unpacking and reconstruction of ideas implied in such a concept as renaissance it is too relaxed compared with what is now required.

Climate change, the husbanding of our natural resources and sinks, the sustainability of the human habitat and the recognition of the connection of that habitat to all life on the planet are matters of urgency on the scale within which such matters are judged.

Within the environment movement people frequently refer to the dissonance between the sweep of the movement's time horizons and the more constrained political horizons. A symptom of the urgency referred to above is that these horizons are converging. Within a generation they will converge and already we know that we shall have to adapt to the consequences of irrevocable actions already taken.

This sense of urgency is being owned by the media, both written and broadcast and parts of industry and commerce. A number of professions are addressing this urgency as I write; the current issue of the British Medical Journal has extensive comment on the matter of contraction and convergence, carbon allowances and green buildings. Note the qualification 'a number'. Massive attitudinal change, required in a democracy, has not yet been secured to enable politicians to follow with the root and branch reordering necessary to address the problems referred to above. Notwithstanding this the Scottish Executive has delivered a suite of good environmental initiatives.

One wonders whether, all those years ago, the community on Easter Island was unanimous in its decision to cut down the last seed bearing tree or whether some of the trades people, some of the artisans and some of the community story tellers urged another course.

Where are these reflections going? Well, the environment has to cease to be one of many issues discussed in the context of politics, economics, trade and employment. The environment has to become the context in which these other matters become the issues.

A few weeks ago the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were discussing the environment on the 'Today' programme with John Humphries. They were both testifying to the importance of the environment and all were agreeing that it was a moral issue. The Chancellor however concluded by saying that the environment had to be balanced against the economy. This of course misses the point that ultimately the environment is not negotiable.

What does it mean for the movement, securing the environment as the context? Well it means not being proprietorial about the environment. It means actively sharing with other institutions and organisations including those not necessarily thought of as our natural allies. It means not blaming but changing, criticism from the environment movement is no substitute for being an engine of change. It means not just embracing one's immediate concerns within the environment but grappling with a holistic approach to society with the environment as the context to secure massive attitudinal change. My impression is that the membership organisations of LINK are filled with people that by qualification, attitude and temperament can fill that role.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Edwards".

Fred Edwards  
President