

CAMPAIGNING IN THE UK

John Stewart

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Campaigning on transport issues for 30 years

30 years ago!

John Stewart – today

- ▣ Chair of AirportWatch – national network of groups opposed to airport expansion
- ▣ Chair of the Heathrow coalition which stopped a 3rd runway

Opposing Road Building in London

- ▣ 1980s – Government had 15 billion euro plan for motorways in London
- ▣ The ‘road building lobby’ was very powerful
- ▣ But we defeated them for the first time

Why We Won

- ▣ We were a united coalition of 250 residents' and environmental organisations
- ▣ We put forward alternatives – public transport, walking and cycling
- ▣ We used unconventional methods of campaigning

Unconventional Methods



Opposing Road Building in the UK

- ▣ 1990: 30 billion euro national road building programme planned by Government
- ▣ The biggest road building programme in UK history: 600 road schemes proposed
- ▣ 1997: Government forced to drop nearly all the road schemes; only 150 left
- ▣ We won again!

Why We Won

- ▣ **1.** A coalition of over 200 residents' and environmental groups
- ▣ The importance of national environmental organisations working with local residents' groups

Why We Won

- ▣ **2.** We made solid academic and economic arguments against road building
- ▣ We were able to put the Government on then defensive by making these arguments.

Why We Won

- ▣ **3. We used unconventional methods, including civil disobedience**
- ▣ **This attracted much media attention and put the Government on the defensive**

Unconventional methods



We Became a National Movement

- ▣ *“Protesting about new roads has become that rarest of British phenomena, a truly populist movement drawing supporters from all walks of life.”* **The Economist, 1994**

Policy Was Changed

- ▣ Roads are still built in the UK
- ▣ But new roads are no longer seen as the answer to mobility problems and prosperity
- ▣ Major campaigns **can** change policy

Heathrow Third Runway

- ▣ 2003: Plans for a third runway at Heathrow
- ▣ The big prize the all-powerful aviation industry wanted
- ▣ Major campaign launched
- ▣ 2010: New Government scraps plans for new runway

The Campaign's Tactics

- ▣ Same as before:
- ▣ Coalition
- ▣ Make the arguments
- ▣ Unconventional campaigning

We became a Movement

- ▣ *“The coalition assembled is extraordinarily wide. It runs from radical eco-warriors to middle-class mothers in west London, hedge fund managers in Richmond, to pensioners and parents in Brentford.”* **Daily Telegraph,**
14/1/09
- ▣ **Policy change: New Government drops all new runways and invests in high-speed rail**

Gracias!

