Making Pro-Environmental Behaviour Work:
An Ethnographic Case Study of Practice, Process and Power in the Workplace

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‘It should be borne in mind that there is nothing more difficult to handle, more doubtful of success, and more dangerous to carry through than initiating changes.’

(Niccolò Machiavelli)

‘How can the ordinary be changed?’

(Kiran Desai)

Abstract

Conventional approaches to pro-environmental behaviour change rest on individualistic and reductive assumptions which posit that behaviour is the outcome of a linear and ultimately rational process of decision-making. Policy approaches have thus concentrated on providing tailored environmental information to individuals to encourage (eco)rational decisions and on removing barriers to 'correct' behaviour, and research has tended to focus on modelling the influences on individual decision-making processes through large scale questionnaire surveys.

This thesis takes a different approach. Based on emerging social practice theories, it investigates what actually happens when pro-environmental ideas come into contact with, and are contested in the course of, everyday practice. Specifically, it provides an ethnographic case study of a pro-environmental behaviour change initiative called Environment Champions in the head offices of Burnetts – a British construction company. It shows how the team of Champions at Burnetts, despite the apparent weakness of their environmentally rational proposals and strong resistance to them, were able to change the nature of social interactions around their offices and to restructure existing practices by introducing a form of environmental discipline to them. It thus argues that pro-environmental behaviour change is a fundamentally social process involving power struggles and collective negotiations over what should count as appropriate behaviour in specific contexts.

The thesis thus suggests that pro-environmental behaviour demands a much more fundamental challenge to social order and everyday life than is implied by conventional research and policy approaches. It concludes by setting out a number of practical and conceptual implications for future work on pro-environmental behaviour change, and outlining the beginnings of a new research agenda on processes of environmental socialisation.

Table of Contents

Abstract 3
Table of Contents 4
List of Figures 7
List of Tables 7
Preface 8
Acknowledgements 11

Chapter 1 Introduction: Re-Making the World from the Office 13
1.1 Environment-Behaviour Relationships: Illusory Progress 15
1.2 Seeking a New Approach: Towards some Research Questions 19
1.3 An Outline 24

Chapter 2 The Social Dynamics of Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change 28
2.1 The Cognitive Approach to Pro-Environmental Behaviour: Changing Minds and Mapping Values 28
2.1.1 Identifying Environmental Attitudes 30
2.1.2 Mapping Environmental Values 33
2.1.3 Social Marketing for Pro-Environmental Behaviour: DEFRA's Framework 36
2.2 The Contextual Approach: Understanding the Dynamics of Social Contexts 38
2.2.1 The Discursive Construction of Environmental Realities 40
2.2.2 Moralising Machines and Being in a Techno Fix 45
2.2.3 Coordinating Lifestyles across Social and Temporal Contexts 48
2.2.4 The Co-Evolution of Collective Conventions 50
2.2.5: Summary: Finding a Middle Ground between Structure and Agency 52
2.3 The Social Organisation of Practice 54
2.3.1 Defining Practice 55
2.3.2 Employing and Applying Practice 57
2.3.3 Gaps in Practice 61
2.4 The Dynamics of Interaction in Communities of Practice 62
2.4.1 Communities of Practice 62
2.4.2 Erving Goffman and the Mechanisms of Social Interaction 65
2.4.3 The Sociology and Greening of Organisations 67
2.5 Summary and Research Questions 69

Chapter 3 Telling Stories of Behaviour Change 72
3.1 Starting Points: Constructing an Ethnographic Case Study 73
3.1.1 Constructing Worlds: Powerful and Partial Fictions 76
3.2 Finding and Introducing the Case Study: Global Action Plan, Environment Champions and Burnetts 79
3.3 Undertaking the Ethnography 84
3.3.1 Observation: Where and When to Look, and What to See? 84
3.3.2 Participation: Fluid Identities and Multiple Positionings 87
3.3.3 Making Field Notes: Writing Up Reality 90
3.3.4 Interviews 92
3.3.5 Leaving the Field 96
3.4 Analysis 97

3.4.1 Analysing all the Time 97
3.4.2 Coding and Cohering 98
3.4.3 Axial Coding or Storying the Data 100
3.5 Ethical Considerations 102
3.5.1 Ethics in Participant Observation 102
3.5.2 Ethics in Semi-Structured Interviews 103
3.6 Writing Up 105

Chapter 4 Getting Going: Designing Pro-Environmental Practice 106
4.1 Introducing the Order and Practice of Bridgeford 106
4.1.1 The Order of Bridgeford 107
4.1.2 Bridgeford in Practice 111
4.1.3 The Mesh of Orders and Practices at Bridgeford 117
4.2 Managing Change at Burnetts 118
4.2.1 Re-Branding Burnetts 119
4.2.2 Introducing CHANGE 121
4.3 Introducing Environment Champions at Bridgeford 123
4.3.1 The Origins and Purpose of Environment Champions 123
4.3.2 Environment Champions: A Different Approach? 126
4.3.3 Recruiting the Champions 127
4.3.4 Auditing the Environment: Connecting with the Facts 131
4.4 Challenging Practice: Re-Forming Burnetts 135
4.4.1 Environment Champions and Stuff 136
4.4.2 Environment Champions and Skills 138
4.4.3 Environment Champions and Shifting Meanings 139
4.4.4 Promoting New Practices-As-Entities 144
4.4.5 The Plan 149
4.5 Summary 151

Chapter 5 Delivering Environment Champions: The Realpolitik of Changing Practices 154
5.1 Delivering the Campaign: As Easy as Putting Up Posters and Providing New Bins? 154
5.2 No Bin Day and Competing Communities of Practice: Engaging with Facilities Management 160
5.2.1 Office Politics: The Champions Relationship with Facilities Management 167
5.3 Hijacking the CHANGE Programme: Mobilising Discursive Resources for Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change 174
5.4 The Champions' View: How was the Champions Initiative Delivered? 180
5.4.1 Group Dynamics: Practically Delivering Change or Developing an Environmental Social Network? 180
5.4.2 Delivering the Initiative: A Radical Challenge or Reforming the Rules? 184
5.5 Summary 187

Chapter 6 Performing Change: Interaction and Power in Environment Champions 189
6.1 The Results: Changing Practices or Practitioners? 190
6.1.1 Employee Responses: Maybe We Should Be Doing These Things Anyway? 192
6.2 Conspicuous Environmentalism 194
6.2.1 Pro-Environmental Performances and Mini-Champions 195
6.2.2 Negotiating Environmental Behaviour 199
6.2.3 Resisting the Initiative 201
6.2.4 Environmental Style: Humour, Teasing and Offensiveness 204
6.3 Inconspicuous and Banal Environmentalism 208
6.3.1 Stopping, Thinking, and Acting 208
6.3.2 Attuning to the Environment: Changing the Champions? 213
6.3.3 Changing Your Behaviour Behind Your Back 214
6.3.4 The Beginnings of Banal Environmentalism? 215
6.4 Is Goffman Enough?: The Humble Joining of Conspicuous and Inconspicuous Environmentalism 217
6.4.1 Re-Programming Reality: Partitioning Space, Time and Activity 222
6.4.2 Hierarchical Observation: Pro-Environmental Big Brother? 226
6.4.3 Normalising Judgement: Creating Environmentally Different Types of People 229
6.4.4 The Examination: Testing the Power/Knowledge of the Champions 236
6.4.5 Environmental Discipline and Making Up Banal Environmentalism 237
6.5 Summary 238

Chapter 7 Conclusion: Making the Transition from Thought to Practice 241
7.1 Summary of Findings: What Actually Happened? 242
7.1.1 Practicing Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change 242
7.1.2 Putting Practice in Context 245
7.1.3 Interaction and Power in Environment Champions 250
7.2 Making Pro-Environmental Behaviour Work: Towards a New Research Agenda on Environmental Socialisation 255

Appendices 261
Appendix 1 Initial Research Proposal to Burnetts 261
Appendix 2 Revised Access Request Letter to Burnetts 263
Appendix 3 Email to the Champions Team Explaining the Nature of my Research 264
Appendix 4 Extract from my Field Diary 265
Appendix 5 Interview Schedule 267
Appendix 6 Consent and Release Form 268
Appendix 7 Extract from an Interview 270

Bibliography 272

List of Figures

2.1: The Linear Model of Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change 29
2.2: Ajzen's 'Theory of Planned Behaviour' 31
2.3: Value-Belief-Norm Theory 34
2.4: DEFRA's Segmentation Model 37
2.5: Discursive Processes in Action at Home 43
2.6: The Sociotechnical Landscape 47
2.7: Spaargaren and Van Vliet's Schematic of Social Practices 58
2.8: Shove and Pantzar's Components of Practice 59

3.1: Theoretical Social Roles for Fieldwork 87
3.2: Operational Diagrams 101

4.1: Plan of the Bridgeford site 108
4.2: List of 'Short Term Actions' from the Second Training Meeting 137
4.3: How to Make Double-Sided Printing the Default Setting 140
4.4: Leaving the Office Checklist 141

5.1: Email Sent to all Staff at Bridgeford during Energy Month 157
5.2: Existing Waste Disposal Facilities at Bridgeford 161
5.3: Desktop Recycling Tray 166

6.1: Plan of the Bridgeford Site showing Area Mentors 224
6.2: Normalisation of Paper Consumption 230
6.3: Extract from an Email Sent to all Bridgeford Staff 232
6.4: Matrix of Potential Reactions to the EC Initiative 233

List of Tables

3.1: Summary of Champions Meetings Attended 86
3.2: Summary of Interviews 94

4.1: Summary of Initial Audit Results 133
4.2: Section of the Campaign Timetable 150

6.1: Summary of Final Audit Results 189

Preface

> 'The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning. If you knew when you began a book what you would say at the end, do you think that you would have the courage to write it?'
>
> (Foucault 1988, 9)

This thesis has been a long time in the making. It began when I undertook a one-month placement with the UK Sustainable Development Commission in January-February 2003. At the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in August-September 2002, all signatory nations agreed that they would 'encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes…to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production' (WSSD 2002, paragraph 15). Accordingly, the Sustainable Development Commission asked me to research the emerging area of sustainable consumption and production, and to find out what existing research capacity existed in the UK with a view to the UK Government's response. The month that followed, and the report I produced (Hargreaves 2003), represents the beginnings of this thesis. During it I became frustrated with what I saw as an over-reliance on sustainable production, resource productivity and techno-fix solutions in bringing about sustainable development. This led me to suggest that, in addition to a focus on the 'world behind the product', there was also an urgent need to consider the 'world behind the consumer.' I argued that:

> 'Only with an increased understanding of people's motivations for consuming can we begin to understand these [unsustainable] trends, attempt to engage with them, and put them on the right track.'
>
> (Hargreaves 2003, 11)

With this aim in mind, once the Masters had finished, I accepted a Research Associate position at Imperial College London to work on the 'It's your choice!' project. This project aimed to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption by providing information to consumers on the environmental impacts of their consumption decisions via a well-branded website. My job was to gather this information and determine the best way of presenting it.

During the year I became disillusioned with the nature of the approach being adopted by the project. It seemed to treat individuals as if they were machines. It suggested that all that was needed was to programme in the right information, and the

correct, sustainable behaviour would somehow follow. I knew from my own experience, however, that I would often behave in stark contradiction to what I knew or thought was the correct thing to do. It thus became apparent that the project I was working on, no matter how hard I applied myself, would not work. There needed to be greater consideration of the various factors, above and beyond individuals' motivations, that shape everyday behaviours. Furthermore, I began to consider that a sustainability in which some behaviours were deemed correct and others incorrect was not the kind of sustainability I was striving for.

This frustration and discontent led me to seek out alternative understandings of sustainability and sustainable consumption, and I began to find some of these in the writings of sociologists and cultural geographers. These disciplines appeared to recognise that individuals did not, and perhaps should not, simply do what they were told. Instead, factors such as lifestyles, cultural conventions, technologies, and politics got in the way. Whilst this work did not appear to offer any solutions as simple as a website, it struck me as a far better starting point. I thus applied to the Economic and Social Research Council to conduct a '1+3' M.Sc. and PhD in this area under the supervision of Jacquie Burgess at University College London and was delighted when my application was successful.

During my M.Sc. I became interested in the role of different contexts in shaping how people behave. In particular, my M.Sc. dissertation considered how different 'rhetorical situations' (Bitzer 1968) activate different stocks of knowledge, and different attitudes and opinions, within individuals (Billig 1996; Myers and Macnaghten 1998; Myers 2004). These findings seemed to contradict fundamentally the information based model I'd been blindly following whilst at Imperial College. The focus of policy attention, it seemed to me, needed to be on the social organisation of different contexts as a precursor to the formation and expression of particular attitudes and cognitive schema, rather than the other way around.

This is the starting point I set off from in this thesis, aiming to chart some new ground in research on sustainable and pro-environmental behaviour. Over the last three years, my research focus has continually shifted. Throughout, I have followed different leads as they arose, discovered new and often unexpected areas of interest (such as 18th century French prison reform), and tried to allow myself and my thoughts to develop in response to these different prompts, rather than to dictate how I interpreted them. This thesis has thus been a long journey into the unknown, aiming to

explore familiar territory with new techniques and, by so doing, also finding wholly new areas to explore. It is a journey for which, at times, I felt ill-equipped and was forced to rely on more experienced guides. Now that this part of the journey is over, I realise that I have not travelled as fast or as far as I originally thought I would. I must have become lost on some of the long detours I took. I have not, however, lost my appetite for further travel. Without wishing to imply that there is a single final destination, I look forward to pursuing some of the new routes and alternative paths this thesis has uncovered, even if they prove to be dead ends. I hope also that others will follow or at least straighten some of the signposts I have tried to set out.

T.H.

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thanks. My Mum and Dad, Linda and David Hargreaves, have always been there for me, always supported and encouraged me, and always been willing to listen to my many complaints and struggles. I never thought I'd follow in their footsteps, but the fact I've come this far shows what good role models they are. Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my partner Ruth Newton. She has shared in many of the ideas as they have developed, being prepared to listen to my long-winded explanations and poorly constructed arguments and always find something positive and constructive to say. Throughout this entire process she has shown unfailing patience with and faith in me, and I am so happy to have had her at my side. Thank you.

Chapter 1 Introduction: Re-Making the World from the Office

'To change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making.'
(Bourdieu 1989, 23)

'Behavioural change is fast becoming the 'holy grail' of sustainable development policy.'
(Jackson 2005a, xi)

It is increasingly recognised that contemporary ways of life are harming the environment and, in turn, that the environment is harming, or at least threatening to harm, contemporary ways of life. In a recent statement the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) dramatically declared:

> 'Imagine a world in which environmental change threatens people's health, physical security, material needs and social cohesion. This is a world beset by increasingly intense and frequent storms, and by rising sea levels. Some people experience extensive flooding, while others endure intense droughts. Species extinction occurs at rates never before witnessed. Safe water is increasingly limited, hindering economic activity. Land degradation endangers the lives of millions of people. This is the world today.'
> (UNEP 2007, 6)

These doom-laden tones and apocalyptic visions are no longer the preserve of newspaper scare stories or disaster films, but are increasingly common from all corners of society, discussed in the corridors of Whitehall, business boardrooms and even family dinner tables. Environmental change and its impact on society is increasingly seen as a crisis, and has become something of a backdrop to normal everyday life (*cf.* Hargreaves 2005). There is a general, creeping sense that something is wrong with the way we are currently living and that something needs to be done to reduce human impacts on the environment.

At the most fundamental level, this thesis is motivated by a concern to understand how these ideas about environmental change and crisis come to have, or not to have, an impact on mundane and everyday human practices. It seeks to explore large questions such as: How do individuals make sense of these environmental ideas in the course of their everyday lives? What are the relationships between environmental ideas and everyday behaviour? What different roles does the

environment play in the many different aspects of contemporary lifestyles? And what can be done to bring about more pro-environmental behaviour?

These are not new questions. This thesis contends, however, that to date they have been asked, and thus answers been sought, in a peculiarly narrow manner. In short, they have been approached through a reductive and individualistic lens that fundamentally neglects large aspects of real life and thus can only ever provide impoverished answers. The last three decades of research in this area has been dominated by a focus on individuals' supposedly rational decision-making processes and how they may be changed to engender pro-environmental behaviour. Vast research and policy effort has been poured into educating the public and attempting to raise general levels of environmental awareness and concern, premised on the assumption that such cognitive states should eventually translate into pro-environmental behaviour. Machiavelli warns, however, that 'a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done moves towards self-destruction rather than self-preservation' (Machiavelli 1999, 50). This thesis suggests that research on pro-environmental behaviour needs to heed Machiavelli's warning. Too much research and policy has rested on how individuals *should* behave, and on what knowledge and information they require to make 'correct' decisions. In the process, and to borrow from Flyvbjerg (1998, 6), this research has ignored the *realpolitik* and *realrationalität* of behaviour. It has ignored what actually happens in processes of pro-environmental behaviour change as they unfold in the course of everyday life amid existing social settings.

To counter this, and begin to explore new ways of approaching these questions, this thesis offers a detailed case study of a pro-environmental behaviour change initiative called Environment Champions, run by the environmental charity Global Action Plan, that occurred in the head offices of a company called Burnetts[1]. On one level it tells the story of a group of people in an ordinary and wholly familiar office setting who tried to reduce the environmental impacts of their own and their colleagues' workplace behaviour. At the same time, it aims to provide some insights into the real life difficulties and challenges of changing our current 'ways of world-making.'

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[1] To protect my participants' anonymity I have used the pseudonym 'Burnetts' throughout this thesis. It is with some regret that I am unable to give due credit to the real company and real people involved in this study.

To begin, this introductory chapter will briefly situate the thesis within the broad research and policy context on pro-environmental behaviour change (section 1.1). It will then set out the four original starting points of this study and outline a set of research questions that flow from them and underpin the rest of this thesis (section 1.2). Finally, section 1.3 will provide an outline of the chapters that make up this thesis.

1.1 Environment-Behaviour Relationships: Illusory Progress

Since the publication of *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al* 1972) and the 1973 oil crisis, the recognition that human behaviour has a detrimental impact on the environment, through excessive resource consumption and the by-products of that consumption in the form of pollution and waste, has been central to the environmental agenda. Stern (2000) defines these 'environmentally significant behaviours' as those which have either a substantial *impact* on the environment, or those that have a (usually pro-) environmental *intent* behind them. Since the 1970s, these environmentally significant behaviours have been a key focus of academic and policy attention. For example, in an early editor's introduction to the journal *Environment and Behavior* (first published in 1969), Sewell (1971) argued that 'the quick, administrative, financial and technological fix' that was being applied to environmental problems through the establishment of various environmental agencies and ministries around the world, was destined to fail. Instead, to address the severity of environmental problems

> 'would require a genuine recognition on the part of the public at large that [a long run improvement in environmental quality] is necessary and a willingness to accept the sacrifices that its attainment would entail.'
>
> (Sewell 1971, 119-120)

Despite the clearly political intent behind early environmental activism e.g. Friends of the Earth's very first protest in 1972 was to dump non-returnable bottles on the doorstep of Schweppes' headquarters, and despite some early and interesting attempts to explore ways of conceiving environment-behaviour relations that captured the grounded nature and complexity of everyday lives (e.g. Lowenthal 1972; Tuan 1972), this quotation from Sewell indicates the dominant framing of environment-behaviour

relations that has endured since the 1970s. It is based on the principle that individuals are rational economic agents who must be 'willing to accept' certain 'sacrifices' in their normally self-interested lives, and it is based on the notion that the key means of bringing about these sacrifices is through raising recognition and awareness of environmental problems amongst the public at large. From the early 1970s, *homo economicus* was thus placed at the centre of policy and research efforts on environment-behaviour relations and s/he has not moved since.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a vast amount of work within cognitive, social and environmental psychology (Craik 1973) developed models of individuals' environmental behaviour that built upon, and substantially developed, an essentially economic understanding of human behaviour based on rational choice theory (*cf.* Jackson 2005a; Darnton 2008). This work produced a range of very robust and well tested scales and models of the relationships between environmental attitudes, values and behaviour. In particular attention was focused on waste recycling (e.g. Burn and Oskamp 1986; Vining and Ebreo 1992), energy conservation behaviours (e.g. Costanzo *et al* 1986), and on designing consistent scales to test general levels of environmental concern (e.g. Dunlap and Van Liere 1978). These models essentially reduced pro-environmental behaviour to a matter of rational decision-making by individuals (as shown in the critique by Harrison and Davies 1998). Within these models, focus shifted to the *impact* of behaviours rather than their *intent* (*cf.* Stern 2000), as pro-environmental behaviour was de-politicised and turned into a technical matter of gathering correct information and making rational decisions on the basis of it.

Consistent with this approach, policy makers around the world relied on providing environmental information to fill an assumed *information deficit* amongst the public (*cf.* Burgess *et al* 1998; Owens 2000). Throughout the 1990s, policies such as labelling products on the basis of their environmental impacts, and conducting large scale mass media information campaigns to educate the public, were enacted. In the UK for example, this resulted in two mass media initiatives: *Going for Green* (Blake 1999; Hinchliffe 1996) and *Are You Doing Your Bit* (DEMOS 2003, and see UNEP/Futerra 2005 for numerous similar examples from around the world) to communicate a general pro-environmental message to the public in the hope that this would impact upon their decisions, and convince them, rationally, to adopt pro-environmental behaviours. These policies, which reduce environmental behaviour to a

simple matter of eco-rational action in the market place, are also consistent with the ecological modernisation framework (Blowers 1997; Cohen 1997; Mol and Sonnenfeld 2000; Mol and Spaargaren 2000) that was increasingly applied in European politics in the 1990s. In short, an individualistic reading of environmental behaviour, developed through psychological models, aligned, and continues to align, well with the dominant political and economic outlook of the times (*cf.* Hobson 2002).

Throughout the 1990s, as expressed levels of environmental concern amongst the public ebbed and flowed (Worcester 1993, 2000; Burgess *et al* 1998), there was increasing recognition of a gap between levels of concern and levels of pro-environmental behaviour. Within the existing psychological paradigm, the identification of this *value-action gap* (Blake 1999) led to new research that attempted to try and close or bridge it (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). For example, studies looked towards the provision of more specific information to more tightly defined public groups (de Young *et al* 1993; Bamberg 2003), and sought better, more motivational, forms of communication (McKenzie-Mohr 2000). In short, rather than critique or throw out the central model, attempts were made to modify and incrementally improve it (see chapter 2).

Within sociology and cultural studies, however, a range of alternative explanations for the value-action gap, and of environment-behaviour relations more generally, began to emerge. These approaches emphasised the reductive and individualistic nature of the psychological approach. They suggested that such rationalistic models were not appropriate for explaining habitual behaviours (*cf.* Halkier 2001), and that behaviour was shaped by sociotechnical surroundings, cultural conventions and social discourses in the context of living out lifestyles, rather than by individual decision-making (e.g. Harrison *et al* 1996; Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997; Burgess *et al* 1998, 2003; Shove *et al* 1998; Bedford 1999; Macnaghten 2003; Shove 2003). These alternatives (and see chapter 2 for a more detailed review) thus emphasised the irreducible complexity of everyday lives and how environmental understandings and behaviour were thoroughly enmeshed within it. Ungar (1994), for example, suggested that the very concepts of the environment and of environmental attitudes were untenable as discrete and isolatable categories. Instead, they represented 'all-embracing macro-categories' (Ungar 1994, 292), inextricably linked-in with and related to other aspects of daily life, rather than possessing their own independent existence. These critiques thus called for a more sophisticated

understanding of pro-environmental behaviour understood from the perspective of individuals' daily lives as they were lived out across different social settings and contexts. They recognised the complex, multiple, and non-linear logics and rationalities of lifestyles, and that a *rationalisation framing* (Harrison *et al* 1996; Hobson 2002) of behaviour failed to account for these. These alternatives, however, have gained little traction in the policy arena.

Today, the nature of the environmental crisis appears to have worsened. Portents of climate change, peak oil, and the current credit crunch all evince the extent to which Western societies are living beyond their means. In this climate it seems ever more important to find effective ways of reducing human impacts on the environment. Accordingly, the need for change now appears to be widely accepted. Sustainable development, for example, whilst still a contested term (*cf.* Owens 1994; Dresner 2002), is increasingly central to policy making, particularly among European states, even being a statutory duty for English Regional Development Agencies and the Welsh Assembly Government (*cf.* HM Government 2005). Nonetheless, whilst recognition of, and the scale of the environmental challenge have changed and grown since the 1970s, the approaches being adopted towards it remain remarkably familiar.

Although under the new banners of sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles (e.g. DEFRA and DTI 2003; Jackson 2005a; Sustainable Consumption Roundtable 2006), attempts to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change still rest largely on changing individual decision-making processes through the provision of information. Social marketing has replaced mass media campaigns as the dominant vehicle for such information (*cf.* McKenzie-Mohr 2000; DEFRA 2008; Haq *et al* 2008), and it is now communicated using sophisticated advertising techniques to carefully identified population segments. Indeed, behaviour change has become something of a buzzword in contemporary UK policy, applied to numerous areas such as obesity, smoking, alcoholism, and dangerous driving, as a means of increasing the public value and effectiveness of policy processes (Darnton 2008). Nonetheless, the theoretical basis of these behaviour change interventions remains essentially the same as that adopted in the early 1970s. The supposedly rational individual and his/her decision-making processes remain firmly at the centre of contemporary policy on environment-behaviour relations.

I would suggest that the progress made over the last 30 years has therefore been illusory. The models being pressed into service to tackle increasingly complex

problems remain premised on a reductive and individualistic model in which pro-environmental behaviour is fundamentally de-socialised, de-contextualised and de-politicised. By continuing to frame environment-behaviour relations in terms of individual decision-making processes, such models appear unable to grasp the dynamics of everyday practices as they are performed in specific *milieu*. As such, they appear ill-equipped to deal with the scale of the environmental challenge being faced. This thesis contends that it is time to seek a new approach for environment-behaviour policy and research. The next section will outline the basis of the alternative being attempted here, before setting out the research questions that underpin this thesis.

1.2 Seeking a New Approach: Towards some Research Questions

To avoid the reductive and individualistic shortcomings of conventional approaches to environment-behaviour relationships, this thesis begins from four original starting points. First, it applies emerging insights from Social Practice Theory (SPT – Schatzki 1996, 2001, 2002; Reckwitz 2002a; Warde 2005) to pro-environmental behaviour. Second, it focuses on practices as they are negotiated and performed within specific contexts by paying particular attention to practices in a workplace. Third, it seeks to observe the dynamics of social interaction involved in the performance of practices to try and understand how pro-environmental behaviour is conducted on the ground by social agents. Fourth, to achieve these aims, it employs an ethnographic methodological approach. In this section I will address each of these novel starting points in turn.

The initial stating point for this thesis is the application of SPT to pro-environmental behaviour. Conventional approaches have concentrated on individuals' thought processes, expending great effort in trying to identify the relevant cognitive schema such as attitudes, values or beliefs that correlate with pro-environmental behaviours. In contrast, an SPT-based approach starts from the *doing* of practices (Shove *et al* 2007). Rather than assuming that behaviour begins inside individuals' heads, as they make different choices to pursue different intentions, SPT emphasises that practices, and associated behaviours, are fundamentally social and shared entities. Whilst practices may be performed by individuals, they are not possessed by them. Instead, SPT suggests that individuals, and the attitudes and values they express, are parts of the practices they perform (Reckwitz 2002a; Schatzki 2002). SPT thus

represents a very different approach, and whilst it has seen a recent resurgence from a 'second generation' of practice theorists (Spaargaren 2006), to my knowledge it has not yet been applied in any depth to processes of pro-environmental behaviour change (although Spaargaren 2004; 2006; Southerton *et al* 2004; and Evans and Abrahamse 2008 are making some steps in this direction). As such, this thesis represents the very first of its kind, and should thus be seen as an exploratory endeavour that attempts to begin charting some new theoretical terrain.

Some social practice theorists may dispute my use of the term practice alongside the terms behaviour and context (e.g. Schatzki 2002). It is thus important to be clear about my understanding and use of these terms from the outset. These theorists would argue that the nature of social practices is such that they subsume notions of behaviour and context within themselves. Continued use of these terms thus muddies the theoretical waters by upholding a false distinction between practice and context, or by continuing to promote the kind of methodological individualism SPT rails against. Whilst I essentially agree with the theoretical basis of this standpoint, I also feel that such dogmatic insistence on terminological precision may be counter-productive. Vast amounts of high quality and useful research has been conducted in the area of pro-environmental behaviour that relies fundamentally on the terms behaviour and context. To ignore this research as theoretically inadequate would be short-sighted, and steadfast refusal to engage on its terms would run the risk of the potential strengths of an SPT-based approach being ignored within important contemporary policy debates. In short, people behave within specific contexts. Throughout this thesis I have thus tried to adopt a flexible and pragmatic stance using the term practice to refer to broad abstract social entities, behaviour to refer to individual performances of these practices (much like Schatzki's [2002] use of the term practices-as-performances), and context to refer to the physical and social setting in which practices are performed. I do not expect all, or even many, social practice theorists to agree with these distinctions, but do hope that they recognise and appreciate my efforts to extend the application of SPT to a new and crucially important area.

The second starting point for this study is to pay serious attention to the role of specific contexts in the performance of practices and the negotiation of pro-environmental behaviour change. Context is increasingly included as a variable within the conventional approach's decision-making models. 'Situational variables' that refer

both to physical infrastructure (e.g. Guagnano *et al* 1995) as well as to social networks (Olli *et al* 2001) and norms (Barr 2003) have been added-in to existing models and, where studied, have consistently been found to have a powerful, even over-riding influence on cognitive decision-making processes. Whilst this increasing attention to context is welcome, in this thesis I suggest that including context as a mere variable in individuals' decisions is insufficient. Such a view presents context as an essentially static thing that individuals can easily enter and exit, and which only becomes relevant at the very edges of behaviour when it throws up barriers to pro-environmental action. In contrast, this thesis argues for a dynamic and active view of context as something that is central to the kinds of behavioural choices that arise, and to the ways in which individuals go about interpreting environmental information and making decisions on the basis of it. Individuals, and the social practices they perform, are thus not independent from social contexts, for it is a part of them and they a part of it (*cf.* Nye and Hargreaves 2008).

Although in a very different academic setting, McDermott (1991) draws a similar distinction between a static and a dynamic view of context using the metaphors of soup in a bowl, and fibres in a rope respectively. A static view of context, he argues, sees it as like 'an empty slot, a container, into which other things are placed.' He uses the example of soup in a bowl: 'The soup does not shape the bowl, and the bowl most certainly does not alter the substance of the soup.' He goes on to argue that 'a static sense of context delivers a stable world' (McDermott 1991, 282). In contrast, a dynamic view of context is captured by the metaphor of fibres in a rope. On their own, the fibres are simply fibres and there is no rope for them to be simply slotted into. Instead, they must be threaded together to form a rope, and in being threaded together they actively create the rope and are themselves recreated by it. In this view, context is more than the sum of its parts, and plays an active role in shaping and changing the world. This is the view I have tried to adopt in this thesis.

Within this thesis, the specific context I address is that of a workplace. Considering many individuals spend the majority of their waking hours at work, and interacting with their colleagues, it is remarkable that so little attention has been paid to this setting and these relationships in work on pro-environmental behaviour (Tudor *et al* 2007, 2008). Perhaps because of the conventional approach's assumption that behaviour is the result of individuals making private decisions, there has been an overwhelming bias towards domestic and private lives in this area. Indeed, the current

focus on sustainable consumption continues this bias (Røpke 2004). This thesis attempts to begin rectifying this situation by exploring a pro-environmental behaviour change initiative in the head offices of Burnetts – a UK construction company (see chapters 3 and 4 for background information on the case study).

The third starting point of this thesis is to try and understand the role of social interaction in the performance of pro-environmental behaviours. Social interaction processes have been almost entirely ignored by conventional research in this area. By reducing environment-behaviour relations to a matter of individual decision-making, social interactions have been systematically factored out of analyses, except as an antecedent variable informing those individually taken decisions. Olli *et al* (2001), for example, attempted to factor social relations into decision-making models by creating an index of 'participation' based on the frequency with which respondents engaged with members of environmental organisations. Whilst they found such participation to have a very strong impact on the performance of pro-environmental behaviour, their reductive and quantitative approach fundamentally fails to capture the dynamics of social interaction. Work in this area has been blind to the normative rules and relations inherent within situated interaction processes (e.g. Goffman 1959, 1963a; Billig 2001) and, in so being, has shut out the local political struggles over who should take responsibility for environmental problems and how this should be factored in to everyday behaviours (*cf.* Burningham and O'Brien 1994; Hobson 2002). In contrast, this thesis seeks to focus directly on processes of social interaction, to try and understand how they invoke different political and normative positions, and thus to explore how they shape the understanding, negotiation and performances of pro-environmental behaviours. It argues that such micro-level interactions are the most ubiquitous and fundamental level on which pro-environmental behaviour is enacted, and must no longer be ignored in attempts to understand environment-behaviour relations.

Finally, the fourth original starting point of this thesis is methodological. The vast majority of work on pro-environmental behaviour change has relied on the use questionnaire surveys to provide the basis for correlations between cognitive dispositions and anti- or pro-environmental behaviours. This methodological technique, I would suggest, lies at the root of many of the shortcomings of work in this area. By surveying atomised individuals, and seeking to capture the complexity of everyday life through their positions on likert scales, research in this area has been

entirely unable to capture the interrelated dynamics of interaction, context and practice that form the basis of this thesis. The search for statistical representation has necessitated a reductive classification of individuals' lives that eradicates their very individuality, even if they are then aggregated into ever more tightly defined population segments. Similarly, the search for robust, reliable and widely applicable models of decision-making has ensured that the vital details of everyday life are airbrushed out of the picture.

In contrast, I have adopted an ethnographic case study approach based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews. In so doing, I hope to capture the real life complexity of pro-environmental behaviour change as it unfolds in practice, and as individuals' talk about and reflect upon it. Critics may argue that a case study approach fails to provide a statistically representative picture of pro-environmental behaviour and is thus of little or no use, particularly for policy making. In response, I would suggest that it is precisely the search for statistical representation, with all the aggregation and abstraction it necessarily entails, that has led to research and policy that is systematically blind to what actually happens when people attempt to live pro-environmentally. Eschewing statistical representation is thus a deliberate strategy. This thesis advances research by considering a micro- rather than macro-picture, offering detail rather than aggregation, and producing dynamic stories rather than static models. Its strength lies precisely in its depth rather than its breadth.

These original starting points led me to the following over-arching research question, and three sub-questions, that underpin the rest of this thesis:

> How do ideas about environmental change come to have an impact, or not, on everyday human behaviours?
>
> 1. What, if anything, does social practice theory offer the study of pro-environmental behaviour change?
> 2. In what ways are pro-environmental behaviours context specific and, in particular, what are the dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour at work?
> 3. What role, if any, does social interaction play in preventing or promoting the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviours into social practices?

These questions offer the potential for a radically new approach to research and policy on pro-environmental behaviour. In attempting to answer them, I hope this thesis

makes an original contribution in three ways. First, it makes an empirical contribution by exploring the dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour in workplaces, and thus fills a gap in existing research. This offers the potential to open up questions about how pro-environmental behaviour may cross contexts and diffuse throughout all areas of lifestyles. Second, it makes a methodological contribution by exploring the application of ethnographic techniques to an area where they have not previously been applied. Whilst it may not be able to draw broad general conclusions that may apply in all situations, it will hopefully provide well informed, and highly detailed, lessons that may be reflected upon and learnt from in future attempts to produce pro-environmental behaviour change. Third, it makes a theoretical contribution by exploring what the emerging SPT-based approach might add to work on pro-environmental behaviour. To my knowledge this has not been done before. As such, this thesis hopes to offer a theoretical voyage of discovery that has the potential to illuminate the local and situated *doings* of pro-environmental behaviours. This thesis thus provides an exploration of a new approach to some old questions. It cannot hope to provide final answers, but does aim to provoke new understandings of, and debates about, the relationship between human behaviour and the environment.

1.3 An Outline

The next chapter sets this study within its theoretical context by providing a detailed review of prior work on pro-environmental behaviour change. After detailing the major strands of the conventional *cognitive* perspective, it considers the major critiques of this work set out by an emerging *contextual* alternative. In particular, the contextual approach focuses on the role of discourses, technology, and the concept of lifestyles in shaping how anti- or pro-environmental behaviour unfolds. The chapter then suggests, however, that where the cognitive perspective offers an undersocialised (Granovetter 1985) and individualistic account of pro-environmental behaviour, the contextual approach makes an equivalent error by providing an oversocialised view that can tend to shut out individuals altogether. The chapter thus seeks a middle level between structure and agency on which to situate this thesis, and progresses to review work in SPT that aims to provide this. It suggests that whilst SPT offers some potential, it demands some significant modifications to make it empirically applicable. In particular there is a need for it to pay greater attention to the social dynamics and

interactions involved in practices. The chapter suggests that the work of Wenger (1998) on *communities of practice*, and some of Goffman's interactionist concepts may be useful here. Finally, the chapter considers the general dearth of research on pro-environmental behaviour that focuses on workplaces. It seeks some answers with a brief review of work on organisational greening, but identifies a need for a more detailed study that considers the contextual negotiations of pro-environmental behaviour within organisational settings. This review leads back to the research questions, outlined above, which close the chapter.

Chapter 3 then sets out the methodological basis of, and procedures undertaken in, this thesis. It argues the case for a form of contextual constructionism (Jones 2002) in which the methodological techniques used in research determine what it is possible to know. Accordingly, it critiques the reductive methodological individualism inherent to work on pro-environmental behaviour change that relies on questionnaire surveys. It suggests that such an approach fails to capture some of the most crucial dynamics and mechanisms involved in behaviour change processes. On these grounds, it sets out the basis of the ethnographic case study approach adopted in this study by introducing Global Action Plan and the Environment Champions (EC) initiative, and providing details of the participant observation and interview techniques used.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then represent an ethnographic account of the EC initiative as it unfolded in the head office, Bridgeford, site of Burnetts. Chapter 4 introduces the Bridgeford site, work practices before the EC initiative began, and considers the precise institutional context into which the EC initiative was introduced. It then applies Shove and Pantzar's (2005) vision of practices as consisting in assemblages of images, skills and stuff to show how, in their early planning meetings, the Champions team constructed new practices-as-entities to diffuse to their colleagues. It argues that this is the level on which behaviour change occurs, rather than inside individual's heads, and that SPT offers a more holistic and flexible framework with which to approach behaviour change processes.

Chapter 5 then considers the delivery of the EC initiative, concentrating on what happened when the Champions' proposals interacted with existing practices at Bridgeford. It focuses on two key narratives that ran throughout the EC initiative: first, the Champions' attempt to organise a No Bin Day and their associated relationship with the Facilities Management team, and second, interactions on a

primarily discursive level between the EC initiative and the pre-existing CHANGE programme. In tracing these narratives, chapter 5 reveals the scale of the challenge involved in changing practices, and shows the EC initiative, and the environment generally, to have been relatively weak in the context of the Bridgeford site. As a result, much of the EC initiative's initial radicalism was seen to be localised and contextualised within existing systems of practice at Bridgeford rather than able to challenge these practices from the outside. Nonetheless, chapter 5 also reveals the pragmatism and resourcefulness the Champions displayed in their attempts to bring about pro-environmental change.

Chapter 6 considers the outcomes of the EC initiative. It begins by revealing the significant environmental savings achieved in quantitative terms. Where conventional research on pro-environmental behaviour change would seek cognitive correlates of these changes, however, the chapter instead seeks to identify observed changes to the performance of practices around the Bridgeford site. In so doing, it finds that whilst the practices themselves did not noticeably change, the manner in which they were performed appeared to have done so. In particular, the EC initiative appeared to have brought about changes to the ways people interacted around the site, and changes to how they approached their existing practices. I label these changes *conspicuous* and *inconspicuous environmentalism* respectively, and suggest they represent the beginnings of what Billig (1995) might call a *banal environmentalism*, that is, one which is so pervasive as to go unnoticed. This leads to a puzzling question however: how could the relatively weak EC initiative bring about such significant changes? The second half of chapter 6 tackles this question by closely observing the 'humble and mundane mechanisms' (Miller and Rose 1990, 8) employed by the Champions. It finds a striking similarity between aspects of the EC initiative and Michel Foucault's (1977) observations about discipline. In uncovering the means by which the Champions re-disciplined their colleagues along environmental lines, it contends that pro-environmental behaviour change at Bridgeford involved a change in the workings of power, representing a process of re-socialisation to 'make up' (Hacking 1986) what might be termed *environmental employees*.

Finally, chapter 7 concludes this thesis by addressing each of the research questions directly to suggest that pro-environmental behaviour change is a fundamentally social, contextual and political process. If this is accepted, it argues that future research and policy interventions on pro-environmental behaviour change

must rely less heavily on narrow models of individual decision-making. It then considers the practical and conceptual implications of this argument and sets out the beginnings of a radically new research agenda for environment-behaviour relations that focuses on processes of environmental socialisation.

Chapter 2 The Social Dynamics of Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change

This chapter will provide a theoretical rationale for this thesis by situating it within the major bodies of literature pertaining to pro-environmental behaviour change. Section 2.1 explores *cognitive* approaches to pro-environmental behaviour based on cognitive, social and environmental psychology, and on quantitative sociology. Section 2.2 explores alternative *contextual* perspectives which critique cognitive approaches for lacking an adequate understanding of the constitutive role of context in structuring everyday behaviour. This body of work focuses instead on the role of discourses, technologies, and lifestyles in shaping often routine and inconspicuous behaviour, and reveals the necessity of paying close attention to the surrounding social settings of action. Section 2.3 then highlights emerging work from a second generation of *social practice theorists* (Spaargaren 2006). Social Practice Theory (SPT) aims to overcome the agency-structure dualism reflected in the debate between cognitive and contextual approaches. I argue, however, that so far SPT has failed to focus sufficiently on the social dynamics of different contexts. As a result, it has tended to emphasise the different poles of agency and structure, without paying attention to how they combine in everyday performances, and how structure is created and transformed in social action and interaction. The chapter concludes with a set of research questions to underpin the rest of the thesis.

2.1 The Cognitive Approach to Pro-Environmental Behaviour: Changing Minds and Mapping Values

Since Maloney and Ward's (1973) insight that environmental problems were caused by 'maladaptive human behaviour', the search for determinants of that maladaptive behaviour has been pursued in earnest (Bamberg 2003). Underpinning this research is the assumption that human behaviour is the outcome of a linear and rational process of decision-making (as critiqued by Harrison and Davies 1998). As more scientific evidence on the nature and extent of environmental problems, and their links to human behaviour, is accrued, policy makers and media outlets are assumed to act as intermediaries, translating this factual environmental information and broadcasting it

in a relevant form for individuals to act upon (*cf.* Burgess 1990). In turn, individuals are assumed to absorb this information, become aware of their personal impacts on the environment, and develop various cognitive schema such as beliefs, values or attitudes that lead them rationally to avoid anti-environmental acts, and instead to undertake pro-environmental behaviour. Finger (1994) summarises this linear, developmental model (see figure 2.1), and also indicates a role for the environmental education of children as a means of increasing levels of environmental awareness across society generally.

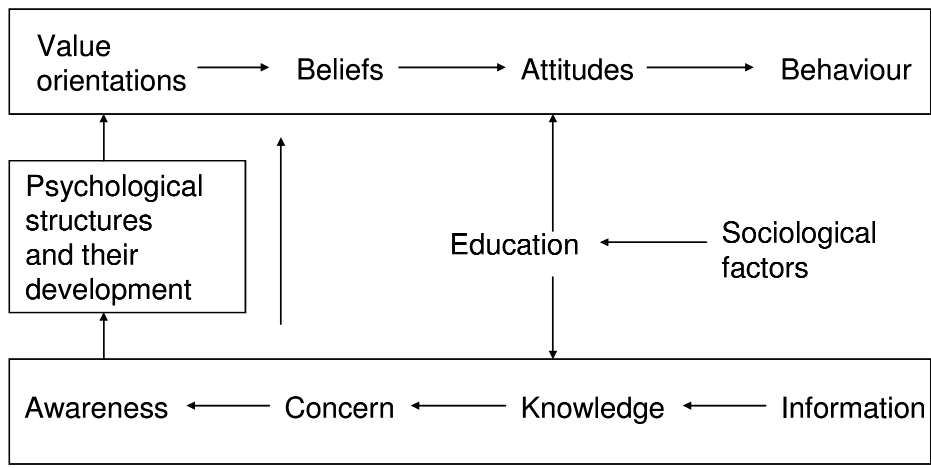

Figure 2.1: The Linear Model of Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change
(Source: Finger 1994, 142)

Such Awareness-Information-Desire-Action (AIDA – Gordon 2002) models place information at the heart of attempts to encourage pro-environmental behaviour. They address an assumed *information deficit* (*cf.* Burgess *et al* 1998; Owens 2000) amongst the public and suggest that, if only environmental information was communicated widely and clearly enough, levels of awareness would rise, and pro-environmental behaviour would eventually follow. Based on this central framework, two distinct approaches to encouraging pro-environmental behaviour have developed largely amongst American social scientists. The first emphasises *attitudes* as accessible mental constructs that act as precursors to behaviour, and might be changed to bring about more pro-environmental behaviour. The second maps broader aggregate trends in society and considers how the development of pro-environmental *values* amongst the public might be used to bring about pro-environmental acts. I will address each of these approaches in turn.

2.1.1 Identifying Environmental Attitudes

A great deal of work within cognitive, social and environmental psychology has sought to associate various pre-defined environmental attitudes with pro-environmental behaviours[2]. Bamberg observes that the *attitude concept* received a great deal of attention in psychology from the 1980s onwards because of its assumed role as a 'situation invariant orientation pattern' (2003, 22). As such, like a magic bullet, it promised that if correct pro-environmental attitudes could be spread to individuals, then pro-environmental behaviours would subsequently cascade across all areas of everyday life. Using predominantly self-report questionnaire surveys, work in this area thus attempted to identify the environmentally-relevant attitudes people held, and correlate them with anti- or pro-environmental acts. Whilst, in an ideal world, this approach would assume a perfect positive correlation between pro-environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behaviour, the models in fact identified intermediary variables that impacted upon this relationship. Once these variables were identified, multiple regression models could be constructed to mirror the thought processes through which attitudes progressed, eventually translating into behaviour.

Jackson (2005a) reviews a large number of the models generated in this pursuit, and there is not room for a similarly comprehensive review here. The best known, and most widely used, model is Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB and see figure 2.2). Morphing out of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action, the TPB,

> 'assumes that people have a rational basis for their behaviour, in that they consider the implications of their actions. The TPB hypothesises that the immediate determinant of behaviour is the individuals' intention to perform, or not to perform that behaviour. Intentions are, in turn, influenced by three factors: 1) Attitudes, the individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of performing the behaviour. 2) The subjective norm, the individual's perception of social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour. 3) Perceived control, the individual's perception of their ability to perform the behaviour.'
>
> (Davis *et al* 2006, 119)

To measure a person's intention to recycle for example, informants might be asked how often they recycled, and this would be correlated with their environmental

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[2] See the journals *Environment and Behavior* and the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* for numerous examples.

attitudes, their perception of social norms towards recycling, and their perceived ability to recycle. The higher the correlation achieved, so the model suggests, the more likely the individual is to recycle.

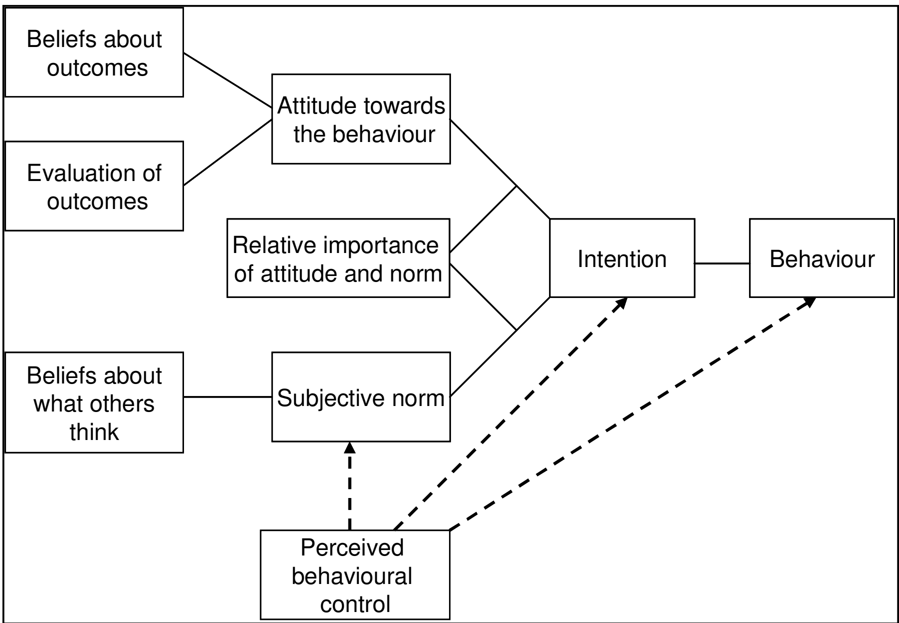


Figure 2.2: Ajzen's 'Theory of Planned Behaviour'
(Source: Jackson 2005a, 49)

This model has been a mainstay of psychological work on pro-environmental behaviour ever since, being adapted in numerous ways to explain recycling, energy and consumption behaviours (Bamberg 2003; Knussen *et al* 2004; Mannetti *et al* 2004; Davis *et al* 2006). Part of its allure is its openness to the addition other variables. The TPB is,

> 'in principle, open to the inclusion of additional predictors if it can be shown that they capture a significant proportion of the variance in intention or behaviour after the theory's current variables have been taken into account.'
> (Ajzen 1991, 199 in Mannetti *et al* 2004, 228)

As such, Mannetti *et al* added self-identity to the model suggesting that 'people tend to behave in ways that are congruent with their own self-image' (2004, 229), whilst others have suggested factors such as belief salience, past behaviour/habit, perceived behavioural control versus self-efficacy, moral norms, and affective beliefs. More and more factors continue to be added to this, and other similar, models, in order incrementally to increase their explanatory capacity (see Jackson 2005a).

Bamberg (2003) suggests, however, that the attempt to correlate generalised environmental attitudes with specific behaviours is misdirected. He argues that generalised environmental attitudes explain no more than 10 per cent of the variance of specific environmental behaviours (2003, 22). Instead, he suggests that generalised attitudes act as an heuristic device, providing the individual with a definition of the situation within which it is *specific* environmental attitudes that are important in predicting *specific* environmental behaviours. Barr (2003) confirms Bamberg's suggestion by illustrating that even behaviours with similar outcomes, such as waste minimisation and waste recycling, can have widely divergent antecedents and, indeed, that those who perform one are often unlikely to perform the other.

The search for determinants of pro-environmental behaviours thus turned away from generalised environmental attitudes, towards more refined definitions of environmental attitudes, and more and more specific forms of pro-environmental behaviour. de Young *et al*, for example, observe that rather than trying to create general pro-environmental attitudes 'what is often needed is precise information on *how* to perform the desired behaviour: where do to it, when it is to be done, what actions are required, and so on' (1993, 74 emphasis in original). Ironically, as global environmental problems become more geographically dispersed, diffuse and ambiguous (Dunlap *et al* 2000), attempts to address them become smaller, localised and more specific.

At the same time, the search for ever more specific environmental attitudes loses the value of attitudes as a 'situation invariant orientation pattern' (Bamberg 2003, 22), and demands instead that new attitudes are identified, and new models and predictions are made, for each pro-environmental behaviour in every context. The result is a 'tension between parsimony and explanatory power' (Jackson 2005a, 100), in which a seemingly infinite regress of additional variables is added to the models with diminishing returns to their enhanced predictive capacity. In short, as the pursuit for attitudinal determinants of behaviour continues and identifies more and more relevant variables, the models themselves become less and less usable (Hargreaves *et al* 2008; Nye and Burgess 2008).

2.1.2 Mapping Environmental Values

The second strand of the cognitive approach reaches back to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of human needs. Once basic material needs have been met, Maslow argues, individuals and societies place value on higher order needs, such as for self-actualisation, or broader social needs such as justice, truth or beauty (*cf.* Jackson *et al* 2004). Along these lines, Inglehart (1977) hypothesised that as material needs had largely been met in Western societies, environmental values, alongside other post-materialist values, were able to spread as a newly affordable luxury in the pursuit of human well-being. Recently, this work has been refined through Max-Neef's (1991) taxonomy of human needs which has been applied to the sustainable consumption agenda (Jackson and Marks 1999; Jackson 2005a). Essentially, this approach argues that consumption occurs in pursuit of needs and as an attempt to increase human well-being. Jackson and Marks (1999) show that Western society's enduring materialist values have failed to increase human well-being over the last fifty years, and have also had environmentally detrimental consequences. If it is possible to spread pro-environmental, and other post-materialist, values more widely, the argument runs, society may therefore achieve the elusive double-dividend of 'living better by consuming less' (Jackson 2005b).

Whilst environmental psychologists looked for the attitudinal determinants of pro-environmental behaviour, quantitative sociologists thus developed an alternative approach which sought to trace and map trends in social *values*. Where attitudes were seen as relatively accessible mental constructs, amenable to straightforward interventions, values are more deeply held cognitive schema that shape how people respond to environmental information and act upon it. Whilst values may be less easily changed, once identified, they could potentially provide powerful tools to motivate pro-environmental behaviour.

Early work in this area sought to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals who already held pro-environmental values. Schultz *et al* (1995), for example, review a number of studies which suggest that such values tend to be associated with young women who are well-educated, high earners, politically liberal and live in urban areas (also see Gilg *et al* 2005). Whilst income has tended to correlate consistently with pro-environmental activity, Schultz *et al* go on to show that age has at best an ambiguous relationship with recycling behaviours, education and

gender have no significant relationship, and too few studies have considered ethnic characteristics, although Martin *et al* (2006) find no significant relationship here either. Given the inconclusive nature of these results, other environmental sociologists set out to define and measure environmental values more precisely.

Most prominently, Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) devised the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale. Set against the Dominant Social Paradigm which holds, amongst other things, that science, technology and neo-liberal economics will solve all of humanity's potential problems, the NEP encompasses a range of post-materialist and bio- rather than anthropocentric values such as: 'Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist'; 'The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources'; and 'The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset' (Dunlap *et al* 2000, 433). The coherence and internal consistency of the NEP scale has been regularly reinforced and it is generally seen as a reliable reflection of generalised environmental values (Dunlap *et al* 2000; Stern 2000). Accordingly, Stern and colleagues applied the NEP scale to pro-environmental behaviour in the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (see figure 2.3). The VBN theory progresses causally from general personal values to more specific beliefs about the environment, such as whether or not the individual subscribes to the NEP scale, what they think the consequences of (in)action might be, and whether or not they feel responsible for taking action. These beliefs, in turn, lead to the development of pro-environmental personal norms and a sense of responsibility and obligation to undertake pro-environmental action whenever possible.

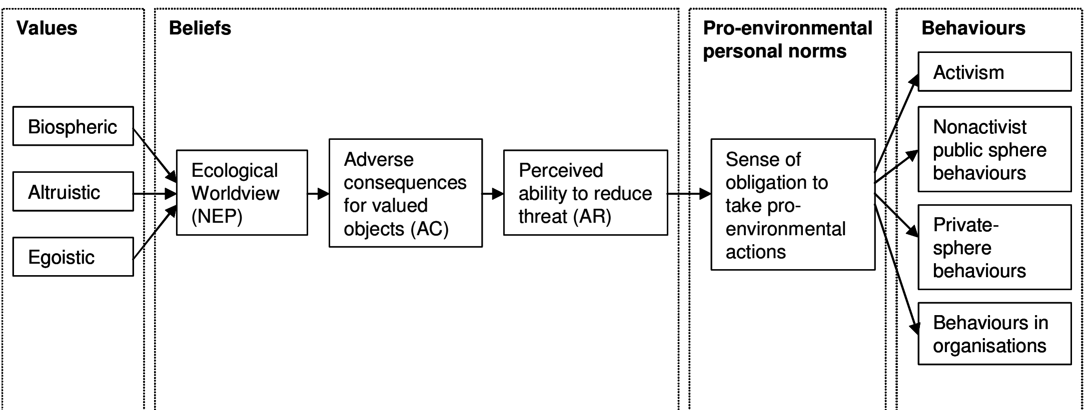


Figure 2.3: Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Adapted from Stern 2000, 412)

The crucial advance in this work on values is to turn away from the notion that cognitive structures are individualised, ahistorical constructs, and instead to see them as social structures. Stern *et al*, for example, treat the NEP as a 'folk ecological theory':

> 'Folk ecological beliefs, such as those reflected in the NEP, can be seen as a link between social structural forces and socialisation processes that influence them, and specific attitudes and behaviour that flow from them.'
>
> (Stern *et al* 1995, 738-9)

The challenge this work poses is thus one of changing the normative basis of society, which it suggests will be achieved by spreading pro-environmental values more widely. Based on this, policy responses continue to rely predominantly on information provision in the belief that values, like attitudes, will respond rationally to increasing evidence of environmental damage.

The VBN has received some empirical support in self-report questionnaire surveys (Stern 2000). Nonetheless, despite rising levels of environmental awareness throughout society, and increasing numbers of people subscribing to scales such as the NEP (Dunlap *et al* 2000), levels of pro-environmental behaviour remain very low (Finger 1994; Burgess *et al* 2003). This *value-action gap* (Blake 1999) is the central paradox of the cognitive approach. Arguably, the approach has had much success in spreading pro-environmental attitudes, values and beliefs amongst the public. The subsequent lack of pro-environmental behaviour change, however, is theoretically problematic.

To address this, some researchers have turned their attention towards identifying contextual and 'situational variables' (Derksen and Gartrell 1993; Guagnano *et al* 1995) which provide barriers to the assumed linear transition from attitudes or values to behaviour. Context has subsequently taken on a number of different meanings within this work. Olli *et al* (2001) use it as shorthand for an individual's network of friends and colleagues. Others, such as Guagnano *et al* (1995) and Martin *et al* (2006), understand situational variables to mean access to recycling schemes or the available space within terraced houses for recycling boxes. Still others, such as Barr (2003), use context as a carrier of social norms that structure particular behaviours. In each case, situational variables are found to have a significant relationship with pro-environmental behaviours, even over-riding attitude/value-behaviour relationships in some cases (Guagnano *et al* 1995; Olli *et al* 2001). Whilst

this might lead some to doubt the central premises of the cognitive model, and to look beyond supposedly rational decision-making processes to explain behaviour, such doubts do not appear to have troubled UK policy makers in this area.

The next section will briefly outline DEFRA's (2008) recent *Framework on Pro-Environmental Behaviour* as an example of how these cognitive strands are being combined, and of how information provision and processes of rational decision-making amongst individuals remain at the centre of attempts to bring about pro-environmental behaviour.

2.1.3 Social Marketing for Pro-Environmental Behaviour: DEFRA's Framework

DEFRA's recent *Framework on Pro-Environmental Behaviour* (2008) begins by identifying a set of 12 'headline behaviour goals' across the areas of transport, energy, water, waste and personal consumption. The behaviours identified are those that are seen as either easily achievable and therefore easy to diffuse widely, or behaviours that will have significant pro-environmental impacts but which may be harder to achieve. A wide range of psychometric tests and questionnaire surveys have then been conducted to assess the public's willingness and ability to adopt each of these behaviours. Further research identified *motivations* to conduct these behaviours such as 'social norms', the 'feel good factor,' or 'being part of something' (also see de Young 1986), and also some of the perceived *barriers* to conducting these behaviours including costs, infrastructure, and time constraints (DEFRA 2008, 7). Based on these large scale randomised surveys, DEFRA has divided the UK population into seven distinct segments according to the different possible environmental attitudes and values people hold. These segments are characterised below, with illustrative quotations taken from focus group research (along with their proportions in the UK population), and figure 2.4 illustrates how the segments map onto a grid of willingness plotted against ability to take pro-environmental action.

1. *Positive greens:* 'I think it's important that I do as much as I can to limit my impact on the environment' (18% of the population).
2. *Waste watchers:* 'Waste not, want not – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you are doing and using' (12%).
3. *Concerned consumers:* 'I think I do more than a lot of people. Still, going away is important. I'd find that hard to give up…well, I wouldn't, so carbon offsetting would make me feel better' (14%).

4. *Sideline supporters:* 'I think climate change is a big problem for us. I know I don't think much about how much water or electricity I use, and I forget to turn things off. I'd like to do a bit more' (14%).
5. *Cautious participants:* 'I do a couple of things to help the environment. I'd really like to do more, well as long as I saw others were' (14%).
6. *Stalled starters:* 'I don't know much about climate change. I can't afford a car so I use public transport … I'd like a car though' (10%).
7. *Honestly disengaged:* 'Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. Makes no difference to me. I'm just living the way I want to' (18%).

(see DEFRA 2008, 8)

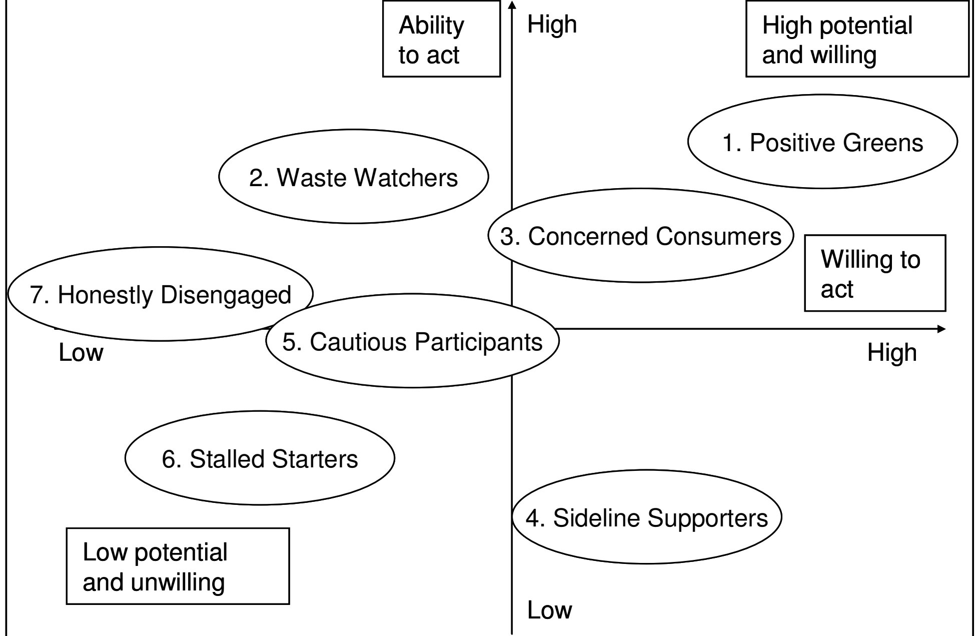


Figure 2.4: DEFRA's Segmentation Model
(Source: DEFRA 2008, 8)

The goal of this *social marketing* approach (Gotler and Zaltman 1971; McKenzie-Mohr 2000; DEFRA 2008) is to allow DEFRA to carefully tailor its messages and target environmental information to different populations. For example, whilst *positive greens* might respond well to generalised appeals to take pro-environmental action, *cautious participants* might require more specific information which communicates how others are conducting pro-environmental behaviours, thus encouraging them to see it as a normal activity. The approach also takes advantage of much work on environmental communications in recent years that identifies the characteristics of good communication, such as: presenting information in 'small, manageable, relevant chunks' (DEMOS 2003, 22); avoiding the use of jargon and

difficult words such as 'sustainability'; connecting with individuals' everyday lives and perhaps using their own words, keeping messages simple and focused on the behaviour in question; and potentially engaging in face to face dialogue (Myers and Macnaghten 1998; Gordon 2002; Darnton 2004b; Futerra 2005; Hounsham 2006; Haq *et al* 2008).

The social marketing approach thus takes advantage of the research within the cognitive paradigm highlighted above. Where previous mass media information campaigns, such as *Going for Green* (Blake 1999; Hinchliffe 1996) and *Are You Doing Your Bit* (DEMOS 2003), simply repeated generalised environmental messages to an undifferentiated public audience, this approach recognises and maps the wide range of environmental attitudes and values present amongst the public, tailors its messages accordingly, and strives to remove perceived barriers to action.

Theoretically, however, the two approaches are similar, the only real difference being that whilst mass media campaigns *broad*cast messages, social marketing initiatives intervene more closely to *narrow*cast their messages to specific groups. Providing information to supposedly rational individuals remains the central mechanism by which pro-environmental behaviour is to be brought about. Whilst social marketing has achieved some apparent success in encouraging pro-environmental behaviour change (McKenzie-Mohr 2000; Haq *et al* 2008), this seems more likely to stem from the highly tailored and often resource-intensive nature of the approach, rather than any theoretical advance in understanding human behaviour.

2.2 The Contextual Approach: Understanding the Dynamics of Social Contexts

It remains to be seen if DEFRA's new framework will be successful in bringing about widespread behaviour change. Throughout the 1990s, however, an alternative *contextual* approach (Burgess *et al* 2003) to behaviour, developed in British and European research across the fields of cultural geography, sociology, anthropology and science and technology studies, has cast serious doubt on the cognitive perspective in at least the following three ways.

First, the contextual approach calls into question the methodological basis of the cognitive models. Very few studies within the cognitive paradigm have looked at actual behaviour, instead preferring to rely primarily on self-report questionnaires that are subject to strong social desirability effects (Burgess *et al* 2003). More

significantly, some have called into question the very notion that environmental attitudes and concerns reflect any kind of environmental reality. Ungar (1994), for example, suggests that,

> 'with the accretion of impacts, environment and environmental concerns have become extensive constructs reflecting an extraordinary population of behaviours by individuals and large actors. Such all-embracing macro-categories lead to problems of incommensurability, and hence may be better understood as political tools rather than as scientific concepts.'
>
> (Ungar 1994, 292)

Stable and coherent environmental attitudes and values are thus dismissed as constructs of the questionnaire surveys which purport to describe them (*cf.* Oskamp *et al* 1991; Corral-Verdugo 1997; Bamberg 2003; Myers 2004).

Second, the cognitive models have been critiqued for failing to grasp fully the role of different contexts in shaping social life. Despite recent leanings towards situational variables and social context, these factors have been added-in as mere variables within methodologically individualist models that remain centrally focused on individual decision-making processes. They have thus fundamentally failed to recognise that individuals are social actors living according to the bounded logics and rationalities of particular social settings (Billig 1996; Shove *et al* 1998; Southerton *et al* 2004).

Third, the contextual approach has critiqued the central role of information in, and the implicit information deficit model of, the cognitive approach (Burgess *et al* 1998; Owens 2000). Not only does such a model construct individuals as passive agents simply waiting to receive clear instructions from distant and disembedded experts (Hobson 2002; Heiskanen 2005), it also treats information as a neutral entity, something that is either true or false. All that is needed, this approach suggests, is for true environmental information to be clearly communicated to, absorbed by, and acted upon by rational individuals. The contextual approach, on the other hand, has focused on how environmental problems are socially constructed by different agents, and how different environmental knowledges interact with one another (e.g. Harrison *et al* 1996; Macnaghten and Urry 1998; Myers and Macnaghten 1998).

The contextual approach thus critiques the cognitive perspective as providing a fundamentally asocial, acontextual and apolitical view of social life. In response, it has adopted alternative methodological approaches, particularly in-depth interviews

and discussion groups (Burgess *et al* 1988a, 1988b), to explore how environmental knowledges and values are employed in context, and it has emphasised that individuals are active social agents, balancing numerous competing demands and pressures, whilst also constrained within social contexts and structures. In this section I will focus on three key strands of the contextual approach that exhibit these features: first, the role of different discourses in giving rise to particular forms and understandings of action; second, the role of technologies and nonhuman agency in structuring behavioural opportunities; and third, the impact of lifestyles and the coordination of behaviours between people and across time and space.

2.2.1 The Discursive Construction of Environmental Realities

Discourses provide ways of understanding and interpreting the world. They are neither true nor false, nor are they created or possessed by individuals, but exist as a kind of collective social apparatus that structures everyday life, even defining what counts as true or false in any given society. Within a discursive understanding, the foci of cognitive studies - attitudes, values, beliefs etc. - become expressions of positions within particular social discourses, rather than reflections of individual mental states (Billig 1991; 1996). The discursive view thus suggests that the key to pro-environmental behaviour lies in understanding the dominant social discourses in any given time and place and how people use and relate to them, rather than in trying to bring about cognitive changes inside people's heads (Burningham and O'Brien 1994; Myers and Macnaghten 1998).

One key contribution of the discursive perspective has been to challenge the linear, top-down models of communication put forward by the conventional cognitive approach (Myers and Macnaghten 1998; Phillips 2000; Hobson 2002). Where the cognitive approach assumes that better communication from various experts and policy makers will lead to a more accurate understanding of behavioural impacts on the environment, and thus persuade individuals to adopt pro-environmental behaviours, the discursive view understands that different forms of communication construct different environments. It seeks to understand how different social agents construct the environment and what implications this has for bringing about pro-environmental behaviour change.

For example, Myers and Macnaghten's (1998) study compared the different environmental discourses and rhetorics of institutions and members of the public. Through textual analysis of environmental leaflets, they identified an institutional rhetoric that constructed environmental problems as large scale, global issues in need of urgent action by all individuals in order to avoid irreversible damage to the fragile spaceship earth. Suggestions of the many small acts members of the public could take were then offered in order to rectify the situation. In contrast, public discourses, accessed through focus group discussions, saw environmental problems as local, gradual processes of loss and decline. Small acts by individuals were interpreted as irrelevant in the absence of meaningful action by institutions. Myers and Macnaghten concluded that 'the rhetoric of environmental organisations and the rhetoric of talk about the environment are seriously out of joint' (1998, 351). Unless communications strategies changed to align more closely with public discourses, they concluded, little would change apart from a growing sense of public distrust (also see Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997).

I partially replicated Myers and Macnaghten's study for my M.Sc thesis (Hargreaves 2005). I found that institutional discourses had changed little, and continued to stress the urgent, global nature of environmental problems, whereas public discourses had changed significantly, and indeed had come to adopt the same rhetoric. In this situation, in the face of more pressing public concerns, a continued lack of visible action by institutions would lead to an even greater loss of trust and credibility, irrespective of increasingly tailored and targeted communications. I concluded that there was no longer any substitute for demonstrable action by institutions. The public would not be fooled by better communications whilst 'institutional body language' (Wynne 1992) continued to neglect the urgency of global and local environmental problems.

These studies thus emphasise the importance of considering the 'rhetorical situation' (Bitzer 1968) in which environmental information is communicated and used. They show that such information is not neutral and does not simply lead to increased awareness and concern which ultimately translates into pro-environmental action. Instead, environmental information always comes from particular sources which may be more or less credible, and is always interpreted and acted upon in relation to broader social concerns. Whilst environmental information does have an impact, therefore, it is not necessarily the impact communicators intend. Rather than

leading to a linear process of social and individual learning, it circulates within wider social discourses which can, and in these cases did, render the information unreliable and in-credible, and the communicators out of touch and untrustworthy (*cf.* Finger 1994; Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997; Burgess *et al* 1998).

Hobson (2001; 2002; 2003) builds on the insights of Myers and Macnaghten to consider how people respond to institutional discourses of the environment during processes of behavioural change. She studied the discursive processes of behaviour change undertaken by participants in the environmental charity Global Action Plan's social marketing initiative Action at Home (AaH). AaH participants were sent monthly information packs by Global Action Plan providing advice on practical behavioural changes they could make in their everyday lives. At the beginning and end of the six month programme the changes they made were evaluated by calculating a *Greenscore* from self-report questionnaires. The information packs were designed on the assumption that upon receipt of the information, participants would read, then absorb the environmental information and subsequently make changes in their everyday behaviours. By conducting in-depth interviews with a range of AaH participants, Hobson (2001; 2003) found that this was far from the case. Instead, the AaH programme generated two distinct discursive processes amongst participants (see figure 2.5).

Hobson makes use of a conceptual model put forward by Giddens (1984) that distinguishes between *practical consciousness* (the knowledges which unconsciously shape routine behaviour, allowing people to carry on in social life without constantly having to ask ourselves such as 'how shall I brush my teeth or turn the tap off' – Hobson 2003, 104; see Giddens 1984) and *discursive* consciousness (those knowledges with which people think and talk and are constantly debating with themselves and others to try out new ideas and possibilities – Hobson 2003, 104). In both discursive processes, the information packs caused particular behaviours or routines to be lifted out of the practical and into the discursive consciousness where the new environmental information was questioned against other everyday concerns. If the proposed behaviour changes were straightforward, new habits and routines might become re-embedded into daily life. If the proposed changes were more difficult to achieve, as in most cases, participants would often reject the proposals by questioning their factual basis or dismissing them as containing unrealistic expectations.

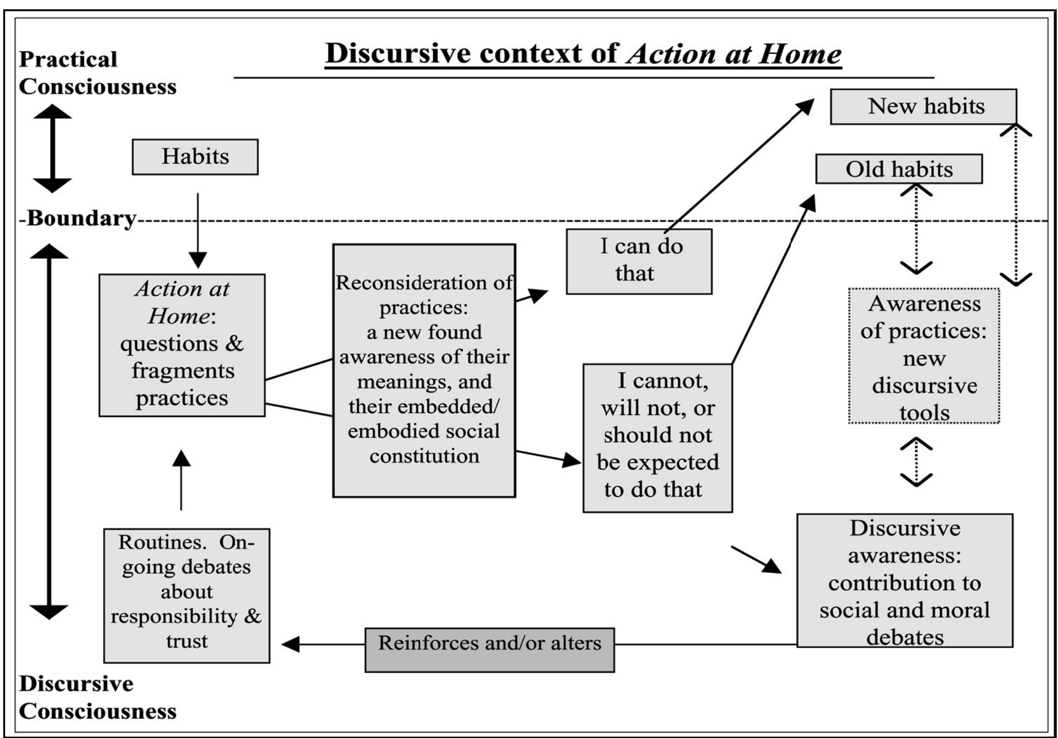


Figure 2.5: Discursive Processes in Action at Home
(Source: Hobson 2003, 107)

Hobson (2002) argues that the AaH programme, as with most environmental communications campaigns, rests upon a narrow *rationalisation framing* of everyday behaviour in which individuals are assumed to change their behaviours when informed of the negative impacts they have on the environment. In contrast, Hobson reported that AaH participants often saw the proposed changes in the information packs as insignificant in the face of broader social and structural issues. Thus, recycling waste or refusing packaging at supermarkets, for example, was unlikely to solve problems of over-packaging or the development of the throwaway society. Crucially, for some participants, taking part in AaH was sufficient in itself as the kind of civic engagement necessary to make society more sustainable, irrespective of whether any pro-environmental behaviour changes actually occurred.

Hobson (2001; 2002; 2003) thus concludes that individuals should not be seen as passive respondents to institutional interpretations of environmental problems. They do not simply learn the facts and change accordingly. Instead, they are seen as curious actors who wish to debate the nature of environmental problems as they relate to a wide range of other moral issues, such as the trustworthiness of science, globalisation and the organisation of capitalism, or individualism and the breakdown

of local communities. The implication is that the individual him or herself is not the most appropriate site of social change. Instead, attempts to encourage pro-environmental behaviour need to engage with how the environment is constructed, and what influence it has, within everyday discourses and practices.

Billig (1995) would argue that current constructions of the environment represent relatively weak rhetorical positions within wider social debates. In his book *Banal Nationalism* (1995), he suggests that ideologies (in his case nationalistic ideologies, but the argument applies equally well to environmentalism, consumerism or any other ideological construct) are banally inscribed in our surroundings. With regards to nationalism, he argues that too much attention is paid to minor occurrences of *hot* nationalism, such as flag waving parades or national events. If these were the only times nationalism was relevant, he suggests, people might forget it. Instead, he shows that nationalism is constantly reinforced in everyday life through numerous examples of *cold* or banal nationalism, such as in the flag hanging limply outside council offices, the food and drink people consume, and even in the ways they think and talk. These *flaggings* of national identity are so ubiquitous as to go unnoticed, but it is their very banality which Billig sees as central to making the ideologies they support become the assumed context of everyday life. Thus, they make nationality seem natural, as if it were an essential part of people, rather than a sociohistorical and discursive construct.

This concept is useful as it suggests that environmentalism, and associated pro-environmental behaviours, is not banally inscribed in most contemporary social contexts. Most social contexts instead embody a banal consumerism: people see upwards of 4,000 adverts every day, each reinforcing an understanding of consumerism as natural, and anything else as unusual (Bordwell 2002; Klein 2000). Environmentalism may be banally inscribed in some contexts, such as in Hatton's (2007) study of a low impact intentional community or in the self-consciously eco-communities discussed by Georg (1999), but these are exceptional situations. Indeed, in much of mainstream society, environmentalism is disparaged as a socially deviant ideology (*cf.* Moisander and Pesonen 2002). In short, the discourses banally inscribed into most everyday social contexts militate against pro-environmental behaviour, and this general and pervasive anti-environmentalism must be addressed as a central part of the challenge of encouraging pro-environmental behaviour.

The discursive strand of the contextual approach thus significantly broadens the challenge of achieving pro-environmental behaviour change. It suggests that encouraging pro-environmental behaviour is a fundamentally social and collective challenge. It rests not on individuals learning environmental information and subsequently changing their attitudes, values or beliefs, but emphasises individuals' roles as social actors who must cooperate to change the basis of our dominant social discourses (*cf.* Billig *et al* 1988). Pro-environmental behaviour change is thus seen as part of a broader process of re-configuring the normative basis of society.

2.2.2 Moralising Machines and Being in a Techno Fix

The second strand of the contextual approach pays attention to how nonhuman objects, technologies and infrastructures shape everyday behaviour. Whilst the cognitive approach frames the technical domain as an external constraint upon human behaviour, this body of research suggests that human behaviour co-evolves with different technological systems in sociotechnical networks (Shove *et al* 1998).

The most famous studies to develop this perspective have been conducted under the rubric of Actor Network Theory (Latour 1991, 1992, 1993; Callon 1986; Bijker and Law 1992; Law and Hassard 1999). Actor Network theory starts by according equal ontological status to society, nature, ideas, and nonhuman objects and technologies, as *actants* assembled into networks. Resulting actor networks thus consists in a series of associations between humans and nonhumans which shape everyday reality and behaviour. Cleaning one's teeth, for example, involves engaging in an extensive network that includes the human being him/herself, the toothbrush, toothpaste, sink, water supply, and industrial systems, which brought the actants together within the home. Numerous alternative actor networks or ways of 'doing reality' (Mol 1999) are possible, but circuits of power within the networks hold particular associations in place and ensure particular sociotechnical configurations dominate over others. In this process, particular social norms develop and are embodied within different actor networks in such a way that, rather than being able to select and change networks at will, individuals instead come to be *configured* (Woolgar 1991) by the networks they are a part of. Particular forms of behaviour thus become more or less possible and more or less appropriate depending upon sociotechnical contexts.

Jelsma (2003) uses the concept of *scripting* to describe how users become configured by particular nonhuman objects into performing anti- rather than pro-environmental behaviours. He suggests that new objects are designed with particular moral visions about their future users and future contexts of use. During manufacture, these moral visions become *inscribed* within material artefacts and serve to configure behaviour. For example, modern televisions are designed to be left on standby, embodying a vision of their users' presumed unwillingness to get up from the couch and of a plentiful supply of cheap energy. Once such moral visions are inscribed in specific sociotechnical contexts, users become socialised to read their scripts and behave accordingly:

> 'Routine behaviour is supposed to be steered by the recognition of situations that are familiar to the actor….Cues such as doorknobs, taps, etc., function as beacons evoking, in an unconscious way, the necessary acts in the specific settings in which such action is required.'
>
> (Jelsma 2003, 106)

Jelsma thus observes that contemporary sociotechnical contexts, and their various scripts, embody a social morality that upholds anti-environmental behaviour. Crucially, however, he suggests that such scripts can be resisted. The user can switch off the television at the mains power supply. Jelsma usefully conceives of these scripts as like a ball on a landscape (see figure 2.6). The topography of the landscape is produced by the various sociotechnical networks encountered in different social contexts, with more established networks having steeper sides. There are thus a number of well-worn routes for social actors to follow as they move across contexts, but with work and effort even the strongest scripts can be resisted.

Optimistically, Jelsma suggests that it may be possible to manipulate moral scripts so they contain cues that encourage pro-environmental behaviour (2003, 106). For example, televisions might be redesigned to contain cues to encourage switching them off, or may be made to switch themselves off automatically after a certain length of time. Jelsma's optimism may be misplaced, however, as Bijker and Law (1992) observe that in much of everyday life individuals exhibit a 'tactical lack of curiosity' (Bijker and Law 1992), ignoring their surroundings and simply following the path of least resistance in order to cope with the demands of daily life. Scripts are thus followed automatically, and anti-environmental social conventions and moral visions tend to go unchallenged. Further, social infrastructures, such as domestic electricity

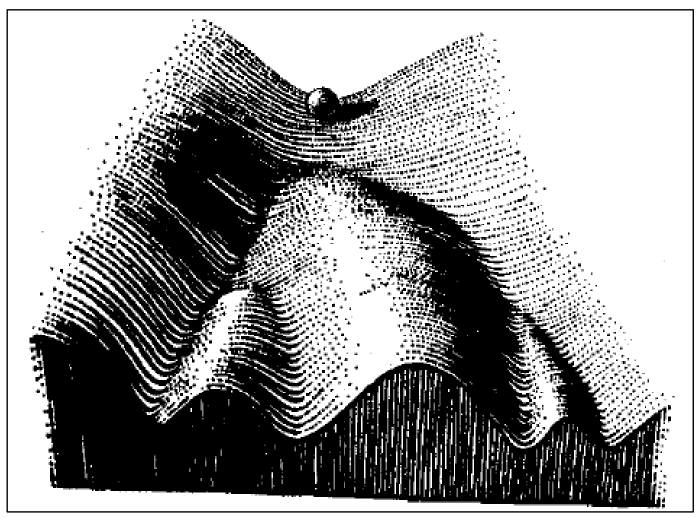


Figure 2.6: The Sociotechnical Landscape
(Source: Jelsma 2003, 108)

supplies, piped water systems or the road network represent collective 'choice sets' (Southerton *et al* 2004) that are very difficult, if not impossible, for individuals to challenge alone, and indeed the services they provide suggest that few would wish to. In her brilliant study of the industrialisation of the home, Ruth Schwartz-Cowan clearly illustrates just how limited individuals are and, in so doing, demonstrates the co-evolution and inextricability of the organisation of industrial production, the normative visions (and especially gendered divisions) of society, and everyday individual behaviour:

> 'The Jones's washing machine would not have done them a bit of good if the town fathers had not decided to create a municipal water system several years earlier, and if the local gas and electric company had not gotten around to running wires and pipes into the neighbourhood.'
>
> (Schwartz-Cowan 1983, 14)

This strand of the contextual approach thus emphasises that, as well as considering the effects of different discourses upon pro- or anti-environmental behaviour, it is also necessary to consider the effects of particular sociotechnical contexts. Different contexts are seen to configure their users (Woolgar 1991) in particular ways. Users are socialised in particular settings, such as the workplace or the home, and even to different functionally defined rooms within each, such as the bathroom, kitchen, bedroom or office. In short, the objects, wires and pipes that surround us have a sort of power over us which, at present, militates against the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviours into everyday lifestyles and routines. The challenge of pro-environmental behaviour thus involves either fundamentally

changing the sociotechnical infrastructures of society, which seems both unlikely and extremely costly, or resisting anti-environmental scripts and collectively negotiating more sustainable ways of living within particular sociotechnical settings.

2.2.3 Coordinating Lifestyles across Social and Temporal Contexts

Whilst the first two strands of the contextual approach have considered the discursive and sociotechnical contexts of behaviour, the third strand I will highlight places behaviour in social and temporal context. It considers how a wide range of different behaviours fit together and are coordinated in the course of living out a lifestyle. In the social sciences generally, the concept of *lifestyle* has been especially associated with a highly aestheticised style of living, based around shopping for luxury, fashionable items, and conspicuous consumption in pursuit of distinction (Veblen 1998; Bourdieu 1984; Shields 1992; Chaney 1996). Within the contextual approach, however, the concept is used to articulate a more practical understanding of how lives are lived in specific contexts. Giddens (1991) uses the concept of lifestyle to argue that bundles of behaviours and practices are bound together across time and space. In Giddens words, lifestyles are:

> 'more or less integrated set[s] of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity.'
>
> (Giddens 1991, 81)

Crucially, Giddens' understanding emphasises that lifestyles are not entirely voluntaristic (Burgess *et al* 2003). Instead, in late modernity, lifestyles represent attempts to cope with the lack of rituals, rites of passage and traditions that once formed the basis of collective sociotemporal rhythms. Sociological studies, for example, have emphasised how individuals struggle to coordinate the various different components of their lifestyles, being forced to 'juggle' (Thompson 1996) often competing demands, and leading to feelings of being harried and hurried by a contemporary time squeeze (Southerton *et al* 2001; Southerton 2003).

One means of coping with these pressures is to develop more or less fixed habits and routines. This has led to research interest in *ordinary* or *inconspicuous* patterns of consumption (Gronow and Warde 2001; Shove and Warde 2002). Gronow and Warde (2001) point out that much research on consumption behaviour focuses too

narrowly on individual choice rather than collective and cultural constraints, on moments of purchase rather than the appropriation and use of artefacts, and on conscious, rational decision-making rather than routine, conventional and repetitive conduct. They argue that focus should instead turn towards inconspicuous or ordinary forms of consumption. Inside their edited collection, the chapters by Ilmonen (2001) and Halkier (2001) emphasise how habits form as practical responses to specific contextual demands and, in turn, come to shape how people perceive, organise and structure their lifestyles.

These studies stress the fact that the environment appears a distant concern to many, and may be hard to assimilate with the pressing issue of balancing competing demands on one's time (Thompson 1996). Bedford (1999) highlights these dynamics in her study of the challenges faced by 15 self-defined ethical consumers. Despite strong levels of commitment and often supportive social networks and/or occupations, Bedford showed how her informants were constantly compromising their ethics in order to get by in different social contexts. At home, for example, she found they were pressured to buy 'unethical' products to satisfy the wants and demands of family members or housemates or, alternatively, would have to consume unethical products if they wanted the shopping to be done for them by others. Outside the home, such compromises were even more common. Whilst shopping, for example, her ethical consumers had to decide whether to accept unethical produce that was conveniently on offer at the supermarket, or make time-consuming trips to specialised ethical shops. Similarly, when eating out, her ethical consumers were often forced to compromise their ethics due to the simple unavailability of fairly-traded, organic and locally-produced fare that was stored in energy efficient fridges, served on cutlery washed in pro-environmental cleaning products and accompanied with recycled serviettes.

Bedford's study also highlighted differences in the strength of what is considered socially acceptable as a non-compromisable ethical position. Whilst, in the UK at least, vegetarianism and veganism are now widely understood and accepted by most people, fair-trade and eco-friendly ethics, for example, demand more information and thus remain poorly understood and contestable. Bedford argues that the absolute ethical positions of vegetarianism and veganism e.g. 'no meat,' or 'no animal produce' are easy to grasp, whereas her participants' *partial* ethics e.g. 'meat, but only if its local and organic,' carried less weight and were thus less catered for or

accepted in most social situations. Bedford's ethical consumers thus felt unable to demand that their ethics were met. Many compromised their stance in certain situations, whilst others pretended to be vegetarian, for example, in order to avoid having to explain their complex position and risk confusing or offending others. Bedford thus argued that ethical consumerism is a 'polite revolution,' that is, one which aims to change the world, but is conducted privately, only in certain contexts and, hopefully, without offending anyone.

Bedford concluded that society is simply not structurally or socially geared up to the complex, ambiguous, and often confusing demands of ethical consumption, for which it is possible here to substitute pro-environmental behaviour. As these studies have shown, in the course of everyday lifestyles, individuals are forced to cope with a variety of competing demands on their time and numerous different ethical standards, and must try and coordinate all of this with others who experience similarly complex lives. In such a situation, it appears unreasonable to expect individuals to valiantly pursue pro-environmental behaviours until such behavioural options are socially and structurally normalised across all contexts. Thus, living a pro-environmental lifestyle is a much more of a challenge than is made out by cognitive perspectives which emphasise relatively unproblematic attitude or value change. Even with the correct attitudes or values, pro-environmental behaviour remains hard to accomplish.

2.2.4 The Co-Evolution of Collective Conventions

These three strands of the contextual approach significantly broaden the challenge of encouraging pro-environmental behaviour. They illustrate that context is much more than a set of external, situational variables or barriers that constrain behaviour and must be rationally overcome. Instead, context is seen to play a constitutive role in shaping what counts as anti- or pro-environmental behaviours. Discourses, technologies, and lifestyles are thus seen to possess a kind of bounded rationality which makes some forms of behaviour more or less likely, appropriate or even possible. As Burgess *et al* (2003) put it:

> 'Whilst some forms of environmentally friendly practices are now fairly well established and workable – recycling, greener transport options, buying organic – *to attempt to live a green lifestyle across different spaces and social contexts is almost an impossibility*.'
>
> (2003, 284 emphasis added)

The contextual approach thus turns attention away from individual decision-making, and towards the organisation and possible reorganisation of different social contexts. However, the studies outlined above only go part of the way towards their goal. By focusing on a single aspect of context at a time – discourses, technology or lifestyles, for example – they only partially re-contextualise everyday behaviour. As such, they remain as far away from real life as the abstract multiple regression analyses of the cognitive approach. Elizabeth Shove's highly influential book *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience* (2003) attempts to overcome this problem by considering the relationships between these different contextual systems (discourses, technologies etc.), and showing how they co-evolve to create the collective conventions that pin everyday practice in place.

Shove's examples of indoor heating/cooling practices, changes in bathing/showering and laundry practices, and the development of convenience items, highlight numerous complex interactions between different aspects of social systems. In the case of indoor heating/cooling, technological developments led to new building standards which specified a narrow physiological indoor comfort zone. Subsequently, social practices changed to fit-in with the new definition of a comfortable indoor temperature. People thus started wearing newly appropriate clothes, siestas were no longer necessary, and sitting on the veranda talking to neighbours on warm evenings was impossible because such verandas had been replaced by air conditioning systems. Over time, the resource-intensive mechanical heating/cooling systems which supported these new social practices came to be seen as necessities. In this instance, technology led the charge, but the interlocking of technological and social systems created changes in conventions of normal indoor comfort which individuals seemed powerless to resist (Shove 2003, see chapters 2-4).

Shove's other examples tell similar stories about the development of conventions of cleanliness and convenience. In each case, she highlights the co-evolution of technologies, discourses, lifestyles and particular practices. Everyday individual behaviour is thus seen as the emergent outcome of a dynamic and large-scale 'system of systems.' Shove's concern is that the global convergence of these

social systems of systems is leading to dramatic rises in environmental resource consumption as anti-environmental behaviour is increasingly normalised across the globe. Her response is that these meta-level conventions must be challenged. Failure to do so has 'the perverse effect of legitimising ultimately unsustainable patterns of consumption' (Shove 2004, 118). Furthermore, she sees studies situated at the level of individual behaviour as complicit in this legitimising process:

> 'studies of eco-villages or investigations into the beliefs and actions of self-confessed environmentalists represent something of a distraction. What counts is the big, and in some cases, global swing of ordinary, routinized and taken for granted practice.'
>
> (Shove 2003, 9)

Shove's study thus represents the polar opposite of the cognitive studies with which I started this chapter. An undersocialised view of free and rational agents changing behaviour almost at will has been replaced by a starkly pessimistic and oversocialised (Granovetter 1985) understanding of powerless individuals locked-in to massive social structures. Ironically, whilst I turned to Shove's study as an attempt to find a more realistic picture of how context acts on behaviour, it has resulted in a view that, by over-contextualising everyday behaviour, almost wholly shuns individuals' experiences of real life.

2.2.5: Summary: Finding a Middle Ground between Structure and Agency

The contextual approach thus makes significant advances on the cognitive perspective outlined above. Whilst the cognitive framework presents an asocial, acontextual and apolitical vision, the contextual approach suggests pro-environmental behaviour is fundamentally social, undertaken by social actors acting and interacting within wider social discourses and settings; fundamentally contextual, unfolding according to different dynamics, rules, logics and sociotechnical networks in different contexts (*cf.* Nippert-Eng 1996); and fundamentally political, embodying particular assumptions about individual agency and responsibility and liable to be contested, resisted, disparaged and even to cause offence.

The cognitive model of information provision to fill an assumed public information deficit that remains at the heart of contemporary social marketing approaches is thus shown to neglect how environmental information and knowledges

circulate throughout society, how they are interpreted and acted upon in social situations, and how they embody questionable assumptions about individual agency. The contextual approach, on the other hand, suggests that encouraging pro-environmental behaviour demands a consideration of the social dynamics of different contexts, how environmental knowledges and information work within them, and how they might be collectively reorganised to support pro-environmental behaviour.

Despite these advances, the contextual approach also contains some significant silences and weaknesses. Oddly, whilst it suggests a strong focus on different contexts, all of the studies I have outlined, and the vast majority of studies in this area, focus only on domestic and private contexts. Burgess *et al* (2003) suggest that the home may be the only place where pro-environmental action is consistently possible, but other contexts have been systematically neglected. It remains to be explored how different dynamics operate in other contexts, such as the workplace, to identify what these dynamics are, and to consider how they encourage or discourage pro-environmental behaviour.

Equally inexplicable is the contextual approach's seeming reluctance to observe social action. Relying largely on interview and discussion group methods, the contextual approach has provided a richer understanding of human behaviour than the cognitive perspective, but it remains firmly on the values side of the troublesome *value-action gap* (Blake 1999). There appears an urgent need to conduct observational studies that are able to show how different knowledges, discourses, technologies and lifestyles operate in real life situations, and to begin addressing pro-environmental behaviour change from the perspective of action rather than values.

Finally, whilst the cognitive approach places too much faith in individual agency to bring about pro-environmental behaviours, the contextual approach is seen to adopt an equally unhelpful position, over-emphasising structure to the extent that individuals are almost erased from the picture. There appears to be little logic in believing that providing information to individuals will make any significant difference to the 'big, and in some cases, global swing of ordinary, routinized and taken for granted practice' (Shove 2003, 9), but it seems just as naïve to imply that individuals can and should play no part in attempting to change social structures and practices. It is thus necessary to seek a middle level which analyzes how individual agents can have an impact on social structures. This middle level approach has been

sought by social practice theorists since the early 1980s, and I will focus on this body of work in the next section.

2.3 The Social Organisation of Practice

Social Practice Theory (SPT) has developed in two waves. First, from the work of Giddens (1984; 1991) and Bourdieu (1984; 1990), and second, much more recently, in the writings of Reckwitz (2002a) Schatzki (1996; 2001; 2002) and Warde (2004; 2005). Giddens outlines the basic thrust of the practice approach when he states that 'the basic domain of study of the social sciences…is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (Giddens 1984, 2). By focusing on action, and the *doing* of social life, SPT aims to overcome the long-running debates between structure and agency, and show how these features of social life are combined and interact in practices. Despite the observation that 'there is no unified practice approach' (Schatzki 2001, 2), practice theorists all focus on the interactions between individuals who possess knowledge, skills, attitudes etc., and social structures such as technology, infrastructure, institutions, and the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu 1984). They suggest that these interactions produce socially recognisable practices, and that this is the crucial realm of social life that requires analysis (Schatzki 2002; Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000).

The relevance of this rather abstract, philosophical body of work for my focus on pro-environmental behaviour[3] is made apparent by Warde (2005) who demonstrates that people consume in pursuit of practices. 'It is the fact of engagement in the practice, rather than any personal decision about a course of conduct, that explains the nature and process of consumption' (Warde 2005, 138). The environmental implications of human behaviour are therefore fundamentally bound up with the social organisation of different practices. The challenge of pro-environmental behaviour change is therefore one of transforming practices to reduce their

[3] Many practice theorists intentionally avoid use of the term *behaviour* at least partly because of its individualistic connotations. In its place they use a variety of terms such as 'activity', 'action', 'tasks' or often simply 'practice.' I prefer to retain the term in order to facilitate discussion with existing approaches to pro-environmental behaviour. In this thesis I will thus use the term behaviour to connote individual performances of particular practices, and reserve the term practice for broader collective entities. Practice thus serves as a middle level concept, shaped by, and occurring within, broader social structures and also able to support both anti- and pro-environmental behaviours (Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000).

environmental impacts, or alternatively eradicating or 'fossilising' (Shove and Pantzar 2006) certain unsustainable practices altogether.

2.3.1 Defining Practice

Some practice theorists go so far as to suggest that all there is in social life is practices, and everything is reducible to them. As such, a central area of debate in SPT remains accurately defining practice (Barnes 2001). Several definitions have been proposed. Schatzki (1996, 89), for example, suggests that a practice is a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings existing in three forms: 1) as *shared understandings* of how to behave, 2) as *explicit rules* formally constraining behaviour, and 3) as *teleoaffective structures* defining appropriate ends and levels of emotional engagement. Alternatively, Reckwitz's oft-cited definition suggests that:

> 'A practice is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.'
> (Reckwitz 2002a, 249)

These definitions may lack clarity and appear hard to apply empirically (Christensen and Røpke 2005; Spaargaren 2006), but they do serve to highlight some commonly recognised aspects of practice.

First, practices are seen as containing within themselves certain forms of knowledge, understanding, and types of emotional engagement, which become embodied within skilful practitioners and are created, reinforced and transformed through the recursive performance of practice. Thus, practice theorists do not talk of mental entities such as attitudes, values and beliefs as if they were the possessions of individuals, but see these as components of practices embodied within individuals (Schatzki 2001, 7).

Second, practices always involve particular configurations of nonhuman objects and things (Reckwitz 2002b). Debates about the degree of agency and intentionality objects and things possess within practices remain unresolved (Schatzki 2001). Actor Network theorists, and other post-humanist philosophers, assign causal agency to objects within practices, suggesting that they have equal status with human

actors. I agree with Schatzki (2002), however, who, whilst recognising that nonhumans possess agency and that this is a much needed correction of humanist tendencies, does not accord them the same agent status as humans. Instead, he draws a distinction between *orders* and *practices*. An order is simply 'the hanging together of things' (2002, 18), whereas a practice entails the organised activities of human agents, for without human activity there could be no practices. Thus, Schatzki assigns nonhuman agents a distinct ontological position within orders, and highlights practices as a distinctly human construction:

> 'I do not deny the existence of nonhuman agency. Its home, however, is social orders and not social practices as I conceive of them…Practices are the bundled activities that one type of component of social orders performs.'
>
> (Schatzki 2002, 71)

This position thus demands that nonhuman agents are recognised and accounted for, but also recognises the distinctly human capacity to resist their moral scripts (*cf.* Jelsma 2003).

This distinction also points towards the third commonly recognised aspect of practices, the position of individuals within them. Under a cognitive paradigm behaviours are the outcomes of individuals learning specific ways of doing things. As such, the social nature of behaviour is downplayed, missing the fundamental point that practices and their 'tacit rule books' (Turner 2001), always entail the orientation of individuals to other individuals and to other performances of practice (Barnes 2001). As such, practices are more than the sum of their individual parts. Nonetheless, it is important not to over-emphasise this structural aspect of practices, for although they,

> 'resemble macro phenomena in constraining individual activity and organizing the contexts in which people act, they never possess the *sui generis* existence and near omnipotence sometimes attributed to structural and wholist phenomena.'
>
> (Schatzki 2001, 5)

Thus, individuals, as 'carriers' of practices (Reckwitz 2002a), are active and capable agents, skilfully engaged in the performance of practices, able to debate aspects of them, creatively resist aspects of them, and even at times change them (*cf.* de Certeau 1984). Nonetheless, they are never fully in control of the practices they perform. As Dreyfus and Rabinow explain: 'People know what they do; they frequently also know

why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do *does*' (1982 in Sadan 2004, 59).

2.3.2 Employing and Applying Practice

Despite identifying the common aspects of practices, these philosophical definitions remain difficult to apply empirically (Spaargaren 2006), and practices remain as idealised and abstract entities (Warde 2005; Shove *et al* 2007). In attempting to apply a practice approach to pro-environmental behaviour, it is therefore necessary to seek out some more simple, empirically applicable understandings of practice.

Schatzki (1996) adds some empirical detail by categorising practices in different ways. First he draws a distinction between practices-as-entities and practices-as-performances. Whilst practices are recognisable and coordinated entities, they also require performances for their continued existence (Warde 2005, 134). In this respect, practices have an almost dual status: at once idealised, abstract and socially recognisable entities (practices-as-entities), and approximations of this idealised state realised as and amid the practical contingencies of everyday, routine performance (practices-as-performances)[4]. Both states exist side by side and in dynamic tension with one another. Empirical studies must therefore consider the extent to which practices-as-entities shape practices-as-performances and vice-versa.

Further, Schatzki distinguishes between *dispersed* and *integrative* practices. Dispersed practices are single types of action common across many domains of everyday life. Such as 'describing, ordering, following rules, explaining, questioning, reporting, examining and imagining' (Schatzki 1996, 91). To this distinctly linguistic list can be added common practical actions which are particularly relevant for pro-environmental behaviour, for example, putting objects such as waste in appropriate containers, or turning machines on and off with the push of a button or flick of a switch. Integrative practices, on the other hand, are 'complex entities joining multiple actions, projects, ends, and emotions' (Schatzki 2002, 88). Examples include business practices, farming practices and cooking practices. Following this distinction, Warde (2005, 135) suggests integrative practices should form the basis of sociological

[4] Schatzki's concept of practices-as-performances is essentially the same as how I interpret the term behaviour within a practice framework.

investigation for they provide organising frameworks of activity in specific domains of everyday life.

These broad distinctions suggest how practices can differ from one another, but do not clarify either how practices operate within specific social contexts, or their internal workings. Spaargaren and Van Vliet (2000; Spaargaren 2004) go someway towards contextualising practices by providing a valuable schematic which integrates many aspects of both the cognitive and contextual perspectives (see figure 2.7).

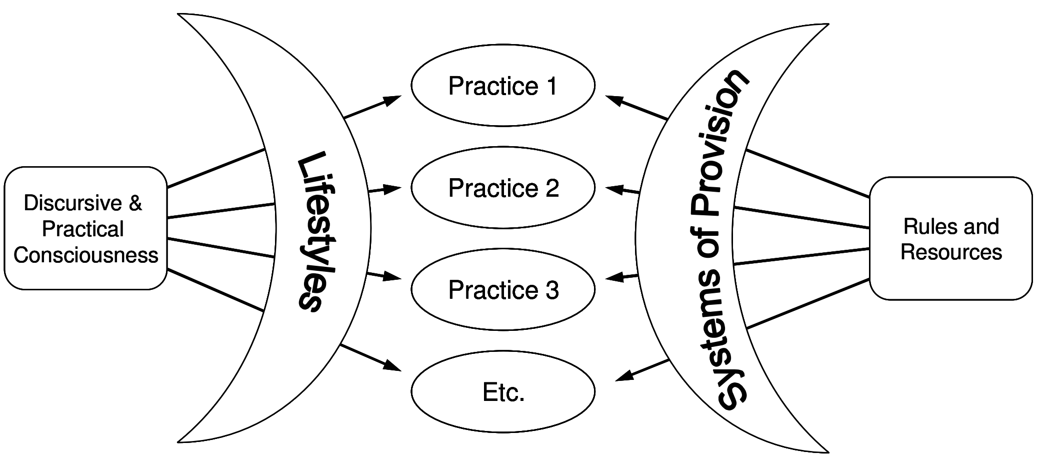


Figure 2.7: Spaargaren and Van Vliet's Schematic of Social Practices
(Source: Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000, 53)

Borrowing heavily from Giddens' Structuration theory (1984; 1991), figure 2.7 suggests that practices are the result of the constant and recursive interaction between agency and structure. On the right side of the diagram, Fine and Leopold's (1993) concept of *systems of provision* suggests that practices are enabled and constrained by broad social rules and resources and the sociotechnical landscapes in which these are embedded. Whilst on the left side, in their lifestyles, individuals have some choice over which practices to engage in, but such choices are constrained by the different practices available in society and social conventions as to when, where and how these may be appropriately performed. Whilst they have their own coherent properties, therefore, practices are always performed within specific contexts and by individuals who may also have other, competing demands on their time, and other practices to perform.

Shove and Pantzar (2005) add further detail to this picture of practices. They suggest that the internal workings of practices consist in interactions between *images/meanings, objects/stuff*, and *forms of competence/skills* (see figure 2.8). Images/meanings refer to the symbolic aspects of practices. Practices may contain different meanings and, when performing practices, individuals are expected to display particular understandings and to engage in them appropriately. For example, not only does football involve particular rules, it can also be undertaken as a fun activity in the school playground, or extremely seriously and with quite a different meaning when performed by professionals. Such images/meanings are also undoubtedly shaped by broader social discourses. For example, the sport of fox hunting is today interpreted by many as a cruel blood sport, and has thus taken on quite different images and meanings to those it once had which, in turn, influence how it is engaged in and related to.

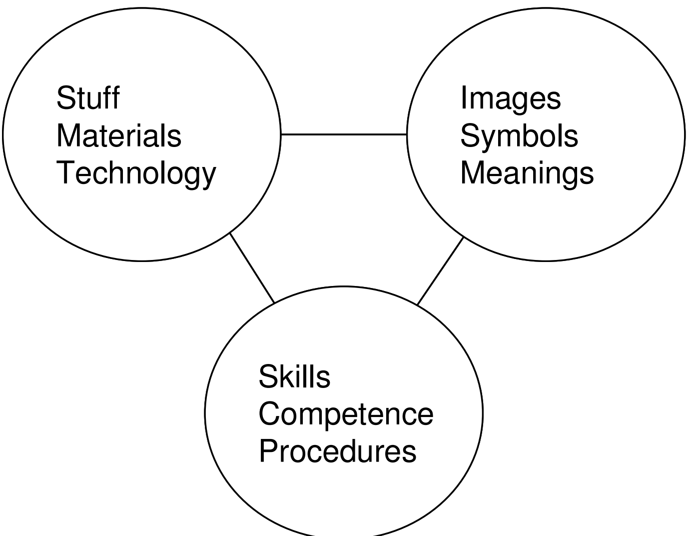


Figure 2.8: Shove and Pantzar's Components of Practice
(Source: Shove [2005] Presentation to 'Traces of Water' workshop. Available online at: http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/cswm/dwcworkshop2.php accessed on 05.10.08)

Objects/stuff are also implicated in most, if not all, social practices. For example, football demands the use of goalposts and a ball, and cooking the use of pots, pans, and ovens. Nonhumans are thus also engaged in practices and can constrain what is possible in the performance of a practice. Computers, for example, have made certain practices possible that were previously unimaginable. The involvement of nonhumans also links practices to broader sociotechnical networks.

Practices are constrained by the stuff that is available, but at the same time, practices may also give rise to the demand for new stuff which may subsequently be produced in order to make new practices, or different performances of existing practices, possible. As such, it can also be seen that the stuff of practices is never fixed. Jumpers are a ready substitute for wooden or metal goalposts, for example, and such changes may also relate to adjustments in the meanings and skills associated with the practice.

Finally, practices always involve individuals who must possess the skills necessary to utilise objects in ways that are consistent with the meanings of practices. Such skills might be complex bodily-mental operations such as those demanded in football or chess or, as Shove and Pantzar (2005) highlight, may be relatively simple acts such as walking. The concept of skills reveals individuals to be active agents in the performance of practices who gradually learn requisite skills through repeated performance, but are also capable of changing understandings and performances of practice by developing new levels of competence and expertise. At the same time, the concept of skills reveals individuals themselves to be a central component of the practices they perform. An individual's behaviour is guided and shaped by the practices they engage in, as much, if not more, than they can control and shape how such practices are performed.

Shove and Pantzar's (2005) study of innovations in Nordic Walking in the UK and Finland shows how practices only continue to exist through the regular integration and interaction of these components. By focusing on the interactions between elements of practices, Shove and Pantzar are able to identify *careers* of practices from *proto-practices,* where elements are yet to be integrated, through *practices,* that are regularly performed with closely integrated elements, to *ex-practices* or 'social fossils' (Shove and Pantzar 2006), in which the links between components have broken down. In this respect, Shove and Pantzar show how each component of a practice circulates more widely than the specific practices in which it is involved, possessing its own specific cultural history. Thus, practices 'are always 'homegrown'… informed by previous and related practice' (Shove and Pantzar 2005, 43).

As such, a practice approach demands focusing on how practices are homegrown in particular contexts and, for my interests, it begs the question of how they may be re-grown in pro-environmental directions. As I interpret it, it also offers two foci for empirical attention: first, collective and contextual understandings of

practices-as-entities, considering the elements that make them up and how these integrate, circulate and change; and second, situated and individualised behaviour in pursuit of particular practices, or practices-as-performances (Schatzki 2002; Warde 2005; Shove *et al* 2007).

2.3.3 Gaps in Practice

Despite this empirically useful model, SPT remains a long way from providing a detailed understanding how pro-environmental behaviour occurs within specific, real life situations. There remain several gaps within the practice approach that require addressing before it might be applied to pro-environmental behaviour change processes.

First, empirical applications of a practice approach, to date, have chosen to focus on some eclectic practices as their case studies. For example, studies have looked at: the design of kitchens, digital photography, and do-it-yourself practices (Shove *et al* 2007), Nordic walking (Shove and Pantzar 2005), floorball (Pantzar *et al* 2005), wooden boat enthusiasts (Jalas 2005) and New Lebanon Shaker medicinal herb practices in the 19th century (Schatzki 2002). Empirical research has thus focused on narrow slices of everyday life in order to isolate easily identifiable practices, such as sports or other pastimes, that can be quite easily shut off from the surrounding fabric of everyday life. Once more, too, the empirical focus has remained firmly within private and domestic settings.

Second, and partly as a result, to date SPT has provided only an idealised and de-contextualised account of practices. It has tended to focus on practices-as-entities rather than their regular, routinised and contextual performances. As such, it has ignored how they fit-in with the surrounding fabric of everyday life, how they interact and conflict with one another, and it has ignored the social dynamics through which practices are performed and in which they are learnt, developed, changed, fought over, and occasionally forgotten (Warde 2005). Ironically, in trying to emphasise the social nature of behaviour, existing empirical applications of SPT may be criticised for treating practices in something of a social vacuum.

Third, SPT has neglected the power relations involved in practices. Largely because it has ignored performances of practices, it has consistently failed to comment upon how practices are controlled and negotiated by different groups of people in

different, sometimes hierarchical, relationships with other practitioners e.g. in families, workplaces, or amongst groups of peers. Considering policy makers' concerns to change people's behaviour, research should begin to focus on how groups of practitioners control and discipline one another, how they are in turn controlled and disciplined by the practices they perform, and the implications of these issues for changing practices in pro-environmental directions (*cf.* Foucault 1977; Darier 1996a).

What is needed, therefore, is social practice research that engages with the performance of practices in specific real life contexts and, in particular, to address the contextual and social dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour. How do existing practices militate against, or assimilate and sustain, pro-environmental behaviours? How might anti-environmental practices be challenged, broken down and replaced with pro-environmental alternatives?

2.4 The Dynamics of Interaction in Communities of Practice

Some potentially useful concepts for this research are found in earlier sociological studies, and particularly those conducted in institutional settings such as workplaces. To complete this review of the theoretical literature, I will outline the concept of *communities of practice*, highlight some of Erving Goffman's mechanisms of social interaction, and touch upon work on the sociology and greening of organisations.

2.4.1 Communities of Practice

The concept of *communities of practice* (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) was developed largely in professional contexts, such as educational institutions and corporations (see for example Brown and Duguid 1991; Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004; Lindkvist 2005; Handley *et al* 2006; Roberts 2006). It recognises the fundamentally social nature of practice and, as such, is concerned with how people coordinate themselves to jointly negotiate and perform particular practices. It shows that getting things done does not rest on single individuals learning what to do in isolation, and mechanically performing it. Instead, the performance of practice rests on a set of informal associations and tacit understandings amongst groups of colleagues, friends, family members etc. These *communities* of practice thus represent

networks of situated and distributed cognition (Lave and Wenger 1991) vital for the collective accomplishment of practices.

Wenger (1998) suggests that all communities of practice share three core elements:

1. *Joint enterprise:* All members share the same aims.
2. *Mutual engagement:* Members work together to perform a practice. Such cooperation can take three forms – *engagement* involves actual performance, *imagination* involves thinking about and planning around the practice, and *alignment* involves bringing the practice into line with other associated practices.
3. *Shared repertoire:* Over time, communities of practice develop a set of shared understandings, perspectives, routines, artefacts, turns of phrase, stories etc., that help them perform their practice and hold them together as a community.

These features form gradually and continually as different individuals are socialised to become members of communities, and as communities of practice learn and develop accordingly. In the case of individuals, the socialisation process is explained through the concept of *trajectory*. Each individual has a unique trajectory within and across different communities of practice. To begin with, one is an outsider, incompetent in the practice. Over time, by developing experience one gains competence and can become a peripheral member. Indeed, Lave and Wenger (1991) use the phrase 'legitimate peripheral participation' to explain how people in marginal positions are expected to participate, but not to the same standards of competence as expert or core community members. Eventually, one's trajectory may lead to the core of the community, in which position one has a crucial role in defining what counts as competence in the practice, and in socialising newer members. Finally, members gradually retire from the community, leaving it altogether or perhaps taking up another legitimate peripheral position.

As individuals weave their different trajectories in and through communities of practice, the communities themselves also learn and develop, and their practices change. Wenger (2000) casts this collective learning process as one of dynamic tension between understandings of *competence* and levels of *experience*. Every

community of practice, he argues, has a shared understanding of what entails competence within the practice, and this is a crucial element of membership. Being a competent member of a community of practice thus entails pursuing a particular practice and developing experience within it. In this respect, competence pulls experience. As experience is gradually accrued, and as new experiences are undertaken (such as interacting with a different community), understandings of competence are progressively re-defined. In these cases, experience pulls competence.

Boundary interactions between different communities of practice are also a crucial mechanism of learning. As communities of practice conflict or cooperate with each other, they develop new experience and may change their understandings of competence. Similarly, as individuals carry their experience of other communities around with them, they too can play a part in renegotiating what counts as competent performance of the practice. By emphasising these interaction processes, the concept of communities of practice thus provides a mechanism by which individuals can change practices, whilst still recognising that such changes fundamentally involve collective renegotiation. With regard to pro-environmental behaviour, communities of practice thus point towards the social processes that might be involved in the acceptance or rejection of pro-environmental ideas within existing practices.

The concept of communities of practice has been criticised for lacking an adequate conceptualisation of power (Fox 2000). Studies have tended to ignore the often hierarchical relationships within and between communities and, emphasis on the development of competence and experience, presents learning as a smooth and gradual process of transmitting practices from teacher to pupil neglecting the power dynamics, struggles and resistances inevitably involved in these processes. The communities of practice concept can thus seem conservative, emphasising consensus, stability, and incremental change rather than conflict, instability and radical transformation (Lindkvist 2005; Roberts 2006). To overcome some of these problems, Lindkvist (2005) suggests the concept of *collectivities of practice* to account for groups that are brought together rapidly and infrequently in order to complete a particular task. Such collectivities are thought to characterise modern practices better than communities, which may take years to form. Ultimately, however, collectivities of practice embody similar ideas about learning and the informal organisation and negotiation of practice, and may thus be seen as a complementary concept.

Communities and collectivities of practice stress the social nature of practice. By emphasising the social interaction involved in getting things done, they turn attention towards what actually happens in the performance of practice and away from the abstract and idealised understandings presented above. Whilst this is a major step forwards, the concept of communities of practice still fails to provide a detailed picture of precisely how these interaction processes occur. For example, how are understandings of competence sustained within interactions, and how might these interactions contribute to renegotiating and changing practices in pro-environmental ways?

2.4.2 Erving Goffman and the Mechanisms of Social Interaction

Some insights may be gained from the sociological research of Erving Goffman. Goffman's concern was how individuals know how to behave appropriately in social interactions without suffering from various social sanctions such as being *stigmatised* (1963b) or experiencing *embarrassment* or *shame* (Goffman 1959; 1963a; 1967; 1974; Scheff 2000; Billig 2001). He focused on micro-scale interactions and, through hours of meticulous observation, articulated a number of rules for the content and organisation of the *interaction order* (Goffman 1983). Two of his mini-concepts (Williams 1986) seem especially pertinent for an understanding of how pro-environmental behaviour may be encouraged or discouraged in the course of social interactions: *impression management* (Goffman 1959; 1963a), and *frames* (Goffman 1974).

In the course of every social situation, Goffman (1959) suggests individuals are guided by a quite specific 'definition of the situation.' Through ongoing socialisation processes, individuals come to read these social scripts and learn the 'social values or norms concerning involvement' (Goffman 1963a, 193) in any particular situation they may encounter. As such, individuals quickly come to realise that 'what is proper in one situation may certainly not be proper in another' (Goffman 1963a, 12) and, in order to avoid social stigma or embarrassment, actively manage the impressions they give off to those around them. *Impression management* thus concerns people's many different 'presentation[s] of self in everyday life' (Goffman 1959).

The complementary concept of frames (Goffman 1974) provides a device in which the norms concerning involvement for different situations are stored. Essentially, a frame is the particular definition of the situation an individual is abiding by at any one time. 'When individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: 'what is it that's going on here?'' (Goffman 1974, 8). The answer they arrive at represents the frame they have identified for that particular situation, and directs how they should interpret events and how they should behave accordingly. In *Frame Analysis* (1974) Goffman makes clear that any single strip of activity can potentially support multiple meanings. A wave of the hand, for example, might be interpreted as a hello or goodbye, an instruction to stop, an attempt to draw someone's attention to something, or even a manifestation of a nervous tick. As such, potentially awkward encounters might rapidly result from a simple misreading of the frame others are abiding by. Frames are thus powerful mechanisms of interaction and correct alignment with them is crucial to the ongoing accomplishment of everyday life.

Through the concepts of impression management and frames, Goffman thus shows how everyday interactions are shaped by subtle mechanisms of social control, and how individuals align themselves with dominant social norms in the course of everyday behaviour in order to avoid social awkwardness. He has, however, been criticised for focusing too heavily on how people cooperate to maintain social order and avoid social awkwardness, and thus providing a rather conservative view of social life (Williams 1986; Gregson and Rose 2000). In contrast, Billig (2001) emphasises the limits to such *nice guy* theories, and suggests an alternative focus on the darker side of social interaction in which dynamics such as embarrassment and shame function to control how people behave. Given the negative stereotypes often accorded to environmentalists (Moisander and Pesonen 2002), for example, it is easy to imagine how fear of ridicule might serve to keep pro-environmental action out of a wide range of social situations and practices. Billig does suggest, however, that it might be possible to take advantage of these dark social dynamics. By using mild social sanctions such as teasing and laughter, for example, parents might discipline unruly children without resorting to more coercive sanctions or physical forms of punishment (Billig 2001; 2005).

This work thus poses a research challenge as well as a practical possibility for attempts to understand and encourage more pro-environmental behaviour. To date, most work on pro-environmental behaviour has focused on private and domestic

practice, in which mechanisms of social control, whilst undeniably present, may be highly routinised and thus hard to identify, not least because such settings are notoriously hard to access. To explore these social dynamics, and taking a lead from Wenger and Goffman, it would seem logical to focus instead on more organised social and institutional settings, such as workplaces in which mechanisms of interaction and social control might be more explicit. Doing so may also reveal ways in which these social dynamics might be used to help promote pro-environmental behaviour.

2.4.3 The Sociology and Greening of Organisations

This chapter has emphasised the over-focus on domestic and private settings within work on pro-environmental behaviour. As such, it has identified something of a silence with regards to how pro-environmental action occurs within workplaces. To complete this review I will highlight work which has considered this, not least due to growing interest in the *greening* of organisations and corporate social responsibility. Nonetheless, my interests remain firmly on processes of pro-environmental behaviour change as they are undertaken by individuals, rather than on the greening of corporate processes and strategy. This section will therefore provide a brief and highly selective review of relevant developments in this area, although interested readers may refer to Stead and Stead (1992), Jennings and Zandbergen (1995), Welford (1995; 1997), Starkey and Welford (1999) and Hoffman and Ventresca (2002).

Early work on the sociology of organisations addressed them as coherent entities that operated in a straightforward manner according to an almost Weberian instrumental rationality (Weber 1997; Reed 1992). Work thus focused on increasing the efficiency of workplace processes and maximising worker productivity by applying the principles of ‘scientific management’ (Taylor 1997). Following this, the earliest work on the greening of organisations also relied on a rational approach to organisational change. All that was required, it assumed, was to access relevant environmental information and build it in to existing organisational rationalities. Numerous techniques were thus designed to do this, such as environmental management systems, environmental auditing (Welford 1995), Triple Bottom Line accounting (Elkington 1997), and resource productivity (Weizsacker *et al* 1998). Greening organisations was thus seen as a straightforward, linear process of development. Indeed, numerous taxonomies and scales of green development were

devised which organisations were expected to progressively ascend as they took advantage of more and more win-win situations (*cf.* Hunt and Auster 1990; Post and Altman 1994; Welford 1995; Forbes and Jermier 2002).

The repeated failure of organisations to ascend these scales and take off as green workplaces led to more recent interest in greening organisational cultures (Shrivastava 1995; Dodge 1997; Emerson and Welford 1997; Welford 1997). Much like the individual values targeted by cognitive approaches to pro-environmental behaviour change, organisational cultures were seen as deep-seated value systems, central to organisational functioning, and providing meaning and identity to employees (Peters and Waterman 1982; Kanter 1983). If cultures could be manipulated to incorporate pro-environmental values, so it was argued, it might be possible to bring about rapid and radical transformations in workplace practices. As such, authors concentrated on designing culture change programmes, involving re-branding initiatives, rewriting organisational mission and value statements, and enacting company programmes such as Total Quality Environmental Management (TQEM – Shrivastava 1995) to involve all employees in the greening process (*cf.* Harris and Crane 2002).

Greener cultures, and green organisations, remained elusive however (Fineman 1996), and this work has subsequently been critiqued for treating organisations and their cultures as single, undifferentiated entities, neglecting the social dynamics and power relations within them, and for ignoring individuals' lives beyond the organisation (Knights and McCabe 2000). In particular, numerous studies critiqued such 'culturalist theorising' (Salaman 1997) for its suggestion that managers could control the meaning of work for their employees (Willmott 1993; du Gay 1997). Instead, they suggested a need to look at how individuals come to understand their work and workplaces for themselves. These critiques followed what Cooper and Burrell (1988) describe as a general move in organisational sociology from 'the organisation of production' to 'the production of organisation' (Cooper and Burrell 1988, 106).

A handful of studies on cultural greening processes have attempted to take these critiques on board and look more closely at complex negotiations involved in greening processes within organisations (Fineman 1996, 1997, 2001; Crane 2000; Harris and Crane 2002). These studies have identified the different meanings greening can take on within organisations, the power relations involved in promoting or

resisting a green agenda, and the emotion work often involved in these processes. Nonetheless, whilst they advance work in this area significantly, they have relied almost singularly on interviews with managers. As such, not only have they fundamentally ignored some workers' experiences of greening processes but, much like the contextual approaches to pro-environmental behaviour outlined above, they have also failed to grasp or observe actual behaviour within workplaces. How individuals, in the course of actually performing work practices, come into contact with, interpret, and incorporate or reject pro-environmental behaviour thus remains to be seen.

This necessarily brief review has shown how work on organisational greening has mirrored the cognitive and contextual approaches to pro-environmental behaviour outlined earlier in this chapter. An initial reliance on the straightforward provision and incorporation of environmental information into everyday action has given way to a concern with how such information is interpreted, used, and acted upon within particular workplace contexts. It has also shown, however, that there remains to be a study that considers how pro-environmental behaviour is incorporated, rejected, supported or resisted within the daily practices of the workplace. This is the key silence that this thesis aims to address.

2.5 Summary and Research Questions

The central argument of this chapter is that theoretical understandings of pro-environmental behaviour, from a range of different perspectives, have been insufficiently contextualised. As such, they have failed to provide a realistic picture of how everyday practice unfolds and develops in social situations, and are therefore incapable of offering much needed guidance on how more pro-environmental behaviour might be encouraged.

Work within the cognitive tradition, with its focus on information provision, beliefs, values and attitudes, adopts a rather narrow, asocial view of how individuals make decisions. In so doing, it neglects the influence of the surrounding context in shaping behaviour. The contextual approach has tried to rectify this situation by concentrating variously upon the roles played by discourses, technologies and lifestyles in providing a normative basis for everyday behaviour. It suggests that behaviour operates according to different social logics in different contexts, but by

failing to integrate the different forms of context it emphasises (discourses, technologies, lifestyles etc.), it only achieves a partial re-contextualisation. Emerging work from a second generation of social practice theorists has thus tried to provide a more holistic view of practice, showing how everyday behaviour is the outcome of an interplay between structure and agency. It directs attention to the social organisation and performance of specific practices, but through its choice of empirical case studies, and tendency to neglect social interaction processes, work in this area has remained somewhat abstract, and at a remove from the actual practice of practice. Finally, research has overwhelmingly focused on behaviour in private and domestic situations, an issue which work on communities of practice, Erving Goffman's research on social interaction in predominantly institutional settings, and work on the sociology and greening of organisations, have all attempted to address. Together, Wenger's work on communities of practice, Goffman's insights into social interaction processes, and SPT offer a potentially powerful conceptual framework to help analyse how pro-environmental behaviour does or does not get taken up within everyday social practices.

As outlined in the introduction, the over-arching research question for this thesis is:

> How do ideas about environmental change come to have an impact, or not, on everyday human behaviours?

In addition, the following three sub-questions have emerged from this review, and underpin the rest of this thesis.

1. What, if anything, does social practice theory offer the study of pro-environmental behaviour change?

SPT promises a more sophisticated and holistic understanding of how everyday practice is organised by surrounding social and technical systems of provision and undertaken by active and skilled individuals. With the exception of work by Spaargaren and colleagues (Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000; Spaargaren 2004; 2006), however, it has not yet been well applied to pro-environmental behaviour, and instead has focused on practices that are somewhat tangential to pressing policy concerns.

This thesis will thus attempt to apply SPT to understanding pro-environmental behaviour, in the hope that it might realise its promise in a more practically useful area, and also as a means to develop this emerging theoretical perspective.

2. In what ways are pro-environmental behaviours context specific and, in particular, what are the dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour at work?

Existing literature suggests that social practices and behaviours are formed and negotiated within, and thus fundamentally shaped by, a variety of context specific dynamics. To date, research has concentrated almost exclusively on domestic contexts and, as such, new research should begin to explore behaviour in other settings like workplaces (*cf.* Røpke 2004; Tudor *et al* 2008). Such research would also allow comparison of the dynamics of different contexts and thus offer insights into how pro-environmental behaviour might be made to transfer across contexts.

3. What role, if any, does social interaction play in preventing or promoting the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviours into social practices?

The theoretical review has revealed an urgent need to understand what actually happens in real world situations to either oppose or support pro-environmental behaviour. So far, research in this area has neglected the micro-processes of interaction which, it may be asserted, determine whether or not pro-environmental behaviour occurs in specific settings. It is thus crucial that new research is undertaken that begins to explore the local social dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour, and that attempts to identify the social mechanisms through which it is either supported or opposed. Perhaps the only methodological approach that is capable of exploring these dynamics is ethnography, a discussion taken forward in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Telling Stories of Behaviour Change

This chapter sets out the methods I used in this thesis and provides a rationale for each of them. It is not, however, a mere cookbook (*cf.* Silverman 1997) for the conduct of the thesis that I felt obliged to write in order to render transparent what was done, and thus try to improve the reliability and rigour of my findings (*cf.* Baxter and Eyles 1997). Whilst it does provide these details, it also goes further to suggest that the methods I used are not mere windows on an external and objective reality out there, but play a constitutive role in what it is possible to know, and thus the accounts I can provide of it (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Fontana and Frey 2000; Fontana 2003; Gubrium and Holstein 2003b; Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer 2005). By relying on self-report questionnaire surveys, the cognitive approach paints a picture of passive and asocial individuals awaiting expert advice and information to act upon (*cf.* Heiskanen 2005). In contrast, a social practice theory (SPT) based approach demands paying attention to the *doings* of particular practices in particular settings. It strives to create a picture of individuals as active agents interacting with, and using, environmental information in a variety of ways. Where the cognitive approach thus seeks to provide ever more refined, yet ultimately static models of individual decision-making, an SPT-based approach calls out for more humanised narratives and stories that attempt to capture the dynamism and complexity of real lives as they are lived out.

This chapter begins by outlining the methodological starting points of the thesis, and accounting for how I arrived at an ethnographic approach. It then provides details of how I undertook the ethnography, gaining access to Burnetts and conducting participant observation and semi-structured interviews with employees, before detailing how I analysed and made sense of the abundance of data such techniques provide. Finally, it comments on how I have attempted to write through the empirical material to try and provide a narrative of pro-environmental behaviour change that differs significantly from conventional accounts of these processes. By its very nature, this is an exploratory thesis, aiming to ask questions in new ways, as much as seeking more detailed answers to existing and well-worn problems. I hope it provides a fresh perspective and a new construction of pro-environmental behaviour change that will provoke disagreements and start conversations. Through this, I hope it makes a

conceptual contribution to work in this area that may one day serve to 'make a difference' (Owens 2005).

3.1 Starting Points: Constructing an Ethnographic Case Study

When I first started research for this thesis I was interested fundamentally in how context impacts upon attempts to perform pro-environmental behaviours. With this in mind, I conducted eight loosely structured pilot interviews in which I asked participants to outline and discuss their daily practices and routines, how they were affected by the different people they interacted with, and the different places they were in, and finally how the environment did or did not impact upon them. From these pilots two outcomes were of crucial significance for how my methodology subsequently developed. First, my interviewees all created complex narrative accounts of their lives, revealing the importance of relationships between different practices and practitioners across space and time in shaping their behaviour. Second, they all produced profoundly contextual accounts, illustrating how their lives were almost anchored around particular contextual settings that provided particular rules and resources (especially workplaces) within which they were able to improvise their own individualised ways of behaving. Based on these outcomes, I became interested in the impact of workplaces on pro-environmental behaviour, in the importance of observing behaviour change processes as they unfold in particular contexts, and in the importance of stories in capturing the real complexity of change processes, as opposed to detailed, but programmatic, models.

These pilot interviews affirmed my interpretations of the pro-environmental behaviour change literature discussed in the preceding chapter, emphasising the need to focus on particular contexts (Bedford 1999; Burgess *et al* 2003), on the often mundane details of routines and practices (Reckwitz 2002a; Shove and Pantzar 2005), and particularly on the lack of attention being paid to workplaces (*cf.* Røpke 2004; Tudor *et al* 2008). For my upgrade workshop in January 2007, I thus proposed a study that followed participants in behaviour change programmes between the settings of home and work. To do this, I proposed to use a combination of methods including semi-structured contextual interviews with the individuals themselves (Valentine 1997; 1999); focus groups involving the individuals, their families and their colleagues, as have been well used in research on environmental values (Burgess *et al*

1988a, 1988b; Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997; Myers and Macnaghten 1998); and solicited diaries (Corti 1993; Elliott 1997; Meth 2003). All of these techniques, I hoped, would provide understandings of how people underwent behaviour change processes in different contexts.

My upgrade workshop[5], however, proved to be a pivotal moment in the thesis as I was told, firmly, that such techniques, whilst valuable, would merely provide 'words about words' (*cf.* Crang 2003), and potentially prevent me from observing practice as it unfolds in context. I was advised instead to include some kind of observation or even auditing of practices, rather than basing my analysis on *post hoc* accounts of it. Furthermore, it was suggested that my proposals were too ambitious for a single PhD study, and that it might be better to concentrate on a single context. The workplace was the obvious choice as it had previously received so little attention in pro-environmental behaviour change debates. Following my workshop, therefore, I decided to use participant observation (Cook 1997) in combination with semi-structured interviews (Valentine 1997 – see section 3.3 for more details on how I used these methods) as a way of accessing 'what people do as well as what they say' (Crang 2002, 650), and also to conduct a single ethnographic case study of behaviour change processes in the workplace.

Ethnographic research attempts to grasp 'the native's point of view' (Malinowski 1922 in Schwartzman 1993, 1), and to 'understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who actually 'live them out'' (Cook and Crang 1995, 4). Considering that pro-environmental behaviour change attempts to engage with how individuals experience, understand and live out their lives, it is surprising that there is a dearth of studies based on ethnographic methods in this area (Crang 2002). To date, the only one I have found that focuses on a workplace is Tudor *et al* (2008), although even here quantitative techniques are clearly dominant, and the ethnographic component fails to convey the sense of immersion and local cultural understanding normally expected of ethnographic accounts (Crang and Cook 2007; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Within organisation research, ethnographic approaches are more common having begun with the famous Hawthorne studies in the 1920s/30s (Schwartzman 1993).

[5] Attended by Dr Tracey Bedford, Dr Tim Dant, Professor Jacquie Burgess, Dr Gill Seyfang, Dr Foye Hatton and several other PhD students, and for which I gathered comments on my research in advance from Dr Russell Hitchings.

Again, however, within this body of research I have found no studies that focus specifically on pro-environmental behaviour. Further, it is argued that much organisational ethnography represents little more than 'jet-plane ethnography' for which researchers 'rarely take a toothbrush' (Bate 1997, 1150).

The almost total lack of pre-existing ethnographic research on pro-environmental behaviour change, and the lack of attention to such processes in workplaces, further highlighted the need for my study to be exploratory. As a result, I elected to conduct a single case study. Case studies are deemed 'tailor made for exploring new processes or behaviours or ones which are little understood' (Hartley 1994, 213). Further, they are seen as ideal for studying specific contexts (Stake 2000) and providing detail on the mundane, routine, 'little things' (Flyvbjerg 2006, 238) of everyday behaviour. Such an approach was therefore well suited to the kind of study I wished to produce.

Despite these ideal features, case studies are regularly criticised for lacking statistical representativeness and generalisability, for tending towards verification rather than falsification of hypotheses (and therefore being subjectively biased), and for being difficult to summarise and therefore unable to provide general theoretical propositions (Flyvbjerg 2006). Flyvbjerg points out, however, that these misunderstandings can easily be rebuffed, as 'the force of example' (Flyvbjerg 2006, 228) has been generally underestimated within all research; experienced case study researchers tend to observe that their hypotheses are far more often falsified than verified (and I can vouch for this unsettling experience); and that the inability to summarise aspects of case processes is less a shortcoming of the method, than a reflection of 'the properties of the reality studied' (Flyvbjerg 2006, 241).

Following Flyvbjerg further, whilst it is true that case studies lack statistical breadth, what is more worrying for researchers is that the complexity of the realities case studies produce, and the tiny details of everyday life they uncover, will be dull and uninteresting to readers. As he puts it:

> 'Working with minutiae is time-consuming, and I must concede that during the several years when I was toiling in the archives, doing interviews, making observations, talking with my informants, writing, and getting feedback, a nagging question kept resurfacing in my mind. This is a question bound to haunt many carrying out in-depth, dense case studies: 'Who will want to learn about a case like this, and in this kind of *detail*?'
>
> (Flyvbjerg 2006, 237)

Whilst this question continues to haunt my study, it also expresses the major strength of case study research. I hope that what this thesis lacks in breadth is made up for in depth, which I see as more important for an exploratory study of pro-environmental behaviour change in workplaces.

3.1.1 Constructing Worlds: Powerful and Partial Fictions

In attempting to understand the 'native's point of view', an ethnographic approach demands an appreciation of the different ways in which people construct and interpret the world. Early ethnographic techniques were seen as providing a straightforward window on the world (Atkinson and Coffey 2003) through which the ethnographer could adopt the 'Archimedean perspective' (Cook and Crang 1995, 7) to describe the world out there. Today, such a 'naïve realism' (Reason and Bradbury 2001b, 5) is impossible. Postmodern ethnographers (Davies 1999; LeCompte 2002) have been forced to recognise the partiality and positionality of their accounts, and that their methods represent active performances (Denzin 2001) of the social world rather than direct representations of it. As such, ethnographic techniques, indeed all methodologies whether designed to gather quantitative or qualitative data, are increasingly seen to produce only partial and incomplete fictions (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Riessman 2008).

These observations are in line with a general *social constructionist* approach (Berger and Luckmann 1967). As Jones (2002) points out, whilst this perspective is increasingly common for work on environmental problems, there remains much confusion about precisely what it means and what it entails for the conduct of research. In particular, Jones (2002) observes that social constructionism is often taken to mean that there is no real world out there, and therefore that all accounts are equally valid and anything goes. Countering this argument, she draws a distinction between ontology (what exists), and epistemology (what we can know). Whilst all constructionists reject an epistemological realism in favour of an epistemological relativism (i.e. reality can only ever be known from a particular perspective), this need not imply a rejection of ontological realism – that there is a real world out there somewhere. It is precisely this stance of *contextual constructionism* that I have adopted in this thesis. My aim has been to understand how individual practitioners

construct ideas about environmental problems, and how they attempt to incorporate them into their daily practice. In such accounts of behaviour change, the objective reality of environmental problems is, to some extent, less important than individuals' constructions of them, and their consequent interpretation and use in specific contexts and practices.

Such a position has two significant implications for my account. First, it demands that I adopt a reflexive stance on my own positionality, to reveal how I am implicated in the contextual constructions of environmental problems produced in my research. Second, if knowledge can only ever be partial, it is imperative to ask whose knowledge is being heard and/or accepted. This raises fundamental questions about the role of power in the production of research accounts. I will address each of these issues in turn.

Throughout my research, my positionality was multiple and fluid (see section 3.3.2). Crang suggests there is a

> 'need to question the all-too-common assumption that there is one researcher, with an unchanging and knowable identity, and one project with a single, unwavering aim.'
>
> (Crang 2002, 652)

Thus it is crucial to identify the different researchers, identities and aims that combine to produce research accounts. Nonetheless, whilst adopting a reflexive stance toward my positionality is important in recognising how I am implicated in the account I have written, it is all too easy to take this too far. Schiellerup cautions against 'self-reflexivity producing an infinite regress' (2005, 122), a trap which is easily fallen into, particularly if my account of observed events is seen to be equally as socially constructed as that of my participants (Davies 1999). Such over-reflexivity would produce an account that was more about me than about the research problem I set out to investigate (Wolcott 1999). It is for this reason that contextual constructivism is crucial for my research. It enables me to acknowledge my positionality whilst not providing excessive amounts of autobiographical background and thus avoiding 'narcissistic, emotionally motivated navel gazing' (Ley and Mountz 2001, 245). It reminds me and my readers to be constantly aware of my perspective, but not ahead of denying a reality beyond it.

Constructionist perspectives also demand a consideration of power in the research process. Conventionally, such considerations reflect on the nature of the

encounter between researcher and researched, observing that the researcher wields enormous power over his/her subjects, possessing the capacity to extract their words and create worlds on the basis of them. It is for precisely this reason that research ethics are vital (Kelly and Ali 2004). As Thrift notes, however, research often does not feel this way, and indeed ethical concern should also be paid to the researcher:

> 'Though fieldwork is often portrayed as a classical colonial encounter in which the fieldworker lords it over her/his respondents, the fact of the matter is that it usually does not feel much like that at all. More often it is a curious mixture of humiliations and intimidations mixed with moments of insight and even enjoyment.'
>
> (Thrift 2003 in Crang 2005, 231)

Further, Valentine (1997) observes that such conventional power relations are often reversed in organisational research:

> 'If you are interviewing elites and business people, it is they who often have the upper hand, by controlling access to knowledge, information and informants.'
>
> (Valentine 1997, 114)

The power relations inherent to this thesis are thus complex. Whilst I held power over my research participants, particularly during the writing up process (see below), many of them also held significant power over me, including, in some cases, the power to halt my research.

In addition to concern with power *relations*, however, a concern with the power *effects* (Foucault 1980; Burchell *et al* 1991) of research is equally important in research on pro-environmental behaviour change. It is increasingly recognised that not only are research techniques implicated in the kinds of worlds created in research accounts, but also that these accounts have real effects on the lives of both the researched and researchers (Gaventa and Cornwall 2001; Briggs 2003). Gubrium and Holstein note that :

> ''Scientific surveillance' such as psychological testing, case assessments, and, of course, individual interviews of all kinds have created the experiencing and informing respondent we now take for granted.'
>
> (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a, 26)

Increasingly, research techniques such as interviews and participant observation are being seen as part of the interview society (Holstein and Gubrium 2003), furthering an

individualising discourse of contemporary *governmentality* (Foucault 1991). In this view, the power effects of research are pervasive and cannot simply be neutralised or erased through better research ethics. Instead, it is imperative to recognise that research methods have power effects and are complicit in the worlds they construct. Therefore it is vital that researchers are sensitive to this and, where possible, use their research to enable more voices to speak, thus providing the opportunity for new stories and ways of self- and world-making to emerge.

The rest of this chapter will turn away from these large philosophical issues to address the practicalities of conducting the research reported in this thesis. This is not to say that these issues have been resolved. Instead, they underlie all that is written in this thesis, and I hope my discussion of them has provided a degree of honesty and transparency that will enable the reader to understand the world I have constructed.

3.2 Finding and Introducing the Case Study: Global Action Plan, Environment Champions and Burnetts

Having elected to undertake an ethnographic case study, the first challenge I faced was finding a suitable field to research and gaining access to it. I wished to research processes of pro-environmental behaviour change in a workplace, and therefore had to find a workplace that was actively encouraging its staff to adopt pro-environmental behaviours. Despite recent growth in corporate social responsibility and organisational greening (Harris and Crane 2002), much of this work centres on external, public facing aspects of organisational behaviour and corporate strategy, rather than the everyday, internal behaviour of employees. Furthermore, organisational pro-environmental behaviour change initiatives tend to be restricted to larger organisations (del Brio and Junquera 2003). As such, the population of workplaces available to me was relatively small, making the task of finding an organisation that would grant me the access required to undertake an ethnography extremely difficult.

To overcome this problem I turned to a key gatekeeper – Global Action Plan. Global Action Plan is an international network of not-for-profit organisations that was founded by David Gershon in the United States in 1989-90, with the express aim to ‘empower individuals to take practical environmental action in their home, workplace and community…to help individuals live sustainable lifestyles’ (McLaren, 1994 in

Georg 1999, 458). In the early 1990s it spread across the Atlantic to Northern Europe, opening offices in 14 countries by 1994, including in the UK in 1993. Global Action Plan UK (hereafter simply GAP) dubs itself the ‘practical environmental charity’ (www.globalactionplan.org.uk accessed on 25.10.08) but, despite its practical emphasis, it has also developed close ties with the academic community through a commitment to undertake various forms of social experimentation (e.g. Hobson 2001; Maiteny 2002; Michaelis 2004; Hargreaves *et al* 2008; Nye and Burgess 2008). These ties form the background to this thesis, and have also played a key role in GAP’s development during its 15 years of existence.

Based on the experience of its sister organisations across Europe, particularly in the Netherlands and Scandinavia (Staats and Harland 1995; Harland and Staats 1997; Georg 1999; Staats *et al* 2004), and following Hobson’s (2001) PhD study of their social marketing initiative *Action at Home* (see section 2.2.1), today GAP runs programmes to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change based on three core features: first, the use of action teams and discussion groups drawn from existing communities; second, the use of trained facilitators and programme managers to organise and coordinate the programmes, and to provide support to participants; and third, the measurement of participants’ environmental impacts, and the provision of feedback to show the effects of the behavioural changes induced by the programmes (GAP 2006). As of 2008, GAP operated three programmes based on these principles: *EcoTeams* which works with households; *Action at School* in schools; and most significantly for my research interests, *Environment Champions*, which operates in workplaces. All three programmes use essentially the same approach, so I will only provide further detail on the Environment Champions (EC) programme (interested readers are advised to consult GAP [2006] for more information on the other programmes).

GAP runs the EC programme in public and private sector organisations that have approached it and paid a fee. An initial meeting between senior managers and GAP’s programme managers is then held to work out when and where the programme should run, and which issues it should address e.g. energy, water, waste, transport or a combination of these. GAP then instructs the organisation to recruit a team of up to 20 Champions from across their staff and of differing levels of seniority. A few months later, the team conducts an initial audit of their environmental impacts, aided by GAP’s programme managers. If the focus of the initiative is on waste and energy, this

will involve separating and weighing all waste bins, and taking meter readings. These data are then given to GAP, to compile an audit report on the basis of them. Next, an initial planning meeting is arranged at which GAP programme managers present the audit results and encourage the Champions team to discuss them and to devise ways of reducing their organisation's environmental impacts. Typically this involves a combination infrastructural changes e.g. installing new boilers or low energy light bulbs, and of running a communications campaign to encourage colleagues to change their behaviour. Over the next four to six months, the team meet regularly to plan and run the initiative in their workplace. GAP programme managers provide support throughout this time and aim to attend meetings with the team at least once every month. At the end of the initiative a second audit is conducted, using the same methods as the first. A final event is then held to discuss, and hopefully to celebrate, these results and to plan further steps which could be taken[6].

During the early stages of my PhD I developed strong links with GAP, by helping to compile the quantitative results of and evaluating their EcoTeams, Action at School and EC programmes (see GAP 2006; Hargreaves *et al* 2008). When I asked if I might conduct a study of the EC programme they were thus happy to help, not least because previous research and policy interest in their programmes had concentrated almost solely on the EcoTeams programme (DEFRA 2003; HoC EAC 2003; Michaelis 2004; Nye and Burgess 2008), reflecting the domestic bias in pro-environmental behaviour change research generally.

Initially, GAP suggested I try and gain access to a major investment bank that was undertaking the EC programme. I wrote a letter explaining the nature of my project and fieldwork for GAP's programme manager to share with them. After roughly a month, I was told they had not shared the letter with the client for fear it might jeopardise the early stages of their relationship. Instead, GAP suggested I approach a large computing company who were about to undertake the EC programme. Again, a letter was written, and this time it was sent, but no reply was received despite subsequent letters and phone calls. As a last resort, GAP suggested that Burnetts, who had in fact commenced the EC programme in December 2006 (it was now March 2007), might be interested in participating.

[6] This is an example of a typical EC initiative. Increasingly GAP operate bespoke EC programmes adapted to the specific demands of the organisation in question.

Burnetts[7] is a large construction company with offices all over the UK. In late 2006, Steven Latham, one of the company's executive directors heard about the EC programme and decided to pilot it at the company's head offices, the Bridgeford site, during 2007. Following the initial pilot, a decision would be taken about whether to conduct the initiative (or something similar) in other offices. Further details on the company's potential motives for undertaking the initiative, and on the Bridgeford site, are provided in chapter 4.

Immediately after GAP's suggestion I sent an initial research proposal to Steven Latham (see appendix 1), but again received no response. The previous two-month period of failing to gain access to organisations caused me to re-examine my research proposal and think about how my methodological strategy might be made more amenable to potential case study organisations (*cf.* Cook and Crang 1995; Horwood and Moon 2003). Silverman (2006) notes the importance of reflecting on failed access. As well as providing an insight into the sorts of organisations that eventually decide to take part in the research, it can reveal much about the fragility of the research process. For me, these processes revealed much about GAP's perception of its own position, suggesting, whether justifiably or not, that they saw themselves as relatively weak in comparison to the organisations wishing to undertake their programmes. They also made me acutely aware of the need to fit-in with the demands of the organisation I wished to study (Baszanger and Dodier 1997), and to ensure that participation was of relatively immediate instrumental benefit to the organisation concerned. As a result, in future access attempts, I offered my services as a voluntary intern.

Therefore, I sent a revised introductory letter (see appendix 2) including an offer of my services, and within two hours had received a response from Steven which read:

> 'What you propose is entirely consistent with my own aspirations for Burnetts and indeed for the individuals who have volunteered to be our Champions… I am confident [they] will welcome you into the sessions.'
>
> (from email dated 21.03.07)

[7] Burnetts, and all employee names used in this thesis, are pseudonyms, used in order to preserve anonymity. In addition, I have felt unable to disclose many details about Burnetts for fear of compromising its true identity. This is a regrettable but necessary aspect of research ethics.

He also suggested we meet as soon as possible. At the meeting he reiterated his general support for my project and suggested I conduct a carbon footprint of their vehicle fleet in return for access to the EC initiative. An offer I duly accepted. At the end of our meeting, he introduced me to David who had been placed in charge of the Champions team. David invited me to the Champions' initial planning meeting which was occurring the following day.

Having recounted the process of finding a case study to research and gaining access to it, it is worth briefly reflecting on the kind of case study it formed. Stake (2000) draws a distinction between *intrinsic* case studies, focused on the specific case in question, and *instrumental* case studies, interested in the case as an example of something else. My study is instrumental in that GAP and EC at Burnetts are merely vehicles for the broader processes of pro-environmental behaviour change in workplaces that form the central focus of my study. Flyvbjerg (2006, 230) highlights four further types of case study selection strategies:

1. *Extreme/deviant cases:* These are unusual cases which provide either an ideal or very bad example of something.
2. *Maximum variation cases:* This involves selecting multiple cases to observe the significance of particular circumstances on case processes and outcomes.
3. *Critical cases:* These are cases which permit logical deductions of the type 'if this is (not) valid for this case then it applies for all (no) cases.'
4. *Paradigmatic cases:* These are exemplar cases which highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question and can serve as a reference point for new schools of thought.

Accordingly, my study is at once an extreme/deviant case and a paradigmatic case. It is extreme in that relatively few organisations undertake pro-environmental behaviour change initiatives, and it is paradigmatic in that it provides the first detailed ethnographic case study of a workplace pro-environmental behaviour change initiative. In this sense, it is also a *revelatory* case (Davies and Crane 2003). Hopefully it will shed light on aspects of these processes in other organisations, whilst not suggesting that they will unfold in exactly the same way.

Finally, whilst I selected Environment Champions and Burnetts on this basis, as this section has made clear, the level of choice I had in selecting my specific case

study was severely limited. As was the case with Flyvbjerg (2006, 231) the process of case selection 'happened to me,' as much as I happened to it.

3.3 Undertaking the Ethnography

Having been invited to attend my first EC meeting the day after agreeing access, I was a little overwhelmed with how fast everything was moving, bewildered by all of the first impressions I wanted to record, and ultimately unsure of how to go about conducting an ethnographic study. The following sections will outline the approach I adopted.

3.3.1 Observation: Where and When to Look, and What to See?

Returning home after my initial meeting with Steven and David, I wrote pages and pages of field notes (see section 3.3.3 for details of what these notes contained), trying to observe anything and everything about my meeting from a description of the car park and the cars in it, to what people were wearing, to a plan of the reception area and the site as a whole, to an overheard conversation about a horse box in a ditch (FD:7[8]). At this early stage I was following Wolfinger's (2002) strategy of 'comprehensive note taking' and heeding the warning that 'if it's not written down, it never happened' (Waddington 1994, 109), but quickly found this approach to be unsustainable. I stayed up writing until roughly 03:00, and subsequently awoke several times throughout the night, my head swimming with further observations which I duly noted down to be written up the following day. On this basis, Waddington's observation that 'it is common for observers to devote up to six hours of writing up for every hour spent in the field' (1994, 109) seemed entirely plausible, but also unrealistic as I had to be up at 07:00 in order to attend the next meeting!

Whilst tempted to continue observing anything and everything, I consciously set myself a broad 'generative question' (Strauss 1987, 17). Strauss notes that such questions are designed to open up the field rather than prematurely close it down. As such, my question was:

[8] Throughout the thesis, all references to my field diary will take the form of the abbreviation 'FD' following by the page number of the observation being cited.

How does the EC initiative interact with daily practice at the Bridgeford site?

I attempted to carry this around with me in my head at all times. It encouraged me to observe closely not only the Champions initiative and how it unfolded, but also routine practice at Bridgeford and how the two affected one another. It was thus very broad, omitting almost nothing, but also focusing my observations on a set of 'sensitizing concepts' (Charmaz 2006, 16).

Furthermore, following almost 18 months immersed in literature on pro-environmental behaviour change I also had a huge number of more theoretical sensitizing concepts swimming around in my head and guiding my observations. Whilst a strict positivist might see this as fostering observational bias and causing me to see only what I set out to find, I would suggest that sensitizing concepts are a crucial and inevitable aspect of all ethnography (*cf.* LeCompte 2002, 286). Nonetheless, to avoid simply being led by existing theories and my earliest hunches, I consciously noted theoretical observations and thoughts in my field diary at the end of each period of observation, keeping track of how they developed and changed. This helped me to treat these sensitivities with a degree of scepticism, as hypotheses to be tested, dis-proven, and refined, rather than paths to be followed blindly.

With this generative question in mind, I conducted two distinct forms of observation. The first, and perhaps most dominant form, was carried out in the many and various Champions meetings. These meetings occurred on a regular basis, sometimes involving the entire group and at others only parts of it (see table 3.1 for a summary of the meetings I attended). Whilst this is a form of 'focused participant observation' covering only 'significant moments' (Styaert and Bouwen 1994, 137) within the course of the EC initiative, I found that it produced vast amounts of data about the organisation as a whole and how the EC team and initiative fitted into it. Schwartzman (1993) argues that meetings are often neglected in organisational ethnography, seen as unproblematic events rather than 'delicate achievements' in which organisations are constructed as well as discussed. I certainly found this to be true: the meetings regularly involved discussions of what would be appropriate within the organisation, how different groups of employees were likely to respond, and what was considered possible and achievable or otherwise. In some respects, therefore, the Champions meetings acted like focus groups for my research, as significant

participants shared their reflections on how pro-environmental behaviour might fit-in with the ongoing organisational reality.

Date	Nature of meeting	Reference No.[9]
03.04.07	Initial access meeting	1
04.04.07	Initial planning meeting	2
17.04.07	Launch group planning meeting	3
18.04.07	Resource group planning meeting	4
20.04.07	Progress meeting 1	5
10.05.07	Recycling group planning meeting 1	6
18.05.07	Progress meeting 2	7
04.06.07	Recycling group planning meeting 2	8
15.06.07	Progress meeting 3	9
18.07.07	Progress meeting 4	10
07.09.07	Progress meeting 5	11
22.11.07	Celebration event	12

Table 3.1: Summary of Champions Meetings Attended

The second form of observation was less focused, based on a series of placements I undertook at the site. As the initiative progressed I was able to negotiate time in and around the Bridgeford site. Often this occurred whilst merely waiting for a meeting or an interview, but I was also able to arrange five week-long placements in different offices around the site. In one of these placements I worked closely with one of the Champions helping him and shadowing (McDonald 2005) him in his work; in three I was placed in different offices working with different teams (only one of which contained a Champion) doing various tasks such as filing, photocopying, and data entry; and in a final placement I spent much of my time alone in an office – although this is actually quite representative of how many employees at Bridgeford spend much of their time. These placements involved a less focused form of observation, but they provided me with a general feeling for routine practice at the offices, interspersed with brief glimpses of how the EC initiative interacted with it.

In total I was present at the site on 67 days over the course of nine months between April and December 2007, sometimes for the whole day and at other times for only a few hours. During this time I came into contact with well over 100 employees in various ways, from chance conversations to working together over an extended period. In addition, I also compiled a large number of emails and other documents relating to the Champions initiative. This level of access provided me with

[9] To avoid confusion, I will note the reference number when referring to these various meetings throughout the thesis.

abundant opportunities to observe everyday goings on at Bridgeford, and generated vast amounts of data. This is not to suggest, however, that I merely *observed* goings on. The next section explains how I also participated in them.

3.3.2 Participation: Fluid Identities and Multiple Positionings

From the outset of the fieldwork period I chose to be overt about my role as a participant observer. Not only do covert studies introduce numerous ethical issues (Silverman 2006), but I was also forced to be overt in order to gain access to the site. Once access had been negotiated with Steven, however, it was by no means assured that it would be granted by all members of the Champions team and other employees at Bridgeford. Instead, I found myself constantly negotiating a role at the site. As such my positionality was multiple, changing over time and meaning different things to different people as the fieldwork progressed (Bell 1999; Horwood and Moon 2003).

Conventionally, ethnographers have considered their position relative to the community under study on an axis running from outsider to insider (Mohammed 2001). Junker (2004) subdivides this axis into four sections running from *complete participant* at the insider pole, through *participant as observer* and *observer as participant*, and ending with *complete observer* at the outsider pole (see figure 3.1). Whilst providing a useful heuristic for thinking about positionality, in my fieldwork I found such a typology wholly inadequate to capture its complexity.

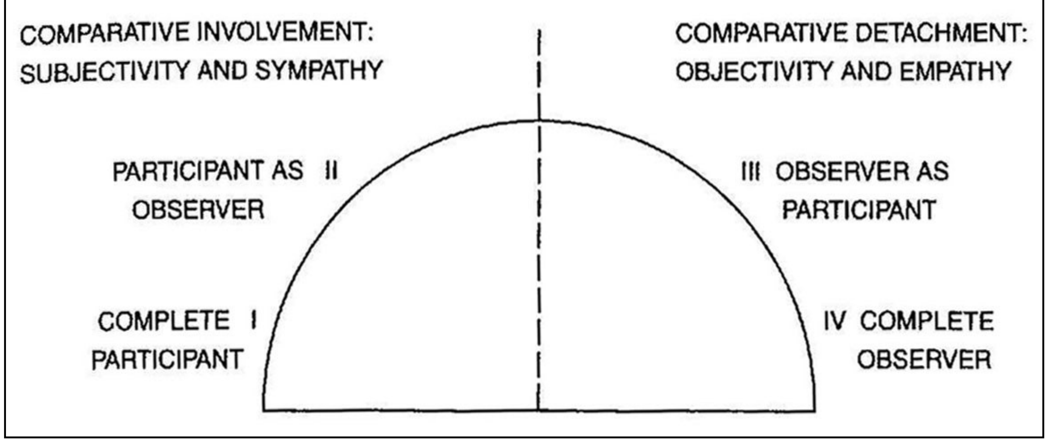


Figure 3.1: Theoretical Social Roles for Fieldwork
(Source: Junker 2004, 223)

At the beginning of my fieldwork, having used Steven – a very senior figure within Burnetts – as a gatekeeper to the EC initiative, my position could have been conceptualised as either an outsider or an insider. I was wary that using Steven as a way-in might distance me from the Champions team; they may have feared I would report back to him and therefore behave awkwardly towards me or shut me out entirely. In the event, however, I soon came to realise that outsiders in the form of consultants or clients were regularly welcomed into the Bridgeford site, often playing important roles in normal office life. Nonetheless, whilst I, and I think most of the Champions as well, gradually came to forget about this connection, I was reminded of it quite late in the fieldwork when called 'one of Steven's protégés' (FD:169). Therefore it was obviously an enduring issue for some. The insider/outsider axis is complicated here, however, for whilst my contact with Steven made me something of an outsider to the EC team, being one of his protégés, or having 'his ear' (FD:162) also made me a potential insider to parts of the senior management team, influencing further the behaviour of the Champions and other employees towards me.

I had hoped formally to introduce my research project during the first meeting I attended. Whilst this would have marked me out as a complete outsider and observer, in the end I was not given the opportunity to do so. Instead, at this meeting I was immediately expected to act as a complete participant in the initiative. Indeed, for those who were aware of my PhD research I was seen as an expert on pro-environmental behaviour change and therefore a potentially important participant. During the meeting I was able to speak to many of the Champions team and introduce myself and my project. Nonetheless, I also sent an email to the entire team afterwards to ensure they understood the nature of my research and to inform them I wished to interview them at some point during the initiative (see appendix 3).

As the initiative developed, my positionality in relation to the Champions team continued to evolve. At first, despite volunteering for as many jobs as possible and showing as much enthusiasm as I could, I did not appear to be very active within the group and relied heavily on David to invite me to meetings and events. Gradually, however, as I spoke to more people, I became more involved and came to feel more and more comfortable and accepted. In particular, conducting interviews with the Champions served to garner interest in and support for my research and led to even further participation, rather than marking me out as an outsider as I had expected it might. As this process continued, I even came to think of myself as a part of the

Champions team, and occasionally caught myself referring to the various activities that 'we' were doing (FD:140). I think, and hope, that the Champions also came to see me in this way. Towards the end they seemed happy to have me in the meetings and to see me around the site, asking me to help out at events, share my thoughts and even to take minutes.

My positionality in relation to other employees around the site was different again however. I was first introduced to such non-Champions at the EC initiative's launch event in early May, when Steven introduced me to a small assembled crowd as: 'Tom Hargreaves…who's actually doing some research on behaviour change, so you're all a sort of part of his experiment' (FD:74). Fortunately, not everyone heard this statement and thus people did not intentionally try to avoid me. Instead, as the initiative progressed, I was variously positioned by non-Champions as someone who worked for GAP (I had been seen talking to GAP's programme manager at the launch event); as the naïve fool who thinks that an ethnographic case study will ever prove anything; as the weird researcher who wants to spend more time in the offices when everyone else wants to go home; and also by some as a new employee or temporary staff member they had not yet met. Once again, whenever I introduced myself to non-Champions I was open and honest about my research, and this usually led to more interest and participation rather than less.

Overall, my positionality was multiple and fluid during fieldwork, switching back and forth from complete observer to participant as observer frequently, depending on who I was engaging with. A further problem I have with Junker's typology, however, is that it assumes a single axis of positionality relating only to my identity as a researcher. Whilst this was undoubtedly a salient identity during fieldwork, I also engaged both with Champions and non-Champions in many other ways, for example as a young man, a cyclist, a football fan, a cricketer, someone who appreciates ballet, someone with a degree, someone with a sense of humour, and, I hope, to some extent also as a friend. As such, whilst I may have been an outsider with respect to my research, I may also have been an insider with respect to my knowledge of cricketing terminology, for example, and it would be somewhat presumptuous to argue that any one trait was more or less important than any others in particular situations.

Whilst my position within the research site was never entirely stable or clear, one aspect of my position that never changed was that I constantly left the site to

make field notes. This helped me to retain some critical distance, ensured I could never completely shed my role as an observer, and also influenced the way I behaved at the site and the sorts of interactions and observations I sought. The next section provides more detail on this process.

3.3.3 Making Field Notes: Writing Up Reality

There are numerous guides available for what to write about, and how, when making field notes (see Wolfinger 2002, 90-91 for some examples). One of the closest to my approach is provided by Lofland (2004) who suggests that field notes consist of five categories of observations:

1. *Running descriptions* of events, people, things heard and overheard, conversations among people and with people, descriptions of physical settings, maps, diagrams, times, dates etc.
2. *Previously forgotten, now recalled* for all the observations missed out when the initial *running description* was written.
3. *Analytic ideas and inferences* about the master themes of the study, about middle level chunks of analysis and about the details of ideas and hunches.
4. *Personal impressions and feelings* recording the observer's thoughts and feelings in the site.
5. *Notes for further information* providing 'instructions to self' for additional areas of observation to pursue or analytic ideas to explore.

Whilst this provides an accurate description of my eventual field diary, the process of note taking itself was far messier and less controlled.

As mentioned above, I tried to keep my generative question in mind at all times. Whenever something relevant to it occurred I would note it down as soon as possible. It is very hard to define formally what I mean by relevant, however, and indeed this took on different forms throughout the fieldwork. Initially almost everything seemed relevant as it provided clues to how everyday practice proceeded at Bridgeford. As the fieldwork progressed, however, my observations became more focused and 'relevance' more tightly defined in relation to the emerging themes of my

analysis. Furthermore, my understanding of relevance, as well as my notation techniques, changed depending on what kind of observation I was conducting.

In their meetings, many of the Champions took notes themselves. I was therefore able to have an A5 notebook open and in front of me at all times without looking out of place. I could note down more or less everything that occurred: comments on who was present, when they arrived and left, who said what, side conversations that were going on, body language, when mobile phones rang, and much more. I am sure many of the Champions thought I was scribbling rather furiously at times, but I was able to play this down by offering to type up minutes of some meetings.

This form of note taking was not possible when conducting more general participant observation however. I often had tasks to do and therefore could not simply note everything down. As a result, relevance became somewhat more tightly defined and, whilst I tried to note down descriptions and impressions of general activity around the site, including snippets of conversation, these observations were highly fragmented. In order to be discreet in these settings I used a smaller, pocket-sized notebook that I could carry around with me without disrupting the normal flow of daily life. At times I developed 'ethnographer's bladder' (Cook and Crang 1995, 35) during sustained presence in the field, taking trips to the toilet in order to make notes after particularly interesting observations. On occasions I also made notes on my mobile phone or on one of the office computers – activities which could easily be disguised as sending a text message or an email.

These scribbled notes were extremely messy and it was imperative that I tidied them up as soon as possible to ensure nothing was forgotten. After each day in the field I therefore spent a considerable amount of time typing up my field diary on my computer, often on long train journeys home. In the field diary I was more able to follow Lofland's (2004) advice, and tended to try and write my notes in a stream of consciousness (Cook 1997) roughly following the chronological order of events as they had occurred. Nonetheless, to some extent I also used a 'salience hierarchy' (Wolfinger 2002, 89) approach that involved writing up the most relevant events as they sprung to mind. Further, when typing up my notes I often found that I would remember past observations and included these also.

As well as a description of my field observations, my field diary also contained numerous theoretical ideas and asides, methodological observations, and

more personal thoughts and feelings about the research process (see appendix 4 for an extract of my field diary). Initially I attempted to colour code these parts of the diary in order to separate them off from my observations (*cf.* Murray 2003). As the fieldwork continued and my theoretical ideas developed, however, it became increasingly difficult to be clear as to what was observation-led-theory and what was theory-led-observation, as the content of my observations became narrower and more focused. This process of *funnelling* (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) illustrates that my analysis of the data overlapped almost entirely with the process of data collection. I constantly found myself making observations, reflecting on them, and developing higher level theoretical ideas whilst writing up my field diary. I would then often attempt to explore promising theoretical avenues in future observation. As such, analysis began whilst still in the field as I constantly tested my developing ideas against new observations, moving back and forth between the field and theory using a combination of both inductive and deductive reasoning. I hope, and believe, that this has added a high degree of rigour (Baxter and Eyles 1997) to my observations and analysis.

3.3.4 Interviews

Regardless of the level of detail captured in my field diary, using participant observation on its own would have run the risk of neglecting people's understandings of their own behaviour. As Atkinson and Coffey (2003) make clear, observation of what is done should not enjoy primacy over what is said. Semi-structured interviews, whilst criticised by Crang (2003, 496) as *de rigueur* in qualitative research, nevertheless provide a chance for 'interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words' (Valentine 1997, 111). In short, whilst I was concerned not to create 'wordy worlds' (Crang 2003, 501), I was also concerned to access the 'words and meanings' employed by 'practitioners of everyday life' (Holstein and Gubrium 2003, 73), both as they went about their normal business, and as they talked about and reflected on it. I did not, however, see interviews as a means of checking or triangulating my observational data (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Mason 2006). Instead, interviews, like participant observation, represented simply another active performance (Denzin 2001) of social life at the Bridgeford site. In this respect, my interviews added new layers of

depth to, and new avenues to explore within, my data, but did not and could not confirm or deny its truth(s).

As my fieldwork progressed, I realised I was conducting a large number of short and informal opportunistic interviews as I discussed my research and the EC initiative with different people at Bridgeford. Nonetheless, I was concerned that such conversations were not providing the depth of engagement I felt a more formal interview could provide. Because of this, I sought semi-structured interviews with Champions, non-Champions and the GAP programme managers.

The first step in this process was to recruit interviewees and I used a variety of sampling strategies to achieve this. With the Champions, it was quite straightforward: I simply asked them face to face for an interview or sent them an email. Although there were some delays in arranging a time, most seemed more than happy to talk about their experiences. The same was true of GAP's programme managers. Recruitment was harder with non-Champions, however, and I found I had to use a combination of three recruitment strategies. First, I used a 'snowballing' strategy (Valentine 1997), asking Champions if they could think of people who would be happy to talk to me. In one case, this led to my having five interviews arranged for me in one afternoon by Louise, such that all I had to do was attend. Second, I recruited people opportunistically out of those I had got to know around the site. Finally, I used a more strategic technique adopting a 'theoretical sampling' approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) to include interviewees who could offer particular, and potentially valuable, perspectives on the initiative. Using this approach I actively sought interviews with members of the board; with members of the Facilities Management team; and I also attempted to recruit interviewees from of all areas of the Bridgeford site. I stopped conducting interviews when the same themes continually reappeared within them and I felt I had reached 'theoretical saturation' (Strauss 1987). In total I conducted 37 interviews (see table 3.2).

The second step in this process was to produce an interview topic guide. As mentioned above, I was not treating the interviews as providing a neutral and objective window on reality, but instead sought actively to co-construct a range of different perspectives on, and performances of, the EC initiative with my interviewees. As such, I attempted to structure the interviews very loosely in an informal and conversational style. To begin with, I mined my field diary for important themes to pursue. Having turned up far too many issues, however, I decided to trust

my interviewees to highlight the points that were important to them and thus chose to structure the interview into three ‘grand tour’ (McCracken 1988) questions, using themes from my field diary as prompts and cues where necessary. These three grand tour questions focused first on the participant’s job and their daily activities, second on the EC initiative and their perspectives on it, and third on evaluating the initiative and seeing if they thought it could have been improved. I used essentially the same interview schedule with all interviewees (see appendix 5).

Champions Interviews		**Non-Champions Interviews**	
Name	**Date**	**Name**	**Date**
Amy Peterson*	10.08.07	Beth Martens	11.07.07
Bill Jones	18.07.07	Brian Ellis	22.08.07
Clare Jobson	25.09.07	Doug Robinson	11.07.07
Craig Stokes	27.09.07	Elly MacDonald	11.07.07
David Miller	16.10.07 & 09.11.07	Emma Dunham*	10.08.08
Geoff Hyatt	16.07.07	JackieYoung	08.08.07
Graham Laver	17.08.07 & 24.08.07	Joanna Bright	14.09.07
Leanne Matthews	10.07.07	Jon Atkinson	09.11.07
Leslie Arkwright	12.07.07	Karen Lawton	25.09.07
Liam Sargent	27.08.07	Rob Thorpe	17.07.07
Louise Elliott	11.07.07 & 28.11.07	Lucy Cavendish	09.11.07
Melanie Stevens	12.07.07	Lynn Edwards	12.09.07
Melissa Banks	02.08.07	Michael Stride	09.11.07
Peter Osborne	14.09.07	Paul Holmes	11.07.07
Roger Smith	16.07.07	Phil Peters	11.07.07
Sally Davies	03.10.07	Steph Harding	02.08.07
		Steven Latham	09.11.07
GAP Programme Managers		Tim Dean	18.07.07
Anna Mclaren	10.10.07	Tina Matthews	26.07.07
Peter Cole	12.10.07	Vicky Colbourn	16.08.07

Table 3.2: Summary of Interviews
* Amy Peterson and Emma Dunham were interviewed jointly

It would be wrong to suggest that this fixed, stable guide is representative of what actually occurred in the interviews however. The guide itself continually evolved along with the EC initiative, and according to the individual I was interviewing. Further, I often asked ‘directive questions’ (Cook and Crang 1995), sharing my own or others’ observations on the EC initiative, as a means of probing further on particular points and trying to ‘activate the respondent’s stock of knowledge…and bring it to bear on the discussion at hand in ways that [we]re appropriate to the research agenda’ (Holstein and Gubrium 2003, 75). In this respect, the interviews I conducted represent improvised performances around my research theme, providing a range of different voices from different perspectives with the chance to speak about,

and reflect on the EC the initiative. I hope, therefore, that they have provided a variegated, rich and detailed exploration of how pro-environmental behaviour impacted upon everyday life at the Bridgeford site.

As table 3.1 indicates, the interviews occurred regularly between July and November 2007. All were conducted at the Bridgeford site in a location convenient and comfortable for the interviewee. Usually I had no choice over the interview locations, and they all occurred either in people's own offices, spare or temporarily unoccupied offices, or in the staff room. Although I always proposed individual interviews, on one occasion I conducted a joint interview with a Champion and a non-Champion who shared the same office, and on another occasion a work experience student was present in the room. On three occasions (with David, Graham and Louise), interviews were cut short prematurely and, therefore, I arranged to conduct second instalments. Overall, interviews lasted anywhere between 15 and 90 minutes with non-Champions, and 40 minutes to two hours with Champions and GAP programme managers.

In general I would say that participants responded well to my interview schedules, and I was able to have very insightful and wide ranging conversations with most. This was particularly true with more senior figures who had a lot to say and seemed well used to the interview format. In some cases, however, particularly with non-Champions, the interviews often stuttered as respondents appeared to find it hard to discuss the EC initiative in any depth, or to give anything more than the stock response: 'I think it's a good thing.' In these instances I tried asking more open questions, leaving long silences, rewording questions, explaining that I wanted their opinions, and that there were no right or wrong answers, but often found these strategies failed. In such circumstances, participants often tended to fall back on the pro-environmental behaviours they conducted at home. This perhaps suggests that domestic environmental discourses are more familiar and common, whilst discourse on pro-environmental behaviour at work remains ill-formed, poorly enunciated and relatively unspoken.

Every interview was recorded onto an MP3 player, apart from one in which the participant asked not to be recorded (I gave each participant this option at the start of every interview, also asking them to sign a consent and release form – see appendix 6). Soon after each interview I also wrote notes on how it had gone, the participant's body language, the setting, any interruptions that occurred, and as much as I could

remember of their responses to my questions. I then personally transcribed the interviews verbatim, finding it took roughly six hours for each recorded hour, although this included making short analytical notes and linkages as I proceeded (*cf.* Kneale 2001, and see appendix 7 for an extract of an interview transcript).

Finally, it is worth briefly reflecting on the effects my interviews had on the research site. As mentioned above, interviews are part of the individualising discourse of governmentality (Foucault 1991) and, as such, create the thinking, feeling individual as much as they gather their thoughts and emotions (Miller and Rose 1990). In my study, interviews provided an opportunity for employees to engage with the EC initiative. They were therefore part of the process of constructing 'environmental employees' which I report on throughout this thesis (see chapter 6). Whilst this is undeniably true, I also agree with Holstein and Gubrium that, in the interview society, 'the interview is becoming more and more commonplace, making it much more of a 'naturally occurring' occasion for articulating experience' (Holstein and Gubrium 2003, 78). In this respect, my interviews did not distort or bias my observations, but represented another naturally occurring forum for becoming an environmental employee, one in which that very process itself was reflected upon.

3.3.5 Leaving the Field

The final stage in undertaking the ethnography was leaving the field. Over nine months I had developed several friendships and come to feel quite attached to the EC initiative. Indeed, I may have been more attached to it than some of the Champions, for whilst it became a central part of my life, for them it was a peripheral concern alongside their existing jobs. Nonetheless, my departure process was aided by the fact I was researching a workplace, rather than a distant and exotic community or culture, and had been constantly leaving the community at the end of each day. Further, the end of the EC initiative in November provided a natural ending to the fieldwork phase of my project.

In addition to making a physical departure, Davies notes that leaving the field also involves 'a degree of intellectual distancing from the minutiae of ethnographic observations in order to discern structures and develop theories' (Davies 1999, 193). I found this much harder to achieve. Ongoing interview transcription also hindered this process as I was constantly becoming bogged down in the detail and 'little things'

(Flyvbjerg 2006) of the field, rather than thinking more generally and theoretically. Over time, however, absence from the field, discussions with my supervisors and colleagues, as well as returning to the literature in more detail, helped me gain the necessary critical distance. I hope it has also enabled me to narrate the EC initiative in a manner which 'understand[s] from the inside' whilst 'describing from the outside' (Schiellerup, 2005, 125).

3.4 Analysis

On leaving the field and completing transcription I was faced with a 254 page field diary and 986 pages of interview transcripts. This presented me with a quite bewildering array of data to try and analyse and turn into a finished thesis. As this section will show, I used a variety of different methods to achieve this.

3.4.1 Analysing all the Time

As I have suggested above, a great deal of analysis occurred in the process of compiling the data. From the outset, 'foreshadowed problems' (Walsh 2004, 230) that I had gathered from my own reading and 'experiential data' (Strauss 1987, 20), shaped the manner in which I observed practice and interviewed participants. When writing up my field diary and transcribing the interviews, I also allowed further analytic themes and theoretical ideas to develop which I recorded and then explored and tried to test in future observations and interviews.

This *funnelling* process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) also developed as I periodically wrote *position papers* (McCall and Simmons 1969) or *theoretical memos* (Strauss 1987) about the emerging data set. These took the form of 'written explorations of ideas about the data, codes, categories, or themes' (Eaves 2001, 659), noting the key issues that were emerging, how they linked with others, how they related to existing bodies of literature, and how they advanced my analysis. Often these memos were produced after discussions with my supervisors or colleagues as particular ideas and linkages struck me.

Robson (2002) describes the inception of such themes as *crystallizations*, suggesting that they range 'from the mundane to the 'earth-shattering epiphany' …after which nothing is the same' (Robson 2002, 488-9). I certainly found analysis to

be a similarly mysterious process, reliant on subjectivity and creativity as much as hard work and immersion in the field and the data. Nonetheless, I recorded these developments systematically as they occurred, either in memos or in my field diary, and would concur with Lofland that,

> 'by building a foundation of memos and tentative pieces of and directions for analysis, the analytic period will be much less traumatic. Analysis becomes a matter of selecting from and working out analytic themes that already exist.'
> (Lofland 2004, 234)

3.4.2 Coding and Cohering

Whilst these more informal processes were ongoing, on leaving the field I also embarked on a more formal set of analytic procedures. Ultimately I conducted a grounded theory analysis of my data (Charmaz 2006), but the formulaic steps for such processes, as outlined by Strauss (1987) for example, certainly do not capture the manner in which my analysis unfolded. In particular, I found that these approaches tended to fragment my data into static variables and concepts, whereas part of the purpose of adopting a case study approach was to observe processes and consider the case as a whole (*cf.* Riessman 2008). In addition, grounded theory analysis, grounded as it is in the data, can struggle to get beyond the participants' own understandings of what is occurring (Halkier 2002). I often found that the themes I was developing went beyond these understandings, and referred to broader processes that may have been invisible even to those participating directly in them. Whilst it was unsettling to depart from the data and go out on my own after so long in the field trying to grasp the 'native's point of view', I came to realise that this is also a key benefit of being able to achieve critical distance from the data. In short, whilst the general thrust of my analysis was led by the principles of grounded theory (Strauss 1987) it also involved a process similar to 'thematic narrative analysis' (Riessman 2008, 53).

Following a grounded theory approach, the first part of my formal analysis involved *open coding* (Strauss 1987). Codes are specific, named phenomena within the data that cut across transcripts or field diary entries and reflect the analyst's emerging ideas and hunches (Eaves 2001; Charmaz 2006). They may be taken directly from the participants' words (in vivo or emic coding) or be more analytic and

abstract ways of referring to chunks of data (sociologically constructed or etic coding (Strauss 1987; Crang 1997). Either way,

> 'open coding is done…by scrutinizing the fieldnote, interview, or other document very closely: line by line, or even word by word. The aim is to produce concepts that seem to fit the data.'
>
> (Strauss 1987, 28)

Strauss suggests that open coding, designed to open up the analysis rather than close it down, is 'a game of believing everything and believing nothing' (Strauss 1987, 29). In my analysis, largely because I was dealing with such an enormous amount of data I used NVivo 7.0 to help speed up the process.

Paradoxically, working through the data line by line had effect of helping me become further immersed in it, whilst also making familiar aspects of it seem unusual and exotic (Charmaz 2006). In the process, I produced 71 codes, each referring to a distinct concept that spanned across the data. Examples of these include: 'Just Another Project,' which referred to the perception amongst some that EC was no different from any previous workplace initiatives; 'Surveillance, Policing and Big Brother,' which contained any references to such processes in the EC initiative; and 'Laziness, Naughtiness and Bad Habits,' which gathered all instances of people referring to their own or others' environmental behaviour in these ways. Whilst it was certainly valuable to scrutinise and fragment the data in this way, I also felt that these concepts lacked the depth of meaning I had experienced whilst present in the field. Open coding, as is intended, served to de-contextualise these aspects of the EC initiative, but I also felt I had to try and piece them back together into the narrative in order to stay true to the data. Charmaz argues that ideas should 'earn' (2006, 68) their way into the analysis, but I felt that the process of open coding almost made ideas try too hard to justify themselves as standalone categories. The result was that they failed to fit together and the emerging analysis seemed to constitute less than the sum of its parts.

To overcome this, I embarked on a second round of analysis that was less concerned with the tiny details of the data. Rather than reading the data line by line and seeking out each independent idea, I tried to conceive of the data as consisting of different cases, reading whole interview transcripts or field diary entries and analysing them quite loosely for key events, processes, stories, perspectives, and characters.

This stopped someway short of detailed linguistic narrative analysis (Franzosi 1998) and even systematic analysis of personal narratives (Riessman 1993; 2000). Instead, it involved a quite creative process of sense-making that aimed to discover what was going on in each different case, and to develop and link it in with other parts of the data, rather than merely to tidy it up into discrete open codes (*cf.* Schiellerup 2005, 117). This yielded a further 114 'codes,' including whole events and narratives such as 'No Bin Day', human and nonhuman characters such as 'Brian' or 'The Vending Machine,' and stories, such as previously failed attempts to introduce desktop recycling trays around the offices.

3.4.3 Axial Coding or Storying the Data

At this stage I had reduced 1240 pages of raw data to 185 codes. I then wrote each of these codes on an individual post-it note and proceeded to sort through them one by one, grouping them together into different categories. This is similar to what Crang calls 'semiotic clustering' (2001, 226) which involves bringing the overlapping categories and codes together and trying to sort them into larger meta-categories. By using post-it notes I could continually re-sort the different codes until I felt happy that my analysis had achieved 'theoretical adequacy' (Cook and Crang 1995). I did this by continually returning to the data and to my memos, checking that the new links I was creating were consistent with what I had found and thought whilst in the field. My aim in this process was not to tidy up and concretise all aspects of my data, but instead to sort it into different meta-categories and explore the many and various different perspectives, events, stories, and concepts within each of them, as well as how they fitted together.

A second advantage of post-it notes was that they produced a tangible 'discursive map' (Kneale 2001) or rather, as the different chunks were not simply words about words, an 'operational diagram' (Strauss 1987, 149). This is shown below as figure 3.2, alongside a simplified computerised version. As can be seen, the analysis is grouped around the macro-categories of 'Practice', 'Interaction', and 'Power', with each of these then further sub-divided into middle level categories. For example interaction breaks down into 'Conspicuous Environmentalism', 'Communal Negotiations', 'Banal Environmentalism' and 'Resistance.' Finally, each of these consisted of smaller micro-categories - the individual codes themselves.

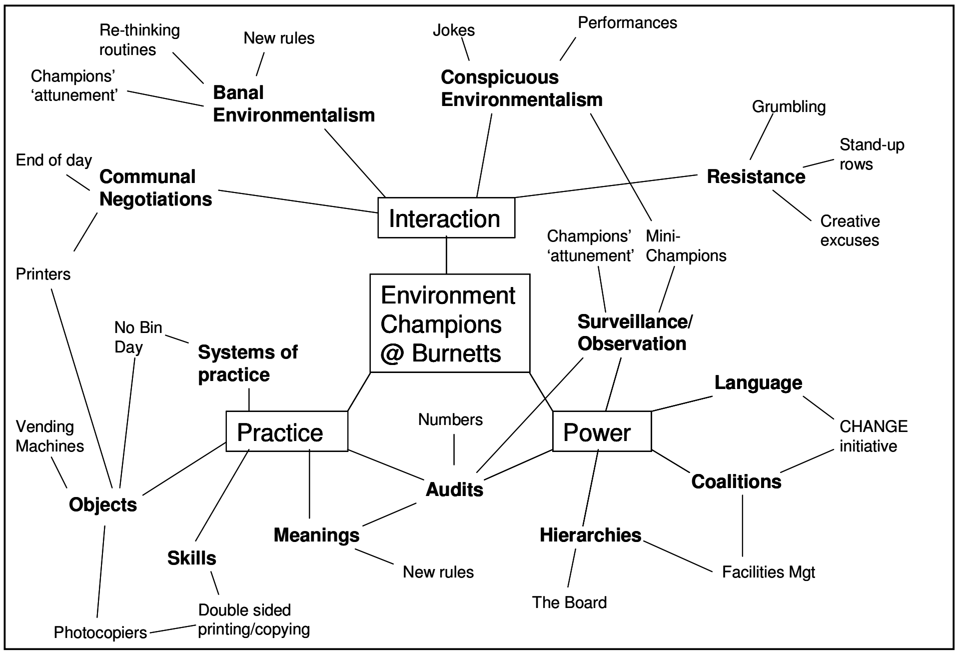


Figure 3.2: Operational Diagrams

Riessman (2008) argues that methodological and analytical techniques should not become disciplinary practices but are better treated as fuzzy and creative processes. This was certainly my experience. As I hope this section has shown, whilst the process of analysis I undertook was systematic and rigorous, it was also equally untidy, messy and idiosyncratic. As Strauss argues,

> 'the researcher's will not be the only possible interpretation of the data (only God's interpretation can make the claim of 'full completeness'), but it will be plausible, useful, and allow its own further elaboration and verification.'
>
> (Strauss 1987, 11)

I hope my efforts to this point have achieved a degree of usefulness, but as Van Maanen observes, for ethnographers 'analysis is not finished, only over' (Van Maanen 1988, 120).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

All research involving other people demands a consideration of ethics (Kelly and Ali 2004). I will therefore highlight the key ethical issues relating to participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, and illustrate how I attempted to neutralise or overcome them.

3.5.1 Ethics in Participant Observation

Participant observation raises ethical issues of both consent and anonymity. As mentioned, I was overt about the nature of my research from the very beginning, introducing myself to the company as someone interested in researching them rather than applying for a job with them for example (*cf.* Cook 1997). This does not imply that I had their full consent however. With the Champions team, I introduced myself and my research openly and honestly on numerous occasions, including sending an email which explicitly invited questions and comments on my research. Nonetheless, as the nature of ethnographic research is to be flexible and also to last a long time, it is possible that the nature of the consent they granted could have been forgotten or changed over time. To try and overcome this I regularly discussed my developing research project with the Champions, discussing emerging ideas and themes and thus keeping them informed and verbally gaining their consent for continued participation.

Such informed consent was harder to achieve with non-Champions with whom I had less direct contact during the fieldwork phase. As mentioned above, I openly discussed my research with anyone I spoke to, but those who might have seen me as a new member of staff or temporary worker could have been wholly unaware of the ongoing project. In this respect the study could be seen as ethically dubious, however,

I am satisfied that none of these individuals play a major, or indeed any, part in the eventual thesis. Indeed, they would be unable to recognise themselves in the finished piece. Ultimately, I had to use my professional judgement and discretion throughout the project and I am satisfied I have done this to high ethical standards.

A second vital ethical issue relating to participant observation is anonymity. In my project this has been maintained on two levels: for the individual participants, and for the company as a whole. With individuals I have used pseudonyms throughout. In a relatively small workplace however, I am sure individuals will be able to recognise themselves. Whilst I do not expect that they will agree with everything I have said, I hope they will appreciate my interpretations and understand how I arrived at them. I have also tried to preserve the anonymity of the company being researched, by using a pseudonym and withholding unique details about it (Macmillan and Scott 2003). This was a very difficult decision to make as I am extremely proud of the participants involved in the research and feel that their trials, tribulations and eventual achievements deserve to be communicated. Nonetheless, outward communication of the precise details of the initiative is a decision the company should take for itself, and ultimately I decided this was the only way to be fair to all concerned. Furthermore, the core interest of this thesis lies in processes of pro-environmental behaviour change amongst individuals in a workplace. Whilst I emphasise the importance of context in these processes, the thesis is not specifically about Burnetts, or EC or GAP. I thus do not feel that withholding these details has harmed the analysis I have presented.

3.5.2 Ethics in Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to anonymity, which I have addressed above, semi-structured interviews raise ethical issues relating to power relations between the researcher and researched, and of ownership over the eventual research report. I will address each of these in turn.

Conventionally, the interview encounter is seen as involving a set of uneven and hierarchical power relationships, with the all-powerful academic probing the lives of research subjects and extracting information. Such a view leads to a fear that participants may reveal more than they would like to, as is easily done when asked to talk freely about aspects of one's life. In my study I attempted to equalise these potentially uneven power relations by adopting an informal conversational style in the

interviews, allowing participants to choose a convenient and comfortable location for the interviews, and reminding them that they could stop the interview at any time without negative consequences. These issues were formalised in the consent and release form, read and signed by all participants before the interviews began (see appendix 6). This approach seemed to work quite well. Most interviewees seemed comfortable and some, I hope, also enjoyed being interviewed. No interviewees terminated their interview or refused to answer questions and in general, by the end, most seemed interested in my project happy to have been able to try and help. Despite these observations, it is also worth remembering Valentine's (1997, 114) comment that when interviewing business people and officials it is often they who have the 'upper hand.' This was certainly how it felt to me, particularly with senior figures in the organisation.

With respect to ownership of the final research report, ethics are again implicated. Far from the traditional 'classical colonial encounter' (Thrift 2003 in Crang 2005, 231) in which I, as researcher, capture data like a prize, it has been increasingly suggested that participants should own the acts and words they contribute (Wolcott 1999). To complicate matters further, I asked all interviewees to sign a release form that clearly explained that the data might be used in teaching and publications. On this, two participants asked that I check with them before using any of their words and one asked that I simply wrote notes rather than recorded the interview, wishes I have of course respected. The approach I have adopted however, is that outlined by Holstein and Gubrium (2003) in which both interviewer and interviewee are active participants in the collaborative construction of data. This raises ethical dilemmas, because having jointly produced the data, I solely authored the final research account, implying I have free reign to distort and de-contextualise the data at will. To avoid this I could have adopted a joint writing strategy (Wolcott 1999) although, as Wolcott suggests, this is very difficult to achieve. It would also have been impractical for me in trying to finish the thesis promptly, and ethically dubious to ask my participants to give up yet more of their time to help produce the final report. As such, it has not been possible for me to resolve the issue of ownership entirely. I have however, been as honest as possible in writing up this thesis and recognising the partial nature of my account. Whilst none of my participants would wholly share the perspectives offered, I hope they will appreciate my interpretations.

3.6 Writing Up

In writing this thesis I have strived to remain true to the processes involved in the EC initiative at Burnetts. The three empirical chapters trace the initiative chronologically, but throughout I also highlight the key cross-cutting concepts as they surface in the analysis. My aim has not been to present a complete, finished and conceptually tidy research report, but instead to convey the complexity and multi-faceted nature of behaviour change processes. I hope that I have presented a meaningful story with which others can empathise, sympathise and learn from, as opposed to a neat and elegant, yet static, model of behaviour change which others should try to copy or test.

Throughout the empirical analysis I have drawn interchangeably on the interview transcripts and field diary. I have not attempted to use my mixed methods approach to triangulate pieces of data and thus try to produce a single truth of the EC initiative (*cf.* Mason 2006). Instead, I have treated them as producing equal but different kinds of data that offer different perspectives on, or performances of, the reality of my research problem. As such, each method offers only partial fictions (Clifford and Marcus 1986) and it has been my job as the author to try and piece them together in a useful manner. In doing this, I have attempted to explore different perspectives on the same issues, offering competing and contested accounts, to produce what I hope is a rich, interesting and multi-layered version of events. Whilst I have acted as the final author of this account, I thus feel it is poly-vocal in nature.

I have explored many different routes through the data, but there are many more journeys I have not taken that I hope others will follow, and that I may pursue in future. In this respect, like Flyvbjerg (1998) before me, I have attempted to approach the EC initiative at Burnetts in much the same way as Wittgenstein described his approach to teaching philosophy:

> 'In teaching you philosophy I'm like a guide showing you how to find your way round London. I have to take you through the city from north to south, from east to west, from Euston to the Embankment and from Piccadilly to the Marble Arch. After I have taken you many journeys through the city, in all sorts of directions, we shall have passed through any given street a number of times – each time traversing the street as part of a different journey. At the end of this you will know London; you will be able to find your way about like a born Londoner. Of course, a good guide will take you through the more important streets more often than he takes you down side streets; a bad guide will do the opposite. In philosophy I'm a rather bad guide.'
>
> (Wittgenstein, in Flyvbjerg 1998, 7)

Chapter 4 Getting Going: Designing Pro-Environmental Practice

Chapter 2 suggested that social practice theory (SPT) offers a superior lens through which to view pro-environmental behaviour change than those currently used by cognitive perspectives. The next three chapters will begin to test this assertion with reference to the empirical data collected during the Environment Champions (EC) initiative at the Bridgeford site. First, this chapter will describe existing practices and behaviours at Bridgeford to provide a detailed picture of the situation into which EC and pro-environmental behaviour change were introduced. It will then consider the origins and setting up of the EC initiative and its early planning phases. Second, chapter 5 will consider how the EC initiative was delivered, observing how the team attempted to diffuse their newly designed practices more widely, and 'sell' them to their colleagues. Finally, chapter 6 will consider the outcomes and effects of the initiative.

Cognitive perspectives on pro-environmental behaviour change rarely offer much background detail on the behaviours being changed and how they are normally conducted, on the people trying to change their behaviour and the circumstances under which they have come to seek change, or on the broader social *milieu* in which changes are to be introduced. Further, they offer little consideration of how people go about critiquing their existing behaviours and planning new ones in their place. This chapter aims to address these shortcomings by observing existing practice at Burnetts and the beginnings of the EC initiative through the lens of SPT. In so doing, it offers a very descriptive view of the context of the Bridgeford site, but I argue that this is a necessary step in order fully to understand processes of behavioural change as they occur *in situ*.

4.1 Introducing the Order and Practice of Bridgeford

Context, if mentioned at all in research on pro-environmental behaviour, is usually seen as providing barriers (e.g. Guagnano *et al* 1995; Lorenzoni *et al* 2007) which must somehow be removed or overcome for 'correct' behaviour to follow (Nye and Hargreaves 2008). In contrast, SPT sees context, in the form of various surrounding sociotechnical systems of provision, as a constitutive part of practices, providing both

the rules and resources that enable and constrain how they unfold (Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000). Instead of treating individuals and behaviours in isolation from, or attempting to overcome context, it begins by observing contextualised *doings* of practice and then explaining how they unfold and develop in relation not only to individuals, but also to the meanings, skills and material artefacts implicated in everyday life (Shove and Pantzar 2005; Shove *et al* 2007). As a simple first step to improving conventional accounts of pro-environmental behaviour, SPT thus demands close and detailed observation of the *doing* of practice in context. To do this, this section employs Schatzki's distinction between *orders* and *practices*. Whilst an order is simply an arrangement or 'hanging together of things' (Schatzki 2002, 18), a practice entails the organised activities of human agents, or how they make use of that order in their everyday behaviour. To understand the EC initiative, it is therefore necessary to understand the orders and practices with which it had to engage.

4.1.1 The Order of Bridgeford

When I first visited the Bridgeford site, a number of things struck me immediately about the kind of 'social order' I had entered, and about the sorts of values and ways of behaving which might be appropriate therein.

> 'On arrival I saw several people wearing full suit and tie. The odd person was without a jacket and one had a short-sleeved shirt with a tie – but all in all it seemed a pretty formal place. There were a few people (in the reception area but not beyond it) wearing fluorescent jackets and boots – people who clearly worked out of the office - but they were only in the reception area, and seemed to know the receptionist there pretty well. They didn't go through the swipe card access doors…I was expecting a kind of 1960s office blockish type place…but it was actually a series of different buildings. The one on the road is a nice looking red brick building – perhaps a set of old houses (it clearly displays a 'built in 1866' (or thereabouts) sign, although with very clean plastic windows. Then you go through a main entrance into a large car park which, at first glance, contains a large number of primarily black and grey hatchbacks – all very shiny – it seems quite a 'Mondeo man' type environment from its external appearances…so this could also say something about the traditionalism and professionalism of the company – what type of image they're trying to create to the outside world. Perhaps it also says something about the construction industry generally and what sort of image it tries to create – or at least what type of image it values and that you need to perform in order to succeed.'
>
> (FD:4-5)

I have cited this extract at length because, whilst it says a lot about me and my perhaps naïve preconceptions, it also provides a flavour of the context into which EC would be introduced. That is, one which to the outside world at least, appears quite formal, masculine, and conservative.

To enter the Bridgeford site one passes through a set of gates that display a large Burnetts logo, and into a car park which, between the hours of 08:00 and 17:30 (almost to the minute), has few available spaces. Aside from the beginning and end of the day, and lunchtimes, the car park is usually empty of people; its quietness providing a composed and organised atmosphere that separates the site from the more chaotic outside world. The offices themselves, as the extract above indicates, are not a typical office block as I had expected, or a glamorous 'headquarters building' (Baldry 1997). Instead, whilst clearly identifiable as a place of work, they are relatively inconspicuous buildings, reflecting the gradual growth and development of Burnetts over the years.

The Bridgeford site itself occupies roughly 30,000 square feet (Brian interview, p2) of office space, divided between three separate buildings (see figure 4.1), each of which has its own distinctive style and layout.

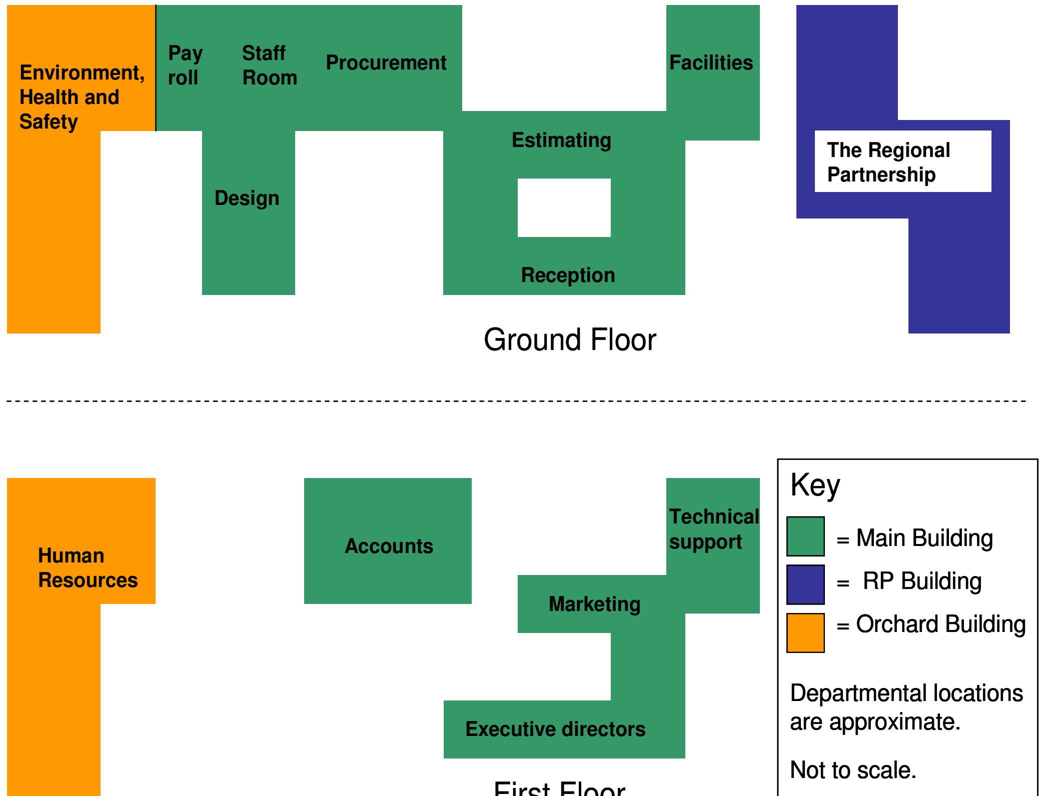


Figure 4.1: Plan of the Bridgeford site

- The ‘main building’ is a purpose built office block. It has been extended three times, adding additional single storey sections and a two-storey ‘duplex’ extension. The layout of narrow corridors around a central quadrangle with additional corridors and extensions branching off in various directions, the large number of small offices on both sides of the corridor, and the similar appearance of the many and various connected sections of the building, make it quite disorienting for those unfamiliar with it - indeed on many occasions it was described as a ‘rabbit warren’ (FD:30).
- ‘Orchard Building’ is the oldest building on the site, and the only one which is not a purpose built office. It is a red-brick building of two storeys, each of which has a narrow and winding passageway (more higgledy-piggledy than the term corridor implies) with a complex arrangement of small offices branching off in various directions.
- The ‘Regional Partnership’ (RP) building is the newest building on the site, consisting of two, large and semi-permanent portacabins adjacent and connected to one another. Inside, it opens out into a wide central corridor which has two large open plan offices to the left (each containing about 32 people in bays of four desks), and a series of smaller single-occupancy offices branching off to the right.

Throughout the day people do pass between the different buildings, although this traffic is fairly limited with most people (if not conducting visits to distant construction sites) spending much of the day in the office where their own desk is located. A survey, conducted during the initial EC audit and responded to by 37% of those regularly using the offices (n=106), shows that roughly 25% of employees sit in an open plan office, 45% in a ‘shared office’ of between two and six people, and 30% in single occupancy offices.

Once inside the offices a number of posters and displays adorn the walls giving off specific images of the kind of company Burnetts is. In the reception area, for example, as well as plaques of the various awards the company has won, such as for excellence in civil engineering or for being a good employer, a large flat-screen TV displays pictures of Burnetts employees,

> 'in suits or in hard hats (occasionally both), smiling, or talking about something and pointing looking serious…they often look straight into the camera and are shot against 'construction' backgrounds e.g. a crane, a bridge etc. Then there are messages like 'working in partnership' or 'innovators in construction' etc.'
>
> (FD:8)

The corridor walls in all the buildings are also adorned with pictures of construction sites, such as bridge building projects or railway station works. To outsiders, the offices convey a strong sense that engineering ability and big construction are highly valued within the company.

Alongside these official pictures, however, there are pinboards covered with different notices, from those advertising the company angling club, to those providing health and safety advice, to posters about the CHANGE (see section 4.2.2 below) or EC initiatives. These provide a more informal feeling to the offices as a place populated by real people with real lives. Further, inside specific offices, the walls are personalised to a greater or lesser extent, with anything from postcards, photos, personal mottos and favourite quotes, to post-it note reminders, year planners, and maps of the different areas and sites on which staff work. Each individual is provided with their own, fixed desk and chair, complete with personal computer and often their own printer, telephone, basic stationery such as staplers, post-it notes, paperclips, Burnetts branded pens and pencils, pads of paper etc. Many offices also contain bookshelves which are usually stacked with large ringbinders or boxfiles labelled with numbers pertaining to seemingly complex contract codes such as NK4360 or NL5110 (FD:213), or the names of specific projects, and occasionally with journals and reports containing details of national, regional or company legislation and policy, or books with titles such as 'Constructors Technical Manual 2001-2005' (FD:88).

As well as the offices, there are also several communal areas dotted around the site. All three buildings contain small kitchens (four in the main building, two in Orchard Building and one in the RP building) equipped with a microwave, fridge and large vending machine which freely dispenses filtered water and hot drinks (tea, coffee, 'chocomilk' etc.). The main building also contains a large communal staffroom with several bays of comfy seats and two vending machines selling snacks (chocolate bars, crisps etc.) and canned drinks.

In general, this provides a basic outline of the 'order' of things at the Bridgeford site. It is an office environment that is wholly familiar, repeated time and

again throughout the world, but it is also an entirely unique order which materialises quite specific sets of values, possesses its own logics and systems, and houses people with lives both within and beyond the workplace. This is the setting the EC initiative had to operate within to try and bring about pro-environmental behaviour change. In order to fully understand this context, however, it is also important to consider how this order is implicated in everyday work practices.

4.1.2 Bridgeford in Practice

As well as the physical partitions between the buildings and offices, the Bridgeford site is also functionally divided into different teams and departments (see figure 4.1). For example, the Design Team of roughly 10-12 people occupies a single open plan office, the Finance and Accounts Department, consisting of smaller teams such as Accounts Ledger and Systems Analysis and Support, occupies several offices on the upper floor of the duplex, and the Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) team occupies most of the bottom floor of Orchard Building, having moved out of the main building in August 2007. Employees thus tend to sit with others doing similar or related jobs, but they do not necessarily sit near the people they work with most closely. For example, employees in the procurement office may all perform similar roles, such as sourcing materials for sites, and may assist one another in doing so, but they may work most closely with the sites they individually serve rather than the other procurement officers with which they sit. In addition, individual employees may support one another across different teams, or make friends and thus share breaks with those from different teams.

Whilst formally divided into functional units and teams, the concept of *communities of practice* (Wenger 1998; see section 2.3.3) provides a more realistic means of understanding how practice is actually conducted at the site. Numerous informal connections and ways of working, sometimes built up over years of working together in the same setting and shared between people with often very different official roles, criss-cross and blur the formal and physical divisions and boundaries at the site. To provide a clearer picture of the practices that occur at Bridgeford, and how employees participate in different communities of practice, I will offer two examples

of how individuals[10] carry out the everyday working practices which combine to create the organisation.

Graham – Environment, Health and Safety Manager

Graham is an EHS Manager and has worked for Burnetts, in several different roles for roughly 10 years. He has his own, single-occupancy office and on days when he must be at Bridgeford, arrives at around 08:15 and immediately switches on his computer, allowing it to boot-up whilst he settles in to the office. Every day, his first job is to check emails as they may demand rapid responses which could affect the rest of the day. Graham's role, as he describes it, involves two kinds of work which unfortunately conflict with one another:

> *'there's two kinds of work you can do in this organisation, either strategic, sort of high level corporate stuff, or 'macro' kind of day to day stuff, and I don't have time to do both.'*
>
> (Graham, FD:162)

'Corporate stuff' involves developing strategies to direct the organisation's future work. For example, Graham has a notice board in his office containing rough details of the 'sustainability strategy' and 'zero waste policy' he would like to develop, but for which he finds it hard to find time because 'he ends up doing the 'macro' stuff – site audits and everything else, and all the 'strategic' stuff gets missed out, even though that's what he'd really like to do' (FD: 162).

Assuming there are no urgent emails, the morning might involve completing a report for his boss detailing, for example, how well different parts of the company are complying with specific health and safety targets. These reports are usually numeric and involve contacting, via phone or email, various site managers and environment managers based all over the UK to develop a clear picture of where, how well and why targets are being met or missed. Additionally, in spare moments, he may keep up to date with forthcoming environmental legislation and initiatives from DEFRA, the Environment Agency or the European Union via their websites or trade magazines.

At around 10:15 the receptionist announces the arrival of the Sandwich Lady over the office intercom (FD:77) and, assuming Graham's not out on site over lunch,

[10] Each of these examples is based on a specific individual, although some of the specific practices and events mentioned may not be carried out by that individual – all of these events/practices do, however, occur at times across the Bridgeford site.

he may go to the staff room to buy a sandwich, chatting with colleagues in the queue and then perhaps getting a coffee from the vending machine, or having a cigarette break and catching up with them on what they did over the weekend, how their work is going, or general office gossip. After this he may have a meeting with his boss to discuss a recent report and consider the development of specific departmental or corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

During lunch, eaten at his desk whilst completing his report, an email may come in from a site manager saying that an environmental report on a specific site needs to be completed urgently to ensure that all relevant legislation is being complied with. In his own words, '*when they* [site managers] *need assistance, I go running*' (Graham interview, p3), and so he may put the report on hold and travel to the site to ensure the company avoids potential prosecution. Such interruptions are commonplace in his role, as the 'macro' side of his job interferes with the 'corporate stuff' he most enjoys. He suggests that roughly 66% of his role is 'reactive', arguing that, as well as preventing him doing corporate stuff, it also hampers his efforts in fulfilling the day to day responsibilities of his role: '*I end up getting something like 17 emails a day at the moment, and I just don't have time for it, I should be out on site doing audits and stuff like that'* (FD: 163).

On his return to the office he will again check emails and, as long as no urgent ones have arrived, may continue with his report before attending an EC meeting – he is a member of the Champions team although has been told by his boss to take a 'backseat' on the EC initiative as the organisation has more pressing environmental concerns:

> *'There was a person that previously fulfilled the role that I'm fulfilling at the moment, pure environment though, nothing to do with health and safety. That person went on maternity leave, but for a year, so for at least a year very little has been done on our environmental management systems or on the environment per se. It's been emergency, quick fixes. So there's a lot of catching up to do, that's why I was told to take a back seat on the Environment* [Champions]. *I've got higher priorities.'*
>
> (Graham interview, p4)

After the EC meeting, these 'higher priorities' might mean he needs to complete an application to renew the company's Waste Carrier License, without which many of the sites could not legally function. This may occupy him for the rest of the afternoon

until at around 17:30 or 18:00 he will go home, unless it is Wednesday when he leaves early for childcare purposes.

Graham's role is thus busy and varied. Over many years he has developed the skills and knowledge necessary to do his job quite autonomously. It is up to him to coordinate and perform the many different practices that combine to make up his role, even though the general thrust of his work is set out, and regularly appraised, by his boss. Whilst predominantly working alone, he must also keep in touch, and hence engage, with a wide range of communities of practice at least peripherally in order to perform his role successfully – with 'success' being jointly negotiated in appraisals with his boss, regularly changing, but also felt as a very real and highly personal thing. In the course of these practices, he also traverses the order of Bridgeford described above. He actively employs a range of different material artefacts in performing his work practices, such as his computer or phone but, in turn, these also shape how he performs his practices and what is considered possible and achievable.

Joanna – Senior Administrator and Personal Assistant to the Finance Director

Joanna has worked for the company for a little over a year, changing roles once and moving offices once. A typical day for her will start at around 08:15 after having cycled in to the office. After changing into her smart work clothes and arriving in the office she shares with six others (Karen, Linda, Nicola, Rob, David and Michael) she will turn on her computer and, whilst it starts up, will perhaps discuss her journey in, or a new cycle route she is thinking of trying. Relatively few people (maybe 10-12 in total) cycle to the site, rendering the cyclists a recognisable and known group (of which I was a partial member during fieldwork). Amongst this group, discussions about cycling are seemingly quite common, and others too will often comment on or share jokes with or about them. Once everyone has arrived in the office, by around 08:40, and if noone else has offered already, Joanna may do a tea run. This will involve asking everyone what they want, collecting their ceramic mugs if they have them, and convincing Rob that she does not mind washing his up, and taking them across the corridor to the kitchen. She always uses the kettle and her own teabags when making tea, as neither her nor her office-mates like the taste of the tea from the vending machine, and she is also trying to convert her office to fairtrade tea, which the machine does not offer (Joanna interview, p15).

Once back at her desk she'll carry on with any number of the different practices she is employed to perform. As she describes it:

> *'Generally my work is kind of organising meetings. Erm, preparing meetings, taking minutes, erm, distributing them, that kind of thing, and then other ad hoc duties that people get me to do. So I've been organising the* [Accountancy] *training in that office there… Erm, so I've been sorting out all their exam entries and that kind of thing, and I order stationery, and I'm currently doing quite a lot of advance organisation, so organising the Christmas party…. Yeah, I'm looking forward to that, and I'm looking into organising a team building day.'*
>
> (Joanna interview, p2)

Her role may therefore involve typing up minutes from recent meetings, printing these out and circulating them, preparing agendas for forthcoming meetings and again circulating these. She also spends a lot of time on the phone, booking rooms for meetings for example, or calling potential venues for the Christmas party to ask about their capacity or rates. At around 11:00, someone else may do a tea/coffee run and Linda will pass round her homemade chocolate brownies (FD:189). This may lead into any number of small asides about the cakes Rob brought in last week (each week someone in the office brings in cakes on a designated day, just as in other offices around the site shared rituals such as 'Bacon Butty Thursdays' provide points for discussion and getting to know one another both personally and professionally – FD:212).

After this she may attend a meeting with her boss, Ed, at which she'll take minutes in shorthand to be typed up and circulated afterwards. At lunchtime she may eat at her desk, checking personal emails or her Facebook profile, and chatting with colleagues, or she may take the free minibus into the town centre and do some shopping or meet a friend. The afternoon will then proceed in much the same way as the morning, with various planned tasks punctuated by people visiting her office and saying to her: *'can you type this letter, or photocopy this, or organise this meeting?'* (Joanna interview, p2) to which she often has to respond rapidly.

Midway through the afternoon, Michael may have a problem formatting a report he is preparing. For example, he may be unable to get a box he wishes to insert to align with the main body of the text. Joanna may therefore walk over to his desk to offer her advice, and generally the whole office will offer help in how to overcome the problem. At 17:30, almost to the minute, people start to go home. The last few

will usually leave together, making sure the windows and doors are shut behind them as they depart.

Joanna's role is thus very different to Graham's. Although making use of essentially the same physical order, it involves very different skills and knowledge, combined into quite different practices. One key difference is that it involves much more direct interaction with those around her, this despite the fact that she is not actually a member of the same formal team as all her office-mates. Although her role is independent of those around her, she reflected in her interview that the different office atmospheres play an important part in how she feels about her role and even about herself:

> '[the office I sit in now], *it's completely different to the other one* [where I used to sit], *just I think in terms of kind of people's backgrounds.... The other one I was in, the people are a lot younger and they're kind of, they've just come out of school, or erm, A-*[levels], *or college, and so whereas, so they're less stable. Whereas in that office you've got kind of older people that are married with kids and, you know, buying houses, whereas in the other one it's kind of like banter and* (laughs)*…which is good, but it's er, it's really different being in this one, it feels a lot more mature I think* (laughs)*.'*
>
> (Joanna interview, p5)

In general though, and over-riding the local atmosphere of specific offices, there is an air of hard-work-in-progress around the site. For much of the day the offices are relatively quiet, with a background din of photocopiers and printers beeping and whirring, phones ringing, and conversations being held in hushed tones so as not to disturb others.

In the course of my fieldwork, I encountered many different people, performing different roles and it would be possible to offer any number of different vignettes demonstrating the different practices people carry on at the Bridgeford site. These two examples are designed to provide an idea of the different kinds of things which occur and the different ways in which they occur. Although entwined in the same order (buildings, computers, printers, paper, telephones, colleagues etc.), things are actively and skilfully juggled and combined in different ways to perform the many different, yet carefully coordinated, practices that make up work at the Bridgeford site.

4.1.3 The Mesh of Orders and Practices at Bridgeford

So far, I have separated the concepts of order and practice at Bridgeford from one another, however they should be seen as closely interrelated. Schatzki (2002, 23) observes that 'social orders are established in practices,' and at Bridgeford it should be recognised that the number and type of computers, photocopiers, printers etc. at the site depends on the demands of the practices performed therein. On a larger scale, the RP building was specifically constructed to support the extension of practices brought about by winning a large contract and, in future, the whole site may disappear to make way for other, broader social trends and practices, such as the building of business parks: '*It* [the Bridgeford site] *won't be here in twenty years, certainly. Might not be here in ten years. It'll be gone. It'll be a business park.'* (Brian interview, p5)

Just as orders respond to practices, however, it should also be seen that practices respond to and rely upon the orders on which they rest. Both Graham and Joanna, despite carrying on different practices, would be forced to radically alter how they performed them and their understandings of their own competence if, say, the internet or email did not exist, if their computers were slower still, or if the 'paperless office' was actually achieved. Practices and orders are thus closely meshed together, simultaneously pinning one another in place and co-evolving (Schatzki 2002; Shove 2003).

Individuals themselves, as practitioners, are also closely implicated in these relationships between practices and orders. Across the Bridgeford site, as they fold their personal and professional lives together in communities of practice, and as their practices and communities coincide, conflict, and evolve, they draw identities and meanings out of the practices they perform. I was frequently reminded of my outsider status when confronted with people who are so closely embedded in their work environment that they seem to know everyone, to know everything, to speak fluently in alien sounding contract codes rather than the place names these codes refer to, and even to know the sound and feel of the office. For instance, they simply know when the printer is being used or is broken from the sound it makes, or get a sense of something not being right in the figures they are working with, or in the office atmosphere, without having to investigate formally.

The manner in which people engage in practices is further shaped by the nature of, and their position within, different communities of practice. In some an

atmosphere of fun dominates, where others are more serious. Some communities value rapid responses to emails and/or accurate collation of figures pertaining to KPIs, where others value creative forward-thinking such as how to design a sustainability policy, or what activities to do at the office away day. Further, whilst all are marked by a formal hierarchy of employers and employees, bosses and staff, these relationships are more or less apparent at different times in different communities.

Far from being separate from, or outside, the practices they perform, individuals form key parts of them. The practices they carry out shape how they interact with others, how they seek and interpret new data and information, as well as what they consider to be appropriate, successful, or even possible, performance. In short, as elements within practices (albeit important ones) individuals are pushed, pulled and, at times, controlled by the practices they carry out, as much if not more than they consciously and deliberately control them. Any attempt to change practices, such as trying to make them more environmentally sensitive, must therefore take into account, and take on, the whole spectrum of different social meanings attached to different practices across different communities of practitioners. This thesis explores how the EC initiative attempted to do this. First, however, it is worth further contextualising the EC initiative within other attempts to change the order and practice of Burnetts.

4.2 Managing Change at Burnetts

As employees get on with their work at Bridgeford there is a certain sense of routine and stability to the organisation. As a researcher I often felt as though everyone else was incredibly 'at home' and comfortable, knowing everyone and everything within a smoothly functioning community (FD:156, 168). As people automatically carry on with their roles it is easy to feel as if organisation and 'the office' are natural settings and forget, as organisational historians and sociologists show, that it is in fact a highly managed and socially constructed place (e.g. Cooper and Burrell 1988; Reed 1992; Willmott 1993; Baldry 1997; du Gay 1997; Knights 2002). Salaman (1997), for example, highlights the relatively recent move towards a 'corporate culture' school of management which actively attempts 'the management of the meaning of work' (Salaman 1997, 240) to try and improve organisational performance. What Salaman

reminds us is that the meaning and culture of work can, and do, change over time, but also that they are constantly contested:

> 'As with all such efforts to define reality for others, those at whom these efforts are aimed interpret and react to them in the light of their existing views and experiences, often 'consuming' these representations in ways which differ significantly from senior managers' intentions.'
>
> (Salaman 1997, 237)

This section will briefly consider two recent attempts to 'manage the meaning of work' at Burnetts – a re-branding initiative and the ongoing CHANGE programme. It therefore considers how the order and practice of Burnetts both respond to, and have been partly created by, conscious attempts to change them, and thus offers insight into how the EC initiative might be received.

4.2.1 Re-Branding Burnetts

Burnetts has changed considerably throughout its history, with recent years witnessing particularly rapid growth. Several interviewees mentioned that it was a 'family company' with a strong sense of community which made it a good place to work (e.g. David; Graham; Jackie; Tina). In 2005, the company undertook a re-branding exercise which involved a change of logo on all buildings, vehicles, hi-visibility jackets, overalls, helmets, stationery, screen-savers etc. The new brand, whilst retaining the company's sense of history by using familiar colours, was designed to present a 'modern, clean and confident' image that would 'position the business' for 'future growth' (terminology from Burnetts Newsletter 2005).

In the same newsletter, employees are assured that the re-branding exercise 'will not have a major impact on [their] day to day function', but is instead about the company 're-engineer[ing] itself from a traditional construction company to a modern, competitive service-orientated business', with core 'values they believe in' including dynamism, honesty, trust, respect, safety and dedication to quality (values taken from Burnetts Website, accessed on 29.05.08). As Salaman would expect, this is a clear attempt to 'manage the meaning' of work for employees, and around the offices there is some evidence that it has been successful. For example, not only do newly branded posters adorn the walls, but during meetings the EC team would regularly argue that

something should not be done 'as it's not in line with the brand' (FD:29) or, alternatively, would look for opportunities to boost the brand image of the company.

At the same time, in meetings and around the site generally, occasional events also seemed to resist or try to undermine the newly imposed meaning of work. Not only did personalised and often messy offices counter the modern and clean image the re-brand sought, but employees also occasionally resisted the brand image through backstage performances (Goffman 1959) that undermined brand unity and coherence. For example, comments such as *'it's not the Burnetts way'* would be said with a wry smile or a sigh that communicated a playful personal distancing from these artificially created values (FD:44, 111 – and see Willmott 1993; du Gay 1997). Employees also teased one another about their adherence to the brand, making comments such as *'you're becoming institutionalised. They'll cut you open and you'll have Burnetts written through you'* (FD:197) if someone displayed too much loyalty or effort for the company, or advising each other to *'slow down, there's no rush'* (FD:165) if someone appeared to be working too fast or hard. Further, prompt departure from the office at the end of the day, particularly on Fridays (FD:130, 154), illustrates that even if brand loyalty was seemingly performed at work, it had only a limited hold, and could be quickly cast aside.

These observations are not meant to suggest that the re-branding exercise was a failure, indeed there was a general sense around the site that people were proud to work for Burnetts and did their job to the best of their ability. Nonetheless, it seemed as if an important part of being a Burnetts employee was to strike a balance between 'buying-in' to the brand, without taking it or oneself too seriously. In a sense, management initiatives appeared to be officially welcomed and followed by employees, but were also subtly contested, subverted and resisted as individuals. This apparent distancing of one's self from one's job reveals the complexity of workplace identities, and also serves as a warning for the EC initiative that individuals and employees are not the same thing.

4.2.2 Introducing CHANGE

The CHANGE[11] programme provides another example of how the order and practice of Burnetts have been constructed over time. Launched in 2005, CHANGE encourages all employees – at Bridgeford and other sites - to think carefully about how they can improve their workplace behaviour by applying a few simple rules. The programme works through different modules, e.g. Health, Safety, Environment or Choices, delivered by CHANGE coaches to small groups of employees. During fieldwork I attended one such module on 'choices' being run by Sally – one of the Champions and also a CHANGE coach.

Underlying the campaign is some intentionally simple theory (Paul interview, p2) of how people behave. For example, behaviour is seen as comprised of underlying 'Competencies' which individuals develop over time, such as the ability to drive a car. These are overlain with various 'Rules' to direct them, such as the highway code, and finally, individuals make 'Decisions' about how to follow these rules e.g. people decide whether or not to stop at traffic lights (FD:136-7). The CHANGE campaign focuses exclusively on improving these *decisions*.

According to the CHANGE programme, there are three kinds of decision-making in everyday life: Front of Mind, Back of Mind and Habits. The CHANGE programme aims to improve all three of these by applying three simple rules: Take Stock, Point Out and Be the Change. Take Stock encourages staff to collect themselves before starting the day or a task and take some time to plan carefully how they will achieve it. Point Out encourages staff to tell others how they might improve their behaviour should an opportunity arise. Finally, Be the Change encourages employees to set an example for others by doing things carefully and in a procedurally correct manner (FD:137-8).

The programme is thus an explicit attempt to change the culture of the organisation. It aims to create a culture in which individuals behave in specific ways, for example by intervening in each others behaviours or offering advice and assistance when they see something risky or potentially bad for the environment about to occur. Finally, it asks individuals to take responsibility and leadership for their own

[11] The name of the programme and the precise terminology used in it has been changed to help preserve anonymity.

behaviours and set examples for one another on correct i.e. safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly behaviour (see du Gay 1997). The initiative has already been very successful, halving the number of accidents reported within just three months (Paul interview, p23). Posters for the programme are conspicuously dotted around the site, often simply repeating the three key messages: Take Stock, Point Out and Be the Change. Further, the company website has a section devoted to the initiative, and merchandise such as key rings and mini-footballs branded with the CHANGE logo are freely given to employees. Perhaps most tellingly, around the site people regularly use the key phrases as part of normal everyday speech when talking about how they behave. For example, phrases such as 'I'm having a CHANGE moment,' or 'I feel this is an issue on which I should take the lead,' might be used as a means to introduce an intervention into a colleague's behaviour.

Despite this apparent success, as with the re-branding exercise, the CHANGE programme, and the language of health and safety, is also parodied around the site, as people often perform slight resistance to its messages when out of earshot of their bosses. For example, on one afternoon shortly after lunch, one of the employees in the open plan RP office flicked an elastic band at a colleague. The following dialogue then occurred, with laughs all round:

> Person 1: *'That's a near miss that is.'*
> Person 2: *'No it isn't. Give him credit, he got me.'*
> Person 3: *'That's horseplay and you may think it's big and it's clever, but it isn't!'*
>
> (FD:211)

Around the site generally, people would often laugh or put on mocking tones when uttering this sort of message. Again, whilst employees appeared to buy-in to the initiative, even to the extent that accident rates dropped, they were also keen to show that they did not take it too seriously and were always able to resist and subvert its messages.

In summary, while the culture and atmosphere of the Bridgeford site is carefully managed and created through various initiatives, job descriptions, hierarchies etc., these artificial structures are also subverted by individual practitioners. There may be a correct and official way of doing something, but these formal rules do not necessarily match up with the informal, emergent culture of the organisation. As Salaman notes:

> 'The impact of any structure of meanings cannot be assumed or simply 'read off', but must be empirically investigated, in order to see how meanings are constructed, mediated, neglected and subverted.'
>
> (1997, 267)

In this section I have introduced Burnetts and the Bridgeford site in some considerable depth. These contextual details are usually omitted in cognitive approaches to pro-environmental behaviour change that address individuals as stable unitary agents somehow external to their surroundings. Instead, this section has shown that it is hard to draw a clear line between individuals, their practices and the context in which they are performed. It is into this complex, multi-layered setting, with its own systems, logics, values and rules, that the EC initiative was introduced. The rest of this thesis will empirically investigate the impacts it had. First, the rest of this chapter will introduce the origins and setting up of the initiative in more detail.

4.3 Introducing Environment Champions at Bridgeford

4.3.1 The Origins and Purpose of Environment Champions

In interviews I was offered several perspectives on the origins of the EC initiative. The most common explanation was provided by Steven, the board level sponsor in charge of the initiative. In his view, a chance conversation at an event introduced him to GAP's work, after which:

> *'I shot down to see people* [GAP] *in London and agreed then. When they showed me what they'd been doing elsewhere, I thought well 'that can work' so erm, I think within a couple of weeks we'd actually, we'd kicked the ball going, so it was, it was a fairly quickfire thing, but it, it started er, dare I say it from a fairly casual conversation on a set of stairs.'*
>
> (Steven interview, p10)

Steven mentioned that setting up the initiative also involved thought about the financial proposition GAP were offering (to recoup the cost of the initiative through the savings achieved within a year); the extent to which it fitted-in with other initiatives at Burnetts, such as CHANGE; as well as convincing the rest of the board that it was a good idea. Nonetheless, this view essentially suggests that the EC initiative provided a relatively sharp break with what had gone before.

Other perspectives present the EC initiative as a part of longer term and much broader social and organisational trends. Phil, for example, who has worked for Burnetts for over 10 years, saw the EC initiative as part of more gradual changes. He saw it as linked to changes in how work was conducted, likening it to the introduction of computers to his job in the early 1990s, and also to how society was changing, relating the initiative to Chinese economic development and to the increasingly constant presence of environmental issues on television and in other forms of media (Phil interview, p3, 8, 10). The EC initiative, in this view, has much broader and further reaching roots that stretch way beyond Burnetts as a company.

Michael also pointed to broader social trends, arguing that the discourses used to justify such an initiative have radically altered over the last decade:

> *'One of the interesting things in a way is that this sort of initiative occurred for totally different reasons sort of 10 years ago, er, because of recession. Because actually, erm some of the drivers are to do with cost, and er during the 90s recessions, um a business like this would have actually been trying to press a lot of these sort of buttons for a totally different reason. Purely to stop people wasting electricity or wasting money or, actually costing things which weren't necessary.'*
>
> (Michael interview, p1)

Again, the EC initiative is seen to take up a particular position in, and emerge from, a broader social context.

Finally, several interviewees suggested that the initiative was a 'natural' thing for a 'company like Burnetts' to do:

> *'Burnetts is a caring company like that about the environment, so no it wasn't a surprise not at all, because they try and do their utmost to be environmental friendly in everything that they do.'*
>
> (Tina interview, p5)

In this view, the initiative had almost been expected as part of the gradual development of the company. Indeed, some wondered why it had not happened sooner.

In addition to these different versions of EC's origins, a number of different purposes of, or motivations for, the initiative were also suggested. The initiative was variously presented, both externally via stories on the Burnetts website and newsletters and internally in interviews, as something that would: 'reduce the

company's waste production and energy consumption - and raise awareness among staff of the importance of doing so'; be a means of 'mak[ing] a difference here at work - but also, importantly, at home and in their communities' (Burnetts website article, January 2007, accessed on 29.05.08); save the company money and resources; help with the recruitment and retention of high quality employees by demonstrating the company's pro-environmental values; and also as something which could give Burnetts 'an edge' in winning new contracts. The initiative is undeniably a part of Burnetts' corporate responsibility agenda, but those cynical about such developments (e.g. Forbes and Jermier 2002) should also bear in mind that the core purpose of the initiative differed for different people in the organisation, with most suggesting a number of intertwined aims and motivations.

The point of offering these different perspectives on the origins and purpose of the initiative is to make clear from the outset that it was interpreted differently and placed in different social and organisational contexts by different observers. For some, the environment was the key background to the initiative; for others it was being a good and caring company; and for others still it was saving money and resources. What is common across these perspectives, however, is that individuals approached and referred to the initiative from their identities as Burnetts employees. EC was something that 'we' or 'a business like' Burnetts was doing, rather than something that 'I' was engaged in. Indeed, in interviews I rarely received personal reflections on the initiative despite asking for them. Instead interviewees appeared to be asking themselves 'what kind of company do I think Burnetts is, and how would that kind of business go about pro-environmental behaviour change?' The initiative was thus a collective thing, but this does not mean that all agreed on precisely what it was or meant. Many different contexts were invoked for the initiative as people tried to frame (Goffman 1974) it for themselves and others in different, more or less convincing, ways. Where research in the cognitive perspective might concentrate on personally held environmental attitudes (e.g. Tudor *et al* 2008), these observations suggest that this may be only one among a plethora of different ways people can interpret and relate to pro-environmental behaviour (*cf.* Burningham and O'Brien 1994). Further still, such an approach may create a relationship between isolated individuals and the environment that is alienating, paralysing and unhelpful (*cf.* Hobson 2002).

4.3.2 Environment Champions: A Different Approach?

Section 4.2 argued that the EC initiative could be seen as similar to other initiatives in the company. The use of external organisations, such as GAP, is another relatively familiar aspect of everyday work at Burnetts. The use of small groups to encourage people to question and change their behaviour was also familiar to Burnetts employees due to the CHANGE coaching sessions (Steven interview, p1). Despite these many similarities, however, senior employees suggested EC took a very different approach from normal company initiatives:

> *'Normally when you, er, you know, when you have some kind of corporate initiative, somebody like, kind of me or Steven or somebody will set the objectives for it. And we might kind of go through a process where we erm, try and get those objectives to involve in some kind of er, structured fashion to generate buy-in from the participants, but actually, you know, the desired outcomes are going to be ones that, actually corporately, are the desired outcomes. Whereas here* [with EC] *we just said well, you know, 'we think we should be taking more responsibility in these areas, erm, kind of, you go and, you know, if you're interested we'll give you time to do it and we'll put some money behind it to enable you to do it, and you sort of decide what you should be doing and then try and persuade everybody to do it.' So, actually it was a much, from a corporate perspective, it was much less structured, it was a much more social initiative, erm, than, than a defined initiative.'*
>
> (Jon interview, p2)

Further, a number of reasons were offered for why a bottom-up, employee-led approach might be superior in this instance to the more typical, top-down management-led approach:

> *'A top-down approach, based purely on cost, somebody can ignore it and have no worries and say 'well it's nothing to do with me because that's not my money.' What they can't ignore is their lives and the environment they live in, because it's, you know, it's part of what they, erm, it affects their everyday life. So I think the power, from our point of view, is that we can say, 'look no we're not doing this because we want you to save a few more pennies so we can make some more profits… we want you to do this because actually this will impact on the lives of you, your family and your grandchildren, and you are contributing to that.''*
>
> (Michael interview, p6)

> *'Peer pressure from the people you work with tends to be more effective than if it's, kind of, somebody anonymous telling you that actually you should behave in a different way.'*
>
> (Jon interview, p1)

> *'It's much more about, kind of, how people's values affect their behaviour, and how they, and so therefore people are responding to their values as opposed to the corporate gain out of it.'*
>
> (Jon interview, p2)

Senior employees thus felt that a bottom-up approach was more appropriate for pro-environmental behaviour change because it allowed employees to explore and express their own values rather than those imposed by the company. This was seen as a better means of communicating the goals of the initiative as it would forestall accusations that the initiative was purely a cost-cutting measure and would help people identify with the aims of the initiative on a personal level. Once such personal buy-in had been achieved, a bottom-up approach would then work through subtle mechanisms of peer pressure. I have already shown, however, that employees appeared to address the initiative as workers rather than individuals, placing their own values somewhere behind those they felt the company held. Whilst EC may have involved a different approach to other top-down company initiatives, it may not necessarily have been interpreted as such by its intended audience.

4.3.3 Recruiting the Champions

Shortly after Steven '*shot down to see people in London'* (see section 4.3.1), a meeting was arranged between one of GAP's programme managers, Steven, Brian (the Facilities Manager at Bridgeford), and David. GAP and Steven's involvement need no further introduction (see section 3.2). Brian was involved on GAP's advice because EC initiatives typically demand the support and involvement of Facilities Management. David was invited by Steven who had identified him as a good candidate to lead the Champions team because he had a *'natural enthusiasm'* and *'was bothered about environmental issues'* as demonstrated by his organising the 'cycle to work campaign' and recycling amongst other things (Steven interview, p10). As Steven explains:

> *'I thought, well I'll invite David er, just to make sure that his enthusiasm, see how he could capture it because I needed it to, there to be erm someone within the ranks not just at senior level, who would be prepared, who had enough natural authority and respect from what I thought was a lot of folk, who can naturally just take it forward. Because if you actually give, if you, if you, if I'd expected someone who might have been either too introverted or, didn't have*

> *sort of a natural following and a natural authority, it might have been tricky. Erm so it needed to be someone who had, who commanded enough erm, enough respect from others.'*
>
> (Steven interview, p10)

Steven thus selected David as a leader for the EC team not merely because of his expressed concern for 'environmental issues', but also because he had previously been involved in practices that demonstrated his environmental commitments, and was a well known individual around the site. David was seen as an important member of a variety of communities of practice at the Bridgeford site, and therefore an ideal candidate to spread environmental ideas and practices more widely.

At this small preliminary meeting, a timetable for the initiative was planned and David was charged with recruiting a team of roughly 20 Champions from across the organisation. David explained his recruitment process as follows:

> *I sort of formulated an email out of various information they'd* [GAP] *sent to us, circulated, asking for volunteers, you know. In a way, I was pleasantly surprised that quite a few people did volunteer. Well I think I went and, I think I did, well I think I initially sent it to people who I thought would be interested, sort of, knowing people who are reasonably green minded perhaps, but then there was a wider one as well, it was, you know it was quite a good take up and we ended up with, I've forgotten how many there were now, was it seventeen or something?'*
>
> (David interview, p1)

Both David and Steven were quick to point out that the recruitment process was 'biased' towards 'green minded' people, although brief consideration of the make up of the team suggests that over half had not been previously identified as green, or were volunteered for the initiative. David, Graham, Liam, Louise and Sally were approached as green minded people; Amy, Bill, Craig, Leslie, Melanie, Peter and Roger put themselves forwards in response to David's email; and Clare, Geoff, Melissa and Leanne were, in their own words, volunteered for the initiative, usually by their bosses.

Amongst those who were personally approached by David or Steven, several reasons were offered as evidence for their green mindedness. Cycling to work was a key issue, but so too were living an *'alternative sort of way of life'* (David interview, p2), working in a job related to environmental issues, and driving a fuel efficient vehicle. In these instances, therefore, it is the prior and/or ongoing performance of

quite specific green practices at work which made one identifiable as a green individual, irrespective of the many possible alternative explanations for these practices.

Amongst those who put themselves forwards for the initiative, being interested in recycling at home, being frustrated by excessive waste, having children and wanting to set a good example to them, or having previously worked on environmentally relevant issues, were all offered as reasons for participating. For some in this group, the initiative provided a very welcome opportunity to engage with greener practices:

> *'I heard about it and I thought 'Yes! Christmas and birthday together on the same day,' and I thought, and I chased them because at the first, originally I don't think, you know, I'd been sort of, you know, they said, you know, when they conceived this idea I don't think my name was anywhere seen, but I kept on and on until it did get put on there* (laughs)*.'*
>
> (Bill interview, p3)

> Peter: '[An email was sent asking] *is anybody interested in become an Environmental Champion?*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Peter: *Very short explanation there, bloody right I was.*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Peter: *You know because erm it's something that I personally have quite a strong conviction about.'*
>
> (Peter interview, p27)

For this group, the initiative was seen as an opportunity to change existing practices in the workplace and bring them into line with particular personal values and practices which were currently only expressed or performed outside work.

Finally, explanations of why people had been 'volunteered' for the team included that they were team leaders and therefore could involve others, that they were noisy and would therefore influence others, that they worked on related issues or, more jokingly, that they were in the wrong place at the wrong time:

> *'He* [my boss] *just said well 'who can be good?' and I'm being the loudest and the noisiest in the office, he just happened to pick me, for whatever reasons, I don't know, and maybe because nobody else was, and they thought well 'oh, Leanne's not here, just put her name down whilst she's not here.''*
>
> (Leanne interview, p10)

> Tom: '*Why do you think you were, sort of volunteered for it, you know?*
> Melissa: *Probably because noone else, noone else offered* (laughs). *No I think erm, I think it's important to have a representative from every area really and er, I think erm, I think Amanda* [her boss] *just picked us because we were like team leaders and we could, we could perhaps maybe even delegate some of our, some of the work to our, you know, our team members maybe.'*
>
> (Melissa interview, p5)

Whilst each team member had a different reason for being involved in the team, a central commonality across all of these reasons is that each individual had specific and potentially useful characteristics as practitioners, or influential positions in communities of practice. Graham commented that the team contained no *'new starts'* i.e. people who had only recently joined the company, and that members were the sort of individuals who *'know people'* around the offices (Graham interview, p17). The quotations above show how some individuals already practised greener ways of living, or were at least frustrated with existing practices. Further, even those who were volunteered are seen as playing key roles in communities of practice as either team leaders or noisy members who were therefore more likely to be able to influence others. In the language of social marketing, the team was therefore largely made up of 'mavens' (Gladwell 2000) who collect and connect people with new ideas and information, and 'sneezers' (Godin 2000) who can infect the people around them with new ideas. In short, the composition of the team cannot be wholly explained by reference to notions of green mindedness or environmental attitudes and values. Perhaps more important were the many different social roles and practices the individual team members performed around the organisation.

To further consolidate, but also complicate this point, Bill felt that irrespective of individuals' relative levels of green mindedness, at the first meeting most performed as if they were reluctant participants:

> *'From our first thing… most of the people were volunteered, they didn't volunteer, they were volunteered…I don't know that but, I just got that concept. When we first had our first meeting in the classroom there, we were told, well somebody said 'I was told to do it' and somebody else said 'well I was told to do it', and I thought 'I'm the only one who wasn't told to do it, I asked to do it.''*
>
> (Bill interview, p4)

He went on to suggest that some may have been using the initiative as a means to the end of accelerating their ascent up *'the career ladder'* (Bill interview, p4). What I

think this suggests is not that people were inconsistent or even duplicitous in expressing green attitudes and values, but that behaviours (pro-environmental or otherwise) are shaped in context by the rules of different social practices. As was seen earlier (with the re-branding and CHANGE programmes – section 4.2) it is almost expected for people to perform resistance to company initiatives. Furthermore, at Burnetts and probably in most workplaces there is a familiar and well rehearsed practice of 'being at a meeting' which almost always involves expressing the desire to be somewhere else instead (*cf.* Schwartzman 1993). Finally, in the specific case of pro-environmental behaviour, there may have been some reluctance to appear to be too green. Fineman (1996), for example, shows how the emotional and caring sides of environmentalism are often downplayed in businesses so as not to lose professional status as a rational and objective profit-maker. In sum, to fully understand the make up of the Champions team it is necessary to go well beyond green mindedness and consider the many different ways in which the EC initiative slotted-in with existing practices.

4.3.4 Auditing the Environment: Connecting with the Facts

After the team had been established, its first meeting (reference number 2 in table 3.1) involved GAP programme managers explaining the EC process to the team, showing them a video that illustrated the environmental impacts of everyday behaviours, and planning an 'audit' of waste production and energy use. GAP trained the team to conduct this audit by conducting spot-checks of electrical appliances left on at lunchtimes or at the end of the day, taking energy meter readings, weighing waste bins at the end of specific days, and tracking orders of paper, stationery and other office consumables.

Over a period of three weeks in January/February 2007, the team stayed at work late on one day each week to mark down the number of computers, monitors, gang sockets, lights and other appliances that were left on. On another day, they spent some time in the morning going through all of the site's waste, separating it into different material streams e.g. paper, cans, glass, plastic, food, etc., and weighing it using bathroom scales. Bill took regular electricity, gas and oil meter readings, and Melissa and Clare tracked down annual invoices for paper and stationery being delivered to the site. In addition, the team emailed a Staff Survey, designed to gauge

existing levels of environmental awareness and behaviour, to everyone who uses the Bridgeford site on a regular basis. These data were then sent to GAP to be collated.

Reflecting on the audit process, many of the team said it had made them quite uncomfortable. Not only had the bins been extremely smelly, mucky and unpleasant to go through, but many of the energy spot-checks were conducted when colleagues were still present in the offices and some of the Champions were apprehensive about intruding into, and challenging, their colleagues' practices:

> 'Melissa said '*you feel rude looking over people's shoulders and in their bins, especially if they're still in the office as it's hard to hide what you're doing'*, and Melanie concurred: *'you do feel rude.'* They felt a bit uneasy about this, like they were *'checking up on people*.''
>
> (FD:19)

Whether or not individuals felt strongly about encouraging pro-environmental behaviour, they felt awkward examining other people's behaviour too closely. In the course of normal daily practice, people often carry on without thinking about what they are doing. Giddens (1984; 1991) for example, suggests people rely on their *practical consciousness* to unthinkingly get by, and Bourdieu (1984) puts much of the unfolding of daily practice down to unconscious operations of the *habitus.* Reflecting carefully upon normally automatic practices is thus an unusual and awkward thing to do, a bit like thinking about your own breathing. Further, Goffman (1963b) observes that most behaviour in public settings is accorded *civil inattention.* That is, if people are behaving normally, others effectively ignore them allowing them to carry on. Breaching this normally taken for granted inattention is a socially uncomfortable act, typically only performed by brave onlookers when something untoward is occurring. Breaching it when people are simply carrying on in a routine manner, however, as the Champions were being asked to do during the audit, is particularly unusual and brave, and I would argue that this breaching of the usual social order is a core effect if not purpose of the audit process – to expose habitual and routine daily practices to environmental scrutiny.

The audit was also valued for the apparently objective perspective it provided on everyday practice. Graham, in particular, valued the audit because it provided *'verifiable facts and truths, erm, not wish lists'* (Graham interview, p11). Such an objective approach was also seen as important in an organisation populated by lots of scientists and engineers. Converting a vague sense that something is wrong with

everyday behaviour into precise facts and figures about negative environmental impacts enabled the environment to speak in a discourse that was already highly valued around the Bridgeford site.

By elevating the Champions to the position of auditors, and through their use of numbers, the audit thus offered a kind of critical distance from everyday practice. Shove and Walker (2007) comment on the impossibility of escaping from the sociotechnical systems and practices that we may wish to change. Whilst it may be true that we ‘cannot steer from the outside’ (Shove and Walker 2007, 769), the audit process at least appeared to illuminate the inside of daily practices at Bridgeford, helping the Champions to question them and get a better sense of the directions they may wish to steer in.

As well as enabling such reflexive scrutiny, the audit process and results also acted to motivate the Champions team to create pro-environmental change. After GAP had collated the audit results, they were presented to the team at the second training day (meeting reference 2) in early April 2007 (see table 4.1 for a summary).

General Information about Bridgeford	
c.300 people onsite for 250 working days each year	
Approx floor space: 30,000 square feet	
Waste Audit Results	
Bin breakdown (%ages by weight)	
Paper 44%	Tins and cans 4%
Food 29%	Plastic cups 2%
Plastic bottles 8%	Miscellaneous 13%
Waste produced annually: 57.4 tonnes	Recycled: 45.7 tonnes
	Sent to landfill: 11.7 tonnes (c.20%)
Energy Audit Results	
Results of spot-checks	
Lights left on at lunchtimes 72%	Lights left on overnight 48%
Monitors left on at lunchtimes 80%	Monitors left on overnight 24%
Printers left on at lunchtimes 83%	Printers left on overnight 33%
Electricity consumed annually 452,611 kWh	
Gas consumed annually 104,443 kWh	
Oil consumed annually 30,724 litres	CO_2 emitted annually 297 tonnes
Stationery and Consumables Results	
2,850,000 sheets paper used per year (c. 40 sheets per person per day)	
140,000 plastic cups used per year	

Table 4.1: Summary of Initial Audit Results
(Source: GAP’s Initial Audit Report)

As the results were revealed they were met with many gasps and expressions of shock and surprise at the size of the environmental impacts existing practices as the site were having. In interviews, most of the Champions reflected on the significance of these audit results in helping them understand the impacts of their everyday practices and motivating them to make changes:

> *'When you actually did that audit and, I mean, myself, Louise and Mel sat, stood there after doing it and went 'my goodness.' When you saw the plastic cups, when you saw everything that could be recycled, and you had that little tiny bit left in the middle that was landfill, gobsmacked, you do, you know you're completely shocked by it.'*
>
> (Clare interview, p24)

> *'I found them* [the audit results] *really shocking…it's astonishing the amount of rubbish that the place actually produces, and I think, I would hope that I'm not alone, I wasn't the only person who just sat there and went 'crikey, how much do we throw away?* (laughs). *We've got to do something about this.' Erm, so I thought that was, that was really good to actually get you hands on, going through things that's all around you that you might not normally notice, and erm, rummaging around seeing what we threw away and then just finding out how much of it there is…It does make you more aware of stuff that's there, that you don't realise.'*
>
> (Melanie interview, p8-9)

The crucial motivating element of the results, however, rests in their relation to local and personal practice. I asked many of the Champions why any one of the widely available hard hitting facts about the environmental consequences of everyday behaviour would not have sufficed, and was told that the important thing about the audit was that it made one feel part of it, as opposed to being a distant, abstract figure (e.g. Craig; Leslie; Melanie interviews). Burningham and O'Brien (1994) refer to the 'localising strategies' people use to help them make sense of the environment in specific contexts, and the audit clearly played such a role. Not only did it make the environment seem real, it also made it theirs.

The audit localised the environment by making explicit two forms of disconnection of everyday practices from environmental issues. First, and as Melanie expressed in the quotation above, it reconnected the Champions to the *'stuff that's there, that you don't realise.'* Actor Network Theorists have pointed out the extent to which nonhuman agents are neglected in social theory, as individuals exhibit a 'tactical lack of curiosity' (Bijker and Law 1992) in their surroundings. In this sense, the audit served as a tactically curious process that re-materialised at least some of the

everyday working practices at Bridgeford and revealed the resources implicated in conventional daily behaviour. Second, and in a related manner, the audit process helped the Champions to question the broader *systems of provision* (Fine and Leopold 1993; Spaargaren 2004) which structure their everyday practices, and to work out new ways of reconnecting practices with them. Again, Melanie provided a succinct description of this process:

> *'You just thought, 'well we've got a can machine', but there's nowhere to put them. So, as you're actually going through the bins, and seeing what kind of stuff gets thrown away, you're sort of thinking well 'ok, well we haven't, you know, we've got something that dispenses cans, but we've got nowhere to put them other than the bin once we've finished with them.''*
>
> (Melanie interview, p8)

In summary, the audit can be seen to play a triple role in starting the EC initiative. First, by providing locally meaningful data it acted as a source of motivation. Second, it separated individuals from their practices, de-routinising current behaviour and providing objective critical distance which helped them to scrutinise what was going on. Third, it helped reconnect practitioners to the stuff of their daily practices (re-materialisation), and also to reconnect practices to the systems of provision which structure them.

4.4 Challenging Practice: Re-Forming Burnetts

Chapter 2 presented Shove and Pantzar's (2005) conception of practices as assemblages of images/meanings, skills, and stuff as a potentially useful heuristic device that could provide a flexible and sophisticated lens through which to observe what actually happens when people try to change behaviours. This section will apply this device to the planning phase of the EC initiative, working systematically through the ways in which the Champions attempted to engage with the stuff, skills and meanings of practices at the Bridgeford site. It will argue that rather than seeing behaviour change as a matter of changing individuals' attitudes, values, or beliefs, or as an outcome of removing certain barriers, it should instead be seen as an attempt to intervene in the organisation of daily practices.

4.4.1 Environment Champions and Stuff

I have shown that the audit results helped the Champions team to re-materialise their normal daily habits. Immediately after the audit results were revealed, the GAP programme managers encouraged the team to think of ways to reduce the environmental impacts of their own, and their colleagues', daily practice. Where the cognitive approach would turn directly to the environmental attitudes or values people held, the Champions turned instead to the detailed practicalities of working at Bridgeford. Quite suddenly, in the discussions that followed, a wide range of previously taken for granted objects were reinterpreted as problematic and in need of change. It may seem obvious to emphasise that pro-environmental behaviour demands a change or reduction in the stuff used, but in most research in this area no attention is given to the role of things in everyday behaviour. Instead, it is people that are seen as problematic and in need of modification, whilst the objects, or 'mundane artefacts,' used remain as ignored 'missing masses' (Latour 1992). The reconnection provided by the audit, however, led to an explosion of things onto the agenda. As the list of 'short term actions (three to six months)' in figure 4.2 demonstrates, the majority of the Champions' suggestions focused on things and the way they were put to use.

As this long list of actions shows, the Champions began to identify and critique the stuff of their practices. Jelsma (2003) argues that objects have in-built 'scripts' which carry the 'inscribed moralities' of their designers. Crucially, he points out that these scripts can always be resisted although some maybe harder to overturn than others. In these early discussions, the Champions team came to re-read these scripts in new ways and challenge their inscribed moralities. Most, if not all, of the things listed in figure 4.2 are relatively inconspicuous and easily ignored in the course of daily life. One would not often give a great deal of thought to the lighting tube above one's head or the printer cartridge shut away inside the printer. As a result of the audit, however, these missing artefacts became problematic. The different moralities they embodied – that brightly lit rooms are vital, irrespective of the energy used, or that printing should be easy, fast, and plentiful, regardless of the paper or ink consumed – began, as a result of the audit, to be questioned and their scripts read in new ways.

- ‘Don’t use **lights** unless needed, look into **low energy light bulbs**.
- Look at **desk layouts** to maximise use of natural light.
- Remove some **lighting tubes**.
- Have a switch off lunch hour once a week, where all non-essential **equipment** must be switched off.
- Reduce number of **printers** to make people think twice about printing.
- Reduce energy use from heating and cooling, replace **broken thermostats**, Brian Ellis to provide staff with **fleeces**.
- Improve access to **plugs** to make it easier for staff to switch off.
- Print fewer emails, create folders in your drive to store emails for reference rather than printing.
- Have **pot** by bin/small containers by printers for stationery such as **paper clips** and **pins** to be reused.
- Use staple-less **staplers**.
- Fewer **magazine** subscriptions pass copies around departments rather than for individual use.
- Reduce **post-it** note usage & reduce **post-it** note purchasing.
- Make **scrap pads** – one person per department in charge of this.
- Reduce **envelope** usage, reuse **envelopes**.
- Duplex printing and photocopying set defaults, communicate this to all staff, print two to a side.
- Reduce **printer cartridge** use, less printing, lower resolution printing, establish guidelines on good printing practice.
- Reduce the proportion of **paper** going into general waste **bins**.
- Investigate localised shredding and increasing capacity for general paper recycling.
- Get staff to use recyclable **lunch storage items**.
- Make sure all **plastic cups** are being recycled.
- Get Brian Ellis [facilities manager] involved.’

Figure 4.2: List of ‘Short Term Actions’ from the Second Training Meeting
(meeting reference 2)

As part of this process, the Champions discussions also extended beyond single, isolated objects to consider the relationships between objects, skills and meanings and to imagine different ways in which practices could be arranged. For example, suggestions such as changing desk layouts to maximise natural light or to improve access to plug sockets reveal how relationships between suites of things (desks, windows, plug sockets – see Shove *et al* 2007) came to be seen as problematic and alternative arrangements were suggested. Still other suggestions, such as the need to ‘reduce printer cartridge usage…[and] establish guidelines on good printing practice’ or to ‘reduce the proportion of paper going into general waste bins,’ show how the team also began to consider the ways in which things, such as paper, linked up with bodily actions/skills, such as which bin to use, and meanings (or lack thereof), such as what protocols surround the use of printers.

In their early discussions the Champions therefore began to question not only the stuff of practices, but the linkages between all components of practices and to

consider new ways that the order of Burnetts might be arranged into less environmentally damaging practices. SPT changes the focus of analysis such that individuals are no longer the centre of attention but merely one part (albeit an important one) among many in the performance of daily practices. In so doing, it provides more purchase points for changing behaviour, even if it suggests that such change is hard to bring about.

4.4.2 Environment Champions and Skills

In addition to objects, the Champions' initial discussions also came to question some of the skills they and their colleagues possessed and how they might also be problematic. Within SPT, skill does not only refer to advanced and complex procedures, such as the skill displayed when playing sports or painting a picture, but also encompasses the tacit and embodied forms of competence necessary for getting-on-in-the-world. Whilst flicking switches or putting litter in one bin rather than another may not automatically be thought of as a kind of skill, such things do have to be learnt. I myself experienced this when learning to use the vending machines at Bridgeford. Not only did it take me a long time to identify which number drink I wanted and what order to press the buttons in, but in trying to exemplify pro-environmental behaviour by reusing a cup from earlier, I pressed the necessary buttons to ensure the machine did not dispense a new cup but forgot to place my old cup in the slot and thus watched in horror as the machine poured what would have been a full cup of coffee down the drain. Considering the fluency with which others used the vending machines, for example, unthinkingly requesting '*a cocktail of 51 and 55* [because]…55 *is too sweet, and 51 you don't get enough coffee'* (FD:190) it is easy to see how hard it might be to re-learn such skills. Indeed, Louise, David and Sally all admitted to making the same mistake as me (FD:65, 118, 142). Taking this sense of the word skill, the Champions were seen to question many different skills in their early discussions – some such skills were more complex than others, but almost all were conducted routinely and unthinkingly.

During the early planning meetings (meeting references 2, 3, 4 and 6), a wide range of skills were brought onto the agenda. Examples included using the vending machines, how to do double-sided printing or double-sided photocopying, which bin to use when recycling different kinds of waste, the routine manner in which people

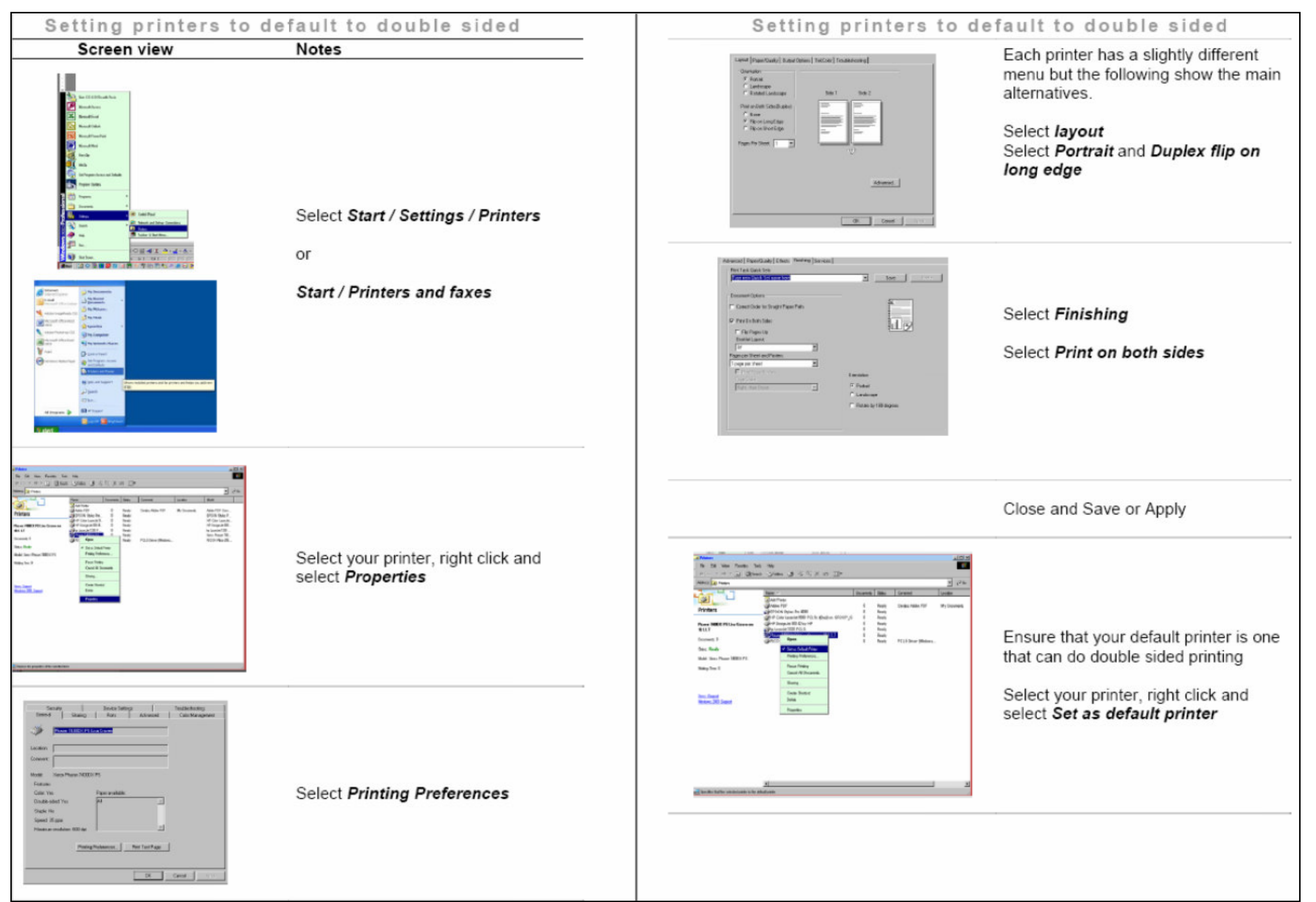
switch things on or off at the beginning or end of the day and many more. Once raised, the Champions began to consider what new skills were needed to for pro-environmental behaviour, and how these could be spread to their colleagues. They came up with a range of suggestions, such as emailing step by step guides on how to make double-sided printing the default setting on computers (see figure 4.3 below), putting posters on vending machines or next to photocopiers with instructions on how to reuse your cup or copy double-sided, and creating checklists to guide people through the process of switching their equipment off at the end of each working day (see figure 4.4 below). The Champions hoped to provide their colleagues with all they needed to learn new pro-environmental skills and incorporate them into their daily routines.

As well as providing instructions on how to behave, the team recognised that re-skilling is not a simple task. They therefore divided the office into different areas and assigned each with ‘area mentors’ from the team. The choice of language here is significant as a ‘mentor’ is ‘an experienced and trusted adviser…who trains and councils’ (Oxford Dictionary of English 2005, 1098). The Champions did not, therefore, simply tell others what to do, giving them information and leaving them on their own to make changes, but recognised that guidance and support might be necessary in helping people through a potentially unsettling and challenging process.

As with the earlier focus on objects, to say that pro-environmental behaviour requires new sets of skills may seem an obvious point. Nonetheless, it is rarely given explicit attention in most literature on behaviour change which tends to focus on the thinking behind behaviours rather than the *doing* of daily practice.

4.4.3 Environment Champions and Shifting Meanings

The final element in Shove and Pantzar’s (2005) model of practices is meanings. Shove and Pantzar recognise that the concept of meaning is illusory and overlaps with both skills and objects which both carry meaning. Schatzki (2002, 18) suggests that meaning derives from the position of a thing (artefact, person, nonhuman etc.) in an order. It is therefore to be expected that, if meaning is a relational concept, it will overlap and interact with the things related to it. For the sake of analytical clarity, meaning may be seen as encapsulating the ends, purpose, and significance of practices. It can therefore be distinguished from both the stuff (tangible objects,



Setting printers to default to double sided

Screen view	Notes
	Select ***Start / Settings / Printers*** or ***Start / Printers and faxes***
	Select your printer, right click and select ***Properties***
	Select ***Printing Preferences***

Setting printers to default to double sided

	Each printer has a slightly different menu but the following show the main alternatives. Select ***layout*** Select ***Portrait*** and ***Duplex flip on long edge***
	Select ***Finishing*** Select ***Print on both sides***
	Close and Save or Apply
	Ensure that your default printer is one that can do double sided printing Select your printer, right click and select ***Set as default printer***

Figure 4.3: How to Make Double-Sided Printing the Default Setting

Extract from an Email to all Staff at Bridgeford – sent at 16:46 on a Friday Afternoon

'Choosing to act positively, even in a small way, we can make a significant difference, together!

If you are leaving early or staying later, don't forget you do have time to switch off your…………….

PC
Power transformer
Docking Station
Screen
Plug (- sometimes easier to switch everything off at the wall)
Gang socket (that little LED on the end uses about 0.3Watts)
Phone Charger
Printer
Lights – if you're in a shared office, who is going to turn out the lights when you go?
Is there a photocopier near you? Does that need to be left on? – one copier uses enough power when on standby at night to print one thousand five hundred copies!'

Figure 4.4: Leaving the Office Checklist

including both nonhuman and humans) and the skills (specific forms of competence) of everyday practices. Without according it primacy, meaning is thus seen to orient and drive practices, providing uses for things and ends to turn skills to. The cognitive approach to pro-environmental behaviour change comes closest to SPT here as attitudes and values might be seen as proxies for meaning. The difference is that in the SPT-based approach, the practice rather than the individual carries the meaning. For SPT then, meaning (e.g. of the environment or pro-environmental behaviour) must be addressed in relation to, and as part of, practice rather than in isolation from it. This section will show that just as the EC team questioned and sought to replace the stuff and the skills involved in their practices, so too did they seek to unsettle and replace some of the meanings associated with them.

At the very first training meeting for the Champions in December 2006, GAP programme managers showed the team a video and a series of facts and figures designed to show how small, everyday acts added up to big environmental impacts. Leslie reflected on the power of this presentation as literally eye-opening, changing the way she thought about and understood her daily practices:

> *'I think that had so much impact. That had so much impact on myself, you know, that was like* [speaks slowly with eyes wide open] *'my god', you know, I just sort of stood back from it all and thought 'my god,' you know, I was like 'blimey.'*
>
> (Leslie interview, p24)

By using emotive media and visual images alongside hard hitting facts and figures, the Champions were encouraged to reconsider the meaning of their everyday practices in a new light, and to add a layer of environmental meaning or an 'ecological rationality' (Mol and Spaargaren 2000) to them. As shown in section 4.3.4, this process of reinterpreting existing practices through an environmental lens was also compounded by the audit results.

Whilst the cognitive approach might interpret this as straightforward communication to engender pro-environmental attitudes amid the team, an SPT-based approach provides a more subtle and detailed interpretation which enables an understanding of how new environmental meanings interact with existing practices. Schatzki (1996, 89) adds sophistication to Shove and Pantzar's concept of meaning by suggesting practices are bound together in three ways: through 'shared understandings of how to behave'; through 'explicit rules formally constraining behaviour'; and through 'teleoaffective structures' that guide emotional engagements with practices. During the second planning meeting (meeting reference 2), the GAP programme managers encouraged the Champions team to set targets for the EC initiative. As I recorded in my field diary, the discussion that followed illustrates how new meanings were being collectively negotiated and added to existing practices, rather than new environmental attitudes/values being adopted by individuals:

> 'Anna [the GAP programme manager] then got the group to commit to certain targets. This led to an interesting set of discussions…[someone] emphasised that *'we should select low targets as then it'd look better when we achieve all of them'*…she said *'How will we look as a group of people if we miss all of our targets? We'll look bloody stupid.'*…. In the end they agreed that they wanted to set *'challenging but achievable'* targets although there was then some reluctance to commit to them initially…. Liam expressed this as *'not wanting to under-deliver, but instead to over-achieve.'*
>
> (FD:23)

The environmental meanings offered by the audit results, video, and facts and figures conflicted and competed with the meanings built-in to existing practices. Issues of professional status, competence and one's success or failure were at stake in the EC initiative. Rather than the environment possessing its own inherent and stable meaning, it was instead interpreted through, and came to take on meaning only in relation to, existing and conventional practices and meanings. In so doing, however, this process also shows how the new environmental meanings reached into the very

heart of everyday practices at Bridgeford. They provided a new shared understanding that practices impact negatively upon the environment. In a loose and informal fashion they offered new rules, for example that practices should abide by environmental limits represented by the targets the Champions eventually agreed upon - to reduce energy use by 10% and reduce waste to landfill by 35%. Finally, they offered new teleoaffective structures, suggesting a new sense of care and responsibility for the environment should be introduced to the workplace.

Having negotiated this process amongst themselves, the Champions then considered how these new ecological rationalities and affectivities could be spread to all other practitioners across the Bridgeford site. They paid attention to the symbolism carried in their practices and sought to devise new symbols of pro-environmental practice. For example, Sally argued that the team should encourage the Facilities Manager to get a 'can bank' at the site. She said 'that having a can bank, even if it wasn't collected often, would be a 'symbol' that Burnetts was recycling and cared about this' (FD:115). Other symbolic acts discussed in the planning meetings involved building 'waste sculptures' to demonstrate the number of plastic cups sent to landfill each year (FD:53), or placing green ribbons on each of the Champions' office doors as a sign that new environmental ways of behaving were being supported throughout the site (FD:35). As well as these symbolic acts, the Champions also planned to use more conventional forms of communication, such as putting up posters around the offices to emphasise environmental impacts (FD:36, 38, 47), emailing the audit results to everyone at the site (FD:32), and sending a series of 'myth busting' emails (Peter interview). In short, the Champions planned to reemphasise new environmental meanings around the Bridgeford site constantly, making them more or less unavoidable in the course of everyday working practices.

In its focus on meanings, the Champions initiative comes close to conventional mass media and social marketing campaigns. It differs from these conventional approaches in two ways however. First, as was shown above, meanings were addressed alongside the objects and skills involved in practices. Each was addressed both independently and in relation to other elements of practices. Secondly, and as a result, meanings were seen as belonging to shared social practices around the site and therefore in need of collective negotiation rather than individual decision-making. Other collective meanings were invoked in the Champions' discussions and

the environment was interpreted, localised and made meaningful through these, rather than simply bolted-on and left to have an impact on its own.

4.4.4 Promoting New Practices-As-Entities

To summarise the argument to this point, I have shown that in their early planning meetings, the Champions team systematically questioned all the components identified in Shove and Pantzar's (2005) conception of practices. With the aid of the audit results, they were able to scrutinize and reflexively evaluate their practices and to propose pro-environmental alternatives. Viewing this planning process from the perspective of SPT, I have argued, has also provided a more comprehensive account of exactly what is involved in pro-environmental behaviour change. It has shown how the environment is locally produced through existing practices and the objects, skills and meanings implicated in them, and is therefore up for grabs and (re)produced when these practices change. This section will consider the final piece of the Champions' planning process - how they proposed to diffuse new pro-environmental practices across the Bridgeford site.

Schatzki (1996) highlights the dual existence of practices as simultaneously entities and performances (*cf.* Warde 2005; Shove *et al* 2007). Practices-as-entities are culturally recognisable and meaningful units e.g. the sport of football. Practice-as-performances are specific iterations of these entities e.g. a group of practitioners playing a single football match. What has been shown up to this point in the analysis is that, based on the audit results and their analysis of current practices-as-performances at Bridgeford, the Champions team devised new practices-as-entities to replace them. Making a similar kind of distinction, Shove and Pantzar conclude that whilst the various components of practices (the objects, skills and meanings) can circulate widely across space and time, practices themselves do not, and are instead always locally reinvented 'in a manner that is informed by previous and related practice' (Shove and Pantzar 2005, 43). In other words, whilst it may be easy to propose new practices-as-entities, recruiting practitioners and converting them into new practices-as-performances is a local and contextually complex process. Nonetheless, the Champions were aware of this challenge and, in their planning meetings, did propose a number of different ways to approach recruiting practitioners.

To begin, as with social marketing initiatives, the team considered the dominant perceptions of pro-environmental behaviours within existing workplace practices as a key barrier for them to overcome. In his interview, David himself revealed some apprehension about how the initiative would be greeted, suggesting that its very name – Environment Champions – conjured particular and stigmatised images:

> David: *'it was a bit vague in the initial thing really, just sort of this 'Environment Champions', I suppose it sort of sounds a bit*
> Tom: *It does sound a bit kind of grand doesn't it*
> David: *Sort of Greenpeace direct action or something like that.'*
>
> (David interview, p7-8)

Other team members also expressed concern that the initiative might be perceived as alternative or deviant (see Moisander and Pesonen 2002):

> 'Graham expressed concern that these ideas [for posters] were *'a bit tree huggy.'* Louise followed up saying that people might see the campaign team as *'a bunch of tree-huggy saps'* and this started a conversation about being *'hippies'* and even *'waccy baccy'* – so there is real awareness (or at least assumptions) within the team about how they think they'll be perceived by others…[Louise suggested] it would be good to have something tangible and interactive (active rather than passive involvement) from the launch day. Graham then said, laughing, *'I'm sure we'll get a tangible reaction'* to which Louise mimed punching someone.'
>
> (FD:33)

These discussions illustrate how the Champions came to a more or less shared understanding of what kind of practices-as-entities their colleagues might accept or reject, and therefore how they should go about promoting them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, more radical suggestions were seen as less desirable, as the team tried to distance themselves, and the campaign, from negative perceptions of tree-huggy hippies. Instead, they preferred to appeal to existing and well established values.

At least three distinct tactics of communication were discussed in the planning meetings as means of generating buy-in from colleagues. The first of these was to emphasise the financial savings that could accrue from pro-environmental behaviour. Early meetings regularly involved discussions of the cost of the various suggestions being made (FD:32, 54, 58). Specifically, the appeal to financial values was seen as likely to work well with 'the Board', even though the board had in fact expressed

concern that the initiative should not be seen as primarily a cost-cutting measure (see section 4.3.2):

> 'The financial savings thing also came up continually throughout the day – people seemed comfortable working things out in this way and constantly emphasised that *'that's what the bosses want'* – someone even said *'it needs to be either cost neutral or cost beneficial or they won't support it'* – so there is a very clear impression among the EC team about what the Execs want and, therefore, how to talk to them – it is hard to judge if this is what the Execs also think.'
>
> (FD:20)

Early discussions revealed considerable concern to demonstrate the financial benefits of the initiative in order to win board support which, if achieved, would then strengthen the initiative. The team were also aware, however, that this approach would not necessarily work with all groups. Indeed, some Champions seemed to have created informal mental categorisations of their colleagues into different types of people who responded to different messages:

> 'Liam said that they should say to 'Michael Edwards types[12]' that *'we're trying to up the share price of the company. By saving energy we save money which in turn will up the share price'*….He went on to say that, for some people, emphasising the financial element of it and the benefits to the company might be a better way to go than the environmental benefits…saying that *'people take the piss out of me for my small car, but I explain to them that it's halved my fuel costs. Some people understand money, some understand the environment. If you explain it to them that they'll be saving money and therefore saving the planet they might get it. You're not trying to change their worldview, you're just trying to get them to go the same way as you.''*
>
> (FD:105)

The team thus recognised that emphasising financial savings alone ran the risk of the initiative being perceived as merely a cost-cutting or 'penny-pinching' exercise (FD:58).

The second tactic they adopted thus avoided discussion of money and instead presented the initiative as a technical matter of knowledge and rational action. The audit results provided the basis of this tactic. Based on observation and a 'scientific' audit process, the audit results represented an objective measure of existing performance, much like a KPI. Craig, for example, argued that the audit results

[12] Michael Edwards is a senior employee at the Bridgeford site.

needed to be clearly and accurately communicated. He wished to demonstrate the tangible impacts of CO_2 emissions in factual terms, rather than relying on vague and abstract visualisations of how much CO_2 was being annually emitted:

> *'We want hard hitting facts, I mean what is CO_2? What does 300 balloons actually mean? We need to make it tangible, people need to relate to it so we can get them to buy-in.'*
>
> (FD:51)

The facticity of the audit results thus made them a key weapon in the Champions' arsenal. Based on these environmental facts, this second communication tactic involved presenting pro-environmental behaviour as a technical and logical matter, and therefore something which colleagues could not argue against. Rather than asking people to care about the environment, aspects of the initiative became a simple matter of ensuring everyone possessed the 'correct' knowledge, and providing the necessary facilities to enable action. Once these two factors were achieved there was no remaining excuse not to act:

> Clare: *'I think it's acceptable for people to do something if they have no other way of doing it.*
> Tom: *Right*
> Clare: *You know, if you've got no other choice, fine, it's acceptable, but if you have a choice, have the facility in place which is widely known, easily accessible, you have, you have no excuse, the only excuse you have is sheer laziness.'*
>
> (Clare interview, p45)

Cast in this way, the much criticised information deficit model of communication (Hinchliffe 1996; Burgess *et al* 1998; Blake 1999; Owens 2000) takes on a different and tactically useful form. It is no longer merely a case *providing* assumedly ignorant individuals with information, but instead of *taking away* potential avenues of excuse. In the context of a private sector organisation, in which specific forms of instrumental rationality, hierarchies and rules exist, and people are regularly appraised on how well they are performing their roles, this manoeuvre takes on special significance as the lack of a good excuse renders environmental inaction an irrational and irresponsible act of 'laziness,' rather than merely an innocent error. So far in this thesis I have criticised the cognitive approach's reliance on a rationalist and realist approach to communication. What I am arguing here, however, is that rationality is context

dependent (Flyvbjerg 1998) and constructed within existing practices (Reckwitz 2002a). In the context of existing practices at the Bridgeford site, therefore, a realist and rationalist approach comes to be seen as a practically and performatively useful social construction.

The third, and related, communication tactic involved emphasising or boosting the convenience of pro-environmental behaviours. A key form of this was to take the matter out of unreliable human hands entirely and employ the objects of practices in ways which made pro-environmental behaviour automatic. Much discussion focused on resetting photocopiers and printers to make double-sided printing the default setting (FD:47, 49), or putting timer switches on electrical equipment to ensure they would be turned off without having to inconvenience people (FD:54). In cases where machines were unable to enforce the new pro-environmental morality (*cf.* Jelsma 2003), the team discussed ways of making existing anti-environmental behaviours less convenient. For example by removing people's general waste bins and placing larger recycling points at convenient locations around the offices (FD:98), or forcing reuse by removing plastic cups from the vending machines (FD:35).

What is noticeable in all these tactics is that notions of care and responsibility for the environment were downplayed. Myers and Macnaghten (1998) suggest that, in their public communications, businesses tend to emphasise their caring nature in relation to the environment as a rhetorical move to counter assumed public scepticism that they operate according to technical rationality and the profit motive alone. In the EC initiative, however, the opposite appears to be the case. Nonetheless, I would not go so far as Fineman (2001) who argues that in making the environment acceptable by turning it into a technical, rational and profit-based issue, the environment itself tends to get lost. Instead, I would suggest that the Champions adopted a pragmatic approach in which they sought to associate pro-environmental behaviour with profit, technical knowledge and rationality, and efficiency, all of which are well respected values in the context of the workplace. For some, this involved a degree of 'impression management' (Goffman 1959; Crane 2002) and 'emotion work' (Fineman 1996) in which they were forced to downplay just how much they cared about the environment in order for the EC initiative to succeed.

Finally, whilst these various tactics refer to the *content* of the Champions' communications, it is also worth briefly mentioning planning discussions which emphasised the *style* they should adopt. Some team members had expertise in

marketing, whilst all of the team knew the organisation and their colleagues well. They were thus quickly able to design communications techniques that overcame most of the typically identified problems with environmental communications, such as making the issue relevant to the audience, breaking big issues into smaller bite-sized chunks, avoiding complex jargon, or emphasising the positive benefits of pro-environmental behaviour rather than framing it as a sacrifice, etc. (see for example Myers and Macnaghten 1998; Gordon 2002; DEMOS 2003; Darnton 2004a, 2004b; Futerra 2005; Hounsham 2006). For example, the group planned a launch day which exhibited all the characteristics of 'good' environmental communications. Whilst planning the event, the launch group tried to make it active, engaging, and fun, by having a 'hopes and aspirations' or 'pledge board' and praising people who signed up to take action (FD:33), holding a quiz based on the audit results with a prize at the end of the day for the winner (FD:31), and hiring GAP's Energy Bike (see http://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/energy.aspx accessed on 31.01.08) and having a competition that praised the person who generated the most energy. The day thus sought to create a positive atmosphere around the whole initiative, essentially serving to market the team's ideas to potential practitioners. Although not always wholly achieved, the general principles of keeping the initiative positive, inclusive, engaging, fun, and active, all of which are well known to social marketers, underpinned all communications. The key difference here is that rather than communications being produced by distant and disembedded 'experts' (Hobson 2003), the Champions devised the messages and their style by themselves, in a manner which they deemed appropriate for their workplace.

4.4.5 The Plan

During the planning phase, therefore, the team engaged closely with a wide range of different practices around the site, questioning different components and the links between them, proposing alternative practices-as-entities, and considering different ways they might recruit potential practitioners. The end result of their planning was a strategy for a four month communications campaign which they hoped would change practices at the Bridgeford site, and for which they agreed a small budget of £3,000 with Steven (FD:49). There is insufficient space to detail every single element of this campaign as, unlike many other single issue behaviour change interventions (Staats *et*

al 2004), it addressed almost all workplace practices in some way or other. To provide an overview, however, following the launch event mentioned above, there were to be three themed months – energy, resources, recycling – before a fourth month to tackle loose ends and feedback. David produced a timetable such that each week of the campaign had a specific set of activities attached to it and would address a specific aspect of daily practice (see table 4.2). Many of these activities have already been mentioned, e.g. posters promoting particular environmental messages, emailing instructions on how to set up double-sided printing etc. A number of other suggestions however, are not mentioned on this timetable.

Date	Subject	Actions
Power Month		
Week 3	**Printers and other equipment**	Poster promoting switch off at end of the day
		Exit door posters – have you switched off yet?
		Time clocks for vending machines?
		Poster of each room/areas switching off success
	Meter readings [Bill]	
Week 4	**Heating/ cooling**	Poster – turn down your thermostat, close your window [winter] open your window, close your blinds [summer]
		Reduce thermostat settings on boilers
		Close blinds in staff room, investigate heat vent stack
	Meter readings [Bill]	
Resource month		
	Clare and Melissa	Set of posters giving details of paper usage at Bridgeford for printing and copying with tips for good practice. Rotate these each week
	Clare and Melissa	Poster with paper usage so far this year updated during this month and up until September
Week 5	**Printers** David	Poster promoting double-sided printing
		Prepare information sheet on how to set up printer defaults to double-sided

Table 4.2: Section of the Campaign Timetable

Some suggestions, such as conducting face to face briefings with staff in different areas are not mentioned simply because there was no specific timetable associated with them. Such activities were supposed to occur constantly, if irregularly, throughout the campaign, with the over-arching goal that the named ‘area mentors’ would become first points of call for anyone with an environmental question or suggestion (FD:97). Some other suggestions, however, are conspicuously absent from this timetable. Specifically, it does not mention any of the more controversial ideas the Champions team came up with. During the early planning meetings, the team were encouraged to come up with as many ideas as possible, however radical, to change

practices around the site. At this stage at least, nothing was off limits. Some of the more radical suggestions offered included holding a No Bin Day, a No Electricity Afternoon, removing all plastic cups from the vending machines, or locking cars out of the car park for a day. In each of these cases, the aim was to shock their colleagues into realising how much they depended on certain environmental resources (*cf.* Spaargaren 2004).

The Champions were aware of the potential power of these ideas, but two key reasons kept them off the agenda. First, many of these ideas were simply ignored after having first been suggested. Some, for example closing the car park, were seen as too radical and unpalatable, and would therefore put people off the initiative from the outset. Others were seen as too heavy handed and dictatorial, an image the Champions wished to avoid. Instead, they wished to win buy-in and promote the positive aspects of pro-environmental action rather than the negative aspects of inaction. Second, some of these ideas simply required more finessing and negotiation, particularly with other communities of practitioners, such as the Facilities Management team or the contractors in charge of the vending machines. For now, it suffices to say that after many meetings, much discussion, and detailed planning, the Champions had devised a plan to promote their new practices-as-entities to their colleagues.

4.5 Summary

For the first time, this chapter has attempted to apply an SPT-based approach to pro-environmental behaviour change. First, it adopted Schatzki's (2002) distinction between orders and practices to describe existing practices at the Bridgeford site in detail. It then contextualised the EC initiative in relation to other management-led initiatives at Burnetts and outlined the setting up of the Champions team. The second half of the chapter then used Shove and Pantzar's (2005) conception of practices as consisting of objects, skills, and meanings, to show how the EC team sought to challenge all three components of existing practice at the site, and proposed alternative pro-environmental practices-as-entities in their place. Finally, the chapter considered the tactics by which the team intended to recruit practitioners to their new practices.

In the process, by applying an SPT-based approach, the chapter has provided an analysis of pro-environmental behaviour that does not centre on individuals and

their decision-making processes. Instead, it argues that pro-environmental behaviour change involves a collective and much more thoroughgoing process of social adjustment and reorganisation. Indeed, the chapter has shown how the EC team formed gradually into a new social unit, a pro-environmental community of practice (Wenger 1998) that drew on its members' different competencies and experiences to create potentially workable alternatives to existing social practices. Significantly, these individual members are employees. This chapter has therefore introduced the figure of the worker to debates on pro-environmental behaviour change. I have shown how the EC initiative and even the environment were fundamentally shaped by the specific roles, rules, and rationalities of the workplace. Pro-environmental behaviour change is thus presented as a fundamentally contextual process, demanding quite different social dynamics and practical details in different settings.

Throughout, the chapter has been highly descriptive, focusing on the often small intricacies and details of EC at Bridgeford. I would argue that such detail is necessary to show how pro-environmental behaviour takes on different meanings in different contexts and when attempted by different communities of practitioners. Furthermore, these details, which represent the practicalities of everyday life for practitioners, also potentially provide a greater number of purchase points for pro-environmental behaviour change than are suggested by approaches which focus only on changing individuals' attitudes or values, or on removing barriers to action. At the same time, an SPT-based analysis of pro-environmental behaviour change reveals its complexity, suggesting it involves much more than simply educating individuals and removing contextual barriers, and calls instead for a fundamental redesign and reorganisation of social practices and systems that have emerged gradually over time.

Finally, this chapter has focused exclusively on the EC teams' initial planning meetings. In so doing, it has addressed a privileged and protected context that provided the Champions with a deliberative space supportive of pro-environmental sentiments. This enabled them to isolate practices from everyday life, step outside them, and adopt a critical and reflexive stance toward them. A key benefit of SPT, however, is that in drawing attention to the *doing* of practices it presents a more realistic picture of how behaviour unfolds in context. In real life, practices cannot be isolated from one another, just as practitioners cannot be isolated from their context. Chapter 5 will therefore progress to consider how the EC initiative was received outside the pristine environment of the team meetings. In Bedford's phrase it will

consider what actually happened ‘when everyday life interact[ed] with idealism’ (1999, 151).

Chapter 5 Delivering Environment Champions: The Realpolitik of Changing Practices

Chapter 4 showed how the Champions designed a range of new pro-environmental practices-as-entities that they hoped to spread to their colleagues across the Bridgeford site. It argued that SPT provides a more holistic and sophisticated view of everyday behaviour and one that potentially offers more purchase points for behavioural change. At the same time, however, it also more accurately portrays the difficulty of achieving it. Despite this, by focusing exclusively on the Champions' meetings, chapter 4 missed one of the key benefits of an SPT-based approach - its focus on the practical performance or *doings* of social practices (Shove *et al* 2007). This chapter will rectify this by extending an SPT-based analysis to consider the messiness, complexity, and office politics involved in delivering the EC initiative at Bridgeford.

To begin, the chapter provides a brief outline of the major events and activities that occurred during the EC campaign. It suggests that, superficially at least, the EC initiative appears much the same as a more conventional social marketing or environmental communications exercise. The chapter proceeds however, to show how focusing on the *doing* of the initiative leads one to consider 'backstage' (Goffman 1959) goings on that are usually missed by more conventional approaches. In particular it delves more deeply into two processes that went on behind the scenes: first, how the Champions delivered No Bin Day, which leads into a detailed consideration of their relations with the Facilities Management team; and second, how the EC initiative interacted with the CHANGE programme. Finally, the chapter will explore how the Champions themselves interpreted and evaluated their delivery of the EC initiative.

5.1 Delivering the Campaign: As Easy as Putting Up Posters and Providing New Bins?

On Friday May 4th 2007, the Champions at Burnetts held a launch day to kick off the EC campaign and begin the process of spreading their new practices-as-entities to their colleagues. The launch day involved a series of different displays and activities

to communicate that the Champions team existed and what changes they were striving to bring about.

In the staff room, the Champions had put up a series of posters communicating the targets of the campaign (to reduce energy consumption by 10% and waste sent to landfill by 35%); a pledge board on which staff could declare they would reuse plastic cups or turn their monitors off when out for lunch for example; a set of posters communicating the results of the audit; and a waste display showing the typical contents of the bins at Bridgeford (made out of waste thrown away over the previous few days e.g. old sandwiches, pieces of paper, CDs, plastic wrappers etc.). Based on these displays, there was also a quiz with multiple choice questions about the audit results and campaign targets, and a prize of a wind-up radio. The room was arranged around GAP's Energy Bike (http://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/energy.aspx accessed on 08.05.08) on which pedallers could experience how much effort it takes to power various office appliances. In addition, the Energy Bus - an interactive and mobile display of renewable and energy efficient technologies - was parked at the front of the offices offering advice to staff about saving energy and giving out free low energy light bulbs.

Steven formally launched the campaign at 10:00 with a short motivational speech to an assembled crowd of employees. He emphasised that the initiative was a way to strengthen Burnetts' already strong environmental performance by concentrating on the environmental impacts of office practices. He argued that:

> '*We may be only around 300 people,…*[but] *think how many households we represent, and if we can pass this onto our clients as well, our small changes can make a big difference.'*
>
> (FD:73)

Following his speech, a local councillor added a few words to say this was precisely the sort of initiative the council welcomed and that he was personally very happy to see such measures being taken (FD:73).

I spent most of the day in the staff room talking to people about the aims of the initiative and encouraging them to have a go at the quiz or on the Energy Bike. Over the course of the day, from 10:00 until roughly 16:30, roughly 150 employees attended either the staff room, the Energy Bus or both. Occasional emails were sent round encouraging people to visit, but generally they seemed quite interested to attend

and get involved in the launch of such an initiative, even if only to escape their desks for a short while. In interviews after the event, people appeared genuinely enthusiastic about the day, reflecting that it was not a normal thing for a company to do, but was something they welcomed:

> *'It's interesting to see a company putting money and time into something that's not directly money making…Most companies if it's not directly making them a profit, they're not overly concerned about it, whereas they're obviously putting time and money into this project.'*
>
> (Karen interview, p11)

Speaking with staff at the launch day, one or two did express some doubt about the proposed actions and their individual ability to make a difference. For example one lady mentioned that there was nowhere in her office to store recycling during the day so she had *'to put it in the general waste bin just so it doesn't clutter everything up'* (FD:78). Others suggested that addressing office-based practices was missing the point and would have very little impact compared to what could be done on the company's various construction sites (FD:79). These examples suggest that some employees were cynical about the initiative, and wary that their individual agency was limited as long as bigger corporate systems failed to change. Nonetheless, the overwhelming attitude on the day was of enthusiasm and support for the initiative from employees who often exhibited high levels of environmental knowledge and awareness (FD:82). Indeed, I got the impression that the campaign would have been largely redundant if creating such pro-environmental attitudes and values had been its primary purpose (*cf.* Darier 1996a).

After the launch day, the campaign got going with much enthusiasm from the Champions for Energy Month. Posters were put up around the site; some of which, ordered for free from the Carbon Trust, carried general messages such as 'Lighting an office overnight wastes enough energy to heat water for 1000 cups of tea' or 'A photocopier left on overnight uses enough energy to produce over 1500 copies,' whilst others had been made by the team to be placed in specific locations such as by exit doors and carried more specific messages such as 'Have you switched your phone charger off?' The Champions also sent out emails on Friday afternoons with attention grabbing subject headings, such as 'Free drinks at the Red Lion?' (FD:95), which reminded people to switch off their equipment when they left, or tried to bust energy myths (see figure 5.1). Further, on one day the team put flyers on all car windscreens

in the car park reminding people to switch off their office equipment when they left. This worked well to make the EC campaign a talking point around the offices, although it was not universally well received (FD:91).

Subject: Free Drinks at the Red Lion?

No apologies for the message title, and sadly no free drinks either, but it got you to open the e-mail at least.

Please don't forget, as you leave the office tonight
Remember, YOU can make a difference. It's a choice YOU make - to switch off, or not to switch off.

Play your part in saving energy and reduce the impact of climate change by switching off lights at the end of the day.

[…]

Remember leaving office lights on overnight, wastes enough energy to boil 1000 cups of coffee.

An energy saving top tip from the Burnetts Environment Champions.

[…]

Thanks for reading this.

If you have any queries about the campaign or what you can do to help, please don't hesitate to ask one of us […] we may not know the answer immediately but we will aim to find out.

Figure 5.1: Email Sent to all Staff at Bridgeford during Energy Month

The team also conducted a series of face to face briefings and audits around the site. I accompanied David on one such briefing in the design office. After David introduced us by saying '*we're here as you're friendly area mentors just to check that you know about the campaign and that you're doing your bit on energy and lights'* (FD:92), there followed a conversation about energy use with the whole office. They told us that they had spent that morning working with the lights off until it had got too dark to work, that the cars in the car park reflected the sun into the offices so they had to keep the curtains closed and the lights on, that they could not access plugs to turn their computers off at the end of each day and that although they turned the office lights off when they left each day they were convinced that the cleaners turned them back on again (FD:92). Gathering such precise local knowledge was the exact intention of the area briefings and David did say he would look into getting blinds, timer switches and more accessible gang sockets for the office. Unfortunately,

relatively few of these small infrastructural improvements occurred (see section 5.2 for an example of why such issues were difficult to address). Further, plans for more regular briefings and audits often failed to materialise as Champions suggested they had too little time to conduct them, or that they carried them out on a more informal and opportunistic basis.

Despite this, and the fact that many of the more radical plans for a No Electricity Afternoon or banning cars from the car park were abandoned, Energy Month was by far the most active and visible of all the months of the campaign. It was widely noticed around the site and many of the comments I subsequently received in interviews referred to it. Such a busy start, however, proved difficult to maintain.

Resources Month appeared to be much less active. A few further emails were sent round providing instructions on how to set up double-sided printing as a default setting on computers, and posters were placed by vending machines and on photocopiers providing instructions on how to reuse plastic cups or copy double-sided but, beyond this, relatively little occurred. Plans to swap posters around, and to conduct regular area briefings and audits, were not fully carried out. This *'loss of momentum'* (FD:121) was variously put down to people being on holiday, having too many other things to do, having 'done their bit' during Energy month, or becoming frustrated with a lack of immediate success (FD:121, 128; and interviews with Roger, Clare, David, Louise, Craig). All of these are viable explanations and certainly true in some cases. I would also suggest, however, that much of the activity during Resources Month happened behind the scenes (see section 5.2) and that some of the difficulties experienced there caused the campaign to stutter.

During Recycling Month the initiative did pick up a little, although largely due to the arrival of new recycling facilities around the site. New desktop recycling trays and recycling bins for plastic bottles and metal cans were distributed around the site, and a small flyer was put on every keyboard detailing how to use this new waste disposal system. Aside from this, however, the general loss of momentum continued. Planned audits and briefings occurred in only patchy fashion, and the more radical challenges to daily behaviour that had been proposed, such as to build waste sculptures or remove plastic cups from the vending machines, did not occur.

The initiative received a small boost in the final month as it was short listed for an environmental award by a local newspaper (FD:149). As a result, in preparation for a visit from the judging committee, many of the plans that had not already

materialised were hurriedly enacted. Green ribbons were placed on all of the Champions doors to make them identifiable, stickers were placed on all light switches carrying the message 'Switch me off', and a tour and presentation were prepared for the judges.

Throughout the campaign, the Champions team also held regular meetings with the GAP programme manager to provide feedback on progress and ensure plans for future months were developing. These meetings were relatively well attended at first, and absentees usually sent their apologies beforehand. After Energy Month however, there was a noticeable fall in attendance, to the extent that David eventually started reserving a smaller meeting room. Meetings were progressively being attended by a core group of Champions who appeared not only to attend the meetings, but also to conduct most of the audits and briefings. This core group included David, Louise, Graham, Craig, Sally, Melanie and Peter and, as such, it is of little surprise that they had more to say about the initiative and perhaps appear more than some others in this thesis. Other Champions came to play a more peripheral role, occasionally helping out with distributing flyers or posters, but otherwise having little to do with the initiative. According to the GAP programme manager, the presence of such a *'hardcore'* group is not uncommon in EC initiatives generally (FD:132).

In summary, during the EC campaign the Champions did much to raise awareness of environmental issues around the Bridgeford site by putting up posters and sending emails to all employees. They also began to remove some of the perceived barriers to pro-environmental behaviour by providing new recycling facilities and discovering how it could be made easier in face to face briefings. In these respects, in its delivery at least, the EC campaign appears to be almost a model of a social marketing initiative. The final step for social marketing initiatives is evaluation (McKenzie-Mohr 2000), and there are many ways in which the initiative might have been practically improved. For example, changing the timing to avoid clashes with summer holidays, distributing activities across the team, or incentivising Champions to participate, might all have helped avoid the loss of momentum. Evaluation might also have considered how the communications could have been made more engaging throughout the whole campaign. Whilst the campaign could undeniably have been improved in these functional ways, however, in the rest of this chapter I will argue that such an evaluation somewhat misses the point and fails to grasp the deeper social processes that occurred with the delivery of the EC campaign.

SPT, on the other hand, directs attention toward the *doing* of practice. It thus demands a more inductive approach, following doings where they lead, rather than narrowing the analysis, and setting out to evaluate pre-existing plans in their own terms. Close observation of what actually happened during the EC initiative reveals that much of the significant activity occurred backstage (Goffman 1959). The initiative was profoundly shaped by events that were often distant in time, space, and intent from the Champions meetings and plans. The next two sections (5.2 and 5.3) will consider two of these backstage processes: first, the practical delivery of No Bin Day and the Champions relationship with Facilities Management, and second how the EC initiative interacted with the CHANGE programme on a more abstract and discursive level.

5.2 No Bin Day and Competing Communities of Practice: Engaging with Facilities Management

At the start of the EC initiative, each Bridgeford employee had a general waste bin by her/his desk, and by photocopiers and in kitchens there were paper/cardboard recycling bins, plastic cup recycling bins, and blue bins for confidential business waste which was shredded before being recycled (see figure 5.2). The general waste bins were emptied on a nightly basis by sub-contracted cleaners, and recycling bins and confidential waste bins were emptied into onsite skips by the Facilities Management team. During the initial training day (meeting reference 2) one of the many suggestions for how to challenge existing waste disposal practices and increase recycling rates was to remove all under-desk, general waste bins for a day. The aims of No Bin Day were: 1) to shock people into realising how much waste they produced, 2) to get them out of existing waste disposal habits, and 3) to encourage them to use recycling facilities which the Champions team intended to improve in advance. As this proposal unfolded, however, it rapidly became clear just how hard it was to challenge, let alone to change, existing waste practices and systems of provision (Fine and Leopold 1993; Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000) at the Bridgeford site.

Figure 5.2: Existing Waste Disposal Facilities at Bridgeford

A hint of the difficulties to follow was provided immediately after the No Bin Day proposal was first uttered. David suggested it might be impossible, because removing waste bins could breach the terms of Burnetts' contract with its cleaners as it would leave less work for them (FD:23). From the very outset, it was thus recognised that under-desk bins were part of a system of provision that supported multiple practices. Systems of provision may be defined as the 'unity of economic and social processes' (Fine and Leopold 1993; 22) that underlie the production of goods and services. These systems, embodied in different infrastructural arrangements, provide the rules and resources out of which social practices are made (Spaargaren and Van Vliet 2000). David's objection thus illustrates how the existing waste system of provision at Bridgeford provided the resources for both waste disposal and waste collection practices, and that changing the rules of one practice would potentially impact upon the other. The whole bundle of waste practices and how they fitted in with existing systems of provision therefore demanded consideration.

The No Bin Day proposal was taken forward, however, next being discussed at a Resources Group meeting (meeting reference 4). At this meeting, some of the Champions expressed a fear that people would object to having their bin removed. In

particular, the proposal could be quite disruptive to those who sat a long way from the communal areas where recycling facilities would be provided. Instead, it was suggested to reduce the shock of removing under-desk bins altogether by instead replacing them with desktop recycling trays. Melissa remembered that this had been tried before and failed however. Brian, the Facilities Manager at Bridgeford, had previously attempted distribute the trays in order to *'reduce clutter'* and maintain a tidy and professional appearance around the site, but they had *'all disappeared within a month'* because desks were too small for them (FD:44). After the meeting, David emailed the original No Bin Day proposal to Brian for his comments and approval.

These initial planning meetings reveal at least three things about the challenges of changing practices. First, they show how, through No Bin Day, the Champions were not merely trying to remove under-desk bins, but were instead trying to re-engineer the relationship between waste, bins, desks and desktop recycling trays. The existing under-desk bins were part of a suite of material artefacts which combined to support existing waste disposal practices (Shove *et al* 2007) and thus could not be addressed alone. Furthermore, this existing suite of objects supported, and was in turn supported by, various normative standards such as what counts as clutter or tidiness. Second, they demonstrate how closely existing practices and systems of provision are interrelated. Removing bins demands addressing interlocking bundles of practices and systems of provision that have co-developed gradually and are fundamentally implicated in what is considered normal working life at Bridgeford (*cf.* Shove 2003). Third, Melissa's recollection of a previously failed attempt to introduce recycling trays suggests this normality has been defined in relation to prior practices and ex-practices (Shove and Pantzar 2005). It thus possesses a complex local history, even a career (Reckwitz 2002a; Warde 2005), which the Champions needed to be aware of, and draw lessons from, if they were to successfully introduce their new practices-as-entities.

After these initial planning meetings, the campaign was launched at the beginning of May. When setting up for the launch day, David told Sally that:

> *'As soon as I sent the email* [summarising the resources group meeting] *Brian came straight to my office saying 'what's this about paper?' so I explained what I thought Steven had said we could do, and he told me apparently we can't throw anything away if its got a name or address on it because it breaches data protection.'*
>
> (FD:69)

Brian's objection further illustrates how closely existing practices slot in with existing systems of provision, as it reveals how the existing waste system of provision distinguished between several different waste streams - general waste, recycling waste, and confidential waste - each of which had to be dealt with independently. It also shows how the confidential waste stream was further constrained by national data protection laws. In this respect, practices are seen to develop in response to and reflect specific sets of power relations across a range of scales. For the Champions to change them, they thus had to engage with the organisation of, and distribution of, power in society.

As the No Bin Day proposal was pursued, the Champions thus gradually uncovered more and more ways in which bins were interlinked with how bundles of practices and systems of provision were organised at Bridgeford. At a Recycling Group meeting in mid-May (meeting reference 6), Graham argued that this was exactly why the No Bin Day proposal should go ahead. He suggested that No Bin Day would be a great way to kick start Recycling Month, but the rest of the group were wary that it might *'get people's backs up'* (FD:98) and put them off the whole EC initiative. To avoid this, Sally suggested that rather than dictatorially removing bins, they could hold a 'bin amnesty' instead, allowing individuals to choose whether or not to give up their bins (FD:97). In response, Graham argued forcefully that,

> *'the one thing you've got to make sure is that there's no exceptions, because it just takes one senior person to say 'oh but I need a bin', or 'it takes too long to walk to the central point,' and the whole thing goes to pot.'*
>
> (FD:99)

Graham's concern raises two further points about attempts to change practices. First, that practices cannot survive without sufficient practitioners, and second, that allowing two kinds of waste disposal practices to exist side by side was unlikely to work. So much is invested in, and embodied by, the existing system of provision and how it interrelates with existing waste disposal practices that leaving it in place, even if people were encouraged to opt-out, would doom the alternative pro-environmental system to failure as it would struggle to recruit practitioners (*cf.* Schwartz-Cowan 1983).

A week later, the whole Champions team met with the GAP programme manager to evaluate how the campaign was developing. For the first time, serious objections to the No Bin Day proposal were raised from within the EC team. Sally introduced the idea and Louise immediately asked if Brian had given his permission, without which the idea could not proceed. Louise also stressed that they would need to make absolutely certain that adequate recycling facilities were in place well in advance if the idea was to succeed. Sensing Louise's objections, Craig encouraged her to support the idea because *'it's all about mindset'* (FD:109) and removing people's bins was a good way to challenge the mindset that it is fine to throw everything away and send it to landfill. Louise then argued that taking people's bins away was *'an invasion of privacy'* (FD:109) and referred to the CHANGE programme which was *'all about encouraging people to choose the right thing, and then we're taking bins away and not offering them a choice'* (FD:109). She went further, imagining a scenario in which the Chief Executive was with a high profile client who'd sneezed and had a dirty tissue: *'is he supposed to say, 'oh just go to the bin at the end of the corridor?''* (FD:110). She preferred the idea of offering people a choice of whether or not to relinquish their bin.

The atmosphere in this meeting was relatively tense, but Graham, keen to support the plan, argued that,

> *'there's a piece of legislation[13] coming in, which basically demands that all businesses separate out their waste streams. So we can either do it gently now, or we can slam it in later when we have to because it's law.'*
>
> (FD:110)

Louise suggested that the legislation could *'transfer the blame'* (FD:110) away from the Champions team. Despite Graham's support for the proposal, the group eventually decided to offer No Bin Day as an experiment, giving people a choice of whether or not to participate.

As the proposals progressed, the manner in which under-desk bins mesh together with existing bundles of practices, systems of provision, power relations, normative codes and even social interactions was increasingly revealed, and the Champions found their proposal blocked at almost every step. Louise's objections

[13] Graham was presumably referring to DEFRA's (2007) *Waste Strategy for England,* although he did not clarify this.

reveal some surprising connections between bins and waste disposal practices and, for example, how the Chief Executive courts clients or how much privacy is expected as part of normal working life. These connections have little or nothing to do with the environment and would thus be missed by more functionalist accounts of behaviour change. At the risk of over-exaggeration, they show that as part of the existing waste system of provision, bins help to provide the very rules and resources from which Bridgeford's working practices are built.

Reckwitz (2002a, 251) contends that social order exists in practices. These discussions help to illustrate how this is so. The Bridgeford site possessed a coherent and working system of provision that supported existing waste disposal practices. Many other practices' objects, meanings and skills were bundled together into this system such that changing even a single element of this contextual system could have knock-on effects across a variety of seemingly unrelated practices and systems. This is why the Facilities Management, and some of the Champions, resisted the No Bin Day proposal, and it shows why practices are so hard to change.

No Bin Day was next mentioned in late-May after Peter received some feedback on the proposal from Brian. Brian had told him it is *'someone's right to expect* [a bin] *as part of a normal office'* (FD:112). It might be suggested, therefore, that Brian realised the true extent of the challenge posed by the Champions to localised understandings of the normal office; I will address this issue further in section 5.2.1. Sally also mentioned that Brian had spoken to her about the proposals and made it clear that for health and safety reasons there was insufficient room in the corridors to store the proposed new recycling facilities (FD:115). Unable to put adequate alternative recycling facilities in place, the group was therefore unsure of how to deliver their plans to give staff the choice of giving up their bin.

To conclude this episode, No Bin Day was next mentioned sometime later, at a meeting of the whole Champions team in mid-July (meeting reference 10). Sally told the group that, for data protection reasons, they were unable to put alternative recycling facilities in place and therefore the plans had *'fizzled out'* (FD:146). Instead, in conjunction with Facilities Management, they would be distributing desktop recycling trays complete with detailed instructions on what type of waste should go in which bin (see figure 5.3). It later transpired that, although they had not consulted the Champions about it, the Facilities Management team also instructed the cleaners not to empty bins if they contained any recyclable waste.

Figure 5.3: Desktop Recycling Tray

To summarise, the No Bin Day story has significantly complicated the picture of the EC campaign provided in section 5.1. It has revealed that the EC initiative was about much more than simply spreading pro-environmental attitudes and removing contextual barriers. Instead, it was forced to confront a complex and fundamentally contextual system of practices with its own working logics and rationalities that did not already contain a strong pro-environmental component. Exploring how the initiative unfolded behind the scenes has shown how this existing system kept some of the Champions' suggestions off the agenda, prevented them from being delivered, or at the very least modified them to align with, rather than fundamentally challenge, the existing system. It has also revealed how practices and systems of provision at Bridgeford were so closely interrelated with one another and fundamentally bound up with a social and moral order at the site as to leave the Champions with very limited agency even to question the *status quo*. Finally, focusing on practices quickly led into a consideration of social relations and to different communities of practitioners at the site. In particular, it drew attention to the Champions' relationship with the Facilities Management team. I will explore this in more detail in the following section.

5.2.1 Office Politics: The Champions Relationship with Facilities Management

The Facilities Management team are responsible for making sure all facilities at the Bridgeford site support working practices as far as possible, and that they meet a variety of legal standards, particularly with regards to health and safety. In interviews with senior board members, I was regularly told that health and safety had been a *'corporate priority'* (Steven interview, p1) for many years:

> *'You know, we have the SHE business, so that's Safety, Health and Environment. And there's no doubt that safety is the higher profile of those three. Erm, environment is becoming more of a profile, and health still is relatively low profile albeit that we have done some more things recently…Safety has been such a high profile for so long in our, both in our company, erm and in the industry at large.'*
>
> (Michael interview, p3)

As Michael suggested, the construction industry has had a poor record and reputation on health and safety for some time (also see DTI 2006, 9), and this explains not only why Burnetts had launched the CHANGE programme across the whole company, but also how the Facilities Management team had come to occupy a very important and powerful position at the Bridgeford site.

Brian, the Facilities Manager, explained the daily challenges he faced in meeting his duty of care to keep people safe:

> *'People forget that they have to be clean to a certain standard, they have to be lit to a certain standard, they, you know, and all the things that Facilities Management do. They have to choose the right chairs, you know, and the right desk heights, and the right equipment you know. And you 'why can't I bring my radio in?' 'It's not been PAT tested, it could blow up.' 'Yeah, but it hasn't blown up at home', 'that's home, that's your business, I've got a duty to protect you here.' That type of thing, you know.'*
>
> (Brian interview, p49)

He admitted that his interpretation of certain legislation can appear inflexible, but he sees this as a regrettable necessity, crucial to avoiding risks and maintaining high standards of safety for all site users. *'Some people might see me as dictatorial, but I tell you something, I haven't had a…reportable accident in this building for over five years'* (Brian interview, p64). In order to do their job well, and maintain their proud record, the Facilities team thus demand a high level of control over what happens at the site and, at least until the beginning of the EC initiative, they were accorded it

because being ‘passionate about safety’ was seen as a ‘core value’ for the company (Burnetts website, accessed on 29.05.08).

Seen from the Facilities Management team’s perspective, the Champions’ proposals thus represented something of a challenge to their control. The Facilities Management team aimed to preserve a *status quo* at the site in which complex arrangements of practices and systems of provision worked together to keep people safe. The Champions, however, wished to change these practices and introduce a wholly new normative justification for doing so - the environment, rather than health and safety. The manner in which this relationship developed during the EC initiative provides a telling picture of how such an environmental justification played in with daily office life and the Facilities Management team’s concerns.

At the beginning of the EC initiative, relationships between the Champions and Facilities Management team were tense. The first sign of this tension was seen when the Facilities team questioned some of the figures contained in the initial audit report:

> *‘We couldn’t see where these figures had come from, erm I’m sure you can appreciate we obviously have to administer such things as the electricity, gas, and oil here, and they had figures for meter readings and energy usage which we hadn’t been consulted about, and they were incorrect.’*
>
> (Rob interview, p7)

As was shown in chapter 4, the audit report formed a core part of, even the factual basis for, the EC initiative. Questioning it thus challenged the Champions’ *raison d’etre*. Despite an amended audit report being created by GAP, there remained doubt as to which set of figures the Champions team used in their communications. The initial audit figures suggested that large amounts of recyclable waste were going to landfill, and that weekend energy usage was almost as high as usage during the week. Such facts, if true, would cast the Facilities team in a negative light, tarnishing their proud record of managing the buildings. Rob elaborates:

> Rob: *‘Er, and again, we told them this* [that their figures were wrong]*, and still the same figures were coming out. I don’t, I can’t tell you what it is, I’m not going to put words in their mouth, but it, it seems it’s shock tactics, which I can understand.*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Rob: *You know you’re trying to get a big impression, but at the end of the day it’s making the Facilities Management team look, well, bad, quite frankly.*

That, you know, that we're not doing, that there's excessive amounts of paper and cups and electricity when it's not true. So that's another one of the issues that's caused acrimony.'

(Rob interview, p11)

Whilst this may be seen as a simple dispute about getting the numbers correct, no true figures were ever formally agreed upon, and the fact this issue was never fully resolved is indicative of a deeper running divide between the two groups.

As well as disputing the figures, Facilities Management also contested many of the suggestions being made by the Champions, claiming they impinged upon Facilities' area of responsibility, with negative consequences for their budget:

'The facilities, the bins, the paper, da duh, da duh, you know, we have to pay for it all. And that's just a, you know, another one of the little things that got all this going on. And they're not even thinking about who's paying for it. They're just assuming that it'll get paid, you know, it's not really up to them to spend our money.'

(Rob interview, p41)

Despite emphasising these budgetary concerns in interviews, they were downplayed during the initiative itself. Perhaps aware that arguing from a financial standpoint might be seen as penny-pinching, an issue the Champions were also wary of in devising their plans (see section 4.4.4), the Facilities team preferred to argue on the grounds that proposals were unreasonable because they risked contravening various pieces of legislation, such as health and safety or data protection acts. As Brian recounts, in relation to the No Bin Day proposal:

Brian: *'So when they say well, erm 'remove bins, remove landfill quid pro quo no landfill,' well that's the way they see it.*
Tom: *Yeah*
Brian: *And then when you explain 'well you really can't do that, in my experience, they've got to have somewhere, there's health and safety legislation that says, not that you have to have a bin, but that you have to do certain things and the bin sorts that out'*
Tom: *Yeah*
Brian: *Erm, so what's* [puts on angry voice] *'Well that's silly, so all we need to do is just take it away,'* [puts on calm voice] *'but that's the law.''*

(Brian interview, p59)

This quotation shows how the Facilities Management team tried to argue on the basis of *'the law.'* By so doing they could claim to be calm, realistic and practical whilst

portraying the Champions as passionate, but ultimately misguided. Rob explained how Facilities Management saw some of the Champions early on in the initiative:

> *'very, erm, passionate about it, and very unwilling to listen to reason. Blinkered was the term that we actually thought was quite good for some of the Environment Champions.'*
>
> (Rob interview, p18)

Had the Facilities Management stressed their budgetary concerns, they would therefore have surrendered their logical and reasonable high ground. Arguing on the basis of money alone would have enabled discussion of the priority accorded to the environment over other issues, a discussion the Champions wished to enter and which could have rendered Facilities Management as anti-environmental and penny-pinching. Instead, by arguing on the basis of the law, Facilities Management tried to side step discussion of priorities, and instead cast the Champions proposals as black or white, either right or wrong.

The Champions, on the other hand, continued to argue on the basis of the moral rightness or wrongness of existing practices and their proposed practices-as-entities. Indeed, quite late on in the initiative (meeting reference 10) it appeared as if the team had realised the role they were seemingly playing as moral guardians of the Bridgeford site:

> 'Sally asked what the role of the EC team was: *'are we some sort of pressure group on facilities?'*…People sort of chuckled at this as if to say 'yes we are, but we're not really supposed to be.' Sally elaborated, *'Are we meant to be Facilities' environmental conscience?''*
>
> (FD:148)

In short, as the initiative progressed, relations between the Champions and Facilities Management team became an open contest between two distinct forms of rationality. The Champions' moral, environmentally rational approach versus Facilities' practical health and safety based stance. The Champions wished to place the environment on an equal footing with health and safety issues, whereas Facilities Management stressed that health and safety must continue to come first, as it had done for many years.

In a context where environmental issues were rising up the agenda, helped by the Champions' launch day and early burst of energy, the Champions' argument appeared to seriously threaten Facilities' control. Indeed, Rob suggested that the

Facilities team had taken on the role of *'the baddies'* (Rob interview, p2), seen as resistant, inflexible, dictatorial and hence, despite their best efforts, unreasonable.

The two communities of practice had thus reached something of an impasse. The Champions could do little without Facilities' approval and assistance, whilst Facilities were unsure of how to retain their control of the site and deliver the Champions' proposals within the established bounds of health and safety. Brian reflected that allowing the argument to unfold in an informal manner from the outset was perhaps one of his mistakes, and had harmed Facilities' more formal stance:

> *'What I did do is unofficially go to several people and say 'Look I don't think that's a good idea.' I think I perhaps, maybe should have been of a, er, formal advice to say, minuted, so, 'the reason that I don't think this is a good idea is X'…I think that's probably the biggest mistake I made in dealing with the Environmental Champions. Not a substantial one. I think it would have been slightly easier.'*
>
> (Brian interview, p55-6)

Recognising the legal backing his arguments had, and the historical power of health and safety discourses around the Bridgeford site, a more formal, minuted form of argument might have kept the Champions' environmental conscience off the agenda. Instead, Facilities Management had to accept that they were being seen as resistant, even if they felt they were not:

> *'They're saying, see me as being sort of resistant, but I'm not. Anything that I have been able to do, within reasonable erm, commercial business sense, applied to as much as we can do with environmental issues, then we do. There's no two ways about it.'*
>
> (Brian interview, p9)

Perhaps if this conditional support for the initiative, on the grounds of *'commercial business sense,'* had been clearer from the start, Facilities Management might have maintained their logical and practical high ground. As it was, despite their powerful position, they had allowed the Champions to set the initial terms of the argument on environmental and moral grounds.

The manner in which this dispute was resolved, or at least moved on, provides a crucial insight into the importance of particular individuals, and of informal social relationships, in the collective organisation of practices. Section 5.2 demonstrated how Louise, in her role as a Champion, managed to temper the No Bin Day proposal.

It becomes easier to understand why she did this when it is noted that, as well as being a Champion, she is also married to Rob, a senior member of the Facilities team. Rob reflected on the importance of their discussions outside the workplace in helping the two groups reach something of a compromise:

> *'Obviously we do speak about it at home…It can get quite heated, speaking about it* (laughs)*, but I've not brainwashed her. I've tried to make her see things from our point of view and she's been doing the same to me, erm, and I believe in some of the meetings now, she's actually been on the receiving end of some, you know, heckling and jeering.'*
>
> (Rob interview, p18)

Louise thus played a pivotal role in the boundary interactions between the two communities. Using her experience as a Champion she was able to explain their position to Rob and encourage him and the Facilities Management to change their strong stance. At the same time, as Rob's wife, she was also able to hear Facilities' arguments outside the workplace. The heated nature of their discussions is also significant, because such open confrontation may be seen as unprofessional and therefore inappropriate in the workplace, even if it may have been necessary. Indeed, Louise was proud that relations between the two groups never deteriorated to this level:

> *'There was a sort of them and us situation, but I don't know why. Erm, there wasn't, erm there's nothing to base that on. Erm, at no point was, were there any actual, you know, proper confrontation and 'we're not, we're not gonna go along with this.''*
>
> (Louise interview, p18)

Where a narrow focus on individual attitudes alone might have seen Louise as inconsistent, irrational and unreliable – in two minds as to whether she was anti- or pro-environmental, an SPT-based perspective presents her as occupying a unique position as a valued member of both communities of practice. She was thus able to appreciate both of their aims, concerns, and rationalities simultaneously and to bring about a compromise. As the initiative progressed, the Champions' passion was tempered and they reduced the radicalism of their proposals. At the same time, Facilities Management saw a need to be supportive of the EC initiative in order to retain control. Further still, towards the end of the initiative, Facilities Management came to see the EC initiative as a potential opportunity to extend their control:

> *'The Environmental Champions focused that, they got people on board, and they enabled it as a vehicle to actually do what we were thinking about doing anyway.'*
>
> (Brian interview, p24)

By distributing desktop recycling trays, for example, Facilities Management were able to turn the environment to their own advantage. As Melissa recalled earlier (see section 5.2), they had previously tried to introduce the trays as a means of reducing clutter thus reducing fire risk, but this had failed and the trays quickly went missing. Brian explained that reducing fire risk remained his key priority in distributing the trays:

> Brian: *'Paper like this* [in neat piles on desks] *as you'll appreciate is very, even if a flame drops onto it, very difficult, it'll go one page at a time, therefore slow it down. If you have a bin full of screwed up paper like that and it catches light, it'll just go poof*
> Tom: *Yeah completely*
> Brian: *So, if you contain it in something like that* [a desktop recycling tray], *and make that your maximum amount of paper that you can hold at one time, you reduce the risk of fire spread.'*
>
> (Brian interview p20-21)

The Champions initiative, however, provided a new normative justification for distributing the trays, and one that was widely supported around the site. Facilities Management were thus able to take advantage of the changed *rhetorical situation* (Bitzer 1968; Billig 1996) at Bridgeford, and to employ the environment in support of their aims for health and safety. Seen in this light, Facilities' instructions to the cleaners not to empty bins that contained recyclable materials without mentioning it to the Champions (see section 5.2), appears almost as a celebratory flexing of their muscles. To some extent, it indicates their ultimately successful colonisation of the environment in their own terms and, in turn, their continued, and now environmentally-reinforced, control over the Bridgeford site.

This section has delved deeply into the backstage relations between the Champions and Facilities Management. It has suggested that the delivery of the EC campaign involved a somewhat uneven contest between the two communities of practice. Each had their own shared aims, understandings, and repertoires, but the Facilities Management were long established as a formal, powerful group in the company where the Champions, despite Steven's board level sponsorship, were a new

and informal group. Nonetheless, by casting the argument in moral terms from the outset and garnering support around the Bridgeford site, the Champions were able to challenge Facilities' control. Ultimately, a delicate coalition was formed in which the Champions could achieve some of their aims by allowing Facilities to reinterpret their moral interpretation of the environment into technical and legislative terms. By letting the environment in, however, Steven also emphasised that, for the Facilities team, there could now be *'no retreat'* (Steven interview, p9).

In focusing on these relations in considerable detail, I have aimed to establish two key points. First, the dispute between the two teams can be seen as a struggle over what, in practice, should count as pro-environmental behaviour. Neither side rejected environmental motivations outright. Instead they debated the different varieties of pro-environmental behaviour that were possible, and ultimately negotiated a form that was appropriate for the Bridgeford site, with 'appropriate' defined largely by the Facilities team. In this respect, throughout these negotiations, pro-environmental behaviour was locally contextualised and made to align with existing systems at the Bridgeford site. Burningham and O'Brien (1994) argue that the environment is a somewhat nebulous concept, always subject to 'localising strategies' that are mobilised to specific political ends. In the EC initiative, within the office politics of Bridgeford, Facilities' practical arguments eventually won out over the Champions' idealistic and moral challenge. Second, whilst different arguments and relationships may exist in other workplaces, in homes, or in other social contexts, this example reveals that at Bridgeford, the Champions' appeals to an environmental rationality were a 'weapon of the weak' (Flyvbjerg 1998), but that they had little else to call on against Facilities' well established and legally backed power base. They were thus forced to accept an inferior position in a coalition. The next section will develop this argument, however, to show how the Champions increased the strength of their arsenal by hijacking the discursive resources of the CHANGE programme.

5.3 Hijacking the CHANGE Programme: Mobilising Discursive Resources for Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change

Whilst section 5.2.1 focused on the Champions quite practical engagements with the Facilities team, this section will concentrate on more abstract relationships between the EC initiative and the CHANGE programme. Where the Champions appeared

weak, and lost out to the Facilities in many ways, this section suggests that they were more successful in their relations with CHANGE, able to employ it to aid the delivery of the EC initiative.

The CHANGE programme was introduced in some detail in section 4.2.2, and thus requires no further introduction. Although it evidently shared the *'same space'* (FD:10) as the EC initiative, the Champions were initially advised by Steven to distinguish between them. Specifically, where CHANGE was a formal, corporate initiative, Steven told me he did not want EC: 'to be seen as a top-down management organised programme, and instead wanted it to be run by the employees themselves' (FD:10-11). In one of the early, launch group planning meetings (meeting reference 3), Louise told the group that Steven *'wanted there to be some distance between EC and CHANGE*' (FD:33). Section 4.3.2 illustrated the many reasons why senior managers felt a bottom-up, employee-led initiative would be superior for action on the environment. In particular, Steven was keen to avoid the EC initiative being seen as a dictatorial measure. Similarly, Paul - the director in charge of the CHANGE programme - also emphasised the difference between the two initiatives as being in what they focused upon. Where, as he saw it, EC involved technical improvements such as providing better recycling facilities, the CHANGE programme tried to avoid these issues: *'Whatever we've touched with CHANGE, we have gone way away from the technical side'* (Paul interview, p10). Both Paul and Steven were thus concerned that the initiatives did not interact. Paul wished to avoid complicating CHANGE's simplicity, and Steven wished to avoid EC being seen as a top-down initiative.

As the Champions planned the EC initiative they were careful to maintain this distance between them. They consciously avoided the ready terminology of the CHANGE programme, devised new and independent slogans (FD:44, 51) and also selected a colour scheme for the EC initiative that was intentionally different from CHANGE (FD:53). They thus made a conscious effort to give EC an independent identity. Sally, who was both a Champion and a CHANGE coach (as was Peter), later reflected that the EC initiative had an *'air of the amateur'* (Sally interview, p6), which she felt helped to ground it within the Bridgeford site specifically, as opposed to the CHANGE programme which was company wide and had a more corporate *'plush, marketed'* style (Sally interview, p7). Nonetheless, despite efforts to keep the initiatives separate, in practice, when the EC initiative was delivered, it was rapidly mixed up with CHANGE discourses.

One key arena in which this occurred was in the CHANGE briefings. During the EC campaign, Sally led a series of CHANGE briefings specifically focused on Choice. The aim of the briefings was to encourage staff to think carefully about the small choices they made, and to help one another to make safe, healthy and environmentally sensible choices. During the briefings, and although unplanned, Sally found that the CHANGE programme supported the aims of the EC initiative, and vice-versa:

> *'I did actually combine the two then* [in CHANGE briefings], *because whenever I was saying, you know, 'and think about' I did say 'you've had Environment Champions, so you could have examples from that.' So I guess I did combine them there. So I don't know, I wonder without that if people would have combined, combined it themselves, I don't know if that was like a cause for it, I don't know, and I wonder if it, CHANGE helped it, or just helped people think about it a bit more, I don't know.'*
>
> (Sally interview, p37-8)

Acting as a key practitioner crossing between both the EC initiative and the CHANGE programme, Sally spliced them together to promote their shared aims.

Perhaps following Sally's lead, the initiatives were also merged together by employees at the site in the course of daily practice, and in my interviews with them. For some, the initiatives were wholly interchangeable. Karen, for example, directly mixed up the two initiatives when referring to the EC launch day as the *'CHANGE day'* (Karen interview, p10). Similarly, Beth, when asked to describe the EC initiative, counted the CHANGE briefings as a key part of it:

> Beth: *'I don't know if you've heard of like our CHANGE sessions?*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Beth**:** *And within that they kind of, sort of, talk about, erm because it's health and safety and environment and everything, so within that they kind of mention bits about how to erm save, conserve energy and you know so they touch on those subjects.'*
>
> (Beth interview, p3)

Lynn, on the other hand, was well aware of the difference between the two initiatives, but had intentionally combined them when trying to encourage others to change their behaviour. She used the CHANGE programme's concept of Point Out which encouraged staff to intervene in others behaviour when they felt it could be improved (see section 4.2.2), as an excuse to introduce EC messages:

> Lynn: *'Oh I think CHANGE has helped* [EC] *a lot, because you can, if say for instance I was walking a long a corridor or, say on safety and the environment or, or whatever, you know you'll say 'I'm just having a bit of a CHANGE moment, did you know, Hi I'm', you know or 'Hi I'm Lynn Edwards what', or 'did you know?'*
> Tom: *Ok, so it kind of gives you what like a lead in, or an excuse almost to say something?*
> Lynn: *Yeah the CHANGE, the CHANGE thing does. It gives you a bit of a lead in.'*
>
> (Lynn interview, p29)

Lynn thus actively used the formal and established discourse of the CHANGE programme as a means of introducing EC messages to her colleagues. In a sense, this official discourse shielded her from any objections they might have had about being told what to do. Louise also pointed towards this benefit of CHANGE for the EC initiative, arguing it had *'primed'* or *'briefed'* (Louise interview, p33) people on how to accept potentially unwelcome interventions:

> *'I think it probably helped to have the CHANGE initiative start before that* [the EC initiative]*…I think that helped to get people in the culture of behavioural change. That sort of set things up.'*
>
> (Louise interview, p33)

As well as taking advantage of the CHANGE programme's briefings and general approach, the EC initiative also attached itself to the specific terminology of the CHANGE programme. At each CHANGE briefing the concepts of Front of Mind, Back of Mind and Habit were reinforced. Posters dotted around the site also provided an inescapable reminder of its key messages, stating simply: Take Stock, Point Out, and Take the Lead. Whilst observing daily life at the site, and also during interviews with both Champions and non-Champions, there were countless occasions on which the CHANGE language was used to support the EC initiative. Lucy provides one such example:

> *'I am now aware that actually, and, as a senior manager here I ought to* ***take the lead****. If I'm asking my people to do something, or to buy-in to the* [EC] *initiative, it's not very good if I'm out of the office or even in a meeting we've got meetings at the end here and we go and sit in the meeting room and all my lights are on.'*
>
> (Lucy interview, p3, emphasis added)

Many others also discussed how actions proposed by the Environment Champions had moved from being Front of Mind choices to Back of Mind choices and were now becoming Habits. Clare, for example, demonstrated how she used the CHANGE language in her role as a Champion:

> *'We all forget, you know, we all kind of get a bit lazy, and if you occasionally just say to somebody 'ooh, your **front of mind** choice is not to recycle.' They'll go 'oh, hang on, is that what I've been doing?' and just kind of, a gentle reminder, I think is going to be needed. I think the basis now has been put in. People are now sort of working a certain way and thinking about* [it]*.'*
>
> (Clare interview, p14, emphasis added[14])

The CHANGE programme thus provided an intentionally simple theory (Paul interview, p2) for how behaviours changed, as well as a ready terminology to explain this process. The Champions, and others around the site, took advantage of these existing discursive resources to aid delivery of the EC initiative.

Despite the initial efforts to keep EC and CHANGE distinct, as the EC initiative progressed, there were several discussions about intentionally utilising the CHANGE approach. At a meeting in July (meeting reference 10), for example, Amy suggested that the Champions intentionally translate EC messages *'into CHANGE terminology'* and strive always to provide *'three key messages'* (FD:144) in EC communications. As I recorded this discussion in my field diary, the team increasingly recognised they could take advantage of CHANGE's more formal and branded approach:

> 'Amy asked more about the relationship between EC and CHANGE, specifically wondering if they/she should develop a brand for EC. Sally and David said that up to this point they'd used GAP's EC logo. Steven then said there had been initial wariness as they didn't want EC to become confused with CHANGE or to be thought of as part of CHANGE, but he felt there was nothing stopping this being developed now, as they were evidently different things.'
>
> (FD:149)

Towards the end of the EC initiative then, the Champions began to hijack the CHANGE programme intentionally. EC was deemed to be sufficiently different from the CHANGE programme (although my observations suggest otherwise) that the two

[14] In order to preserve the anonymity of my research site, I have changed the terminology and name of the CHANGE programme for words with an equivalent style and meaning. This has necessitated amending the precise phrasing used in some of these quotations.

could freely be mixed. For many of the non-Champions I interviewed, it was precisely the more top-down and official nature of the EC initiative that emerged through mixing with the CHANGE programme which made them take notice of it – irrespective of senior managers' desire that it be an employee-led approach, and irrespective of the Champions' discussions behind closed doors. Lynn explained this very clearly:

> Lynn: '*I suppose they've, they've, you know, erm, it's part of you working for Burnetts that they're encouraging you to erm, be kinder to the environment.*
> Tom: *Right*
> Lynn: *Erm and also, you know, they're asking you to do that as part of your job.*
> Tom: *Right*
> Lynn: *So, you know, if you don't do it, you're not being a good Burnetts person really are you?*'
>
> (Lynn interview, p15)

The point I am making here is that despite initial plans to keep the two initiatives separate, and despite the Champions devoting much time and effort to devise alternative ways of delivering and communicating the EC messages, in practice the EC initiative was interpreted and delivered at least partly *through* the CHANGE programme. Once again, this demonstrates how the Champions initiative was locally contextualised in its delivery. Not only did it play in with Facilities Management's practical concerns, it also occurred literally in the terms of the already established CHANGE programme at the Bridgeford site. The EC initiative was always going to produce new conversations and ways of talking about the environment. In this respect it represents a period of discursive ferment and production (*cf.* Darier 1996b). Whilst initially attempting to occupy its own isolated space in the field of discourses at Bridgeford, however, it gradually came to ally with the CHANGE discourses, recognising this could help achieve its aims. The 'interdiscursive mix,' or 'hybrid discourse' (Phillips 2000), that was ultimately created held more sway because it was at once familiar and new, and also because it hijacked some of the additional legitimacy accorded to the more official CHANGE programme.

This section has thus further demonstrated how the EC initiative was delivered behind the scenes. In this case, however, it has turned attention towards the discourses through which the initiative was delivered. SPT tends to downplay discourses, reinforcing an unhelpful distinction between speech and action. Observing the

delivery of the EC initiative in detail, however, suggests that a key context for changing practices is the discursive or rhetorical context (Billig 1996), and that 'speech acts' (Shotter 1993) may play a central part in bringing new, pro-environmental practices into being.

5.4 The Champions' View: How was the Champions Initiative Delivered?

This chapter has focused on the delivery of the EC initiative, how it was shaped by the Champions' relationship with Facilities Management, and how it interacted with the CHANGE programme. What has not been discussed so far, is how the Champions themselves experienced the delivery of the initiative, what they saw as important, how they felt it was enacted, and how they thought it developed as it progressed. This section will address these matters.

5.4.1 Group Dynamics: Practically Delivering Change or Developing an Environmental Social Network?

When asked to reflect on how the initiative was delivered, most of the Champions mentioned two elements of the initiative as particularly significant: first, the audit, and second, the group. I focused on the significance of the audit and its results in section 4.3.4 and thus it requires no further attention here. The importance of social groups and group discussion in encouraging pro-environmental behaviour change, however, deserves further attention (see Georg 1999; Michaelis 2004; and Hargreaves *et al* 2008).

In interviews, many of the Champions reflected on the importance of having a group of Champions who held fairly regular meetings in shaping and delivering the initiative:

> *'It* [the group] *gives you other ideas, you know, other people to bounce ideas off, and you know, you can sort of work together to actually get a message across, to get something done, … but, I think it's good to have the sort of, the Champions if you like, because you can then take responsibility for a particular area, or a particular department and just kind of be their representative, if you like, and spread the information that you've got, because I think if you haven't got people kind of dotted around the business, if it's just sort of one person trying to lead it all, then you kind of run, you run into problems because at the end of the day we've all got our day jobs to do as*

well… at least if there's more than one person, you've got the enthusiasm still and you can, kind of be gee'd up by other people if you're thinking 'ooh am I really going to have time to do all of this?' You know, 'how is it going to work?' Erm, at least there's other people to help.'

(Melanie interview, p13)

'It was nice to have such a diverse group, because someone could come up with an idea that doesn't affect them, but from another department we're going 'well hang on, that's a major problem for us if you tell us we can't do this…you know the, there is an argument to everything. You have to, you like, say, have to have justification, and I think because everyone challenged each other you had that justification.'

(Clare interview, p26-7)

These quotations support much existing work on the benefits of groups. Previous studies have emphasised how groups can provide collective fora for the negotiation of new social narratives and therefore act as learning networks to help support pro-environmental behaviour (Michaelis 2004); or how they provide social support for processes of reflexive lifestyle evaluation within a localised deliberative space (Hargreaves *et al* 2008; Nye and Burgess 2008). These quotations suggest that the Champions group at Bridgeford also provided these social benefits. It provided a supportive context, it offered enthusiasm to 'gee' the Champions up when things were not working, and it offered a deliberative space in which ideas could be bounced around and explored to ensure they were sensitive to local needs and were sufficiently justified.

Unlike existing studies of group-based behaviour change, in which groups only really exist in their meetings, the Champions were drawn from the existing community of the Bridgeford site. Whilst meetings were indeed crucial, the group continued to exist, albeit in a more diluted form, outside of its meetings. The Champions regularly mentioned the importance of the group in helping to form a network of pro-environmental, or at least environmentally interested, individuals around the Bridgeford site:

'We were still meeting up at lunchtimes just as, you know, as friends rather than just as Environment Champions, and it inevitably became a part of conversation, stop in the corridor at the coffee machine, and there were sort of millions of tiny, impromptu meetings and if we all added up the time we'd actually spent away from the Environment Champions actually talking about it, it's probably a lot of time.'

(Louise interview, p30)

Others (e.g. David, Bill, Craig, Peter) also emphasised the importance of the group in introducing them to other people around the organisation that they did not previously know were interested in environmental issues, and that this gave them a sense that they were not on their own:

> *'I'm quite happy being part of a team, I like it. I think it's good because then you can feel you're doing something, you're getting things done. Because if you're on your own, you know, I've been on my own, been doing loads of, you know, when I was fitting all that in, you know, you get sort of, you could basically, you know, just do your work and 'that's all I want to know,' nothing else. So to find something which is, you know it takes time to draw it out of you and all of this lot, and feel absorbed into it, but it helps actually.'*
>
> (Bill interview, p26)

Not only did the group provide social support and local knowledge within the meetings, but it also extended across the Bridgeford site overlaying existing working relationships with a new network of environmentally interested people. In short, the group reached out, beyond the meetings themselves and into the daily routines of the office as the Champions initiative was invoked in *'millions of tiny, impromptu meetings' 'in the corridor or at the coffee machine.'* In this respect, it extended the social context of the meetings, in which pro-environmental behaviour was understood and supported, across the entire Bridgeford site (*cf.* Bedford 1999; Burgess *et al* 2003). The social dynamics of the Champions initiative may thus act more powerfully than in other group-based behaviour change interventions, such as the use of focus groups in social marketing initiatives, because they appear to reach further across, and more deeply into, existing social settings.

In addition to these social aspects, the Champions also stressed the more practical benefits of having a group. The group was equally important because it *'stopped duplication of activities,'* provided *'holiday cover, sickness cover,'* enabled people to balance the demands of their day jobs with being a Champion, and provided a wide range of different levels of expertise on the environment (Graham interview, p20-21). It also ensured that the initiative could cover the whole Bridgeford site, with at least one Champion from each part of the site. To some extent, this reveals a key difference between the EC initiative and other pro-environmental behaviour change interventions. Where other initiatives aim only to change their participants' behaviour, the EC initiative aimed to change *both* the Champions' *and* their colleagues'

behaviour. This is significant as it played a key role in how the Champions set about delivering pro-environmental change. In short, they rapidly eschewed any environmental idealism they may have started with (partly helped by their interactions with the Facilities team), and instead interpreted pro-environmental behaviour change as a practical and organisational challenge, to be treated no differently from their normal work projects.

This point is reinforced when one considers some of the Champions' critiques of the EC meetings. Where EcoTeamers, for example, seem to enjoy the opportunity to discuss environmental issues and explore how they relate to their local area (see Hargreaves *et al* 2008; Nye and Burgess 2008, and section 3.2), for some of the Champions this represented a waste of time. Many of them complained that the initiative was unfocused and unstructured and that, as a group, they failed to reach decisions efficiently and effectively:

> *'If you take the Environment Champions meeting, it was basically people getting together, everybody's got a different opinion, there was no control over the meeting, erm people were basically left to make their own decisions on what they should do, there was no coordination, erm, and it was just, it was awful. I hated going to them and I haven't been to the last two or three, because when I go to a meeting, I don't want to chit chat.'*
>
> (Geoff interview, p11)

> Amy: *'the whole thing was just pathetic at the beginning, it really annoyed me, quite frankly…I felt like, I really did feel that there were people that wouldn't listen…to the business ideas…And it is only recently that the long standing Champions that are still in the group, that have made the commitment to go to the meetings, we've made the decisions to just get on and do these things, rather than, you know, brainstorm everything with, to within an inch of its life.*
> Tom: (laughs)
> Amy: *You know and then do it and then nothing happens, it's all, there's far too many meetings and action points and not enough decision-making and doing as far as I'm concerned.'*
>
> (Amy interview, p27-8)

In short, the delivery of the initiative was seen as something to be evaluated in quite conventional organisational terms, employing the existing practical and instrumental business rationality which, as was argued above, the initiative also set out to change.

The Champions' reflections on the group differ significantly from how groups are usually treated in work on pro-environmental behaviour change. Within the

cognitive approach, groups are typically seen as providing a source of identity to the individual, or constraining behaviour by defining strict social norms and values (*cf.* Olli *et al* 2001; Jackson 2005a). In both instances, the individual remains the ultimate focus of attention. In the Champions initiative, however, the organisation and collective practices take centre stage as the group acted collectively to negotiate how pro-environmental behaviour could be incorporated into everyday practice at the Bridgeford site. Within this process, this section has also identified two conflicting issues. On the one hand, the Champions initiative was seen to create a new pro-environmental social context, overlaying the Bridgeford site with a new form of environmental meaning. On the other hand, the Champions tried to work within the existing conventional and contextual logics of the Bridgeford site. In one respect, these two processes may be cast in dynamic tension with one another, much like a process of Structuration in which structure simultaneously produces and is produced by agency (Giddens 1984; 1991). The context of the Bridgeford site was used as a reference point to define how the initiative should proceed, but at the same time the initiative proceeded to re-define that context. Context is thus seen to play a fundamental and constitutive role in pro-environmental behaviour which, in turn, comes to play a fundamental and constitutive role in context.

5.4.2 Delivering the Initiative: A Radical Challenge or Reforming the Rules?

This process of pro-environmental structuration was also apparent when the Champions reflected on the nature of the campaign delivery and on the EC initiative as a whole.

At the outset, some of the Champions argued that the aim or role of the initiative was to challenge the *status quo* of the organisation (FD:56). The key means by which to do this, they suggested, was to address individuals *qua* individuals and to raise their levels of environmental awareness and knowledge, whilst also making pro-environmental behaviour easier to achieve:

> *'The role of the Environmental Champions…is promoting, or raising awareness of the issues regarding the environment.'*
>
> (Graham interview, p30)

> Amy: *'From my perspective it's erm very very simple. When we started the Environment Champions it was to make working here, erm, the recycling and raising awareness, but also making it just much more accessible for people.*
> Tom: *Mmm.*
> Amy: *To, to be environmentally aware at work. I think a lot of people are aware at home, but aren't necessarily aware of what they can do in their workplace. So, what Steven wanted to achieve was to transfer that knowledge at work.'*
>
> (Amy interview, p2)

In this view, the EC initiative is seen as independent of the Bridgeford site, and its prime target is individuals, who are also seen as independent of the Bridgeford site except for the fact that they use its facilities during the working week. This separation of individuals and the initiative from the Bridgeford site, I would argue, is what permitted some of the Champions' more radical suggestions, such as No Bin Day, No Electricity Afternoon or banning cars from the car park, to be made and, at least initially, pursued. Free from the constraints of context, and addressing individuals in isolation from the workplace, the Champions felt as if they possessed a great deal of agency; anything was possible and nothing was *'off limits'* (FD:59).

As the initiative continued, however, passing through the various negotiation processes seen in the preceding sections, the Champions implicitly realised that separating individuals from context was unrealistic. The individuals they were addressing were in fact workers, and played a crucial role in making the context of Bridgeford what it was. The Champions thus arrived at a much more complex and dynamic understanding of pro-environmental behaviour change in which it was insufficient either to change individual attitudes or to remove contextual barriers alone. Instead, the relationships between individuals and context became significant, and the Champions' challenge became one of introducing pro-environmental behaviour into an already working and coherent contextual system. To paraphrase Cooper and Burrell (1988, 106), the Champions moved from considering the abstract, and therefore straightforward, organisation of pro-environmental production, towards considering the contextually specific, and therefore complex, production of a pro-environmental organisation.

One of the most notable aspects of this shift in focus was the loss of the EC initiative's radical edge. As it was localised and contextualised, the initiative increasingly came to work within and reform the existing systems of the Bridgeford

site, rather than trying to dismantle them from the outside. David expressed this gradual shift in focus very clearly:

> David: *'At first sight I think it seemed perhaps a bit more radical than it is in reality. It was a, at the end of the day it's, it's about switching things off and thinking where you throw things away. It's pretty basic stuff, but, you know, in the initial thing it seemed much more of a, I suppose a more of a radical, green, sort of idea, which, you know, business don't necessarily go for. But you know we're, once we'd sort of understood what it was all about, you know it makes good business sense really. It's not, it's not sort of do anything unusual, it's just sort of good practice really.*
> Tom: *Yeah, I guess so.*
> David: *Good housekeeping really.'*
>
> (David interview, p4-5)

Whether this development was something the Champions desired or welcomed is beside the point. In interviews, different Champions emphasised both positive and negative effects of this process, suggesting it was something of a mixed blessing. Clare, for example, stressed that the gradual recognition of contextual constraints limited what the Champions felt was possible:

> *'You have to kind of also think as, as a business that the, erm, sort of, what you have to do for your employees. You have to consider that. So I think from our point of view, yes, you know, we could come out with all this power, you know 'let's hit them here, let's hit them there.' But you actually now, you can appreciate as well, that from a business point of view, how our hands can be tied to a certain extent…at home you can kind of do what you like, but you are, as a business you are tied, erm, as a duty to your employees.'*
>
> (Clare interview, p26)

On the other hand, and as was the case in striking coalitions with Facilities Management and the CHANGE programme, working within the existing systems also provided resources for the Champions to use to their advantage. Geoff and Sally, for example, suggested that employees also have a duty to their employer and must be seen to obey the rules of expected behaviour:

> *'What's expected is that people do the right thing. So when we look at behaviours, there's a bin provided for plastic cups, so you will use that bin.'*
>
> (Geoff interview, p18)

> *'I almost think that what we have done is made it the rule to a certain extent that you have to recycle your stuff… So why an office light left on looks weird is because it's, it's not what the rules are anymore. …It's not that it looks*

right because you're imagining global warming., It doesn't look right just because it's, it's, kind of, what's wrong with this picture in terms of what the sort of rules are as such. So, to a certain extent I don't think we've converted everybody on site to saving the world, and I don't think that's what we were trying to do. We were just trying to, it was almost changing the symptoms rather than the, the initial beliefs, and I don't think we had to change the beliefs, I think we could just change the symptoms.'

(Sally interview, p26)

In the context of a private sector organisation in which individuals are already regularly appraised on their everyday performance, the Champions did not need to *'convert everybody onsite to saving the world,'* but could instead introduce an informal *'rule'* that everyone must display at least some pro-environmental dispositions and behaviours.

This section has shown how as the initiative was delivered, it progressively came to work within the grain of the organisation rather than against it. As the initiative came into contact with existing systems, practices and rationalities at the Bridgeford site, it cast-off its initial radicalism as unrealistic, and instead adopted a more reformist approach. In so doing, however, by developing coalitions with other communities of practice, and mobilising existing organisational resources, it potentially became more powerful in its effects.

5.5 Summary

Chapter 4 considered the planning of the EC initiative in isolation from other practices at the Bridgeford site. This chapter has argued that, as it was delivered, it interacted with existing contextual features in ways which simultaneously shaped the EC initiative and reshaped the context.

Compared to other communities of practices, such as Facilities Management, or other initiatives such as CHANGE, the EC initiative was weak. It was an informal, employee-led project with an agreed budget of only £3,000 (FD:49). The only real resource the Champions possessed was therefore the audit results, which provided a new ecological rationality for changing practices. In this light, it is unsurprising that the Champions' proposals and radicalism were watered down and de-radicalised when they came into contact with other, better resourced groups and programmes. This chapter has thus shown how Facilities Management's well established health and

safety rationality, with its legal backing, came to re-define and manipulate the Champions' ecological rationality to its own advantage, and how the EC initiative compromised its distinctive identity by hijacking the CHANGE programme's ready terminology. In short, it has shown that as EC was delivered it came to fit snugly within the various hierarchical, technological and discursive contours of the Bridgeford site.

This was not a solely one way process however. Recognising they could have little impact independently from existing systems, the Champions strengthened their weak resource base by developing coalitions with Facilities, by using existing discursive resources, and generally by working within existing systems rather challenging them from outside. In the process, the Champions were therefore able to create a new pro-environmental social network around the Bridgeford site, to introduce new pro-environmental rules for office practice, and to raise pro-environmental expectations to a level from which there could be *'no retreat'* (Steven interview, p9). Whilst it did indeed come to follow existing contextual contours, like a river, it was also able gradually to change the shape of the landscape.

In tracing the delivery of the EC initiative, this chapter has argued that it involved a collective process of negotiating what role the environment and pro-environmental behaviour should play within the existing context of the Bridgeford site. In so doing, it has shown how pro-environmental behaviour change is a fundamentally contextual process, appearing as an emergent property of existing contextual systems, for which there could never be a blueprint or a correct or incorrect form. At the same time, pro-environmental behaviour change should not be seen as a superficial and straightforward process of changing isolated individuals' attitudes or values, or of removing contextual barriers to action. Instead, it reaches to the very heart of how different contexts are made up and understood, posing complex questions and potentially involving (office) political disputes over how pro-environmental behaviour should be incorporated into existing practices.

The next chapter will consider the outcomes of the EC initiative and attempt to explain the mechanisms by which they were brought about.

Chapter 6 Performing Change: Interaction and Power in Environment Champions

Chapter 4 considered the planning of the EC initiative and suggested it should be analysed as an attempt to spread new practices-as-entities across the Bridgeford site. Chapter 5 extended this argument to show how, in the course of delivery, the Champions' practices-as-entities were localised and contextualised within the existing systems of practice at the Bridgeford site. This led to the de-radicalisation of the Champions' proposals, but also lent them increased power through pragmatic coalitions with the Facilities Management team and the CHANGE programme. Chapter 5 thus suggested that the pro-environmental practices-as-entities being suggested came to appear less as isolated assemblages to apply to, and diffuse across, the workplace, and more as homegrown and emergent properties of the existing system. This chapter will complete the story of the EC initiative at Bridgeford by showing how it was responded to by its principal audience – the Champions' colleagues. To use a dramaturgical metaphor, where chapter 4 was concerned with writing the script, and chapter 5 with production and stage management, this chapter will address the performance of the initiative itself, asking how it was eventually enacted.

The chapter will begin by characterising the overall response to the campaign and presenting information about its quantitative impact in terms of environmental savings. Rather than searching for attitudinal correlates of these savings, however, the chapter will then describe what actually happened at the Bridgeford site, observing a number of changes to everyday interactions and the performance of practice. It will suggest that the effect of the initiative is usefully interpreted as a re-framing (Goffman 1974) of everyday practice to support a new and shared definition of the situation at the Bridgeford site. The chapter will progress to argue, however, that such a Goffmanian approach fails to capture the power dynamics involved in the initiative, and that a fuller explanation of its effects demands allying Goffman's insights with Foucault's understanding of the everyday workings of power. Through this alliance, it is possible to see the EC initiative as employing subtle but pervasive power

mechanisms to 'make up' (Hacking 1986) what might be termed *environmental employees*.

6.1 The Results: Changing Practices or Practitioners?

The overall aim of the EC initiative was to reduce the environmental impacts of office practices at the Bridgeford site. To determine its effects, a second audit, using the same methods as the first, was conducted in September 2007, and savings were calculated. The final results of the initiative are presented in table 6.1, and show a 25% reduction in overall levels of waste at the site (roughly 14.5 tonnes), and a 5% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from energy use (roughly 6 tonnes).

Waste Audit Results		
Bin Breakdown (%ages by weight)	**1st Audit**	**2nd Audit**
Paper	44%	12%
Plastic bottles	8%	2%
Tins and cans	4%	0%
Plastic cups	2%	2%
Miscellaneous, non-recyclable (incl. food)	42%	84%
Total Annual Waste		
	1st Audit	**2nd Audit**
Waste sent to landfill	11.7 tonnes	8.3 tonnes
Recycled waste	45.7 tonnes	34.6 tonnes
Total	57.4 tonnes	42.9 tonnes
		Reduction: 14.5 tonnes (c. 25%)
Energy Audit Results		
Equipment left on overnight	**1st Audit**	**2nd Audit**
Lights	48%	27%
Monitors	24%	23%
Printers	33%	28%
Total electricity consumption	Jan-Sep 2006: 294,037 kWh	Jan-Sep 2007: 278,044 kWh
		Reduction: 15,993 kWh (c. 5%)
Total CO_2 emissions	126 tonnes	120 tonnes
		Reduction: 6 tonnes (c. 5%)
Stationery and Consumables Results		
Paper usage	**1st Audit**	**2nd Audit**
Total sheets purchased per year	2,850,000	1,922,000
Sheets used per person per day	40	31
		Reduction: 928,000 sheets (c.22.5%)
Plastic cup use	**1st Audit**	**2nd Audit**
Total cups purchased per year	140,000 cups	110,000 cups
		Reduction: 30,000 cups (c.13%)

Table 6.1: Summary of Final Audit Results
(Source: GAP's Final Audit Report)

Cognitive approaches to pro-environmental behaviour change would explain these results as resulting from a change in either the attitudes, values or beliefs of individuals at the site, or the removal of contextual barriers (Lorenzoni *et al* 2007; Tudor *et al* 2008). As such, they would seek the assumed correlates of these changes, typically through self-report questionnaire surveys, to suggest that initiatives like EC generate cognitive changes, which eventually translate into behavioural change (see the critique by Harrison and Davies 1998; Burgess *et al* 2003). There is a danger in this approach, however, made all the more stark by SPT's alternative, of confusing the process of change with its outcome. In other words, of assuming that cognitive changes lead to behavioural changes, rather than the other way around. SPT, on the other hand, focuses attention on the *doing* (Shove *et al* 2007) of everyday practice. It demands detailed observation of the processes of change, making no *a priori* assumptions about what causes them. Thus it leaves itself open to the possibility that new attitudes and new behaviours may emerge simultaneously, may interplay with one another in complex and lateral rather than linear fashion, or even that something else entirely may generate change or stasis. Chapter 5 has already shown that the EC initiative was fundamentally shaped by practices which had nothing ostensibly to do with the environment. This chapter will continue this approach and observe the changes that occurred at the Bridgeford site before trying to explain them.

A crucial starting point for this analysis is therefore that, despite the quite significant environmental savings shown in table 6.1, which are suggestive of quite substantial alterations in everyday practices, there were in fact few noticeable changes to daily activities. If I were to re-write the vignettes offered for Graham and Joanna at the beginning of chapter 4, they would be very much the same. On the surface at least, daily routines and practices at Bridgeford remained the same at the end of the EC initiative as they had been at its beginning. The practices themselves did not change outwardly. People still organised meetings, still wrote reports, still prepared bids and still conducted site audits. In the process, they still used computers, printers and photocopiers, still used paper, still got drinks from the vending machines, and still threw rubbish away. The question this chapter will seek to answer, therefore, is what *did* change in daily practices to bring about such substantially different effects?

6.1.1 Employee Responses: Maybe We Should Be Doing These Things Anyway?

The cognitive approach to pro-environmental behaviour change would suggest that these changes to the everyday performance of practices were brought about by the provision of environmental information. Making employees aware of environmental issues, it would suggest, would cause them rationally to avoid anti-environmental acts. In interviews with employees at the site, however, there seemed to be no lack of awareness, or information deficit (*cf.* Owens 2000), and no anti-environmental attitudes in the first place. Quite the contrary, there seemed to be a general awareness and desire for something to be done about the environmental impact of office practices.

Champions and non-Champions alike expressed an overwhelmingly positive response to the EC campaign. Whenever I asked what people had heard or thought about the EC initiative I was told what a positive thing it was:

> Tom: *'What did you think when, you know, the Environment Champions thing started round here?*
> Tina: *It's good.*
> Tom: *What was your kind of reflections on it?*
> Tina: *No, I think it's really good. People should be made aware and they should be more conscious and everything definitely, so no I think it's a really good thing.'*
>
> (Tina interview, p5)

> *'I think it's a good idea because there is a lot of wastage and I think people are lazy and they just tend to put things, like especially with cans, because we've got the vending machine, and now we thought it was a good idea to have recycling facilities for that, and people I think just waste paper and a lot of things, like the recycling for our stationery as well, I think that's a good idea.'*
>
> (Steph interview, p4)

Such a positive reaction was a stock response in interviews and should not necessarily be taken at face value, especially because I may have been seen either as associated with the initiative and therefore someone to whom positive feedback should be given, or as an outsider to whom internal differences and dissent should not be revealed. Nonetheless, the presence of this response was overwhelming; during observation I saw nothing to contradict it, and asking the Champions to reflect on how the initiative had been received they tended to confirm this position. What this positive response suggests is that employees did not in fact have to be won around to pro-environmental

arguments (as some of the Champions had initially feared – see section 4.4.4) because they already supported them. Whilst they thought further environmental awareness and consciousness was generally a good thing, this was not because they previously lacked it. They already possessed sufficient awareness to know that they were being *lazy*, or that they needed new facilities in order to take action. The initiative thus provided a vehicle through which this latent knowledge and pro-environmentalism was surfaced in daily practices.

Most employees at the site already appeared to possess the requisite pro-environmental cognitive dispositions (*cf.* Darier 1996a). Indeed, this interpretation is strengthened by considering the second stock response to the initiative employees offered in interviews, which was that they already recycle at home. Almost without fail, interviewees shared their domestic green credentials early in the interview as an indication of how much they supported the EC initiative:

> *'I think it's a good idea, I've not seen it in any of the workplaces I've been in before, and I, I recycle anyway at home. I'm quite proactive with that, so I thought it was quite good that the company had something in place that was encouraging employees to do that. I was slightly surprised though, just because I'd never seen it before.'*
>
> (Karen interview, p3)

Most interviewees thus appeared to be well aware of the perceived need to act on environmental issues well in advance of the EC initiative, implying that further awareness-raising and education were not in fact required. Jackie and Lynn, in the quotations below, further support this argument suggesting that the EC initiative offered little *new* knowledge or awareness, and was instead a matter of making environmental issues salient at work:

> *'I think it was just making people aware, erm, but we already did a lot of recycling at home, so most of it wasn't sort of new to me.'*
>
> (Jackie interview, p10)

> Lynn: *'I think it's a very good idea erm, because a lot of people save energy and are aware of the environment at home,*
> Tom: *Right*
> Lynn: *but when they come to work they shut off.'*
>
> (Lynn interview, p1)

Not only do these quotations suggest that pro-environmental behaviour change interventions, to date, have focused too heavily on domestic contexts - a bias mirrored in academic research (*cf.* Røpke 2004; Tudor *et al* 2008) - more importantly they indicate that the change brought about by the initiative was not to be found in individuals' attitudes, values, or beliefs, and was not the result of gaining additional environmental knowledge. Instead, employees already possessed what Melanie called an *'underlying knowledge that maybe you should be doing these sort of things anyway'* (Melanie interview, p18). Rather, the role played by the EC initiative was to make this latent knowledge salient within workplace practices. The changes it brought about thus did not occur inside individuals' heads, but appeared to represent a collective working out of how environmental issues might be incorporated in existing practices at the Bridgeford site.

As the change brought about by the EC initiative was thus more situational than individual, interviews in isolation were not especially useful for capturing what actually happened at the site. In interviews, most participants suggested that the initiative had raised awareness whilst simultaneously arguing that they already had high levels of awareness prior to the initiative. When asked about this contradiction most suggested that, in fact, the initiative had not taught them anything they did not already know, but then struggled to explain what had actually changed. To some extent, therefore, there appeared to be a ready discourse of 'we need more information and awareness' that interviewees voiced (perhaps the result of years of information based campaigns), even if it did not match up with what appeared to be occurring. Combining interviews with participant observation techniques proved extremely fruitful here, as it enabled me to witness the events of the EC initiative as they unfolded, and then ask employees for their interpretations and for their own similar examples. This approach led me to find that the key changes brought about by the initiative were manifested in social interactions between practitioners and in the ways they approached their everyday practices, even if not always in how they performed those practices.

6.2 Conspicuous Environmentalism

During the initiative there were numerous occasions wherein employees at the site made a conspicuous show of their pro- or anti-environmental thoughts or actions. This

conspicuous environmentalism took many forms, as outlined below, but in each case it represented the bringing of environmental issues to the surface of daily interaction and practices where they had previously been ignored. Many of these occurrences were incidental and short-lived, but their prevalence and frequency at the site suggests they were also significant. The next three sections will highlight the main forms of conspicuous environmentalism I observed.

6.2.1 Pro-Environmental Performances and Mini-Champions

The most obvious form of conspicuous environmentalism was seen in countless tiny performances which indicated to others present that what was occurring could and should be seen in a pro-environmental light. On several occasions whilst walking around the Bridgeford site, I witnessed employees make gestures that they were about to switch off a light in a room, or about to recycle a drinks can or plastic cup (FD:93, 150, 169). For example, during my interview with David, which occurred in the staff room, we were interrupted by a passer-by who said:

> Passer-by: *'I couldn't understand why the lights weren't on, then I saw you're here David and I thought 'oh right'* (laughs).*'*
>
> (David interview, p37)

In this instance, the passer-by did not feel the need to explain his confusion. Instead, a simple 'oh right' sufficed to say words to the effect of 'you're trying to save energy' which explained why the lights were switched off. Louise offered another example:

> *'As a Champion, we now sort of walk past a photocopier and in the past where you'll just walk past and someone will be at the photocopier photocopying, erm, I've personally found that people will now acknowledge that I'm a Champion and say 'oh I'll just check that I'm double-siding, I definitely am double-siding.''*
>
> (Louise interview, p7)

On several occasions, people who were aware of my interest in the EC initiative, made similar displays of conspicuous environmentalism to me. For instance, Sam made a point of saying *'I'll turn the lights off in there then'* (FD:157) when leaving a room with me, and Paul commented *'I didn't just drive to the coffee*

shop, I'd been somewhere else too' (FD:169), when I saw him arrive in the car park minutes after having seen him at the coffee shop which is just a two minute walk.

Such occurrences did not only involve the Champions or those involved in the initiative however. In interviews, several Champions described the emergence of *mini-Champions* (David interview, p39) around the offices. For example, Craig discussed one woman, Elly, who would regularly remind her colleagues to recycle cans or switch off lights. He described her as *'quite an activist really within her department'* (Craig interview, p19). Similarly, during my participant observation in one office, Karen and Joanna took action against people who were failing to use the new recycling bins for plastic bottles, and this was evidently not the first time they had done so:

> 'At about 16:00 Karen came into the office and said: *'it does apply to milk bottles, I'm going to send an email out.'* [she had just checked if you could recycle plastic milk bottles] The dialogue followed thus:
> Joanna: *'Who was it who last made tea? Was it Rob? Rob when you made tea did you finish off a milk bottle?*
> Rob: [having just entered the office] *No.*
> Joanna: *Good because if it'd been you you'd have been in big trouble.*
> Rob: *No, I've been waiting to finish a milk bottle just so I can feel good about myself for using the new bin.*
> Nicola: *Blimey, you're like the recycling police you lot.*
> Joanna: *Well someone's got to do it. We've got these new facilities so we may as well use them. We're probably paying for them.' I had an email from* [name] *the other day in response to the one I sent out, saying it was because the vending machine is missing that people weren't using the bins properly, but I don't see what that's got to do with it. I think he must have thought I meant they weren't being used at all, not that they were being used incorrectly.*
> *[…]*
> Karen: *People'll be saying 'haven't they got anything better to do with their time.''*
>
> (FD:183)

Partly prompted by this dialogue, I arranged interviews with both Karen and Joanna to discuss the EC initiative. When asked about this milk bottle incident, Karen gave a good example of what a mini-Champion does:

> *'I think you heard me moaning about the plastic bottles, which is a permanent frustration of mine, because we use milk bottles in the kitchen and I must remove four milk bottles a week from the bin still, even though people have been told about it. They know the bin's there, and I've… asked Joanna to send out an email reminding people, and I've personally sent an email to people*

saying 'please,' but it doesn't seem to make any difference…they're still going in the bin. That's something I'm continually complaining about…There's a bin, it's next to the main bin, so it's ridiculous really that they don't [use it].*'*

(Karen interview, p7)

The presence of these mini-Champions around the site further emphasised the Champions' messages and created a new situation around everyday interaction and practice in which acting in pro-environmental ways came to be expected, and anti-environmental behaviour became '*ridiculous.'* In short, behaviours which would previously have been ignored quite suddenly became environmental flashpoints around the office. Both Champions and non-Champions could be '*picked up*' (David interview, p23) in this way and asked to justify their actions.

Goffman uses the concept of *civil inattention* (1963b) to describe a key aspect of social order. Civil inattention is a learned performance found, for example, in the brief glances given to strangers in order to avoid walking into them but also to indicate there is no threat and that they may carry on as normal. In the course of the EC initiative, the opposite seemed to be occurring. Acts which would previously have been accorded civil inattention e.g. walking past the person at the photocopier, suddenly became grounds for *civil attention*. Goffman has often been criticised for lacking an adequate conception of social change (Maines 1977), but the EC initiative suggests that, by reversing some of his observations, change might be explained. Where civil inattention engenders stability and order, civil attention brings about changes to the social situation. Following the initiative at Bridgeford, a glance or a throwaway comment served effectively to emphasise that 'things have changed and we should all fall into line with the new situation.'

It is also worth observing, however, that on several occasions such attempted pro-environmental performances failed. For example, in her interview Vicky was adamant that she always switched her monitor off, having been reminded to do so by several Champions before she moved offices:

'Switching off computers and lights. I do that more now, I always make sure I switch my screen off, and even when I go to lunch I always switch it off at the monitor now. That's only purely because I've had a few Environmental [Champions]*, when I was over the other side they kept coming in and switching my computer off when I'd go to lunch so.'*

(Vicky interview, p13)

The week after interviewing Vicky, however, I spent some time in her office and observed that she was liable to lapse:

> '[Vicky] commented in her interview that she always switches her monitor off at lunchtime and in the evenings, which she never used to do. Having spent the previous week working in her office I can confirm that this isn't the case. In fact I don't think she switched if off once during the day.'
>
> (FD:178)

Some lapses in behaviour might well be expected, but on several occasions during participant observation, people's claims to be behaving in line with the EC initiative's aims were let down by their observed actions. For example,

> 'During my interview with Paul he tried to show me that all his documents were now double-sided, but the three or four examples he had on his desk were all single-sided.'
>
> (FD:150)

Paul had been trying to perform a degree of conspicuous environmentalism towards me during his interview, but the props of his practices told a different truth of his everyday behaviour. Not only do these observations confirm the benefits of a mixed methodology, they also confirm the suggestion made above that the social situation at Bridgeford appeared to have been changed by the EC initiative. Both Vicky and Paul attempted to fall into line with the new social situation, but their *alignment displays* (Goffman 1963b) were unsuccessful. The crucial point here, however, is not that Vicky and Paul simply got away with it or ignored the dissonance between their intentions and their actions as may have happened previously, but that in the newly environmentally charged atmosphere of the Bridgeford site such failures posed potential social risks. Being caught leaving monitors on, or printing single-sided, was now something to be embarrassed or even feel guilty about, just as switching them off and printing double-sided had become a source of pride. The EC initiative thus appeared to have introduced a new social pressure to perform practices in a pro-environmental fashion.

6.2.2 Negotiating Environmental Behaviour

Whilst the most obvious changes brought about by the EC initiative were these pro-environmental performances, the initiative also led to a series of similarly conspicuous *communal negotiations* of pro-environmental action. On several occasions during the initiative, I observed groups of employees, often those sharing the same office, remind one another to switch lights off, recycle waste or print double-sided for example. In these instances, pro-environmental action appeared to be a communal process of re-defining the social situation and what behaviour was appropriate therein. As such, they further show how the EC initiative brought about change on a social and situational, rather than individual, level.

For example, for one week I was situated in the RP building, working with Leslie (one of the Champions), and noticed how mundane and incidental acts were being questioned and re-defined by the initiative. On my first day in the office the following exchange occurred:

> 'Later in the afternoon Leslie told me and Sarah how to do a different task – essentially checking whether invoices had been costed or cleared or whatever. Sarah said *'so do we chuck away the ones that have a 'C'?'* and Leslie immediately retorted *'recycle it.*''
>
> (FD:215)

The very next day, when being instructed by Matt how to do the same task,

> 'I noticed Matt say *'so, because we've found where it's been assigned to, it can just be recycled now as we don't need it anymore'* – not much, but interesting to note how this is part of normal daily speech acts – not a *'throw it away',* for which Sarah was reprimanded by Leslie yesterday, but a conspicuous *'recycle it.''*
>
> (FD:216)

In this example, this small group of colleagues negotiated their understanding of what was appropriate behaviour together. Although led by Leslie in her role as a Champion, others (Matt) subsequently began to take on the social role of reminding others and incorporating environmental acts into the normal procedures of office practice. This example is a tiny aside that occurred in the flow of daily practice, other examples were more explicit, however, programmed into certain times of the day such as before going home or leaving the offices for lunch:

> Karen: *'It's certainly made a difference. When you see our lot like, you know, in my office anyway, you will see somebody say, 'have you done with the photocopier?' 'are you done with this light?' and people as they leave the office do make those checks that everything's been turned off before they go which I don't remember that being done beforehand.*
> Tom: *Right*
> Karen: *So definitely in our office it's made a slight difference to the way people do things.'*
>
> (Karen interview, p9)

I observed numerous situations like this during the initiative. Rather than being left to make pro-environmental changes on their own, colleagues helped one another to change. In some instances the fact of co-presence demanded that pro-environmental behaviour change was a social rather than individual process. For example, switching computers off at the mains would often entail shutting off the power to a whole row of desks and therefore could not be done without colleagues' prior consent - the same was often true for lights, printers or opening/closing windows.

This process of negotiation is similar, in some respects, to that highlighted by Hobson (2003) whose participants were trying to change their behaviour as part of GAP's Action at Home (AaH) programme. As shown in section 2.2.1, Hobson found that the AaH information packs prompted two distinct discursive processes amongst programme participants. In both cases, aspects of the individual's practical consciousness were challenged by the information in the packs and lifted out into the discursive consciousness. In some cases the information was accepted and re-embedded into the practical consciousness as new habits. In others, it was questioned, debated, and often rejected.

In the EC initiative, a very similar process of bringing previously unquestioned aspects of office practice out of the practical and into the discursive consciousness is witnessed. Where it differs, however, is that rather than representing an intensely individual process of cognitive change, in the EC initiative these forms of consciousness appear to be collectively distributed within and across different communities of practice. Individual employees were not seen to change their behaviour privately and independently, but to go through this process publicly, in negotiation and conjunction with those around them. The discursive consciousness thus appears to be genuinely discursive, as colleagues interacted around new ways of performing practices.

During the initiative, such processes were frequent but, over time, one would expect them once again to become re-embedded in the collective practical consciousness. A crucial difference here is that small lapses and minor slips are likely to be picked up by colleagues who offer continual pro-environmental prompts and reminders. The behaviours may therefore remain in question until they are consistently performed in a pro-environmental fashion. In this respect, the collective and social nature of the changes brought about by the EC initiative might prove more durable than the individual cognitive changes that are the target of other behaviour change interventions.

6.2.3 Resisting the Initiative

Whilst most forms of conspicuous environmentalism involved positive reactions to the EC initiative, there were some occasions in which, rather than trying to incorporate pro-environmental behaviours into office practice, practitioners instead tried to resist them. Rather than seeing these as individual rejections of pro-environmental messages, however, I would argue that they are more fully understood as practical and defensive strategies of coming to terms with a changing social situation. I identified three such strategies. First, and most common, was simple *grumbling* about the changes the Champions were trying to bring about or the manner in which they were doing so. The Champions regularly feared being seen to nag people about the messages they were spreading but, for some, even their relatively light-hearted approach was too much, too often:

> Tom: *'You mentioned, right at the beginning, that you thought to some extent there was, kind of a little bit too much emails and things like that.*
> Leslie: *Mmm, definitely. Because everybody was just like 'oh god, here comes another email from them' … and for the first few weeks, you were just bombarded with emails, and sometimes I think there is a bit of, you get to the stage where people don't read them.*
> Tom: *Mmm*
> Leslie: *Once you start throwing too many emails at people, especially when you've got 500 emails…and, you know, when 150 of them are from like the Environmental Champions thing, you just think 'oh, low priority'* (laughs)
> Tom: (laughs)
> Leslie: *So I think there was possibly a bit of overdrive, and I heard a few people going 'oh god, not another one of these.''*
>
> (Leslie interview, p22-23)

> Tom: *'you also mentioned that, you know, for some people it's kind of information overload as well?*
> Graham: *Yeah… 'oh not the environment again' it's, you get that reaction 'I'm sick of the bloody environment let me get on with my job.''*
>
> (Graham interview, p10)

This form of grumbling, whilst ostensibly a form of resistance to the initiative, can actually be seen, as both Leslie and Graham explain, to be less about the initiative in itself, and more about its relation to the other practices employees have to carry out at work. Such grumbling was never an outright rejection of the environmental messages being spread, rather resistance to the number of messages being sent and the manner in which these interfered with other work practices. In this respect, this appears to be another example of a communal process of negotiation. The EC initiative, and the Champions physical presence, appeared to have changed the situation such that employees were expected to incorporate pro-environmental action into daily practice, even if this was a difficult and at times frustrating process.

The second form these negative reactions took was in the provision of *creative excuses* for why practices could or should not be changed. In particular, two excuses stood out, both pertaining to double-sided printing or photocopying - an issue several non-Champions expressed that they were having difficulty with. The first clever excuse was that printing on both sides could lead to people not reading the information on the back of the page and, therefore, double-sided printing would hinder existing work practices (FD:108, 118, 143). As David explained:

> *'There was one guy refused to double-side print because he's of the view that people don't read the back side, which I find weird because erm, any book or newspaper you read is double-sided.'*
>
> (David interview, p24)

The second such excuse is more creative still, with one person arguing that noone reads more than one side of writing anyway, and therefore double-sided printing was as much of a wasted effort as was writing documents of more than one side (FD:114). In both of these instances, individuals are again seen adjusting to a changed situation. In neither case did the excuse-makers deny the importance of pro-environmental behaviour or attitudes, but instead they provided excuses that would be found weird, or even entirely unintelligible, were it not the case that such practices were being challenged by the EC initiative. What is most significant here, however, is the fact

that these individuals felt the need to make excuses in the first place. The EC initiative appeared to have brought about changes to the situation at Burnetts such that environmental inaction demanded public justification. It would no longer go unnoticed.

The third and most active form this kind of reaction took was in *stand-up rows*. Very few such arguments were mentioned during my time at Burnetts, but those that were tended to be recalled in some detail. The best example came from Clare:

> Tom: *'You've mentioned several times where people have talked to you, or you know that people have talked about the bins being an issue, or whatever else. Have you got any kind of good examples or anecdotes of when people have done that?*
> Clare: *Oh I've had stand-up rows with people* (laughs)
> Tom: *Really?*
> Clare: *Yeah, one person didn't have their bin emptied, and she was absolutely kicking off, 'health and safety', she 'rah rah rah rah rah.' I said 'what have you got in there?' and she went 'oh I've got this this this and this,' and I went 'well hang on, out of that what can you recycle?' and she went 'well all of it.' I went 'right, so why haven't you?' at which point she went 'ooh well it's my choice to' and I said 'well yes it is if you're at home', I said 'but as a business we're making this decision to go down this route, you're employed by this business, you know, it's part of your choice to do'…and, you know, we stood there and then she went 'fine', emptied the stuff, put it in the recycling, and then for next she went* '[makes angry noise]*', and what she did, the next day, she put something in there that could be recycled,*
> Tom: *Right*
> Clare: *And I didn't say anything, and it didn't get emptied. And she went 'oh this recycling' and binned it. After that, never did it again.'*
> (Clare interview, p29-30)

Such outright resistance was very rare, but again demonstrates a social process of adjusting to a changed situation. Again, the environmental basis of the EC initiative went unquestioned as instead individuals tried to work out how they could practically incorporate its messages into their behaviour or, in instances such as this, try and avoid doing so, even if unsuccessfully.

The last two sections have shown that, in response to the EC initiative, employees across the Bridgeford site communally renegotiated the situation at work to one in which it was appropriate and expected to incorporate pro-environmental behaviours into everyday practice. This process involved both positive and negative reactions to the initiative in which employees reminded one another when they lapsed, tested reactions to alternatives, and argued with each other about their behaviour.

Through these processes they came to incorporate the EC initiative's proposals into office practice. Further, I have shown that much of this process of negotiation had little to do with the environment *per se*. Negotiation did not focus on whether or not global warming was happening, or the environmental effects of sending waste to landfill sites, but instead on whether or not people had finished using the printer, if they would read the back of a double-sided sheet, or which bin to put what waste into. These issues are wholly practical and wholly local. Environmental arguments, rather than being accepted or rejected directly, thus appeared to be translated into everyday, routine practices, and only then either applied or dismissed.

What I am arguing here, as was also argued in chapter 5, is that on their own, abstract arguments about the environment appear particularly weak, and have little purchase on everyday practice. In order have an impact at all, such arguments must be localised and made meaningful in relation to, and in the course of, specific everyday practice. At Bridgeford, the EC initiative brought about this process in everyday interactions between colleagues as a locally negotiated environment gradually came to be an accepted part of the social situation.

6.2.4 Environmental Style: Humour, Teasing and Offensiveness

Section 6.2 set out to illustrate the conspicuous social effects of the EC initiative at the Bridgeford site. It has shown already that employees began to perform to one another in pro-environmental ways and that they collectively negotiated how environmental actions could fit-in to daily practice. In this section, I want to pursue a slightly tangential theme, but one which draws further attention to the fundamentally social nature of incorporating the environment into daily practice. A noticeable aspect of the changes to social interaction I observed at Bridgeford was the *style* in which they occurred. In particular, many of the interactions recounted above were accompanied either with laughter and joking around, a mild form of teasing of the individuals involved, or occasionally a sense of moral indignation, although this was usually kept hidden. To date I have seen no research which has explicitly addressed the issue of style with regards to pro-environmental behaviour. Research has concentrated on the tenor of environmental communications, emphasising that positive encouragement works better than doom-laden sacrificial messages or guilt-

trips (e.g. Futerra 2005; Hounsham 2006), but nothing I have seen has considered the style in which behavioural changes are negotiated and made.

More often than not, the communal negotiations and pro-environmental performances were accompanied by a certain sense of humour and jokiness. Individuals would gesture to Champions that they were going to print double-sided or switch a light off with a smile on their face and this would often be met by a small laugh from the Champion in question. The use of humour and laughter has been recognised as a defensive mechanism to distance oneself from particular actions, and also as a coping strategy to deal with potentially stressful situations (*cf.* Billig 2005). I would argue that both of these processes were occurring in the EC initiative, as humour was used to deal with the uncertainty of a shifting social situation. People were at times uncertain about how to behave in the presence of Champions, and unsure about what would occur if they failed to behave pro-environmentally. On several occasions, for example, I myself experienced some doubt as to which bin I could put certain pieces of paper or cardboard into. When asked, Melanie suggested that humour was perhaps a means of dealing with the seriousness of environmental issues and the typically doom-laden messages which accompany them:

> *'I think people perceive it as being something that people can be a bit, yeah, sanctimonious about and a bit kind of a bit boring, and a bit over-bearing about and you know it is quite a serious thing. So I think if you've got to, if you want to get people on board I think you've got …to try and do it in a way that, that is not going to put people off.'*
>
> (Melanie interview, p24)

Melanie thus suggests that humour was used to lessen and mask the seriousness of environmental problems. I would also suggest that humour played a more active role in helping people deal with uncertainty about what was considered appropriate behaviour. By laughing at the uncertainty, especially in conjunction with the Champions responsible for introducing the changes, people could distance themselves from the situation and perhaps escape any blame which may result from accidental 'bad' behaviour. This is a small aside within the responses to the campaign, but the use of humour in responding to the Champions was so common that further study is perhaps merited on the use of humour in responses to environmental change.

Another element of this was to use humour as a form of teasing. During the initiative, the Champions or mini-Champions were often teased by being called the Recycling or Environment Police:

> *'People have said, 'oh, watch out, here come the Environment Police' and that kind of thing, and it is a bit, and I think you're right, it is just a way of people erm, just taking it on board but also making a bit of a joke of it.'*
>
> (Craig interview, p30)

Such teasing did not always occur in the presence of a Champion, however. For example, Beth related how a whole office teased one another about the potential consequences of anti-environmental behaviour if Clare, the local Champion, found out:

> Beth: '*You know 'don't forget to turn the light off' and, you know if you're about to leave a room 'no, put that in the box', you know, in the recycling box and stuff. So, people do kind of, even they'll joke and say 'oh, you've forgotten, oh I'm going to tell Clare you've forgotten', you know just messing about, but in a way that's kind of good because that's making everyone aware sort of. I think the more times you say it, then more's going to get stuck in people's heads, just little things like that.*
> Tom: *Yes*
> Beth: *I mean they're the things that I can remember on a day to day basis, because that's the kind of thing we're like 'oh, you know, you didn't turn your printer off Clare's going to tell you off'* (laughs), *you know silly little things like that, but you know in the end it's going to, that'll probably stick in everyone's mind.*
> Tom: *Mmm, so are there times when you have forgotten to do things or other people have, and either you've sort of teased them, or whatever else?*
> Beth: *Yeah, yeah I'll be like* (puts on a shocked voice) *'oh, ooh, I can't believe you did, you know, you walked out the room and, you turned the air con on and you didn't shut your window and', you know, just little things like that, but I think after a while people will think, 'right first, what am I going to do, I'm going to shut the window and then I'll turn the air con on', 'I'm leaving the room so I'm going to switch my monitor off.''*
>
> (Beth interview, p6-7)

References to the Environment Police suggest that people humorously teased the Champions as a defensive measure to communicate that they did not enjoy being watched over. At the same time, Beth's observations about office banter show that it was becoming increasingly accepted that behaviour was liable to be judged according to environmental standards and that it was considered almost naughty to lapse. These comments were made in a teasing fashion, however, perhaps because of uncertainty

about what degree of authority the Champions actually had; perhaps because of a degree of tacit support for the EC initiative; and perhaps also because within the company it was rapidly becoming expected that this kind of initiative was something that good employees supported, even if it meant relinquishing some freedom of action. In either case, this style of responding to the initiative further illustrates that it had changed the social situation to one in which people understood that anti-environmental behaviour might be something to be embarrassed about (*cf.* Billig 2001).

The final style I observed was reserved for explicitly anti-environmental behaviour and relates to employees, largely the Champions, expressing a sense of moral indignation and offence towards what are seemingly trivial and innocent behaviours. Throughout the initiative, environmental inaction was regularly described as *lazy, bloody minded*, *unacceptable*, and even on one occasion *offensive*. These are all strong moral statements and serve to characterise and classify other people's behaviour in a new way, whether or not this is recognised and understood by those others. In short, anti-environmental behaviour came to be characterised as morally unacceptable, something to be ashamed of, and something that no longer had a place at the Bridgeford site. The EC initiative thus involved a collective process of changing the normative basis of office practices.

To some extent, these observations on style are an interesting aside to the manner in which the EC initiative changed daily practice at the Bridgeford site. What they do show, however, is how individuals at the site tried to make sense of and cope with a shifting and uncertain social situation, and in so doing they further suggest that the EC initiative's real effect was to bring about a new social situation in which individuals had to reassess and renegotiate what counted as appropriate behaviour at work. Section 6.2 has thus shown that whilst work practices remained essentially the same to the outside observer, the EC initiative made a noticeable difference to everyday interaction at the Bridgeford site, and to how those practices were approached and performed. In Goffman's terms, it brought about a change in the shared 'definition of the situation' which demanded an amended 'presentation of self in everyday life' (Goffman 1959).

6.3 Inconspicuous and Banal Environmentalism

Section 6.2 showed that many of the effects of the EC initiative were conspicuous, occurring as noticeable pro-environmental interruptions to normal social interaction. In addition to these conspicuous acts, however, the Champions initiative also influenced the ways employees thought about and approached their own and others' practice in less visible ways. This section highlights the key forms of this *inconspicuous environmentalism*, and begins to consider the extent to which the EC initiative brought about what Billig (1995) might call a *banal environmentalism*, that is, one which is so embedded within the local surroundings as to go unnoticed, and indeed one which does not need to be noticed.

6.3.1 Stopping, Thinking, and Acting

For many across the Bridgeford site, much of the day was spent alone, individually getting on with work. Whilst I have argued that the presence of others helped to promote reflection on, social negotiation about, and performances of, pro-environmental behaviour, these processes also occurred in the absence of others. Most noticeably, in interviews non-Champions regularly recounted how the EC initiative had made them *stop and think,* and *re-think* aspects of their daily routines, especially at certain times of the day, such as when leaving the office, or when performing certain tasks, such as throwing waste away or whilst photocopying.

> Steph: *'I think it's just things you take for granted and you don't realise the impact it's having, but with people com*[ing] *round and telling you, and I remember we had some emails come through saying 'oh leaving this on is equivalent to so much something' I can't think exactly what it was now but, sort of made me stop and think of, you know, things that I could do to try and help.*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Steph: *That I sort of take for granted otherwise really.*
> Tom: *So do you think it's sort of a process of, literally just kind of a reminder being flagged up?*
> Steph: *Yeah, just re-thinking things that you wouldn't necessarily think of doing otherwise, I mean I thought I was quite careful but just the silly things like turning my monitor off, I never thought of before.'*
>
> (Steph interview, p5)

> *'Erm* (laughs) *well obviously I've seen a lot of the posters that go round and…I think that's quite good, because that makes me, because I admit that I*

never used to recycle as much as what I do now because that's made me sort of stop and think about, like putting bottles in my bin.'

(Vicky interview, p5)

'For me certainly, it's sort of made you think twice about what you order and how else could you go about things.'

(Jackie interview, p11)

These quotations illustrate that whilst the EC initiative had exposed employees to new environmental information, this did not result in its simple absorption followed by passive compliance in new forms of pro-environmental behaviour wherever possible. Instead, it suggests that the information served to open up a form of distance between individuals and their everyday practice. Rather than merely carrying on as normal with habitual and automatic acts, such as turning monitors off or throwing rubbish away, the initiative prompted people to look at their existing behaviour differently, question it, and connect it with the environmental arguments being spread by the Champions (*cf.* Hobson 2001, 2003).

In some cases, particularly with relatively unproblematic changes such as switching lights off or recycling waste, employees reported that such processes had led to the development of new habits. Over time, they suggested that they no longer had to stop and think or re-think what they were doing as it had become automatic.

'I think people are getting into habits of starting to turn lights off and leave them off.'

(Tim interview, p10)

'Certainly the lights thing, I think people have got into the habit of that now.'

(Karen interview, p9)

'It has changed, you know, changed my kind of awareness in terms of, just you know, the basic stuff about, you know, how much waste I'm creating, how much can be recycled, you know, what power gets left on, lights get left on, all of those things, actually just kind of more aware of it because you can see kind of lots of people trying to do it. So it's, you know, and then it, well it becomes a learned behaviour after a while and you just do it automatically.'

(Jon interview, p6)

In these instances, the apparent distance between practitioner and practice opened up by the EC initiative had been successfully closed with pro-environmental habits neatly sandwiched in between. Such straightforward change however was not so easily achieved for all staff, or for all of the Champions' suggestions. Many commented on

the difficulties they experienced in changing their behaviour or on whether or not the Champions' proposals were realistic and achievable. For instance, Jackie explained how the newly introduced desktop recycling trays were difficult for her to adjust to, because her job necessarily produced more waste paper than they could accommodate:

> Jackie: *'We're all trying to do our bit. Erm, for me having this waste box here has been a bit of a trial because I get through a fair amount of, of envelopes, literature that we don't want, and things like that throughout the week and I was filling up a box as opposed to a little carton like that, but I've done my bit I religiously go downstairs and empty it.*
> Tom: *Oh excellent.*
> Jackie: *So trying to join in where possible.'*
>
> (Jackie interview, p2-3)

In this instance, Jackie reveals how much of 'a trial' it was to introduce the Champions' suggestions into her daily practice. Indeed it demanded almost religious dedication for her to undertake the new behaviours, but she was prepared to do this wherever 'possible.' In other cases, the Champions suggestions and expectations were deemed unrealistic. As Emma explained, whilst the Champions could 'make it easy' for people to change their habits, they could not realistically expect to change how people felt about certain issues, because people possessed a limited 'sphere of influence':

> Emma: *'I think it's an unrealistic expectation for the Environment Champions to feel that their actions will impact the broader perspective of an individual*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Emma: *I think all they can hope to do is make it easy to make someone make it a habit.*
> Tom: *Right*
> Emma: *That's all. Because people are, will not, it's just not in their sphere of influence. It's just not something they care about. Most of them probably don't know why we recycle, or what the impact is, but if, but they'll do it because it's easy to do.*
> Tom: *Yeah*
> Emma: *I don't think it's a realistic thing to expect.'*
>
> (Amy and Emma interview, p6)

Many others also argued that there were some aspects of their daily practices that they could not change, either because certain facilities were not available, the Champions' proposals did not consider professional standards or clients' demands, or

because there was simply no alternative to what was increasingly coming to be seen as anti-environmental behaviour. Nonetheless, as the following quotations show, even in these cases employees did feel a need to justify their inaction and typically mentioned that they had changed in other areas and would like to change if possible:

> Lynn: *'I'd like to travel by erm bus to work, but I've got to get off at the, erm, at the hospital which is the top of* [street name], w*hich is then, and, say 15, 20 minute walk down here… And at the evening I'm basically too knackered to walk… it's quarter to seven before I get home if I do it that way.*
> Tom: *Yeah which isn't great* (laughs).
> Lynn: *No, and cycling's out of the way because it's too dangerous.'*
> (Lynn interview, p9-10)

> 'With printing double-sided people constantly emphasised that they would try to do this but that *'sometimes people don't like to have it double-sided'* or that *'it doesn't look great in a report.'* One guy said *'we have to put all this environmental stuff in the tenders about recycling, but then they ask for six hard copies of the report. Why can't we just send them a CD or an email of it?''*
> (FD:75-6)

> Leanne: *'Especially in my business, and in some of the, some of the departments as well, we have to look in the drawing at hard copies* [because] *you need to have, to do amendments in your own handwriting.*
> Tom: *Ah, ok*
> Leanne: *And then send it away again to get it amended, there unfortunately there's nothing anybody could do. It would be nice if you can amend it on the screen itself, but, it's not the same as just scribbling it in your handwriting, and again we have to take it onsite anyway… for our operatives, operatives like to work with the hard copies anyway, so we can't say 'take your laptop.''*
> (Leanne interview, p22-3)

What these quotations suggest is that, despite agreeing with the basic thrust of the Champions' proposals, in some areas they were deemed too difficult to achieve. This was either because they compromised other normative standards, such as professional competence or work-life balance, or because they could not be achieved by individuals alone but required collective action and broader infrastructural changes in the workplace or society at large. What they also show, however, is that even where action was deemed implausible, employees began to make connections between their daily working practices and environmental arguments.

These processes precisely mirror those observed by Hobson (2001, 2003) for participants in the Action at Home programme. In response to the EC initiative, employees at Bridgeford had aspects of their practical consciousness challenged and

brought out into the discursive consciousness. Once there, however, the environmental arguments were not simply accepted or rejected but were instead internally questioned, localised, contextualised and only applied where it was deemed reasonable and possible. In some cases this led to new habits, in others behaviour continued much as it had before. As Hobson puts it,

> 'practices change not through exposure to scientific knowledge *per se* but through individuals making connections between forms of knowledge that link their own, everyday and experiential environments to broader environmental concerns.'
>
> (Hobson 2003, 107-8)

Section 6.2.2 argued that Hobson's approach was too individualistic, and needed to recognise the role of interaction in the fundamentally social process of negotiating new understandings of appropriate behaviour. What these observations suggest, however, is that Hobson's arguments do still apply to more individualised, private behaviours. Critically, Hobson's arguments do not suggest that individuals at the site have suddenly learnt new environmental attitudes or values, but that the EC initiative prompted them to understand and make sense of the environment *in relation to* their daily practice. This is a process of struggle, both communal (as was seen above) and individual, that involves working through which aspects of environment messages are meaningful and applicable to specific local contexts and practices. In a certain sense, pro-environmental behaviour is thus seen, not as an abstract and universal idea that pre-exists its performance and needs only to be communicated, but as created in specific contexts through everyday practice.

Furthermore, these observations offer a different take on the role and capabilities of practitioners than is usually suggested by SPT. By focusing on these individual and communal processes, individuals are seen as capable of relating to everyday practices in different ways and even as capable of changing their positions as practitioners. Schatzki (1996, 89) argues that practices consist of *shared understandings*, *explicit rules* and *teleoaffective structures* which define appropriate kinds of doings and sayings. What my observations of the EC initiative suggest, however, is that it is possible for individuals and communities of practice to challenge and change these forms of engagement, even if it is not always possible to change practices in themselves. In the EC initiative, employees were seen to negotiate new ways of relating to their daily practice which incorporated an environmental

component. In some cases this new relationship was sufficient to change the way practices were performed, even if the practice-as-entity remained essentially the same.

6.3.2 Attuning to the Environment: Changing the Champions?

For most of the non-Champions, the EC initiative appeared to yield a fairly formulaic response. Whatever suggestions the Champions made, be it switching lights and monitors off, recycling paper, or photocopying double-sided, would then, where possible, be assimilated into daily practice through a process, outlined above, of stopping and thinking and then re-thinking how to behave. There was little evidence, however, of the Champions' suggestions spilling over into different aspects of daily practice, even where pro-environmental alternatives were often widely available and known. For example, whilst monitors might be switched off, air conditioning might still be buzzing away at full tilt and short-haul flights might be taken without consideration of more environmentally sensitive alternatives (FD:186, 195). For the Champions, however, a more all encompassing process of change appeared to be occurring. Melissa explained this as a general process of 'seeing things differently':

> Melissa: *'I must admit I'm, it's changed the way I see things, I mean I notice things more…If I see something in a bin, that shouldn't be in there, then I'll say 'that shouldn't be in there.'*
> Tom: *Right*
> Melissa: *But before I wouldn't even look in, near the bin…The bin's a bin, you know, and I'd stay away from it.'*
>
> (Melissa interview, p14)

In this instance, where for non-Champions the EC initiative appeared to have changed their relationship to a specific practice, or perhaps only to an aspect of that practice, for the Champions it seemed to have changed their understanding of their role as a practitioner. They no longer simply performed practices in ways they were used to or had been told to, but sought generally to improve practices in pro-environmental ways. David further elaborates on this concept, suggesting that the EC initiative had led to a process of *attunement* to best practice:

'I've noticed that recently, I've been, I worked in [a different office] *for a couple of weeks, which is a quite a big office, and there's, there's certainly huge scope there for a similar scheme with, you know, and having sort of become attuned to the best practice here it was very noticeable working there.'*
(David interview, p8)

Although the external environment did not actually undergo any physical changes, it began to appear differently to the Champions. For non-Champions, this process seemed to be partial and formulaic, led by the Champions' proposals. For the Champions team, however, it was more fluid and far-reaching, encompassing a broader range of everyday practices and situations, and giving them a new social role around the Bridgeford site.

Despite these different kinds of reactions, which appeared to depend on differing levels of engagement in the EC programme, what is significant is the similarity of the process being experienced. For both Champions and non-Champions alike, aspects of daily practice at the Bridgeford site came to appear, and be understood, differently as their environmental features became locally salient.

6.3.3 Changing Your Behaviour Behind Your Back

The final form of this behind the scenes, inconspicuous environmentalism relates to an increasing admission by non-Champions that they would switch their colleagues' monitors or lights off behind their backs. In other words, they would behave pro-environmentally on behalf of their colleagues. Several of the non-Champions I spoke to mentioned having behaved in this way, effectively helping their colleagues to overcome lapses in pro-environmental behaviour, but at the same time in an indirect attempt to send a message to their colleagues that equipment should be turned off whilst absent.

Jackie: *'I switch everybody's lights off now if they're not in their office.*
Tom: *Right*
Jackie: *And it's stuff you wouldn't have done before because you just would have thought 'it's not up to me to decide' whether a light should be on or not, whether a monitor should be on, whether plugs should be switched off and things like that*
Tom: *Right*
Jackie: *Whereas now you can make a conscious effort. If I know that they're out for a meeting and a light's on or music's playing, I will turn it off, and I*

> *know that they don't mind that. Or at least they haven't said they mind anyway* (laughs).*'*
>
> (Jackie interview, p13-14)

Steven also suggested the initiative had empowered him to act on the behalf of others, even though he was already a very senior figure at the site. Further still, he intentionally sought to influence those others with his inconspicuous actions:

> *'I've been in someone's office today and switched off two lights and their screen, because I knew they were out all morning and they hadn't done it. I would never have done that before. So, so erm but hopefully when they come back to their office, they've realised that someone's done that and they didn't do it themselves.'* (Steven interview, p5-6)

What these acts suggest is not only that people were coming to relate to the office environment differently and see it in new ways - such that recycling in the wrong bin or lights left on appeared like warning beacons (*cf.* Jelsma 2003) - but also that they were beginning to feel able to impose their new ways of seeing things onto their colleagues. Crucially, they felt they could assume that their colleagues would automatically understand the environmental justifications for their actions and might even agree with them. In short, through the EC initiative, the environment had become a near constant issue, and quite a powerful force, around the Bridgeford site, sufficient to make people stop and change what they were doing, intervene in and cast strong moral judgements on their colleagues' behaviour, and even engage in stand-up rows about what should count as appropriate behaviour.

6.3.4 The Beginnings of Banal Environmentalism?

Whilst section 6.2 highlighted conspicuous acts of pro-environmentalism, section 6.3 has suggested that the EC initiative also generated more inconspicuous changes in the way people related to everyday practices, to the Bridgeford site, and to one another. Throughout all of his works, Billig (1991, 1995, 1996, 2005; Billig *et al* 1988) essentially argues that social life is always and everywhere surrounded by sets of social arguments and dilemmas.

> 'Dilemmas may be constant within society, but our present dilemmas will reflect our present society. That being so, it becomes entirely feasible to pursue social action to change the basis of society, not in order that dilemmas will be

> removed *tout court*, but so present dilemmas might be replaced by others…One of the goals of social action or of social reform is to win a present argument, in order to change the agenda of argumentation.'
>
> (Billig *et al* 1988, 148-9)

One set of contemporary arguments Billig highlights are those around national identity. In *Banal Nationalism* (1995), Billig argues that arguments about nationalism surround all aspects of daily life. Where most understandings of nationalism focus on what he calls *hot* nationalism, such as flag waving parades, Billig suggests that *cold* or *banal nationalism* is in fact more pervasive and important. Such banal nationalism is found in the constant *flaggings* of national identity that are embedded in people's surroundings or in the ways they think and talk. Billig argues that the pervasiveness of these reminders is what prevents people forgetting their national identity, and ultimately serves to make it feel somehow essential and natural (see section 2.2.1).

In the EC initiative, the presence of what Billig might call *hot environmentalism* is immediately apparent in the various conspicuous performances, communal negotiations and stand-up rows, outlined above. Such events infrequently reminded employees to consider their environmental performance whilst at work. Following Billig though, if this were the only effect of the initiative, such environmentalism might be forgotten once these events became fewer and further between. To some extent, the presence of the Champions is designed to stop these events from disappearing, but, even so, the Champions have limited energy and multiple additional responsibilities, so it is likely that that such hot environmentalism will eventually dwindle. In order for the EC initiative to generate durable change therefore, the Champions needed to translate such hot environmentalism into *banal environmentalism*, and embed *forgotten reminders* and *flaggings* into the office environment. I would argue that the inconspicuous acts of environmentalism outlined above represent the beginning of this process.

For the Champions, this began in processes of attunement and seeing things differently around the site. For these individuals, the office appeared to have taken on a new layer of meaning as *flaggings* of environmental issues began to appear in many aspects of everyday life, such as lights left on or waste in the wrong bin. A similar process occurred amongst the mini-Champions and those who were actively performing in pro-environmental ways by going round switching off their colleagues' electrical equipment for example. Again, for these employees the office environment

came to appear differently as environmental meanings were now embedded within it. For others, however, this process had barely begun and regular *hot* reminders in the form of briefings, emails, posters, and even stand-up rows appear still to be required to assimilate environmental understandings into the office surroundings.

On the whole, however, the preceding sections have shown that the key change brought about by the EC initiative was not one of changing individual attitudes, values or beliefs, nor of removing barriers to pro-environmental action, but of beginning to change the collective and social 'agenda of argumentation' (Billig *et al* 1988, 149) to one in which, for most employees, in most situations and practices, the environment could no longer be ignored.

6.4 Is Goffman Enough?: The Humble Joining of Conspicuous and Inconspicuous Environmentalism

To this point I have argued that the quantitative results of the EC initiative should be understood as a change to the shared 'definition of the situation' (Goffman 1959) at the Bridgeford site, rather than as a corollary of cognitive changes within individuals. The EC initiative prompted individuals, both on their own and in groups, to reconsider their everyday practice and, where feasible, to build-in and act on a locally and contextually derived concept of pro-environmental behaviour. This was not a matter of trying to save the world, but rather of developing new norms for what is appropriate behaviour in the bounded context of the office. Goffman might summarise this process by suggesting that the EC initiative had introduced a new *frame* (Goffman 1974) for office practices.

In *Frame Analysis* (1974) Goffman suggests that, in the course of daily life, people constantly ask themselves 'what is it that's going on here?' (1974, 8). Usually this is asked unconsciously, although in times of confusion and change it may be explicitly asked of others. In either case, the answer they receive takes the form of a *frame*, that is, a coating for a strip of activity which provides it with social meaning and helps people understand what counts as appropriate behaviour for the ongoing situation. For most employees at the Bridgeford site, I would argue that the EC initiative provided new answers to the question 'what is it that's going on here?' which included an environmental component. Behaviour could no longer go

unnoticed, or *pass* (Goffman 1963b), unless its environmental credentials could be seen or at least justified.

SPT has tended to ignore the role of social interaction in the course of daily life (Christensen and Røpke 2005; Spaargaren 2006). Whilst it does recognise that practice is a fundamentally social and shared thing (Reckwitz 2002a), it thus appears to neglect the different ways in which it is indeed social and shared. Warde (2005) suggests that this has caused SPT to under-emphasise the roles of conflict and dis-sensus in the development and diffusion of practice:

> 'Philosophical descriptions of practices often seem to presume an unlikely degree of shared understanding and common conventions, a degree of consensus which implies processes of effective uniform transmission of understandings, procedures and engagements. It is almost inconceivable that such conditions be met.'
>
> (Warde 2005, 136)

In my observations, however, the importance of conflict and dis-sensus in the renegotiation of practices and in how they are transmitted and socially learnt is plain to see. Employees at Bridgeford actively engaged in discussions, internal deliberations, and even arguments about their practices, whether or not their existing behaviour was still appropriate, and how it could or should be changed. Goffman's insights, I would argue, serve as a useful addition to SPT to help interpret these processes. They suggest that practices support particular frames and situational definitions, but also that these can be challenged and even potentially changed, even if the practices-as-entities themselves are more resilient.

What Goffman's insights do, crucially, is introduce a concern with the role of discourse and interaction in practices. In this sense, I feel they add new layers of sophistication to SPT by making its descriptive approach to practices-as-entities more sensitive to local understandings and situated performances of practices. In other words, they sensitise it to individuals' everyday behaviour. In doing this, they potentially offer greater explanatory power to SPT by enabling it go beyond descriptions of practices, and to consider the different ways in which individuals and communities of practice relate to their shared practices, and therefore how they may wish them to develop, or what sorts of developments they are likely to resist.

Despite the benefits offered by Goffman, his approach is limited in its understanding of the individual and its explanation of social change. Goffman

describes the self as a ‘changeable formula’ (1974, 573). He thus implies that, in different situations, individuals can read-off the relevant frame of interaction and change their social performances accordingly. Gregson and Rose (2000) make clear, however, that such an understanding implies the existence of an active, conscious, and somewhat amoral, self that exists prior to interaction and is capable of choosing and changing its performances almost at will. It is precisely this sort of methodological individualism that I have been arguing against in this thesis, and that SPT has consistently tried to avoid (which perhaps partly explains why social interaction and practical performances have been under-emphasised in this emerging body of work). Were individuals simply able to choose which frame to apply, existing cognitive approaches to behaviour change, which simply provide information and try to sell different frames through social marketing, might be more than suitable for the task. Instead, and as my observations have suggested, individuals do not possess such agency. Which frame is salient at any one time, and therefore which frame individuals must behave in accordance with, is not up to the individual to decide. Others present may try to impose or resist certain frames, and specific social sanctions, such as shame or embarrassment (Scheff 2000; Billig 2001), may be experienced if individuals fail to abide by the communally negotiated frame. What is crucial, therefore, is not only to identify which frame applies in any given situation, as sections 6.2 and 6.3 have attempted to do but, more significantly, to consider how new frames are able to challenge and even usurp the conventional and already existing frames for everyday practice. In short, how were employees at Bridgeford persuaded to realign themselves to the EC initiative’s new pro-environmental frame?

This question appears all the more difficult to answer when considering the *power* of the EC team, and of the environment generally, at Bridgeford. Throughout this thesis I have suggested that the EC initiative was relatively weak in the context of the Bridgeford site. It was an informal, bottom-up initiative with no formal authority and a small budget. The Champions feared that environmental arguments would be ridiculed by their colleagues and thus allied them with pre-existing and accepted forms of rationality, for example, that pro-environmental behaviour would save money, was a logical thing to do based on the facts of the initial audit, or was a convenient and therefore efficient form of action. Further, chapter 5 showed how, throughout the initiative, the Champions were made to water down their suggestions and create coalitions with Facilities Management in order to get approval for their

proposals, and how they discursively hijacked the CHANGE programme in an attempt to boost the EC initiative's influence. Effectively, all the Champions really had at their disposal was a form of environmental rationality that they were increasingly forced to compromise and dilute, and which thus appeared to be a 'weapon of the weak' (Flyvbjerg 1998).

As such, there appears to be a deep contradiction at the heart of this chapter. On the one hand I have argued that the Champions were weak yet, on the other, I have suggested they were able to introduce a new frame for daily practice at Bridgeford and even to impose normative and social sanctions on those who failed to align with it. During fieldwork, I became increasingly puzzled by how the isolated and incidental (albeit quite frequent) events of conspicuous and inconspicuous environmentalism I have outlined above managed to have such pervasive and powerful effects. This explains why I was careful, above, to suggest they represented only the *beginnings* of what Billig might call a banal environmentalism. As the initiative progressed, however, and as I increasingly funnelled my observations and analysis towards this question, I became very interested in some of the techniques, metaphors, and means of expression the Champions used within the EC initiative and about their colleagues, and began, tentatively, to perceive some underlying connections between these isolated incidents. In particular, I noticed a striking resemblance between the EC initiative and aspects of Michel Foucault's (1977) understanding of *disciplinary power*[15].

Foucault suggests that power is a pervasive, inescapable force that functions always and everywhere throughout society. Rather than focus on who possesses power or their intentions for its use, as previous power theorists had done (see Lukes 2005), Foucault is concerned with 'the *how* of power' (Foucault 1980, 92 emphasis in original). As such, he shows that rather than being possessed by and acting upon people, power instead works *through* them, making them the vehicles of its exercise (Foucault 1980). Perhaps most provocatively, he suggests that by working through people, power serves to create and constitute minds and bodies in particular ways for

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[15] I was led to Foucault's ideas through my observations at Bridgeford, rather than starting with them as a theoretical framework. I am aware that some Foucault scholars (e.g. Knights 2002) may object to my partial and instrumental application of Foucault's thought. Nonetheless, Foucault himself invited others to do just this: 'I would like my books to be a kind of tool box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area…I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers' (Foucault 1974, in O'Farrell 2005, 50). It is in this spirit of using and testing Foucault's ideas in a new area that I have conducted this section of the thesis.

different ends (Foucault 1980, 98). As such, Foucault inverts previous ideas about power to suggest it is a positive and productive, rather than solely dominating and oppressive, force.

Throughout his works (e.g. Foucault 1977, 1980, 1984, 1991), Foucault shows how power operates within and through the discourses, rationality, and taken for granted knowledges that circulate in society; hence his term *power/knowledge*. In particular, in his work on discipline (1977) and governmentality (Foucault 1991; Miller and Rose 1990; Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1993), he reveals its 'capillary form of existence' (Foucault 1980, 39) in numerous quotidian technologies that serve to reclassify and reorganise space, time, activity and ultimately individuals. As Miller and Rose (1990) elaborate, he shows that:

> 'To understand modern forms of rule…requires an investigation not merely of grand political schema, or economic ambitions, nor even of general slogans such as state control, nationalization, the free market and the like, but of apparently humble and mundane mechanisms which appear to make it possible to govern: techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the invention of devices such as surveys and presentational forms such as tables; the standardization of systems of training and the inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies; building design and architectural forms – the list is heterogeneous and is, in principle, unlimited.'
>
> (Miller and Rose 1990, 8)

Foucault's ideas have been applied extensively in many areas of the social sciences (e.g. Martin *et al* 1988; Burrell 1988; Burchell *et al* 1991; McNay 1994; McKinlay and Starkey 1998; Rose 1999; Knights 2002). Considering his concern with 'the conduct of conduct' (Dean 1999) and how people govern themselves, however, it is surprising how little his work has been applied to the subject of pro-environmental behaviour change. Éric Darier (1996a, 1996b; 1999) made some useful strides in this area in the mid to late 1990s by applying ideas about governmentality to pro-environmental behaviour. Foucault's concerns with discourse are also implicit throughout, although rarely engaged with directly, in the contextual perspective (e.g. Moisander and Pesonen 2002, Hobson 2002, 2006). Strangely, however, his ideas about discipline have seemingly been completely ignored in this area, despite the fact that they explicitly address how people are trained to behave in new ways. Considering the contemporary importance and policy focus on behaviour change

across many areas of life, I would therefore suggest that there is a need to revisit and reapply Foucault's ideas.

During my fieldwork at Bridgeford, and as I became increasingly puzzled by the seeming contradiction I was observing, Foucault's insights enabled me to see the significance of a variety of 'humble and mundane mechanisms' in the EC initiative as providing a new, underlying framework for practices at Bridgeford that joined together the conspicuous and inconspicuous acts of pro-environmental behaviour outlined above. In the rest of this chapter I thus aim to demonstrate that the EC initiative can be more fully understood by paying attention to the positive and productive, but also subtle and pervasive, power/knowledge mechanisms which the Champions employed, and that acknowledging these mechanisms helps explain how such a seemingly weak initiative had the strength to bring about banal environmentalism.

6.4.1 Re-Programming Reality: Partitioning Space, Time and Activity

Central to Foucault's ideas about both discipline and governmentality is the introduction of new ways of understanding, representing and dividing up space, time and activity that render them more amenable to management and improvement (Miller and Rose 1990). In *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault shows that throughout the early 1800s, time, space and activity were increasingly thought about and divided up in new ways, as new forms of discipline swarmed throughout society. He shows, for example, how prison space was divided into individual cells (as opposed to communal dungeons), how detailed timetables were introduced to structure prisoners' and workers' days, and how meticulous sets of instructions were devised to train schoolchildren to hold a pen, or soldiers to hold their rifles. Foucault suggests that these devices were vitally important means of imposing new forms of order onto previously disordered, or at least differently ordered, minds and bodies, and were thus the first step in attempts to change them. In the EC initiative, the introduction of new ways of thinking about and dividing up space, time and activity at the Bridgeford site was one of the very first things to occur in the Champions' earliest meetings.

With regards to space, from the very outset the EC initiative was restricted to the Bridgeford site alone, dividing it off from the rest of Burnetts' operations. This was done so that Bridgeford could serve as a pilot study or test case for the EC

approach, as a means of producing new knowledge about a specific section of Burnetts' reality that could subsequently be applied across the company.

> 'The [Champions] team has carried out an energy and waste audit at Head Office… and set targets for reductions.…The lessons learned from this project will then be used to spread best practice across the company - and beyond.'
>
> (Burnetts website, April 2007, accessed on 29.05.08)

The head offices were thus cut-off from the broader context of Burnetts and considered in isolation. In *enclosing* (Foucault 1977) the head office site in this way, the initiative created a fixed and stable object to work upon by ignoring other aspects of Burnetts' reality and how the Bridgeford site interacted with them.

In addition to this enclosure, the Champions also set about *partitioning* (Foucault 1977) and dividing the space of the offices into different elements, enabling them to focus more precisely on one at a time. Foucault argues that: 'disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed' (Foucault 1977, 143). Whilst the Champions were unable to rebuild the Bridgeford site and erect walls between individual employees, they too set about dividing the site into more easily controllable and manageable sections.

In the very first meeting, for example, the Champions divided the offices up into different areas and assigned each its own mentor. Figure 6.1 illustrates how this was done. On a finer level still, in the initial audit and throughout the initiative, the Champions divided the office up into individual rooms with their own light switches and plug sockets, and into individual desks with their own computers, monitors, and general waste bins. The Champions thus adopted new ways of thinking about and representing the office that segmented it into more or less individualised spaces. Such dividing practices are central to Foucault's understanding of discipline; however it is also important to note that the Champions were not in fact starting from scratch. To some extent there was no need to build new walls between different areas of the office, because such a disciplinary grid already existed. As chapter 4 described, some areas of the site were divided into single occupancy rooms, larger open plan offices were divided into fixed individualised compartments, and communal areas were clearly distinct from these ordered spaces of work. Building on the site's existing disciplinary grid, therefore, one of the first things the Champions did was to

demarcate the space of its operation and to divide it into the different elements which were then to be managed and improved.

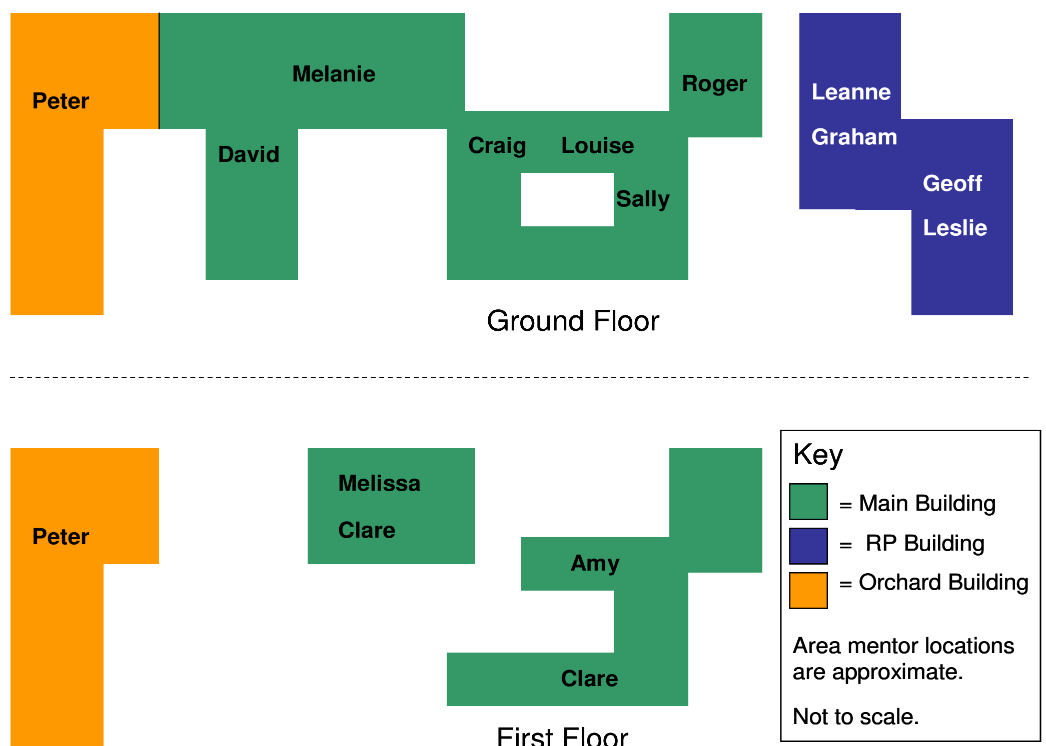

Figure 6.1: Plan of the Bridgeford Site showing Area Mentors

A similar process occurred with the organisation of time around the offices. At the outset of the initiative, its board level sponsor – Steven – was keen for the initiative to spread beyond the workplace itself and for individuals to carry new, pro-environmental behaviours home with them (Steven interview, p4). In an early Champions meeting (meeting reference 2), however, the Champions immediately set about dividing time at work from time at home. As I recorded in my field diary:

> 'Liam came up with a campaign idea to *'Switch off work. Switch on your life!'* – looking at setting down an ideal routine to leave the office which incorporates switching off your monitor and lights etc.'
>
> (FD:14)

Whilst this was dismissed in the team meeting because it was felt *'management wouldn't like it'* (FD:14), the central message was adopted throughout the campaign as the Champions rethought the temporal organisation of office practices along environmental lines. The team recognised that, according to an environmental

rationality, certain times of the day or week were more important than others, particularly times of arrival and departure from the office, and set about reorganising these specific moments.

Accordingly, one of the first things the team agreed upon was to produce a ‘Shutdown Checklist’ (FD:54) to detail exactly what steps to take when leaving the office to ensure everything was switched off. An equal and opposite ‘Switch On Routine’ was also mentioned although never actually created. Further still, the initiative focused on particular times of the week, for example, the Champions sent a series of emails to all staff at Bridgeford late on Friday afternoons to remind them to switch equipment off over the weekend. The team thus focused their efforts on specific times when they felt they could have most impact.

Whilst these observations may seem insignificant, what is important is that, just as they had with space, the Champions created a new way of thinking about and structuring the passing of time in the offices. The Champions focused on entry to, and exit from, the office, and on the beginnings and ends of certain tasks. These are the precise moments of the working day that are typically the most informal, disorganised, and undisciplined. At Bridgeford, as at other workplaces (*cf.* Nippert-Eng 1996), arrivals tend to be casual and slow, with people making cups of tea and engaging in long discussions about their weekends or the previous evening before settling down to work (e.g. FD:164; 170), and departures (particularly on Fridays) tend to be hurried, often involving laughter and loud chatter (e.g. FD:197, 212). As such, the times the Champions focused on were precisely those that are ignored or at least only weakly affected by conventional forms of workplace discipline. The EC initiative thus created a new temporal order.

Finally, Foucault argues that discipline functions by imposing a new form of control onto activity. By this, Foucault is not simply referring to the vague and general ways in which employees, patients, and schoolchildren are given tasks to do, but suggests that discipline is marked by power and control at a new scale, what he calls ‘an infinitesimal power over the active body’ (Foucault 1977, 137). Thus, in the EC initiative, and as was shown in chapter 4, the Champions set about identifying some quite specific practices and concentrated on the specific elements of those practices (in the form of images, skills and stuff), breaking them down into their component parts, and providing very precise instructions for how they should be reassembled in pro-environmental ways. For example, the Champions instructions

were never so general and vague as simply 'Save energy,' or 'Recycle your rubbish,' but consisted of detailed step by step guidelines for individual performances of practices, such as those for using vending machines or changing printer settings (e.g. see figure 4.3), and precise checklists for what to do and when (e.g. figure 4.4). Whilst not quite as precise as Foucault's examples of *dressage*, in all of these cases the Champions provided a meticulous level of detail to help people perform in pro-environmental ways.

It is thus evident that the EC team set about introducing a framework that restructured space, time and activity at Bridgeford in a range of new ways. Some might suggest that these steps are simply a part of good and efficient project management, and they would be exactly right. Through these acts the Champions were engaging in something wholly familiar, employing humble and mundane mechanisms that are regularly used across all areas of life. What is significant is that they were employing these means to new ends. Whilst they may not have conceived of it in these terms, or set out to do so intentionally, they were extending the discipline of the workplace to incorporate environmental concerns.

These steps formed the bedrock of the new frame the EC initiative was trying to introduce but, on their own, they are somewhat meaningless. To say that the Champions were beginning to think like this, and to order the Bridgeford site in new ways in their meetings, has little significance unless it can be shown how these reorderings were put to use and applied across the site. The following three sections will thus outline how the Champions used *hierarchical observation, normalising judgement* and *the examination,* or what Foucault (1977, chapter 6) calls the three 'means of correct training' to implant pro-environmental discipline in the thoughts and acts of their colleagues.

6.4.2 Hierarchical Observation: Pro-Environmental Big Brother?

Goffman uses a dramaturgical metaphor throughout his work on social interaction, focusing on how individuals manage the impressions they give off to others. In this respect, his concern is as much with the individual in question as it is with their audience and what it is they want to see. Foucault was similarly concerned with the notion of watching and being watched, and would have agreed with Goffman that an audience imposes a form of control over the individual. Indeed, he argues that

discipline is 'a power that acts by means of general visibility' (Foucault 1977, 171). I have described numerous instances of how the Champions initiative introduced a new field of visibility to the Bridgeford site above. Individuals began to perform pro-environmentally towards one another, to notice lights left on or waste in the wrong bin, and to challenge those who were not acting in the newly appropriate fashion. Where this new frame was seen as an outcome of the initiative under Goffman's analysis, through Foucault's eyes it comes to be seen as a mechanism of power and thus also acts as a key means of creating pro-environmental change.

In interviews, metaphors of visibility were often used to describe the EC initiative. For example, the language of 'big brother' was used often, if reluctantly. References to being in 'glass houses', 'policing', and having 'eyes and ears' also appeared to indicate the nature of the new gaze being cast over practices at Bridgeford.

> *'It's like the big brother is watching you attitude. If anyone leaves their lights on* (laughs)*, so somebody* [will] *tell you you're leaving the lights on. You can't get away with things, it's like a police force* (laughs). *It sounds a bit harsh…but you have somebody monitoring you.'*
>
> (Graham interview, p14)

> *'We've had people distributed around the business who are true believers before we've even raised the profile of it, and they've helped be our eyes and ears and push things forwards in their departments.'*
>
> (Craig interview, p12)

> David: *'I mean certainly my own behaviour has hopefully changed in terms of the erm, taking on the lessons learnt because the er, when you're in the public gaze then er, if you're not doing what you say then you, you suffer accordingly erm*
> Tom: *Yeah I guess it's kind of lead by example in there* (inaudible)
> David: *That's right, you know the, people in glass houses isn't it really.'*
>
> (David interview, p21)

As these quotations indicate, the EC initiative introduced a new field of visibility and form of surveillance at the Bridgeford site. Often the Champions' gaze was face to face, as in the case of conspicuous performances, although as section 6.3.3 showed, it also occurred behind people's backs and was thus, to some extent, inescapable.

For Foucault, the ideal form of the gaze was achieved, although never materially realised, in Bentham's Panopticon in which, by clever design, a single, centrally placed guard could observe all inmates distributed in individual cells around

an outside wall. To achieve such a pervasive gaze in most places, however, Foucault recognised it was necessary to employ relays:

> 'The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly…But, the disciplinary gaze did, in fact, need relays.'
> (Foucault, 1977, 173-4)

The physical nature of the Bridgeford site meant that a single individual could not hope to see the whole site to observe all individuals and behaviours at all times. As a result, the 'microscope of conduct' was forced to take on the shape of an hierarchical pyramid. At the top of the EC pyramid was Steven, the board level sponsor. He was responsible for starting the initiative yet, as shown in section 4.3.2, was concerned for it not to seem too top-down and heavy handed. Thus, he enlisted the help of David to recruit a team of Champions drawn from all parts of the Bridgeford site (see section 4.3.3). Further still, through the presence of mini-Champions and others exerting peer pressure on one another by switching lights off in empty offices or engaging in communal negotiations, it may be seen that the Champions initiative came to cover all parts of the Bridgeford site. In this view, the Bridgeford site came to act like an observatory with an 'uninterrupted play of calculated gazes' (Foucault 1977, 177) shining a light on environmental conduct everywhere.

A key aspect of this 'pyramidal organisation' is that, although it has a head, 'it is the apparatus as a whole that produces 'power' and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field' (Foucault 1977, 177). As such, no matter what position one occupies, one is always observed, and even the 'supervisors [are] perpetually supervised' (Foucault 1977, 177). In this sense, however, the EC initiative at Bridgeford only partially conforms to Foucault's scheme. David acknowledges that he felt watched in the initiative, likening it to being in a glass house, but the reluctance to impose too top-down a structure or to be too heavy handed, also implies a reluctance to look too hard. Furthermore, Craig explained that, despite the Champions' success in establishing a new field of visibility, there were some places where they could not look, or at least had to turn a blind eye:

> Craig: *'When we did the electrical audit, there's always one director, and like, you couldn't find anything in his office that wasn't left on.*
> Tom: *Right* (laughs)
> Craig: *So…the issue with that Tom is then who addresses that issue with that person? Very difficult. For us as Environmental Champions very difficult,*

> *because we carry no weight do we, in truth? We're here to influence people and, and I don't, and I think in some respects we shouldn't pick people out and highlight people anyway.'*
>
> (Craig interview, p12)

These observations illustrate that, although the EC initiative did introduce a new way of seeing at the Bridgeford site, it could not, and did not completely, replace previous relations of power, but was instead forced to work alongside them. Similarly, as chapter 5 noted, the EC initiative was unable to dislodge the Facilities Management team's long established and formally supported health and safety based discipline. Foucault argues, however, that discipline does not replace previous forms of rule, but instead works within them, being 'linked from the inside' (Foucault 1977, 176). These complications do not, therefore, undermine the fundamental point that the EC initiative employed a form of hierarchical observation at Bridgeford that served to highlight pro- and anti-environmental aspects of practice.

6.4.3 Normalising Judgement: Creating Environmentally Different Types of People

In addition to observing how people conformed to their suggestions, the gaze cast by the EC initiative also introduced a form of *normalising judgement* around the site. The concept of normalisation is central to Foucault's thinking about discipline and governmentality as it highlights that what is considered natural or normal is in fact socially created. By isolating a particular characteristic of individuals or their behaviour from the chaotic and unruly mass of bodies and activities, norms are created against which all can be judged. The novelty of normalisation is that, rather than introducing an absolute sense of right or wrong behaviour, it produces a relative sense of rightness or wrongness. It thus renders all but the most normal in need of improvement. What needs to be changed, then, is not wrongdoing *per se*, but non-observance of, or departure from, the norm: 'that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it' (Foucault 1977, 178). In the EC initiative, examples of normalising judgement were extremely common. By various means, the initiative created a new norm of environmental behaviour against which all were judged, and non-conformers were identified as in need of improvement.

The first instance of environmental normalisation in the EC initiative was introduced by the GAP programme managers. In the initial audit process, they were

quick to place the environmental performance of employees at the Bridgeford site in some kind of context. In other words, they provided an environmental norm against which practice at Bridgeford should measure up, where previously there had been none. Figure 6.2, taken from the initial audit report, is one of many examples that clearly demonstrate how the EC initiative isolated the environmental impacts of practice and created a norm for them by judging them against other 'good practice.'

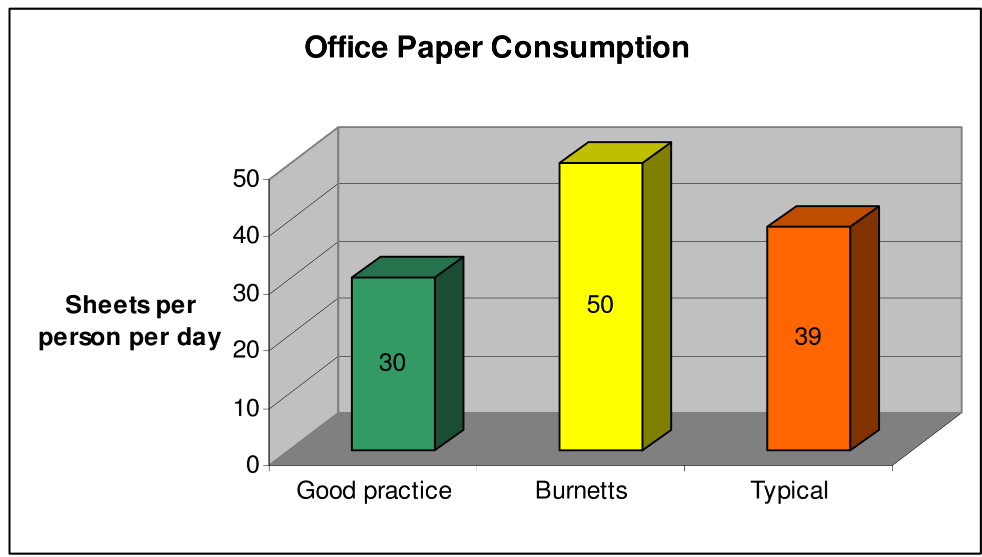

Figure 6.2: Normalisation of Paper Consumption
(Source: GAP's Initial Audit Report)

Whilst this example was provided by GAP programme managers, the Champions themselves quickly applied similar versions of environmental normalisation to their friends and colleagues. Three particular examples stood out during my fieldwork. First, alongside the audit of waste and energy use, the Champions also conducted a staff survey by circulating a short questionnaire to all employees at Bridgeford. The survey contained a series of questions about people's behaviours in relation to the environment. For example:

'Do you?
- Switch off unnecessary lights, when there is enough daylight?
- Switch off the light if you are the last one to leave a meeting room?
- Switch off lights when you leave your office at night?'

(Source: GAP's Initial Audit Report)

For each question, respondents were given the options *Never, Hardly Ever, Sometimes, Usually, Always* and *Not Applicable*. Similar surveys are used in much environmental behaviour change research and, whilst they may be seen as a neutral means of gathering objective data on environmental attitudes and behaviours, they also play a more active and productive role in isolating the environmental aspects of behaviours and presenting them as something one should have an attitude about or act upon. Depending on which box a respondent ticks, they are invited to rank their behaviour in relation to others, and thereby to cast a moral judgement as to the significance of being in any of the other categories. For example, for those who *always* switch their lights off when there is enough daylight, the survey provides not only a sense of self-satisfaction, but also judges their behaviour as superior to any colleagues who *hardly ever* take this action. Similarly, respondents who reply *hardly ever* receive a silent, yet nonetheless powerful, comment upon their conduct, and are urged to do better. Whilst ostensibly serving to represent an objective reality, this survey's more significant results are to create and act upon that reality by casting a normalising judgement upon it. As Rose and Miller put it:

> 'making people write things down, and the nature of the things people are made to write down, is itself a kind of government of them, urging them to think about and note certain aspects of their activities according to certain norms.'
>
> (Rose and Miller 1992, 200)

Second, as well as encouraging colleagues to normalise themselves through such surveys, the Champions also began to present normalising judgements of office conduct publicly. For example, in the initial planning meeting there was much discussion about how different areas of the office had performed in the audit. Champions occasionally teased one another about which department was most or least environmentally friendly, and such comments and comparisons led on to a suggestion to create a 'league table' of how different sections of the office were performing environmentally (FD:19, 23). By collecting data on a weekly basis, such as how many computers or lights were left on, the group planned to monitor the performance of different areas of the office, to communicate this to staff, and thus to create a sense of competition they hoped would motivate change. Leanne volunteered to produce a plan of the site using computer aided design software from which they could then easily create graphs to show how different sections of the office were performing.

Ultimately this suggestion did not come to fruition (FD:118). Leanne never did produce the plan, and the time demands of collecting data every week ensured it was never better than patchy. However, the basic principle of normalising judgement is clearly present here, and in an email to all staff during the energy month of the initiative (see figure 6.3), Peter publicly demonstrated this normalising intent.

> 'There has been another audit of energy usage across the Bridgeford site at the end of last week….The audit was to see what percentage of electrical items had been left on after the working day and people had left the office.
>
> The results were quite varied in different areas of the site. There was an outstanding performance from both the Duplex Building First Floor and Design & Wages with only 4 & 5% of items left switched on.
>
> In other areas, there is probably room for improvement, with one area registering up to 48% of electrical items being left on - including a number of Air Conditioning units, which would have proceeded to cool down or heat up an empty office from Friday evening until Monday morning.'

Figure 6.3: Extract from an Email Sent to all Bridgeford Staff

Whilst not as comprehensive as the league table initially proposed, normalisation is immediately apparent in such communications. Areas of the office such as the Duplex Building First Floor (part of the main building) and Design and Wages could feel a sense of satisfaction that they were doing well, but also heed the warning that lapses in performance would be noted. Indeed, such communications also serve to reinforce the gaze of the Champions indicating to all that they might be being watched and judged at any time.

Third, the final example I will highlight demonstrates that the Champions did not merely *try* and normalise environmental conduct at Bridgeford but that, at least in certain times and places, they actually came to think differently of their colleagues, and to classify and categorise them in new ways. In interviews, several of the Champions offered taxonomies that focused on their colleague's environmental attitudes or behaviour. Typically these consisted of three types of employee, but sometimes more:

> *'I think initially erm, we probably had about three categories of people and their response to the campaign. There were those who weren't interested, didn't think they could make a difference. There were those who were willing to come on board, yet there were also those who say 'well I already do this, I*

already do that,' and I think the campaign's helped soften the people who weren't interested to start with. It's definitely brought on board the people who are willing to give it a go. But also it's further improved those who did think they really were, erm, you know, doing great environmental things.'

(Louise interview, p7)

'Everybody wanted to change the world, well we're not going to change the world, we'll make a change, and that can, that might be a small change or it might be a big change, but there's certain people you'll never change, there's certain people you can influence and there's certain people that want to change.'

(Craig interview, p9-10)

Sally presented a matrix she had been using in the CHANGE programme which divided employees into four categories according to their *Self-belief* and their *Project-belief*. Those with high self- and project-belief are dubbed *Players* and show active support. Those with low self-belief but high project-belief are dubbed *Spectators*, happy to watch and support but not necessarily get involved. Those with low self- and low project-belief are called *Corpses*, offering nothing to the project, and finally, those with high self-belief but low project-belief are called, provocatively, *Terrorists* (Sally interview, p36 – and see figure 6.4) Sally argued that there were very few terrorists for the EC initiative, with most being either players or spectators. The terms

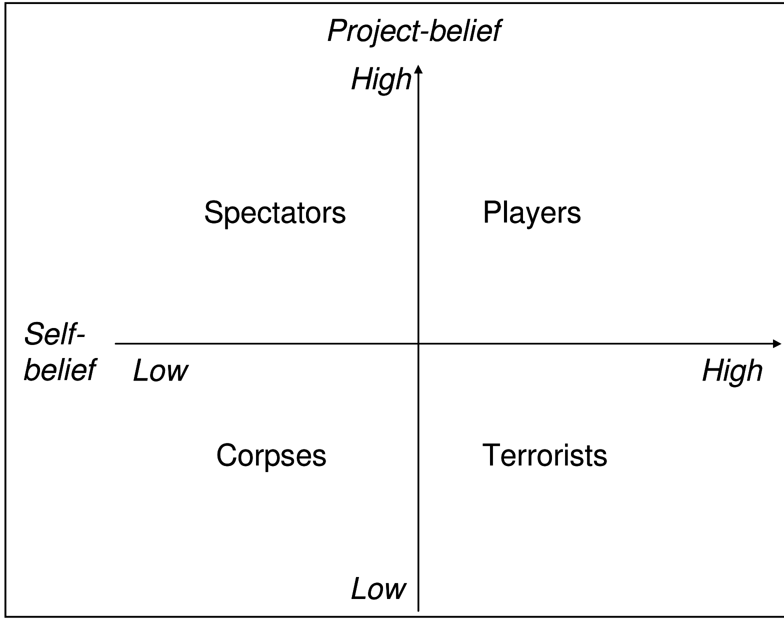

Figure 6.4: Matrix of Potential Reactions to the EC Initiative

used in this matrix are clearly morally loaded, but what such classifications show is that through the course of the initiative the Champions came to think of themselves and their colleagues differently; in relation to their individual environmental perspectives and performances.

A crucial aspect of such normalisation procedures is that they exist in order to cast judgements on others. In Foucault's words:

> 'The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects it to his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements.'
>
> (Foucault 1977, 304)

The previous section illustrated the presence of 'eyes and ears' in every department at Bridgeford. The EC initiative thus created the *colleague-judge*. Whilst the role of judges is either to punish or praise, Foucault highlights two novel characteristics of disciplinary judgements. First, 'disciplinary systems favour punishments that are exercise – intensified, multiplied forms of training, several times repeated' (Foucault, 1977, 179). Second, discipline introduces a double system of 'gratification-punishment', in which gratification is the preferred option. Whilst the language of punishment is a little strong for the EC initiative, throughout it was apparent that, as far as it did exist, punishment took the form of encouragement and training to do better, and positive incentives or gratification was the preferred means of enacting this.

Graham provided the clearest comment on how the Champions exercised and trained colleagues who were not abiding by the new norm:

> Graham: *'We're like little piranhas* (laughs) *at people's ankles. Don't give up. Erm and you don't shout and rage at them or anything like that to belittle them. They might do it to you initially, but it's not even a war of words, you can turn them around with words.*
> Tom: *Mmm*
> Graham: *And you have a suspicion that as soon as you walk out the door they're just going to go back to normal, so you go back and repeat it the next day and the next day*
> Tom: (laughs)
> Graham: *And the next day, and the next day. It will get there in the end. They'll get the idea you are not going to go away.*

> Tom: *Mmm. How do people respond, how do they respond to that? Do they get sort of thoroughly fed up with it or?*
> Graham: *No, erm, you might walk towards someone and they'll say 'look, it's all switched off. I know, I'm going home, I've switched it all off'* (laughs). *It's as simple as that, you just have to crack, be light-hearted not serious.'*
>
> (Graham interview, p44-5)

His emphasis on constant repetition of the key messages was echoed by many other Champions. Much like exercise at the gym, this process relies on gradually building up strength, little by little. The more often the message was repeated, the stronger it would become. The character of punishment in the initiative thus tended towards repetition and exercise, but in the last line of the quotation above, Graham also expresses its second characteristic: 'light-hearted, not serious.' As Foucault would have expected, the Champions emphasised the positive, fun, encouraging aspects of their new norm, more so than the negative.

As a general rule, the EC team avoided criticising or 'naming and shaming' (Craig interview, p13) their colleagues, and preferred instead to praise those who had performed well, hoping others would learn vicariously. In meetings, the team would often discuss the need to put a positive slant on their communications and, as the following extracts from my field diary show, early on their intentions became praising, incentivising, and rewarding good behaviour, and somewhat ignoring bad behaviour.

> 'There was then some discussion about how to motivate people and it was generally felt that incentives and rewards were the best way forwards, as well as competitions. Generally it was felt that the techniques should be fun – offering people the chance to go home half a day early if they won the contest, for example.'
>
> (FD:26)

> 'Eventually the group thought that an email saying which offices were doing well would be a good way to go. Sally said that 'telling people off' didn't work and instead praise should be used, so rather than saying 'don't switch the lights off,' you should say 'do save energy' for example. It was felt that this was a better approach to take.'
>
> (FD:106)

The purpose of such positive judgement, ultimately, is to eradicate the lowest categories of the taxonomies presented earlier, through constant improvement and progress. Following Sally's taxonomy, outlined above, such judgement should

eventually turn all terrorists into players and perhaps even generate the need for a new category of star players (or Champions). As the initiative progressed, the Champions did indeed suggest that the lower categories were less and less populated. In Louise's words:

> *'The great thing is those 50* [people who are responding well]*… are affecting that one* [person who is responding badly]*, yet that one isn't affecting those 50. And I think that's really apparent.'*
>
> (Louise interview, p27)

6.4.4 The Examination: Testing the Power/Knowledge of the Champions

The centrepiece of Foucault's mechanisms of discipline is *the examination*. The purpose of both hierarchical observation and normalising judgement is to gather knowledge of individuals such that action can be taken in accordance with this new knowledge. In the examination, these two mechanisms are combined. Crucially, through this combination of techniques the examination is able to link together 'a certain type of the formation of knowledge [with] a certain form of the exercise of power' (Foucault 1977, 187). As such, Foucault suggests that the examination has become both ever more constant throughout the disciplinary society, and at the same time 'highly ritualized' (Foucault 1977, 184). Both of these aspects are seen in the EC initiative at Bridgeford.

Throughout this and previous chapters, I have identified many different forms of examination that occurred within the EC initiative. These included, the staff survey, audits, spot-checks, and mentoring chats. All are a form of examination or review. As has been shown, these became ever more constant as the initiative progressed, to the extent that almost any employee at the site might have been found examining their own or their colleagues' conduct for its environmental credentials.

I have paid less attention to the 'highly ritualized' nature of environmental examinations at Bridgeford, nonetheless this was also seen. For example, the two major audits were both followed by key events in the initiative. The launch day communicated the initial audit results to everyone at the site, and similarly a celebration event, reserved for the Champions alone, ritually marked the improvements that had been made. Although of lesser stature, other examinations were also accompanied by an element of ritual: results were always widely

communicated; mentoring chats often had an element of the doctor's visit to the patient's bedside as each and everyone stopped what they were doing to listen to the advice on offer (FD:91); and spot-checks in the offices often caused quite a commotion as employees would follow the Champions around, offering humorous excuses, issuing challenges, and teasing each other, about their environmental performance (FD:217).

As with hierarchical observation and normalising judgement, the presence of forms of examination in the EC initiative at Bridgeford is impossible to deny. The key aspect of the examination for Foucault, however, is its joining of the creation of knowledge with the application of power. Whilst the level of documentation and administration at Bridgeford falls short of the ideal examples Foucault found in French prisons and hospitals, through these various forms of examination, the Champions built up a corpus of knowledge about their colleagues, enabling them to determine who was performing well (such as the mini-Champions) and who badly. This corpus of knowledge served to normalise employees, enabling judgements of them, and generating behavioural change to meet the new norm. In turn, as new behaviour occurred, new knowledge was gathered, new judgements could be made, and the norm became a moving, and environmentally improving, target. The Champions' environmental examinations thus combined new knowledge with a new form of power. In an inescapable fashion, the Champions' environmental discipline created the very objects that required further environmental discipline.

6.4.5 Environmental Discipline and Making Up Banal Environmentalism

Through these 'means of correct training' (Foucault 1977), the Champions thus introduced a new framework of power/knowledge – what I have called environmental discipline – to all individuals and practices at the Bridgeford site. SPT suggests that individuals are a key part of the practices they perform. Accordingly, Foucault suggests that a key effect of different forms of power/knowledge is to constitute individuals in new ways. I would thus suggest that the Champions' introduction of environmental discipline to workplace practices served to 'make up' (Hacking 1986) what might be called *environmental employees* across the Bridgeford site.

The preceding sections have shown how the EC initiative gave rise to forms of conspicuous and inconspicuous environmentalism at Bridgeford, new ways of

thinking, acting and interacting, that served to build environmental understandings and meanings into office practices. Even examples of resistance to the Champions' messages (section 6.2.3) posed no threat to the new environmental discipline. Foucault suggests that 'there are no relations of power without resistances' (Foucault 1980, 142). Rather than challenging or overthrowing power/knowledge, resistance instead serves to show it where next to turn and to provide new points of application. Sites of resistance to the Champions' environmental discipline are thus seen to provide further opportunities for 'making up' new environmental employees, even if the resistors are initially placed towards the bottom of the various environmental scales and norms being introduced.

By building environmental discipline into practices, and introducing new modes of being at the Bridgeford site, the EC initiative created a pervasive and self-reinforcing system. Foucault suggests that those who are subject to disciplinary power relations come to impose them upon themselves:

> 'He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.'
>
> (Foucault 1977, 202-3)

Environmental employees may thus be understood as those who judge and discipline themselves with regards to their anti- or pro-environmental behaviour.

By employing familiar, humble and mundane mechanisms, the Champions were thus able to bolster the apparent weakness of the EC initiative by building environmental procedures and concerns into existing office practices and linking an environmental discipline to existing, and more conventional, systems of workplace discipline. For these reasons I would therefore suggest that the EC initiative was able to introduce a banal environmentalism to the Bridgeford site, that is, one in which pro-environmental thoughts and actions assumed the status of normality.

6.5 Summary

This chapter began by considering the quantitative results of the EC initiative at Bridgeford. Rather than attempting to explain these results in terms of changes to

environmental attitudes or values, or in relation to the removal of contextual barriers by the EC initiative, it followed SPT's more descriptive approach to observe how such changes appeared to be expressed around the site. Looking at what actually happened at the site revealed several changes to the ways individuals interacted with one another, as well as an expressed change to the way people approached aspects of their daily practice. Most notably, a form of conspicuous environmentalism began to appear at the site in which colleagues made a point of performing in pro-environmental ways, or communally negotiated how to incorporate pro-environmental components into their daily practice. In addition, several acts of resistance to the initiative were observed in which people were seen to object to how the Champions' proposals interfered with their normal daily routines. Despite such acts of resistance, I argued that the EC initiative had brought about a new frame of interaction at Bridgeford. This was not a simple attitude change, but a socially shared new way of seeing which made environmentally significant acts somehow more visible. This conclusion raised a puzzling question however: how could something as weak as an environmental argument could have such powerful effects?

The second half of the chapter attempted to answer this question by observing that the EC initiative had deployed a series of disciplinary power mechanisms which obeyed Foucault's descriptions remarkably. Through such pervasive methods, the initiative was able to link in with existing disciplinary frameworks at the site and, ultimately, to create and maintain a pro-environmental frame at the site. Further still, however, the chapter suggested that such a process was not a simple, neutral process of making people see differently, but of 'making up' people in new ways, to create environmental employees. Ultimately, these processes served to introduce a pervasive and seemingly inescapable form of banal environmentalism to the Bridgeford site.

This chapter has thus provided a much more far-reaching understanding of behaviour change processes than is usually offered. It suggests that behaviour change is not a neutral process of encouraging people to voluntarily adopt new pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours, but instead that such processes may involve the subtle application of power mechanisms which, to some extent, force people to see themselves, others and the world around them in new ways. Equipped with this understanding it is easier to account for the various forms of resistance offered to the EC initiative. Chapter 5 highlighted how Facilities Management resisted many aspects of the initiative, and this chapter has observed several more informal and individual

acts of resistance to the EC initiative that are in many ways similar to the resistance to and subversion of the re-branding and CHANGE programmes highlighted in chapter 4. If at all, conventional understandings of pro-environmental behaviour change would explain such resistance as a failure to grasp the significance of environmental issues, an irrational rejection of environmental arguments, or an inability to act due to various contextual barriers. The analysis presented here, however, suggests that such acts of resistance may have occurred even with a full knowledge and understanding of environmental arguments and amongst individuals and communities of practice that were more than capable of pro-environmental action. It suggests that what was being resisted was not the environment *per se*, but the new environmental rationality being introduced by the EC initiative, how it was being applied to ongoing social practices, and the associated changes this attempted to effect on the very constitution of employees at the Bridgeford site. In this respect, resistance is not so much a failure of the initiative as an indication of its power and significance. Seen in this light, pro-environmental behaviour change is less a neutral process of education, and more a political process of socialisation involving power struggles over our understandings of our practices, others, and ultimately ourselves.

Chapter 7 Conclusion: Making the Transition from Thought to Practice

At the beginning of this thesis I suggested that conventional ways of thinking about environment-behaviour relations, that rely on changing individuals' decision-making processes, needed re-thinking to help capture the irreducible complexity of everyday lives. To begin this process, this thesis started from four original positions. First, that emerging debates in social practice theory (SPT) could provide a new theoretical lens by focusing on the social and collective organisation and *doing* of practices rather than individuals' thoughts about their behaviour. Second, that there was a need to consider the role of specific social contexts in shaping and structuring behaviour as more than a mere variable within individual decision-making processes, and as part of this that there has been a general neglect of behaviour in workplaces within this debate. Third, that the inherent individualism of conventional approaches was systematically blind to the crucial importance of social interactions in shaping how practices are performed, learned and changed. Fourth, that all of these reasons pointed to the need for new methodological approaches that are able to observe the situated performance of practices, a challenge for which an ethnographic approach seemed ideally suited. From these starting points I set myself the following four research questions:

> How do ideas about environmental change come to have an impact, or not, on everyday human behaviours?
>
> 1. What, if anything, does social practice theory offer the study of pro-environmental behaviour change?
> 2. In what ways are pro-environmental behaviours context specific and, in particular, what are the dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour at work?
> 3. What role, if any, does social interaction play in preventing or promoting the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviours into social practices?

I resolved to try and explore these questions through an ethnographic case study of a pro-environmental behaviour change initiative in a workplace. As a result, the

preceding chapters have offered an account of pro-environmental behaviour change processes that differs theoretically, empirically, methodologically and thus fundamentally from most contemporary research and policy in this area (e.g. Abrahamse *et al* 2007; Lorenzoni *et al* 2007; Darnton 2008; DEFRA 2008; Tudor *et al* 2008; Haq *et al* 2008). This concluding chapter will begin by reviewing the major findings of this study and relating them to my research questions. It will then consider the conceptual implications of this thesis and set out the basis for a new research agenda on environment-behaviour relations that focuses on processes of environmental socialisation.

7.1 Summary of Findings: What Actually Happened?

Each of the three preceding empirical chapters has stepped away from the conventional cognitive models discussed in chapter 2. In this section I will outline the major theoretical and practical findings of this ethnography to highlight the nature and benefits of this departure.

7.1.1 Practicing Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change

Chapter 4 introduced the Bridgeford site, described everyday practice before the EC initiative, and outlined the organisational context in which the EC initiative was set up. It then analysed the Champions' initial planning processes through the lens of Shove and Pantzar's (2005) conception of practices as assemblages of meanings, skills and stuff. It argued that rather than seeing the EC initiative as an attempt to change employees' attitudes, values or beliefs towards the environment, instead it might be more productively interpreted as a challenge to the organisation of practices at Bridgeford.

Some SPT-based accounts argue it is impossible for individuals to escape from social practices and act upon them intentionally from the outside (e.g. Schatzki 2002; Shove and Walker 2007). In contrast, chapter 4 suggested that, through auditing procedures and in their meetings, the Champions team was able to gather some critical distance from the daily work practices of which they were also a part. The audit process, with all the social awkwardness it induced indicative of the taken for granted nature of routine practices, illuminated everyday routines and procedures in

new and environmentally salient ways. In so doing, it enabled the Champions to disconnect themselves from their practices and problematise the meanings, skills and stuff out of which they were made. In a sense, it helped them disassemble and de-routinise their practices, in order to reconnect them with environmental issues and reassemble them accordingly. This process was aided by the protected setting of the team meetings that was cut off and distanced from the normal daily grind. In this context, environmental arguments were generally accepted, and could therefore be collectively discussed, experimented with, and applied to existing office practices. Through these processes, chapter 4 suggested, the EC team formed as a new, pro-environmental community of practice (Wenger 1998).

Having stepped outside and problematised their practices in these ways, chapter 4 then showed how the EC team constructed new practices-as-entities (Schatzki 2002) in their meetings. By suggesting that new skills needed to be learnt, new objects and infrastructures bought and installed, and new rationales for action diffused, the Champions discursively constructed new assemblages of meanings, skills and stuff that incorporated pro-environmental ideas. Furthermore, capitalising on their privileged boundary position of being at once inside and outside workplace practices, the Champions also devised a series of tactics by which they might sell their new practices-as-entities to their colleagues. These tactics were based largely on aligning their new pro-environmental rationality with existing and accepted forms of argument at the Bridgeford site.

Chapter 4 thus began to try and understand what SPT might offer to the study of pro-environmental behaviour change. From the outset, SPT provided a reading that was not based on the longstanding and seemingly commonplace assumption that behaviour change is the outcome of a linear and ultimately rational process of decision-making (as critiqued by Harrison and Davies 1998; Burgess *et al* 2003). Shove and Pantzar's (2005) understanding of practices provided a useful heuristic device to suggest that behaviour change processes involve addressing complex relations between meanings, skills and stuff within broader social practices. In this way, SPT appears to provide a more holistic, sophisticated and flexible interpretation of behaviour change processes that potentially offers more purchase points for change than individuals' cognitive dispositions. In addition, chapter 4 suggested that practices are interpreted and negotiated within specific communities of practice, and that processes of auditing and group discussion (through the team meetings) can help these

communities to step outside their practices, critique them, and plan ways to change them. SPT thus challenges existing reductive and individualistic understandings of pro-environmental behaviour change by suggesting instead that it is fundamentally a social and collective process.

Chapter 4 also carried the practical implications that processes of auditing and group discussions can be extremely useful in enabling and motivating people to challenge existing social practices. With regards to auditing, the facts and figures audits generate provide a means of disconnecting people from their daily practices, encouraging them to problematise their routine activities by localising environmental impacts, and thus prompting them to consider ways in which practices might be accomplished differently. In the EC initiative at Bridgeford, the facts and figures were particularly useful as quantitatively defined objectivity was already highly valued around the site. Auditing may thus be especially effective in workplaces, although there is evidence to suggest that measurement and feedback works well in other social settings too (Brandon and Lewis 1999; Staats *et al* 2004; Hargreaves *et al* 2008). Recent policy moves towards do-it-yourself carbon calculators (e.g. www.direct.gov.uk/actonco2 accessed on 25.10.08) or installing smart meters to monitor domestic energy use appear to be making steps in this general direction. I would suggest, however, that one of the key strengths of the audit in the EC initiative was that it provided the basis for new forms of social interaction around the environment.

With regards to group discussions, the Champions meetings provided another means of distancing practitioners from the flow of daily life and providing critical distance from existing practices. Furthermore, the meetings offered a social context that was supportive of and encouraged interaction around pro-environmental ideas (*cf.* Georg 1999). Adding the audit results into this context produced a situation in which the negative environmental impacts of existing practices were localised and made more tangible. This provided both the basis of, and motivation for, the discursive construction of new pro-environmental practices-as-entities. Future policy interventions to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change might therefore consider ways of using auditing processes and group discussions in combination with each other. Crucially, I would argue that the value of audit results lies not in the fact that they are a superior form of information to provide to individuals (although they

do indeed offer this), but in the way they can provoke social interactions around the nature of social practices and their environmental impacts.

7.1.2 Putting Practice in Context

Chapter 5 complicated the analysis presented in chapter 4 by considering what happened when the Champions' new and abstract practices-as-entities came into contact with existing practices-as-performances at the Bridgeford site. In particular, it focused on two central narratives that ran throughout the entire EC initiative: first, the Champions' attempt to organise a No Bin Day and how this was influenced by their relationship with the Facilities Management team; and second the EC initiative's relationship with the already established CHANGE programme.

In attempting to organise a No Bin Day as a means of introducing their new waste practices-as-entities to the Bridgeford site, the Champions team came into conflict with the Facilities Management team. Through a long series of complex negotiations, the Champions gradually uncovered ways in which the practices-as-performances they wished to replace were interlocked into a coherent and working system of practice at the site that ensured high, and sometimes legally required, standards of health, safety and commercial sensitivity, and that embodied particular moral norms and standards for office practices at Bridgeford. In the face of this complex system, and the more powerful Facilities Management team, the Champions were ultimately forced to compromise their more radical ideas and create a coalition within the terms set by the Facilities Management team in order to try and achieve their aims.

A similarly complex set of relationships occurred between the EC initiative and the CHANGE programme. Initially, both the Champions and the CHANGE programme organisers attempted to keep the two initiatives separate, for fear their messages would become confused and complicated. As the EC initiative progressed, however, the Champions found the discursive resources offered by the CHANGE programme useful to their ends and pragmatically employed them to boost the strength and spread of the EC initiative, even if at a potential cost to its original identity and message. I characterised this as a process of discursive hijacking, as the EC initiative co-opted aspects of the CHANGE programme to use as vehicles to achieve its own aims.

Chapter 5 thus suggested that, in the face of the existing system of practices at Bridgeford, with the associated rules, regulations, and standards it carried, the Champions initiative, armed with only a new environmental rationality, appeared rather weak. In most cases, the Champions were forced to back down in negotiations with other more established communities of practice that possessed their own, equally benign aims and standards around which the existing system of practices at the Bridgeford site had emerged over time. As the EC initiative progressed, the Champions increasingly realised their inability to challenge the existing system and to replace its practices with their own pro-environmental alternatives. Instead, their new practices-as-entities were gradually localised, contextualised and reinterpreted within the existing system of interrelated practices-as-performances at the Bridgeford site. Recognising they had limited room for manoeuvre, the Champions adopted a more pragmatic and incremental approach, making use of whatever resources were available to them to work within the existing system rather than challenge it from outside. Rather than replace existing practices, instead they created a new social network around the Bridgeford site that served to reform 'the rules' (Sally interview, p26) for how practices should be performed.

In observing the delivery of the EC initiative, chapter 5 served to expand the application of SPT to pro-environmental behaviour change begun in chapter 4. It showed that by focusing on the *doings* of practice, a practice perspective reveals the numerous interconnections between different practices, showing how they embody particular local and contextual norms and standards, how individuals are socialised within the practices they perform, and how different communities of practice are implicated in complicated, non-linear systems of practice that have emerged over time. Faced by this tangled web, it is easy to understand why social practices appear so resilient. Even if individuals are able to get outside and critique the practices they perform, the complex system they must deal with appears unlikely to respond to change interventions in a straightforward manner. In this respect, SPT adds a dose of realism to understandings of behaviour change that assume it requires little more than changing individual attitudes or removing contextual barriers.

These observations also reveal at least three ways in which SPT might be usefully developed. First, they suggest that SPT could benefit by paying greater attention to discourse by showing that practitioners are able to adopt different discursive positions in relation to their practices. Schatzki (1996, 89) implies that

practices come with pre-defined *shared understandings*, *formal rules* and *teleoaffective structures*. In contrast, the EC initiative suggests that communities of practice can challenge and contest these aspects of practice. Through auditing processes, and in the Champions meetings, this thesis has shown that, whilst it may be limited, practitioners do have some discursive room for manoeuvre within their practices. This finding is significant as it suggests it is possible, to some extent, for practitioners to step outside their practices, reflect upon them, and seek out ways to change them. Although this is not to imply that such attempts at change will succeed.

Second, these observations hint at the importance of power relations in the performance and negotiation of practices. They suggest that different communities of practice may desire different things of their practices and thus that attempts to change practices can involve local political processes involving struggles around precisely how practices should be constructed and performed. For example, in the EC initiative, the Facilities Management team wished to preserve a *status quo* in which practices preserved high levels of health and safety and data protection. The Champions, on the other hand, became almost a *'pressure group on facilities'* (FD:148), engaged in a political struggle to reassemble practices to achieve reduced environmental impacts. Considering behaviour change processes through the lens of SPT thus emphasises conflict and dis-sensus (*cf.* Warde 2005), and suggests that they may involve engagement in local power struggles. SPT might therefore be improved by adding-in a concern with the power relations within and between communities of practice.

Third, these observations question the basis of a simple distinction between practices-as-entities and practices-as-performances. Where practices-as-entities initially appear to be distinguishable and independent from one another, in the course of their performance they are revealed to be closely interlinked with other practices in complex and contextually specific systems of practice. This observation helps explain why the definitions of practice offered to date (see Reckwitz 2002a; Schatzki 1996 and section 2.3.1) appear so difficult to apply empirically. It seems as if the harder one tries to distinguish between and isolate practices-as-entities, the more links and interconnections one finds between different practices and thus the fuzzier they appear to become. Future applications of SPT should therefore include a clear focus on the performances of practices and how they interlink into complex systems, rather than continuing to focus on the organisation of single practices which reinforces an idealised view of practices as abstract entities.

With regards to SPT, chapter 5 thus tempered the implicit optimism of chapter 4 by showing how behaviour change necessarily involves engaging with the organisation and performance of social practices as they are interlinked into complex contextual systems. Pro-environmental behaviour change is thus seen to demand a much larger and more fundamental challenge to existing social systems than is suggested by conventional attempts to change individuals' cognitive dispositions. Reckwitz (2002a, 251) argues that social order exists in practices. Accordingly, and as chapter 5 suggests, attempts to change practices demand addressing complex and coherent social systems that have taken many years to develop and which, to some extent, appear to embody and uphold the normative basis of society.

In addition to these observations about SPT, chapter 5 also began to explore the contextual nature of pro-environmental behaviour change processes in more detail. In chapter 4 it was shown how the Champions team formed their ideas and plans by considering existing practices, norms and rationalities at the Bridgeford site. They then consciously attempted to make their new pro-environmental practices-as-entities work within these contextual dynamics at the same time as they hoped to change these very dynamics. Chapter 5 went further to show that as the initiative progressed, the Champions rather abstract practices-as-entities were progressively localised, contextualised and reinterpreted within the existing system of practices-as-performances at the Bridgeford site. In particular, the existing power of the Facilities Management team's health and safety rationales demanded a reconsideration and tempering of the Champions' plans. Chapter 5 thus showed how understandings of the environment and pro-environmental behaviour are always locally and contextually constructed and contested (*cf*. Burningham and O'Brien 1994; Nye and Hargreaves 2008). As such, there appears to be no such coherent and stable thing as pro-environmental behaviour, or even the environment, in the absence of considering its contextual construction (Ungar 1994; Jones 2002).

Within this thesis, the context in question was that of the workplace. The Bridgeford site was shown to contain specific sets of rules and resources. These took various forms, such as in legal standards e.g. for data protection or health and safety; formalised and hierarchical relationships between people e.g. in a duty of care or regular employee appraisals; and in specific contextual histories and initiatives e.g. previous attempts to introduce recycling trays or the ongoing CHANGE programme. The EC initiative was forced to work within this system. In doing so, certain things

were made possible that may have been impossible or inappropriate in other settings, and vice-versa. For example, the relationships between people were constrained by certain rules of professional etiquette and competence meaning that the Champions plans could not be too radical, but also that individual employees may have felt as if they had less autonomy to resist or reject an official workplace initiative. As such pro-environmental behaviour change in a workplace appears likely to involve very different dynamics than it would in other settings.

What is perhaps more significant, however, is that rather than focusing on the workplace *per se*, chapter 5 implied that the most important part of context is the communities of practice (Wenger 1998) within them. In line with postmodern developments in organisational sociology (Cooper and Burrell 1988), workplaces should not be seen as single, coherent entities, but as consisting of a wide variety of different individuals, groups and communities with potentially conflicting understandings and contextual constructions of the organisation. In this light, chapter 5 showed how the EC initiative, and associated constructions of the environment and pro-environmental behaviour, was formed out of the interactions and power struggles between the EC team and other communities of practice around the site. Although abstract social practices span across many different physical settings, this thesis has shown that they are always locally and contextually enacted by specific communities of practice. Rather than focusing on different physical settings such as homes and workplaces (e.g. Tudor *et al* 2007), or dividing and classifying isolated individuals and aggregating them into population segments according to their environmental attitudes or values (e.g. DEFRA 2008), this thesis suggests instead that attention should be paid to how pro-environmental behaviour is negotiated within and between different communities of practice, and how this results in its incorporation, or not, into contextual systems of practices.

Chapter 5 also carries a paradoxically impractical practical implication. In short, it suggests that there can be no one size fits all approach with regards to pro-environmental behaviour change. Audience segmentation and tailored messages are making some steps in differentiating and contextualising pro-environmental behaviour change policies and initiatives, but by retaining a focus on individuals they miss the central arena in which behaviour change is negotiated and given meaning, that is within communities of practice. Within different social settings, practices unfold according to very specific local dynamics. The ways in which they need changing and

the best ways of bringing about those changes are also shaped by those same dynamics. Whilst this poses significant problems for addressing large sections of the population or up-scaling behaviour change interventions, I would also suggest that this may be an awkward and uncomfortable fact. Simply stated, there may be no magic bullets or easy shortcuts when the challenge being addressed is re-defining the nature and basis of society.

7.1.3 Interaction and Power in Environment Champions

Chapter 6 considered the outcomes of the EC initiative. It showed that whilst quite large reductions in waste and energy use had been achieved, there was not an obvious change in the practices employees were performing. As chapter 5 had suggested, the practices themselves were not replaced by the EC initiative, but had been re-formed and reassembled to include a pro-environmental component. Where conventional approaches would seek to explain these quantitative savings by seeking corresponding changes in employees' cognitive dispositions, following SPT's focus on the *doings* of practice this thesis instead sought to observe what had changed in the outward, social performance of practices.

It found that whilst employees initially explained they had learnt new things or had had their environmental awareness raised, when such comments were probed more deeply they suggested instead that the initiative had in fact served to activate and apply a pre-existing latent knowledge within practical performances. Around the site, this latent knowledge was employed in a variety of ways. Most obviously, it produced forms of what might be called *conspicuous environmentalism*. Quite suddenly, employees began to actively and openly joke with or tease each other about the environment, hold discussions, debates and even arguments about pro-environmental acts, and even put on public performances of their new pro-environmental behaviours. The EC initiative thus appeared to have brought about some quite significant changes to social interactions at Bridgeford. Less visibly, but equally significant, in interviews both Champions and non-Champions alike disclosed ways in which the EC initiative had prompted them to stop and reflect on their practices and consciously try to add a pro-environmental component to them. They also began to behave pro-environmentally behind one another's backs, for example by switching lights off in unoccupied offices. I termed this a form of *inconspicuous*

environmentalism. Further still, the initiative appeared to have changed perceptions of the offices for both Champions and non-Champions such that issues of environmental relevance, e.g. a light left on or waste in the wrong bin, became obvious, noticed, and commented upon. I therefore suggested that the EC initiative had served to make the environment and pro-environmental behaviour a salient normative issue in the performance of practices at Bridgeford. In this respect, it had served to introduce a new frame (Goffman 1974) to practices that demanded new presentations of self (Goffman 1959) from employees. Billig (1995) might suggest these processes represent the beginnings of a *banal environmentalism*. An environmentalism that is so pervasive, in the context of the Bridgeford site, that it has become an almost natural order of things.

These observations raised a puzzling question however: how could an initiative that had appeared so weak have such significant effects? To address this I looked more closely at the subtle metaphors and 'humble and mundane mechanisms' (Miller and Rose 1990, 8) used in the EC initiative. To my surprise I found that much of what the Champions initiative had involved corresponded strikingly well with Foucault's observations about discipline (Foucault 1977). Throughout the initiative, the Champions had used wholly familiar, but as such extremely powerful, techniques of pro-environmental discipline that served to re-define time, space, practices and even individuals around the site in pro-environmental ways. They had worked from inside the existing disciplinary grid of the workplace and introduced new forms of environmental surveillance, normalisation and examination. As such, whilst the EC initiative could not remove or replace practices at Bridgeford, it was seemingly able to restructure them according to a new pro-environmental framework. In short, the EC initiative appeared to have brought about a re-socialisation process at the Bridgeford site, one where existing practices were rearranged in pro-environmental ways to 'make up' (Hacking 1986) the environmental employees needed to perform them.

The first half of chapter 6 began to develop an understanding of the role played by social interaction in bringing about, or preventing, pro-environmental behaviour change. Conventional approaches increasingly recognise the importance of social networks (e.g. Olli *et al* 2001) in facilitating pro-environmental behaviour change. Nonetheless, their over-reliance on questionnaire surveys means that whilst social interaction has been identified as potentially important, it is never observed and, as such, its real effects and significance are systematically factored out of

analyses. In this thesis, however, the use of participant observation techniques allowed the detailed recording of social interaction processes and has shown their fundamental importance in the unfolding of pro-environmental behaviours on the ground. Goffman's (1959; 1963a; 1974) work suggests that micro-level social interactions contain a strong normative element as different situations involve different 'norms concerning involvement' (Goffman 1963a, 193). Chapter 6 showed that, by various means, the Champions were able to alter the dominant definition of the situation within work practices at Bridgeford to include new, pro-environmental 'norms concerning involvement.' In particular, during the EC initiative, failure to display pro-environmental concern could lead to a variety of different social sanctions from simple awkwardness to embarrassment and even shame (*cf.* Scheff 2000; Billig 2001).

Such apparent changes are all the more significant when it is remembered that, at the beginning of the EC initiative, it was shown how existing social interactions at Bridgeford seemingly militated against the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviour within work practices. In their early meetings, for example, the Champions expressed concerns that their proposals did not align well with the economic and technical norms that dominated at the site. Such a misalignment, they feared, would result in them being discredited as *'hippies'*, as *'a bunch of tree huggy saps,'* or even receiving the tangible reaction of being punched (FD:33). Moisander and Pesonen (2002) suggest that across much of mainstream society there is a similarly derogatory vision of environmentally committed individuals as weird, gullible, hypocritical and irrational (see also Bedford 1999). As such, it is easy to see how the normative aspect of interaction processes can serve to keep pro-environmental acts out of everyday social practices.

These observations suggest that social interaction plays a central, and very powerful, role in shaping whether or not pro-environmental behaviour is incorporated into social practices. It is in micro-level social interactions, that norms, attitudes, values and beliefs are activated and come to have an impact on social practices (Goffman 1959, 1963a). Outside such situations, for example in questionnaire surveys shut off from the surrounding context of daily life, their expression and effects might be quite different (*cf.* Billig 1996; Myers 2004). Micro-level interactions thus represent the most fundamental and ubiquitous medium through which pro-environmental behaviours are negotiated and performed. If pro-environmental norms

concerning involvement can be activated, as they were in the EC initiative, social interaction can play a powerful role in bringing about pro-environmental change as people will remind, prompt, and help one another to align with the appropriate definition of the situation. If they cannot, the opposite effects may be equally powerfully felt. This suggests the practical implication that pro-environmental behaviour change initiatives should strive to bring about new forms of social interaction that support pro-environmental behaviours. This demands addressing individuals not in isolation, but in social situations and as social actors.

The second half of chapter 6 changed the focus somewhat and began to consider a second way in which power was implicated in the EC initiative. Where chapter 5 had considered power relations between the Champions team and other communities of practice at Bridgeford, chapter 6 began to consider the power *effects* (*cf.* Foucault 1980) of the EC initiative on individuals and practices around the Bridgeford site. SPT suggests that individuals' minds and bodies are elements of, or 'carry,' the practices they perform (*cf.* Reckwitz 2002a; Shove and Pantzar 2005; Warde 2005). It is for this reason that SPT also considers it difficult if not impossible for individuals to get outside their practices. Chapter 6 argued, however, that it is possible for communities of practice to contest and re-define the ways in which individual minds and bodies are disciplined (Foucault 1977) by their practices. It showed that the Champions were able to add a form of environmental discipline to the existing structuring of practices at Bridgeford that was concerned with economic production within legal and health and safety bounds.

What these observations imply is that interventions to encourage pro-environmental behaviour, as much as they represent a progressive, educational and benevolent impulse, are also part of a broader process of rearranging the effects of power across society to produce new forms of social control. Foucault (1977, 1980, 1984, 1991) argues that power is inescapable, coterminous with society itself, but also that it is positive and productive. In this respect, whilst it may sound somewhat sinister, discipline is not a dirty word. Humans are disciplined in different ways throughout their lives as part of the process of maturing and learning to exercise self-restraint. Many of the environmental, social and health problems currently being experienced in Western societies can thus be seen as the result of a general lack of discipline within societies devoted to short-term gratification for free and sovereign consumers. Attempts to change behaviour, whether in regards to the environment,

smoking, alcoholism, obesity or dangerous driving (Maio *et al* 2007; Darnton 2008) might therefore be more appropriately framed as processes of reigning in unruly and ill-disciplined aspects of everyday practice. Within this framing, future research might consider the extent to which pro-environmental behaviour change processes differ from behaviour change in these other more immediately individualistic lifestyle areas.

This conception of behaviour change processes raises a quite significant practical implication for future interventions. If pro-environmental behaviour change is seen as a new form of social control, Foucault would suggest it will also give rise to forms of resistance (Foucault 1980). Within the EC initiative resistance was indeed encountered. It was able to redirect and change the Champions' plans, but the Champions were also able to use it to their advantage, framing resistors as lazy, ignorant or out of date. Not only do forms of environmental resistance deserve further research attention, they also pose the practical question of how to introduce forms of social control without being authoritarian and provoking excessive resistance or even outright rejection. Gordon (2000) finds an answer in Foucault's work that resembles, I would suggest, some aspects of the EC initiative:

> 'Foucault's work suggests that the governmental relation needs to be remoralized, from both sides…a new respect for those who govern for the governed, the acceptance that the conduct of government must be rationally justified to and accepted by those whom it affects, and a practice, on the side of the governed, of participative cooperation with government, without unconditional complicity, compliance, or subservience – neither shoulder to shoulder, nor on bended knee, but, as [Foucault] put it, *'debout et en face,'* upright and face to face.'
>
> (Gordon 2000, xxxvi-xxxvii)

In short, this suggests that attempts to bring about pro-environmental behaviour change should pay greater respect to individuals. Rather than assuming they are behaving incorrectly and require a form of corrective education or manipulation by advertising techniques, it should conceive of them as knowledgeable, capable and active agents (*cf.* Heiskanen 2005), seek to understand the contextual logics of their existing practices and, on this basis, treat them as equal and worthy partners in the need to address environmental problems. Such recognition would demand involving various individuals and communities of practice at all stages of behaviour change processes but, arguably, such democratic engagement is the least that should be expected for what are, in effect, attempts to change society.

This ethnographic case study has thus provided a radically different reading of pro-environmental change processes. By creating a narrative of behaviour change it has been able to highlight the complexity, reflexivity, and tiny but significant details involved in the social negotiation and performance of practices. Such issues are typically ignored in more conventional and reductive attempts to create cause-effect models of individuals' decision-making processes. As is the nature of an ethnographic and grounded theory approach, whilst it has made some significant advances, it has been unable to provide neat or final answers to any of my research questions. Instead, it showed the issues of social practice, context, and social interaction to be inextricably interrelated and intertwined in the course of behaviour change processes in real life settings.

7.2 Making Pro-Environmental Behaviour Work: Towards a New Research Agenda on Environmental Socialisation

The over-arching research question for this thesis was not new: How do ideas about environmental change come to have an impact, or not, on everyday human behaviours? Variants of it have been being asked since at least the 1970s (e.g. Craik 1973; Maloney and Ward 1973), but the apparent failure to find effective answers to it is what motivated me to attempt a new approach. A single study cannot hope to answer this question, but I hope this thesis has explored new ways of thinking about it, and thus may represent the beginnings of finding some new answers.

This thesis has found that pro-environmental behaviour change involves a collective process of renegotiating the relationship between everyday practices and the environment that is undertaken within and between communities of practice. Whilst this may sound obvious, it is a radically different conception of environment-behaviour relations than one which contends that behaviour change begins with individual cognitive adjustment. Instead, it suggests that ideas about the environment influence daily practice through various socialisation processes shown, in this thesis, to reside in social interactions and power relations within and between communities of practice. Presently, most social situations do not demand either pro-environmental awareness or action. Rather than changing individuals, therefore, this thesis suggests that what is needed first is to change the nature of the social situation to include an environmental component. In the process of achieving this, individuals and

communities may then undergo a process of environmental socialisation, re-socialising themselves into the changed situation.

In the EC initiative, this process of *environmental socialisation* involved the use of Foucauldian disciplinary mechanisms. The Champions introduced a banal environmentalism to the Bridgeford site by changing the way everyday practices were structured and interpreted. This is not to suggest, however, that this is the only means by which behaviour change will work. In his later writings, Foucault himself suggested that individuals could autonomously change themselves and resist the dominant *dispositif* through 'technologies of the self' (Martin *et al* 1988) for example. Arguably, contemporary social marketing interventions have a role to play here. I would contend, however, that the limited success they have achieved so far is explained less by the cognitive changes they induce, and more by the manner in which they have encouraged and enabled people to activate, apply, and interact around pro-environmental ideas in the course of daily practice. Cognitive changes, in this view are a by-product of broader changes to social dynamics, rather than the engine of those changes. In short, what I am arguing here is that pro-environmental behaviour requires a social situation in which it is understood, accepted, and even expected within routine social practices. At Bridgeford, environmental employees were made up inside an environmental organisation created by the Champions. By logical extension, would-be environmental citizens require an environmental state, with the implication that they may currently be stateless. Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour change thus appears to demand a parallel, or even prior, process of collective environmental socialisation.

To suggest there is a need to move away from individual level behaviour change and towards collective environmental socialisation processes is a bold claim. From the very outset this research was exploratory, attempting to approach old questions in new ways. I hope and believe I have demonstrated that the original starting points of this thesis, the approach it has taken, and the new questions and answers it has arrived at, offer much promise for producing new and more effective understandings of environment-behaviour relations. A single case study cannot hope to fulfil this promise on its own however. To bring this thesis to a close I will therefore highlight the five major conceptual advances it has made. I would suggest that they form the beginnings of a future research agenda on environmental socialisation.

First, this thesis has suggested that behaviour change, and at least the incremental reform of social practices, is possible, but that the key forum in which such change occurs is communities of practice. Most current research and policy in this area focuses on targeting behaviour change interventions to specific population segments (e.g. DEFRA 2008). Regardless of the statistical sophistication or accuracy of such approaches, they retain the atomised individual as their central focus and thus miss out the dynamics of social interaction within communities of practice that appear crucial to the negotiation of changes to practices. Research should therefore consider how best to engage communities of practice in the research process. Future studies might therefore focus on groups of colleagues (as in the EC initiative), families, or other social networks such as sports teams, book groups, and other special interest communities (*cf.* Macnaghten 2003). Perhaps more significantly, as the concept of communities of practice has been most applied within organisational sociology (e.g. Brown and Duguid 1991; Lindkvist 2005; Roberts 2006), I would suggest there is considerable scope for interdisciplinary working and cross-fertilisation between work in this area and research on pro-environmental behaviour change.

Second, this thesis has shown that social dynamics and interactions can no longer be ignored in research on pro-environmental behaviour change. Indeed, this study has contended that social interactions are the crucial vehicle in which pro-environmental thoughts and behaviours are activated and come to have effects (*cf.* Myers 2004). Future research that focuses explicitly on the role of micro-level social interactions in pro-environmental behaviour change thus seems warranted. In particular, such research might consider how interactions across different domains of life influence the incorporation of pro-environmental behaviour into practices. For example, what is the significance of family interactions around the dinner table, in the morning rush for the bathroom, or around the TV? And how might they incorporate or shut out pro-environmental elements? How do specific interactions e.g. between husband and wife, or between employer and employee, impact upon environmental behaviours? How do interactions differ between strangers, colleagues, friends or lovers and what significance might these different kinds of interaction have? It would also be interesting to reanalyse social marketing and mass media campaigns from this perspective and ask what impacts, if any, they have on various social dynamics and interactions. These questions are unanswerable by reductive theoretical approaches that attempt to contain these contingent and social processes within individuals'

decision-making procedures. Instead, I would suggest that research on pro-environmental behaviour faces up to the irreducible complexity of everyday lives and that to do this requires adopting more holistic theoretical approaches that illuminate behaviours as they unfold in real life situations.

Third, this thesis has invoked the role of power in pro-environmental behaviour change processes in two distinct ways. On the one hand it has suggested that power relations between different communities of practice can play a significant role in these processes. It found the EC team to be relatively weak in their relationships with other more established communities of practice such as the Facilities Management team for example. Further research might therefore consider the impact of such local political struggles in attempts to bring about pro-environmental behaviour. In particular, it should seek ways of boosting the power of the environment within local and contextual relationships. On the other hand, this thesis has suggested that pro-environmental behaviour change involves changes to the power effects of routine social practices, by modifying them to make up environmental employees or even environmental citizens for example. It showed that the environment is currently a weak form of argument and seemingly has little influence within current practices. Further research could therefore focus on the anti-environmental power effects of current social practices and ask how they might be challenged and changed. Revisiting some of Foucault's ideas (*cf.* Darier 1996a, 1996b, 1999) has potential here. These observations also gave rise to notions of environmental resistance. Considering this more closely in future research might provide an alternative, more active and dynamic understanding of anti-environmental behaviour than is provided by current appeals to contextual and perceived barriers (*cf.* Lorenzoni *et al* 2007) to pro-environmental action. In both of these cases, this thesis suggests there is a need to re-politicise environment-behaviour relations as part of a future agenda on environmental socialisation.

Fourth, these issues point towards a different methodological basis for research on pro-environmental behaviour change. It is no longer acceptable, or environmentally responsible, to continue to rely on large scale questionnaire surveys in this area. Not only are they seen to create the realities they purport to describe (Ungar 1994; Corral-Verdugo 1997), they also perpetuate a methodological individualism and cognitivism that, this thesis suggests, is unable to grasp the scale of the challenge being faced (*cf.* Heiskanen 2005). What is needed are methodological

approaches that are flexible and sensitive enough to cope with the contextual performance of practices by truly social actors. In this thesis I have found a combination of participant observation and interviews highly suitable for this task as it enabled both observation of practices and consideration of practitioners' understandings of the practices they perform. Video-based methods (e.g. Martens and Scott 2004) might also be able to explore some of these dynamics, and action research techniques (Reason and Bradbury 2001) that work alongside and emphasise the active nature of communities of practice also hold much potential. This thesis has also shown that it is insufficient to take snapshots of people's attitudes, values or beliefs, however large or statistically representative, and aggregate them into static correlations and models of decision-making processes that shut out the real details of everyday interactions and practices. Instead, I would suggest that future research adopts a longitudinal, contextual, and dynamic stance, considering how processes unfold over time and in particular spaces, and that provides stories of behaviour change rather than models. Alternative analytical techniques could help in this task. In particular detailed discourse and conversation analysis potentially offer a great deal (*cf.* Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Fairclough 2003), so too might different forms of narrative analysis (*cf.* Riessman 1993, 2008; Franzosi 1998).

Finally, I would suggest it is time for research to make the transition from cognition to practice. This thesis has suggested that SPT provides a very useful framework for investigating environment-behaviour relations. It has also suggested ways it might be improved through the addition of concerns with interaction, discourse and power. I do not expect to have won over social practice theorists who would contest my use of the terms behaviour and context alongside practice. I would argue, however, that a more flexible and pragmatic stance is needed to realise the potential benefits of this approach. I would advise, for example, that future applications of SPT focus on the contextual performances and *doings* of practices rather than their abstract organisation. Grounding SPT in this way may fail to produce conceptual clarity and philosophical precision but, I would contend, it is vital to help generate better understandings of what actually happens in behaviour change processes.

Whilst the application of SPT to behaviour change processes makes the challenge seem frighteningly large, this thesis has also suggested that there is room for optimism. Collectively, within communities of practice, it appears it is sometimes

possible to restructure and re-form practices in specific contexts, and thus to re-discipline and re-socialise ourselves to become environmental employees, or perhaps environmental citizens (Dobson and Bell 2005). What has not been considered, as it was not achieved in the EC initiative, is whether or not unsustainable practices can be dismantled, eradicated or intentionally fossilised (Shove and Pantzar 2006). Further research is thus necessary to discern if small and incremental reforms of practices can lead on to bigger changes, to changes in other practices, or to changes across other domains of social life.

Over the last three decades, work on pro-environmental behaviour change has focused almost exclusively on the values side of the value-action gap (Blake 1999). This thesis has suggested that it is local, contextual and social dynamics invoked in the course of the everyday performance of practices that fundamentally shape whether or not pro-environmental behaviour change occurs. Whilst many of the observations in this thesis might seem small and insignificant, I would suggest that this banal and mundane level is precisely that which is most ubiquitous and therefore important in behaviour change processes. I would therefore argue that it is time to start addressing the value-action gap from the side of action. In conclusion, to make pro-environmental behaviour work, future research and policy should concentrate less on thought about thought, and more on thought about practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Initial Research Proposal to Burnetts

Research Proposal: Realising Burnetts' Commitment to Sustainability in Everyday Working Practices

The research would investigate the challenges Burnetts employees face, and the level of success they achieve, in integrating more sustainable behaviour across all areas of their everyday lives (at work and potentially at home as well) as a result of the Environment Champions programme.

Research Outline

The research would be conducted alongside Global Action Plan's Environment Champions programme. Through detailed qualitative research involving both interviews with and observation of employees at work, the research would generate new knowledge and deeper understanding of the everyday challenges employees face in putting sustainability values into practice across the work-life interface. The research would adopt an approach that views Burnetts employees as key experts in understanding and creating Burnetts' work culture, and therefore on how sustainability commitments might be realised and grown within it. The work would be as flexible as possible in order to fit around the needs and busy work lives of Burnetts employees, and would accord with the British Sociological Association's ethical code to ensure full confidentiality and anonymity.

Benefits of the Research

The research would:

- Increase employee engagement and buy-in for the Environment Champions programme by providing additional opportunities for reflection on sustainability at work.
- Maximise learning from the Environment Champions programme by exploring employee experiences of developing a sustainability culture within Burnetts.
- Provide independent verification for the results of the Environment Champions programme.

Research Requirements

The use of in-depth qualitative methods for this research will generate rich and detailed insights into the challenges employees face in putting sustainability commitments into practice in their working lives. Such methods take time and require access to necessary work sites, but are also flexible and can fit around the demands of participants. The proposed project would require:

- Access to the Environment Champions meetings.
- Up to 2-3 weeks site access and minimal workspace to observe work practices.
- Sufficient permission and time for employees, both the Champions and some of their main colleagues, to be interviewed (maximum 4 hours per employee).

The precise details of the research are flexible and negotiable. Ideally, the majority of the research would be conducted during the communications campaign phase of

Environment Champions programme, with some observation and interviews being conducted during each theme month.

Tom Hargreaves (sent on 02.03.08)

About the Researcher

Tom Hargreaves is a PhD student at the University of East Anglia. He has a BA from Cambridge University and an MSc from University College London. He was also a *Forum for the Future* scholar and gained extensive placement-based experience in a range of organisations including Vodafone, the Sustainable Development Commission and Nottinghamshire County Council. He has previously conducted consultancy work for Global Action Plan, Imperial College and DEFRA.

Appendix 2 Revised Access Request Letter to Burnetts

Dear Steven,

I thought it might be useful if I followed up on my email of a few weeks ago to introduce myself personally and perhaps give you a little more information about my research proposal.

I am currently doing my PhD with Professor Jacquie Burgess at the University of East Anglia and have been working with her and Global Action Plan to try and understand the dynamics of behaviour change in their group-based approach to behaviour change. In particular, my research interest is in how organisations develop and maintain a 'sustainability culture' through this kind of intervention, which is why I'd be extremely interested in doing some research with Burnetts. I have re-attached the initial proposal I sent you[16], but to offer a bit more information I'd be very keen to understand the day to day workings of Burnetts and how this interacts with the attempt to spread sustainability across the organisation. How does sustainability take on different shapes in different parts of the organisation? And, crucially, how can Burnetts ensure that changes to more sustainable working practices endure?

To answer these kinds of questions would require detailed qualitative research involving observation and interviews with staff at Burnetts, and I would propose to do this through some kind of internship/placement process. I am a graduate of Forum for the Future's Masters programme in 'Leadership for Sustainable Development' which is based around a series of six placements in which scholars undertake work for their host organisations that helps identify and overcome the various sector-specific and cross-sectoral challenges involved in moving towards sustainable development. For example, during the course I completed work for Vodafone designing an 'Economic Footprinting' tool for their corporate sustainability department, for the Environment Agency developing a Sustainability Appraisal Tool for Business, and for the Sustainable Development Commission in helping devise a strategy for work on sustainable consumption and production.

I wondered if, as part of my research, there might be similar projects I could undertake to help Burnetts develop an understanding of the specific demands involved in becoming leaders in sustainable construction? Such an approach to the research, I think, could be of benefit both to Burnetts in building upon the success I'm sure the Environment Champions programme will achieve, and also for me in helping to establish a detailed understanding of the developing sustainability culture within the organisation.

I would be extremely grateful if you would consider my proposals and perhaps if you could spare a little time to meet or discuss them with me? I am very flexible in my approach to the research so would welcome any suggestions you might have on how the proposed project could go forward.

Many thanks,
Tom Hargreaves (sent on 21.03.07)

[16] This is included in this thesis as appendix 1.

Appendix 3 Email to the Champions Team Explaining the Nature of my Research

Dear All,

I thought I should send an email around the Champions group to introduce myself to those I didn't get a chance to meet at the planning meeting on April 4th, and also to thank everyone who was there for making me feel welcome. I really enjoyed the meeting and am looking forward to working with you in trying to achieve what I think are some quite ambitious targets.

For those I didn't get a chance to introduce myself to, I'm a PhD student at the University of East Anglia and my research focuses on the challenges people face in changing everyday behaviours to try and live more sustainable lifestyles. I am therefore extremely interested in how the Environment Champions programme unfolds at Burnetts. Specifically, I'm interested in how you, as Champions, attempt to change your own everyday practices to be more sustainable, and in how you attempt to influence and encourage your colleagues at Bridgeford to adopt more sustainable working practices.

If you'll let me, I hope to carry out this research during the running of the Environment Champions programme through a combination of helping out with the various Environment Champions meetings and events, carrying out interviews with you and potentially with some of your colleagues, and also through simple observational techniques.

I hope that all sounds OK. I'd be really interested in attending and helping out at any of the planning meetings and events that are being arranged so please do let me know if you're happy for me to come along. Also, if any of you have any questions about me or my research I'd be only too happy to talk to you more about it so don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thanks again for making me feel welcome at the meeting last week and I look forward to working with you over the coming months.

Tom (sent on 12.04.07)

Appendix 4 Extract from my Field Diary

Thursday 13th September 2007

Then it was time for the audit. Leanne started it, a little early at 17:10 – she looked as if she wanted to go home. She had a clipboard and sort of sauntered around the office, wandering into and out of each bay in a very suspicious manner. By the time she got to Phil and Roger's bay – Phil said 'are you OK Leanne? You look a bit lost?' Roger said: 'She's checking the bins or something.' Leanne then replied saying 'don't make me lose count' – it was all rather odd. As it was going on, Leslie turned to me and said 'it's too early really, I mean look everyone's still here.' Then, for one reason or another, she started talking about Matthew. She said 'I mean look, he's buggered off home and left them [the air conditioning units] all on. He goes round and turns them all on and I've had people say to me 'why does he turn mine on?' I mean why can't he just turn the one closest to him on? How can the ones right at the other end of the room have any effect on him where he sits? I've had arguments with him, so he knows it.'

Anyway, as it was deemed, by Leslie, too early to fairly audit the highways room, we loaded the dishwasher instead, She went off to find lots of cups to ensure it was full telling me 'look at all this, they're a bunch of slobs in there' as she returned with about eight cups. We loaded the machine and as we left the room Leslie was saying something about how many cups there were and Jack said 'you aren't moaning are you Leslie? What a surprise!' So she's evidently got a bit of a reputation. Leslie walked right into the far end of the office and, although we were supposed to be auditing the electric appliances left on, she focused on bins – she went up to the first bin she found, looked in it and found a large manila envelope. She said to its owner 'ah, ah, ah what's this?' he replied with a laugh 'it's not mine, look (taking it out) its Steven's.' Leslie said: 'well in any case, it shouldn't be there, you should recycle it, because the cleaners won't collect it otherwise.' He took it out and went to recycle it, but not without saying 'so can you recycle envelopes then?' As he walked off to the bin, all his mates on the other side of the room made a collective 'ooh' sound and generally laughed at the whole situation.

Leslie made her way to the next bin which had an absolute load of paper in it – she had a quick word with the guy – 'what's all this?' He said 'it's not mine.' She told him it'd need to be recycled, would he take it out and recycle it otherwise it wouldn't be collected, and he promised her to do so, just not on the spot. She confirmed 'there should be no paper at all in your bin.'

Then, as we were leaving, we went up to Jack – who sits at the end of the room and looked in his bin. As it happened there was no rogue recyclable waste in there. He joked around with a tiny tiny scrap of paper, picking it up off the floor and putting it in his recycling tray 'I'm being good.' Leslie told him he should recycle everything and he replied, more to his mates, 'I've had my wrist well and truly slapped there.'

As this happened Leanne went round doing an audit of the computers left on – but she wasn't really looking at what she was doing – just ticking at random and talking to herself saying 'if I get them to switch it off at the wall, I can just say they were all off

can’t I?’ So not exactly thorough – again, the emphasis seemed to be more on rapidity here.

Then we moved into the corridor and into the offices that come off the side of the building. As we did this we talked to the people in the offices – Leslie went into one of them and said ‘it’s so cold in here.’ The occupant replied ‘it’s just right, I was hot.’ Leslie then said ‘you get a gold star if you turn everything off when you leave.’

We checked the toilets – everything off.

Went into a few people’s unoccupied offices and turned things off at the wall etc., etc.

Then we chatted to another chap. Leslie said ‘you will turn everything off when you leave?’ he replied ‘no, I was thinking of leaving everything on actually’ – he was joking of course.

As we left we looked again at the printers – adjusted the timer switches – Leanne and Leslie said they should get another timer switch for one of the printers – but who knows if this’ll actually happen or not.

Appendix 5 Interview Schedule

Preamble

Explain confidentiality, ask participant to read and sign consent form.

Remind them that they're the expert – so I want to listen rather than talk.
Ask them to say as much as they can. I'm interested in getting opinions, there are no right or wrong answers.

Section 1: Their Job

To start with then, I wondered if you could just describe to me what your job involves?

Prompts:
-What's your job title?
-Go through a typical day? Can you describe what sorts of activities you actually do?
-Do you work closely with any other people/groups? If so, in what ways?

Section 2: The Environment Champions Initiative

Thanks, and moving on then to the bulk of this interview, I wondered if you could tell me about the Environment Champions initiative in your own words.

Perhaps start from the beginning, thinking back, can you tell me how you think the idea to have the initiative came about? Could you describe the events that led up to the beginning of the initiative?

Prompts:
The team – selection process, make up
Personal involvement
How issues/behaviours were selected – several ideas weren't followed up…why?
Key issues
Key people
Reactions from other staff e.g. office gossip.
Team dynamics

Section 3: Evaluating the EC Initiative

How would you evaluate the initiative?

Prompts:
What worked well/badly?
Any changes?
Any changes to the way you see self, others, organisations?
Did they learn anything?
If you had to do it again, would you make any changes?

Endings

Anything I've not asked about that you think I might be interested in?
Any questions you have for me?

Appendix 6 Consent and Release Form

Research Project on Sustainable Lifestyles and Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change

Information Sheet for Research Participants

The aim of this research is to understand how the Environment Champions initiative in your organisation has been operated and how people have responded to it.

You have been invited to participate in this interview because the research team believes you hold important views on the Environment Champions initiative, either because you have been involved directly in the initiative or because you have been identified as likely to hold important views on the initiative.

With your consent, the session will be recorded to ensure that all your comments are captured. The contents of the recording will be transcribed and then the recording will be destroyed. Your name will not appear alongside any of the comments you make in this interview. Any comments you make which are especially insightful will appear in the final research report and any associated publications with a false name. Any personal information will only be accessible to the research team and will be held in confidence.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are at liberty to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences.

Should you wish to comment on the ethical grounds of this research, or ask any further questions please contact:

Prof. Jacquie Burgess

School of Environmental Sciences
University of East Anglia
Norwich NR4 7TJ

Research Project on Sustainable Lifestyles and Pro-Environmental Behaviour Change

Consent Form

Please put a tick or a cross in the relevant boxes.

I, ________________________________* [participant's name] agree that this interview material may be used by the research team at the University of East Anglia [Tom Hargreaves].	
I have received a copy of the *Information Sheet for Research Participants*, and have read and understood this.	
I agree that the contents of the interview may be used in a variety of ways throughout the life of the research project and afterwards: in discussion with other researchers, in any ensuing presentations, reports, publications, websites, broadcasts, and in teaching.	
Please use this space if you would like to qualify your consent to the use of the interview in any way:	
I understand that I can withdraw consent for this interview to be used at any point by contacting any member of the research team.	
I have received a copy of this statement.	

Signature of participant ____________________________ Date ________________

Signature of researcher _____________________________ Date ________________

Contact Information

Tom Hargreaves
School of Environmental Sciences
University of East Anglia
Norwich NR4 7TJ

Appendix 7 Extract from an Interview

Interview with Beth Martens on 11.07.07

Beth: So we came for that sort of open day, had the talk, I looked round the bus, came in here, did the quiz, and yeah, so that was quite useful because some things do stick in your head like the waste and stuff that was they picked it out (laughs) from the actual everyone's bins and stuff, they had things that could be recycled.

Tom: Oh yeah they had a door didn't they, yeah

Beth: And you know, just things like that and you think oh, just little things like that you could actually think, well, if I just thought of maybe putting that in a different bin, that can all get recycled and, you know. Just by turning off the lights, turning off the printer and just things like that, you can save a lot of energy.

Tom: Yeah

Beth: So that was quite helpful, and I think that actually really helped because that stuck in people's minds.

Tom: Mmm

Beth: Rather than being told, actually doing something, that sort of helped you, you know, stayed in your mind.

Tom: Yeah, no sure. Erm I mean, were these sorts of issues that you'd kind of, had thought about before or?

Beth: Well they're kind of things that you kind of know, I mean I don't know if it's sort of aware to everyone but, me, I kind of think 'oh yeah, don't forget to shut the window if you're going to turn the air con on', just little things like that, and oh, you know, if you're going to be out the room for ages, turn your monitor off rather than leaving things on standby. You kind of know but you don't necessarily always remember to do it.

Tom: Right

Beth: Erm, sometimes, you know, people can be really lazy and you'll have plastic cups from the machines and there's an actual bin there to recycle, but you see some people, they probably just think it's easier just to pick it up and throw it in their bin under their desk, rather than getting up and walking to the kitchen and recycling it, but I guess when everyone was kind of made aware of it, someone can turn around and point at them and say 'actually, will you get that out of the bin and put it in the recycling bin.'

Tom: Right

Beth: So that, if everyone's aware of it, it becomes a habit so

Tom: Mmm

Beth: Yeah (laughs)

Tom: So what do you think the role of the campaign, of the Environment Champions thing has been mostly then?

Beth: Well, I think it's good that they've picked people from different departments, because, I think, when you have someone perhaps in your team that's involved in this directly, they can, it's easier to relate to them, rather than someone in a different department across a different side of the building. You don't really know them, once in a while they send you an email saying 'don't forget, we've got this, you know, thing' or 'don't forget to do this, don't forget to do that', but when you've actually got someone in your team, or someone that you kind of know, and they come to you and say 'oh yeah, I just had my meeting I've been debriefed to tell you all this, this and this'

Tom: Yeah

Beth: I think that might stick in your mind a bit more, and when you've got someone in your team, they can say (puts on a high pitched, flustered sounding tone) 'ooh no, I told you, you know, don't forget to turn the light off' and you're like 'oh ok', whereas like if someone just sent you an email about it, you read it sometime and you might just forget about it, so it's helpful having someone in each different department.

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