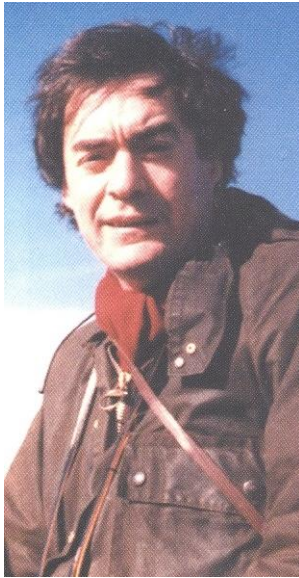


ANDREW LEES 1949-1994



Andrew Lees was a conservationist, scientist and environmentalist who became Director of Campaigns at Friends of the Earth. He successfully led a number of high profile national and international campaigns and went to Madagascar in 1994 to research and film the littoral forests of the south east coast that were due to be mined for ilmentite by the transnational mining company, Rio Tinto.

He died whilst filming the endangered forests of Petriky.

Andrew was one of the world's top environmentalists and his contribution to conservation has been recognised in the creation of prestigious environmental and journalism awards, as well as the setting of commemorative plaques in Norfolk, Wales and Ft Dauphin, southern Madagascar.



A traditional Anosy stone marks the place in the forest where he fell in Petriky. The area has been designated 'fady' (taboo/sacred) by the local villagers who now see Andrew to be one of their ancestors (the traditional belief is that the spirits of the ancestors live in the forest).

In Memoriam

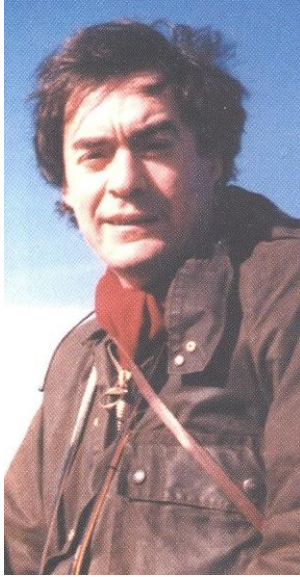
In 1995 the Centre Ecologique Libanona (CEL), an educational training centre, was dedicated to Andrew's memory. The Trust helped to launch the centre and support it over many years.



Andrew was a highly respected environmentalist and when in 2006 the UK's Environment Agency invited a panel of experts to name the people who have done most to save the planet, Andrew Lees was listed in the top 50. www.andrewleestrust.org/campaigners.htm

For several years the [UK Environmental Law Association](http://www.ukenvironmentallawassociation.org/) has run an annual essay competition - the Andrew Lees Competition, to encourage students from all disciplines to consider topical environmental law issues.

The "Andrew Lees Memorial Award" is awarded at the British Environmental and Media Awards which promote excellence in environmental reporting. Recipients of the award have included Nancy Tait, Don Staniford, Di McDonald, Dusty Gedge, Georgina Downs and [Rebecca Hosking](http://www.andrewleestrust.org/RebeccaHosking.htm). www.andrewleestrust.org/RebeccaHosking.htm



ANDREW LEES BIOGRAPHY

by John Barwise

ANDREW JOHN LEES (1949 - 1994), scientist, conservationist and environmental campaigner, was born on 8th June 1949 at Sandown Nursing Home, Great Yarmouth. He was the eldest of four boys of Edward Andrew Lees, Great Yarmouth Borough Councillor and Hotelier and his wife Beryl Lees (nee Whiteley).

Andrew was a son of Norfolk with a passion for its big skies, low-lying landscape and traditional village culture. Most of all he loved its myriad of rivers and streams, dykes, marshes and fens and its rich diversity of wildlife. The Norfolk Broads: where earth meets water, was where Andrew was happiest.

He would later return to defend the Broads from the ravages of industrial agriculture in what became the Battle for the Broads.

Andrew had an enquiring mind. His passion for nature was not enough: he needed to understand the science of the natural world. In 1967 he enrolled at the University of Wales in Cardiff to study zoology, botany and philosophy. Graduating with Honours in 1971, Andrew worked as a field scientist with the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC). The NCC had a statutory responsibility to protect the best of the Britain's natural environment by designating certain areas as 'sites of special scientific interest' (SSSIs).

As a scientist, Andrew's uncompromising commitment to nature conservation first emerged in 1978 when surveying Crymlyn Bog in Wales. Having determined that this unique habitat was a potential candidate for special protection, he organised the local community and the media to stop it being turned into a rubbish tip. In 1981 working with Friends of the Earth (FoE), he obtained leave for Judicial Review on NCC's failure to notify part of the bog as a SSSI. The NCC backed down and the site was given SSSI protection. Crymlyn Bog achieved world status as a Ramsar Site in 1993.

This was Andrew's first environmental campaign success. His adherence to scientific discipline and knowledge of environmental laws, combined with his ability to attract media attention and generate local support provided the winning formula that defined his future environmental campaign strategies.

Disillusioned with the NCC Andrew left Wales in late 1981 and returned to his native Norfolk. The Broads were under serious threat from proposals to build deep drainage and barrier systems that would turn the wetlands into vast prairies of cereal production. The beautiful Halvergate Marshes, Wicken Fen, Hickling Broads and a

whole network of rivers, dykes and fens that make up the Broadlands unique wildlife habitat would be damaged or lost forever.

True to form, Andrew applied his scientific knowledge to identify the threats to the Broads. In 1982 he helped to set up Broadlands Friends of the Earth and was appointed as its Chairman. He lobbied the media and exposed the environmental contradictions in the government's agricultural policies. The Battle for the Broads was under way. There was considerable opposition to the scheme from a wide range of environmental organisations, academic institutions and local communities. He succeeded in galvanising local and national opinion against the drainage scheme and was largely responsible for saving Halvergate Marshes.

But the Battle for the Broads continued. In 1986, after much campaigning large tracts of marshlands were designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Two years later, under intense public pressure, the government passed The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads 1988 Act. The Broads Authority became a Special Statutory Authority with duties to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Broads'. The Broads were protected: a success due in large measure to Andrew's tenacious campaigning and commitment.

In 1985, Andrew was appointed FoE national campaign officer for the countryside and pesticides and later in 1986 as water pollution and toxics campaigner. Pollution in any form was unacceptable to Andrew: agricultural pesticides, sewage discharges, leachate from landfill sites, and traffic pollution. Any activity that threatened human health or the environment would be challenged.

Andrew continued to apply his winning campaign formula with vigour and determination. He organised the 'Dirty Dozen' campaign to expose a group of highly toxic chemicals some of which later became subject to much tighter regulatory controls: others, were banned altogether. He pioneered the use of judicial review to expose weaknesses in government legislation. He understood better than most how European legislation worked and used formal complaints procedures to ensure proper implementation by the British Government of European Community environmental laws.

According to his close friend and colleague, Tony Long, when Whitehall didn't move fast or decisively enough to apply environmental laws, he would simply appeal over their heads to the European Commission. He became a well-known figure to officials in Brussels and was responsible for filing more official complaints on behalf of Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland than any other environmental group or any other country.

He was extremely wary of the government's plans in 1987 to privatise the water industry which he felt would undermine water quality in the United Kingdom. He exposed the poorly regulated and weak standards of sewage treatment and

showed that concentrations of pesticides in many drinking water supplies breached legal standards. The British Government was later convicted in the European courts of breaches of drinking water and bathing beach standards.

Ultimately Andrew got much of what he wanted. The Water Resources Act, which was implemented in 1991, included much higher environmental standards and tighter regulatory controls for the protection of water quality than had previously been expected. Some pesticides were banned in the UK and billions of pounds were spent cleaning up Britain's beaches. This was one of Andrew's greatest achievements.

Andrew's environmental concerns extended beyond the UK. In 1988, he and fellow FoE campaigner, Charles Secrett went to Nigeria and exposed the illegal dumping of 8,000 tonnes of mainly Italian toxic waste at Koko on the Niger Delta. Andrew was incensed that a so-called developed country could show such scant regard for the health and wellbeing of local people in a developing country. Not content simply to expose those responsible, Andrew continued to track the waste on the notorious Karin B cargo ship. With nowhere to go the Karin B saga became a scandal and a major embarrassment to the European Union who later introduced new regulations restricting the shipment of hazardous waste to developing countries.

Andrew was a skilled media man and knew a good story instinctively. Journalists respected him. He could articulate complicated science in a language they understood. With his 'killer quotes' they could always rely on his interpretation of government spin. Andrew would 'go for the jugular' of any hapless politician, civil servant or industrialist who dared to put the environment at risk. He believed people had a 'right to know' and organised various campaigns to raise awareness of environmental problems. He introduced new information technologies that helped raise the profile of FoE as a national and international campaigning organisation.

In 1990 Andrew became FoE's National Campaigns Director. His enthusiastic and combative campaigning style never abated. He would work day and night to get results and he expected the same level of commitment from his colleagues. He was demanding and motivating in equal measure. His single-minded and often uncompromising approach would sometimes infuriate his colleagues. But he was also empowering and supportive, always encouraging others to realise their aspirations, hopes and dreams. According to his colleague, Mary Taylor, Andrew had enormous energy, creativity and intelligence. His dedication to the environment, political nous, media intuition and touch of mischief inspired many colleagues who felt privileged to be part of his team.

Andrew's intense love of life and nature extended beyond environmental campaigning. He had a lively interest in philosophy, politics and art that shaped his own unconventional perspective on life. But it was his partner, Christine Orengo, who provided balance in his often over-stressed life. They were a devoted couple.

Christine described Andrew as a wonderful listener: the most caring and loving of partners, completely supportive and a great strength in times of crisis. The feeling was mutual. Preoccupied with one or more campaigns, it was Christine's loving and enduring support that was Andrew's greatest strength.

In 1992 he attended the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro to lobby powerful western leaders against what he saw as self-interest and campaigned for a united approach to solve global environmental problems and support the needs of developing countries. Not all of Andrew's campaigns were successful but they were all effective in drawing attention to environmental issues. By the early nineties, the powerhouses of government and industry realised that they could never win the environmental debate on Andrew's terms. They appealed for a new approach: new rules of engagement. It was time for negotiation not confrontation, partnerships and collective responsibility not individual accountability. In this emerging climate of co-operation some of Andrew's colleagues saw a real opportunity to influence decision-makers to change the axis of government environmental policy and industrial activity towards a more sustainable approach to development. Andrew was suspicious. He backed the principles of sustainable development but would never compromise on environmental issues.

For Andrew, the campaign to protect the environment had to continue. This was his style. In 1994, he turned his attention to Madagascar. QIT, a mining company owned by Rio Tinto Zinc was proposing to mine parts of the island for titanium dioxide. Madagascar is the world's fourth-largest island and home to some of the most remarkable flora and fauna on earth. Of an estimated 200,000 species, three quarters exist solely on Madagascar. The mining operation would produce 2 billion tonnes of titanium dioxide over forty years. Huge swathes of unique littoral forest and sand dunes would be destroyed along with the livelihood of thousands of local farmers and fishermen. This was a cause celebre of international proportions. Andrew went to Madagascar with photographer, Paul Hellyer just before Christmas in 1994 with the intention of making a film documentary to support his campaign. Armed with a microphone and video camera, he interviewed local people about their concerns and filmed the forests and sand dunes that would be destroyed if the proposal went ahead.

Sadly, he never completed the project. Despite suffering from chronic diarrhoea Andrew decided, on New Year's Eve, to go one last time into Petriky Forest alone to shoot one last piece of film. He had been in the southern town of Tolénaro for just over a week, he was familiar with the coastal jungle and it was not too difficult to find a way out of the Petriky forest. Hours later, when he failed to rendezvous with his taxi there was panic. There was even talk of foul play, given the sensitivity of this multi-million dollar project and Andrew's sole intention to stop it.

Christine Orenge flew out to Madagascar to join the search team on 2 January. After days of searching, they found Andrew's body in a small clearing in Petriky

Forest on 7 January. There was no indication of foul play. His camera equipment was in fact. The autopsy later indicated he died of heat exhaustion.

His abrupt and tragic death at aged 46 sent shock waves around the world. His colleagues at FoE were devastated. It was as if, suddenly, there was a void where once there was hope. The tragedy made national news. Tributes to Andrew poured in from friends and adversaries alike. Tom Burke, a government special advisor, said 'He was a hero and a man who commanded enormous respect even amongst those who found him irritating. The media variously described him as 'a secular saint', 'a man of deep principles', and 'an environmental campaigner of a kind we will not see again'. Former European Commissioner, Lord Clinton-Davis commented on Andrew's remarkable ability to influence an audience by his unassailable evidence and penetrating logic.

Andrew was a scientist with principles: a professional campaigner who won international acclaim and respect for his work on the environment. Yet he was a gentle man with a deep respect for the natural world. He was as determined to protect the smallest of creatures as he was to save the biggest wetland.

Following his death, the Andrew Lees Trust was set up to help the people of Madagascar. The Libanona Ecology Centre (LEC), dedicated to the memory of Andrew, provides ecological surveys and laboratory services and runs training courses in forestry and marine biology. The Trust also funds a number of locally based community projects.

Perhaps the most poignant of memorials erected in his honour is the one at Pant-y-sais Fen, the northern limb of the Crymlyn Bog where Andrew won his first environmental campaign that started his own personal journey to save the Planet Earth. The memorial describes him as 'the man who started the fight to get the bog protected' It carries a quotation from him, "At some point I had to stand up and be counted. Who speaks for the butterflies?"