

## **Extinction Rebellion London Fossil Fuel Protests April 8th - 17th 2022**

### **Timeline:**

April 8th - The rebellion began at Tower Bridge with two activists fastening a massive banner saying 'End Fossil Fuels Now'.

April 9th - Hundreds of Activists assemble at Speakers' Corner, March into London City Centre. A sitting took place in the heart of London's West End Shopping District. 29 arrests.

April 10th - Hundreds of Activists assemble at Speakers' Corner Hyde Park. March into the city and occupy Lambeth and Vauxhall Bridges. The media emphasise that ambulances were let through. 61 arrests.

April 11th - Gathering at The Albert memorial in Kensington Gardens. 0 arrests.

April 12th - Extinction Rebellion block the entrance to Lloyds of London HQ in the City. They use superglue and bike locks, forcing the closure of Lloyds. 5 arrests.

April 13th - Extinction Rebellion glue themselves towards Shell HQ. Extinction Rebellion scientists paste pages of scientific papers to the window of the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Hundreds of activists march down Constitutional Hill to Buckingham Palace in London. Extinction Rebellion go door knocking all over London to attract new members. 37 arrests.

April 14th - Nasa scientist arrested in Los Angeles after protests at the JP Morgan building. 9 arrests.

April 15th - Extinction Rebellion block four of London's busiest bridges; Waterloo, Blackfriars, Lambeth and Westminster. This gets reported in Canada, the USA and the Gulf. Scientist Emma Smart one of the scientists at the BEIS protest is held in Charing Cross police station. Scientists rally outside the station. 2 arrests.

April 16th - In Paris Extinction Rebellion take the central square Porte Saint Denis and major boulevards in the 2nd and 10th arrondissement staying till the 18th. This is just eight days before the Parisian presidential election. In London, Extinction Rebellion block roads around Marble Arch. Olympians Etienne Stott and Laura Baldwin get arrested for gluing themselves to a Shell oil tanker at a petrol station in Bayswater. There are protests in New York. 70 arrests.

April 17th - two people scale hang an Extinction Rebellion banner from Marble Arch.

## **9 Key Insights from the April 2022 Extinction Rebellion London Fossil Fuel Protest:**

1) Etienne Stott, gold medalist Canoeist at London 2021, is the media face of Extinction Rebellion. Great coverage given towards his appearance, words and actions. Stott was arrested on the 16th of April with fellow Olympian and wife Laura Baldwin. They glued themselves to a Shell Oil tanker at the petrol station in Bayswater.

In media appearances Stott emphasised the words of UN Secretary General saying 'the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing production of fossil fuels'. After the arrest Stott gave the following statement: 'I am acting to try to disrupt the toxic fossil fuel industry that is destroying everything we hold dear. I am hoping we can slow it down long enough to create a moment where everyone can stop and think where we are going and change course. We need our government to rein in these companies and stop investing in fossil fuels now, rather than allowing oil companies to continue their stranglehold on our lives and our future. I am aware that my actions will cause anger to many people and I am prepared to be held accountable. But our government should also be held to account for its decision which are destroying our planet's ability to support human civilisation'.

2) Extinction Rebellion have the ability to provoke responses from the world's most powerful and unaccountable companies. After the demo outside the central London Shell building on the 13th of April, Shell gave the following statement: 'the company agreed that society needs to take urgent action on climate change and said Shell has a clear target to become a net zero emissions business by 2050'.

3) Extinction Rebellion's media and messaging was the best yet. Because Extinction Rebellion focused on stopping the use of Fossil Fuels, it was very simple for the media and the activists to explain what Extinction Rebellion were fighting for. Elon Musk says that the climate crisis is essentially an energy crisis. Extinction Rebellion identified and condemned the climate crisis' greatest enemy - fossil fuels.

4) Extinction Rebellion's protests were the first major political demonstration since the War in Ukraine and the consequential energy crisis. As a result, the actions and messaging felt very relevant. The democratic significance and gift of Extinction Rebellion was demonstrated in a BBC article where an Extinction Rebellion member stressed the Extinction Rebellion's unique ability to offer people to offer 'thoughts and fears about the world'. In doing so Extinction Rebellion exemplify the spirit of democracy that people risk their lives for fighting totalitarianism in places like the Ukraine.

5) The parallel 17 day actions of Stop Oil coalition, blocking oil terminals and tankers in the Midlands and the south east of England, created a sense of seriousness and effectiveness towards the XR London protests. Deliveries to petrol stations were down 43% in the West Midlands, 44% in London and 48% in the East. These actions provoked strong condemnation from Keir Starmer and Priti Patel. Ben Goldsmith, chair of the Conservative Environment Network, created great deals of media attention after tweeting:

*Not a good look from @UKLabour. The protestors are right to be doing whatever it takes to wake people up. The fossil fuel industry is grubby and dangerous. We need to unhook ourselves from our dependence asap. I'm with @ExtinctionR.*

6) Extinction Rebellion were framed as an activist movement led by science and the messengers of the IPCC. In London, this was demonstrated through the involvement of

scientists at the Shell Protest, at the UK Government Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy building and in Los Angeles by the actions of NASA scientist at JP Morgan.

Activists, Roger and Kat did well connecting the protests with the IPCC science. The former saying that 'the IPCC report released this week tells all of us in no uncertain terms that we are in deep trouble'. Kat saying 'never has there been more urgency than after hearing what we have from the UN and the IPCC report last week'. Todd managed to make connection between the protests and the energy crises saying that 'renewable energy is the cheapest and quickest form of energy that could be rolled out, such as insulating homes and many other things the Government are failing to do'.

7) The electoral significance of Extinction Rebellion was demonstrated by the Paris protests, with the Financial Times referencing the Extinction Rebellion protests in a major article about the French Presidential Election.

8) Through the United Kingdom, Extinction Rebellion have the attention of some of the world's most popular news sites. This makes Extinction Rebellion's London protests representative of international attitudes towards the climate crises. In countries like China and Russia popular protest is heavily suppressed. In countries like India or Africa, they may not have the ability to raise internationally significant levels of media attention, limiting the representative function of the protests.

There were at least 13 articles on Extinction Rebellion from [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk). The BBC is the planet's most popular news site with 1.2 billion visits in January 2022.

There were at least 12 articles on Extinction Rebellion from [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk). The Daily Mail is the planet's 5th most popular news site with 369.2 million visits in January 2022.

There were at least 11 articles on Extinction Rebellion from [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com). The Guardian is the planet's 7th most popular news site with 316.8 million visits in January 2022.

Final Comments:

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, designed primarily to stop Extinction Rebellion, has failed. Extinction Rebellion managed to have a hugely effective protest with hundreds willing to make noise and get arrested to help prevent climate disaster. The War in Ukraine has changed everything. Protests like these demonstrate the greatness of democracy, love for the planet and relative concern towards its destruction. Thank you and well done.

Sam Guinness