



For someone with a degree in politics (well, half-a-degree: it was joint honours), I have had little to do with the practicalities of local politics. Similarly, election literature usually ended up in the recycling bag.

For some reason, however, I decided to read the less-than-lavishly produced DTP document that was posted through our door on behalf of the Labour Party candidate in the latest round of local votes. I was really looking for any mention of the absence of a pelican crossing over to our local health centre from the car park opposite. Currently there is a zebra – highly dangerous for sick and disabled people on a major road, particularly as drivers don't seem to know you're supposed to stop these days.

I digress. What the document did tell me was that the hung council had closed our local 'tip', or recycling facility. The nearest place to dispose of WEEE or light bulbs, or any of the other recyclables that the council doesn't have a bin or a bag for, is five miles away. Now that, to me, is a big environment news story. The term 'recycling miles' used to describe the process of carting used goods across continents to process them (fridges spring to mind). In a more modern sense it can be used to describe the sometimes ludicrous journeys people are being forced to make to recycle stuff in order for local authorities to save a few quid. It doesn't make sense.

Said Labour bloke got elected – I'm following with interest his efforts to get our tip re-opened. And about that pelican crossing...

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I don't normally watch *Points of View* on the BBC, but last Sunday the TV was switched on waiting for something else to start and I walked into the living room to hear the presenter, Richard Vine, state vis-à-vis the inimitable Mary Beard: "...the message coming through, loud and clear, is 'ditch celebrity presenters and wheel in the expert'."

Shortly afterwards I was enthusiastically invited to witness a spectacular 'live' wildlife programme, to be presented by – Richard Hammond! No, not Richard Hammond the environmental tourism expert of *The Guardian*, but the Richard Hammond who is best known for that greenest and most wildlife-friendly programme,

Top Gear

. Oh, and for presenting a programme set in a forest clearing in Argentina wherein sad people are jetted halfway around the world to take part in some puerile games. I'm sure there are more suitable people to present the programme listed in the Environment Directory. I can only imagine the casting people at the Beeb DID get the wrong Richard Hammond.

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The ultimate solar torch was ignited today, at Olympia on the Peloponnese peninsula of Greece. A 'special device' was used to capture the Sun's rays and light the flame: a lens to you and me. The ancient site is uniquely preserved (the component stones of the pillars of the Temple of Zeus lie in lines on the ground as if pushed over by a giant toddler) and the Greek people take a great deal of pride in the origin of the Olympic flame. From Olympia the flame will travel around Greece and thence to Cornwall. And I thought my old light bulbs put in the miles.

Chris Stokes