FOREST UNFILTERED
Design by Dan Donovan - Battenburg.biz
Photography by Dan Donovan except where stated

Cover: David Hockney supporting Forest at the
Labour party conference in Brighton, 28th September 2005

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Foreword

It has been my great pleasure to be the non-smoking director of the smokers’ group Forest for precisely 20 years. Smokers must be one of the most vilified minorities in the country and I am proud to be involved in this small but important battle against the overbearing nanny state and the manufactured intolerance of tobacco that has been whipped up by politicians, NGOs and anti-smoking zealots.

Founded in 1979 by Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, a pipe smoker and former Battle of Britain fighter pilot, Forest is a campaign group that promotes freedom of choice, not smoking. Over four decades we have been quoted thousands of times in print and online and our spokesmen have appeared countless times on television and radio. When we're not responding to the latest anti-smoking initiatives we are writing or commissioning reports and surveys. We also contribute to government consultations and occasionally give evidence to parliamentary committees.

Since 2005, when Britain’s greatest living artist David Hockney joined us for a never to be forgotten day at the Labour conference in Brighton, we have also hosted regular events in London and at other party conferences. They range from panel debates to receptions and gala dinners with guest speakers and other entertainment including, on one occasion, a mock police raid complete with sirens and blue flashing lights. (The speaker, our great friend Ranald Macdonald of Boisdale Restaurants, was duly ‘arrested’ for ‘inciting people to enjoy themselves’.)

Sadly there is nothing in our photo archive to remind us of Forest’s early years. (Moving office several times has taken its toll!) The photographs in this collection are therefore relatively recent. Most were taken by photographer Dan Donovan, a proud smoker who has been a hugely popular member of the Forest family since 2007. Thank you, Dan, for your work on this and many other Forest projects.

Thanks too to all those who have worked for Forest, attended our events or supported us in other ways. Forty years after Forest was founded we are more convinced than ever that freedom of choice and personal responsibility are issues worth fighting for. Thankfully, on the evidence of this journal, we’re far from alone.

Simon Clark
June 2019
David Hockney supports Forest in Brighton

For all the media coverage Forest has generated since it was founded in 1979, this was perhaps our finest hour. With the Labour government still debating the exact nature of the smoking ban it wanted to introduce, artist David Hockney, who had attended his first Forest event the previous year, joined us in Brighton where we were hosting an event designed to highlight opposition to a ban. To say Hockney took the conference by storm is an understatement. After appearing on the Today programme (Radio 4) and BBC Breakfast, he arrived in Brighton where we had arranged a photo op plus interviews with every broadsheet newspaper. The photo op went slightly awry when it was gatecrashed by anti-tobacco campaigner Stuart Holmes but Hockney, who was also interviewed on BBC2’s live conference programme, took it in his stride. Later, over dinner with other Forest supporters including musician Joe Jackson, he gave a further interview to the Sunday Times which sent one its top reporters to Brighton to speak to him.
BAN TOBACCO

Of all the people alive today 650 million will be killed by Tobacco W.H.O. This figure is so large it is more than 10 times greater than the total war dead of the entire 20th century (excluding genocide).

DEATH awaits you even if you do not smoke
Revolt In Style

Six days before the introduction of the workplace smoking ban in England on 1st July 2007, Forest hosted a dinner at the Savoy Hotel, London. The Telegraph called it a ‘smoke filled rebellion’. Writing in The Times, columnist Rod Liddle described the mood as ‘optimistically defiant’. ‘There were some fine speeches,’ he wrote, ‘pugnacious and rabble-rousing from Antony Worrall Thompson; politically-loaded and sharp from Andrew Neil; counter-intuitive from the excellent Clare Fox.’ The event attracted TV crews from 12 countries including Russia, Greece and France. Among the 400 guests was playwright and screenwriter Alan Plater whose ode to the smoking ban, ‘I’m Going Outside’, was performed live for the first time. The song also featured on ‘You Can’t Do That!, an album of smoking-related songs performed by the Boisdale Blue Rhythm Band, produced by Boisdale and Forest, and released on CD.
Save Our Pubs & Clubs

In 2009, with pubs closing at a rate of 52 a week following the introduction of the smoking ban in England in 2007, Forest launched the ‘Save Our Pubs & Clubs’ campaign. Guests at the launch, which took place at a pub in Westminster, included Greg Knight MP, TV chef and publican Antony Worrall Thompson, and a certain Nigel Farage. The purpose of the campaign was to persuade the government to review the impact of the smoking ban on Britain’s beleaguered pubs and halt calls to extend the ban to outdoor areas including beer gardens and pub doorways. We also called for an amendment to the ban that would allow designated smoking rooms in pubs and clubs. A highlight of the campaign, which was supported by MPs, publicans and the Working Men’s Club and Institute Union (CIU), was a reception on the terrace of the House of Commons hosted by Greg Knight, Labour MP Roger Godsiff and Lib Dem MP John Hemming. Guest of honour David Hockney gave a short but passionate speech.
Hands Off Our Packs

In March 2012 Forest launched the ‘Hands Off Our Packs’ campaign with a reception close to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. The campaign was launched with one aim: to facilitate responses to a four-month government consultation on ‘plain’ packaging of tobacco. In 16 weeks the HOOPs campaign generated over 260,000 signatures from members of the public opposed to plain packaging. When the consultation report was eventually published in 2013, eleven months after the consultation closed, it was revealed that 665,989 campaign responses were received from 24 separate campaigns. Around two-thirds were from people opposed to plain packaging, with a third from those who supported the policy. Forest’s Hands Off Our Packs campaign was responsible for 269,854 signatures, 214,653 via street petitions plus 55,201 on postcards. When prime minister David Cameron revived the idea of plain packaging, having parked it following the consultation report, Forest submitted to Downing Street a further 53,196 letters. In four weeks almost 100,000 people signed a further ‘No, Prime Minister!’ petition organised by Forest. Needless to say the government ignored public opinion and implemented the policy.
HANDS OFF OUR PACKS!

Say no to plain
Axe The Tobacco Escalator

The Axe The Tobacco Escalator campaign was launched by Forest to fight what we believe are punitive and unfair levels of tobacco duty that have forced many smokers further into poverty or towards the black market. (In 2014/15 an estimated £2.6 billion in revenue was lost as a result of illicit trade and cross-border shopping.) In 2016 we launched a 72-hour online advertising blitz urging the then Chancellor George Osborne to rethink the government’s taxation policy. The ‘Be Fair To Smokers’ advertisements linked to a microsite that enabled consumers and shopkeepers to write direct to their member of parliament.

illustrations by Howard McWilliam
The Freedom Dinner

For several years the Freedom Dinner was one of our most popular and enduring events. Each summer 150 guests would join us at Boisdale of Canary Wharf, a Gotham City-style art deco building with views to the Thames and the City of London skyline. Overlooking the fountains at Cabot Square, guests were invited to enjoy drinks on the smoking terrace followed by a delicious dinner with wine and some notable after dinner speakers. MPs, peers and parliamentary researchers rubbed shoulders with journalists and friends of Forest. In 2017 the local Wharf News summed up the nature of the event with the headline: ‘Smokers and libertarians join for a celebration of freedom in Canary Wharf’.
Smoke On The Water

With smoker-friendly venues becoming harder to find following the introduction of the smoking ban, Forest took to the Thames for what became our most popular annual event – the Smoke On The Water boat party. Each year more than 200 guests boarded The Elizabethan, a Mississippi-style paddle-steamer with a unique sliding roof, an open rear deck and two covered walkways on either side of the boat where guests smoked and vaped in comfort whatever the weather. Embarking at Westminster Pier, the boat would cruise down river before returning to central London. Live music and some of London’s most iconic sights kept guests entertained. “A Westminster institution” according to some people and one of our most successful networking events.
Special events

Alongside our annual events in London and at party conferences, we like to celebrate milestones and other special occasions. In 2008, for example, we marked the publication of ‘Scared To Death’ by journalist Christopher Booker with a drinks party attended by almost 300 people at Boisdale of Belgravia. The following year we hosted a similar event to mark the publication of ‘Velvet Glove Iron Fist: A History of Anti-Smoking’ by a promising young writer and researcher, Christopher Snowdon. Chris is now head of the Lifestyle Economics Unit at the Institute of Economic Affairs and a leading commentator on the nanny state. The event also marked Forest’s 30th anniversary and in 2014 the same venue hosted the party that celebrated Forest’s 35th anniversary.
Speakers

From broadcaster Andrew Neil to General Sir Mike Jackson, former head of the British army, Forest has always attracted some top speakers. Others include Mark Littlewood, director-general of the Institute of Economic Affairs, Dr Madsen Pirie, president of the Adam Smith Institute, Alex Deane, former chief of staff to David Cameron, Claire Fox, director of the Academy of Ideas, broadcaster Iain Dale, journalists James Delingpole and Brendan O'Neill and many, many more. One of our most popular speakers was The Spectator’s Rod Liddle who addressed the Freedom Dinner in 2016 and again in 2017.
Smoked Out and other reports

In addition to our media role, a key element of Forest's work is the research we commission and publish. In recent years we have published a number of reports including 'Prejudice and Prohibition: Results of a study on smoking and vaping policies in NHS hospital trusts in England', 'The McNanny State: How Scotland is becoming a puritan's playground', 'Road To Ruin: The impact of the smoking ban on pubs and personal choice', and 'The Pleasure of Smoking: The views of confirmed smokers'. We have also worked with other groups, notably the Manifesto Club, on reports such as 'Smoked Out: The hyper-regulation of smoking in outdoor public places' and 'The Intolerant State: The regulation of smokers 1979-2019'. Often these reports are launched with a talk by the relevant author, a panel discussion or some similar event.
Forest EU

Forest EU, a Brussels-based campaign run by Forest UK and headed by Frenchman Guillaume Perigois, was launched in May 2017. It followed a UK campaign, ‘No Thank EU’, that fought the European Union’s revised Tobacco Products Directive that resulted in the introduction of larger health warnings and bans on ten packs and smaller pouches of rolling tobacco. Commenting on the launch of Forest EU, we said, “Decisions made at EU level affect the lives of tens of millions of adults across Europe yet the revised TPD was introduced with very little engagement with ordinary consumers. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union we are delighted to be starting a new EU-centred chapter in our history. We will be bringing our trademark events to Brussels including smoker-friendly receptions and seminars. Our goal is to put consumers at the heart of the debate.” To date Forest EU has published several reports and papers and hosted a number of well-attended events in the heart of Brussels.
Forest Ireland

Founded in 2010, Forest Ireland was launched with the aim of giving smokers in Ireland long overdue representation. Our spokesman John Mallon has become a familiar voice on Irish radio. Each year, in additional to regular appearances on national radio, he embarks on a nationwide tour of local radio stations. In 2014 Forest Ireland was invited to give evidence to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children hearing on plain packaging. Forest Ireland hosts networking dinners with speakers from Ireland and UK. In Dublin in 2017 we launched the ‘Golden Nanny Awards’ which are presented to those driving the nanny state agenda in Ireland. Winners to date have included Senator Catherine Noone and Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD who were bold enough to accept their awards in person.
Forest Awards

One of the first recipients of a Forest award was the comedian Jo Brand for “sticking steadfastly” to her right to smoke. Brand gave up smoking many years ago but in 1996 she wrote, ‘I am sick to death of this American-style assault on smokers and I shall continue to smoke as much as possible, particularly in places where it will irritate po-faced health obsessives.’ Since then musician Joe Jackson, artist David Hockney, TV chef Antony Worrall Thompson and journalist Tom Utley have also been ‘honoured’ with Forest awards. In recent years our ‘Voices of Freedom’ award has been presented to journalists Rod Liddle and Ella Whelan, media commentator Claire Fox, blogger Martin Cullip, the IEA’s Mark Littlewood and Chris Snowdon, and Elise Rasmussen, founder of the annual Global Tobacco and Nicotine Forum.