



traverrzine

issue 1. travelling light

Heat, the first word on my lips this morning, feels primary.

Barely a mark of yesterday's rain clouds remains. It might only be 8.30 a.m., but a fully exposed sun has already returned much surface moisture back into the atmosphere. I'm sitting on the curb watching tyres trundling through the junction. A lone cyclist, legs wheeling dynamically in comparison, enters my line of vision and pulls up outside the school. He looks determined, perhaps ready to teach, and I wonder if he's about to go inside or join the protest. I hope for the latter; the more the merrier.

The school forecourt is unusually busy. Classes are already underway and yet hundreds of young people are grouped on the grass as if the fire alarm has just been activated.

Their sound system may be creating a celebratory mood, but the first amplified message that rings out between songs is pensive—today's cloudless sky after an unseasonably wet month is not the good forecast it might otherwise seem. The second Fridays For Future Global Strike in Udine has started with a sincere observation—climate change is evident.



It's time for the voice of those without a vote to be heard.

Soon enough both the protest and hand-drawn cart full of speakers is rolling. The predefined route towards Piazza della Libertà may be well-worn from the 70s, but this is a fresh impetus: crossovers exist between similarly impassioned movements that necessarily campaigned for equal rights and freedom of choice, and yet this protest focuses on the whole—all species and habitats—rather than the self.

Alongside the school's perimeter, the first call to unite is raised: "vieni giù anche tu" (why don't you come down too). Tiered windows are lined with eager faces. The academic year is coming to a close and there seems to be uncertainty as to which lesson is more pertinent—that within an educational environment or an outdoors environmental education. At street-level, the decision is tangible.

One adolescent in particular touches a sense of emergency with her mic'd up banshee wail. The rally blocks cars passing through town. With European elections on the horizon, everyone pauses outside the city's main ministerial building, calling for ecological concerns to be heard over nationalist debate. When in the main city square, the young protesters gather further intellectual momentum.

How many adolescents does it take to make a significant impact?

I'd been in Vienna for the first Global Strike—a seemingly never ending stream of people collecting outside the Hofburg was overwhelming. At first I hadn't even been sure whether I should attend a youth protest. But once there I'd soon realised the broader distinction—an age range from around seven to nineteen would have been difficult to unify in many other settings. Supportive parents and grandparents were also a clear advantage to inclusion. Environmental concerns aren't always the easiest issues to campaign for; not everyone wants to face facts if they feel arrested by the magnitude of global climate change. Until this moment, I hadn't been quite aware of how undermined I had come to feel in the wake of such acceptance until surrounded by the directness of determined youth. By the time I'd reached Udine, I felt a sense of solidarity rather than self-consciousness protesting alongside a younger majority.

Some adults speak of numbers. They understandably wonder how today might compare to the city's first protest. But if such spirited participation is overshadowed by a notion of neoliberal growth, where does that leave enthusiasm for more meaningful maturity? This newly politicised youth is critical of individualism and wants to see global political decisions that project beyond one lifetime. There's awareness that any action to redress planetary imbalance is about minimising the effects of overconsumption rather than avoiding its overall impact. Their skill in speaking directly and honestly should be the envy of many a politician whose policies rarely engage a young audience nor stretch any further than a four or five year term. This is an organised group of young people that should make any adult proud and encouraged to act; indeed, one of the latter FFF speakers is the cyclist I saw earlier who happens to be both teacher and protester.

Before travelling to Trieste on the next leg of my slow journey, which had already taken in three cities by train and coach, I feel inspired—remembering the day I'd spent at the Extinction Rebellion protest in London, I pass my energy consumption leaflet to a police officer and resolve to keep passing the word.

“Police, we love you, we’re doing this for your children too.”

As I'd arrived at Waterloo Bridge, the mothers and fathers amongst a dutiful line of uniformed officers were being serenaded; the sit-down, chanting and drumming protest was already in its seventh day and a good rapport had been established between those paid to be there and those off work and away from home to contribute. The mood was one

of peaceful resilience inspiring hope. No one was using scare tactics. The bridge's usual traffic had simply been suspended by a human blockade. I'd never seen the city so enlivened yet calm and so decided to make myself comfortable too—the drummed refrain, its subtle reverberations through the tarmac, acted as a call to stop, feel and think.



I love the type of transformations that can challenge everyday perceptions of place.

A closed bridge opens thought and exchange. Marble Arch, the main protest site, had also surprised me when I'd arrived there earlier in the day. The usually aggressive interchange had turned into an auspicious family campsite. The atypical holiday atmosphere at the end of Oxford Street had been a positive challenge for passing tourists already spent from shopping. When stepping up onto a low wall to get a greater vantage of the array of colourful tents, I'd got chatting to a fellow new arrival. After an engaging half hour pondering life and the universe, he and I decide to cross the city together. Although I'd once lived in the city for twelve years, this was the first time I'd physically and conceptually connected Hyde, Green and St James' parks to get to the river. Thinking that you already implicitly know your body in any given space is perhaps never truly the case and I'd taken the chance to journey barefoot on the grass. London is many things, so why not a green regal carpet for this very privileged pleb?

And Waterloo Bridge? In walking out to its very mid-point with water coursing under my path, I'd been rewarded with the kind of broad horizon that is unusual from the heart of a city. As I'd looked outwards, a skateboarding cherub in a t-shirt and golden hot pants—Eros as a girl enjoying her freedom and goosebumps—was making full use of the bridge's expanse. At its far southern end, officers had begun grouping in small teams

to carry each protester away one by one to waiting police vans on the northern side. A cheer of “we love you” was raised for each arrestee, many of whom were aiming to leave as little physical trace as possible. From there, engaged in action and reflection, I decided to make other positive changes to my life and keep travelling light.

Sarah Waring
www.farmingforthelandless.com

traverzine is pocket-sized literature for those interested in exploring and sharing ideas about environmentally aware travel. Each zine traverses a different topic regarding leisure, work and migration recounted through direct experience. Contemporary travel is reconsidered as an engaging, participatory and often necessary activity. Cycle protests, walking with migratory goats and sailing trade ships are all fine examples of traverzine's scope.

The zine welcomes contributions from all those who are also ‘travelling light’. Short, accessible and engaging pieces of writing submitted for publication should be no more than 1,200 words or 7,000 characters with spaces. Images should be 10.5 x 7.5 cm at 300 pixels per inch. Please send all submissions to: info@traverzbooks.net

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