

## Pilgrimage to higher ground

I've done a bit travelling over my lifetime and these days there's only one part of the planet I'd still like to get to.

Sadly, it's not very accessible, especially for someone like me, a mere journalist.

It's too high up, this particular piece of ground, and it requires something called morals.

It seems quite crowded, as well, and there is no guarantee you'll be admitted without making a lot of personal sacrifices.

It would help to join certain organisations, groups that have occupied the moral high ground ever since societies formed and discovered not all their members were of a like mind.

Greenpeace is one such. It not only occupies the heights, it defends them with a vehemence that leaves no doubt among those marooned on the lower slopes that their lack of purity in thought and deed will forever deny them the enlightened view from above.

Barrie Smith may not even have got to the foothills, in the opinion of Greenpeace. His lack of understanding of why New Zealand is failing to eliminate fossil fuels from its economy with acceptable haste will keep him further away from the MHG than I am.

Barrie was naive enough to state his views on oil and gas in the Taranaki Daily News recently.

Is naive too strong a word?

No. Nobody in possession of their senses can challenge the purist views of the MHG dwellers these days and expect to get away without public humiliation and denigration.

What can he have been thinking? Surely, there are no convincing arguments against abandoning fossil fuels within days, given the damage they're doing to the climate.

Doesn't Barrie get it that unless we do something very soon, like tomorrow, the whole planet is going to hell in a hand basket.

There's no time to muck around, Barrie. It's renewables immediately, or we're goners.

My friends at Greenpeace and I want you to trade in your car on Monday and get an electric.

Hang on, though. That won't work. We have gas-fired power plants, don't we, and coal-fired ones, apparently, although I can't for the life of me think where those ones are (Greenpeace knows though).

So no electric car, Barrie, I'm afraid. Nowhere acceptable to plug it in.

## JT column for Sat Nov 26 2016

You're some sort of rural person, I'm judging from what you write, so perhaps a horse and cart?

Greenpeace and I could possibly frown on that option, though. What might the cart be made of? And can you grow feed for the horse without using grass fertilised with urea? Because urea comes from gas, Barrie, as I'm sure you know.

So, it looks like shanks's pony, doesn't it, although even there I would be worried about your shoes. Any fossil fuel input, do you reckon?

And where would you walk?

Don't say the supermarket, Barrie, because that's out, for sure. Full of stuff that might have fossil-fuel input.

So what are you going to eat?

I know. You could grow your own food, just so long as you use only horse dung for fertiliser and seeds harvested from last year's crops, but only if there's no suggestion those were grown with the help of fossil fuels.

What will you wear, aside from the requisite sackcloth and ashes?

Pure wool garments might be okay. You could slaughter a cow and cure the hide for leather. They use urine for that in countries that don't burn a lot of fossil fuels, don't they?

I'm worried about your health, though. The blood pressure pills you must be taking now might have fossil fuels involved in their manufacture and transport.

And how will you pay for them, assuming there will still be pharmacies? Credit cards are out, of course, because of the plastic (made with fossil fuels), and you can be pretty sure fossil fuels are involved somewhere along the process of making actual money. Bound to be.

Keeping warm in winter could be a challenge, Barrie. No gas fires allowed, or electric heaters, or heat pumps.

You could risk an open fire, but from the HMG the Greenpeace people are bound to spot the smoke and be around in a flash to sort you out.

Mind you, they of course would be on foot - bare feet, undoubtedly, given the need to be pure-minded about footwear provenance and everything - so you might get a few hours of warmth before they can get there.

But I've just thought of something else - what the hell are you going to live in?