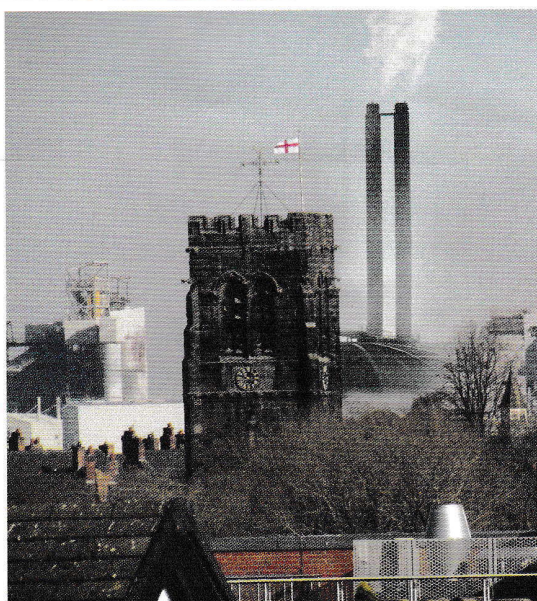




By an incredible coincidence the woman who has taken the fight against waste incinerators to the High Court in London just happens to be from Northwich where we have a giant version to worry about



## GEORGIA'S BURNING DESIRE

GEORGIA Elliott-Smith is a woman on a mission. She is trying to corner a slippery government and make it accountable for the pollution they allow the waste incineration industry to get away with.

She is taking HMG to court next month to try and make it face up to its responsibilities. At the moment they are intent on what might appear to be a cunning little ruse. But not if London based Georgia has her way.

Ironically, that the person emerging at the forefront of the fight against the world's

biggest urban incinerator, which is growing daily at Lostock, should be an estranged Northwich person.

Georgia, 43, lived at Norley and Cuddington and attended schools at Hartford Grange infants, Sandiway Primary and Weaverham High, followed by Sir John Deane's College. She is the daughter of Ruth Elliott-Smith, keen golfer and well-known writer of adventure novels.

In fact, Georgia could turn out to be a heroine herself.

"I'm tired of pollution filling the lungs of my children, suffocating those that live in poorer, more industrial parts of the country.

"I'm tired of incinerators claiming to be environmentally friendly while they pour out greenhouse gases that are destroying the planet.

"My action is not attached to any specific plant, but will help all local campaigns in their battle as it directly hits the financial business case of incineration, making the



process more expensive and therefore adds a nail in its coffin," she said.

Georgia has been in touch with CHAIN - the campaign group against incineration in Cheshire - though she was inspired by an incinerator at Edmonton, where she and partner Stuart live with their children Charlie, 12 and eight-year-old Mae. Georgia is managing director of the sustainability consultancy Element 4, Stuart is its operations director.

"I have been campaigning against waste incineration for a couple of years and grown incredibly frustrated at the lack of local councillors, MPs and waste authorities.

"I was getting brushed away and ignored by those who are supposed to protect us, but have little understanding or interest about the problems that incineration causes - terrible air pollution, climate change and the burning of recyclable materials.

"The 'greenwash' and outright lies told by incinerator operators to protect their profits are scandalous, but they get away with it because there's so little attention on waste.

"So I decided to go above the local authorities and take action in court against the government, attacking the policies that allow incineration to proliferate," she said.

It's a costly business, but Georgia's action is being crowd-funded and her lawyers have capped their fees at £30,000. Details of how you can donate are the end of the feature.

What the government wants to do is not include pollution caused by incineration in their commitments to the Paris agreement and becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

*If you don't count a major source of pollution it makes it a lot easier to declare yourself free of it.*

What Georgia said is, hang on a minute, that is not fair and honest and in December a judge agreed her case had substance. It was a triumph for Georgia but a bigger prize may await when full hearing takes place in the High Court in March.



Imagine making a government live up to its word. But how did she become the

focal point of a national campaign and what does a sustainability consultant do?

"I studied Environmental Engineering at Portsmouth Uni and my first job was on the construction of the Trafford Centre during the summer of the Manchester bomb - I had the dubious honour of being one of the first workers surveying the damage of the Arndale Centre

following the blast and working with the remediation team.

"I managed to secure a place on an Antarctic expedition and subsequently became a UNESCO Special Envoy for Youth and the Environment.

"After graduation, I became one of the first dedicated environmental managers in UK construction. Since then, I've continued to develop my career Element 4 in 2003.

"I work on projects and with organisations to make them more environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible.

"Our work is incredibly varied. We help clients to set and achieve net zero carbon

**"We don't need a handful of people living perfectly sustainable lives, we need millions of people doing it imperfectly"**  
- Georgia Elliot-Smith



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targets, achieve the most sustainable scheme possible.

"No two days are the same – one day I'll be giving training to corporate board members, educating them on global environmental trends, policy and regulations. The next day I could be auditing a construction project to ensure they're properly segregating and managing waste and pollution. My clients include Nike, Bank of England, Cadent, UPP and many other businesses including contractors, architects, developers, landlords and furniture manufacturers," she said.

Winning permission for the full hearing, Georgia added, was 'very exciting'.

"The judge found the government's defence lacking and agreed that my case was substantial and had merit. Hopefully a great portent of things to come!

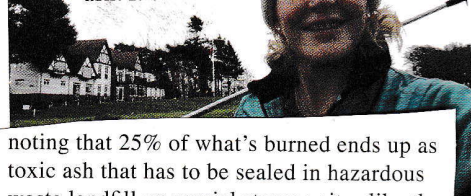
"Most people have no idea that most of what's burned is fully recyclable or compostable – around 60% in most areas and up to 80% in some places. Incinerator operators claim that what they burn is 'residual waste' – a term that strictly means material that cannot be reused or recycled – but they mislead councils and the public by using it to describe all waste that has not been segregated at source by the householder.

"There is no municipal waste incinerator in the UK that pre-sorts material before it goes into the furnace to remove recyclable material. Also, because an increasing proportion of our waste is plastic, the greenhouse gases emitted from incinerators are increasing quickly and, unless controlled properly, will mean the UK cannot meet its Paris Agreement commitments to keep global temperature rise well below 2C.

"Pollution from incinerators is truly shocking.

"Dioxins and furans are some of the most toxic substances known and are emitted from the

chimney and in the ash. It's worth



noting that 25% of what's burned ends up as toxic ash that has to be sealed in hazardous waste landfill or special storage sites like the salt mines at Winsford.

"So incineration does not remove the need for landfill at all – instead it concentrates the waste down into its most toxic form creating a long term environmental problem.

"In addition, mercury, nitrous oxide, ultrafine particulates, ozone and a cocktail of other pollutants are emitted from the chimney.

"Operators will tell you it's safe, but in 2019 the 39 UK incinerators that provided data reported 127 permit breaches – five incinerators had more than ten breaches each! The machinery is fallible, suffering frequent malfunctions – typically only 80% operating hours are 'normal'. When it goes wrong, it goes very badly wrong and



people's health is on the line," said Georgia, whose younger sister, Amy, lives at Anderton.

Late last year air pollution was recorded as the cause of death of a nine-year-old girl at Lewisham.

The pollutants responsible were particulates and NO2 – the same as emitted in huge quantities from incinerators.

"Remember that, once built, these plants operate for 30-50 years making them toxic dinosaurs while other pollution sources like traffic are quickly cleaned up," said Georgia who is a member of the protest group Extinction Rebellion.

The UK may become the rubbish dump for the world, just as Northwich is seen as the rubbish dump for the county and region by certain Cheshire West councillors.

Wish to support Georgia?

<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/make-incineration-polluters-pay/>

*AMID the rain, floods and snow Georgia's mum Ruth (left) got some sunny news. She squallied from Sandiway Golf Club for the England Golf Medal Northern Final in July. She said: "I have been a member for 40 years and this is the first time my golf has been good enough to get me through. It shows show you should never stop trying."*

• The artist's mock-up photograph at the front of our feature is based on measurements taken from Tata's original documents and provided by CHAIN. It shows how the chimneys might be seen from a viewpoint at Castle. They may not always appear as smoky because some of the pollutants are not visible to the naked eye.

LIAM Byrne, the Little Leigh based man who has led CHAIN's campaigns against all incinerators in Cheshire, said: "I drove past the Lostock construction site a few weeks ago. It was a frightening and depressing experience, I have to say, which I will do my best to avoid in the future.

"I am not sure whether I have given up on Lostock because we all have other events on our minds, but I am certain that the vast majority of Northwich residents gave up on the TATA incinerator many years ago. There appears to be a blackout on what is happening at the moment."