

Help us put out the fire – arson attacks on natural landscapes

Fundraiser song release for a Rescue community project in North-east England

Singer songwriter John D Hastings from Sutton, Surrey is releasing a fundraising song with net proceeds going to Cleveland Archaeology Trust's (CAT) Eston Hills project, near Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire.

John is Eston born and bred, playing on Eston Hills as a boy. He moved down to London to pursue a music career and never lost touch with his roots. So he was shocked and saddened by the number of fires and anti-social activities over the last few years on Eston Hills, many deliberately caused by arson. Since the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, the number of fires and devastation have increased dramatically. Everybody across many agencies and organisations, including councils, police, fire, and community groups, are working together to change our future prospects, in our precious place.

Through social media he heard about CAT, formed by Spencer Carter an archaeologist leading a rescue project called "Ice and Fire" on Eston Hills, in association with Teesside Archaeological Society and the Friends of Eston Hills. The site is significant: findings such as flint tools dating back to the Ice Age. It's a "rescue project" because of the damage caused by fires and quad bikers churning up the earth and even personal intimidation of site volunteers. While the vegetation may recover, re-grow, the ancient heritage does not, When it's gone, it is gone forever.

John and his wife Frankie got in touch with Spence, deciding to fundraise for CAT whose own funding streams have now been put on hold due to the pandemic. Donations of net proceeds from digital sales and streams of "When It's Gone" from music platforms and their music publishing website will go to the "Ice and Fire" Eston Hills project and community work.

The hopelessness of the situation inspired John initially to write a tribute song to the hills and his happy childhood. It turned into something much bigger. Similar arson attacks across the world and bush fires in Australia peaking earlier this year highlighted to John that a minority of society were destroying the natural habitat of wildlife, animals and damaging biodiversity possibly beyond repair.

Our Hills form a unique landscape in North Yorkshire, and Eston Nab is a 2.7 acre plot bought in 2014 by a community group, Friends of Eston Hills. The Friends saved the land from property development with public donations and returned the land to public ownership for future generations to enjoy.

Friday 5th June is World Environment Day, a movement created by the UN, with this year's theme being "Time For Nature" as part of biodiversity issues.

Never in history have we needed to care for our natural landscapes more, and push CAT's mission of "connecting People With Place by promoting well-being, belonging and cultural value through sustainable Heritage and Archaeology." Our outside space, our place, is a canvas for everybody to enjoy, irrespective of ability, age or background. When we love our place, even our economy improves. People visit and enjoy.

This current world pandemic has helped us rediscover our open spaces, relearning the simple joy of sharing them with family and friends. The joint issue of biodiversity and climate change will still continue, let's hope it's further up the world political agendas. As John sings "Only we can save us, You and I. Together we can change the world"

What people say about "*When It's Gone*":

"Truly a powerful and meaningful song. If you haven't heard it, I highly recommend you listen" Daniel

"A very moving song with a powerful message" Barry

For interviews and further info please contact hello@johndhastings.rocks

John D Hastings music website: <https://www.johndhastings.rocks>



@hellojohndhastings



@JohnDHastings1

Cleveland Archaeology Trust CIC: <https://clevelandarchaeology.com>

World Environment Day: <https://www.worldenvironmentday.global>