



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER RAVIN' LUNATIC...

SchNEWS

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CLUBS TO SHUT SHOCKER

"Heavy regulation and surveillance could stifle the creative potential of night life: to sanitise dance culture is to destroy its anarchic, hedonistic essence."

Mixmag

You're on your way to your favourite club, but when you get there a notice is pinned on the door. "Sorry, this club has been closed by the council because the police suspect drug dealing/taking was taking place on these premises."

Come again?

As the General Election draws near the government are fighting our nation's "declining morality" with a puritan revolution they hope will make clubs clean up, clamp down or shut up shop.

Last week Brighton Borough Council refused to grant the licence for this year's Festival of Freedom. The decision wasn't helped by new government guidelines concerning dance events, which the police waved in the air at the meeting to back up their objections. Yes, the event could go ahead if the police could have CCTV cameras and a large presence. Festival of Freedom, gulag-stylee? And most probably, if it was a paying event, giving the council loadsa money.

With the popular panic concerning Ecstasy, two sets of government proposals to regulate festivals, parties and clubs have emerged. One is a programme of guidelines released by the Home Office (see contacts list). The other is the Private Members Bill by Barry Legg, Conservative MP for SW Milton Keynes, who was involved in the oh-so-moral Westminster Council "Houses for Votes" scandal.

The Home Office paper is a series of guidelines and recommendations for local authorities when granting public entertainment licences. Organisations like Release, Lifeline, the Scottish Drugs Forum and Megadog had some input, helping achieve some positive points like the provision of free drinking water, good ventilation and chill-out areas. However, 20% of the guidelines are so bad they make the rest unworkable!

These include increasingly stringent searches, anti-drug notices, strict security, exclusion of convicted drugs offenders (erm... how?), installation of CCTV cameras... There was also the idea, before it was laughed out of the paper, that there should be intervals of silence during the evening so those dancers can calm down and not get "over excited". Instead, now DJs will be legally bound to quieten things down if people start whipping themselves up into a mad frenzy. Your local Techno DJ could find themselves on the wrong side of the law if they don't see the signs and start playing more laid back tunes.

Inevitably, it will affect festivals such as the Hackney Homeless and the Deptford Urban Free, just as it has the Brighton Freedom Festival who now have to compete financially with the heavy demands of the new licence requirements.

NOT SORTED

"If we are not careful night-life will turn out to be no different from the bland consumerist playground of chainstores and fast-food outlets which punctuate the daytime economy"

**Andy Lovatt & Justin O'Connor,
Manchester Metropolitan University
Institute for Popular Culture**

Legg's new Private Members Bill, launched with Leah Bett's parents by his side, received its 2nd reading last Friday with no opposition. It is likely to become law in March. It will provide councils

with the power to shut down clubs immediately if the police **suspect** drug taking or dealing. At present clubs can stay open pending appeal. Legg states, "my Bill will allow local authorities to clamp down on clubs that are involved in encouraging the use and dealing of controlled drugs."

There are inherent contradictions and side effects of both Legg's Bill and the guidelines. Firstly, is the provision of drug advice at festivals an admission that organisers are aware of "drug misuse" at the event, and would a festival thus be liable to closure? Also, will desperate club competition mean that rival clubs may "snitch" to authorities so "offenders" will be closed? And what proof do local authorities need in order to close a venue or party? Just vague "suspicion"?

In any case, this puritanism will not stop people taking drugs. The likely consequences are that the scene will head further underground. The CJA outlawed the free party and forced people into clubs; yet the Bill and guidelines will sanitise, sterilise or close clubs, and make obtaining licences increasingly hard.

Clubs, parties and festivals are the few areas in our culture where we can express our creativity; where barriers of race, class and sexuality are transcended. Yet this freedom of expression is being quashed. These requirements are another attempt to "clean us up". We need to enlist the support of club owners and dance organisers, for it is also their jobs and their lifestyle that are on the line.

GET INFORMED - GET ORGANISED

** **Release** Advice and helpline on drugs and legal matters 0171 729 5255 ** *"Code of Good Practice for Safety at Dance Events"* guidelines available from the **London Drugs Policy Forum** 0171 332 3084 ** *"Sound Advice"* info booklet for SAE from **Advance Party** 0181 450 6929 ** http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge ** **United Systems** International free party network. SAE for newsletter 0181 959 7525 ** **Festival of Freedom** are carrying on, with a bigger and better festival for 1998. 01273 727309 **

Crap Arrest of the Week

For throwing a snowball. A sixty year old Shoreham veteran was nicked by those happy-go-lucky constables from Kent after joining in a mass snowball fight. Two years of pent-up anger and frustration over the impartial policing of live export demos spilled over in a very one-way snowball fight, resulting in the cops getting their riot shields out, and arresting the said man. He was later released without charge.

not knowing whether to save or savour the world makes planning a real bitch...

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UP WHERE THE AIR IS CLEAR?

Last week saw the go-ahead for the £172 million second runway for Manchester airport, part of a £500m development scheme for Cheshire. 1000 acres of greenbelt including 43 ponds, ancient woodland, 15 km of hedgerow, significant river geological features, protected species (badgers, bats, Great Crested newts), 21 buildings including four 17th century Grade II listed homes will be covered in a two mile strip of tarmac. Lovely.

There will be runway walks every second Sunday starting the 26th Jan (meet 10:45 Piccadilly Station, Manchester, or 11:30 at the Ship Inn, Styal.) There are also plans afoot to set up camps, so those willing to get into the Non-Jet-Set should contact Manchester Earth First! on 0161 224 4846.

According to the Climate Action Network at a UN Conference on Global warming last year; "If the airline industry was a country it would rank eighth in the world in terms of emissions." It's time to hit them as hard as the road builders have been! Go for it!

WHAT'S UP DOCKS?

On Monday eighty ports around the world took some form of industrial action in support of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers. Dockers in Australia, America, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Japan, Montreal, Denmark, Sweden and elsewhere joined together in one of the biggest shows of international solidarity for years.

At the Seaforth docks in Liverpool 14 people braved the coldest night of the year and chained themselves onto the top of the 150 foot gantry cranes stopping the unloading of a grain ship - for 27 hours - not just in support of the dockers but also to show disgust of the unloading of genetically engineered soya beans coming in through the port. On the ground traffic was disrupted by a convoy of over one hundred taxi drivers.

The Liverpool dockers went on strike seventeen months ago in protest against casual labour and have been an inspiration to us all. However, they are in desperate need of cash. Donations please to the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards, c/o TGWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool, L38 EQ 0151 207 3388
...That's all folks!

GE Blues

US pressure on the European Parliament has led to the decision last week to allow Genetically Engineered food to be sold without labelling. Despite the UK Government voting in December that it wouldn't be pushed around by America, this is one piece of commercial protectionism they can't do anything about. The only way now to check if food has GE ingredients will be to ask the European Commission if it's on their register.

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Too many drugs affect Both Leggs Bill and both Bill's legs. How much wood would a legless woodchuck chuck?

Party & Protest

23rd Jan Support the Asylum Seekers Hunger Strike - meet outside Home Office, 5-6:30 *** **26th Jan** Rochester Prison, Kent, 2pm. Coach, Hackney Town Hall, 12:45. Contact Brian 0181 986 3606 *** **28th Jan** SchLIVE & Conscious Cinema at Sussex Uni, East Slope Bar. 01273 685913 *** **31st Jan** Menwith Hill blockade. Cat or Helen on 01943 468593 *** **1st/2nd Feb** Party and Action to celebrate birth of spring. Faslane Peace Camp 01436 820901 *** **1st Feb** Anniversary of Jill Phipps' death. Nation-wide actions. Contact 01203 632 873 *** **1st Feb** Groundswell Conference against Job Seekers Allowance. Chestnut Community Centre, 280 St. Ann's Rd, Haringey, 12-6pm. "Project Work" is about to be tested in 29 new areas affecting up to 100,000 claimants - come to meeting to help co-ordinate nation-wide resistance to these attacks Info: PO Box 2474, London N8 *** **3rd** SchNEWS training day. Call 01273 685913; followed by meeting on Project Work at Albert Pub, Trafalgar St., Brighton *** **8th** Amsterdam Reclaim the Streets! Contact London RTS for coach on 0171 281 4621 *** **8/9** Anniversary of Mike Hills' death: Nation-wide actions against hunting. 01203 632873/ HSA 01273 622827 *** **8th** Football Solidarity! Brighton Independent Supporters Club ask supporters from other clubs to turn up in their colours to show solidarity at the Harteplee game. 01273 870875 *** **14th/15th** anniversary of the Sea Empress disaster. Mass direct action against oil industry and Milford Haven Port Authority 01749 812665 (*more info next week*) *** **15th** Farnham Fusion Festival, 4 rooms of music mid-day to midnight - £12 01483 454159 *** Mask-making workshop for dedicated protesters, discretion guaranteed. Brighton venue. Bring old newspapers, oil paints, flour, wallpaper paste... 0850 974181 *** Campaign Against the Arms Trade One-Day Conference to plan actions to stop the torture trade: Caxton House, London N19 (Archway tube) 0171 281 0297 *** **SchNEWSnight**, political cabaret at the Sanctuary Café, Brunswick St. East, Hove. Performers welcome to contribute. Ring Justice? *** **21st** Reclaim The Valley on the anniversary of the first battle of Daisy Nook camp, actions organised against the M66 extension. 0161 344 0255.

FLANNEL
DEBUT
TOUR!

Sorted, 'appenin' Brighton band on the road in April - seeking more venues! If you 'appen to 'ave one - call Flying Fish on (01273) 680077. 'Avin' one! Innit!

Police Ban for Peaceful Protest

Peaceful protests involving gatherings of more than twenty people "normally go unchallenged" but the High Court has thrown it's weight around by ruling that people have no basic legal right to such gatherings. The decision, respecting the "trespassory assembly" provisions of the Criminal Justice Act, over-turned an appeal case in which Salisbury Crown Court had said there was no case to answer for two people who had been arrested for being within four miles of Stonehenge, where the police had ordered an exclusion zone. Salisbury Crown Court was criticised for accepting that "any assembly on the highway is lawful as long as it is peaceful and non-obstructive of the highway." That, says the High Court, is "mistaken." The protesters involved will try to take the case to the House of Lords, and onto the European Court of Human rights, to have their acquittals re-instated. The moral of the story: don't have more than 20 friends!

THE + FILES

+ We can't be always at the barricades, and criticism is more effective backed by positive human solutions to the world's needs. So here's something to look forward to...

+ Does the thought of 40-hour fun-free weeks of multinational misery not appeal to you? Are your whiskers too sensitive for the rat race? Then this is for you ... On Sat. February 1st. Oxford Uni are holding an alternative careers fair. From 10am-4pm @ the Examination Halls, High St, Oxford, there will be speakers, potential employers and stalls. Also a workshop on alternative media featuring a SchNEWS bod. Ring 01865 316121 for details.

and finally...

It may be bloody obvious to most of us at SchNEWSdesk, but now it's official - successful politicians and stockbrokers share many of the characteristics of clinical psychopaths. Research by Liza Marshall at the Caledonian University in Glasgow claims that these so called "high flyers" are selfish, callous, remorseless, pathological liars, and basically anti-social, parasitic con artists (you get the picture!). The difference, it seems, is that these psychos don't break the law. But since they made up the laws in the first place it's not surprising (or if they do, they get the best solicitors or feign senile dementia).

disclaimer

The SchNEWS warns all readers not to attend free parties. Ensure that the only movements you make are economically useful, and sit at home and listen to Des O'Connor albums. Never attend any party that does not include jelly and ice cream and always blow out the candles before the cops arrive. Then you will be bored. Honest.