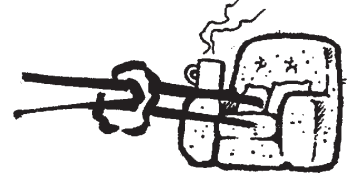




WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER OLD AS THE HILLS

# SchNEWS



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## GRANARCHY IN THE UK!

## DON'T BE SHY- OCCUPY!

"Most of our members are very angry. We have a lot of experience and we've learnt a lot about civil disobedience and one thing and another over the years - we've been in unions, working in different campaigns. We don't want to go and stand in Hyde Park and talk, because nobody takes any notice. We're involved in actions now because direct action is the *only* way to get anywhere."

**Chris Frith, Pensioners' Rights Campaign**

Pensioners involved in the 3,000 strong Pensioners' Rights Campaign have been involved in direct action across the country demanding decent pensions and an end to discrimination against older people. Just before the election 30 of them in Leicester stopped city centre traffic for more than an hour. They have blockaded a television centre, forcing the TV station to give them air-time and most recently they blockaded the Humber Bridge, the biggest single-span construction in the world.

Chris Frith told SchNEWS what happened: "We wanted to draw attention to the erosion of pensions and get more people to join us, blockade the bridge. Seven of us met up one morning, and thought 'Is it worth it?' and then we thought 'What the hell, we're here, why not try it. We just stood in the road with our placards and stopped everything for half an hour, holding the bridge, getting a massive traffic build up, and then we left. We got some harassment."

One of the bridge staff pointed me out to a van driver and said, 'Go on, run the bugger down.' The driver stopped when I got on my knees in front of his van.

"We want pensioners to have enough money to allow them to live in reasonable comfort and security without having to suffer the indignity of means testing." Pensions used to be tied to the average national wage but this link was broken in 1980 and since then the single pension has fallen to a fifth of average

male earnings. The current state pension, on which a half of pensioners depend for at least 3/4 of their income, is £62.45 for a single person and £99.80 for a couple. If the link with wages had not been broken single pensioners would be more than £20 and couples more than £30, better off per week. The fact that Labour can announce this week that they are giving pensioner households between £20 and £50 per year shows just how little is on offer to pensioners from politicians of all parties.

The growth of middle class consumer culture has not been kind to most older people. Increasing numbers of out-of-town hypermarkets at the expense of local shops have meant real suffering for many pensioners. "Most pensioners don't have cars for a start. We have to buy small amounts of food, and supermarkets don't cater for that."

The Pensioners' Rights Campaign is currently involved in planning an action in early December demanding an upgrade of the £10 Xmas bonus given to pensioners. This bonus was brought in in 1971 and has not been upgraded since. If it was indexed in line with wages it would now be worth £115.45 - but for politicians so keen not to tax the rich, keeping pensioners warm in winter is not a high priority. Details of the protest are being kept under wraps for now, but SchNEWS will keep you up to date.

"Since we blockaded the **Humber Bridge** we've had enquiries from all over the country from pensioners wanting to get involved. We're starting new groups in Doncaster and Barnsley soon. We know that unity is important and we'd love to co-operate with other groups. One thing we'd like to do is block three or four places like the Mersey Tunnel all at once."

\*For more info on the Campaign, especially if you're interested in helping out with future actions, contact Chris Frith, Rivanner, 77 Holme Road, Market Weighton, York YO4 3EW Tel 01430 873637.

As SchNEWS went to press students at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) were in their 7th day of occupying their library. They have been keeping it open 24 hrs a day in protest about the lack of open access to the University of London library and general lack of funding for Higher education. SOAS is part of the University of London, but they are not allowed to use the library, unless they have a special ticket. However last year, SOAS management only bought 682 tickets for 2000 students, so the majority cannot use it unless they cough up £80 from their own pockets.

The School's director, Tim Lankester (who used to be the top civil servant at the Dept for Education) has refused to supply all students with tickets, and has only offered another 150 tickets (with maybe 300 more if there is enough demand). Since the occupation began management have shut down the computer lending system, so no books can be issued out, switched off photocopy machines, and took the occupiers to Court.

On Thursday, the day after nearly 10,000 students had a rather dull march through London to protest against the introduction of tuition fees, SOAS students decided by a majority of 2 to 1 to continue occupying their library indefinitely until management agreed to their demands. Bailiffs could come at any moment, but University workers have pledged to stand between them and the students if they turn up. Other students are being encouraged to "do it the French way", and come out and occupy in solidarity to fight against Labour selling out on its election promise of making education a priority.

For more info contact the SOAS Student Union on 0171 580 0916, or the Committee for the Continuation of Occupations c/o Sussex Uni Student Union pigeon holes, Falmer House, Sussex University, Falmer, Brighton BN9

### CRAP ARRESTS OF THE WEEK

\* For giving a backy. 17 year old M. Bizabhue was fined £20 with £30 costs for carrying more than one person on a bike in North St., Brighton!

\* During an Anti-Live Export action at Woodsfarm in Redditch, a woman was arrested for being in possession of a pair of nailclippers. She was later released with the warning that if she took them on another action she would be charged with going equipped!!

## GANDALF UPDATE

The campaign to free the three editors of Green Anarchist (see SchNEWS 143) gathers momentum. They were given three years apiece for 'conspiracy to incite criminal damage' - purely for reporting about direct action. As the news of the trial verdicts has rebounded around the world, disbelief has sharply turned in to action, and world-wide solidarity has burgeoned. Index on Censorship, more used to focussing on repression in far-off regimes, has instigated a co-ordinated Internet response, asking groups to re-publish on their webpages the offending paragraphs from GA that were central to the prosecution case. So far six groups around the world have done so, and the number is rising...

The police in their urge to clamp-down, may find that they have once again shot themselves in the foot, as more and more people adopt the attitude: if anyone is guilty, we all are! The McLibel Support Campaign and London Greenpeace have organised a public meeting on Wed. 17th Dec. at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2 (Holborn tube) 7pm to discuss "where do we go from here?" \* **One of the jailed Steve Booth is currently being held in HMP Winchester, with a view of being moved to Dorset. despite the fact that all his friends and family are up north. So this is a shout for all concerned out there to write a letter to the Governor of HMP Winchester asking that he be moved nearer home.**

### SEND LETTERS OF SUPPORT:

**Saxon Burchnall-Wood** CK4322, **Steve Booth** CK4323, **Noel Molland** CK4321, HMP Winchester, Romsey Rd., Winchester, SO22

### kangaroos

In a bizarre but related development, nine people were nicked last Thursday after taking part in a trolley run at Sainsburys to protest at the company stocking 'exotic' meat. They were hauled in for criminal damage after allegedly spoiling meat with household bleach and children's lollipops! They were all held for 18 + hours and six had their homes raided. One young hunt sab - a student with no previous, had her bedroom searched by six cops, one with a video camera, removing such inflammatory items as SchNEWS and BBC Wildlife Magazine. Police zeal could be explained by the involvement of Paul Rogers, the editor of Green Anarchist (GA) severed from the Gandalf Trial. While in the cell, he chanced to overhear the coppers discussing possible charges of ....conspiracy. Paul commented "These latest raids by Hampshire cops are just a fishing expedition for ARNI (the Animal Rights National Index ) and a further attempt to intimidate GA."

Get involved! GA, BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX or check out SchNEWS website.

## Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

tel/fax (call before faxing): (01273) 685913 e-mail: schnews@brighton.co.uk e-SchNEWS: <http://www.cbuzz.co.uk/SchNEWS/>

## SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

Since **Monsanto** introduced the genetically engineered Roundup Ready Soya bean, a Genetic free diet has become hard work, and as one woman has observed, expensive. So the Isle of Wight resident recently billed Monsanto to the tune of £6,418.82 - to cover her increased cost of groceries, researching non-GM products and their suppliers, travel expenses etc. If you are trying to avoid GM produce then why not do the same? Write to Monsanto, PO Box 53, Land End Rd., High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 4HL Tel 01494 474 918 \*\*\* 2 years, 2 days after the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow activists, Glaswegian activists helped **Shell** celebrate their 100th anniversary by unfurling a 40' 'No blood for oil' banner and D-locking shut their main depot. \*\*\* **The Law** - the radical magazine written by solicitors (and in a language even SchNEWS can understand) - is three years old. Issue 12 is out now and as usual is excellent with a top interview with Sara Thornton, the women jailed for life for murdering her alcoholic, violent husband, but eventually freed on appeal. Years sub is £5 from PO Box 3878, London, SW12 9ZE \*\*\* Prospectors **MIMNET**, out on the pull down in Devon, got lucky after sinking a big long screw drill down a bore hole in the Crediton Trough. They literally struck gold. Like all planetary rapists who want to make the earth move they plan to extract this 'precious metal' with all the dirtiest and crudest methods known \*\*\*Wed. December 10: X-static-MASS PARTY, benefit for the Brighton **Dance Parade** 10-3 am @ the Comber Club, on the seafront between the piers, near the Fortune of War pub. £3/2\*\*\* Between 6th Dec. until 13th there's gonna be a National Week of Action Against the **Fur Trade** Details from CAFT, PO Box 38, Manchester, M60 INX Tel 0171 278 3068 email: [caft&londonaa.demon.co.uk](mailto:caft&londonaa.demon.co.uk) \*\*\*The Mayor of **Hastings** Council last week put out an impassioned plea to the citizens of his town, who, two weeks into a £100,000 appeal to erect a statue to Saint Di, had coughed up the Princessly sum of £55\*\*\*\* Fri. December 12 "**Disgruntled**" The alternative panto, rocky horror meets spinal tap. The Pavilion. 8.00 Tickets from box office. £5/£3.50 conc!

### New Deal for Dolites

Unemployed and under 25? Single parent? Been on the dole for two years or more...well, we suggest you get along to the Hobgoblin Pub on London Rd, Brighton next Monday (1st December) for the low down on the New Labours Welfare to Work. There's gonna be a mass picket outside the Brighthelm Centre in North Road on Saturday 6th December. It's been organised by Brighton Against the Job Seekers Allowance who are targetting the Brighthelm because of their enthusiastic support of Project Work.

## DOCKERS CHRISTMAS FUND

Christmas is approaching once again, and what better at this time of Yule-tide good cheer than to send a donation to the sacked Liverpool Dockers and Hillingdon Hospital Strikers (See SchNEWS 136). Call the Hillingdon Strikers Hotline on 0956 135311, and the Dockers Donor Line on 0151 207 3388.

\* A Picket and Rally takes place on Saturday 6th December - meet 11am Philips Road, Blackburn - to protest at PolyGram's policy of casualisation. Last year they ditched 550 workers in favour of £3-an-hour-labour despite sales of nearly £3 billion. M&S Packaging, the company who now pack CD's for PolyGram, expect employees, including pregnant women, to stand throughout 12-hour shifts, day or night, and put up with owners' dogs messing in their canteen. Nigel Cook has been sacked, at PolyGram's request, for protesting at these conditions and will be speaking at the rally, along with: Liverpool Dockers, Hillingdon Strikers, TGWU and the Revolutionary Communist Group.

### GARDEN TREE PARTY

There's a BIG shout going out for more climbers (but *no* lunch outs or kettle watchers) to help save 76 poplar trees in Canbury Gardens, Kingston-upon-Thames. Permission has been given by the Liberal Democrat Council so that the residents of plush new housing development can get a better view of the river! The brochure plugging the high-class flats presumptuously cites the river view as a selling point, even before the fellings have happened. Possible eviction on the horizon... Call the camp mobile 0378 498257.

### +++PLUS+++ FILES

In Bath, the UK's first Farmers' Markets have gone down a storm. Local farmers and producers who brought in goods have almost sold out by the afternoon. There is another of these community markets taking place on Saturday 13th December @ Green Park Station, Bath.

### ...and finally...

Anglo-French Relations Award of the Week goes to Antoine Hurel, chief executive of Connex Trains. Bemoaning the recent spate of late trains due to 'leaves on the track' he complained about our countries irrational love of trees, and thundered "Is it so important, this attachment to trees, that we take the risk of delaying every year so many passengers? There are too many trees."

*disclaimer:* The SchNEWS warns all readers to grow old gracefully, sit passively in nursing homes, playing whist and having bed baths. Be thankful for your ever vanishing pension, and while away your final days safe in the knowledge that all your hard work and cash has gone to funding tax cuts for the rich. Then you will feel grey. Honest.