



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER DIRT DIGGIN'

# SchNEWS

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Ashton Court Quarry Campaign



## SOD OFF!!!

*"You can't move a grassland without changing its environment - and if you change that, the community of plants and animals it supports is bound to change too. The first prerequisite for protecting an SSSI\* is to leave it where it is. Quite simply, if you move it, you lose it."*

**Dr Richard Jefferson, English Nature ecologist**

The sign on the entrance to Ashton Court Park reads. "You are visiting a beautiful and peaceful park. Help keep it that way so that everyone can enjoy it." So what do North Somerset Council do? They give planning permission for the extension of Pioneer Aggregates Durnford Quarry into 20 acres of the park! But how come a park given in 1959 to the people of Bristol, under the condition that 'no part of it should be set aside for works which would detract from its value as a recreation ground or prejudice the enjoyment of the people' can be excavated for minerals? You tell us!

Despite ongoing protests, Pioneer began removing topsoil from the park's wildflower meadow last week, which is a site of Nature Conservation Interest, and home to three rare species of wild orchids as well as nesting skylarks, foraging bats, and badgers. The company plan to spend £1 million to remove 51 per cent of the twenty acre site in two metre square chunks, to be relaid half a mile away in a field on the other side of the quarry.

This process is known as translocation - and it has been an unmitigated disaster when tried elsewhere round the country.

*"The idea that nature is so resilient that you just shift it around somewhere else and carry on has to be rejected."* **Dr. James Bullock, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology**

**FAILED:** Warwickshire Wildlife Trust acted as consultants for the translocation of a meadow supporting 'almost all the unusual and rare meadow plants found in Warwickshire'. The meadow was in the way of a supermarket. An 'impossibly tight timescale rushed the process of finding a receptor site.' Result? Sedges and reeds became dominant and nearly all the species present in the original meadow disappeared. The Trust said they would not invest so much voluntary time or money in a similar endeavour, should the situation arise again.

**FAILED:** Twyford Down, Hampshire. In 1992 the DoE arranged

for a flood meadow at Hockley Junction, lying in the path of the M3, to be translocated to an island in the River Test, 16 miles away. The receptor meadow was 'of poor agricultural quality.' Result? After initially being trampled by sheep, the translocated areas have since subsided due to the cracks in the turves (the cut up pieces of topsoil) accelerating the peat drying out.

**FAILED:** Selar Farm, West Glamorgan. 'A remnant of traditionally managed farmland, a mixture of flower-rich grassland, ancient woodland, scrub and streams, that had survived years of destruction caused all round by coal mining, urban development and conifer plantations.' The meadow was home to the rare Marsh Fritillary butterfly and was on land designated for opencast mining by British Coal Opencast and Celtic Energy. In 1994 the meadow was moved.

*"In a couple of years we will have to write off this site for the Marsh Fritillary. It is another nail in the coffin of this nationally rare and declining species (P. Kirkland, Western Mail, March 1996) \*\* 'As far as we are concerned it is a successful project, and the planned process of re-introducing the butterflies, which has been happening, will continue.'* (Celtic Energy, Western Mail 1996) \*\* *'We visited the site in 1997 and reported that no adults had been seen that year. Current indications are it may well have died out.'* (John Davis, Butterfly Conservation Organisation, Sep 1998)

**SAVED:** Brock's Farm, Devon. Owners of this SSSI, English China Clays International planned to relocate this site to allow them to tip ball clay waste. 'The show of green-winged orchids is enough to leave you breathless.' In July this year ECCI told a Public Inquiry that they could prevent the loss of the grassland site by moving it to another location. English Nature objected, presenting evidence to show that previous attempts to transplant grasslands, both at Brock's Farm and elsewhere in England, had all failed. The inspector ruled in favour of the site remaining exactly where it is.

*"Translocation should never be offered as an alternative to opposing a development."* **John Davis Butterfly Conservation Organisation**

Pixies are asked to keep visting Ashton Court as the project will take about three months to complete. There is a safe camp nearby. Contact Ashton Court Quarry Campaign - 0467 430211 or 07970 423834

**VOCABWATCH:** A SSSI is a Site of Special Scientific Interest designated by English Nature, the government's own conservation body.

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For damaging a fire exit door:** Kate Evan, (her of 'Cops' - the cartoon book of road protesting fame), was enjoying a free drink or twenty at another DiY booklaunch, when security took a dislike to her dog being in the building. After a bit of a struggle they threw Kate against a fire-exit door and then had her arrested - charged with damaging the door to the tune of £200.

**\*For going to a seminar:** About 40 police officers took part in an early morning raid of an International Seminar on Globalisation and Resistance being held in Geneva at the end of last month. 50 participants, from 17 countries, were taken in riot vans to the local police station - including a 6 year old girl from the Ukraine - and questioned about Peoples Global Action. Speakers at the 16 day seminar included international economists, journalists, representatives of people's movements, and workers from grassroots organisations. A Nepali human rights worker commented "For me it is unthinkable that such police action in violation of human rights should take place in the same city as the UN Human Rights Commission headquarters." Quite.

The raid is part of a crackdown by the authorities after three days of rioting in May during 'celebrations' of the World Trade Organisation in Geneva (see SchNEWS 168)

### CAMPS DO WORK!!

Victory! Campaigners up the trees at the **Bass Recreation Ground** in Derby are coming back down to earth following a Council decision to change road plans. Instead of going through the Park the road will now shave away the verge.

The Camp at **St. Mary's Churchyard** in Southampton has been disbanded after the Church scaled down plans to build business units, apartment blocks etc. in the churchyard.

All these protest camps have (we think) been issued Possession Orders and so could be evicted any time soon.

**Birmingham Northern relief road** Tel:07970 301978/932224. Trying to stop the construction of Britains first toll motorway. \*\*\* **Crystal Palace.** Campaigning against a twenty screen multiplex cinema to be built on inner city green space. Tel 07957 938 784, (site mobile)/0181 7617826. \*\*\* **Arthurs wood,** due for the chop because it apparently obstructs the satellite and radar reception of the Manchester Runway 2 airport extension Tel 0161 998 1888/ 07775 602954. \*\*\* **Radstock railway Campaign,** fighting a housing development Tel:01761 432273. \*\*\* **Swindon** - Fighting a housing development in Shrivensham (just north of Swindon) Sorry no phone number.

**SCHNEWS BENEFIT: BANDS AND TECHNO: TAX £1.00: 7.30 FRIDAY 18TH SEPT -HOBGOBLIN**

## Town vs. gown

The countries first ever heritage protest camp in Central Oxford was finally evicted last Friday evening after 60 hours and 17 arrests. Taking 10 times longer than predicted by the acting Sheriff Nicholas Blandy, (he of Newbury by-pass fame), the eviction cost Oxford University up to 1/2 million! The listed London Midland Scottish railway building had been squatted to stop a new six-lane road junction and a University Business School (part funded by a dodgy arms dealer) The plans by Oxford University were never open to public consultation, and fly in the face of over 10,000 protest signatures. Arrests included Green Party Councillor Mike Woodin who was nicked after complaining about the wrong trees getting the chop!(Eight officially to be chain-sawed, but clueless blunderers still got the wrong ones!) Damage was also done to the listed building - one copper even falling through the roof. This whole saga has rekindled a centuries-old feud : *Town vs Gown*. Thanks to widespread press coverage, the whole of the County has seen Oxford University run riot over the Gateway to Oxford. One activist told Schnews "The time has come to show the University that Oxford is NOT their playground, it is our HOME."

BREATHE, c/o 38a Walton Crescent, Oxford 07970 343 486 email: nomoreroads@hotmail.com  
\* Oxford **Reclaim the Streets** Saturday 26th September, meeting 12 noon at Carfax tower (between Queens Street and Cornmarket Street) More details available from 04325 148539

## OPERATION MERMAID

Sometime in September, police forces are springing a one-day nationwide roadblock check to snare "illegal immigrants, benefit cheats and anyone of 'interest' to the police". Codenamed "Operation Mermaid" the exercise will be conducted alongside a triple-whammy of immigration officials, benefits agency inspectors and customs officers, wired up with on site laptops to run names and numbers through DSS and police databases. Operations co-ordinator Bob Nockalls of the West Midlands force gives his own PR pitch: "People are in no way detained for anything other than road traffic matters. Whilst they are in that check then people like the benefits agency will speak to the occupants. Nobody can make anyone speak to the benefits agency." This surveillance swoop is the latest in a series of UK operations led by local forces. So far, 93,000 drivers have been stopped, leading to 673 arrests and 5,500 vehicles being taken off the road (no great shame there). Privacy International say Operation Mermaid is in clear breach of the privacy provisions in the European Convention on Human Rights. It also breaches several principles of the U.K.'s Data Protection Act. For example, police can't demand, or even request details like National Insurance numbers, because this information is outside the stated reason for detaining the motorist. Detention by police can be a harrowing and frightening experience, and previous studies indicate that motorists see themselves as "suspects" and often feel obliged to comply with any request for information. If you've been detained as part of Operation Mermaid let Privacy International know at mermaid@privacy.org. Meanwhile in an operation already underway police and DSS officials are 'shadowing' London Underground ticket collectors looking for claimants going to work, illegal immigrants and 'muggers'.

\*Remember - you **don't** have to answer any questions put by police or government officials. You **don't** have to provide documentation of any description to benefits agency officials. Police can only ask for relevant information or documents - usually insurance papers, registration papers and drivers licence.

## 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.

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belated happy birthday to old Mick !!

## SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

**Full Employment Not Full Employment** is the name of the Glasgow Radical Festival being held during the first week of October, and promises to be "A celebration of Do It Yourself and Oppositional Culture" More info c/o Fahrenheit bookshop, Virginia Galleries, 31-33 Virginia St., Glasgow email: radfest1@hotmail.com \*\*\* If you've got any dirt on **Richard Turner Ltd** - the company that hires the 'scab' climbers used in evictions, then let Corporate Watch know, as they are planning an article for the next issue of their magazine. Send to Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford, OX4 1RQ; email@corporatwatch.l-i-way.co.uk \*\*\* As part of Gene Week, there's a **Day of Action against Tesco** on Friday 2nd October, to pressure them to remove Genetically Modified Organisms from their own brands. Contact Genetic Engineering Network 0181 3749516 / e-mail: genetics@gn.apc.org \*\*\* Against the 'ethnic cleansing' rampage in Kosovo, a **'Kosovo Solidarity March'** is planned for Sunday 4th October ... MEET Hyde Park Corner 11-12 am, MARCH at 12 am, RALLY 1.30 pm Trafalger Square. Protesting against the Albanian apartheid in Europe, systematic destruction of villages and complete lack of UN intervention (as ever) against human rights atrocities...more details 0181 674 2528. \*\*\* fancy a bit of **Hell in Hull?** and that's not just visiting the place! From Sunday September 27th - Wednesday 30th September the Disabled Peoples Direct Action Network (DAN) have planned their 11th National Action which needs YOU to bombard Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott with the simple request of Accessible Transport by 2007. More info (accommodation/ transport). 0181 889 1361 \*\*\* Highly recommended is the **PorkBolter**, Worthings monthly newsheet about what's really going on in the town. The September issues is out now, but also see if they've got any of August's 'Standing Up To Big Brother'. SAE and donation to PO Box 4144, Worthing, BN14 7NZ. Every town should have one! \*\*\* The UK's first annual **"Big Brother Awards"** are taking place in London on 26th October. Organisers Privacy International are calling for government, corporate, and legislative policy nominations. To vote for your Big Brother, e-mail PI on bigbrother@privacy.org, or write to Privacy International c/o on the fiddle, PO Box 2600, Brighton, E. Sussex \*\*\* There's a Demo at **Shamrock Farm** (breeders of monkeys for experiments) on Thursday the 24th. Transport from Brighton: meeting point is 2.30 pm outside Harvest Forestry New England St \*\*\* **The Okasional squat cafe** in Manchester has a new home - an old pub at 111 Newton Street. \*\*\* If you're interested in learning about **permaculture** get in touch with Naturewise who are holding an introductory weekend at the end of this month 0171 281 3765 \*\*\* For a while now a cyberbased collective called **The Electronic Disturbance Theatre** (EDT) has been supporting the Zapatistas in Mexico (SchNEWS 174/5). The idea behind EDT is to create mass protest in Cyberspace using tactics such as thousands of people sending faxes and e-mails to the same embassy or government at exactly the same time. These computerized versions of Critical Masses are called FloodNet and during the course of the last 7 FloodNet Actions some 80,000 plus have participated. EDT want to use this new tactic on other campaigns, if you would like to participate in or know more about FloodNet, e-mail: "disturbance.theater" <sjw210@is8.nyu.edu>. \*\*\* Three Days of **Action, Art, and Anarchy for queers of all sexualities**. 25-27th Sept. at the 121 club, 121 Railton Rd, Brixton.

**And don't forget, the last Mass Tresspass on the South Downs of the summer, this Sunday (20th) Meet 12 noon outside Brighton Train St.**

## INSIDE SCHNEWS

**Richard Dixon** and **Rose Browning** both jailed recently for 'conspiracy to recklessly endanger life and cause criminal damage' have been freed on bail pending an appeal. They had both been found guilty of cutting a private railway line into Whately Quarry, which is destroying the Mendip Hills. The rail line was a private line running into the quarry and there was never any danger to life, due to warning lights being placed up and down the track, and phone calls to the media.

\*Animal Rights Campaigner Ben Thompson has won a mega important victory for prisoners rights. On Thursday his second hunger strike was called off after Deputy Governor Serjent of HMP Bullingdon agreed to his demands for a healthy and complete vegan diet that is free from Genetically Modified (GM) contamination. Ben is being held in Bullingdon prison for protesting against the breeding of cats at Hillgrove Farm for vivisection, he was tricked into calling off a previous 8-day hunger strike when he was promised GM free food which then never materialized. Yesterday (Thursday) Ben finally tucked into a GM free breakfast and was been shown a full menu for the next two day's, however because of the Dep. Governors trickery Ben is still keeping a hunger strike option open. A spokesperson for the Genetic Engineering Network (GEN) said. "GEN will continue to monitor Ben's situation on a daily basis ...If for some reason these meals are withdrawn, Ben will begin the hunger strike the following morning without fluids." Whilst Ben was inside GEN was busy contacting people with the result that the prison was inundated for over 24 hours with faxes of support for Ben from activists to NGOs to scientists and MPs .A vigil was planned for the entirety of his hunger strike and wholefood companies and stores gave food donations which although are now not needed, means Ben will have some top tuck when he gets out in two weeks. Ben has been blown away by the amount of support shown to him and sends thanks and love to everyone that has helped in any way. Write to Ben for the next two weeks at: HMP Bullindon, PO Box 50, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 OPR \*\*\* Genetic Engineering Network, Tel: 0181 374 9516. E-Mail: genetics@gn.apc.org Website: http://www.dmac.co.uk/gen.html

## ...and finally...

Well, what d'you know Britain's poor are worse off than ever, according to a new report by the United Nations. In fact deprivation, chronic unemployment and poor levels of literacy has turned the UK into one of the most poverty-stricken countries in the West. Worldwide, the gap between rich and poor countries has also widened, with the richest 225 people in the world having a combined wealth of more than \$1 trillion - equal to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the earths population, some 2.5 billion people.

And Westerners spend \$37 billion a year on pet food and perfumes - enough to provide education, food, health care, water and sanitation for all those now deprived of the basics - with \$9 billion to spare. In fact a child born in New York, Paris and London will consume, pollute and waste more in their lifetime than 50 children born in a developing country. The report concludes that developing countries now face a strategic choice: they could repeat the industrialisation and growth of the past 50 years, or they could leapfrog to growth patterns that are pro-environment and pro-poor. SchNEWS wonders which one they will choose, and in this world of globalisation will they even really have a choice?

### disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to get all conspiratorial when they go to our website and the word 'forbidden' flashes up. Its nothing to do with M15, M16 or the CIA (although we'd like it to be, so we can boast about it down the pub). It will be sorted in the next fortnight. Honest.