



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ONE FOR THE ROAD...

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ROADS TO HELL

WILL COALITION PLANS DRIVE US ALL ROUND THE BEND?

The parallels keep racking up - a Tory government in power intent on pushing through a huge road-building/improvement programme by any means necessary - is SchNEWS looking at a return to the 90s?

Cameron has been saying recently - in any number of those cosy Downing Street chats no doubt, but this time with leading Tory councillors that, 'there's money for roads... for those who shout the loudest'.

With 68 new road schemes currently on the books, the threat of bulldozers now hangs over green fields and forests up and down the country. Road-builders are itching to get their hands on new funding streams made available by Cameron & Osborne PLC (to see them all got to <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/roads-to-nowhere/map>)

Regional Growth Funds and Community Infrastructure Levies are pots of cash that have suddenly sprung up, encouraging councils and 'local enterprise partnerships' to dust off old road schemes.

One proposal is to turn the A303 (which passes within a few hundred metres of Stonehenge) into a dual carriageway. This massively controversial and expensive project was dropped in 2007 after (among other protests) Arthur Pen-dragon threatened to down a bowl of hemlock. Will Excalibur be enough to stop it now?

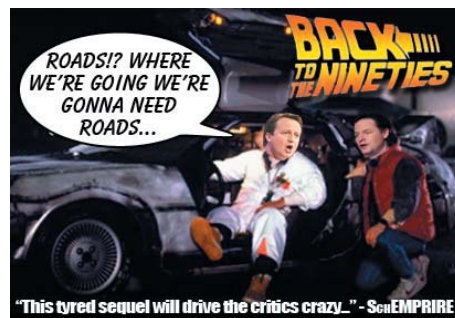
Closer to our own base, the unspoiled areas of Sussex one of the most environmentally damaging schemes of all has been pushed through following a fifteen year battle: the £100m Bexhill Link Road. This will trash one of the most beautiful and tranquil spots in the south; Combe Haven Valley. There's been a long-running campaign against this one, courtesy of the Hastings Alliance. They say "We will continue to make every effort to secure this very special and treasured valley for future generations to enjoy."

Campaigns are also currently underway in Norwich and Bristol (south Bristol Link Road) where roads have yet to get permission. In Norwich, Denise Carlo, of the Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group, said: "The Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NNDR) is a development road which even the major developers say they don't need. The way in which the County Council has promoted it as an access road for a business park to avoid a local planning inquiry makes a mockery of local democracy and accountability."

Although it's only 68 new roads/improvements on the table right now, these are just the opening salvo with more major schemes be-

ing planned for the next Spending Review in 2015. And now major roads, or ones that touch motorways will also get to enjoy the reduced Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NOD STRAIGHT INTO PLACE) planning process. So forget the hard fought public inquiry process, expect the tarmac to start going through immediately.

Becca Lush, a veteran anti-roads campaigner, told SchNEWS: "The current rush for roads is so depressing, with all the evidence of the last 20 years being ignored. That shows that road building rarely solves congestion, and usually makes it worse as traffic increases faster - as in Newbury. In fact road building usually harms local and regional economies. Transport poli-



cy is now driven by the Treasury, obsessively chasing growth and ignoring evidence. Road building won't benefit the economy or ordinary people; it'll simply line the pockets of construction companies."

All of this comes on top of recently announced government studies into the 'semi-privatisation' of the motorway/major road network, a kind of PFI for roads rather than those for hospitals and schools which we will still paying off at a ludicrous real cost to final cost-plus-interest ratio for decades to come. This time those getting pig-rich will be the usual road building scum likely backed by investors from oil-rich Gulf states.

Time to dust off the harness and get back into the trees?

A FIRST FOR BLOOD

AS CRAWLEY AND HORSHAM HUNT GO ON TRIAL

Well cover us in scent and chase us through the woods on horseback - four members of the Crawley and Horsham hunt in West Sussex actually appeared in the dock at Horsham Magistrates Court on Monday (23rd). They were accused of illegally hunting foxes with dogs, in antithesis with the joke that has been the Hunting Act 2004. Eight year's on and this case is the first such hunting prosecution in Sussex.

The obviously completely utterly and repeatedly guilty / accused are Masters Neill Millars (45 - yes, we're putting their ages in brackets like a real newspaper, as if the information was in some way relevant) of Dragons Lane, Shipley, Henry James Hawksfield (59) of Bines Road, Partridge Green, secretary Rachael Holdsworth (47) of Rock Road, Washington, and ex-huntsman, now Master and huntsman of the Dart Vale Harriers - Andrew Phillis (50) of Halwell, Totnes. The charges relate to six alleged offences under the Hunting Act on three days in January and February 2011. All allegations involve section one of the Hunting Act - hunting a wild mammal with dogs.

All four have pleaded not guilty. "It weren't me guv", honest," said Neill Millars (well, words to that effect) whilst turning a beetroot red.

On the opening of the trial the court heard from prosecutor Walton Hornsby. Video evidence has been provided from a local West Sussex Hunt Saboteurs group. The footage dates are from January 18th and 25th and February 15th. The fact that this motley crew could ever face their day in court is testament to the work sabs

have done round the country(side) for years, documenting the the hunts in often dangerous circumstances - only for their evidence to usually be somehow strangely ignored by police. But at least not this particular time.

As the case reached day seven on May the 1st, another related charge was thrown out before the final arguments were made. Hawksfield then had all charges dropped against him, District Judge Stephen Nicholls decreeing that there was no case for Hawksfield (great name for a hunter) to answer. The Judge is now considering his final verdict. The case has been adjourned until 14th May at Haywards Heath Magistrates Court.

And Sussex courts were not the only ones seeing hunt action. Two Cumbrian men were found guilty on Wednesday (25th) of hunting foxes and badgers after a 3 day trial. Ryan Lowe (30), of Baird Road, Harraby Carlisle and Brian Sanderson (40) of West Lane, Shap were also found guilty by a local Sheriff of possessing offensive items contrary to the Badgers Protection Act. Sentences will be handed out next month.

While SchNEWS will wait with unbaited breath to find out the severity - or not - of the punishments meted out, in the meantime at least its fun to see the hunters become the hunted, sweating furiously and with red faces rather than red jackets. Yer SchNEWS says: Throw 'Em to the Dogs!

PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

A SMASHING START

Last Tuesday, the Smash EDO's first protest as part of the Summer of Resistance took place at the gate of EDO/ITT EXELIS.

The Bad Noise demo started around midday with around 25-35 people - all equipped with banners and anything that might cause a racket (well, no missiles obviously). All kinds of instruments were given a thorough bashing but any hint of musical harmony was promptly smashed by several kitchen utensils banging on anything metallic. Young and old were present, tea was served and anyone inside or near the factory was left in no doubt about the level of disgust felt directed against Brighton's favourite arms dealers.

15 minutes before it ended one copper left his van and started bullying a girl half his age who was ringing a cow bell. She was arrested under section 5 - claiming that that her conduct was alarming in some unknown (and probably unknowable) way.

One protester (who preferred to remain nameless) said, "The unnecessary and unjust arrest highlights the role of the police in this Summer of Resistance. The disproportionate police presence shows that protecting the military industry is their priority. The completely uncalled-for arrest only proved that the police are there to do ITT Corporation's bidding."

The fight continues with plenty of demos and actions over the coming months. See smashedo.org.uk for more.

BILL POSTERS WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED

Last Monday (30th April) Greenpeace activists shut down the head offices of Centrica (the owners of British gas). The activists chose Centrica as a target because not only have they been solidly lobbying against renewable energy, but they've added an extra £100 per year to the average household electricity bill.

Around 50 activists, some of them locked on, shut down their head offices - ceasing trading and admin work for the day. They delivered them huge gas bills in the form of massive placards that barricaded their doors, as well as pasting giant wallpaper bills on the walls. As a result their boss, Sam Laidlaw agreed to the talks that he had been resisting for weeks.

One protester was briefly accused of "attempted manslaughter" for chaining a door two foot away from another fire exit. Despite this there were no arrests.

Oporto-UNITY KNOCKS FOR SQUATTED SCHOOL IN PORTUGAL...

During the past couple of weeks a wave of fullscale protest and direct action has swept the major northern Portuguese town of Oporto. The popular outcry is the result of the violent eviction of the project Es.CoL.A, aka "Espacio Colectivo Autogestionado" (or "Self Managed Space" - in English) from their abandoned school. Although these protests are serious about fighting City Hall's injustice they are also a community affair, filled with plenty of music and children.

Last Thursday, 19th April, City Hall decided to violently evict Es.CoL.A, leading to three arrests. In response, last Wednesday (25th April) - the same day of the national celebration of the 1974 Carnation Revolution against their fascist dictatorship - thousands took the streets and re-occupied the school. However, the next day police promptly closed it down once again, this time destroying essential building features.

Es.CoL.A emerged on April 2011, with the occupation of a 5-year abandoned school near a poor community in Alto da Fontinha, Oporto. The forgotten building was occupied by a group of active young citizens in order to return education and teaching to the site. It began with music lessons, books and toys for the children in the neighbourhood and gatherings with the locals on special occasions. Since then, the project gained a life of its own - numerous activities started up as the number of people joining increased. The self-managed school has been offering a wide range of social, cultural and educational activities to young and old.

To name a few, the activities include cooking skills, theatre plays, film screenings, music lessons, yoga, lectures, bike workshops, and so on. The list is endless as everyone one participates with what it can offer. After just one month of its occupation they were evicted on the grounds that future

projects are being designed for the forgotten space. This only made the resistance stronger with all the surrounding community backing up the Es.CoL.A project due to the direct benefits of the self-managed school in the community. The pressure was such that the Mayor gave the movement a temporary lease of the building, for now...

The building itself may no longer exist but its idea is more alive than ever! Assemblies outside the school and outside the City Hall are frequent and workshops have been taking place on a daily basis on the street outside the school, even sometimes taken to City Hall's street. In addition the project has begun to inspire the whole country propelling in solidarity two new initiatives. On 25th April, in Coimbra, a long forgotten field was transformed into an allotment, aka The Gardens of April. In only one day, under pouring rain, the site had been cleaned and prepared to receive seeds. In the same day, in Lisbon, an abandoned house has also been occupied and although eviction is expected new ideas are starting to be implemented.

Es.CoL.A shares many values with the global Occupy movement. A member of Es.CoL.A summarizes it perfectly for SchNEWS: "For the future, Es.CoL.A aims to keep activities running as well as enabling this idea to grow and spread throughout society. We are propelling discussion that goes way beyond the framework of a social project. It intends to create alternative ways for people to engage in self-management of the surrounding spaces. It is a form of direct citizenship based on an autonomous and egalitarian organisation, thus opposing the conformist attitude of accepting certain ways of living imposed by a non-representative administrative power. It is an attempt to clear the path for a new social organizational paradigm."

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...and finally...

The media has faithfully been doing the government's propaganda work for it this week by talking up all the big military exercises and showing off ahead of the Olympics. Witness the elite, seriously tooled up British forces parading their capabilities, ready for anything. A massive muscle-flexing exercise to shit up and terrorists, or the population at large, from trying anything during the big blow out.

Less well publicised is the casual approach to security shown by some of those 'elite forces' at a tower block in Tower Hamlets. A local resident was most surprised on coming out of his building to find a huge pile of seriously hardcore-looking military equipment; guns, missile-launchers, suspicious looking bags and boxes all heaped up around the front door. And nobody anywhere to be seen. It's as if discovering Parcelforce have just delivered Armageddon to your door, without even stopping to get a signature. Cue hasty arrival of embarrassed soldiers, from whereabouts unknown.

Fortunately for us, we live in the 21st century and every second person carries a video camera in their pocket. See the amusing scene here. (Well not quite whole scene; we don't see the soldiers arrive, but we imagine it along the lines of Right lads, we've unloaded all the vital equipment and weapons, stick 'em over there - now, anyone fancy a coffee?)

Disclaimer

SchNEWS consoles all nineties' protest veterans - at least it'll be easier to get to the next round of protests thanks to all those new roads they built. Honest!

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