

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER TOOLED UP... SchNEWS

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SPANNER!

"The state has no legitimate business invading the bedrooms of consenting adults and dictating how they should have sex."

Peter Tatchell, Outrage!

Three gay sado-masochists jailed for inflicting pain on each other for sexual pleasure lost their fight against the Government on Wednesday at the European Court of Human Rights.

The ruling marks the final chapter in the notorious **Operation Spanner** case, which started a long running debate on whether the state should attempt to regulate what consenting adults do in private if no serious or lasting harm is caused.

In a landmark ruling, the Strasbourg judges said the Government had *"the right to interfere in the private lives of people to protect public health and morals"*!

John Wadham from Liberty said *"The costs of this prosecution have been a massive waste of public money... It's to be hoped that a new government accepts the Law Commission's view that consent is not a crime, changes the law accordingly, and finds more useful things to do than worry about what goes on in the nation's bedrooms"*

Sixteen men were prosecuted after police accidentally found videotapes of their activities. Three were jailed for between 12 months and three years under the 1861 Offences Against The Persons Act, later reduced on appeal.

The sex acts mainly involved genital abuse with hot wax, sandpaper, fish hooks and needles, as well as ritualistic beatings with spiked belts, nettles and a cat-o'-nine tails.

More info: Outrage! (0171 439 2381).

* A quarter of a million quid of Wandsworth Council Tax-payers' money was squandered last year in an attempt to prosecute Club Whiplash, citing the Disorderly Houses Act designed to protect the "lower sort of people" in 1751!

* When police stomped upon last years 10th Annual Sex Maniacs Ball people involved had had enough and so the *Sexual Freedom Coalition* was born. The coalition produce *"Consenting Adults"* and are currently organising a *"Prostitution Pride"* march in central London sometime in July - followed by a hookers ball! Info: 0171 737 6289.

Refugees Ruling

The Lords do it again...

Last Monday three Law Lords upheld a previous decision that despite the Asylum Bill, local authorities had a duty to provide assistance to *"those in need of care and attention which is not available to them."* The judges also noted that the plight of asylum seekers is *"horrendous"*. This was emphasised by a recent study from the Refugee Council, who followed the progress of 15 refugees, many of whom suffered deterioration in both their mental and physical states. One Algerian said: *"Since I came to your country, I have had a hard time, but returning to Algeria would be worse. God writes your destiny on your forehead and this is mine. They think what they are doing is right, but they have made refugees criminals."*

Meanwhile, 18 refugees being held in Rochester prison are nearing 50 days on hunger strike. Some are also refusing liquids, and the British Medical Association has written to the Home Secretary saying that *"there is a likelihood of serious and irreversible neurological and kidney damage"* occurring.

Messages of support to Medway Community Support Centre, 16 New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6BA. Regular protests are being held outside the prison every Saturday from 2pm onwards (junction 3, M2 in direction of Rochester).

Anyone keen to remind Michael Howard that his Romanian Jewish father would have fallen foul of the Asylum Act if it has been in place in the '30s should fax him on 0171 273 3965. Anne Widdecombe can also be faxed on 0171 273 3094.

STRINGERS COMMON

SchNEWS' local anti-road protest camp, along the length of a road being widened in Guildford, Surrey. The beautiful common land being destroyed must, by law, be replaced, but the council plans to use existing green belt land which is, effectively, safe anyway!

Defences are growing along the length of the proposed improvements, with two growing camps and more people moving in to defend the strip between them. Help, in the form of bodies, materials, food, etc. is very much wanted.

This road is a local council, not a government, scheme, so we really stand a chance of stopping it. Come and make sure! Contact: 01483 32167, or call Justice? for travel info from Brighton.

CRAP JOB OF THE WEEK MYSTERY TRAVELLER

Spotted in Brighton JobCentre. Private rail company Connex are looking for a *"mystery traveller"* for the Gatwick service to sit in plain clothes and spy on the refreshment sellers. The requirements? Be able to check for *"suggestive comments"*! The pay? £30 per week. Incidentally, now we print jobs, you can say SchNEWS is part of your JSA jobsearch!

FOSSILISED!

Milford Haven report-back

"Built in Spain, registered in Cyprus, commissioned by a Norwegian, managed from Glasgow, chartered by the French, crewed by Russians, flying a Liberian flag, carrying an American cargo and pouring oil onto the Welsh coast... Who takes the blame?"

The **Reclaim the Coast** action at Milford Haven last weekend was pulled at the last moment when over 200 police were waiting at the port. Instead, the 100 or so activists went off to Brynhenllys open-cast mine where work was stopped. Six arrests were made, and one U.S. activist is being held on remand for a week. Meanwhile, back in Cardigan Bay, the oil industry celebrated the first anniversary of the Sea Empress disaster with another spillage, one of two which happened in Wales on Tuesday night. Away from the action, there were plenty of interesting behind-the-scenes shenanigans:

- A local research scientist taking water samples at the port was jumped upon by scores of police and armed Royal Marines!
- A ward in Haverfordwest hospital was left empty as it was anticipated that Earth First! would set fire to one of the refineries!
- Michael Heslop, the head of the Cardigan Bay Port Authority, has recently had his house ringed with razor wire and gets a police escort to and from work every day.
- Of the three refineries on the site, ELF recently had a security review and put up more than four miles of fencing in a week, and all those who work for Gulf were given two days off with full pay as this was deemed to be cheaper than the projected security costs.

Ignite magazine - digging the dirt on the oil industry - is available from Justice?. Send an SAE for 43p to get a copy.

Have I Got SchNEWS for you! £2.5/3 @ The Lift, Queen's Road, Brighton, 26th Feb, 8:30p.m.

@NTI-COPYRIGHT - INFORMATION FOR ACTION!

The + files

Interested in woodland working but lack the necessary skills? Fret not, for Friends & Families of Travellers are launching a mobile training unit to enable people to manage land, produce forest products such as hurdles and charcoal, and understand the ecology of leafed things.

Initial sessions are planned for Somerset, Sussex and two other areas. More info from: Steve Staines, FFT, Top Floor, 33 High Street, Glastonbury, BA6 9HT. (Telephone 01458 832 371).

Gorleben!

If you missed it, Gorleben nuclear waste plant in Germany has seen some of the biggest environmental direct action protests since the war. It's where nuclear waste is brought from France to be reprocessed, and there has been massive opposition against it. Last year up to 10,000 people were confronted by 19,000 riot Police who fought pitched battles as the convoy carrying the waste was taken across Germany, at a cost of £25 million. Another shipment is expected in the first week of March, and apparently the German authorities will give up if they cannot get it through without massive cost. Activists are calling for people from all over Europe to turn up and protest; it will be a major victory if this dangerous transport is halted. Ring them on 0049 5841 4684 or fax 0049 5841 3197 to leave your number. They are doing one ring-round when the shipment starts, and you will have 3 days to get there! Info from EF! Action Update: 0171 561 9146

Crap arrests of the week

For planting seeds! Stephen Hancock and Ciaran O'Reilly were arrested under the Aviation Act, for planting seeds inside the British Aerospace base in Warton (those nice people who sell Hawk jets to Indonesia). Both received suspended sentences of 3 months for breaking their injunctions.

For being nice! Sylvia Stayton 63 year old granny from Cincinnati was found guilty of obstructing official business - for putting coins in expired parking meters. She said "I'm disappointed, I feel we're here to help one another."



Conscious Cinema Collection

After many mishaps (and a lack of money!) the latest Conscious Cinema video is now available. Featuring everything from Squatting to Liverpool dockers to RTS to Plants for a Future to the latest roads footagea (check out the burning diggers at Newbury!) it's essential viewing for anyone who wants to see what's happening! You can get it for £5.00 inc. p&p from: PO Box 2679, Brighton, E. Sussex, BN2 1UJ. Cheques payable to Conscious Cinema. More info: 01273 278018.

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Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send stamps (e.g. 20 for the next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?). Or, if you can afford it... £15 for a year's subscription, or the SchNEWS supporter's rate, £1 a week. Ask for "originals" if you plan to copy and distribute. SchNEWS is post-free to 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/>

Sponsorship mania! We're planning an issue on business getting in on local community services. Know somebody who's commercialising due to poverty? Please get in touch! Brought to you by...

SchNEWS in brief...

*** The No Open Cast national support campaign are asking early bird activists to meet (old fashioned acid house party stylee) at Blythe Roundabout services, junction 34, of the A1 & A614, at 4 a.m. Spades, miners helmets and other implements of use in protecting Mother Earth on Mothering Sunday might also - we've been told - come in handy. More info: 0171 603 1831. *** **Liverpool dockers** on strike now for 17 months have now got the backing of... the labour movement? Er, no. Comedians. The *Dirty Three* and *a Half Dozen* will launch at the London Palladium then aim to raise £30,000 a week. Nice one. There is also a *Rock The Dock* benefit to be held at the Liverpool Irish Centre, Mount Pleasant, on the 13th March. £2/3. *** In an effort to counter Barry Legg's Private Members Bill (which will give police the power to get councils to close down clubs if they suspect people are taking drugs there - see issue 104), the Gemini website are putting up a *Rave Safe* survey - with the intention of using it as a campaign tool. Find it at [http://www.gemini.org.uk/Legg's bill is expected to come into law next month](http://www.gemini.org.uk/Legg's%20bill%20is%20expected%20to%20come%20into%20law%20next%20month). *** With the Legg law looming, sniffer dogs are to be introduced at *Room at the top*, a Bathgate nightclub. This Scottish venue will surely be a hit, as alongside Springer Spaniel "Max" and his companion, other measures to be introduced include an airport style metal detector and CCTV. When asked to comment, manager Ian St. John said, "We didn't have a problem before, we don't have a problem now and we certainly don't want one in the future." Alright? *** Recent **prison service** figures show the average cost of keeping someone in the slammer is £1,776 a month. That's £21,312 a year. Yer average doley gets less than two and a half grand a year. Bargain. *** Are you a net-surfing vegan anorak? Then the new improved **McSpotlight** site is for you. As of last Sunday it quadrupled in size to include all 313 days of the official court transcripts in full. Find this historic record at: <http://www.mcspotlight.org/> *** As the jaws of the **Job Seekers Allowance** bite hard, check out Mary Scott Cato's "Seven Myths of Work", a comprehensive hike through well researched territory to justify what we know to be true - work is shit. Order your copy from your local independent book shop for a measly five, published by Green Audit (ISBN 1-897761-13-9). Students take note... *** On 6th March at Frome Magistrates Court, Somerset, at 9:45 a.m., 3 people are due to appear charged with offences connected with the **Whatley Quarry** Action of Dec '95. Two further people are still under investigation. Those charged are alleged to have taken up the railway tracks going into the quarry, and British Transport Police have defined this as "Conspiring to Cause Criminal Damage With intent to Endanger Life". Info: Mendip Hills Not Holes Campaign, PO Pox 2113, Shepton Mallet, BA4 (see SchNEWS 103). *** Brace yourself for some shocking news: on Monday something of note took place at the House of Commons! INK, the **Independent News Collective**, of which SchNEWS is a member, was launched in the Hallowed Halls of the Mother of Parliaments. MP's Tony Benn & Cynog Dafis of Plaid Cymru were there at the launch, and good old

Tony took a copy of the SchNEWSround to go in the House of Commons library. INK promotes more than 20 titles, including Big Issue, The Ecologist, Squall and Undercurrents Video. More than 150 newsagents have pledged to stock INK titles as well as the same old rubbish held on shelves such as The Budgeter & Razzle. Info: INK, 87 Kirkstall Road, London SW2 4HE. Tel: 0181 671 7920.

SLEAZE PLEASE!

Plenty of skulduggery to report this week, and those who hanker after our votes are prime candidates for investigations. It's funny how a lot of revelations only come out long after the actual dirty deed is done. For instance, take Tories Derek Laud and Neil Hamilton, who in the '80s worked as consultants for the South African government, tirelessly working to convince people that apartheid was great. Another misdemeanour of that decade came to light last week: the naughty boy involved is Tim Bell, who masterminded the Tory election campaign. In 1983, he was arrested and fined for masturbating off of his balcony whilst on cocaine! Finally this week, a quick mention of the £4 million spent every year spent on Grade 1 lodgings for High Court Judges. The cost of keeping a wigged one away from London for a week presiding over a case? £10,897. More than enough to keep Tim Bell in Colombian Sneezing Powder and Kleenex.

Inside SchNEWS

Nic Grey (TN3965), half of the partnership that produced *Watermelon* comic and most recently involved in the "Bob" Dobbs art exhibition is looking for people to cheer him up while he's inside. Write to him at HMP Camphill, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO305PB.

...and finally...

You may have read of King Arthur Pendragon's crap arrests for possession of a broadsword and for being run over by a car. Now everyone with access to the internet can marvel at the wonders of the Arthurian Warband Website: (<http://arthurpendragon.ukonline.co.uk/>) There are full-colour pictures of the King in his full splendour, as well as the answers to all those questions you've been itching to ask, such as whether he works Knights.

...and FINALLY...

Fiction and fact can sometimes be very strange bed-fellows. Back in SchNEWS 70 we jokingly said that the DoT had set up a FeetFirst Helpline for people who had forgotten how to walk. Last week came the announcement that John Bowis, the Minister for Transport in London, was to set up a Steering Committee on Walking. Best foot forward now John! Even stranger (but as welcoming) was the news that the RAC, defender of motorist's rights and scourge of those fighting for a sane transport policy, has at last embraced public transport. Strangest of all perhaps is the Connex South Central train timetable advice: "Before leaving the train, please ensure that the station platform is there." South West Trains sacking a third of their drivers was stupid, but putting the platforms out to pasture is even more out there.

disclaimer

The SchNEWS advises all readers not to... ouch!