umbug

"If it is true that the UK is being asked to pay at tomorrows prices for yesterdays technology, at the same time as lone parents are losing yesterdays benefits and paying tomorrows impoverishment there has to be something wrong with our sense of priorities." Alan Simpson Labour MP

With the TUC's Bad Bosses Hotline receiving 5,000 phone calls in two days while New Labour announced child benefit cuts, with more to follow for the disabled and anyone else on the poverty line, it's looking like another penny pinching Christmas for millions of Britions. That's if you're allowed one. One company in the North East have "cancelled" Christmas according to one hotline caller. The factory bosses have told staff if they take Xmas or Boxing Day off, they have to take it as annual leave. Meanwhile, security guards rang the hotline from across the country complaining of 12 hour shifts where they get as little as £2.25 an hour. But even at the 'top' people aren't having much festive fun - one in four callers were professionals and managers complaining of individual bully bosses as well as exploitative corporate policies. And down at the bottom if you've not had your benefit stopped thanks to the Job Seekers Allowance then what are you going to spend your £40 a week income support on this Xmas? With so much choice and the economy 'booming' surely the United Nations report describing poverty levels in Britain 'unacceptable" must be mistaken? Still it'll be a Champagne Christmas for

George Barnes, head of a project team considering the merger of two Yorkshire hospitals, recently got a "golden handshake" of £372,000. Shame about the hospitals tho, who have a spending deficit of £1.5 million meaning operations have been cancelled. And City dealers are really listening to the Chancellors who told the nation that wage restraint was essential. They've given themselves a record £1 billion in bonuses this Xmas, 30% up on last year.

Still at least as we enter the Christmas spirit we can do so in the knowledge that we are safe. Ok, not from the gas

man, the bailiffs or a social security means test, but from those who would invade our country. And what better way to make sure of that, than by spending £16,000,000,000 (sixteen billion) on 230 Euro-fighters.

So this Christmas when you're cashing your wages/giro and opening the last tin of Tesco's value baked beans just remember that now we have a Labour government we should complaining and thank our lucky stars that Welfare to Work is just around the corner.....

*Faux Pas! Cuts in benefit to the disabled? Tony Blair spelled it out to GMTV viewers last Sunday "Look, if we're going to get this country back on its feet

* The Energy Savings Trust, which help's thousands of poor pensioners and disabled people to buy energy efficient boilers and so cut their fuel bills, this week had its budget cut by £5 million by John Prescott, the Environment Secretary. * Need an idea for another Christmas present? ABC Asia Pacific are selling spy cameras for only \$2,200 each - and if you buy now you get a 2nd free. Bragging "Productivity really does go up with this system" their sales blurb says that the spy kits will not only act as a deterrent to thieves but also "help managers see if employees are really working... It's a helpful tool for people who want to stay in control."

APEC CRAP ARRESTS OF THE WEEK

For talking too loud. One of the leaders of the APEC ALERT group in Canada, was nicked because at a demo a couple of weeks previous "he had spoken to loudly into a mega phone, and damaged a police officer's hearing."

For holding up signs. A director of the British Columbian Civil Liberties Union was nicked and held for 14 hours after standing on his front lawn, holding signs that said 'democracy and free speech'. The police said that the signs were dangerous because they could be thrown in front of cars and hurt someone.

For leafleting. A woman was arrested while she was handing out leaflets. She was detained and questioned for several hours by plain clothes cops who told her she was being held for "conspiracy to protest."

HUNT SABS IN CIA HOWARD FRIEND HELICOPTER INTRIGUE

01! YOU, CHRISTMAS? NO!

Suffolk encountered a millionaire landowner making a convincing bid to be a prime all-round hate figure. On December 3 at Mildenhall Magistrates court in Suffolk, saboteurs Melissa Vardy and Wilkins were acquitted of aggravated trespass, a charge stemming from a day of action against the Suffolk fox hunt, during which they were flown at by landowner David Hart in his private helicopter. So while Hart had acted recklessly contravening the Rules of the Air Regulations, the sabs were the ones who ended up under arrest that day. Yet it was the fact of Hart's mad flying coming out in court that led to the sabs' acquittal - the stipendiary magistrate accepted that, far from trying to intervene with the hunt at the time of their arrest, the sabs were in fact preoccupied with trying to evade the helicopter, as well as a tractor and quad bike being driven at them, and various members of the mounted field riding at them on their horses.

'My friend Michael'

Hart swore during the trial that he flew the chopper merely to observe and photograph the sabs, and never took it below 500 feet. But in a bizarre twist, his claims were contradicted by the notes of a police officer present at the scene who confirmed from the witness box that he had seen Hart's helicopter 'buzz' the wood the sabs had taken refuge in. Apparently Hart landed his craft several times to demand the police arrest saboteurs, and in a brash reference to wellloved ex-minister Michael Howard, declared "my friend Michael passed laws to stop this sort of thing!" For the man Hart is no stranger to controversy: he is a former Cabinet adviser to then Defence Secretary Michael Portillo, and in 1985 had a Commons motion tabled against him calling him a "CIA conduit" and decrying his "clandestine operations against the '84-'85 miners' strike". No charges have been brought against him for his reckless airborne escapades; so when out walking through the

Mike Cont. . . .

tranquil Suffolk countryside, should you hear a sinister buzzing sound coming from above, beware the scourge of frenzied right-wing helicopter pilots.

SchNEWS Tip: A simple shoulder-mounted rocket-launcher of the type dealt by the arms trade he was so involved in, should do the job.

Last Saturday 44 people were nicked at the Hursley Hambledon Hunt, Hampshire after 12 hunt vehicles were damaged. Most of those nicked then had their homes raided with the police taking anything to do with animal rights along with punk posters and band tshirts.

For once it seemed police were keeping a low profile despite a large convoy of anti hunt vehicles. However one of those arrested explained this bizarre police tactic "In an at-tempt to get me to admit to the charges they showed me a video that had been taken by a police spy plane. It had started filming us from the train station and followed the convoy the whole way, at one point the focus pulled back and it was so high in the sky you could barely see the ground, no wonder they didn't need to follow us. It was a complete stitch up "

Whilst the damage to property was real the media hysteria that followed conveniently forget to mention that it is often sabs that are attacked and their vehicles smashed by terrier men. Only two weeks previous 3 sabs were hospitalised and one sab van ram raided by a terrier boy landrover at the nearby Portman Foxhound in Dorset.

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

The 45th edition of the Housmans Peace Diary and World Peace Directory is out now. Costs £6.95 inc p+p from 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9DX. Cheques payable to Housmans *** A medical research expert who put a rats tail in his sons French fries in order to sue McDonalds for millions of dollars, was this week found to be lying. He now faces a 4 year prison sentence *** 100 people attended a meeting onWednesday to see what support could be given for the three editors of Green Anarchist - recently imprisoned for three years each for writing about direct action. A London Gandalf Support Group has been established and will be meeting monthly at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (nearest tube Holborn) from now on. Next meeting is Weds 21st January 7pm 0171 865 8100 Email lgp@envirolink.org*** The latest quote from caring/sharing Portillo 'We may have our first homosexual Prime Minister very soon." What is he on? [and can us SchNEWSers have some ?]

JUSTICE? FAX PLEA

Please can someone give us a fax machine??? We really really need a new one (or 2nd hand!)

Subscribe!_.

NO SHELTER FROM GREENBELT HOUSING

According to present trends, a projected 4.4 million new households will be created in the UK by the year 2016. The Department of the Environments 1996 Housing Green Paper says that this increase "if met in the simplest way - using greenfield sites - would result in wholly unacceptable environmental damage." Schemes of up to 10,000 houses are currently being pushed through the planning offices of Britain while the Empty Homes Agency estimate that around 860,000 homes lay vacant. ... One such site, Peacehaven Valley, to the east of Brighton, is the last remaining stretch of undeveloped land on the coast between Newhaven and Littlehampton. Modwen Properties Ltd., based in Birmingham, have successfully applied for planning permission to build 113 houses. Local residents have compiled a 14,000 signature petition but an enquiry has still found in favour of the development. Tony Howard, the leader of Peacehaven Town council, has said he would welcome people taking direct action to defend the site if it came to it. "The valley has so many owners that if a court order was obtained to remove protesters, they would only have to move a matter of feet and the whole process would have to start all over again".

Over in Stevenage campaigners are fighting the largest destruction of Green Belt in the UK - the scheme for 10,000 houses would mean a new town the size of Hitchin.

Friends of the Earth (FoE) have set up a new unit to raise awareness and help coordinate campaigns to stop the sprawl. Dr. Simon Festing, FoE is Housing Campaigner, said "The government cannot ignore this looming environmental disaster, and must review its housing policies now or face mounting public criticism.

* A 'Halt Greenbelt Housing' conference is to be held on Saturday 17th January 1998, hosted jointly by Friends of the Earth and Alarm UK. The venue is 356 Holloway Road, London N7, and there will be a fee of £15 to help cover costs. More details ring Paula Smith on 0171 566 1670.

The Campaign Against Stevenage Expansion (CASE) can be contacted at (01483) 315210, Dyes Farm, Langley, Herts SG4 7PQ.

* 'This Land Is Our Land' by Marion Shoard (Gaia) One reviewer called this "the best book I have read on land and the politics of ownership"

SOUTHDOWNS ALERT

The South Downs are a priceless landscape, full of natural and cultural heritage and Brighton's green playground - or at least they should be. As an experiment, for the last five years they have been under the jurisdiction of the obscure "South Downs Conservation Board." Under their management, loss of precious chalk grassland and ancient monument has continued unabated, with the public still excluded from the vast majority of the Downs. However, now is your chance to have your say of what you want for the Downs- but be quick. The Countryside Commission is currently conducting an enquiry into the best way forward for the Downs and there will be a discussion forum on Mon January 5th 7.30 pm Hove Town

POPLAR PEOPLE'S FRONT

Kingston upon Thames this week. After initial hostility towards protesters, who set up camp on a park to save trees from Fairclough Homes, [the a pair to save trees from Farctough Fromes, fine developers argueing that trees spoil the view of the Thames from luxury housing], the affluent residents soon saw the light and took to Direct Action with a fervour that would make the Scientologists jealous. Over 500 suburbanites marched to Kingston Guildhall for the council vote with people carrying coffins, dressed as Green Men and trees. The normally reserved Kingstonites went apeshit as a climber scaled the Guildhall roof. With the building rammed others carried on the protest outside, the meeting degenerated for a time into absurd theatre as people shouted the councillors down, tore up paper and generally misbehaved. 100 police looked on nerviously as 90 year old ladies threatened to be dragged out kicking and screaming and a F.I.T Squad [Forward Intelligence Team] tried unsuccessfully to look anonymous [F.I.T. at a council meeting?] Amongst papers snatched from councillors desks was a Gold Paper the term describing documents covered by 'The Official Secrets Act' what the hell does the official secrets act have to do with a public meeting? unlikely coalition emerged as Conservative and Labour councillors voted down the developer loving Liberals 25 to 24 on a 1st vote. A 2nd amendment vote saw the hypocritical Liberals suddenly voting to turn down the tree felling application. Fearing for their seats perhaps? The meeting ended with Tories hugging dreadlocks and both Conservative and Labour councillors praising Direct Action . Although this battle was won the war is still on as Fairclough Homes can appeal . Contact: The Tree house Canbury Gardens, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey 0181 287 3118 or 0378 498 257

...and finally...

Last Sunday's "Turn Yourself In Day " in Leeds saw 100 cannabis users confessing to the heinous crime of smoking dope, then handing themselves in at the local cop-shop. After being refused entry, one person was nicked "for not having a bath"! 6 other's were then arrested but all released without charge, except for one man who has been charged with possession - even though he didn't have any on him at the time! Leeds Police decided that because he had admitted to having previously consumed the evil weed, that was good enough, and so he has been charged with possessing an unspecified amount at an unspecified place in Leeds on an unspecified date in 1997! With that logic six million other Britons (and Bill Clinton) could be charged in the same way. And there is barely an adult alive who has not committed some minor criminal offence somewhere, sometime, (except Jack Straw) for which they have not been punished. How many motorists have broken a speed limit? How many people have dropped litter? How many people have had alcohol before they were 18? Is everyone soon to be quizzed about their past with old CCTV footage gone through with a fine tooth comb. We think we should be told.

...disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers to remember to enjoy their Christmas nut-turkey and smile as they open their presents and stare at rather large y-fronts. Try not too feel guilty that you've fogot to get Auntie Jean any bubble bath and the money your nan sent you to buy a nice prezzie with has gone up your nose. Then you feel Christmas crackered. Honest.

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tel/fax (call before faxing): (01273) 685913 e-mail: schnews@brighton.co.uk e-SchNEWS: http://www.cbuzz.co.uk/SchNEWS/ Congrats to Tam & Mark on the arrival of Yemaya. -Tam, when are you coming back to (welfare to) work? Happy solstice/xmas/new year/life! We're back 9thJan1998.