



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER EARTH SHATTERING...

SchNEWS

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BOO! TO THE OPENCAST MONSTER MUNCH

"We all know of the need for alternative energy and the phasing out of fossil fuels, but Rio in 1992 lead to nothing concrete and the recent follow-up meeting in New York seems to have been no better. If direct action can take on the construction industry, surely it can wake up the country to the exploitation of the open cast industry."

Mandy Meikle Scottish Open Cast Action Group

Halloween is the day set for a national day of action against the monster that is open cast mining. Up and down the country plans are being drawn up to tackle what is fast becoming one of Britain's environmental hot potatoes, with protestors promising to occupy and close down at least one RJB opencast pit. The day of action also co-incides with the last day for responses to the Department of Environments consultation document about opencast mining.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Open cast mining began in Britain after the second world war when permission for mineral extraction was granted freely. However, many of those "interim planning orders" of the forties still remain in force still today. Since 1980 open cast coal production has tripled and now stands at 16 million tonnes making up more than 1/3rd of the total British coal production.

This increase in production has come about despite the former President of the Board of Trade Michael Heseltine telling the country - as he announced the last wave of deep pit closures in 1992 - "British Coal cannot go on producing coal which cannot be sold."

Since the end of the miners strike in 1985 140 deep pits have closed and 90 per cent of the colliery workforce has been made redundant. All the devastation inflicted on mining communities being brushed aside and justified by the Government on 'economic grounds'. Then in 1994 British Coal was privatised with RJB Mining taking over 70% of the industry in England, the Scottish Coal Company got the majority in Scotland (funnily enough) and Celtic Energy grabbing the coalfields of Wales.

"The deep mines were part of your life, they created their own communities, and they created employment. But open cast doesn't create local jobs. It takes a maximum of six people to excavate the sites round here, and then they move on. And even if we can live with the open cast, there's the landfill...After three generations, the danger will still be with us."

Clive Bound ex-Leicestershire miner

Now across Britain there are at least 95 open cast mining sites in operation, with the figure set to rise dramatically as coal contracts come to an end in March 1998 and are thrown open to the 'free market'. It's predicted more deep mines will close at the expense of more open cast sites which are much cheaper to operate - if you don't take into account the social or economic costs.

Opencasting is brutal. Even the House of Commons Select Energy Committee this year said *"(it) is one of the most environmentally damaging processes being carried out in the UK."* Entire landscapes are dug out sometimes to a depth of several hundred feet, piled up in heaps, while the saleable minerals are removed and taken away by road. For people living nearby the effects can be appalling. Even when its 'restored', it can never be the same again. Minor cosmetic repairs, such as the planting of shrubbery or trees cannot be seen as any sort of restoration of an ecosystem that has taken hundreds of years to develop. As journalist David Newnham observed *"It will always be a bland, blank slate, wiped clean of its history, returned to Year Zero. To those who knew and loved it in its original state, it is forever tainted - like a house whose contents have been turned over by a burglar."* Then there is the air and water pollution, noise and dust of diggers and explosives and the incessant coming and going of heavy lorries...

And it cannot even be argued it creates jobs. It's been estimated that it takes 389 open cast workers to produce a million tonnes of coal in a year, whereas it takes 701 workers to produce the same amount from deep mines.

"Unless people pool their resources, they don't have a chance. Open cast coal is cheap to produce, but the social and economic costs are big, and they are picked up not by the developer but by the taxpayer for years to come."

Colin Robinson, Anti OpenCast Campaigner

Friday 31st Oct is Halloween and time to scare the pants off the open cast monster with a national day of action. Meet 5am Ward Green Community Centre, Genn Lane, Worsborough, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

The community centre will be open from 10pm Thursday 30th October for gathering/sleeping. Bring food and warm clothing. For transport from London and the south/more info phone 0171 603 1831 / 0171 672 9698 For transport from Brighton call the Justice? office on 01273 685913.

GET INVOLVED!!!

Yorkshire 01924 864451

North East 0191 3772027

Midlands 01530 813010

Wales Reclaim The Valleys 01685 873993

Swansea F.O.E 01792 813600

Scottish Open Cast Action Group

01501 785202 .

So what do New Labour have to say about this? In March 1991 they produced an 11 point plan entitled Open Cast Coal: Too High a Price? Their new consultation document however details 10 points. As Elaine Gilligan from Friends of the Earth (FoE) told SchNEWS "The one point they've omitted is a commitment for a 'presumption against', which in reality gives the green light for open cast to continue." The document also fails to mention the effect on human health and its impact on former coalfield areas. FoE also complain that the document "has a heavy bias towards the private sector and governmental organisations, ignoring the hundreds of locally based anti open cast groups around the country."

If you want to find out more about renewable energy send an SAE to the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ Wales or ring 01654 702400 email: help@catinfo.demon.co.uk

GREEN FIELDS NOT BLACK HOLES

Friends of the Earth are organising media actions on five Greenfield sites in the UK currently under threat on Saturday 1st November. 0171 490 1555.

RETURN OF THE TEAPOT

The Anarchist Teapot has opened its 6th squatted cafe and radical reading room at 72 Grand Parade. Justice? who had squatted the same building about two years ago, were evicted by Brighton Council who promised to turn it into housing. However, the building has been empty ever since.

The squat will be open noon - 6pm Monday to Saturday, serving free tea and food by donation. Forthcoming events include: Mon 20th 8pm, an introduction to the Anarchist Teapot and squatting, followed by a showing of Undercurrents 7 *** Wed 22nd Talk on Brazilian land squats at 7pm, with food being served after. *** Thurs 23rd anarchist talk and video by two Maori's Mike and Annette about the resistance to the destruction of their homelands and culture *** Mon 27th 7pm Bandit Queen video, with Indian food. If you want to get involved with the Teapot or get more information simply drop into the squat and ask.

* Mike and Annette will also be speaking on the 20th October at 7pm at Living Green Centre, 28 St. Pancras Rd., London. They are also speaking at Leeds, Bristol and Warwick. More details 0956 656937

NEAR CRAP ARREST

For wearing a "f.c.u.k. fashion" t-shirt. A Brighton man was pulled out of a cafe in the Laines for this heinous crime and threatened with arrest. Fcuk that!

ANIMAL MAGIC

Camp Rena was set up five weeks ago at Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) to campaign against vivisection. Despite a recent eviction when one woman spent 60 hours down a tunnel and helped cost HLS £50,000 the camp has moved a little down the road. In order to set up a permanent visitors centre they need wood, tarps, fencing, vegan food etc Contact 01223 311828 or camp mobile 0589 026435

*Animal rights campaigner, Dave Callender, sentenced to 10 years for conspiracy to cause arson, has his appeal on October 30th. There will be a gathering at 8:30 am to welcome him followed by a National Demonstration 11am, Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand, London. (nearest tube Temple) Contact Dave Callender Justice Campaign, PO Box 38, Manchester M60 1NX. Tel 0121 632 6460.

* November 1st is World Vegan Day (01424 427393) and also the day the Fox Hunting season begins. If you wanna go sabbing ring Hunt Sabs Association 01273 622827

*WRATH (Welsh Rurals Against The Hunt) have organised a rally in support of Michael Fosters Bill to outlaw fox hunting. Meet 12noon, Sat November 15th, in Aberystwyth outside the Town Hall (Queens Road) More info 01970 615398

The + FILES

Fancy a cheap holiday that is ethical as you like? WWOOF (Working Weekends on Organic Farms) is a countrywide exchange network where bed, board & practical experience are given by volunteers in return for work on organic farms. Many farms are child-friendly, and stays can be longer than a weekend! SAE to WWOOF, 19 Bradford Rd, Lewes, E. Sussex BN7 1RB.

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SchNEWS in brief

Opps! We forgot to mention in last weeks SchNEWS the **Movement for Justice** demo against police harassment is on November 1st Meet 1pm at Brixton Oval opp Lambeth Town hall *** **A Time To Travel?**, a book published as an introduction to Britain's newer travellers, is being rewritten with a European slant. If you'd like to contribute your own experiences of nomadic living on the continent, or buy the original book, contact Alan Dearling, Enabler Publications, 3 Russel House, Lym Close, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3DE Tel/Fax 01297 445024 *** Indian activists have defeated **American bio-pirates** in their attempt to patent the spice turmeric. The US Patents Office issued a patent to Mississippi University in 1993, but a recent U-turn saw the patent being deemed invalid - because the spice was 'not a novel invention'. Actually the spice has been used by ayurvedic practitioners and indigenous people in the Indian sub-continent since time immemorial as a blood purifier and anti-inflammatory agent *** **Jobless Swedes** are getting themselves attached to billboards in a bid to highlight their plight! The two day advertising campaign by the Union of Commercial Salaried Employees proclaimed "Here hangs an unemployed person" *** An Irish alcoholic turned himself into the cops after spotting himself on a security video - robbing a petrol station with a fake gun! William Nixon had spent all his **giro on beer**, before robbing the garage of £250 and wishing them "all the best" *** A monkey caught stealing a tv aerial has been arrested in Benin along with the **Ghanaian street juggler** who trained it. The juggler was locked in a police cell, the monkey in Contonou zoo *** McGrath & Co Solicitors **Travellers Advice Team** are now offering their services for the whole of Britain. Willing to attend traveller sites at short notice plus training on the law to organisations, you can contact them on 0121 643 4121 office hours 0468 316755 24 hour mobile. They also publish a newsletter, for a copy send SAE to 135a New Street, Birmingham, B2 4QJ. *** Have you heard the one about the recycled products such as glass and plastic which could in the future contain small quantities of 'very low level' **radioactive waste**? This is thanks to a new decision by the European commission which allows small quantities of radioactive material to be disposed of without the need for a licence. Who needs Readybrek to glow in the dark? *** **Direct Action and British Environmentalism** is the title of a Conference at Keele University on Saturday 25th October 10 am - 5.30 pm £10/£6 unwaged 01782 583452 *** A British section of **Food Not Bombs** has been established kicking off with a Halloween Meal at the Imperial War Museum Park (!) Lambeth Rd, SE1 4.30 pm. More info 0181 766 8813 If you wanna get involved in the group they meet every Monday night 8pm at 121 Centre, 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, SE24 *** There's gonna be an 'Ideas & Action' **alternative politics fair** in Norwich on 1st November from 10.30 am - 4pm at Norwich Arts Centre, St. Benedicts St., Norwich. And it's free! *** Bookmarks is a new **socialist bookshop** opening at 1 Bloomsbury St., London, WC1B 3QE November 1st. 0181 802 6145 *** Out now - launch issue of **ANIMAL** - new rant mag including eye witness reports from Trafalgar Square Reclaim The Streets plus lots

of theory £1.20 from ANIMAL, PO Box 467, London E8 3QX *** Haringey Solidarity Group are planning to produce a monthly newsheet covering a whole range of resistance. So if your "an unrepentant dinosaur leftist, self-confessed anarchist, crusty eco-terrorist or just a dole scrounger with a chip on your shoulder" drop 'em a line HSG, PO Box 2474, London N8 0181 374 5027 *** **March for a woman's right to choose!** Commemorate 30 years since the 1967 Abortion Act with a torchlight march on Wednesday 29th October at 6pm University of London Union, Malet St., Euston, London 0171 561 6503 *** Two more dates as part of the 'Public Service Announcement - striking a chord - no issue is single' benefit nights: The Duvalls, Inner Terrestrials & **King Prawn** play a benefit for Reclaim The Streets and Autonomous Refugee Centre in Hackney on 30th October at Pembury Tavern, 90 Amhurst Rd., Hackney E8 London 8.30 pm - 1 am £3/£2 *** Next an evening of cultural delights with artists from different **refugee communities** at the Library, Brownswood Rd., N4 (Finsbury Park tube) £3/£2. For more information email: publica@tarakan.demon.co.uk *** **November 8th The Food Health Connection** - a diet for our children's future. One day conference on nutrition and health. Good Gardeners Association 01452 700306.

WALKING TO VICTORY

Protesters were partying in Devon this week after The Department of the Environment finally granted a public enquiry into a proposed clay quarry extension in Teigngrace, Devon. The announcement came just four days after protesters and locals walked 242 miles in just 12 days, to deliver a letter to John Prescott calling for the Public Enquiry. Feeling snubbed that a mere underling came out to accept the letter, signed by 3,000 people, three protesters climbed the roof of the DoE the following day and dropped a banner in defiance of the expansion of the quarry. If it gets the go ahead the quarry will divert two rivers and trash 280 acres of marshland to provide ball clay for millions of toilets and washbasins, all for export. The camp is now to be disbanded.

...and finally...

Gig of the week most go to Klaire, Mand 'n Linz who are organising a Punk 4 Pussys benefit gig in Walsall in aid of the Cannock Cats Protection League. Featuring such luminaries as One Chord Wonders, Jumpin Landmines, Combat Shock and Contempt (TBC) its £2.50 - or £1.50 *with a tin of cat-food!* It's at the Royal Hotel, Astor Room, Bott Lane and t-shirt removal and a punk disco are also promised. Talking of obscure flyers that arrive in the post - how about Sick on the Bus playing at the Racehorse in Northampton on the 24th. Tickets are of course available from Get Sick Records in Raunds where you can also apparently get their new gutter coloured LP "Suck on Fuckheads." Who said punk was dead?

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers to never live with a slag who treats the place like a tip, just get on yer pedal-powered generator bike avoiding all diggers, dumptrucks, pits and whopping great holes then you will feel content. Honest!

Apologies to new email subscribers - we are on the case!