



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER SMUG

SchNEWS



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Told You So !!

MOUNTED COPS IN SPY CAMERA SHOCK

Mounted cops in Cleveland have become the first police force in the country to run trials with new surveillance equipment video cameras. The tiny cameras, with a lens the size of a shirt button, are fitted to specially designed helmets.

Developed by Helmet Integrated Systems (HIS) a military equipment supply company based in St.Albans, the images are stored on a Walkman-sized device that is attached to the officer's belt or kept in the horse's saddlebags. The picture can also be sent by a microwave link up to two miles away, so that colleagues can monitor the situation and offer advice.

The wide-angle camera is fixed behind the helmet visor and is almost invisible to an onlooker. A tiny high-powered microphone provides the option to record sound, all operated by the flick of a switch worn on the finger.

Inspector Ros Sibley said "The main reason we are planning to deploy this technology across our mounted force is because offices on horseback are 9 foot off the ground and have a wide range of vision. They are also most often in crowd-control operations, such as football matches or riot situations, where we think that the technology will be most useful."

Eric Staples, in charge of HIS police-products division believes the applications for the system are almost limitless. "We definitely see this as something that goes wider than the police" Over in America, a similar system is being developed. Semco Systems have unveiled an in-car video system, which links a camera being worn by an officer with a recording system in a patrol vehicle. This means that if cops give chase to someone, a flip of a switch on the body-worn camera, will record the action up to half a mile away.

The cost of the trials has been justified because the police reckon they will be able to prove they are innocent when it comes to fighting harassment allegations made by the public. Whether the cameras will mysteriously break down when the police step out of line, is of course anyone's guess.

Note: During the last Brighton Reclaim The Streets all the police CCTV cameras 'mysteriously' broke down...

...the same provisions against investigative journalists." As one activist told SchNEWS "This could be the thin end of the wedge. If they get away with using these laws against animal rights activists then it will give carte blanc to attack anybody involved in the direct action movement." The Protection from Harassment Act

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On 25th February, three animal rights activists became the first protesters in the country to be taken to court under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 - a law introduced to protect women from stalkers.

Last year Peter Harrison, the owner of Cornyhaugh Mink Farm in Northumberland took out a injunction banning Newcastle Animal Rights Coalition and anyone connected with the group from demonstrating near his farm, from using the highway which runs alongside the farm and from phoning or writing to him! The campaign against the mink farm followed an undercover investigation in 1997 which revealed the appalling conditions in which mink are kept.

A whole month after taking part in a candlelit vigil outside the farm, Stephen Tindle and Elizabeth Crocker were arrested and charged with the 'continual harassment' of Harrison. In Court they were accused of repeatedly trespassing on Harrisons land and of leaving him and his family feeling 'threatened and distressed.' (but not as distressed as the mink) A third person, Laura Nicol was also nicked when a policeman lied and said he had seen her with Steven, despite her being in jail at the time for non-payment of fines!

After a three day trial, Stephen and Elizabeth were found guilty and given absolute discharges with £100 costs. But were also given restraining orders preventing them from going within half a mile of the farm, under the threat of up to five years imprisonment.

The case sets a dangerous precedent, and could affect all types of protest. In theory anyone protesting against the same person more than once could be accused of harassment and arrested.

Now that the Act has been successfully used against demonstrators, then it's surely only time before police forces across the country start queuing up to use it. On Wednesday evening, two more people were arrested outside the mink farm during a candlelit vigil, charged under the Act and given 7.30 pm - 7 am curfews.

And one woman has been charged for demonstrating outside the home of Hillgrove Farm owner Christopher Brown - the man who breeds cats for vivisection.

Liz Parratt from Liberty told SchNEWS "Using the new Act in this way will detract from the aim of protecting genuine victims of harassment whilst adding to the arsenal of criminal sanctions already available against legitimate protest. One wonders how long it will be before the same provisions are used against investigative journalists."

* Demonstrate outside a Dorset mink farm this Sunday (22nd). Travel available from Brighton, meet 9 am outside Harvest Forestry.

NEWS GAG

Liberty last week failed in the High Court to overturn the convictions of three people who were monitoring a hunt. The three, who were doing nothing more than filming, failed to comply with a police order to leave the area. Liberty said the ruling would be a threat to others such as investigative journalists.

Stopiwch ddinistrio Eithinog!

'Possession Forthwith' has been granted to Bangor Council on land squatted by greenfield protesters. The council intend to build 300 social housing homes on a 30 acre green site that has been used as a village green by the local community for thirty years. People are angry because despite there being countless brownfield sites around, Bangor Council have ignored pleas to review planning policies not updated since the Fifties. A full-on camp has been set up for five years now with total local support, the camp say. "It's a beautiful site, lovely locals, bring usual eviction tat."

Camp Mobiles 0836 563 980/01248
388 018: Student Union 01248 388 018

ILL-Legal Aid

"Justice should be there for all of us, not just the well off or very poor". Funny way to begin a report that basically says justice won't be there for all. Our old mate Lord Chancellor Irvine (the man who spends your money on his wallpaper and hangs public works of art over his mantelpiece) has rethought plans to abolish Legal Aid for compensation but don't start to celebrate, since we see the first phase of cutbacks come in during the summer that will affect 60% of personal injury and accident claims. Obstacle one to justice for all. It means accident victims will have to take out legal insurance to begin a case, the fee being worked out on the odds the insurance company see on your chances of winning (Ladbroke's Law?) These fees are likely to start at £100. Lawyers will be asked to take on cases on a 'no win no fee' basis to cut the number of cases getting to court. So if you are seeking compensation, your first problem is finding a solicitor who thinks you have a chance of winning and as one said to SchNEWS. "you can't take on anything but a sure-fire winner". The poorest, weakest, most disadvantaged, who most need to take legal action will have no hope. The real winners in this situation will be the insurance companies who will profit every time. E.g. a case might begin with the client asking for £10,000 in damages. They could then be offered half that amount and no matter what is involved the insurance company could force a client into accepting the lesser sum by refusing to give cover to continue with the claim. Aid for medical negligence cases is to stay for the moment but this will be phased out in the future. The Government also plans to set up a fund for cases that are 'in the public interest.' yet they will determine what is in the public interest P.S. Don't forget that you can take a 'McKenzie Friend' to court or tribunal for moral support. A McKenzie Friend can be anyone, even yer old mum!

ASPE-VALLEY ACTIONS

The start of the action season (does it ever end?) is also noticeable in the Aspe-valley in the Pyrenees, where people keep on fighting the same old fight; to stop a very destructive road from passing through one of the most beautiful and unspoilt valleys of the Pyrenees (it's the last Brown Bear habitat in Western Europe, too). From April 24th to May 5th, there will be actions and activities, with a BIG DEMO on May 2nd! It's a brilliant place! Go there!!! A Theaterstraat bus is being organised from Utrecht (NL).

Info: P'tje: +31-30-2721351 or Rymke: +31-30-2722650.@

Detention

The Chief Inspector of Prisons, after checking out Campsfield Detention Centre in Oxfordshire reckons, "The UK asylum system is a shambles". He has condemned the way private security company Group 4 are running 'the lock up' and condemned the Government for, "Not controlling Group 4." Campsfield is where asylum seekers are held, in prison conditions, when they arrive in the UK. When detainees recently demonstrated about conditions, 5 ended up in a real nick, 2 in a young offenders unit and one 17yr old was put in a secure psychiatric ward after attempting suicide. "Ethical Foreign Policy Eh, Robin?"

*Monthly demos Campsfield

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SchNEWS in brief

Here's one they cloned earlier. Following on from offering kids a trip to watch the launch of Cassini plutonium rocket, **Blue Peter** are now offering a jumper knitted from the cloned Dolly's fleece. Whatever next will the trainee consumers be offered? Answers on a postcard *** **Pigeon fancier** Ken Andrews thought he'd plant some bird seed in his 1 acre field to attract some of his feathered friends. But he got more than he bargained for, when the field sprouted 13,000 Cannabis plants with a street value of £700,000! Andrew told a court he was against drugs and that there was no label on the packet, he'd bought for less than a fiver, only a picture of a bird! *** Whilst we were researching last week's Kingston story we spoke to **Dennis Doe** the local Tory MP who told us "If we were still in power the trees would be down by now" The next day he rang back: "What I meant to say was things would have been sorted out by now". *** The **Grey Owl Centre** for New Ideas are organising a 'Norman Invasion' and 'Right to Roam' picnic as part of their campaign against the proposed Hastings by-pass (in reality part of the Trans-European Super Highway feeding the jaws of the Channel tunnel). The road will destroy the landing site of William the Conqueror and most of the 1066 historical sites **The 2nd Battle of Hastings Coalition: 01424 719 671** *** There's a **HUNT SAB BENEFIT @** The Albert, Trafalgar St, Brighton, @8pm Saturday 4th April, for £3. Feat. Oi Polloi, Chineapple Punx and Haywire *** **THESPIONAGE BENEFITS @ THE LIFT:** Monday 23rd March 8.30 pm: £3/2 starring Rochelle (Dub Star) - Full Pack + D.J.'s Queens Rd / **@ THE ALBERT:** Tuesday 24th. 8.00 pm £2 Punk/Ska nite with Unslug - Seka - DJ's Fek & Hedrix *** Calling **FRIENDS OF PETER 'PG' GAISFORD** Some of you will remember Peter either from the Quercus Circus camp at Newbury (evicted with style, custard pies and eco-clown) or one of many other actions. Following his untimely death in December last year, his girlfriend is compiling a book of remembrance and wants to hear from anyone who has something to add. Lucy Robbins, c/o 27 Berkekey Rd, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5JE 01635 523637

CALLING ALL SHOPPERS

Remember the Sainsburys proposal for a 38,000sqft superstore, business units and housing on the Railtrack site behind the main station? The council and 1000s of locals rejected the proposal, with all the usual arguments why the store shouldn't be built. But if you're still not convinced, get along to The Ray Tindle Centre, Upper Gardner St @6.30pm this Monday (23rd) for the last meeting before THE PUBLIC INQUIRY. (from 10am, Tues 24th-Fri 27th March @ Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew Square), Turn up, even if only for a couple of hours. Contact BUDD for creative alternative uses for the site (01273) 622727.

FASLANE PHONE IN

Faslane Peace Camp, protesting outside Scotlands Trident nuclear base for the past fifteen years, are in court on April 1st. They want people to ring up and ask 'Where are Councillors Dick Walsh and Bill Petrie going to get the £400,000 needed to evict Faslane Peace Camp?' Ring 01546 604263 to find out!

Battye Golf

Oldham Council leader John Battye woke up on Valentine's Day to find parents teaching their kids crazy golf on his front lawn. The fun action was in response to the Council backtracking on promises to keep dodgy stuff out of a land fill site. The Beal Valley, an important wildlife site (home to birds on the endangered list), is scheduled to become a golf course and the council, eager to save money on creating nice little humps and valleys, hit upon using earth from the M66. "I must reiterate... that no radio-active material will be brought onto the site." **Dir. Economic Devopment.** Despite this assurance the Environment Agency, the council and the waste company kept changing the rules and now have admitted that they will allow 'special waste' at the site. In a long list of dodgies are: cyanide, arsenic, asbestos and radioactive cadmium and berium "...but only in safe levels" **Oldham Council.** What? Battye is now sulking and won't talk to the local paper because they didn't warn him about the protest beforehand.

INSIDE SCHNEWS

Vanunu, an Israeli imprisoned after revealing to the Sunday Times details of Israel's nuclear arms, has been released last week from solitary confinement where he has been for 12 years, supposedly because he had 'more secrets to reveal'. The Campaign to Free Vanunu is going to celebrate on 28th March, from 6pm onwards, at the George IV pub, Portugal St, London WC2, near the London School of Economics. Vanunu becomes eligible for parole next month, after serving 2/3rds of his 18yr sentence, so increase pressure on Israel to grant him parole and join the vigil, from 12 till 2 every Saturday in Kensington High St, opposite the end of Palace Green W5, near the Israeli embassy. **The BBC Rough Justice programme about the M25 three, wrongfully convicted of murder is now on the 25th, BBC1 @ 10pm. To get involved in the campaign call 0171 7352985

...and finally

Once it was Moscow Gold funding commie agitators. Then it was Colonel Ghaddafi payrolling anyone the government didn't like. Now, according to Bristol 'anarchist pub quiz' host Iain Bone, that popular beat combo the Levellers are responsible for financing SchNEWS. Obviously rich bastards can't understand people doing anything if there's not a profit in it (that's why they believe that everyone from strikers to road protestors must be getting paid for it) but we would have thought Bristol's anarchist quizmaster-extraordinaire would get it right.

Good quiz apart from that- especially if you know the names of every Crass member (one point for that) and the answer to "Do they owe us a living?" (A: "Of course they fuckin' do!"- one point, none without the "fuckin'")

* We reckon it costs us around £15,000 a year to keep going!

** Iain's trying to organise a "Enemies of the State - 30 years of struggle" tour. seeking tour between May & August. Give him a page on 01523 160145 if you wanna organise a local date.

disclaimer

Oh, can't be bothered, nick us if you must.