

SchNEWS

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PARKING MAD

"There is a time for words and a time for action. Now is the time for action."
Harry, a local campaigner currently up a tower during the eviction

As SchNEWS went to press the eviction of the protest camp at Crystal Palace entered its third day. The site is surrounded by hundreds of security and police, main roads have been closed off, but protestors reckon the eviction could last for at least another ten days.

The Grade II listed park, on the highest point in London, is about to be carved up to make way for a £56 million, 20 screen multiplex cinema with 9 bars/restaurants, various retail outlets with concrete ramps leading cars up to the largest rooftop car-park in Britain! 12 acres of the park and 150 trees will disappear under the building which has been likened to an 'airport terminal.' This blot on the landscape will be visible for miles.

Despite the fact that there was no environmental impact assessment; the Wildlife and Countryside Act was broken and the EU Habitat Directive ignored John Prescott gave the venture the green light saying there was no need for a public enquiry. Since taking over the park from the G.L.C. in 1986 Bromley Council have deliberately run the park down hoping any development would be welcomed by locals. However, the Councils claim that the development will "capture the essence of Paxtons work" hasn't washed with the locals who complain that the consultation process left a lot to be desired. The trashing of Crystal Palace, however, is being repeated around the country. The London Wildlife Trust estimate that sixty wildlife sites in the capital have been threatened by development this year alone.

Not that architect Ian Ritchie cares. He told disgruntled residents "I'm glad people don't like it – it confirms my belief that it is a good design."

The complex aims to attract people from across South London and as Croydon councillor Adrian Dennis points out, "It is a car led development".

One of the boroughs bordering the site, Southwark, despite having the lowest car ownership rates in the country, suffers some of the worst air pollution rates in northern Europe, and will be hit further by the development with thousands of visitors expected.

In fact Bromley Council's own traffic advisor when asked by a local person how they could cope with the extra traffic replied 'It will be best to avoid the area'. Bit difficult when you live there.

Southwark is also the most densely populated district in northern Europe – here more than anywhere people need open spaces. Still, councillor John Lewis, a supporter of the development reckons "People don't want change and will find any excuse to hinder progress. There is a hard core group of people who want a museum and more trees in the park."

More trees in a park – good god, whatever next. As one protestor Storm Porrum told SchNEWS "Parks are the lungs of any city and we don't want our breathing space encroached upon by a development that will only add to pollution by increased car use."

A little history

The Park lies on what was once Penge Common, a patchwork of common land dominated by the Great North Wood. The area was still wooded and rural when the Great Exhibition housed in the 'Crystal Palace' building was moved from Hyde Park to Sydenham Hill in 1852. Over the years the Palace, built by Joseph Paxton became run-down until it burnt down in 1936 after a cigarette was dropped during an orchestra rehearsal. The resulting fire was seen across south east England. The grounds of the Palace became parkland and various Acts were passed by parliament to ensure that the land was held as recreation space for the people.

Directions to the camp:

It's at the corner of Crystal Palace Park Road and Westwood Hill. By train: Crystal Palace or Gypsy Hill station direct from Victoria then walk up the hill. No.3 bus from Brixton or No. 63 to Kings Cross to Palace.

Contact the Crystal Palace Campaign 0181 693 8200

SCHNEWS BENEFIT Thursday 18th March Ground Zero & the Exodus Collective

8 – 9.30 pm film and talk by
Exodus followed by music!(til 2)
@New Madeira Hotel, on the
seafront. Just £3

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For talking to a shop-keeper! After having the cheek to ask a Nottingham ASDA store manager about genetically modified food labelling, a man was told he could either "starve to death, or shop somewhere else". None of pleased with the reply, the disgruntled customer went back the next day and handed out leaflets about the mutant foodstuffs, when he was arrested on suspicion of "tampering and poisoning Asda food products"! (hey, does that mean we can charge Monsanto and their ilk?) The man was released without charge a few hours later.

CASUAL KILLERS PT2

The Simon Jones Memorial Campaign swung into action again on Wednesday invading the Department of Trade and Industry and occupying the lobby for an hour to demand the prosecution of employment agency, Personnel Selection.

Simon Jones was sent by Personnel Selection to work for Euromin on the docks. He received no health and safety training despite being asked to do one of the most dangerous jobs in the country. Within two hours he was dead. Nearly a year on and despite every legal channel being exhausted as well as a series of high-profile actions no-one has been prosecuted over his death.

Meanwhile on the same day in Parliament George Galloway MP thundered "James Martell's (Euromin manager) contempt for the laws of health and safety in this country, his greed and hunger for profit, his negligence and carelessness, slaughtered this young man just as clearly as if he had pushed him off the dock with his own hands."

Simon's death highlights the spread of low-pay and casualisation across Britain; as a spokesperson from the Memorial Campaign told SchNEWS "If you want to kill someone, the easiest way to get away with it is to do it at work."

Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, PO Box 2600, Brighton, E.Sussex, BN2 2DX www.simonjones.org.uk

* Tony Blair has declared in the Register of Members Interest that the Freedom Group of Companies has seconded an employee to work in his constituency office for 15 hours a week. The company advises business on how to convert staff contracts into freelance jobs.

* A gorilla from the Welsh Socialist Alliance recently tried to get a job at Staff Sign recruitment agency in Wrexham, after hearing the firm paid peanuts. Apparently the recruitment agency boss went bananas.

CRAP APPOINTMENT OF THE WEEK

"Appointing the former boss of the Countryside Landowners Association to head the Countryside Agency is like putting an alcoholic in charge of a pub." Kate Atkinson, Rambler's Association

What is the CLA? Sounds like a people's democracy movement doesn't it?

DON'T BE A NANA! The Countryside Landowners Association is the exclusive club which, as their own promo blurb enthuses, is "a force to be reckoned with, constantly lobbying ministers and government departments" to safeguard the interests of private landowners. In fact, its headquarters are in exclusive Belgravia Square, London, in property owned by the Duke of Westminster, Britain's largest landowner. Last year the Right to Roam movement, headed by the Rambler's Association and the Land Is Ours seemed on the verge of victory with the Blair's pledge to introduce laws forcing landowners to open up their land. So abhorrent were the squirearchy at the prospect of picnicking families and courting couples interrupting a Saturday afternoon's bloodfest, that the Countryside Alliance was formed in the blaze of publicity which guaranteed that the Stoogestry for State got the message. A year on, and a bill backed by the Rambler's Association would, if passed, remove all farming subsidies and government grants from landowners who obstruct footpaths or refuse to provide public access. No-one could be more aware of the duty of landowners to share the wealth of nature's bounty with the people than Ewen Cameron, the former president of the CLA and handpicked by Blair himself to chair the new Countryside Agency, which will oversee the whole Right To Roam programme. Indeed it's almost poetic that Cameron is the same Somerset potato farmer who planted spuds over a public right of way through his farm in 1996. "Trust me, I'm a landowner". I think not. * Pack yer sarnies for the next South Downs Mass Trespass Meet 10am Brighton Train Station March 21.

CRAP JOB OF THE WEEK

Heard the one about the 'Sustainable Aviation' research post at Manchester University held by Professor Callum Thomas and funded by, eh, Manchester Airport!

Air transport is believed to be responsible for 5% of 'greenhouse gases', so Schnews decided to investigate this apparent conflict of interest. Upon questioning, Prof. Callum declared "yes I'm a fat cat ... (but) it is very important for decisions made by society to be based on sound science." Obviously, the fact that his funding body has an interest in getting a positive light for aviation will not affect his research in any way, and he will of course produce the soundest, unbiased science

LOONY LAMBETH

On Wednesday night, over 100 local people were stopped from entering a Lambeth Council meeting held to discuss cuts in local services, including special needs schools, playcentres, youth and community centres. The cops were called, the street barricaded but the council did not change their tune. When SchNEWS tried to discover what's happening in Lambeth, the council gave us the runaround, complaining that the different committees have little contact with each other. "It's difficult to find anything out," one confused official told us. These cuts continue the process of gentrification of Brixton, but people aren't taking this lying down. Local disabled activists are occupying the Lambeth Centre for Independent Living, and the 121 Centre, Railton Road, still faces eviction. For more info contact the 121 Centre on 0171 274 6655, email mark261@hotmail.com.

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whatever next - the Evening Argus supporting the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign! Really.

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

The trial of the three **Portsmouth hunt sabs** up on charges of conspiracy (see SchNEWS 202) has been postponed for the time being. Contact Defence Campaign, c/o Box H 167 Fawcett Rd, Southsea, Hants. Tel 0411 166 533 ** **Goldsmith College** students are occupying their lecture building after 8 students were expelled for not paying their tuition fees. They are in court today to fight a possession summons. Meetings are in the Whiteland Building, Goldsmith College, Dixon Road New Cross SE1 5pm every day. Contact 0181 692 1406/0797 9896545 ** Having problems explaining the problems of Free Trade? Why is the World Bank so destructive? What is the IMF? What resistance is there world wide? **Undercurrents** have produced a radical 12 minute video exposing the truth. Entitled "WASHES WHITER!" it's £10 plus £1.50 p+p from undercurrents, 16b Chervell St, Oxford OX4 1BG Tel 01865 203662 www.undercurrents.org ** **MAI-DAY ACTION** on Sat May 1st in Birmingham, needs imagination, music, ideas, street entertainment, banners, donations etc to set the city alight with fun and frolics. Contact 0961 810356 to get involved *** ** **The Network of Socialist Alliances** Conference will be held on Saturday 27 March at the Union Club, 723 Pershore Rd, Birmingham. Contact 32, The Green, Long Lawford, Rugby CV23 9BL. Tel 01788 569766. ** There's a **whistle-blower** march outside vivisection lab Huntingdon Life Sciences on Sat 20th March 11 am outside Huntingdon Tesco, Ring Road (A141) Tel 0589 026435 www.fortunecity.com/greenfield/shell/279/ ** **National Anti-Fur Day**: Sat March 6th. Brighton Animal Rights Coalition demo outside Karen Millen boutique, Nile Pavillions, Nile St, 12pm- Brighton's last fur stockists! ** What a shame - but apparently the new road surface on the **Newbury Bypass** is cracking up with pot-holes appearing; oil and mud is filling the balancing ponds and the police complaining the slip-roads are too short *** It's **International Women's Day** this Monday (8th) and the Crossroads Women's Centre have organised some events over the coming month. Sunday 14th March there's a Mothers Day Celebration and Protest 1pm; 26th March video and talks celebrating the sans-papiers (without papers) third anniversary - both events at the Women's Centre. Meanwhile this Sunday there's various events at Hove Town Hall 11 am - 4pm. Join the global women's strike 8th March 2000* for a new millennium that values women's work and women's lives". Contact Crossroads, 230a Kentish Town Rd (entrance on Caversham Rd.) London NW5 0171 482 2496

SNORT FAIR!

Our crazy Californian chums in the city of Huntington Beach (a.k.a Surf City) have signed a deal with Coca-Crapa giving the dodgy scum exclusive rights for ten years to display their corporate logo in parks, on benches, even on police and fire stations. Coca-Wankas competitors Pepsi has been banned from sale in all but a few outlets. However, Pepsi are close to signing a similar deal with California's state capital, Sacramento, that "will send a tidal wave of Pepsi over Coke's Huntington Beach deal," says an executive, who no doubt enjoys surfing in his toilet.

* What have McDonalds, Coca-Cola and Wrigleys all got in common? They all gave £25,000 last year to the Tidy Britain Group who every April organise the National Spring Clean. Y'know where people go round woods, ponds etc. clearing up all the excessive package generated by organisations like - well, eh McDogshit, Coke and Wrigleys. Hey and guess what? The chairman of the Tidy Britain Group is Peter Stokes formerly of 'The Real Thing'.

INSIDE SCHNEWS

"The pie is cast. We shall not rest until justice, as well as dessert, is served" - Agent Apple of the Biotic Baking Brigade. (BBB)

Three members of the BBB have been imprisoned for the anarchic and blatantly anti-social, not to say extremely violent, act of pieing San Francisco mayor Willie Brown. Having already pied the Chief Executive Officers of Monsanto and Maxxam, last November the BBB launched their act of humiliation at Mayor Brown, for his continued collusion with developers at the cost of local poor and homeless people. "Poverty is violence" said Justin Gross one of the three sentenced. Rahula Janowski suffered a broken collar bone in the fracas that ensued when Mayor Brown ordered the Cherry Pie 3 arrested by his mayor's police guard. The judge complied with Mayor Brown's demand for the maximum sentence of six months for simple battery. This from a Mayor known for his (unpunished) violent outbursts.

Write to the Cherry Pie 3:

Rahula Janowski #1818075, c/o SF County Jail 8, E Pod, 425 7th St. SF, CA 94103

Justin Gross #1818071 c/o SF County Jail 8, B Pod 425 7th St. SF, CA 94103

Gerry Livernois has not been sent down yet due to medical reasons.

The BBB could really use some financial support. Cheques and money orders can be made out to Jeff Larson and sent to: Friends of the BBB: 3288 21st #92, San Francisco, CA, 94110, or contact <bbb_apple@hotmail.com>.

* "...They Will Never Get Us All!" a new booklet of writings and poetry by US Anarchist prisoner and jailhouse lawyer Harold H Thompson is available for £1.80 from Huddersfield ABC, PO Box 12766, HD13XX.

Stop-press: The first two protestors to be charged under the Criminal Justice Act 'trespassory assembly' laws yesterday had their convictions over-turned in a landmark ruling. More next week.

...and finally...

It isn't usual for SchNEWS to be lost for words, so we thought we'd throw it out to our readers. An ordinary Wednesday at SchNews Towers, when who should phone but Chief Inspector Mike Flynn from Sussex Police HQ. "Can you help me," quoth the voice of Law 'n' Order, explaining he'd been put in charge of compiling the 'National Guide To Public Order Policing'. Keen to stress his (yawn) 'sense of fair play', CI Flynn doesn't just want the views of the goons with batons. Oh no. He wants to know how YOU feel. "I'm interested in 'alienated groups' expectations of the police," he enthused. Can you help the friendly copper, readers? Don't get too carried away, though: "I know some people might wish we just disappeared altogether. Hey, can we talk real world here?"

CI Flynn is of the opinion some of us may have had 'good experiences' of public order policing. He wants to know about them. "Perhaps some people have even had negative experiences of police in such situations", he added, more plausibly. "Perhaps they have low expectations of us." Surely not? "Tell me about them too."

Well, he asked for it. If you'd like to assist CI Flynn with his enquiries (we know you're itching to) his direct number is 01273 403435; fax 01273 404229. "Please don't hesitate to call".

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to get the silly romantic impression that parks are places to chill out, hang out with wildlife and breathe some fresh air. Let's make it crystal clear. They are not. Money doesn't grow on trees y'know.