

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER WORM TURNING...

SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 2nd February 2007

Free/Donation

Issue 574

...sure I like
ALLOTMENTS, but
I've DUG myself
into enough HOLES
already...

6th annual
**SEEDY
SUNDAY**

2007 Brighton
Feb 4th, 10am-5pm
Old Market, Hove
www.seedy sunday.org



SOIL OF THE CENTURY

ALLOTMENT FEVER AS SchNEWS CONFRONTS SOME GROWING ISSUES

Here at SchNEWS we've always wondered how a multi-billion pound project to build mega sports complexes and to fly in athletes from all over the world could possibly be 'sustainable'. But apparently sustainability is "at the heart" of the 'One Planet Olympics' (the Martian team so unfairly excluded).

But try telling that to the allotment holders at the 100-year-old Manor Garden, Hackney. Their veggie growing exploits have the misfortune to be right in the middle of the Olympic Park site and are due to be bulldozed to make way for a footpath - to be used for the four weeks that the Games take place. Historical legacy or what? "There is no need to remove the allotments, they can be worked around," says Univ of East London Senior Lecturer in Architecture - Tak Hoshino, "the current plans will leave behind a Hollywood set for a ghost town."

The same politicians from the London Assembly who practically begged the Olympic selection committee to bring the corporate sport'n'steroid fest to the capital have, ironically, also been bigging up allotments in a recent report on London's disappearing growing spaces. With the boom in interest of cultivating all that is organic, would-be allotmenters in the Big Smoke face a ten year wait for a plot. Since the 1970s it is estimated that nationally allotments have been disappearing at an average rate of nearly 10,000 per year. Now there are waiting lists all around the country. And how do you tackle that, Neo Labour? By trashing another 1,500 sites since 1997 of course!

GENERATION GAME

Growing your own grub is sustainable as you can be - and you're not at the mercy of some greedy corporation bent on controlling and profiting from your every mouthful to boot. Take a look in your local supermarket and the crap they want us to eat - it's a toxic food society, and you could be growing your own additive free, unpackaged, fresher, tastier grub - free of charge! We could, very briefly, also mention all the great exercise you get diggin' and a hoein' but, to be honest, getting up in the middle of the night to 'deposit' your garden of its population of slugs and snails can be a bit of a nightmare...

And next time you pick up the winter aubergine or fancy a bowl of strawberries and cream in February, spare a thought for the distance such out of season fare has traveled to get to your plate. Never mind all the suits who jet thousands of miles around the world in business class, our daily produce is traveling farther than ever to reach the supermarket shelf. The centralization of our

food production system by a handful of corporate giants means that yer cow juice is very unlikely to have come from that dairy farm down the road. According to the government's own research, food miles increased by 15% in the ten years since 1992. Over 95% of food in the UK is imported and it's another growing contribution to greenhouse gases and global warming that well-fed politicians seem to care little about. And of course its not just fruit n' veg that travel - live animal exports are now very much back on the cards too (see SchNEWS 542).

One of the many benefits aside from the pleasure you can derive from planting yer own, is that you're much less likely to throw away perfectly good food. Whilst 800 million (and rising) people live in food poverty, consumers in the UK throw away between 30 and 40 percent of the food they bought - worth up to £16bn a year!

Back over at the Olympic site, last week (16th Jan) more than 100 supporters gathered at the endangered Manor Garden allotments. Campaigner Michael Whale told those present the plots should not only be "spared from the bulldozers, but should be the centerpiece of the new Olympic development, seeing as they present healthy-living, the very essence of what the Olympics is meant to be about..."

Meanwhile in Eastleigh, Hampshire council is trying to boot allotment holders off their land so they can clear the area for a money-spinning development of 470 Barratt boxes. The growers are saying no and have started a court battle to judicially review the Secretary of State's decision to back the development. The Eastleigh plots are 'statutory allotments' which means they can only be bulldozed if there is a surplus of allotments in the area. Which, of course, there are not. The **Campaign Against Another Supermarket** in Hadleigh has been involved in a long running legal battle with Tesco, fighting off a compulsory purchase order for the town's allotments. So far the supermarket chain has been forced into retreat but is planning to issue another planning application to build a store on the edge of town.

BLANKETY BANKS

The fact of the matter is that the food business is exactly that - a business. With concern only for 'shareholder value', you just can't trust these people with our food. Biotechnology and genetically modified foods are already making a come back (see SchNEWS 564) and autonomy over your own food supply is a sure fire way to keep them pesky GM organisms off your fork.

BACK TO YER ROOTS

All local borough councils are statutorily obliged to provide allotments for their local communities - there should be information on their website (often under Parks, Recreation, Leisure etc). For a complete list of every council site see www.tagish.co.uk/links/localgov.htm or give 'em a call and ask for your local allotment officer.

Even if you can't get yer own straight away, see if there's some kind of community allotment project near and you and get involved! It's a great way to learn some of the skills and pitfalls and meet new green-fingered friends before striking out on your own.

Failing that get some pots and window boxes! A surprising amount of stuff can be produced from small spaces so you've no excuse for not getting yer fingers dirty.

* **For more info about getting yer own allotment...**

* **"The Allotment Handbook"** by Sophie Andrews is an excellent, practical book on how to campaign and save your allotment site.

* Check the Soil Association's **Green Directory** at www.soilassociation.org for how to eat locally.

* Tim Lang's and Michael Heasman's **"Food Wars"** is good read on Biotech philosophy and the green fight-back (Earthscan press, 2005) www.eco-logicbooks.com

The worldwide area used for GM crops rose by more than 10% last year. Although 'terminator' seed technology (where plants produce only sterile seeds) has been put on hold for a while, the pause is only a temporary one. The corporations know that the only way to really manipulate the food supply is to control it at its source - by having a stranglehold over seeds. Farmers' choice about what to grow is being restricted as the seed companies force them to go for the most profit-worthy mono crops with high yields.

By growing yer own you are defying the supermarket monopolies, but also helping stop the assault on our eco-diversity and protecting our crop heritage by supporting local varieties of plant - even some which are 'outlawed' because they're not registered by the European seed list, which is all about limiting crops to those suited to large-scale agriculture.

Great places to get yer seeds ready for this year's crops, and top tips on growing 'em, are local **seed swaps**. Groups doing stalls and talks at these events range from allotment holders and small organic producers to specialized seed distribution companies - and if you've got your own seeds people are up for swapping. Getting the seeds is a start but it's also the know-how available at seed swaps that could be the difference between your crop experiments being a disaster or coming up roses.

* **For a list of upcoming seed swaps, see over...**

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

Copyright
Published in Brighton since 1994

NOT A SEEDY BUSINESS

* **3rd: Lewes Seedy Saturday** community seed swap at Southover Grange, Southover High St, Lewes. 9.30am-4pm

* **4th: Brighton & Hove 'Seedy Sunday'** at the Old Market, Upper Market St, Hove from 10am-5pm, with cafe, vegan food, bar, crèche, £1. For more see www.seedysunday.org

* **10th: Anglesey Seedy Saturday**, 10am-4pm, Women's Institute Hall, Holyhead Rd, Llanfairpwll, tel 01248 430244 email seedysaturdayanglesey@tesco.net

* **11th: Blackawton Seedy Sunday, near Totnes**, at school hall (next to church), tel 01803 712611

* **11th: Fourth North Devon Seed Swap, Tapeley Park, Nr Instow**, 10am-1pm, call 01237 424029, email lava@volcano1.freemove.co.uk

* **25th: Southampton 2nd Annual Seed Swap at St. Denys Community Centre**, Priory Road, St. Denys, Southampton SO17 2JZ, 10am-4pm with 14+ stalls and fair trade cafe. Entry 50p. Call 02380 643813 web www.octoberbooks.org/seedswap

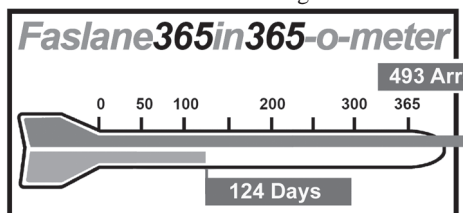
* **25th: Seedy Sunday 2007, Machynlleth** - seed swapping with talks and entertainment, 10.30am-3pm, Machynlleth Community Hall, entry by donation. Call 01654 703965, email seedsavers@machynlleth.biz

DUNEDINER* DUNNIT

SchNEWS was delighted (well, kind of) to hear from the 365th arrestee at the Faslane 365 continuous year-long blockade of the Trident nuke sub base in Scotland (See SchNEWS). The (p)lucky lad, from Edinburgh, when cut out of his barrel lock on and thrilled to bits to find out he had won the prestigious SchNEWS award. "Just receiving the honour is enough for me," he told us (after checking the prize wasn't booze - which it wasn't), "just tell your readers to get your bodies up to Faslane and lock yourself on to something. The campaign has been going great but we need more people to continue to block the roads if we are to escalate our tactics and win the campaign."

Meanwhile people and groups have continued to sign up and check in for their own 48 hours of Faslanery as the campaign sustains its presence just as strongly into 2007. Just last week (25-26 Jan), for example, a Health Professionals group assembled from all over the country, arrived for their stint. Taking to the streets, doctors and nurses offered shoppers special health checks, taking blood-pressure measurements and handing prescriptions to people for the prevention of nuclear war; prescribing 'dialogue for disarmament - to be taken regularly'. On Friday, nine doctors and healthworkers were arrested when, dressed in paramedic-style clothing bearing the slogan 'Trident Health Warning', they lay down on the road to the gates of the base. They told police they were upholding international law, which prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons, as they were arrested for ignoring a police warning to move.

So get a group you know booked in - or just get up there yourself... See www.faslane365.org
* *SchNEWS vocab watch*: ADunediner is the proper term for someone from Edinburgh fact fans.



NB - this graphic is now obsolete and will be safely decommissioned - but don't worry we aren't planning to spend £100 billion replacing it.

CELEBRITY BIG BROTHER SHOCKER

If only minor in the big scheme of things, there was a welcome victory for the legend that is Brian Haw last week (fresh from having his full anti-war display recreated and put on display in Tate Britain and having been nominated for Channel 4's political figure of the year award - to vote see www.channel4.com/news/microsites/P/politicalawards/vote.html). The latest court hearing regarding Brian's one man stand against the state for the right to demonstrate returned a slightly unexpected verdict: that when cops swooped down on Parliament Square last May to trash and confiscate most of Brian's display (See SchNEWS 545) they were actually acting, er... completely unlawfully.

In a ruling that has a wider bearing on the policing of the crazy SOCPA laws (see SchNEWS 483), the judge noted that as the law currently is, only top cop brass from the 'office of the commissioner' are able to sign off orders imposing conditions on specific demonstrations. In this case, cops tried to produce an undated document delegating the powers to get heavy with Brian to a mere superintendent, and the judge declared that this delegation was unlawful, the conditions were unlawful, and so the raid must have been unlawful too. Great! So will police be returning Brian's full display? Will they perhaps be having some of their stuff unlawfully removed in retaliation? Ok, well fined, then? Apologise even..? Think again - it just meant Brian couldn't be sent to prison or get a hefty fine as the prosecution wished, and police then merely submitted newly issued documents, properly signed off, imposing the conditions limiting Brian to the small display he has been grudgingly allowed since May.

One consequence apart from vindicating Brian (in the 11th case to be brought against him since he began his vigil in 2001), and the kick in the teeth to

the Met, is that two supporters who tried to stop the Police that night by climbing on a freight container should get off as it is hard for them to be prosecuted for obstruction of unlawful police business...

What the case has highlighted is what a pain to police not only Brian Haw is, but also Mark Thomas and the rest of the 'mass lone' demonstrators (See SchNEWS 560). They've been regularly flooding cops with overwhelming amounts of paperwork seeking permissions to protest (requests rising from a few hundred to many thousands since the campaign began). The fact that relatively few people have the authority to sign the orders imposing conditions is severely hampering the ability of police to enforce a big clampdown.

Meanwhile in another simultaneous but less publicised SOCPA court hearing, Barbara Tucker was facing jail for carrying out her peace vigil around Parliament and Downing St. Barbara bravely refuses to seek any permission for her protests and has over 70 counts of breaching SOCPA stacked up against her. While she was spared prison for now, with the judge granting temporary bail after Brian Haw piped up in court with a timely character reference, she could still well be incarcerated when her case resumes in the next few weeks. With one Liberal peer having this week introduced a private members bill to repeal the SOCPA legislation - to snorts of derision from the government no doubt, SchNEWS wonders how long it will be before a SOCPA amendment is tabled giving repression decision making authority to any monkey in a blue uniform...

* See www.parliament-square.org.uk

* Next mass lone demo is on Feb 21st - join the fight for the right to free protest...and get that form in! See www.markthomasinfo.com

PARTY & PROTEST

FEBRUARY: 3 - Saving Iceland benefit party. Hectic night of live music at RikiTiks, Bond Street, Brighton in aid of protest camps against the Karahnjukar dam and ALCOA's aluminium smelter (see SchNEWS 487). Acts include UK Beatbox champion - Beardyman, concious hip-hop from Bad Science and alt rockers Kyomori. Acoustic sets and djs/vjs all night. £3 8pm - 3am

* **6 - Defend asylum seekers! Noise demo at UK Immigration Service**, Communications House, 210 Old Street, London, EC1V 9BR (tube: Old Street) 1-2pm. Bring drums, pans and whistles. Email defendasylumseekers@yahoo.co.uk

* **7 - Patient Privacy in the Database State - Public Meeting.** The govt is planning to put confidential NHS patient records onto a database - but how will it link in with ID cards and other surveillance? At Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton, 7pm-9.30pm. Chaired by Phil Booth - NO2ID National Co-ordinator. www.no2id.net www.nhsconfidentiality.org

* **9-11 - The Fabulous Queer Tree Planting Holiday** for queers of all races, ages, genders and sexualities. A non-profit climate change event, Friday evening til Sunday, with party on Saturday - bring instruments for the cabaret! Height Gate, Todmorden Yorkshire, £20 incl. vegan food and acc. - book in advance, and if you are skint but still want to come call 0113 2252490, email sammyhugs@hotmail.com

* **10 - stall in Brighton for the Titnore protest camp** outside Komedia from 11am. The camp, near Worthing, is still going strong - for directions there and more info see www.protectour-woodland.co.uk

* **17 - March on Worthing Police Station** to protest against police intimidation of Titnore supporters. Meet 2pm at Montague Place, Worthing. See www.southcoast.indymedia.org.uk

* **For full Party & Protest listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap**

SHAC-KLED

Lynn Sawyer - threatened with losing her house for allowing it to be used as the address for Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SchNEWS 470) - won't be made homeless or be pursued for costs by Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). However she has had to agree to a very strict injunction restricting her right to protest against HLS, and SHAC cannot use her address in future.

An offer to abide by the injunction was made back in November 2004, but HLS vindictively decided to seek money off her. The only winner out of this whole sorry affair is sleazy lawyer (See SchNEWS 492, 537) Timothy Lawson Cruttenden, who specialises in harassing protesters with the Protection from Harassment Act, charging £400 per hour to willing corporate clients.

Lynn says that of the court case, "I did indeed have the right to fight them in court but this would have involved not just much more of my time and limited funds, but those of other animal rights people as well as the wider activist community." See www.vivisection.info/netcu_watch/jan30_1.htm
* The campaign against HLS continues: www.shac.net 0845 458 0630, SHAC will have a new postal address soon.

...and finally...

News this week that direct action has finally spread to the animal kingdom. Over in Thailand's Ang Lue Nai wildlife reserve, near Bangkok, the local elephants have had enough of goods trucks steaming through their neighbourhood and taken to blocking the main highway though the park. Whether they are more concerned about the pollution, excess food miles or are standing up for the 14,000 animals killed on the road is unclear but some of the tusked young turks even smash up the trucks liberating the produce inside. Authorities have been quick to demonize them as dangerous terrorphants from the fringes of elephantine society and have put an immediate dawn til dusk curfew in place.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - you only reap what you sew. Honest!

Subscribe! Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email schnews@brighton.co.uk Web www.schnews.org.uk