

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER TOO CLOVER BY HALF...

SchNEWS

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TARA! TARA! TARA!

11th HOUR AS IRELAND FACES MONUMENTAL CATASTROPHE

"The proposed M3 motorway has been described by archaeologists as the worst case of state-sponsored vandalism ever inflicted on Irish cultural heritage." - Roadblock.

The biggest anti-road direct action protest ever in Ireland may be about to happen at the Hill of Tara, north west of Dublin, if attempts to have the area protected on archaeological grounds, and other legal efforts fail. The entire area is a large archaeological complex containing at least 160 sites covering a timespan from 3600BC through to bronze and medieval ages. It was once the seat of the High Kings of Ireland and the country's political and spiritual capital until the 12th century. Yet it is imminently threatened, after a nine year battle to stop the development, by a motorway which would pass within one kilometre of its centre, and through the Tara Skryne Valley, scattered with hundreds of monuments whose relationship with the central complex is only just beginning to be understood. Like Stonehenge, the main edifice is surrounded by a large acreage of associated mounds, burial chambers and ancient building works.

The Irish govt have given the green light to the M3 motorway and are so determined to avoid the past problems of nuisance neolithic artefacts or human remains being dug up during earth works and threatening the developments, that new heritage laws have been enacted. Now under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, government ministers have sole discretion in deciding whether archaeological sites in Ireland are to be preserved or demolished – affecting Tara, and all future development sites.

Work started late last year, and since January a construction compound was set up and earth moving equipment brought in. On 4 January, protesters occupied digging equipment near Dunshaughlin to hold up work, as earth moving had begun – being passed off as 'excavations'. Last month a 1,300 year old underground building near Roestown was destroyed, just one of the major archaeological sites on the proposed route, containing beads, carved bones and an ancient gaming board. The destruction was rushed through by the National Roads Authority (NRA) to avoid an injunction being placed under the National Monuments Act which would have stopped work. The NRA claim that this sort of site was 'relatively common' in Ireland. Campaigners were refused permission to have an independent archaeologist inspect the site. Mysteriously, a section of land at Lismullen is surrounded by fencing and 24 hour security – it is believed that something important

may have been dug up which they don't want the public to find out about.

At the moment, with the affected land still largely intact, campaigners are trying to raise funds to pay for an independent archaeological team to go over the 38 known important sites along the route. Campaigners say that Irish archaeologists won't do it because they are all too deeply in the pockets of the NRA, and have an eye towards the future work they will get signing off other historic sites to oblivion. It is also claimed that government-lackey archaeologists are not digging at sufficient depth considering the layers of burial going back through the ages, and it is estimated that a proper excavation of the area concerned would take a decade. In June this year World Monuments Watch, an international body with enough clout to save many of the threatened sites at which they have intervened,

continued overleaf...

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being stuffed...

Police sank to a new low this week with the arrest of three cuddly soft toys outside Faslane Nuclear Submarine base.

The toys were there to show solidarity with their owners, a Lothian-based peace group taking part in the actions against Trident. Cops eventually realised they weren't just strange little hairy people refusing to talk and de-arrested the toys, who were placed on a roundabout outside the base to continue their protest.

This being Scotland, it soon began to rain and as the demonstrators attempted to rescue their furry friends from a soaking, police swiftly moved in again, insisting that the toys be searched one by one before they could return to their distraught owners. At this point, the suspects all went limp and had to be manhandled into the police vans for a once-over. We wish we were making this up but assure you we are not. See www.faslane365.org

Benefit gig for SchNEWS/SchMOVIES

May 4th, featuring the new 2007 SchMovies, live music from Boyley and the Don Bradmanns plus a DJ from 8pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Rd, Brighton £3/2.50 conc/donation

DON'T BE SHELL-FISH

THE PRIZE IS RIGHT FOR ANTI-SHELL ACTIVIST, AS PROTESTS CONTINUE...

A farmer who was one of the 'Rossport 5', imprisoned at the behest of Shell in 2005 (SchNEWS 505), has been awarded the prestigious Goldman Environment Prize, seen by some as the 'Nobel' of the environmentalists' world. Willie Corduff, from Mayo in west Ireland, picked up the award plus a \$125,000 cash prize in San Francisco last Monday (for details of the five other winners see www.goldmanprize.org).

Willie has been fighting Shell's plans to build an on-shore refinery next to his home for seven years and is strongly involved in the local 'Shell-to-Sea' campaign. The campaign had initial success in delaying the project through demonstrations and blockades of the site but since October last year the gloves have been off (See SchNEWS 564). Police and private security routinely use violence and intimidation to force vehicles past demonstrators and into the site.

Builders are in the process of stripping the land of acres of peat from this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in preparation for the refinery. A High Court ruling last week stated that the original route of the pipeline was now "defunct" (hadn't it always been?), ordering Shell to pay the £1 million cost of the hearing, and forcing them back to the drawing board. That ruling, and Willie's Goldman award, have completely vindicated the position of the

five who went to jail. Not that this makes any difference to the state's ongoing campaign of harassment of those who oppose Shell.

There have been a number of break-ins to the site, most recently last Friday when a group of women hopped over a fence and spent the next nine hours evading security. The next day saw a mass trespass on the site, resulting in six arrests. All were later released without charge.

Accusations of phone-tapping of activists have been made recently against Shell, not that a mega-corporate giant would surely ever think of such a thing... after all they prefer their opponents swinging from the end of an executioner's rope (see SchNEWS 49). Shell's

Dublin HQ in Leeson Street has been the site of regular protests and was temporarily occupied on 27 March. Dublin Shell-to-Sea have called for another day of action chez oil barons from 7.30am (gulp!) today (27th).

* See indymedia.ie & www.shelltosea.com

* **The Rossport Solidarity Camp 3rd Summer Gathering** will be held on the June bank holiday weekend (1-4) – a community festival of resistance with music, workshops, kids events and more. See www.shelltosea.com

*For loads of footage of over-reactive cops protecting their local community from, well, the local community, search for 'Shell to Sea' at www.youtube.com

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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will give a decision about whether to put Tara in their top 100 'most endangered sites' list, which would put further weight behind efforts to protect it. Tara is also being made a big issue in the forthcoming Irish general election this year, but campaigners told SchNEWS that this is amounting to the main political parties trying to gain pre-election kudos by appearing to oppose it. Whether any of them could be trusted once in power is another matter.

Since the Summer Solstice in 2006, there has been a permanent vigil, fire and camp at Tara, with regular events including the upcoming Beltane on 1 May, and a large gathering open to all celebrating the first anniversary on 21 June. The vigil is on the north side of the Hill of Tara, past Rath Grainne: just follow the ditch/road north from the parking area. Rope, tarpaulin and all usual camp tat is needed. For more see www.savetara.com or call site mobile on 00353 (0) 86 175 8557.

In late December large trees were felled and earth moved on the northern slope of Skryne at Rath Lugh, and what began as daily demos has turned into an ongoing protest site there. When the direct action campaign kicks off, Skryne Valley will be the frontline - an area not only of archaeological importance but also featuring ancient woodland between Rath Lugh and Blundelstown. Mass destruction through the valley could be imminent; SchNEWS will give bulletins as and when people are needed to help protect it. For directions to this camp contact the vigil mobile.

* For updates about the protest see <http://tarawatch.org> & www.savetara.com

* To donate to the appeal for funding archaeological work see <http://tarawatch.org/?p=342>

* To read about the history of the Hill of Tara see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hill_of_Tara

M For Media Malarkey - the SchNEWS Alternative Media Conference May 11-13th

A coming together of independent media with discussions, screenings, stalls, workshops. Starting Friday evening till Sunday afternoon. Please contact well beforehand if you need accommodation. At the Cowley Club, 12 London Rd, Brighton. For more and updates see www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies/malarkey-intro.htm

PARTY & PROTEST

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

May 1st - Space Hijackers May Day: Suited and Booted - a party in the heart of the Corporate Financial Centres of London - get an outfit sorted, bring music, drinks and cakes. Location will posted on www.spacehijackers.org closer to the date. After there's a party in the city at 5pm. ** **1st - London May Day Demonstration**. Assemble Clerkenwell Green, Off Farringdon Rd, London, EC1 (nearest tube Farringdon) at 12noon, move off at 1pm to Trafalgar Square for Rally. / Join the **Autonomous Workers Block** - meet 12pm behind the red and black flags. Check out www.spacehijackers.org for more. / **Demonstration in solidarity with Asylum Seekers & Refugees**. Bring whistles, drums and your voices. 12noon at Clerkenwell Green. Call 0207 837 1688 or email: defendasyllumseekers@yahoo.co.uk ** **5th** - Public meet-

ing and film showing of '**Omar Deghayes: the Search for Justice**' with panel discussion. 4-6pm at Gladstone Park Primary School, Sherrick Green Rd, NW10 1LB (tube: Dollis Hill). By the London Guantánamo Campaign. Call 07809 757176 or london_gitmo@yahoo.co.uk ** **5th - Mayday - Nottingham** - supporting asylum seekers in their right to work. At Brewhouse Yard near Nottingham Castle, 12.30pm. A march and afterwards stalls, speakers and an International Music Festival. Email nottmdayday@yahoo.co.uk web www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk ** **5 - Mayday - Edinburgh** - assemble East Market St, 11.30am, march at 12 noon, rally in Princes Street Gardens, 1pm. With speakers including Craig Murray (former UK ambassador cum whistle-blower on Uzbekistan), stalls & music see www.mayday.org.uk

BAE-ING FOR BLOOD

Five protesters were arrested after breaking in to corrupt UK defence giant BAE System's Filton facility near Bristol, yesterday (26th). Instead of being given some kind of ingenuity award for evading the military-strength 24-hour security at the base - where advanced research and development into 'next generation' weapons (Make it so, Number One?) is carried out - they were detained and held for intensive questioning under suspicion of burglary, although what they were supposed to have taken, other than the piss, is unclear.

The protesters had earlier even announced that they planned to occupy the site to protest against the politically-inspired end of the Serious Fraud Office's investigation into the dodgy bribe-laden 'Al Yamamah' arms deal between BAE and Saudi Arabia back in 1986. The plug was pulled on the grounds that continuing it would not have been 'in the wider public interest' - or indeed BAE's as they attempted to cling onto a big juicy order to supply Typhoon jets to...er, Saudi Arabia.

A statement from the protesters summed it up: "We're going to fight the arms trade until it disappears. We're going to keep on laughing at the myth that any corporation will act responsibly."

* More about disarming the arms trade at www.caat.org.uk & www.tridentploughshares.org

BEAN THERE, DONE THAT

17 April 2007, Kingston upon Hull. Vibrant young shoots of protest have sprouted, fertilized by the plans to grow mutant GM spuds in Britain again (See SchNEWS 583). In a meticulously planned explosion of direct action, 150 anti-GM freaks, armed with shovels and organic spuds to plant, descended as one... on the wrong field! The theory ran that seeding the field with an uncontrolled number of non- GM spuds would invalidate the trial, but unfortunately the ground in question belonged to another farmer and was already sprouting a crop of entirely conventional beans.

OK, on the face of it a mistake of laughable proportions but the fact that this many people were willing to risk arrest to take part in GM direct action sends a clear message to BASF - the company behind the trials - that opposition to mutant food is as strong as ever.

Protestors blamed the government for not giving an accurate location for the trial. In the past, six figure grid references for crops have been given - pin-pointing trials to within 100m. This time, to muddy the waters the crop was only located within a 1km square. Sadly the last-ditch guesswork didn't pay off.

A spokesperson for the campaign put a brave face on the fiasco telling SchNEWS, "While it is regrettable that the wrong site and farmer were targeted, we would also like to make it clear to the government and to industry that people will continue to disrupt the planting of GM crops despite the difficulties faced by this lack of full disclosure." For more see www.mutatoes.org

...and finally...

An exciting breakthrough in the race to deliver a full information spectrum data-dominated sci-fi world of the future, as SchNEWS learnt this week of one San Francisco-based Microsoft-in-the-head researcher, Gordon Bell, who is busy digitally recording every aspect of his entire life. Wearing a camera that automatically snaps pictures and a sound recorder that permanently rolls, 'doesn't ring a' Bell has also been saving everything else he possibly can on to computers, including (or so the 71-year-old claims) 50,000 family photographs, 100,000 emails and every medical record, certificate or document he can find.

The system he's working on for Microsoft would help people easily record and recall their entire past - or perhaps police, government or corporations for that matter. "Our focus is to try to make it as useful as possible," Bell says. Indeed. But on the plus side, "using computers to remember will free our minds for more creative thinking". All this stupidity reminds me of that story of the <ERROR, FILE NOT FOUND, IF PROBLEM PERSISTS CONTACT YOUR HARDWARE PROVIDER>

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - this might be a whole new Eire for the protest movement. Honest!

STICKY CARMEL FUDGE

It looks like the UK HQ of Carmel-Agrexco, the half-Israeli state owned company which makes its loot importing most of its goods from illegal West Bank Settlements, is all set to become an occupied territory of its own following the latest legal development in the attempted clampdown on protest there.

The cases against three protesters from London and Brighton, arrested after locking on at the Agrexco distribution centre as part of a Valentine's blockade in February (SchNEWS 576), have now been dropped by the Met Police.

The three had been arrested on suspicion of 'obstructing the highway' - even though cops on the scene were helpfully told by protesters that the road they were on was private, and not a highway under the definition in the Highways Act. At the police station, to cover this embarrassing possibility, they were arrested a second time on suspicion of Aggravated Trespass for obstructing an 'adjoining land' to a 'lawful business' (insert your own bile filled joke here).

Last Saturday DS Kofi of Uxbridge Police Station confirmed to a solicitor of one of the protesters, that the road outside the Agrexco UK plant is indeed a private road and not a public highway, so therefore no-one blocking it in future can be arrested under suspicion of 'obstructing the highway'. The owner of the road is believed to be a private company not connected to Agrexco.

Copper Kofi (hold the sugar) also confirmed that no witnesses had come forward from

Agrexco UK to give evidence that the company had been adversely affected by the protest - so the possible Aggravated Trespass 'on adjoining land' charge could not be continued either.

It seems that Agrexco's staff have come over a little shy since February 2005, when seven blockaders won an important case at Uxbridge Magistrates Court during which Agrexco UK boss Amos Or was cross-examined about the company's complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity in the occupied Palestinian territories for several hours. Funny that. They can't want any more PR slip ups like that one, when Amos Or admitted under oath that the UK company imports 70% of its produce from West Bank settlements ruled illegal under international law by the International Court of Justice.

The latest clarification of the law by Uxbridge police leaves open the possibility that they will have no powers in future to arrest demonstrators who peacefully blockade Agrexco UK, unless the company are prepared to give evidence against protesters in court that their business was disrupted - and lately they've taken to issuing press releases claiming no disruption is caused (despite originally claiming £100,000 in the 2005 case - make your minds up guys!).

Seems like legally then, it's open season on Agrexco and an arrest-free zone - which means that blockaders can really start making a permanent nuisance of themselves... For more see www.brightonpalestine.org

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