

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

REPORT BACK FROM THE CALAIS NO BORDERS CAMP

No Borders campaigners, calling for freedom of movement for all people and an end to migration controls, culminated their week long camp in Calais (See SchNEWS 681) with a demonstration outside the city's main port last Saturday. Over 2,000 people took to the streets against the increasingly tight border controls at the channel crossing, the bottleneck of Fortress Europe where many undocumented migrants - or 'sans papier', people without papers - risk their life for months, sometimes years, just to move from France to the UK.

The demo was subject to severe police controls before it even began. Hundreds of demonstrators were blockaded by police around every corner, with a drafted force of 2,500 - including CRS riot police - preventing people from reaching the starting point of the march. Despite police repression, and after hours of cat and mouse, protesters from the camp joined other groups including trade unions, humanitarian organisations and left leaning political parties, quadrupling the number of people on the march. But with the town centre barricaded out of bound by riot vans, the demo was forced into the outskirts and around the dock, out of the public eye.

The No Borders camp, from 23rd - 28th of June, was set up alongside the main motorway leading to the harbour and near a junction where many migrants try to jump on passing trucks heading to Britain. During the week practical workshops ranging from first aid to direct action, and meetings with campaigning groups from across Europe, focused on organising transnational action against closed borders and draconian immigration policies. The camp was made up of 500-800 activists mainly from France, UK and Belgium, along with around 100-200 migrants stranded at the border.

At any one time there are 1,000 - 2,000 refugees in Calais alone, mainly young men and children from the Middle East and Horn of Africa who squat in town buildings or make-shift settlements in 'the jungle', a wooded area surrounding the port. Many have travelled for years, forced to leave their homes to escape war, poverty and abuses and see the UK as the end point of their journey. People go to the UK for many reasons, not least because of colonial ties. A large proportion of migrants in Calais are

from Iraq and Afghanistan; many worked with British forces during the occupation and now fear persecution as collaborators.

FRONTIÈRE SANS MÉDICIN

In 2002, the French and UK authorities forcibly closed a Red-Cross run refuge centre in Calais, the Sangette, claiming it creates 'incentives for immigrants'. Currently, a couple of voluntary organisations, through tacit agreement with local authorities, provide food handouts five days a week. Ministers have shot down ideas of re-opening the Sangette or establishing a new refugee centre. However, the UNHCR - the UN refugee agency - announced last Tuesday (1st July) that they will be establishing a full-time presence in Calais. While recognizing the 'squalid' conditions people are living in, the UNCHR is limited to only providing information and advice 'to help the migrants and asylum seekers to make an informed decision'.

No Borders supports freedom of movement and as first steps, demands:

- 1) Unconditional entry into the UK for all
- 2) The places where migrants are living must not be raided or destroyed, and access to healthcare must be guaranteed
- 3) Freedom of movement for all around Calais: the ability to travel to all parts without restriction, harassment or fear of arrest
- 4) No repeat arrests
- 5) Freedom of expression for all, including migrants: the right to protest and the right to make complaints to the authorities, individually or collectively
- 6) No deportations (whether by charter flight or not)
- 7) End repression of associations/individuals who support migrants, including by transporting them
- 8) Free and impartial legal advice on UK and other asylum and immigration systems
- 9) Britain's policy of arbitrary immigration detention without time limit must not be exported to Calais. There must be no new detention centre and especially no Guantanamo style facility.

Don't blame it on the Vicodin,
Don't blame it on the Sertraline,
Don't blame it on the Oxycodone,



Migrants face constant harassment by police who raid and destroy their camps, tear gas whole sections of the jungle and regularly arrest and detain people, taking their fingerprints before releasing them, only to repeat the whole process over again. Migrants have no access to health care or legal representation. It is illegal to assist migrants in any way; as a result of article L622-1 of the French penal code anyone "aiding or facilitating either directly or indirectly the arrival, circulation or residence of illegal immigrants in France" is a punishable with up to five years in prison and a £25,000 fine. There is a high suicide rate amongst the migrants, who are forced to live in inhumane conditions, risk their lives every night trying to climb into, or under, trucks and face abuse from truck drivers and police.

By the end of this year, in collaboration with the UK, France plans to evict all migrants from Calais by clearing out the jungle and building a new detention centre to supplement the existing Croquelles CRE, enabling mass deportations, mainly to Afghanistan and Iraq. French immigration minister, Eric Besson said, "We are going to make the zone around Calais watertight to illegal immigration".

Currently French courts are refusing to send illegal immigrants back to countries where they may be persecuted so, through technical manoeuvring, the new detention centre will be a hybrid of Franco-British powers, located on a carved out 'British control zone' in Calais. This will allow them to pick-and-mix legal loopholes, manipulate ambiguous legal grey areas and cut through red tape, allowing migrants to be deported more easily under UK immigration law.

The system will effectively create an 'off-shore, on-shore' detention centre that exploits legal systems and evades European and international law on immigration and asylum in order to fast-track people out of Europe, no questions asked.

Earlier this year, when discussing proposals to externalise the UK's powers and control migration from beyond its borders, Phil Woolas, British immigration minister, said he wants to 'send a message... back to Afghanistan and Iraq that Britain is not the Promised Land'.

* See www.noborders.org.uk

**"Free immigration prisoners,
no one is illegal"**

COUP BLIMEY

AN INDEPTH LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S COUP D'ETAT IN HONDURAS

"Imagine if I had proposed a real reform? They would have executed me on the spot." - Manuel Zelaya, deposed President of Honduras

Early in the morning of Sunday the 28th dozens of soldiers stormed the Honduran presidential residence, disarming and beating the guards before seizing the pyjama clad president, Manuel Zelaya, and escorting him to a waiting plane destined for Costa Rica. Within hours protesters were out on the streets confronting the military and the coup was being condemned by every international government and organisation from the US to the UN.

By the time of the operation, the military had been surrounding the residence for several days in response to a chain of events that began when Zelaya proposed a popular consultation to determine whether November's presidential poll – in which Zelaya can't stand due to the one term limit – should include a referendum on whether to elect an assembly to re-write the constitution. The Supreme Court declared the consultation illegal and ordered the police and military to not distribute ballot boxes, threatening those that did with 8–12 year prison sentences for 'abuse of authority'. The army sided with the Supreme Court and confiscated the ballot boxes and election materials. In retaliation Zelaya fired the head of the military's Joints Chiefs of Staff, General Romeo Vásquez. The Honduran Congress then promptly began an investigation into Zelaya, not only over his 'administrative actions' but also into his mental health.

Not to be intimidated, Zelaya led a caravan of 25–30,000 (claimed Radio Es De Lo Menos – an independent Honduran radio station present on the caravan, while Associated Press said "dozens") to military bases to retrieve the boxes and distribute them in time for the Sunday poll. With everything set up for the poll the military moved in.

As far as our lazy and ignorant media are concerned, ambivalence prevails. Even as the White House (yes, that White House – supporter of just about every Latin American military coup since independence) condemned the coup in surprisingly unambiguous terms - labelling it a coup, stating that they only recognise Zelaya as president, suspending joint military operation with the Honduran army and threatening prompt action with the Organisation of American States (OAS). Weird, it's going to take some years to get used to a president who uses diplomacy. The media has been happy to follow the line of the Honduran right-wing press - framing it as a simple case of deposing a leftist megalomaniac who was in the process of a power grab. Even the most rudimentary analysis (a SchNEWS speciality) demonstrates this clearly isn't the case.

Zelaya was elected in 2005, not as a populist leftist, but as the candidate of one of the two main parties - the Liberals - who over the years had carved up power between themselves and the Conservative party and kept politics a strictly elite business. Zelaya, however, broke ranks, first by joining Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a grouping of Left leaning Latin American states committed to alternative strategies of cooperation and development (i.e without Uncle Sam's strings attached dollar), and then by implementing various pro-poor policies such as raising the minimum wage by 60% (i.e. about \$1.20 - most live on less than \$2 a day).

The current crisis was triggered when Zelaya, with just a few months remaining of his one term, proposed a referendum which would have asked the Honduran people one, yes or no, question; "Do you think that the November 2009 general elections should include a fourth ballot

in order to make a decision about the creation of a National Constitutional Assembly that would approve a new Constitution?" Even though Zelaya did not once mention presidential terms and the proposed assembly would have convened after the end of his term before probably spending several years bitterly debating reform which may or may not have included mention of term limits, this was quickly reported in the Honduran right-wing media as being an attempt to secure the ability to extend his rule. This idea, which was only ever stated as opinion, was seized on by "cut-n-paste" hacks (step up those liberal giants The Guardian and The New York Times) and repeated until it became an accepted truth.

Like in most of Latin America, the Honduran constitution is an elite stitch-up designed to ensure that no matter who the people elect, real structural change is impossible and power remains concentrated in the hands of the wealthy and powerful. As the current coup government claim, the constitution does state that seven of its 379 articles are not subject to reform. One of these articles refers to term limits and states that anyone who proposes changes can be removed and be disqualified from office for ten years. However, what Zelaya proposed was the election of an assembly to completely re-write - not reform - the constitution, and the issue of term limits would have been for them to decide. Nevertheless, following the Supreme Court judgement, Zelaya changed what would have been a binding consultation to non-binding, effectively an opinion poll, nothing more.

The constitution also states that it is necessary to gain a two thirds majority of a specially convened Congress to depose of the head of the army. Which raises the question of what sort of constitution allows the immediate removal of an elected president but requires a massive action to remove the head of the army? No need to ask where power really lies.

BANANA REPUBLIC

Since Zelaya was deposed and replaced by the military backed President of Congress Roberto Micheletti, a fellow Liberal, Honduras has been in lock-down. After imposing a curfew from 9pm and 6am, the coup regime immediately set about clamping down on both resistance and anyone reporting on it.

Protests began within hours of the coup, with supporters of the president, grass-roots social movements and anyone not up for living under an junta, pouring onto the streets to demonstrate against the regime. On the first day of the coup protesters set up barricades of burning tyres in the

streets outside the presidential residence to restrict the military's movements and prevent the arrival of reinforcements. Protests have since broken out around the country with marches, blockades of major transit routes and strikes, including a nationwide teachers strike. The police and military have responded with tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannons and live ammunition, resulting in a large number of injuries and mass arrests.

It's been impossible to determine the scale of the protests due to the severe repression of any media reporting anything other than the coup government line. Journalists on the streets face violent harassment and gunshots. Independent and pro-Zelaya media have essentially been shut down, with a number of raids on local TV and radio stations, foreign channels such as CNN (yes that CNN) and Venezuela's Telesur being blocked, as well as arrests of both local and international journalists. Pro-coup media, however, have operated unimpeded.

In attempts to quell the escalating resistance the coup leadership has stepped up the repression. On Wednesday, Micheletti passed an emergency decree that ironically stripped Hondurans of a number of constitutional rights, including the right to protest, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom from unwarranted search, seizure and arrest and the rights of due process while under arrest.

Under pressure from both the streets and the international community, the military is now also facing dissent from within its own ranks with at least two battalions heeding the protesters chants that "Soldiers, you are part of the people" and refusing to participate.

Having postponed his original return, scheduled for Thursday (2nd), in order to wait for the expiration of an OAS ultimatum for the return of democracy, Zelaya now plans to return to Honduras on Saturday (4th). While Micheletti has promised to arrest him the "moment he sets foot on Honduran soil", social movements and supporters are preparing to meet the President to provide an escort and protection.

In the current political environment in Latin America, '80s-style military coups are as out of fashion as shoulder pads and Wham, a fact that even the less than squeaky-clean US administration recognises. While Zelaya is far from a revolutionary man of the people, his relatively minor challenge to the ruling oligarchy has shown just how difficult it still is to effect genuine change. However, it seems that the Honduran powers that be might just have backed themselves into a corner that it will be difficult to bully their way out of.

* For extensive coverage see www.narconews.com

DON'T COAL HOME

Mainshill Solidarity Camp in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, (See SchNEWS 681) are calling for volunteers to help guard an ancient woodland from being turned into an opencast coal mine. The landowner, Lord Home - son of Sir Alec Douglas-Home the former PM - is happy to sell off to Scottish Coal - the UK's largest open cast producer - for an undisclosed (huge) sum. The site is only 1000yds from a local hospital and nearby town of Douglas.

In a farcical court hearing on 29th June in Lanark Sheriff Court, the eviction order brought by Lord Home and Scottish Coal against the occupiers at Mainshill Wood was granted. Despite being given just two working days to seek legal advice and prepare a defence, the Sheriff refused the group's reasonable request for more time. The local council had prepared a statement to present to the court which supported the occupation and raised concern about the time-scale of the eviction order. The Sheriff, however, would not even allow the statement

to be heard, saying only: "Given that you're a lay person, I'll cast my eyes over it".

* For details on how to get there and more call 07806 926 040 and see www.coalactionedinburgh.noflag.org.uk/?page_id=415

* While Home wants to dig up the woods, here's a bit of dirt on Homes himself: He is a hereditary peer elected Conservative member of the House of Lords, and also the current President of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. Shooting *and* conservation? Or is that shooting the conservationists! He is also chairman of Coutts & Co, the private banking arm of the infamous taxpayer-money sucking bank, RBS. Coutts is currently going through one of the biggest and longest running criminal conspiracy corruption cases and the subject of major criminal allegations of conspiracy to defraud, racketeering, and money laundering - see www.nowpublic.com/world/coutts-bank-chairman-lord-home-named-carroll-trust-case-0

A LOT TO ANSAR FOR

Two sweatshop workers in Bangladesh were shot dead last weekend during protests over pay cuts and outstanding wages. Another worker is in a critical condition and dozens more injured as the police and Ansar civilian volunteer forces attacked the workers with tear gas and live bullets at a garment zone near Dhaka.

Following several days of strikes last week by 1800 RMG (Ready Made Garments) workers at one sweatshop, management finally agreed to the demands last Thursday. But on returning to work on Saturday (27th), three workers who had taken leading roles in the agitation and negotiations were told they were sacked "on charges of leading the demonstrations". Upon learning this, the workforce immediately left the factory to demonstrate and demand the reinstatement of their fellow workers. This led to fierce arguments followed by scuffles with the factory bosses, two of whom were reported to have been beaten up.

The workers blockaded a main road and resisted police attempts to disperse them using tear gas, responding with hails of stones and bricks. The Ansars then shot into the crowd, killing two, later claiming that the workers were about to seize their guns.

As news of the fatalities spread during the afternoon the workers' numbers swelled, joined by other factories striking in solidarity and RMG factories being closed early by bosses due to fears of the unrest spreading to their premises. The insurgent crowd then occupied a factory, smashing windows and wrecking offices. They remained in occupation for an hour and a half, during which time they set fire to the factory's warehouse and the hated Ansar camp on factory grounds. The Ansars have a history of clashes with RMG workers in recent years and are sometimes deployed within factory compounds as a semi-permanent para-military presence.

Thousands of workers gathered on the outskirts of Dhaka on Monday morning and set off to the nearby Export Processing Zone, location of many sweatshops. Police blocked their way with tear gas and rubber bullets leaving 100 protesters injured. Numbers swelled to 50,000, overwhelming the security forces and reducing a still operating complex to ashes – the fire brigade was denied access by those blocking the road. Meanwhile, others roamed the area and attacked another 50 factories and 20 vehicles.

Clothes sweatshops in Bangladesh have long been notorious for appalling pay and conditions and the latest unrest coincides with the release of a report by the Bangladeshi Government Factory Inspector's office. At least one in every seven garment factories does not pay salaries to the workers regularly and one in every three factories breaches labour laws. Labour leaders say these violations are actually more widespread, with factory owners using the global recession as a pretext for worker exploitation. Although conditions had improved since the last major worker strikes in 2006 with workers earning up to \$100 a month for 7-day weeks, wages have recently been cut by 20-30%.

Back in 2006, 4000 factories in Dhaka went on wildcat strike; sixteen factories were burnt down, three strikers were killed plus thousands injured, and the army was brought in to restore order. Last week's events are only the latest in a series of recent similar clashes in the Bangladeshi garment sector. With the deepening economic crisis and further downward pressure on wages fuelled by greedy rich world consumerism, such conflicts look set to escalate.

* For more see www.libcom.org

ISLAND MENTALITY

While No Borders activists have been raising awareness of the plight of migrants stranded in Calais, for those that do make it to Britain it's no guarantee of a safe and peaceful life. However, here in the UK there are lots of organisations campaigning for fair and just treatment of people seeking to settle in a country where they will not be persecuted. Here are just two examples of the successes and heartbreaking failures of refugees in the British asylum system - and their supporters - and these sorts of stories happen on a daily basis...

Members from the campaign group **Stop Deportation** staged a sit-in demonstration at **Yarl's Wood detention centre** in Bedfordshire earlier this week, blocking the way of the deportees' coaches, to stop the deportation of 20 Nigerian refugees to Lagos. Earlier in the day, the non co-operating refugees inside Yarl's Wood had been forcibly removed by immigration officers and security guards.

The sit-in at Yarl's Wood lasted until around 4.30pm, when officers removed protesters and arrested one campaigner for 'obstruction of a police officer'. The coaches carrying the deportees left soon after although many of the refugees onboard had no prior notice of their deportation or had valid Removal Directions, clearly flouting the correct legal process. Waiting at Stansted – not Gatwick as previously thought – was a private charter flight destined for Lagos. The Yarl's Wood refugees, along with others collected from three more detention centres, delayed the flight for over four hours by refusing to board the plane, but it eventually took off around 9.45pm. The flight stopped in Dublin and Prague, picking up further deportees from the Czech Republic,

Germany and Ireland. The charter arrived at 9am the next morning where a total of 94 people, including 8 children were left at Lagos airport.

* Meanwhile fellow activists also staged a demonstration outside the offices of WH Tours in Crowley, the private coach company used by the Home Office to transport deportees from detention centres to the airport.

* See also <http://stopdeportation.net>

Another campaign in **Sheffield** recently saw a more positive outcome when Claude N'deh, his wife Majolie, and their three children won their battle to remain in the UK. The family had come here seeking asylum after they were arrested and tortured in prison in Cameroon for being involved in human rights demonstrations. Two of their children, both born in the UK, were later diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia, a condition that requires daily medication with a 50% survival rate in Cameroon. After their initial application for asylum was declined, a huge campaign started in support of the family, backed by direct action groups and the community in Sheffield that they had come to be part of during their six years living in the city. The family have credited the hard work of the support network of community and campaign groups around them as being integral to the successful appeal.

* For more information on other cases see www.ncdac.org.uk

*** To get involved in direct action groups, campaigning and to keep up to date with the issues surrounding freedom of movement and how refugees are treated in the UK see www.noborders.org.uk www.ncadc.org.uk www.noii.org.uk**

SEZ WHO?

In mid-June the Indian government launched a massive operation in an adivasi (indigenous) region of West Bengal, where locals had been protesting against the state facilitated corporate land-grab for one of the notorious Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

Since the mid-nineties the Indian government has seized thousands of acres of land, uprooting adivasis, dalits, small farmers and landless farm workers - affecting around 250 million. The land was handed over to multinationals – Indian and foreign – in the name of economic liberalisation. SEZs were created where industries are exempted from labour and environmental laws, granted complete tax exemption and are constitutionally to be treated as foreign territories on Indian soil, fully equipped with special courts to serve the purposes of the corporations.

There was already local anger at torture and arbitrary arrests at the hands of the Lalgurh police when the state government of West Bengal seized 5000 acres of land for an SEZ to be handed over to Indian multinational steel company Jindal Steel. Last November, a convoy carrying the chief minister of West Bengal was targeted by a land mine on its way back from laying the foundation stone of the steel plant, injuring six policemen. The attack was claimed by India's Maoists (CPIM) who had been active in cooper-

ating with the adivasis until being recently driven out by federal forces. The police responded by beating and arresting locals, leading them to effectively seize control of the rural region. Road blockades were formed from felled trees and trenches, and locals stopped selling the police food, forcing them to withdraw.

The adivasis have distanced themselves from the Maoists, asserting their peaceful credentials whilst the Maoists have never claimed the adivasi movement to be under their control. The Maoists were recently declared a terrorist organisation.

As the press and independent monitors have been banned from the area, the extent of the abuses suffered by the adivasis at the hands of the military is unclear, although there have been reports of mass detentions and the displacement of entire villages.

The repression of resistance to land grabs for SEZs is commonplace in West Bengal. In protests against forced displacements in early 2007, 25 locals were killed by state police and over 20 women raped. An Amnesty report in January 2008 condemned widespread human rights abuses including killings and rapes carried out by West Bengal state forces.

A picket of the Indian Consulate in Birmingham has been called for 4pm on Friday 10th July to protest the Indian state aggression against the adivasis of West Bengal.

* See also <http://antilandgrab.wordpress.com> <http://sanhati.com>

PARTY & PROTEST
For events listings updated weekly see
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

IF YOU'RE NOT PISSED OFF YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION

ICH BIN EIN BURNIN'

"We believe for a space to be truly autonomous it must first be liberated. Liberated in our sense doesn't just mean taking something out of the hands of capitalists (the mere re-appropriation of a building) but rather taking space and finding ways to use it as a weapon against the State and Capital."

The recent Action Days for autonomous spaces had Berlin in chaos throughout the last week of May as anarchists converged for varied and often militant actions in defence of 'free space'. We could go into an in-depth, theoretical analysis of anarchism here, but we won't: let's go straight to where the real action was happening, down on streets...

Fires raged as cars, vans, trucks, billboards, bins, construction cranes and other vehicles in their dozens were torched, yuppie new-builds were trashed by paint bombs and stones, windows were smashed, roads were littered with caltrops (bent nails designed to puncture car tyres), advertising screens destroyed and estate agents were graffitied and glue put in the locks. Buildings were squatted in their numbers and an anti-gentrification rally was held.

Amongst the multifarious actions, McDonalds in Kreuzberg was trashed, a banner was dropped from the roof of the cathedral Berliner Dom and barricades were built in Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg and Wedding. Targets were numerous and diverse, including Media Spree land developers, SAP - a software company connected to arms trade, the Verdi Hotel and banks like Sparkasse.

A web-based real time info-ticker kept everyone informed with up-to-the-minute info on demos, actions, arrests, police locations and descriptions of undercover cops and their vehicles. The Kopi squatted centre held workshops, voku (people's kitchen) and a pirate radio station.

Despite beatings and arrests, Berlin's activists remain undaunted after their week-long revolt. See <http://wba.blogspot.de> and Indymedia Berlin.

LIONS AND TIGERS

Just because the civil war between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan military has come to an end (or maybe a pause) the suffering of the islands Tamil civilians continues unabated. In order to hammer home this message, British peace campaigner Maria Gallastegui imprisoned herself in a mock-up concentration camp in front of Churchill's statue, Parliament Square.

Tens of thousands of Tamils suffer appalling conditions at the hands of the Sri Lankan state. At least 250,000 are being held in concentration camps where whole communities have been uprooted and collectively punished (See SchNEWS 681, 672).

Maria managed to stay put, surrounded by barbed wire and placards on a plinth under the shadow of the old Tory, from the early hours until mid-morning on Wednesday (1st). She was evicted by cops who, rather than use a specialist cutting team, seem to have used some blokes from the council and a stepladder to remove the barbed wire wreathed protester.

Maria was arrested for a host of spurious rubbish - criminal damage (nothing was so much as scratched) and that old standby public order offence of 'threatening words or behaviour likely to cause alarm or distress', as well as some mumbblings about byelaws. The only distress around seemed to be found in the porcine form of Churchill's grandson, Nicholas Soames, who was reportedly thoroughly marked at his ancestor's legacy being subverted for peaceful causes. There was talk of Maria getting an ASBO for her persistent opposition to genocide. Maria was released the same day (after eight hours in the nick).

* See <http://peacestrike.org.uk>

SQUATS UP: South West London Squat Round Up KEEN SQUATTERS

This week a house was squatted in West London owned by Ann and Alan Keen, Labour MPs up to their eyeballs in the expenses scandal. It had been empty for up to a year, with the Keens living at their posh pad nearer to Parliament - which they had claimed £140,000 for over the last four years, as their 'second home'. On top of that, Alan Keen had an office at the back of the house, which he was claiming £250 monthly travel expenses to get to - even though it was in the same house they were calling their 'main residence'. In Alan's so-called office, squatters found a dusty old computer lying around.

While the old Bill visited last Saturday - doing nothing - the owners haven't started eviction proceedings yet. What they have done is letter dropped around the area with a notice saying that their house has been occupied by squatters, that it is empty because the builders went into liquidation, and work will start in two weeks and they will move back in the summer. Those letters are yet more taxpayers' money down the drain. It's also suspected that the Keens haven't paid the broke builders, and squatters found the house as a partial building site. They are currently getting it liveable.

The squat has had a lot of mainstream publicity, riding on the furore about MP expenses. The house is in the seat of Brentford & Isleworth, where Ann Keen is the local MP. To gauge the true feelings of her constituency, the squatters are holding a public meeting outside the front gates of the house this Sunday (5th), 3pm.

Also, tonight (3rd), is 'Having A Laugh At Your Expenses', a comedy benefit gig at the house featuring Mark Thomas, Attila The Stockbroker and Wil Hodgson. The money goes to refugee support. Starts 8pm, £4.

The house is at 38 Brook Rd South, Brentford, TW8 0NN, Site mob 07912078757

KEW BRIDGE

The Kew Bridge squatted eco-community in Brentford, West London is going strong after being occupied on June 6th (See SchNEWS 679). The community has been set up in the middle of a urban landscape with benders, yurts, compost loo and garden to prove a model of what can be achieved. It will be used as a community garden and educational centre. The local response has been overwhelmingly positive.

It was empty for 23 years and is currently owned by St Georges - whose pipe dream is to build an eight story 168-unit building, despite the community not wanting the development, and the plan being refused permission. There is a public consultation process two weeks from now.

Events are being held all week: Wednesday nights 7pm-9pm is workshops on a range of topics from bike generators to chanting, Tuesday and Saturday 11am-8pm are gardening days, Wednesday 11am-8pm is community structure building. All are welcome.

The place is not currently under direct threat of eviction, so let's hope they get the chance to get it fully up and running. Visit Kew Bridge Road, Brentford, TW8 0JF, site mob 07515166011.

* See also www.facebook.com/reqs.php#group.php?gid=88020757939

TYTING FARM

The squatted 118-acre Tyting Farm near Guildford, Surrey, was evicted this Monday after

eight and a half weeks. This site was notable for being occupied by The Diggers in 1649 - exactly 360 years ago - and is near St Georges Hill, made famous by Gerard Winstanley's Digger community.

On Monday a group of around 35 bailiffs and police arrived, and bailiffs began to evict the eleven occupants, gratuitously trashing and burning their benders and dwellings, and ripping plants out of their beds.

The site was taken on April 26th, and was the setting for a Rainbow Gathering in early May. After two court adjournments - due to the defendants drawing on historical documents - a possession order was finally issued two weeks ago at Guildford County Court.

The squatters' case - that Tyting Farm is common land - was based on a 1915 covenant by then-owner Duke of Northumberland bequeathing the land to the people of London and Guildford, remaining on condition of sale. In 1942 Guildford Council acquired the land for its protection. Part of the building dates back to a chapel built in 1300. Either way, despite the eviction, public access remains, and in fact the site could be re-occupied.

The on-the-case network of SW London/Surrey squatters have had an active few months, with the historic Ravens Ait island on the Thames near Kingston being occupied from February to May (See SchNEWS 675), as well as a cross-over with the West London lot occupying Kew Bridge and the Keen house. After a brief moment to recharge their batteries, look out for another squat in the area soon.

* Site mob 07842137535 email savetytytingfarm@googlemail.com

* See www.tytingcommunityproject.org.uk, www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=80809116892

* For more about the history of Tyting Farm see www.savetytytingfarm.com

...and finally...

Surprising a survey from the *Daily Mail* recently had 96% of participants voting that gypsies *should* jump to the front of the queue in the NHS. This wasn't quite the opinion that the *Mail* had expected, or even sought, however, when they posed the ever so slightly biased question in the *MailOnline* "Should the NHS allow gypsies to jump the queue?"

It's just possible however, that the result might have gone a different way had it not been for a virtual revolt amongst the UK's army of psychologists. After the dodgy survey came to the attention of the shrinks they launched a full-on twitter/email offensive to get as many votes for 'Yes' as possible to sabotage such a blatantly biased, consensus-manufacturing poll.

Said one Brighton-based senior lecturer in experimental psychology Dr Sam Hutton, "One reason I think there were so many yes votes was because a psychologist got hold of it, and sent an email which quickly got copied to virtually every psychologist in the country, suggesting that we all vote yes as a way of protesting against such a ludicrously loaded question (psychologists care about questionnaire design)".

Do you think that the *Daily Mail* is a xenophobic reactionary Hitler supporting small minded middle England rag? Vote on our online poll now.

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SchNEWS warns all readers - Don't Stop Til You Get Enough... is no way to manage your drugs habits. Honest!

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