

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DIGGING FOR VICTORY..



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GIVING THE GREEN FINGER AS GUERRILLA GARDENERS SET UP AN ECO-VILLAGE IN BRISTOL...



Bristol eco-village set up camp this week with huge support from local people and activists from all around the country. The off-grid, urban community kicked off last Saturday (17th) on a patch of waste land in St Werburghs - previously notorious for fly tipping, arson attacks and hard drug users.

The 'swoop' to take the land started with activists forming a walking block and cycle block, trailed by an obligatory police presence. After a wild goose chase to lose the cops (who eventually got bored and wandered off), both teams took the site at about midday.

The first day was spent clearing the site of rubbish, yielding a plethora of waste building materials which have been put to good use with tyre walls for an earthship being constructed, two composting loos on the go and recycling facilities sorted.

St. Werburghs is known for being a 'green' part of Bristol with a city farm and a number of self-build eco-houses nearby, so the neighbours to the site have responded with gusto. Residents have donated tools, a grey water system and polytunnel, as well as plants and seedlings, which were planted with help from the kids from the primary school opposite.

Police have reacted positively to the squat and offered their support to help prevent a planned illegal eviction on Wednesday (21st). Bailiffs had turned up the day before and served occupants with an eviction notice (after which a fire was mysteriously started in the corner of the site), and a call out went out for people to help protect the village. After a good turnout of supporters, the bailiffs didn't show, having been served notice that the eviction would be illegal under common and criminal law. Another attempt to evict is expected soon, so campers are urging people to continue to respond to call-outs.

One camper told SchNEWS that the collective plans to set up the site with buildings

and a flourishing garden, then leave it for the local community to enjoy before moving on to another piece of derelict land which needs regeneration. The camp invites all visitors to come for the day or to stay for longer - so grab your tools and gardening gloves and get down to help green-up an urban wasteland.

FIRST IN THE KEW

The Bristol project was inspired by green-fingered activists in London who set up an eco-village at Kew Bridge in June 2009 (See SchNEWS 677, 679, 682). This provided an example of post-peak oil, sustainable, urban living created from capitalist society's waste - creating a thriving community space which is still going strong nearly a year later.

The two hectare site had been unoccupied for 23 years after failed development plans for an eight storey block of flats were continuously rejected at the planning stage. The land has been left alone by the landowners, who have not tried to evict the occupants, and by managing to keep the local residents and police sweet, the camp is now a hub of community interaction. There is a packed weekly itinerary of workshops including permaculture, cookery and art, wild food walks around the local area, public meetings and guided tour open days. The site is also a launch pad for protest with people getting involved with demos like the anti-Counter Terror Expo action (See SchNEWS 718), and the village is closed on Mondays as the occupants go and demo outside the MOD and 'emanate love' to promote peace.

With 30 permanent residents, nine of whom are original crew from the swoop at the site, they also welcome visitors with a custom built guest house if you want to stay (though call first to check if there's space), and encourage all to come and help with the community vegetable and herb garden or just chill out.

DIGGING DEEP

The eco-village phenomena is not a new concept, with a six-month long community set up in 1996 (See SchNEWS 73, 95) by a collective called Pure Genius, who occupied a site in Wandsworth before being evicted to make way for a supermarket and flats (who says nothing changes...). The land there had previously been empty for six years and was

owned by drinks giant Guinness. This camp was however plagued by problems caused by the more fringe members of society flocking to the 'autonomous safe space', resulting in personality clashes and conflicts of interest caused by - to quote SchNEWS from back in the day - "people not willing, or able, to take responsibility for their own actions". Luckily this does not seem to be an issue facing the recent eco-villages.

The action of squatting unused land based on principals of harmony with the land and equality goes back further to before anyone had even come up with the genius idea of abbreviating ecology into a soundbite, and when villages had composting loos as standard. The Diggers movement from 1649, a network of communes which reclaimed land after the English Civil War, has been heralded as the prime inspiration for all of these modern day actions. Following the execution of Charles I, the Diggers started in protest against the treatment of the common people who had fought and died for a supposedly more egalitarian parliamentary system, while the MPs lived in luxurious comfort (sound familiar?). The network however was quickly squashed by the military who went round smashing up all the settlements (ditto).

To get involved in this ground-up movement, go and visit for a workshop or a chat, or even better, start one up yourself in a neglected spot near you.

* **The Bristol Eco-Village** is on land between the M32 and Saxon Rd, Bristol, BS2 9SH - for map see <http://wtp2.appspot.com/wheresthepath.htm?lat=51.469250...oz=10%3E>. For more info and contact details see the Facebook group: Bristol Eco Village - the Urban Centre for Alternative Technology.

* The **Kew Bridge** site is at 2 Kew Bridge Road, Brentford, TW8 0JF, site mob 07967864370 see Kew Bridge Eco Village! on Facebook and <http://kewbridgeecovillage.wordpress.com>.

* There are currently two other occupied community gardens, both of which were toxic, disused petrol station sites, and are now thriving gardens and community spaces: The **Lewes Road Community Garden** in Brighton has been an oasis of green on a grinding high street since last May (See SchNEWS 680) www.lewesroadcommunitygarden.org, see also Facebook group of the same name. In East Oxford, the **Barracks Lane Community Garden** has been running since 2007, with regular events see www.barrackslanegarden.org.uk.

CRACKDOWN AFTER DEATH IN DETENTION CENTRE

Asylum seekers in Oakington Detention Centre have reported that protests over the cover-up of the death of a Kenyan man caused riot police to descend on the centre and make 60 arrests and removals.

Detainees managed to contact Cambridge Migrant Solidarity following a solidarity demo on Sunday (18th). They claimed on April 15th detention centre staff denied the Kenyan medical treatment and even turned away an ambulance called by the inmates. Trouble flared when the detainees tried to prevent the removal of his body, fearful of a cover-up.

In the confrontation that followed, police made

arbitrary arrests, including the detainees closest to the dead man. They now can't be contacted.

A number of those arrested were sent to prison in Birmingham. The sister of one of the men was told by his lawyer, who had been in touch with immigration officials, that he and the others were in prison because "there is nowhere else for them to go" and they were there "just to calm the situation". Many of those still inside the centre say they have been handed the dates for their deportation. The 'removal directions' have been issued despite ongoing legal cases.

* See www.ncadc.org.uk

TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS

Migrant rights campaigners will take to the streets this afternoon to protest the collusion between a cleaning company and the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

Lancaster Cleaning Services, having recently taken over the contract for the London branch of Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS), provided the UKBA with information on a worker who had just left the company. The UKBA acted on the information by raiding his house and detaining the man in an unknown location.

It's not the first time cleaning companies who rely on migrant labour have used the UKBA as a tool against their workers. Migrant cleaners attempting to organise for their rights have been targeted for deportation at the University of SOAS (See SchNEWS 680) and cleaning firm Mitie/Willis.

Many of the workers were members of union UNITE, who have accused campaigners highlighting the issue of "frightening people off from union membership and activity".

The protest will take place at 5pm, outside UBS, 100 Liverpool Street, London.

* See www.thecommune.wordpress.com

QUILLA SURPRISE

Indigenous Bolivians stormed the site of a Japanese mining company last week and are occupying the offices in protest against environmental abuse and the exploitation of communities.

On April 12, seven hundred Quilla people blockaded a key road and rail routes to the silver-zinc mine, owned by the Sumitomo Corporation. On the 16th they occupied the offices, setting the site on fire and overturning containers filled with mineral ore awaiting export.

The Quilla claim Sumitomo is dumping toxic waste into the Madera River, contaminating their water supply and land. They are demanding an end to the environmental degradation and calling for more investment in their impoverished community.

A spokesperson for the protesters said, "Our demands are fair and must be met. The mine is ransacking our natural resources. We want compensation for the damage and... we want help with our development."

With Bolivian President Evo Morales busy espousing half baked theories on the roots of homosexuality to those assembled for the alternative climate summit the World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth (see And Finally...), the government has yet to officially respond. The Bolivian Deputy Minister of Environment, Juan Pablo Ramos, said it wasn't their intention to circumvent the discussion, but the world conference was not the appropriate setting because it would be focused on global issues. Demands from the Quilla for their own table at the conference have been refused.

* See earthfirst.org.uk/actionreports/node/23876

THE FULL ENGLISH

Back in SchNEWS's local haunt, Brighton, March For England plans to demonstrate through the city's streets on St. George's Day, this Sunday (25th). Meeting at 11.30 they plan to march to the King and Queen pub on Marlborough Place.

Matters are somewhat confused at the moment - last years march was a flag-waving jamboree with a few racist remarks hurled at passers by. It was ignored by nearly everyone. The March for England does have links to the EDL on their website (and they haven't got a long list of links). So far so - unpleasant.

However this time round Unite Against Fascism have announced a counter demo, claiming that the English Defence League are on their way to the City-by-Sea. They're holding a 'celebration of unity' opposite the pub from 10 am onwards. The EDL meanwhile have expressed surprise that they're supposed to be in Brighton this weekend - but some have now announced that they're going to turn up because of the counter-demo.

Local anti-fascists are urging people "To be in town, be on the ball and see how the situation develops".

PUT YER BACTON INTO IT

In solidarity with the ongoing resistance of campaign group Shell to Sea (see SchNEWS 716) to a gas pipeline in Rossport, Eire, activists blockaded a similar facility on the Norfolk coast. Bacton gas terminal is the largest of its kind in the UK, pumping gas from the North Sea into Britain and mainland Europe.

Protesters laid across the access road to the Shell owned terminal locked into steel arm tubes. They closed the road to traffic for 7 hours, until they were removed by police. Seven of the campaigners were arrested for obstruction of a highway and three have been ordered to appear at court at a later date.

The action on Wednesday (17th) was one of more than 150 protests worldwide being co-ordinated by global environmental action group, Rising Tide, for a day of Fossil Fuels demonstrations.

* For more on the demo see www.indymedia.ie/article/96387

* Also www.shelltosea.com & www.risingtide.org.uk

...and finally...

Evo Morales, idiosyncratic leader of Bolivia, what a guy! Well, sort of, nearly. Er, but....

Speaking at the first Worldwide Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth, he was hitting all the right notes, observing: "Mankind is facing the choice of either continuing along the path of capitalism and death or to take the path of harmony with nature and respect for life so as to save mankind." Right on!

He claimed the richest countries of the world owe a debt to the rest of the planet because the "atmospheric space" is "filled with the emission of winter-effect gases" and called for international borders to be lifted to allow free migration for the coming environmental refugees. *We're with you Evo, sock it to 'em!* He followed on to sing the praises of local Bolivian foods and folk medicines. *OK, we can forgive a bit of playing to the home crowd...*

But then... "Baldness appears to be a normal disease in Europe, almost all of them are bald, and that is because of the things they eat; while among the indigenous peoples there are no bald people, because we eat other things." *Erm, los-*

ing you a bit now mate.... Before winding up with claiming that homosexuality is also an egg-stra result of this fowl diet: "The chicken that we eat is chock-full of feminine hormones. So, when men eat these chickens, they deviate from themselves as men." Er, hang on, surely homosexual slightly pre-dates Kentucky Fried Chicken?

Oh dear, we thinketh Evo doth protest too much; and the aggressive view just reflects his own self loathing for lacking the courage to come out of the closet. (© all psychologists) Well, never fear, SchNEWS can help there...

Name: **Evo**
Loves: **The feel of silk**
Hates: **Capitalism**
Movie: **Forrest Gump**
Notes:

Hi Guy! My friends call me Evo Stick... :) I think you'll agree I look fabulous for 50. I work out as often as I can, if you know what I mean. Looking to meet like minded left-wingers for discreet chicken dinners (stuffing optional).



Disclaimer SchNEWS warns all readers, keep your hair on, only eat organic Bolivian. Honest.

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