

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER OILY FINGER SLICKIN' GOOD...

# Weekly SchNEWS

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## CRUDE BUT REFINED

### AS CLIMATE ACTIVISTS HIT ESSEX REFINERY WITH PRECISION ACTION

Utmost secrecy, activist goodie bags and sheer determination shut down the the UK's busiest oil refinery last week in one of the most well-planned actions the climate justice movement has seen so far.

Stilt walkers, a samba band and around 500 activists blockaded the road to Corydon oil refinery in Essex on Saturday (16th), stopping an estimated 400,000 gallons of oil getting to London's petrol stations. Organised by a coalition of action groups including Camp for Climate Action, Plane Stupid and UK Tar Sands Network, the 9-hour blockade was part of a global week of action against the fossil fuel industry that saw protests in 22 other countries.

With very few details released before the day, three blocs of protesters gathered at Euston, Victoria and Waterloo stations that morning with a clear mission - to disrupt the flow of oil - but no knowledge of who the target was, where or how. The crowds gathered with an obligatory but small police presence. At 10am the signal was given for each group to head down to the tube, where they navigated their way through London, following flags and listening to whispered directions.

The Dirty Money Bloc ended up at Fenchurch station first, and boarded a train, when it became clear for the first time that the action wasn't in the city. They were soon joined by the Building Bloc. Twenty minutes into their suburban journey, pieces of paper were handed down the carriages of squashed-in protesters. The target and plan was finally revealed: to blockade Corydon oil refinery in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex. Corydon is the UK's busiest refinery and largest supplier to the major oil companies' petrol stations in London.

Next to appear were huge laundry bags of 'protest packs', which were handed out to all the demonstrators on the train (leaving the two cops who came along for the ride looking a bit left out, bless'em). Inside was an impressive direct action toolkit: white boiler suit, mask, map to

the location, rope, carabiners and a tube to lock-on at the blockade.

### SUITED AND BOOTED

Suited, masked and ready to go, around 300 activists arrived at the very normal town of Stanford-le-Hope, 30 miles east of London. With sound systems blaring and flags waving, the blocs made their way through the streets. Given the strange looks given by passers-by, you can bet Stanford-le-Hope doesn't get this sort of visit very often. They weren't the only ones surprised by the action - with the Met busy 'protecting' the oil financiers' HQs in London from a never-to-appear anarchist mob, the protest was met with only a very small and very local police presence.

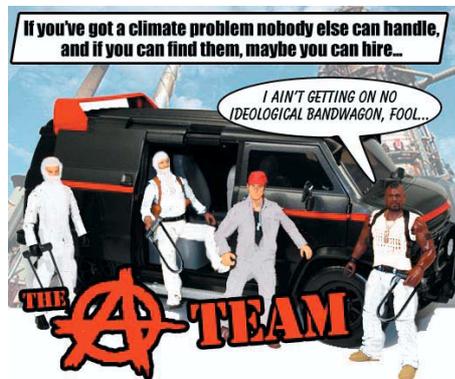
The blocs split to take different routes to the refinery, one road and one cross-country. Each heard the announcement: an all-women affinity group had already started the blockade. They were locked-on underneath two vans they had driven onto the road. Now they just needed the protest to catch up with them.

Unfortunately the third bloc had been waylaid at Fenchurch, where police had blocked platform exits and ordered the 200-strong group off the train to search them under a Section 1 order. The party-pooing tactics didn't work for long - the group caught up with the protest later in the day, swelling the already strong numbers.

Missioning across the fields to the target, the Dirty Money Bloc managed to break through no less than five police lines, linking arms and pushing through each time the coppers tried to get in the way. FIT were kept on their toes as people used umbrellas and banners to block the camera. At the sight of the gaggle of protesters rounding the corner to the refinery, around 15 empty tankers parked in an adjacent car park roared into life and shot down an unblocked back road, obviously terrified of getting caught in the middle of it all.

As people saw the tankers making their getaway, a group huddle formed, questioning whether to go and join the affinity group already at the blockade or to set up a second blockade at the back exit. In one of the quickest consensus decisions ever made, people decided to join the affinity group. The Building Bloc and the newly arriving Body Bloc were to set up the second blockade.

Just as the first blockade came into view, two meat wagons screeched up from behind with sirens blaring, attempting to stop the group from reaching their mates by getting in front of them. Protesters fanned out, blocking the road and preventing the cops from getting ahead - a move that topped the list of the day's victories by protesters vs. police. At around 1.30pm, the Dirty Money Bloc got to the blockade with much cheering



and celebration. They immediately locked-on in lines, supporting the women who had been holding strong since 11am.

Over at the second blockade, the Building Bloc had reached their destination, complete with bamboo tripods. The Met made their presence known by trying to rush the group as they set up the tripods. The lines held strong, however. In total six tripods were put up between lines of locked-on demonstrators straddling both sides of a dual carriageway. The shut down of the refinery was complete. Hard work done, the Body bloc arrived with more fun in the form of sound systems, a samba band and stilt walkers, handy for stringing up banners.

### CORY-DONE FOR THE DAY

Both blockades got visitors from locals during the day, mainly groups of curious kids on their bikes. Several mini direct action workshops took place, with the kids being taught how to lock on, given boiler suits and taught all the chants. One group particularly got into the spirit, shouting 'fight the power' back at the lines of cops and joining in with chalking anti-oil messages over the road. The press were kept away however, as police refused to let anyone with a camera or notebook through to the protest.

At about 5pm, the first blockade made the decision to pack up and go down the road to join the party. After perhaps watching one too many dance routines by the stilt walkers, a meeting was soon called and it was decided to end the action by 'tactful withdrawal', point made, and all without a single arrest. Just as swiftly as it had struck, the 500-strong crew dismantled itself and headed for the station and the after-party.

As one protester put it: "Today's action showed what can be done by a group of people determined to show the oil industry that what they are doing needs to be stopped, and how well it can be achieved with collective action and co-operation."

The -A- team: We love it when a plan comes together.

\*See [www.crudeawakening.org.uk](http://www.crudeawakening.org.uk)

## HUNTINGTON EVICTION ALERT

Activists at Huntington Lane in Shropshire are readying themselves to defend the anti-coal action camp from eviction. Following last week's police and bailiff raid on a vacant part of the site, National Eviction Team (NET) goons have been lurking around the main camp (see SchNEWS 743).

Campers are now on high alert and are battenning down the hatches in preparation for an eviction attempt. Defences already set up include a wooden 'fort', tunnels, tree houses, nets and aerial walkways. Campaigners have put a call out for bodies to get down there to man them. For information on how you can help, ring the site phone on 07503 583419 or 07727 295232.

\*See [www.defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com/](http://www.defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com/)

### SchNEWS Benefit

Get yer arse down to Hector's House, Grand Parade, Brighton this Sunday (24th) and warm your cockles with a whole host of treats brought to you by SchNEWS and SchMOVIES. Featuring a line up of the best in ska punk, dub and folk it's all in aid of raising a little money so we can keep bringing you the latest in direct action news. More events are planned at Hector's on Sunday 31st Oct and Sunday 1st Nov.

See <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/event.php?eid=153296611361252>

**INFORMATION FOR ACTION**

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## THE BIG LIBCON CUTS: TO THE MANOR OSBOURNE

Thousands have marched, a government department has been broken into, and a Scottish branch of Lloyds TSB has been occupied by pissed-off pensioners...It must be the (OK, somewhat quiet compared to France) start of the anti-cuts revolt!

Wednesday's Spending Review announced, as expected, that the plan is to further punish the public and the workers for the elite's fuck ups. Osborne announced nearly 20% cuts in public expenditure, clobbering welfare, social housing, public sector workers yada yada. The axing package - already dubbed as this generation's Poll Tax - was acknowledged, even by government-friendly think tanks, as passing the burden of the cuts mainly to the poorest in society.

The Age of Austerity (TM) is characterised by a lurch to the right under cover of crisis. Remove safety nets, make workers leaner and 'hungrier', then privatise and hand everything over to corporations to run and profit from. And if an insufficient profit is to be made, the public purse is always there for a bailout. Just make sure the cops are tooled up enough to keep order when the market inevitably 'fails to deliver'. While cooked up on the playing fields of Eton, the after-taste is definitely more American in flavour.

For those who know that the real crisis has yet to begin to play out, resistance is in the air. Is it an opportunity to wake up the masses before they sleepwalk-on-ice-factor-idol themselves into the biggest change in the 'social settlement' between rich and poor since the Second World War?

Protests took place in many UK cities on Wednesday evening, including Cardiff, Newcastle, Sheffield, Barnsley, Cambridge, Southampton, Bolton, Luton and London. In Dorchester protesters marched in white boiler suits and masks to represent the 'faceless' nature of workers in the firing line.

The London turn-out was the largest with 3000 people marching on Westminster. Most then packed into the central hall, whilst hundreds waited outside. The focus was on the half million public sector job losses and the 41% cut in university teaching budgets, amongst more general anti-slashing anger.

## FRANCE: WILL YOU STILL NEED ME, FEED ME WHEN I'M 62?

With violence in the cities, rubbish piling up in the streets, fuel supplies running low, transport chaos and school blockades, France is paralysed and reaching boiling point.

The rolling strikes continued on Wednesday (20th), causing widespread disruption to schools and transport and adding to a growing fuel crisis. One third of petrol stations across France still had no fuel. All 12 refineries and some fuel depots were blockaded but police broke up the barricades at three strategic fuel depots in Donge, Le Mans and La Rochelle.

Pickets and stoppages continued at airports with Toulouse airport blockaded and cancellations at Orly and Charles de Gaulle in Paris. Train, bus and tram staff were still striking across the country. Bus drivers in Rennes went on strike after tear gas was fired at the city's bus depot. Police fired tear gas to break up demonstrations in the eastern cities of Mulhouse and Montbelliard. In Marseille piles of uncollected rubbish are creating a stench across the city.

In Lyon and the outskirts of Paris an outbreak of 'mini-riots' saw disenchanted youth fighting running battles with police, burning cars and smashing shop windows. The interior minister, Brice Hortefeux, threatened to send in paramilitary

Notably absent from the throngs of trade unionists and student activists was leader of the opposition Ed Milliband, who had promised earlier in the month that he would "definitely" attend.

If he was worried about associating with misbehaving members of the public he needn't have worried. The main march passed peacefully. It was only several hours later, at around 8pm, that any minor mischief occurred when 12 protesters broke into the government Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in Whitehall. Three were arrested for criminal trespass, while others avoided the nick by leaving when asked. Immediate arrests do tend to put a dampener on these high-profile occupations...

On Thursday in Glasgow a few unlikely suspects continued the disobedience. Eleven members of Citizens United group, including several pensioners, have occupied a Lloyds TSB branch in the city centre. The group entered the building shouting "No Cuts! No Cuts!", and, at the time of writing, are still there.

Admirable, yes, but it looks as though it will take until at least the weekend for the resistance to pick up steam. A series of protests across the country are planned for Saturday, including in Cardiff at the City Hall, Edinburgh which kicks off at 11am at East Market Street, and Sheffield outside the Town Hall at 12.30pm.

MadPride, the mental health system survivors group, are taking a creative approach for their demo planned at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park for the October 26th at 1pm. Mental health service users will re-enact the opening chapter of Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish', and a life-size effigy of a Con-Dem politician will be publicly hung, drawn and quartered. The day will also be a 'medication strike', with participants refraining from taking medications and any use of the mental health services for 24 hours.

As the reality of the cuts sink in, will this relatively calm start gain significant momentum? The seeds of nationwide unrest have been scattered but to reach European levels it will need an outbreak of "We're all in it together"...

police to tackle the violence, saying, "We will mobilise all means necessary to put these thugs out of harm's way", adding that he would not hesitate to send in armed units. Officially, 1,423 people involved were arrested in the past week, including the arrest of 428 rioters on Tuesday (19th). Some 1,000 people remain in custody.

On Saturday night (16th), there was a miniature storming of the Bastille by 200 anarchists chanting the slogan: "Down with the state, the cops and the management!"

In addition to violence in Lyon and near Paris, Tuesday (19th) saw 4,000 petrol stations waiting on supplies. Sarkozy was, er, driven to plead for calm and responsibility but insisted he had no intentions of backing away from his pension reforms. Day 6 also gave rise to increasing action by children with 379 secondary schools blockaded.

With women, employees in hazardous jobs and the young set to be hit hardest by the unjust reforms, the protests have seen up to 3.5 million take to the streets. Sarkozy however, is holding firm and on Thursday (21st) warned violent protesters that they would not "have the last word" and would be pursued and punished "with no weakness" on the part of the authorities.

Over to you, Britain..

## CHEV IT UP YOUR PRs

Culture jamming pranksters the Yes Men duped the world's media and played havoc with the launch of oil giant Chevron's latest greenwash advertising campaign with a carefully orchestrated satirical spoof.

Chevron had been preparing to push their sharing, caring green credentials with a multi-million dollar advertising campaign to be launched on Monday (18th). Their "We Agree" campaign declared their agreement with statements like "Oil companies should put their profits to good use" and "It's time oil companies get behind renewable energy". But hours before the campaign was launched, the Yes Men launched an alternative campaign with mock-up ads highlighting the company's environmental and social abuses.

Chevron immediately issued a stern condemnation of the spoof. Unfortunately for them the Yes Men also released a fake condemnation on Chevron's behalf, in which they proudly declared Chevron's right to exploit Ecuador.

With two ad campaigns and two condemnations floating around, it was all too much for many journos. Site after site cited from the spoof versions or sometimes even both. AFP and Energy Digital described the hoax before quoting the very same releases as the "real" version.

The Yes Men intend to keep the alternative ad campaign going and are urging people to send in their own subverted Chevron ads to [fckchevron@theyesmen.org](mailto:fckchevron@theyesmen.org)

\*See [www.theyesmen.org](http://www.theyesmen.org)

## WHO YA GONNA COAL?

The ghosts of Mainhill past have been haunting the South Lanarkshire open-cast coal mine these last two weeks. In the early hours of Monday (18th) morning, poltergeist activity included the D-locking of the gate of an access road, the repainting of a Works Traffic sign with the words 'Stop Coal Chaos!' and the Jackson Pollock-ing of a security building. On Wednesday last week (13th), the site's haulage gate was found mysteriously locked, preventing coal trucks entering the site and transporting coal to the Ravenstruther Rail Head. The Mainhill action camp was evicted last January (see SchNEWS 707).

Elsewhere in the Douglas Valley of South Lanarkshire, four earth movers, two dump trucks and an explosives handling truck were sabotaged at Broken Cross Open Cast Mine on Sunday (17th). The mine is one of three active pits in the valley. Scottish Coal has plans for three more.

\*See [www.coalactionsotland.org.uk](http://www.coalactionsotland.org.uk)

## ...and finally...

The over-inflated ego of a Toronto policeman who arrested a G20 protester for blowing bubbles (how come we missed that as Crap Arrest of the Week at the time? For Being Armed with a Wand...), has finally been popped. In the video that originally carried him to fame, Const. Adam Josephs is heard telling the soap-dodger "If the bubble touches me, you're going to be arrested for assault." How can you top that for over-reaction?

You ask an amateur animator using Youtube to poke fun at him on t'interweb, of course. In a series of amusing shorts, a toon likeness of Const. Adam Josephs was seen arresting, amongst others, Santa Claus and Barack Obama. Not amused, the bursting-with-anger cop has now dropped a \$1.2m defamation lawsuit on the budding comedy genius.

SchNEWS expects the case will eventually turn out to be a load of hot air - else we'd better start rethinking the graphics...

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS advises all readers, keep clinging on to Stanford-le-Hope that the energy bubble won't burst. Honest.

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