



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER TIMBER SHIVERING...

SchNEWS

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FIGHT THEM ON THE BEECHES YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YEW AS TORIES PLAN TO CUT NATIONAL FORESTS

Last week (see SchNEWS 753) we covered the protests against the sell-off of the Forest of Dean. But the implications of the Public Bodies Bill for the Forestry Commission go a lot further than that. Essentially the Tory's are planning (in time-honoured fashion) to flog off the family silver and privatise forests up and down the country. The sale is intended to raise £2bn - less than half of one years tax avoidance by Vodafone.

At a recent parliamentary select committee DEFRA Minister Jim Paice said: "We wish to proceed with very substantial disposal of public forest estate, which could go to the extent of all of it." The Forestry Commission currently controls around one million hectares. Ministers have said they 'hoped the woodland would be bought by community groups and charities' but would also 'be willing to sell the land to private UK or foreign companies.'

Well as we know, hope ain't much good against profit and already the investors are

sniffing round looking at chipping the woods cheap bio-fuel for example. So now's the moment to fight the legions of Saruman before the UK's forests disappear up the chimney. Crucially the forests are expected to be flogged off without any requirement to uphold the Forestry Commission's current commitment to replace rows of conifers with native broadleaf trees such as oak, beech, ash and lime. Defra is reluctant to reduce the sale value of the forests by adding conditions over the types of tree that must be planted. The Woodland Trust (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) said that the value of each hectare would be cut by a third if any future owner was required to plant native trees and not just focus on maximising the profits. Sue Holden, the trust's chief executive, said: "Ancient woodland is our richest and most fragile habitat, our equivalent of the rainforest. [Selling the sites] with no means of securing their restoration would mean a massive opportunity would be lost, probably forever."

ASH FOR CASH

Ironically it's actually the UN's international year of the forest - and as the world slowly wakes up to the necessity of green cover just to keep us breathing, then Maggie's little helpers are reaching for the chainsaw. Of course, once you've bought yer own little leafy glade then you'll still need planning permission before you can shout 'TIMBER!' - but don't worry 'cos amongst the Tory policies is a promise to take a felling axe to red-tape of planning permission.

Of course it's not every new owner who's going to chop down the trees - some will want to fence them off and use them as handy little tax loophole. In the UK, profits and gains derived from commercial forestry are beyond the scope of taxation. This means although no allowances are available on expenditure, commercial forestry in the UK is free from income tax, capital gains tax (other than gains on the underlying land as opposed to the timber crop), corporation tax and, if held for more than two years, inheritance tax. - KER-CHING! (nicked from www.investment.co.uk).

CEDAR WRITING ON THE WALL

So, perhaps the trees and squirrels or whatever could carry on much as before - just under different ownership. But you won't see that because as the first thing private owners are likely to do is stick up a massive fence and a keep-out sign.

The Forestry Commission ain't perfect but there does at least seem to be some commitment to the idea of public ownership and access. Right-to-roam legislation only applies to 'freehold' rather 'leasehold' woodlands, mean-



ing that new owners, depending on the terms of the sale, will be able to restrict access. And of course any time that a more profitable alternative reared its head they'd have total freedom to change their minds and shut off access.

The abstract idea of 'selling forests to developers is bad' is gathering weight nationally, but the fact that it means that patch of trees just outside town where you take yer dog for a walk is only just starting to trickle through. The hugely encouraging protest last week in the Forest of Dean (see SchNEWS 753) has made a good start, but there are still only a small number of local groups organising against the sell off. The Public Bodies Bill, which proposes the corporate takeover of woodland is currently at committee stage in the House of Lords, which basically means it's passed through the initial stages of debate and now amendments are being made. It's still got to go through the House of Commons, so the time to sign the petition, hassle yer MP, and more importantly, build yerself a treehouse equipped with sab tools and D locks is now.

*www.saveourforests.co.uk

*<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Britains-Forests/157828020924281>

*Local campaigns we know about: Staffordshire: <http://www.savecannockchase.org.uk/> | Exeter: <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/exeter/haldon/> | Nottinghamshire: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8192305118> | East Anglia: http://www.fotfp.org.uk/fotfp_fc_campaign.shtml | Gloucestershire: <http://www.savetheforestofdean.co.uk/>

*The petition: <http://www.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/save-our-forests>

CALL OUT CORNER

* Do you believe the corporate kleptocracy is tearing the world apart in its search for profit while a morally bankrupt and intellectually corrupt liberal class nods approvingly? Are you hungry? Then get yerself down to the **Cowley Club**, London Road, Brighton this Sunday for the SchNEWS benefit vegan roast and support us in our fight against the powers-that-be while filling that belly with a delicious nut roast with all the trimmings. From 2pm to 6pm.

* **Network X**, a gathering of non-hierarchical action groups is taking place this weekend (15th/16th January) at MMU - Manchester Metropolitan's Student Union. Go along to join a working group for action planning on cuts action, environmentalism, human rights and anti-capitalism campaigns and meet the network of UK-based collectives working on these issues. See www.networkxuk.wordpress.com

* On the other hand, if you're a Southern Softy who can't make it past Watford Gap without getting a nosebleed, then fear not, the **Rebel Alliance** - Brighton's monthly forum for anti-authoritarian direct action groups - will be holding its next meeting on Sunday the 16th. The Hydrant Pub, Preston Circus, from 6-9pm.

*Ok, you're well fed and have plotted the downfall of capitalism, what next? A bloody good knees-up, that's what. On Friday 21st there will be a helluva **squat party** in Brighton, headed by techno-weirdos Sicknote. Call 0740542514 near the time for details.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

Wake up! Wake up! It's yer...
SchNEWS
 Benefit Gig with...
 punk/ska legends
CITIZEN FISH
 supported by
 punk rock goddess
RITA LYNCH
 Sat 22nd January 8pm £5
 @ HECTORS HOUSE
 Grand Parade, Brighton
www.schnews.org.uk

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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Published in Brighton since 1994

KEEP IT CIVIL

Dishevelled cigar-chomping fatty Ken Clarke's first foray into the world of swingeing cuts resulted in the surprisingly liberal plan to cut the prison population. In case anyone thought the old Tory rogue was going, err, rogue in the twilight of his career though, the 'No' Justice minister's latest swipe with the spending sythe, is aimed squarely at the poor and unfortunate. Clarke's plans to reform civil legal aid will leave hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people facing destitution, debt, homelessness and miscarriages of justice with no access to legal recourse.

In an assault that makes Thatcher's attempts to cut legal aid begin to look mild, Clarke's plans aim to reduce the number of legal aid cases by half a million a year - moving entire legal areas out of the reach of yer averagely financed Joe. On the chopping block are debt advice, social welfare, employment, personal injury, clinical negligence and areas of housing.

The Tories claim the move will put an end to litigation culture. However in reality, it is those fighting evictions, unfair dismissal, non-payment of wages and police victimisation who will find themselves helpless, while chancers out for the 'compo' can try their hand with 'no win no fee' sharks - the Tories' Big Society taking up the slack.

The right-wing press has merrily jumped on the bandwagon, hailing it as a blow to the 'fatcat' lawyer parasites sucking tax-payers dry. Yet the truth is legal aid lawyers tend to operate in the one corner of the profession that doesn't exist to live it up on the backs of other people's misery. The average wage for a legal aid brief is £25,000, a pittance in comparison to the fortunes to be leeches out of the private sector. Many of these lawyers are now staring at unemployment as law centres and firms offering free advice close. Those that cling on to their jobs can expect a 10% cut in fees.

The prosecution rests: see the Facebook campaign 'Say no to legal aid cuts in the South West', or drop Camer-Leg and cronies a line and tell 'em what you think at www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/legal-aid-reform-151110.htm, or better still, turn out for the demo outside the South-West offices of the Legal Services Commission: Queens Square, Bristol, 7/02/11 from 12 noon.

THAT'S END-DETAINMENT

The High Court has ruled that the detention of two single mothers and their children in Yarl's Wood immigration centre was unlawful due to the lack of consideration given to the welfare of the children.

The judge acknowledged that 'no one can seriously dispute that detention is capable of causing significant and in some instances long lasting harm to children', and since the imprisonment of the minors in January/February 2010, one child has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress disorder.

In 2001, the UKBA changed their policy to allow the detention of children according to the same criteria as adults, whilst maintaining it would only be done in 'exceptional circumstances'. Since then however, there have been numerous cases of children being detained as a standard procedure rather than as a last resort.

A Home Office spokesman has said that the detention of families would be kept to a minimum while officials drew up an alternative arrangement to protect the welfare of children without 'undermining' immigration law.

EMA-DNESS

The campaign against Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) cuts took a new turn this week after a mistaken call out that there was going to be a vote in Parliament last Tuesday (11th) (OK, hands up, in SchNEWS but we got the info from Unison). In fact, no vote had been planned, but a public meeting was taking place at the House of Commons to discuss the parliamentary decree that was going to push through the decision to cut funding without a vote or consultation.

The London demo that was originally planned for the 11th was cancelled after the mistake was discovered, but student groups in some cities went ahead with anti-cuts actions, not letting the Tories get away with their bull in a china shop approach to welfare for the poorest in society. Protests included gatherings in Nottingham, which saw a good turnout for a city-centre march and Vodafone occupation; Cornwall, where students marched on the town hall in Truro; and Leeds, where a banner drop proclaiming 'Save EMA' was unfurled on a bridge across a motorway.

Labour politicians have now put forward a motion to push a vote on the decision to scrap the EMA payments, and a date for the vote has been set for the 19th January. Campaign groups are calling for students to rally outside parliament on the day of the vote - meet at 4pm at Piccadilly Circus to march on parliament at 5pm.

Another date for your anarchist diary is the 26th of January, when a national day of walkouts has been planned for schools, colleges and universities across the country. Demonstrations have also been organised in London and Manchester for the 29th - a Saturday, giving workers the opportunity to join the fun. The walkouts and demos will go ahead no matter what the outcome of the vote on the 19th.

Campaigners are calling for students to join the actions and refuse to let parliament snatch away the only support available for people on low incomes to go into further education. *www.anticuts.com

ROUGHED UP DIAMOND

Is it easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into heaven? That was the question that stumped Barclays honcho Bob Diamond 'Geezer' when he faced a grilling over his 8 million smacker bonus. At SchNEWS we have a different question: WHY IS NO ONE DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THIS? Most visible of those who are is the Right to Work Campaign - calling for a wave of protests against the government's surrender to vampire bankers and their bulging bonuses. To kick things off they will be marching on banks in Brighton, Bristol, Hackney, Manchester, Sheffield, Swansea and Worthing... See www.righttowork.org.uk

BONNEVILLE RENDEVOUS

In the early hours of Monday (10th) anarchists in Bristol sabotaged several corporate institutions. The bailiff and debt collecting firm Revenue on Bonnaville Road had all its windows smashed on one side of the building. Another target was the O2 repeater tower. In the exterior of the telecommunications tower a tyre full of rags was drenched in paraffin and shoved through the biggest bunch of cables and set alight.

Meanwhile the Brislington police station ended up with three squad cars that had their bodywork damaged with paint stripper along with a mobile CCTV unit with no windows. A branch of HSBC bank on Bath Road also had its front windows clobbered.

BASTARD OFFSPRING

The latest scurrilous, muck-raking rag to enter the fray launched in Winchester this week. Issue One of Bastard Monthly takes a sledgehammer to national and local politics with articles such as Aaron Porter is Shit, Winchester's Most Wanted Bastards and a squatter's guide to local empties. Download a PDF of issue 1 at www.mediafire.com/?hj8e27cj76cc30s

EXTINGUISHER NOT LET OFF

The flame-haired teen terror who got carried away in 'high spirits' at the student protests in November, lobbing a fire extinguisher from the top of Millbank Tower has been jailed for 32 months.

After video footage of the action appeared on the news, his 'concerned' (i.e. totally livid) mother convinced him to turn himself in. The judge announced he was dishing out the harsh sentence to act as a 'deterrent', because of course sentencing is on the mind of any teenager 'finding themselves' in the middle of their first riot.

The unfortunate A-level student will serve half his sentence in a young offenders institute before being eligible for parole.

* Two protesters carrying banners calling the government a bunch of liars were arrested on Wednesday (12th) morning as they tried to stroll into Buck Palace via the staff entrance. They appeared at the City of Westminster magistrates court the following day after being charged with trespass.

...and finally...

A controversial new art installation has not been going down a bomb with German cops in Dresden.

'Petra' is a lifesize model of a female riot cop in full armour squatting down, trousers akimbo, relieving herself on the floor. The 'piss de resistance' is a yellowish pool of liquid puddling at her feet.

Police are extremely pissed off over the exhibition at the Dresden College of Art, claiming, "There is freedom of art - but this time it has gone too far."

As ever in modern art, controversy breeds success and the young piss-artist concerned, Marcel Walldorf, has won a £1,000 prize and risen a couple of rungs up the ladder of notoriety.

You can easily browse the web for an image of the work, but we prefer looking at it (for the humerous website name and the ruthless German efficiency of the page marker) on... www.kunstknall.de/public/user/benutzer/view.php%3Fbid%3D634%26sortid%3D3%26complete%3D&u sg=__6aPiwMQf6nSvlnljN0P4-cem3v0=&h=742&w=1024&sz=462&hl=en&start=22&zoom=1&tbnid=G6AQ1tjFQoKQMM:&tbnh=138&tbnw=201&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmarcel%2BWalldorf%26um%3D1%20-%20if%20you%20can%20t%20be%20arsed%20to%20type%20all%20that%20in%20just%20see%20it%20here%20instead%3F



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