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GONE TO GROUND

PROFILE OF SIMON GREENWOOD - FOXHUNTER AND FRACKER

Well guess who doesn't give a stuff about ripping up the countryside to blast gas out of the ground? It might surprise you (or not) that it's those lovers of all things green and pleasant – our mates in the Countryside Alliance.

One of the prime movers behind the attempt to bring the extreme energy extraction technology of fracking to Sussex is Simon Greenwood of Balcombe Estate who is lending his land to Cuadrilla for the drilling of a test rig (see SchNEWS 803). As well wanting to get his hands dirty pulverizing natural gas out from underground shale rock, he just so happens to be joint master of the notorious nearby Crawley & Horsham fox hunt, known for illegal hunting and violent attacks on saboteurs.

Back in 2009 Greenwood was caught on camera using his hounds to chase a fox to ground, something which is totally illegal under the 2005 Hunting Act. Greenwood called in terrier-men to dig the fox out and then threw it to the hounds. He can then be seen directing his minions to force hunt monitors off the land. The publicity from the footage forced the Crawley & Horsham hunt and the Countryside Alliance to back out of a injunction they were trying to secure at the time to prevent the activities or hunt monitors (see Schnews 684). This charming fellow also runs large scale commercial pheasant shoots and is a cousin of local feudal magnate Viscount Cowdray.

Greenwood's cavalier attitude to the law

TESCO VALUES?

20 pro-Palestine protesters went anti-shopping at their local Tesco in Brighton (or maybe it was actually Hove, actually). Their mission – to expose Tesco's trade with Israel and to protest against the store's selling of Israeli products that support the Zionist state's policies of colonisation and ethnic cleansing. Just to make things more fun, a handful of pro-Israel Zionists turned up – ostensibly to show their support for Team Israel, but mainly to get aggy and try and disrupt the disruption by, er, causing more disruption.

After about an hour of picketing and leafletting (the cops failed to show up to push people around) the demonstrators called it a day. When Britain's largest and arguably most evil mega-chain of hypermarkets has had its worst sales performance in years, every little helps.

doesn't just extend to the persecution of the local wildlife though – he happens to be an active member of the Balcombe Parish Council overseeing planning applications where, surprise surprise, Cuadrilla's drilling application didn't see light of day (not publicly anyway) except for in the footnotes of the Balcombe Parish planning minutes in Feb 2010, where Greenwood asserts that the application was going to West Sussex County Council, without even a squeak in the 'declaration of interest' section that he's the fracking land owner!

*For more on resistance to fracking in Balcombe: gasdrillinginbalcombe.wordpress.com/

*Or across UK: www.frack-off.org

*For more on kicking back against the hunt: hsa.enviroweb.org

southdownhuntsabs.wordpress.com/



CRAP EVICTION OF THE WEEK

Ainsworth House, Brighton

The council owned former nursing home (see SchNEWS 804) was successful evicted on Saturday 14th.

Ready to face a hail of projectiles the Police were there in force. Though to the disappointment of the riot shield waving cops and heavily tooled up bailiffs, it turned out no one was home. Sensibly the occupiers had already moved on to pastures new, giving the long arm of the law the slip once again.

The council are now paying for dog patrols at the site to make sure the gaff remains vacant. Money well spent.

DEAD SETT?

AS SchNEWS PONDERES THE PROPOSED BADGER CULL

Two badger culls will take place this August near Taunton, Somerset and Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. The government claim these will be followed by another ten new 'cull zones' every year.

This is despite the fact that no scientific case for the cull has been made – even Professor John Krebs (a man with the blood of 11,000 badgers on his hands) says that he "can't understand how anybody who's looked at the science would say this is a good idea." In the trials conducted under Krebs in 1997 they found that badger culling often made the situation worse by disrupting badger colonies and causing further spread of TB.

Even if all badgers were killed (which is not being suggested... yet) whether this would have much, or any, effect on rates of bovine TB is debatable. The Isle of Man has no badgers yet it does have bTB, while Scotland – which has badgers and hasn't culled any – has no bTB. In the UK cattle outnumber badgers by about 40 to 1 – it's more likely that cows are giving badgers TB, but the market for badger steak is fairly limited so it's the badger that's gotta go.

While 30,000 cattle are prematurely killed each year after testing positive for TB, a further 75,000 are slaughtered for not being 'in calf', 7,000 because they are low yield and

120,000 because they are infertile. Though all these figures are dwarfed by the nearly 3 million cattle the UK slaughters for meat production. So TB's hardly a "chronic and devastating disease" for the industry as agriculture minister, Jim Paice claims.

Developing a vaccine and bringing back the strict regulations regarding movement of cattle would be logical ways to help actually stop the spread of TB (or better yet, just all go vegan) – though even this ignores the fact that the disease itself is fairly benign. Pasteurising milk and cooking meat prevents transmission, so unless you're tearing into some raw meat or suckling from an infected cow you should be fine.

It's also not as if the cows are desperate for a cure – even those that are infected rarely develop the actual disease, especially due to their short economic lives. Their premature slaughter at the hands of Defra is currently the only side-effect most infected cattle experience. There are two drivers behind these culls – one is an effort to reassure European markets that we've got it under control and the other is good old fashioned Tory blood-lust.

The exact location of the culls are not being made public because of fears that some pesky spoilsports might throw a spanner in the works, though SchNEWS thinks skulking about in the Forest of Dean might be a worthwhile way to spend your Summer...

SEA SHEPHERD: DANCING ON ICE

The Yushin Maru 2 has relieved the Shonan Maru 2 and has taken up the task of chasing the Steve Irwin this week. The Shonan 2 headed west towards the ACV (Australian Ocean Protector) customs vessel to deposit the three Australians held onboard. The trio boarded the Japanese vessel, Shonan Maru 2, on Sunday (8th). Geoffrey Owen Tuxworth of Perth, Simon Peterffy of Bunbury and Glen Pendlebury of Fremantle, all from Forest Rescue came by boat from shore to intercept the Shonan Maru that was hot on the trajectory of the Steve Irwin. By Friday (13th) afternoon the transfer was complete. No parties were injured on either side. The action is meant to highlight Japan's inexorable and very much illegal whaling activities in the Southern Ocean and remind of the Australian government's hollow pre-election campaign promise to tackle whaling. Their demand was simple "Return us to shore in Australia and then remove yourself from our waters." The presence of any whaling vessel off the shore of Bunbury is in direct violation of the 2008 Federal Court ruling prohibiting whaling vessels from entering Australian territorial waters. Yet the Australian government turns a blind eye.

Meanwhile the Yushin Maru 3 remains at Macquarie Island, illegally within Australia's twelve mile territorial limit, which means the Nisshin Maru has only one harpoon left, the Yushin Maru. Drone contact with the Nisshin Maru is null and void at the present time so there is no concrete proof whether whaling has begun. The Nisshin Maru is the primary research vessel of the 7 vessel strong fleet and the world's only whale factory ship. If whaling has indeed begun Sea Shepherd will proceed with two of the three harpoon vessels not involved in killing operations. "If we had one more ship, there would be no possibility of any whales dying," said Captain

Paul Watson. "In July I met with Greenpeace representatives at the IWC and requested of them that they send one ship to support us. I told them that one more ship would shut down this entire fleet. They refused, and that is deeply disappointing, and as a result whales may die." Greenpeace still not cutting the mustard it seems. Sea Shepherd's fast scout, Brigitte Bardot, is still licking her wounds after being struck by a rogue wave that cracked the hull and severely damaged one of the pontoons on the vessel on the 28th December. The ship is docked in Fremantle and in a state of repairs till next season.

A word from the Captain: "We have demonstrated that we can shut these poachers down and every year we become more effective than the year before", said Paul Watson.

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

EDL ROUTED IN WHITECHAPEL

The sorry tale of the EDL is perhaps wending its way to an anti-climax. Yesterday saw a piss-poor turn out in Barking end up in an ignominious defeat in Whitechapel.

The league decided to make a stand in Barking – long an area of widespread BNP support. Admittedly this was only intended to be a regional demo not one of their national 'big ones' but even so the turn-out was poor.

SchNEWS spoke to a local anti-fascist "It really was a poor turn-out about 80 of them mostly old guys in their fifties or young kids – no casualties to be seen". The EDL were cordoned off by police outside Barking Town Hall and exchanged points of view with a small UAF contingent. Later the right-wingers were bombarded with pots of yoghurt from above.

OCCUPY LSX: PITCHED BATTLE AS ST PAUL'S CAMP LOOSES HIGH COURT HEARING

On Wednesday 18th January the High Courts in London once again thronged with activists waiting to hear the decision of Justice(?) Lindholm on the future of Occupy LSX. After a five day hearing at the end of last year many of those who attended had expected a positive outcome, stating the the Judge had been understanding and positive throughout the hearing. So they were very disappointed when the Judge – true to form – granted the City of London, possession of the land and eviction forthwith.

The decision to evict was based on the misinformation of one witness who stated that walkways were blocked and the public's access was denied, there were also concerns re sanitation but this was an issue that those living at St Paul's were well aware of and had been slowly working out ways to resolve the difficulties that arise when over 200 people end up camping in the middle of a busy tourist attraction in the heart of the city. Article 9 of the Human Rights Act was also evoked to protect the rights of worshippers who were apparently being obstructed from attending services in the cathedral.

The Occupy team had a number of defences, one of which was self-litigated, unfortunately though the justice system showed them so little respect that they failed to provide them with a copy of the judges decision until the morning of the trial, this

failure to uphold proper procedure means that they have seven days to appeal against the judges decision. SchNEWS wishes them luck (but doesn't hold its breath) as they continue their battle further with the corrupt courts of injustice.

After the hearing Occupy and their supporters marched noisily down the strand for the short walk home, where they were able to digest and share the news with the rest of the camp and consider their options. Whatever the final outcome, Occupy LSX has surprised many with its impact thus far and it will no doubt continue to effect things in the future.

Paternoster Square the home of the Stock Exchange and the original target has been shut off to the public for the duration of the occupation thanks to a decision by the Corporation of London. Unfortunately though this has meant that one independent business is now in serious trouble, even though many other local businesses have flourished with the influx of visitors to the area.

And spare a thought for one very committed Occupant who has recently been evicted from her own council home as a direct result of her involvement with this movement. Punished for her beliefs – how many dirty tricks do the authorities use in their attempts to quash resistance, demoralising us in an attempt to weaken our resolve to change the system?

After that not particularly inspiring effort a few leaguers decided to up the ante. Around twenty of them got off the tube at Bethnal Green and pub-crawled their way up to the East London mosque. Attentive SchNEWS readers will know that this was the target of the EDL Tower Hamlets demo back in September.

According to our anti-fascist witness "They were there briefly, shouting 'Allah is a paedo', then almost straight away one of them got knocked out. Within ten minutes there were three or four hundred locals there ready to confront them. There were also TSG [riot police] all over the shop. The EDL were then all arrested for their own safety" Nice one guys!

BULGARIANS SHUT THE FRACK UP

Bulgaria have banned hydraulic fracturing after nationwide mass protests across twelve cities in Bulgaria last Saturday (12th) saw thousands of people take to the streets, along with solidarity demos organised by Bulgarian expatriates and other anti-fracking campaigners in several other European cities including Paris, Copenhagen and London.

Hundreds of protestors marched on government buildings in Sofia carrying banners saying "No to shale gas, Yes to nature", and "Chevron go home" to protest the US energy giant's plans to extract shale gas in the European Union's poorest member.

The Bulgarian government revoked the shale gas permit granted to Chevron, who had been given a permit last June to explore for shale gas in Dobrudzha region in northeastern Bulgaria, one of the country's main agricultural regions. In a sudden turn around now Bulgarian drilling ban stipulates a fine of 100m leva (£43m; \$66m) for any infringements.

Fracking had barely got a foothold in Bulgaria but in a refreshing spout of sudden mass mobilizations against the industry grass-roots protests across the country seems to have been effective at kicking them out! Sorted!

...and finally...

Tory Mp Lets The Khat Out...

According to Tory MP Mark Lancaster, some 10 million tons of the drug khat are imported into the UK every single week. For those not down with the youth or up with their obscure drug lore, khat is a mildly stimulating, fairly pointless bitter narcotic grass, used by many East African men.

The Right Honourable Halfwit for Milton Keynes was just doing what comes natural to a Tory backbencher- trying to whip up some anti-drug, anti-immigrant hysteria during a House of Commons Early Day Motion- when he casually dropped the 10m figure. Ten million tons of khat means 200kg of the the stuff for every man woman and child in the UK, every single week. That's a lot of chewing to get through.

According to (way off the) Mark Lancaster, the UK consumes about ten times the amount of khat that it burns in coal (about 1m tonnes per week). Either some people are seriously trying to get a high off the stuff (although according to our team of dedicated pharmacological investigators, even 200kg might not give you as much of a hit as a Poundland energy drink) or a Tory MP is talking out of his arse. No prizes for guessing which.

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