

OUT OF THEIR LEAGUE!

So brave Sir Tommy, and his looming sidekick loyal Squire Kev Carroll gallivant off to the greener pastures of state-funded 'anti-extremism', courtesy of the Quilliam foundation, leaving his dogged foot-follower in state of hilariously bewildered confusion – but what does it all mean?

Firstly and most importantly, absolutely nothing that comes out of Tommy Robinson's mouth is to be trusted. One minute he's proud of everything the EDLs ever done – the next denouncing them as riddled with racists. He's always struck SchNEWS as a chancer, along for the ride and in love with the limelight, rather than a serious political contender.

On the other hand there seems to have been suspiciously seamless transition of leadership with the website Facebook and Twitter still firmly in the hands of those who term themselves regional organisers. For a man who claims to have been beating the bounds of his movement to keep out neo-nazis Tommy seems to have done little to burn any bridges.

Over the last four years he's successfully spun a confection of tabloid bugbears into a street movement. Not even that big a street movement to be honest. At it's very height the EDL could pull 3,000 onto the streets – a turn-out that for a national demo on the left in London would be regarded as an ignominious failure. Quite how Tommy ended up being the leader in the first place is shrouded in mystery and prior to the brief post-Lee Rigby surge in support, he was losing ground to various splinter organisations.

Nonetheless he has continually been treated by the UK media as a figure of national significance, repeatedly appearing on Newnight, channel 4 news and other less serious outfits too numerous to mention. His resignation was treated like that of controversial cabinet minister – even making onto Radio 6 News!

One of the more bizarre revelations to come out of this Damascene conversion has been that the BBC has been making a fly on the wall documentary of Tommy's life. Could it simply be that, tiring of the company of drunken racists, Tommy aspires to the life of D-List celebrity and talking head. How long before we see the "former leader

of the EDL" on Question Time, TalkSport or even Celebrity Big Brother?

There is obviously a big question mark hanging over the continued existence of the league. EDL tears on Monday were of course a joy to behold as the rank and file at first refused to believe such an obvious spoof, before crying or denouncing him as a traitor. At the time of going to the main Facebook is still insisting they're heading for Bradford this Saturday (October 12th).

CHARGE OF THE WHITE BRIGADE?

Bradford was announced as the next national demo after the EDL flop in Tower Hamlets on September 7th. It has all been organised at very short notice (Tower Hamlets by contrast had a several month lead up). The last time the EDL went to Bradford, they did so at the height of their powers and they quite frankly got slapped. So when the time comes for the rank and file to reason why, fingers might best be pointed at the two gents currently slipping out the back door.

It's what happens after Bradford that's crucial - a shit day here and the league could well fragment into tiny squabbling factions as yer Infidels, Aryan Strike Forces and Casuals all head their separate ways. Already at least one new leader of the EDL, a sieg-heiling Alex Wood has announced himself. Others will surely follow.

Anti Fascists are of course organising to counter the Bradford demo – to find out more visit the redoubtable Anti Fascist Network

To find out what's happening on the day <https://www.facebook.com/Yorkshire-AntiFascists>



BACK IN BLACK?

Front line report from successful badger cull saboteurs, as the killing lurches towards a confused end.

The badger cull is nearing the end for this year, with the Somerset licence ending on Sunday and the Gloucestershire one a week later. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have been pretty secretive and sometimes blatantly lying about how this 'pilot' is going but evidence on the ground suggests it has been a dismal failure.

When anti-cull activists found a dead badger that had been shot, Defra denied it was anything to do with them. The badger was found some distance from the shooting site, having lived for several minutes, with her guts hanging out, after being shot. Defra initially said it wasn't part of the cull because all the badgers in the cull were killed instantly (perfect logic, eh?). The marksman involved ruined all that by talking about how he had been about to pick up that badger until he had to run away from some protesters. The police said it was shot in the cull and now Defra admit it too.

Meanwhile, farmers and the NFU have been falling out over the failings of it all, and some protesters who were arrested and raided for 'conspiracy to commit aggravated trespass' have had their charges dropped. Police have been filmed several times making stumbling, incompetent statements suggesting they are there to assist the NFU, attracting some serious questions about their impartiality. If that's not enough, the master of the Ledbury hunt was arrested for attacking badger patrollers, farmers report the shooters 'can't see the point' in turning up any more and Gloucester may have abandoned the free shooting method in favour of cage traps.

No figures are being released officially about the number killed or the state of the badger's bodies which have undergone an autopsy. The decision on whether to continue with the cull is going to be down to a committee of politicians already determined to keep killing badgers, using secret data.

Schnews has been talking to a nocturnal hunt saboteur in Somerset:

'We've got some new night vision devices which are magic* for finding shooters in the fields. You can see a long way, more

TRAVELLERS VICTIMISED

Pro-traveller campaigners have complained that a recent large scale police operation has been conducted by racial profiling.

Operation Elven is ostensibly dealing with the theft of ancient Chinese artifacts and rhinoceros horn from museums across England and Ireland dating from last year. Raids have taken place in London, Sussex, Cambridgeshire, the West Midlands, Essex and Northern Ireland. Police officers from twenty six forces and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) are involved in operation Elven.

On Wednesday (2nd October) there were two raids on the Cranleigh site in Surrey and Five Oaks site in Sussex.

One of the sites raided was Smithy Fen in Cambridge. Cambridge Unite Against Fascism mobilised to observe the 50 strong police operation. Despite police heavy handedness it seems the searches were conducted almost at random. In many instances the properties searched have had no links to the individuals on the warrants. Police have been raiding people on the pre-text that they are "associates" of suspects which in the closed world of travellers covers a lot of people.

Disabled and elderly people have been forced out of their homes. One Smithy Fen resident had the power to their medical equipment cut off with no warning. A retired couple in their seventies were held during an eight hour raid by taser equipped police.

Phien O'Phien, a traveller rights campaigner, made the following statement: "Police have been raiding premises of Travellers all across the country and in some places in Ireland. They are allegedly only looking for a few men and their ill-gotten gains but are scouring the whole Traveller

community as an excuse."

The Travellers solidarity network (TSN) has issued a statement which emphasizes the fact those targeted by the police under operation Elven were connected with the organised resistance against the Dale Farm Eviction. They have issued a first-hand account of the police raid on Smithy Fen. It appears the police are using robberies as a disguise to intimidate and oppress the Traveller community and any of those that stand by it.

The cops of course maintain that "Operation Elven" is underway with the sole purpose of breaking up the conspiracy responsible for last year's high-profile thefts. Yet the accounts of the harsh and humiliating treatment police are subjecting travellers to speak otherwise. Eight men, mainly of Irish Traveller ethnicity, have already been convicted and jailed for their involvement in the thefts.

A spokesperson for the TSN said "It's an opportunity to fish for information amongst all local Travellers, it happens all the time. They (the police) turn up at your doorstep and show you photographs of suspects and say that you must know them because you are a Traveller. They say that they are searching for one thing but have a good look around for anything else they can find. They automatically think you are a criminal and that you must be hiding something. The police would not treat any other minority like this."

If anything similar is happening in your area get in touch with travellersolidarity@riseup.net

For more updates follow the blog www.travellersolidarity.org.

There is more information available on netpol.

STILL FIGHTING OSBORNE'S ROAD TO NOWHERE

Update from the Combe Haven road protesters trial

"The more video footage I see of the beauty of the landscape in Combe Haven and the principled stand taken by the protesters in freezing conditions, to protest against a destructive, unnecessary and costly scheme, the more I think they've got the wrong people in court" – defendant Tom Druitt.

The third week of Combe Haven 19 trials began on Monday 23 September (after a week-long hiatus). This was Trial #4, involving six defendants, all of whom were arrested for allegedly occupying trees during the eviction of Base Camp in January 2013.

By many accounts this was a dull week (one observer in the public gallery claimed that "Surely it is punishment enough to have to sit through that for more than 2 hours!"), with reams of video evidence and some lengthy legal arguments. Nonetheless, the trial was well attended by supporters – both locals and friends from London and Brighton. One of the defendants told us that she had been "touched by the warmth of the support from local people involved in the campaign" and that "their kindness and generosity has made this whole experience more bearable".

Trial #4 was interrupted on Tuesday (24 September) afternoon for the belated verdict of Trial #1. Though the judge found the defendant guilty on both charges ('Aggravated Trespass' and 'Resisting a Police Officer'), rejecting his lawyer's 'ingenious' legal arguments, the sentence was again very light: a two-year conditional discharge. As with Rosamond's case, the judge awarded no costs against the defendant, making this pyrrhic victory #2 for the prosecution, who appear to have spent a small fortune on these prosecutions.

In his judgement the judge described the defendant in Trial #1 as "a very committed environmentalist" who had been "there to protest the environmental consequences of the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road". He also explained that running away is not by itself sufficient grounds to prove resisting arrest (which is well worth knowing). By Friday (27 September) the prosecution had still not finished presenting its evidence, so the case – which was originally scheduled to finish no later than the Friday – will continue next week, bumping Trial #5

Trial #4 will now begin again at 10am on Wednesday 2 October – and is likely to continue until (at least) Friday. Please come along and support! New dates for Trial #5 will be announced at 1.45am on Tuesday 1 October. Wood you believe it

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, not not all leaders are good managers

BACK IN BLACK? ...CONTINUED

than with the really bright torches. Often we find that the shooters leave as soon as we arrive, also they don't even stop their vehicles if we're behind them on the road. The company has been using a minibus to transport shooters around so if we find that, it delays their work for quite a while. In some parts of the zone, they can't possibly have shot many badgers as we're always disrupting them.

If shots are heard people disrupt it either by walking into the area or making enough noise to scare the badgers off. Sometimes there's a lot of hanging around gazing across empty fields but you have to do that to find where something is happening.

Someone setting cage traps for the badgers has told us he's given up putting them anywhere except right next to the farm because they all get destroyed. There's a lot of people out there against the cull and taking direct action to stop it. Of course we

need as many people as possible out looking because that's the only way to find where they're shooting and trapping.

It's nice that with so many animal lovers exploring the area, all sorts of other animal abuse and wildlife crime have been uncovered. Equipment for the pheasant shooting industry has been trashed, neglected farm animals have been reported, investigations into illegal poisonings are in progress.

Once the shooting has finished, the next battle is with the politicians, to stop the cull policy being continued and expanded across the country. The scientific evidence against culling is overwhelming and opposition is pretty huge, including plenty of farmers. Maybe this will be another U-turn for the Tories? (Although U-turns can be a bit tricky in those narrow country lanes!)

*SchNOTE – they are not magic of course, just sufficiently advanced technology.

Subscribe!

Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG - (01273) 685913 - mail@schnews.org.uk - www.schnews.org.uk - find us on Facebook & Twitter (whatever they are)