



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER FOOTBALL CRAZY...

SchNEWS

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FANS UNITED!

"This is not about supporting Brighton & Hove Albion for the day. It's about supporting fellow football fans in their hour of need. It's about sending a message to the world that football belongs to the FANS."

Internet Seagulls

There is going to be a unique day in British football in Brighton this Saturday. As a protest against the way Brighton and Hove Albion F.C. are being run into the ground, footie fans from around the country - and the world! - will be converging on the Goldstone to show their support. Imagine a football match where the terraces are full of people in different shirts, having a laugh and protesting against the Brighton board.

This will be followed up by a demo outside the headquarters of the F.A. on Wednesday to pressure them to do something about the situation.

THE ARCHER: a tale of money, greed, & balance-sheet football.

"Football clubs are not toys for rich businessmen."

Internet Seagulls

So what's been going on at the Albion? In a nutshell, Bill Archer, director of Focus DIY and Pet World who lives in nearby Blackburn (just 250 miles away) having conned his way onto the board for just £56.25, then sold the Goldstone Ground to property developers on the quiet. He had hoped that planning permission would be granted for a new stadium in Toads Hole Valley, where he would build his retail empire around the ground and make a packet. But Toads Hole is in a conservation area and the local council didn't give planning permission, leaving Brighton facing the prospect of being homeless (and out of the football league if they are relegated) come May.

Archer won't quit - his ego won't admit failure. Even after all the direct action the fans have taken he is still there. A new consortium is waiting in the wings to take over, and mediators have been brought in to supervise the talks. But who are these mediators? Members of the CBI! What have they got to do with football? They're part of the whole process of business interests dominating football more and more. Money before clubs and fans.

"Profiteers out of football. It's our game not theirs."

Brighton Independent Supporters Club banner

What's been happening at Brighton however is just the thin end of the wedge. Just in the past few weeks, Bournemouth have announced their on the verge of extinction; Millwall's shares have been suspended (they've been selling players recently to pay off debts made by bad property investments); and financial consultants have started appearing on TV talking about football. In fact, its widely rumoured that Newcastle's decision to go on the stock market helped push manager Kevin Keegan over the edge, leading to his "shock" decision to resign. Out of 92 clubs its estimated that at least six are on the verge of extinction.

Despite the media hype that things are rosy for our national game, it's only a minority of clubs who are "alright jack". The rest are forced to beg, steal and borrow premiership league crumbs just to stay alive.

The nightmare scenario

Imagine this. You stand up to cheer a goal, and your thrown out of the ground. Your join in with a chorus of 'We hate Leeds' and your asked to leave. Brave New World? Well, no its Brave new Old Trafford, where Manchester United now make more money from their souvenir shops than gate receipts. (What's next? Cantona blow-up dolls!)

Silly old us, we thought that the idea of football was to forget about work and shopping for a few hours, meet your mates, let off a bit of steam, have a laugh...now however, it seems since the money vultures have moved in its goodbye to passion and hello to the passive spectators.

But that's not all. Thanks to the Criminal Justice Act footie fans are once again feeling the long arm of the law. The Act introduced the incredibly vague "intentional harassment", which means you could face up to 6 months inside if you do something that is "likely to cause alarm or distress"! What? Like wind-up opposition supporters? Surely part of the pleasure of footie is being able to shout, taunt and let off steam harmlessly at opposing fans? If you've got a spare ticket and want to sell it - even at face value - watch out. You could be nicked

for 'ticket touting'. Then there's stop and search - last season just 30 people out of an attendance of 22 million got caught with offensive weapons, so this law seems a tad excessive. Still, I suppose its what you define as 'offensive'. Footie fans have had asthma inhalers, mobile phones, celery, even the souvenir issue of the South Wales Echo confiscated by cops!

And its set to get worse - the F.A. might have announced their 10 year plan to support footie from the grass-roots but it doesn't say much when they wash their hands of the plight of Brighton. Their interests seem only in the premiership and the bid for 2006 World Cup. Meanwhile European Super Leagues, pay-to-view, and more Bond Schemes here we come.

But it doesn't have to be this way... What's happening in football mirrors society at large, the rich are getting richer and the poor, well we are sure you know the chant. If it doesn't make a profit then wave goodbye. But does everything have to be measured by money? Football clubs - like hospitals, schools, art centres, parks etc. are community assets not business, that play an important role in many peoples lives.

So what's the answer? Independent Supporters Association and fanzines have given fans a voice and helped slow the rot. Brighton supporters have shown the way with imaginative and effective direct action (would they have gained so much publicity if they'd just written to a few MP's?) Football doesn't need more millionaires with egos coming to save clubs from extinction, it doesn't need more bond schemes and increased ticket prices, it needs real fans being listened to seeing its they who pay the wages, and being democratically elected onto the boardrooms with an input in day to day decisions.

And when we've got democratically run football clubs then we can get on with the job of *overthrowing capitalism* and building a world based on the needs of people rather than profit...!

Let the FA know your fed up with them doing sweet FA

Phone & Fax blockade:
Mon 10th till Wed 12th Feb, on:
phone: 0171 262 4542 / 0171 402 7151
fax: 0171 402 0486

DEMONSTRATE! Wed 12th Feb, outside Lancaster Gate, London, 11a.m.

Bye-bye, right to protest!

At Newbury, the first person has been sent to jail for breaking a High Court injunction that bans him from "interfering" in the Bypass in any way. Martin Edwards, known as "Nissan" got the automatic 3 months and will be living at HMP Reading, Forbury Rd, Reading, RG1 3HY, so send your letters of support.

So far 30 people who are deemed to be "persistent protesters" have had their right to protest removed thanks to evidence gathered by private detective firm Brays Security. In a reply to Labour MP Brain Donohoe, the Dept of Transport admitted spending £477,000 on private investigators in 1995, so god knows what the figure was last year.

CJA Victory

Thirty nine people nicked at the blockade of the Farnborough air show in September had their cases thrown out of court this week. The police managed to get their map reading knickers in a twist and charged people with 'aggravated trespass'. However, this means you have to be on private land disrupting a 'lawful activity' (i.e. selling weapons to anyone that will buy them) - when in fact the sit-down in the road had taken place on public land. The Air Show is one of the most important dates the calendar for arms dealers, and protest organisers Campaign Against The Arms Trade aim to be back next year. CAAT: 0171 281 0297.

Military Sponsorship

Whilst student grants are disappearing and tuition fees threatened, and the Blairite leadership of the National Union of Students insists that free education is not realistically achievable (a policy designed to give an incoming Labour government an easy time), the military are offering sponsorship to get you through university - and under their control. The Navy are holding a recruitment day at Sussex University this Tuesday. In response students are taking action, angry that the only way some of them will be able to pay their way through Higher Education, avoiding massive debts, is to accept military sponsorship, and eventually employment. Meet outside Falmer House at Sussex Uni, 11:00 a.m., Tuesday; and tell the N.U.S. what sell-outs they are: calling 0181 345 6789, and asking for pager "NUS 20" will send your message to *all* their pagers...

Mass Suicide called off

Six thousand U'wa Indians in Colombia who had threatened to commit mass suicide in protest at plans to explore their ancestral lands for oil, have won a court case against the US oil giant Occidental.

Colombia's highest judicial authority, the constitutional court, upheld the U'wa's claim that their cultural integrity was at stake, and ruled that Occidental should shelve plans to survey what one company spokesman called "potentially some of the largest reserves in Colombia."

Itchin' for a kitchen?

Don't stick with Magnet!

Five months ago 300 skilled workers were sacked for taking legitimate strike action against Magnet Kitchen Limited, Darlington. A 3% pay rise had been offered to only 60% of the workforce while the other 40% were offered a

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This week's SchNEWS brought to you by FOUR FULLY FUNCTIONAL COMPUTERS! Huzzah!

nil basic rate rise for the fourth consecutive year. This offer was so unfair the majority voted to reject the offer unless everyone was treated equally. Since then the company have refused to negotiate already spending 10 times as much cash on increased security than it would if it had given everyone an equal pay rise! There is a mass picket on Valentine's Day at 6:00 am, meet at the main gates of the Magnet factory, Allington Way, Yarm Industrial Estate, Darlington. Call them on: 01325 282389.

It's not just the footie fans being shafted...

Seventy textile workers have been occupying their factory in Tottenham, North London since 24th January - a little annoyed that they haven't received any wages for nearly a month. The workers produce 400-600 jackets per day, earning between £120-£200 per week. They're expected to work up 80 hours per week, over all seven days. When they began the action, wages were paid in dribs and drabs until it was announced one of the directors had disappeared with all the company's cash and they were now bankrupt.

However, as if by magic another company selling very similar products has been set up with the same directors - a clever way of legally avoiding paying the company's debts, including the £40,000 in unpaid wages. So, the workers are staying put until they get the cash... if you can help or would like further info, call 0181 806 6636.

Newcastle rampages for Newbury

In Newcastle Newbury solidarity actions took place over the weekend of the Reunion Rally. Mott Macdonald offices (how are they involved in Newbury) were occupied, information uncovered and old Christmas trees were planted in filling cabinets. The dodgy construction company's links with Nissan, local roads, oil refineries, and nuclear bunkers were discovered, all activists rummaged around the offices. The action coincides with pledges to resist the construction of Newcastle United's new stadium on moor and parkland. Campaigners however fear the could well get a "bloody good beating" from United footie fans not prepared to let anyone get in the way of their football! To get involved in the campaign contact Newcastle Earth First! 0191 273 4997.

Fore!

Last Friday saw an assortment of activities going on in and around the giant golf balls on Menwith Hill in Yorkshire. Menwith Hill, where the American military gather economic, military and diplomatic info by listening to C.B.s, radios, land & mobile telephones anywhere in the northern hemisphere, is the biggest spy base in the UK. Activists broke into one of the domes and damaged equipment. The "Pusher system", which allows the US to listen to pirate radios, private conversations and even embassies, was switched off. Menwith Hill Peace Camp, however, is now facing eviction. Info: Tracey 0113 2629365.

Meanwhile, Lindis Percy, Bradford midwife and long time peace campaigner, has been sentenced to 9 months in prison for breaking her injunction restricting her from entering Lakenheath RAF base. Please send her letters of support to: D1 Medical Wing, HMP Holloway, Parkhurst Rd, London.

The + files (It aint all doom & gloom!)

+ Hamburg's second team, F.C. St. Pauli, who play in the Bundesliga, has been a symbol of anarcho-punk soccer ever since the sixties when their keeper was an anarchist squatter. The club organises anti-fascist activity and is a favourite of free-thinking fans everywhere. For more details call Sven in the club shop on (0049) 40 439 6961.

+ 17 Workers for White Arrow Express parcel delivery service were facing victimisation at their workplace for refusing to enter a dangerous warehouse. A 2 day strike, coupled with Wigan articulated lorry drivers threat to spread the action led to the workforce being victorious.

Prions

Here is a little known fact about BSE... currently infected carcasses are being burned in pet crematoria. Prions (proteins), a probable carrier of BSE, cannot be completely destroyed by incineration at these temperatures, and emissions tests have found them in flue gases. This means that these microscopic killers fly around in the air and enter soil and food chain. For more information, see article in Professional Engineering Magazine, Nov 96. Info: 01792 851599 or alanwatson@gn.apc.org

...and finally...

"We need to fight a war. But we aren't spending enough on the weapons. Our weapons should be food, homes, and schools. The enemies are poverty and injustice."

If a politician knocks on your door in the run-up to the election, and tells you there isn't enough cash to sort out the social problems in this country, ask them this: with an underfunded NHS, cuts in education, the privatisation of almost everything useful the government used to run, and a generally shitty standard of living outlook, why do 10% of all our taxes - including VAT - go to the military?

On top of this, 50% of all government "research and development" funding is tied to military projects. If we can't afford weapons in the war against widespread poverty, or to provide free healthcare or education then why are we spending £33 billion on Trident, our nuclear genocide system?

Roger Franklin, 55, decided he'd had enough of this situation and has been withholding 10% of his taxes for the last 15 years. He now owes the Inland Revenue £7000. He was found guilty of contempt of court last week for ignoring a summons to pay his debts, and is spending a second term in prison, despite clearly explaining he will "pay all the taxes now owing if [he is] assured that they will be used for peaceful purposes only." He's campaigning for individuals to have the right to divert taxes to non-military projects. More info: *Conscience* 0171 561 1061.

disclaimer

The SchNEWS warns all readers not to attend any illegal matches or take part in any criminally bad play. Always stay within the law. In fact, please just sit at home, watch the match on Sky, and buy endless consumer crap from the Quality Home Shopping channel. Then you will have scored. Honest.