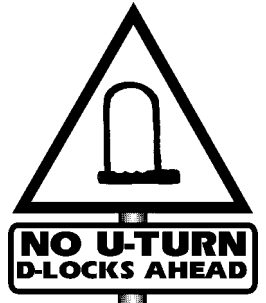




WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER WELL MOTORVATED...

# SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Winter Solstice 2000

www.schnews.org.uk

Issue 288

## Wheels of Fortune

**“Politicians are in danger of forgetting the lesson of the 90s, when large scale road development played very badly with ordinary people. Communities and environmental groups will now take on the Government over every inch of tarmac.”**

- Lynn Sloman, *Transport 2000*.

So you thought the Battle of Newbury, Twyford Down and Fairmile had forced the government to halt its construction programme for new roads? Well now roadbuilding is back again to haunt us. Last week John ‘Two Jags’ Prescott announced the transport budget for local authorities for the next five years. Four billion pounds – nearly half the total – is to be spent on roads. That’s enough to build forty more Newbury bypasses. It looks like it’s time to dust down yer D-locks and take out yer tunnelling tools again.

The protests against the new programme have already started. In a pre-emptive strike, besuited protesters stormed the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in London, and locked themselves in the offices of ministers Michael Meacher and Lord McDonald. The car park was blocked by a group linked with arm tubes and security doors were locked shut, preventing Prescott from parking either of his two Jags.

It’s not all bad news. £4.4 billion is to be spent on improvements to public transport and providing more support for pedestrians and cyclists. But hidden in the small print of the Fat Controller’s timetable are plans to build a new Worcestershire Wyre Piddle Bypass, a new stage of the Leeds Inner Ring Road, and the East Leeds Link Road. Seventy seven more schemes are in the pipeline for funding in the next five years.

Bob the Builder’s corporate chums will be jumping for joy at the news, but it certainly won’t be a Christmas number one for residents in Salisbury, where plans for the bypass which Labour scrapped when they came into office have now been dug up and repackaged. Or in Lancaster, where the Lancaster Western bypass would trash the Lune Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or Carlisle, where the privately-financed Northern Development Route will destroy a section of Hadrian’s Wall – a World Heritage Site.

### A New Battle of Hastings

One of the prime candidates for future funding is the planned Hastings Bypass in Sussex. Despite a load of greenwash about tough measures to reduce environmental impact, the bypass would destroy two SSSI’s and pass through an area of outstanding national beauty and the environmentally important floodplains of the Rother and Brede Rivers. And consultants evaluating the project warn that it may actually increase unemployment in Hastings which is not one of southern England’s most prosperous areas.

That’s not to say there might not be economic benefits. It’s just that it’s large corporations which stand to gain, with precious little expected to ‘trickle down’ to the resident Hastings’ community. As at Newbury, construction of the Hastings bypass will open up the way for in-fill development, with business parks and housing estates already planned for neighbouring greenfield site areas. As at Newbury, the bypass would become one part of a larger national road scheme - a long-distance south coast link-road leading to Folkestone and Ashford. And as at Newbury, public debate about the Hastings bypass is being heavily manipulated by business, the local media, and the three main political parties, all of whom strongly support the road. All this despite surveys which show most local people would prefer better public transport rather than new roads.

### Bypassing Logic

Meanwhile, plans for a big-budget Hollywood film drama, starring Sigorney Weaver, of the UK anti-roads movement have been put on hold. If you’ve been lamenting the lack of excitement in your life since events at Newbury, or if you weren’t there at all, it looks like we’ll all have a chance to bag a starring role as the real-life drama unfolds once again....

**Transport 2000** 12-18 Hoxton St, London, N1 6NG. 0207 613 0743.

**Road Raging** - essential direct action guide to stop road building. [www.eco-action.org/rr/index.html](http://www.eco-action.org/rr/index.html)

**Copse** - Kate Evan’s cartoon book of road protesting. Send SchNEWS a cheque for £12.

**South Coast Against Roadbuilding** [www.worthing.eco-action.org/scar](http://www.worthing.eco-action.org/scar)

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

The police were out in force last month at a car-park near Windsor and Eton Train Station after one of their number was called a moose. For some time this place has been used by young people to meet up and chill out, so bored cops looking for fun have recently also been turning up to harass them. When one woman, who had had enough of this, called a WPC a *moose* no less than eleven coppers stamped in to arrest her. After locking horns about it later at the station she was released without charge.

### Christmas Bonus

**More than two and a half years after Simon Jones was killed at work, the Director of Public Prosecutions has decided to charge Euromin, the company Simon was working for, and its general manager with manslaughter.** Simon was sent to work inside the hold of a ship with no training and was dead within two hours of starting work.

Since Simon’s death his friends and family have campaigned for the events surrounding his death to be the subject of court action. Their campaign has involved shutting down Euromin’s docks, occupying the employment agency that sent Simon to work for Euromin, occupying the Department of Trade and Industry on the day that Simon’s case was being debated in parliament, shutting down Southwark Bridge outside the Health and Safety Executive, winning a judicial review challenging the Crown Prosecution Service’s decision not to prosecute and, this September, picketing their headquarters in London demanding a prosecution. These actions, of course, had no influence on the decision to prosecute which, in the words of the Director of Public Prosecutions, was “reached without unnecessary delay”. This is only the sixth time that any company director has been taken to court for the charge of Manslaughter by Gross Negligence. So remember - direct action never works. Honest.

\* **The Construction Safety Campaign** are planning a day of action on 27<sup>th</sup> February to co-incide with a Health and Safety Crisis in Construction Conference which is to be held at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre. In the first six months of this year there have been twice as many construction workers killed than in the same period last year. London Hazards Centre 020-7794-5999 [construction.safetycampaign@talk21](mailto:construction.safetycampaign@talk21)

\* **Schwoops!** The web address to see ‘Fighting to Win’ about preventing deaths at work is [www.red-star-research.org.uk/fightframe.html](http://www.red-star-research.org.uk/fightframe.html)

## Wassa NATTA?

Anti-terrorism posters by the Met police are being subverted by campaigners from The Network Against The Terrorism Act (NATTA), drawing attention to the new laws which come into force on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The Act has such a wide definition that everyone from striking workers to anti-genetic campaigners could be tarred with the terrorism brush (SchNews 268). But it is the police powers to stop, search and harass that should get alarm bells ringing - especially if the old Prevention of Terrorism Act is anything to go by. Out of five thousand mainly Irish people stopped under the old PTA less than 7% were charged, even fewer convicted, with one former Home Secretary revealing "The object of the exercise is not just to secure convictions but to secure information."

NATTA 01273 298192 <http://go.to/ta2000>

## A Right Carry On

Britain's planning system faces chaos after a ruling in the High Court last week. Controversial planning decisions are often decided by the Environment Minister, however lawyers successfully argued that this is in breach of Article 6 of the Human Rights Act 'the right to a fair hearing.' The ruling is the first time an English court has used the Human Rights Act to declare existing laws incompatible with human rights. The Government are now appealing.

\* A decision last week by Hampshire County Council to grant permission for a waste incinerator at Marchwood, near Southampton is being challenged under the Human Rights Act on the grounds that it breaches the rights of nearby residents.

\* The police have started to threaten people who take their photos at demonstrations with the Human Rights Act. John Voos, a snapper with The Independent was taking pictures at animal rights demo when a copper told him "If you take my photograph and publish it, you will be infringing my human rights and I will take action on that basis." A bit rich when you can't go to any demo nowadays without the police sticking cameras in yer face. Voos has written to the Association of Chief Police Officers to find out their position asking "If the law does provide for this, how on earth do you cover demonstrations in the future?" [www.pressgazette.co.uk/](http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/)

\* Our old friends the Countryside Alliance look set to use the Human Rights Act to defend their 'sport' if MPs vote for an outright ban on hunting. Their lawyers will claim that a ban would be in breach of the rights to enjoyment of property and respect for private life!

## In House

A new report by the local government ombudsmen has shown a 73% rise in complaints about Housing Benefit over the past year. In London most of these complaints are directed against the performance of 4 London boroughs where Housing Benefit has been privatised: Southwark (CSL), Lambeth (Capita), Hackney (IT net) and Islington (IT net).

In Newham things quickly started to go wrong for CSL, owned by Deloitte Touche. Under new 'private sector management practices' claims lay unprocessed, staff are bullied and victimised and not surprisingly leave on a daily basis creating even more work for those left. Things finally came to a head when three workers, UNISON shop stewards, were disciplined simply for raising the issue. All three were suspended on a charge of 'causing grave embarrassment!' Show support by targeting CSL and Deloitte & Touche offices in your area!

Contact : CSL3 Support Group, c/o PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE; email: [housingbenefit@hotmail.com](mailto:housingbenefit@hotmail.com)

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## SchNEWS in brief

The Indian state of Uttar Pradesh has recently banned **beauty contests**, although the country is home to the current Miss World. The state's chief minister, Rajnath Singh argued that beauty was God-given and therefore could not be judged \*\*As the Queen and Prince Phillip arrived to open part of the International Centre in Newcastle (a giant genetics showcase), they were upstaged by protestors dressed as a two headed queen, and clones of the queen mum. Protestors carried placards with the slogans - 'stop interbreeding now' and '**clone the queen mum before it's too late!**' \*\* 600 **Dudley Hospital Workers** are once again on strike, this time for 3 weeks over the Christmas period. They're on strike to stop their jobs being transferred to a private company (SchNEWS 278). Summit Healthcare want to build a new 'superhospital' under the Private Finance Initiative - so super that out of four hospitals, 170 jobs will be shed, 70 beds lost, one hospital will be closed and two hospitals will lose inpatient services. 01384 244350 [www.labournet.net](http://www.labournet.net) \*\* **Polish Nurses** fed up with poor wages and corrupt politicians have been giving it some to get their point across. They have occupied the Ministry of Health hanging a banner reading "Restructure government and parliament: 100% downsizing."; also pelted police with eggs, and are threatening to blockade the border. [www.op.pl/hosting](http://www.op.pl/hosting) \*\* This week a gang of **anti-GM turkeys** invaded the Dartford distribution centre of supermarket giant ASDA, locking on to lorries and dropping banners to highlight the dangers of genetically modified animal feed in Britain. Around two thirds of all GM crops in the world are for animal feed and millions of tons are imported every year from the US. For more info on genetics actions contact Genetics Snowball 0161 8340295 [www.gn.apc.org/pmh/gp](http://www.gn.apc.org/pmh/gp) \*\* Newcastle-upon-Tyne council and **incinerator** company Combined Heat and Power are to be prosecuted by the Environment Agency due to the illegal dumping of 2,000 tonnes of toxic ash on allotments, parks and public bridleways. The council has currently banned children from playing in 27 allotments close to the incinerator, and the public have been warned not to eat eggs or poultry from the area. Communities Against Toxics, PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, [ralph@tcpublications.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:ralph@tcpublications.freereserve.co.uk) \*\* The newly established **Surrey Anti Hunt Campaign**, set up in response to the near-death of hunt saboteur Steve Christmas at the hands of Old Surrey and Burstow Hunt, has the ultimate aim of closing down this hunt permanently. Surrey Anti Hunt Campaign, BM Box 7099, London, WC1N 3XX, 0771 9031066 [www.sahc.org.uk](http://www.sahc.org.uk) \*\* **Mast Action UK**, is a new campaign bringing together 100 local groups lobbying for planning controls over mobile telephone masts because of fears over health effects. <http://freespace.virginet.co.uk/mast.action/> \*\* *Keep up to date with the SchNEWS Party and Protest pages on our website.*

## Positive SchNEWS

After crimbo as the interest starts to pile up on yer loans you might start considering changing your faith. Converting to Islam might be worth considering, not only will you not have to celebrate consumerism annually, it's also against Islamic law to charge interest. The highest court in Pakistan has recently ruled that the country should adopt an interest-free monetary system within twelve months. Malaysia, another Islamic country, stuck two fingers up to the World Bank this year when it refused to pay any more interest to them, or get involved in their structural adjustment programme.

## Hellafield

'Because of reprocessing at Sellafield, in the area around the plant there are 10 times more children with leukaemia than the British average. Because of 50 years of reprocessing, the Irish Sea is now the most radioactively contaminated sea in the world' - Kent Against a Radioactive Environment (K.A.R.E)

Last week the first shipment of plutonium nuclear waste left the defunct power plant at Dodewaard, Holland, for Sellafield. Despite the best efforts of protestors - two managed to infiltrate the police exclusion zone by dinghy, while Greenpeace boarded the ship carrying the waste, had a boat crushed and were hauled off to Court - the waste is on its way to Sellafield. There will be consignments of nuclear waste leaving for Sellafield from Dodewaard every month for the next year and a half. Protests are planned both in Holland and over here. The next shipment will be on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001. <http://kare.enviorweb.org/>

## Inside SchNEWS

20 people occupied the Crown Prosecution Services (CPS) offices in Sheffield this week to demand justice for Mark Barnsley. Unfortunately for them the police station was right next door, so it didn't take the bizzies very long to get on the case and nick 16 people for "burglary with intent". They have been bailed to appear at Hull Magistrates on 9th January. Mark Barnsley was sentenced to 12 years for defending himself against an attack by 12 students. (see SchNEWS 214). An excellent pamphlet about his case entitled "Beaten Up, Fitted Up, Locked Up" is available for from PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX for £2.00. [www.appleonline.net/markbarnsley/mark.html](http://www.appleonline.net/markbarnsley/mark.html)

\*The naked protestor Vincent Bethall is due to stand trial at Southwark Crown Court beginning on January 4<sup>th</sup> and a starkers protest has been arranged outside the court.

Letters of support to Vincent Bethall, DN9542, B-Segregation, H.M.P Brixton, SW2 5XF. [www.geocities.com/thehumanmind/](http://www.geocities.com/thehumanmind/)

\*Jonathan Elliot, who was sentenced to six months for affray at the N30 demonstration would really appreciate letters of support. Jonathan Elliot, FT10TT, H.M.P Petonville, Caledonian Road, London, N7 8TT

\*Support the two Trident Ploughshares activists who'll be spending Xmas in the nick after for entering Wittering RAF base in Cambridgeshire to hammer on the dashboard of a Trident warhead carrier. Martin Newell, EM6780, HMP Bedford, St Loyes Street, Bedford MK40 IHG and Susan Van Der Hijden, EN5880, HMP Brockhill, Redditch, Worcs, B97 6RD.

\* For more on prisoner support check out the Anarchist Black Cross pages on the SchNEWS web site.

## ...and finally...

Christmas, the season of goodwill, the season for buying presents for children and watching their little faces light up. Not according to Crucial Input Ltd, a debt collecting company based in Liverpool. They reckon this is the time for 'sending the boys round' to people who owe them money because, as their leaflet says, the debtor will be spending more on their families when they should be paying off their debts. Some people are all heart! SchNEWS advises all readers not to give these modern day scrooges a call on 0870 700 4004 or 0870 700 4005 and pretend to be the ghost of Christmas Past / Present/ Future or to send them a black fax on 0151 476 6661

## disclaimer

SchNews warns all readers who don't put the brakes on the profit driven road to ruin - get on yer bike! Honest.

**That's all folks ! Next SchNews 12<sup>th</sup> January**