

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER GREEN IN THE GILLS...



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THE HIPPY, HIPPY SHAKEDOWN

BREAKING NEWS... THE BIG GREEN GATHERING HAS BEEN SHUT DOWN BY POLICE!

The Big Green Gathering, a fixture in the alternative calendar, was due to return after two years this week. 15–20,000 people were expected to turn up on Wednesday (29th) to the site near Cheddar, Somerset, for Europe's largest green event - a five-day festival promoting sustainability and renewable energy, with everything from allotments to alternative media. Hundreds of staff and volunteers are already on site, and its cancellation comes just days before gates were due to open. Organisers, most of whom work for nothing, are gutted. One told SchNEWS "We are so disappointed not to be having this year's gathering - it means so much to so many people".

A last-minute injunction by Mendip District Council, supported by Avon and Somerset Police, put the ki-bosh on the entire event - citing the potential for 'crime and disorder' and safety concerns. This was despite the fact that the festival had actually been granted a licence on the 30th of June. According to Avon and Somerset police's website "[We] went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure this event took place." This is of course utter bollocks.

The injunction was due to be heard in the High Court in London on Monday (27th). However, before that could happen the BGG organisers surrendered the festival licence on Sunday morning. As soon as this was done a police commander at the meeting was overheard saying into his radio "Operation Fortress is go". Police have already set up roadblocks and promised to turn festival-goers back. Chief Inspector Paul Richards, festival liaison, later confirmed to one of the festival organisers that "This is political", adding that the decision had been made over his head at county level. One of SchNEWS' sources on site said that the police were frank about the fact that the closure had been planned for two weeks. "This was a blatant act of political sabotage - the Big Green Gathering is now completely bankrupt, they knew that we were going to be closed down and yet they carried on allowing us to spend money hand over fist on infrastructure".

The BGG collapsed financially in 2007 under the weight of increased security costs.

The new licensing act added an extra £120k to their costs, leaving them with a loss of £80k. Security accounted for a third of their overall overheads and the road marshalling bill rose from £5k to over £23k. In spite of these setbacks, they managed to scrape themselves back off the floor with shareholder cash and some potentially dubious corporate involvement. Every effort had been made by the gathering's organisers to accommodate the increasingly niggling demands of police and licensing authorities. The procedure lasted over six months - just check out www.mendip.gov.uk/CommitteeMeeting.asp?id= SX9452-A782D404 for the minutes of meetings held between organisers and the authorities. Demands included a steel fence, watchtowers and perimeter patrols, having the horsedrawn field inside a 'secure compound' and wristbands for twelve undercover police.

At a multi-agency meeting on Thursday, police took those wristbands in order to

maintain the pretence that the festival stood a chance of going ahead. A catalogue of other obstacles were also continually placed in the organiser's path.

All of the businesses associated with the BGG came under scrutiny, licensing authorities contacted South West ambulances, the Fire Brigade and the fencing contractors and asked them to get payment up front from the BGG. Needless to say this caused huge problems.

Under the terms of the Licensing Act 2005, police can insist on certain security firms being used by organisers. This of course leads to a totally unhealthy hand-in-glove relationship, open to abuse. Stuart Security were forced on the BGG by police, and on Wednesday last week, they suddenly announced that they wanted 60% of their fee up front. Even though the BGG scraped the cash together, the company still wanted out. So the BGG hired another firm - against police wishes. The fact that Stuart Security rely on police approval for lucrative contracts at Glastonbury Festival, the Royal Bath & West Show, WOMAD, Reading Festival, and Glade Festival has, of course, no bearing on the matter.

UNCERTAIN FETE

The last issue at stake was road closures. Mendip District Council had insisted on road closures as part of the licensing requirements. A festival organiser contacted the highways agency to process this fairly routine request. The decision was passed to junior management who reportedly came under intense pressure not to grant the closure. As the road closures were not secured, the council were able to claim that the BGG was in breach of licence. A nice little legal stitch-up that according to one QC meant the BGG stood fuck-all chance of fighting the injunction. Of course, now that "Operation Fortress" is in full swing, there are road-blocks throughout the area. The BGG is itself a limited company and could have fought the injunction - risking no more than bankruptcy - but in a nasty twist two individuals were also named, meaning that should proceedings have gone ahead against the festival then Mendip Council would have had a claim on their assets to settle court costs. Police also threatened to place the farmer on the injunction, risking his entire livelihood.

Anyone who has ever been to the Big Green will know that the atmosphere is more like a village fete than any of the mainstream events. There is virtually no aggro. It's more about chai and gong-massages than Stella and fisticuffs. All power is 12V solar and the amplification is correspondingly quiet. Music stops at midnight. Compare that to the 24 hr Technomuntfucks that go on with state blessing across the country. Of course it would be cynical to suggest that the BGG represents an alternative that the authorities fear. It's a gathering place for eco-activists, where the likes of Plane Stupid and No-Borders hang out and exchange ideas while trying to avoid being button-holed by 9-11 truthers. It's clear now that the state views events like the Big Green in the same light as Climate Camp and the anti-G20 protests. The BGG saga is showing that there may no longer be any 'safe' legal spaces for us to gather. The third way of quasi-legal free-ish festivals is looking like a dead-end.

Continued overleaf...

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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BIG GREEN GATHERING SHUT DOWN

THE HIPPY, HIPPY SHAKEDOWN *continued...*

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

It's clear that the Big Green has been singled out – and any gathering promoting those values or trying to organise in a grass-roots way will probably suffer the same fate once they get to a certain size. As corporate-branded Glasto has become a fixture on the mainstream calendar, like Ascot or Wimbledon, many have turned towards smaller more 'grass-roots' festivals. Niche festivals have bloomed across the British landscape. No matter what your bent, be it faerie wings or S&M, there's probably a muddy weekend in a field for you.

Of course this isn't the first time that Britain's had a thriving festival scene. See previous SchNEWS' for how the free festival scene came under ruthless attack from the forces of Babylon (or just skin up for an old hippy and listen to them bang on about the glories of the White Goddess Fayre or Torpedo Town).

Some have tried to go down the quasi-

legal route, such as Strawberry Fair and even Glastonbury, until the aptly named Mean Fiddler intervened in 2002. Unfortunately the corporate dollar is never far behind. Witness how Glastonbury went from a fence-jumping free-for-all where the festival organisers built the infrastructure, but the fly-pitchers, buskers and random naked lunatics made it a real festie rather than a fenced in, heavily policed corporate theme park.

The Big Green was an exceptional festival, which managed to leap through the legal process while being crew-heavy and retaining a lot of the free-festival atmosphere (Not all of course - we still had to put up with plod wandering around site). It was a unique gathering place for fringe movements, from eco-activists to crop-circle nutters.

We're not just banging on about festivals being free because we miss the good 'ol days – there's a huge difference between being a punter who has a whole experience laid on for them (e.g. Glasto's themed areas with helpful stewards pointing you in the direction of the

consumer delights), and being part of a festival/free party where everyone's responsible for the entertainment, and even infrastructure like welfare. A crowd that feels it owns an event behaves differently to one that feels it has paid to have an experience. The fact that undercover police now feel free to operate and arrest people, without any back-up, for cannabis use or nudity (See SchNEWS 684 and 603) at festivals has a lot to do with the sheep-like behaviour of punters - a mentality that our masters are keen to see enforced.

In the SchNEWS office we're hearing rumours that people aren't going to be put off – alternative sites are being looked at and people are heading to the West Country anyway. In the words of one participant "Things are just getting interesting". Time for the Big Black Barney?

* Festivals and free parties are going on all around the country. For festivals see www.festivaleye.com and www.efestivals.co.uk For free parties see www.partyvibe.com For both of these as well as protest camps and lots more see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

STILL CAMPING IT UP

It's summer (no, *really*) and time for a bit of in-tents action. With four **Camps For Climate Action** coming up, the UK Climate Camp scene is seeing the break up of the union with separate Scottish, Welsh, Irish and English events. The camps are the usual low impact living affairs with renewable energy, compost toilets and grey water systems. Meals are provided by camp kitchens and there are practical workshops, direct action and horizontal organisation.

Running alongside all four will be police camps with all mod cons, shiny uniforms and usual harassment.

First up is the **Scottish Climate Camp**, August 3rd-10th, in the Firth of Forth area which has lots of power stations, corporate HQs, gas and oil refineries, open cast coal mines, a nuclear power station and a cement factory. See www.climatecampscotland.org.uk

Wales' climate camp will be in Pembrokeshire, August 13-16. See www.climatecampcymru.org

The **Irish** camp will be in Co. Offaly, August 15th-23rd. See www.climatecamp.ie

And last is the **English** camp which will be near London, August 27th – September 2nd. See

www.climatecamp.org.uk

*And don't forget the other permanent camps in Scotland: **Mainshill camp** in South Lanarkshire was set up oppose Scottish Coal who've been given the go-ahead to mine 1.7 million tonnes despite 700 out of 1000 locals putting in objections to the scheme. The camp is building defences and always appreciates more people and tat. Info: www.coalactionedinburgh.noflag.org.uk/?page_id=415 or call 07806 926040

Long running anti-nuke weapons establishment **Faslane Peace Camp** is in need of people. The peace camp, running since 1982, is down to just one member. All the other regular residents are defending land elsewhere in the country. There is a real need for people to move there or visit as often as they can.

The camp is a base for direct action against nuclear weapons and related issues it would be a great shame if the camp closed. To help keep this 27-year-old protesting institution going get yourself up north sharpish! Contact: 01436820901, faslaniapeacecamp@yahoo.co.uk and www.myspace.com/faslanepeacecamp

STILL KEMPING IT UP

This week has seen the opening of the third corporate-run supermarket on St James' Street in Kemptown, Brighton. In response Campaign group Keep Brighton Unique organised a demonstration calling for a boycott of the new Tesco store last Wednesday (22nd).

Tesco recently cancelled plans to open a 100,000 sq ft store on London Road, Brighton, due to a locally organised action group's campaign of opposition during the consultation. The group, Another London Road, have been acting continuously to preserve Brighton from multinational development. Anti-corporate campaigners were hopeful when the St James' St Tesco was initially refused an alcohol licence on the grounds that it was in an booze control area within the city centre. However, magistrates bowed to the big business bullies on appeal and granted the licence.

Kemptown, renowned for its quirky, individual and unique atmosphere as well as its independent traders and privately run shops, now has the dubious honour of having a Morrison's, Co-op, Tesco and Starbucks all along one stretch of high street.

Despite a recent set back in their campaign against Starbucks, as

the council accepted the questionable evidence of 51% of products being sold for take-out and allowed Starbucks to continue trading on a retail licence (SchNEWS 679), Keep Brighton Unique will be continuing to hold monthly protests outside various Starbucks in the city. To date, this rowdy bunch have collected over 3,000 anti-Starbucks signatures and staged weekly protests for more than a year.

The next Keep Brighton Unique demo is midday 1st August outside the St James' Street Starbucks, then on the first Saturday of every month.

The protesters were joined last Wednesday by another group campaigning against a Tesco in Titnore Woods (near Worthing), where groundwork has started without full planning permission on an area with ancient woodland and that is at severe risk of flooding. Protesters have been camped in the nearby woods since May 2006 (See SchNEWS 648). Help is still needed with the camp.

* Info on the London Road campaign group: <http://another-londonroad.googlepages.com>

* For more about the Ttnore protest camp see www.protectourwoodland.co.uk

IF YOU'RE NOT PISSED OFF YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION

BREAKING WIND

AS WORKERS OCCUPY VESTAS WIND TURBINE FACTORY

After sticking their heads out of the Westminster windows for a quick climatic analysis, Britain's politicians have earmarked wind power as our best option in the race to prevent climate catastrophe. Yet, in April, when the world's largest manufacturer of wind turbines, Vestas, announced plans to close its sites in the Isle of Wight and Southampton, the government remained silent - about both the loss of Britain's most significant turbine manufacturing facilities and the loss of hundreds of jobs. Faced with a wall of silence, apathy and hypocrisy, the non-unionised Vestas workers on the Isle of Wight had little option but to take action and, last week, they occupied their factory in protest.

The occupation began on Monday night (20th) when 30 workers took over the management offices in the factory. The Vestas management immediately locked down the site and called in the police. Workers arriving for their last few days of work the next day were turned away from the gates, but when they realised why, many stayed on and established a picket outside the factory, which has since been manned by up to 150 people.

Vestas took a hard line in response to the protest. Riot police who turned up on the first day threatened those inside with arrest for aggravated trespass and huffed and puffed but failed to force their way into the offices. They also prevented people from joining the protest or providing food to the occupiers. Although the riot shields have since been put away, police have continued obstructing attempts to deliver food. On Tuesday two people were arrested for breach of the peace after protesters staged a mass walk-in, in an attempt to resupply the workers inside.

Hoping to starve the protesters out, Vestas imposed a food ban after the failure of their initial cunning plan of offering the workers food as long as they came out to get it. Following the success of the walk-in however, they changed their stance and are currently offering to provide the workers with food, as long as they accept no more from supporters.

The company has so far refused to negotiate - preferring threats instead. They've told the occupiers that they faced arrest and being fired without redundancy pay (a measly three weeks), if they didn't leave the premises immediately. Two workers have left the occupation but the others remain strong despite having been given four ultimatums.

The factory on the Isle of Wight had been making turbines for the US market, but production is moving to China and the US. Vestas, who recently saw a 70% rise in quarterly profits, have failed to adapt production for European wind farms, blaming a "lack of political initiatives" and chronic nimbyism, with a 'not in my backyard' attitude rife in Britain.



Energy and climate change secretary, Ed Miliband, recently promised the creation of 400,000 new 'green' jobs as part of his plans to meet his hot air target of "over 30%" of Britain's energy being produced by renewable sources, most notably wind power, by 2020. Passing wind on the Vestas situation, Miliband, without a trace of irony, blamed insufficient orders for the turbines and the difficulty in obtaining planning permission for wind farms.

A similar situation arose in Scotland earlier in the year when Vestas closed a plant in Machrihanish, Kintyre, for similar reasons. However, the Scottish government negotiated a takeover by another company, (the hilariously named) Skykon, who, with the help of government subsidies, are planning to adapt the plant to purpose before expanding production as part of a push to meet the Scottish government's renewable energy targets.

While the government has been happy to give the 'green' light to airport expansion plans and the construction of new nuclear and coal powered power stations on the premise that they will create desperately needed jobs, not to mention pouring rivers of cash into the failing banks and propping up the car industry, it seems that stepping in to save 525 jobs in a hard hit island economy is out of the question. Up to their necks in hypocrisy, Miliband's feeble protestations have shown once again that the government's action on climate change amounts to little more than pissing in the wind turbine.

* See www.savevestas.wordpress.com

* Send messages of support to: savevestas@googlemail.com

* The workers are calling for solidarity actions - specifically at Vestas UK head office in Warrington at 302 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, WA3 6XG

TESTING TIMES

An animal rights protest was held by Gateway to Hell campaigners and Stop Sequani Animal Testing group (See SchNEWS 646) in Ledbury, Herefordshire last week (Wednesday 15th).

The demo, named No Holiday For The Animals Inside Sequani, was held to stop the cruel practices of Sequani Labs in their treatment of animals used to test pharmaceutical drugs, chemical compounds and medical devices.

30 protesters in summer clothes with buckets and spades were joined by 22 police officers and 7 police vehicles, while passing motorists showed their support by sounding their horns. Some cops then took offence and started hitting these drive-by supporters... with £30 fines - much to the confusion of the people concerned and the other officers.

One arrest was made of a campaigner for withholding their name, details which were later leaked on a pro-vivisection website after the police used painful restraint methods to extract the information.

More action is planned see www.sequani.wordpress.com or www.gatewaytohell.net

CALAIS ABOUTS

The clampdown on the migrants in Calais by French Authorities (see SchNEWS 684, 682) is underway with migrants being stopped and detained on the streets with intensified police raids on migrant camps and squats - complete with tear gas, beatings and detentions. Although there is no sign yet of flights chartered for deportations, the situation remains tense.

Activists from France, the UK, the Netherlands and Belgium have been arriving all week to show solidarity with the migrants and act as legal observers.

Raids on the jungles and squats have intensified: on Wednesday (22nd July) a Sudanese squat was raided four times, with tear gas and two people taken. The Pashtun jungle was also raided in the early hours of the morning, and while nobody was taken the police photographed and counted all the migrants they found there - mostly minors as many of the adults who are more at risk of being deported have been hiding elsewhere. Similarly there have also been raids on Eritrean and Somali squats.

With police operations building, activists on the ground have put a call out for more people to get down there and show their support.

* See www.calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com



LA LUTTE CONTINUE

Groups of French workers who had been threatening to blow up their factories (see SchNEWS 684), have this week been offered increased redundancy packages to put down the gas canisters and end their factory occupations.

While workers at Nortel have accepted a €7,300 redundancy package, workers at car part manufacturer New Fabris are considering their options following negotiations with the French Industry Minister and Peugeot and Renault – who had been New Fabris' customers. After disarming their homemade bombs in order to enter into talks last Monday (20th), the workers – who had been holding out for a €30,000 payment – were offered an average statutory severance pay of €7,500 plus a “job-seeker aid” payment of €1,000. However, many of the factory-floor employees would receive considerably less, despite over 20 years service in some cases. Disappointed workers have yet to accept the offer and may yet return to their guns, having stated that “nothing is ruled out.”

Elsewhere in France, workers are continuing with their rather more up-fer-it version of the ‘Summer of Rage’. On Wednesday four managers at Michelin's plant in Montceau-les-Mines were held over night in another case of “boss-knapping”, while around 100 workers at Swedish-owned ball bearing plant SKF in Fontenay-le-Compte, blockaded the entrance to the site and burned machinery in response to redundancies.

This was followed on Friday (24th) by yet another “boss-knapping” when workers from British company Servisair prevented two managers from leaving the company's offices. The managers were released the next day following the intervention of bailiffs.

TWISTY TIERNEY

Peter Tierney, Liverpool businessman by day, so called BNP “super activist” by night, is set to stand trial for assault at Liverpool Magistrates Court on August 5th. After previously being nicked twice, once for the possession of 100 wild bird eggs, Tierney was collared in April after splitting open the head of an Anti-Fascist protester with a camera tripod.

The Anti-Fascists had been following Tierney and his fellow BNP Neanderthals around Liverpool city centre, foiling their attempts to set up a stall and leaflet passers-by. After twice having to pack up and leave, Tierney finally flipped out and started attacking protesters with the folded tripod. He was joined in his assault by Steven Greenhalgh, who used an upturned table as a riot shield.

The BNP are attempting to organise a demonstration outside the Court in support of Tierney. Liverpool Anti-Fascists are calling out for a counter-demonstration to show that Tierney and the BNP have no place in the community.

* See www.antifa.org.uk

REPUBLIC GONE BANANAS

Against the background of continuing nationwide direct action, the deposed president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, finally returned to Honduran soil on Friday (24th). Zelaya, however, only made it as far as a ‘Welcome to Honduras’ sign before turning tail and retreating to the safety of Nicaragua.

After the failure of US brokered talks between Zelaya and coup ‘president’ Roberto Micheletti, Zelaya had announced his plans for a triumphant return coinciding with the birthday of Latin American folk hero, ‘The Liberator’, Simon Bolívar. But, with thousands of Zelaya supporters dispersed in clashes with riot police several miles away from the crossing, and with the military and riot police waiting on the border with orders to arrest him, Zelaya's liberation march was considerably shorter than that of Bolívar. He instead opted to do a couple of quick interviews before returning to exile rather than risking arrest.

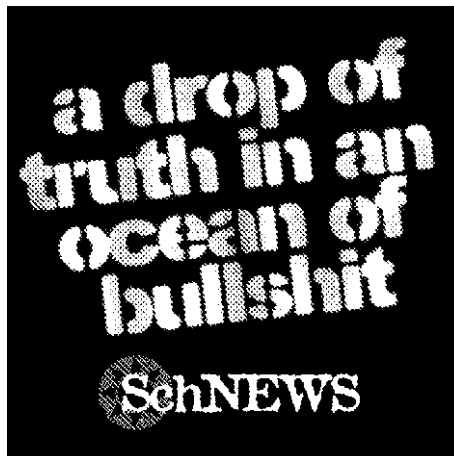
While Zelaya has continued his symbolic hopping back and forth over the border throughout the weekend, those that are now living under a military dictatorship, the Honduran people, continue to risk their liberty and safety by challenging the regime on the streets with daily mass demonstrations, strikes, school and workplace occupations and road blocks.

There are now also a number of international solidarity campaigns underway, including the International Transport Workers Federation which has called on its 4.5 million members worldwide to refuse to handle Honduran goods for as long as the coup regime remains in place.

Zelaya has proved once again that he is no real-deal revolutionary. The social movement that has arisen as a result of his removal however, continues to grow in strength and it looks like they won't back down quite so easily.

* For recent history from the original banana republic see SchNEWS 682,683,684.

* See www.upsidedownworld.org www.narconews.com



SAVING IT FOR AN IRAN-Y DAY

In the latest round of repression of protests against the rigged elections in June by the Iranian authorities, security forces beat and arrested dozens in Tehran on Tuesday.

This follows Friday's clashes when the police attacked protesters attending an anti-Ahmadinejad rally with tear gas last Friday. Until last Friday there had been few signs of mass dissent after the brutal crackdown following the election, during which at least thirty protesters were killed. The recent protests represent the first major challenge to the Ahmadinejad regime after it declared gatherings illegal.

Even the Saturday meetings of the ‘Mourning Mothers’, which began four weeks ago in public parks between 7 and 8pm – the day and time at which Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman, was shot dead on June 20th – have been targeted by security forces. The meetings have seen several arrests, including women's rights and student activist Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh, who is also a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, which is demanding an end to discrimination against women in law.

Thousands have been detained during round-ups by the authorities after the elections, including political activists, journalists, academics and lawyers, many of whom are still being held. Lawyer and human rights activist, Shadi Sadr, was violently arrested in Tehran last Friday on her way to prayers. Shadi was walking with a group of women's rights activists along a busy road when unidentified plain-clothed men beat her with batons before bundling her into a car.

There were international demonstrations last weekend (25th) in solidarity with the Iranian people, including events London, Brighton, Seattle, Toronto and others.

* See www.iransolidarity.org.uk

...and finally...

Pent up Pagan police are now campaigning for an officially recognised support group – a Pagan Police Association. Well it can't be easy concentrating on your mantras when the Chief Super is breathing down your neck...

Pentagram-carrying Pagan police are already allowed up to eight days annual leave which they can take off and join all the hippies at the solstice and equinox, but presumably not to skin up a big spliff.

Pagan cop Andy Parry, from Hertfordshire told Police Review: “Paganism is not the new age, tree-hugging fad that some people think it is” (Maybe you're more into pig worship). “It is not the clandestine, horrible, evil thing that people think it is.” (No Andy, that's MI5.)

SchNEWS wonders what is next... Satanist or Jedi Police Associations?

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SchNEWS warns all readers, you bend over backwards to do things legally and look what happens. Honest!

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