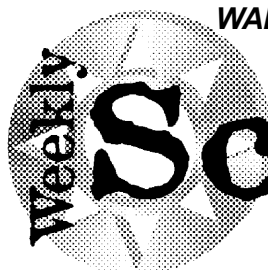


WAKE UP!! IT'S YER GET ALONG MOVE ALONG...



# SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 10th September 2010

Free/Donation

Issue 738

## CARAVANDALS

**AS GYPSY SITE IN ESSEX IS EVICTED, LEAVING TRAVELLERS NOWHERE TO LEGALLY PARK...**

*"The police have been merciless with us, with their use of Section 61 [power to move vehicles on] on families who have just lost their homes. We have a woman who is pregnant. A few of our small children were sitting on the pavement traumatised, and the police seemed to think it was funny."*

- Grattan Puxon, traveller spokesperson.

The Hovefields Gypsy/Traveller site in Essex with 50-60 inhabitants has been evicted this week. At the time of writing, a group of these families are still on the road without anywhere to stop, having been also evicted from two other sites they tried to move on to, all within 24 hours. In fact it is illegal for them to stop anywhere as a group, as they are more than six live-in vehicles.

Hovering ominously over this eviction is the extra concern is that this may be a 'warm-up' exercise for a much larger one at the nearby site of Dale Farm, which has 1000 people and is the biggest Gypsy site in the country (see SchNEWS 669, 694). The Hovefields clearance was an operation that Basildon Council seem to have carefully stage-managed – and that includes the PR, media and police, as well as the bailiffs.

After receiving a 28-day notice to quit in early August, Hovefields – a Gypsy site for twenty years – was threatened with eviction after August 31st (see SchNEWS 736). Then at 8am on Tuesday morning (7th), a team of over 50 bailiffs from Constant & Co (more about them later) – with tow trucks, cranes, diggers and trucks carrying portable fencing – descended on the site accompanied by numerous police vans. A portacabin was installed on one of the plots to use as a base for operations – however it was also heavily used as a media centre for ITN, BBC and local media: it was essential that all media coverage was controlled from 'their' side.

Residents were on stand-by to resist the eviction and, alongside other supporters, managed to stave off the work for around an hour by blocking the access road with cars. They were eventually dragged off and attacked by bailiffs and two protesters were arrested for Breach of the Peace – later released without charge. Also attempts to switch off the water and power to the site were thwarted for a time, before bailiffs got the upper hand. A seventy-two year old man suffered a broken nose after being smashed into a caravan.

Legal observers and monitors witnessed events, documenting numerous breaches of human rights; including failure to provide alternative housing, health and safety malpractices with heavy machinery, and the police's refusal to allow observers access to the site.

Once work could start, bulldozers began

tearing up the caravan standings. By the end of Tuesday three families drove off the site, leaving four families who stayed the night.

The next day (8th) at 9am, police gave the remaining families an ultimatum to leave by midday, as the bailiffs continued to bulldoze plots. The four families complied, going to a nearby car park at Gardiners Way – owned by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and earmarked as a possible replacement site (HCA boss Bob Kerslake supports the plight of travellers). Once there, they were threatened by police with Section 61 of CJA 1994 "Notice To Move" which illegalises gatherings of six or more vehicles and is the bane of all travellers. After police harassment the convoy moved off at 9pm – without a viable destination – and ending up stopping for the night at South Mimms motorway services.

Yesterday (9th) the convoy of four families came back to another HCA-owned site at Gardiners Close, and were again met with police brandishing Section 61 – forcing them to leave again. It was particularly traumatic and difficult for the families to endure three evictions in 24 hours. It is hoped that the HCA will provide some land in Essex for them, and a planning application for a site has been submitted.

This all comes after six families were evicted from Hovefields on June 29th (see pic), when Constant & Co and police arrived without forewarning in the early hours of the morning and gave them one hour to go. A bulldozer smashed a building being used as a toilet and dug up the surface. Legal action is being taken regarding health and safety breaches during this eviction.

### DALE FARM ALERT

One phrase heard several times from bailiffs as they performed the eviction was "...next time..." This is likely a reference to Dale Farm. The Tory Basildon Council are resolutely moving towards an eviction, which could possibly be the biggest ever in British history. The Council have given Constant & Co a £2 million contract to do the dirty work, and have for years waged a tabloid-paper fuelled publicity campaign against the site.

Dale Farm was started in the 1970s on a former scrap yard, and at the time got planning permission for 40 families to stay. But during recent decades, due to other evictions and the difficulty of living on the road, more and more have come to Dale Farm, and it's grown to its current size. All except those original families are now facing eviction because they don't have planning permission to be there, despite the land being owned by the Gypsies.

Gypsies and those living nomadic and itinerant lives have always suffered from racism and



Traveller eviction at Hovefields, Essex, June 29th, 2010

persecution – right across Europe (including currently in France as widely reported in the mainstream press).

After the 1994 Criminal Justice Act and the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, local authorities were no longer obliged to provide park-up space for travellers, and the ensuing harassment forced many to buy land just so they had a place to park – the opposite of their desire for a life on the road. This in turn led to the creation of the semi-permanent sites which exist today as refuge for hounded travellers. The trouble is that councils, despite kicking them out of everywhere else, very rarely issue planning permission for people live on these sites, and this is often the leverage used to expel them – an unofficial policy of ethnic cleansing masquerading as the enforcement of council regulations.

It must be said that settlements like Dale Farm are the consequence of a people whose way of life has been smashed by legislation, and also to some extent by the loss of the traditional livelihoods which sustained them. Of course there will be friction arising from disenfranchised people forced to live in an unintended ghetto, suffering persecution from nearby communities who don't see why they should be there and prompted towards ignorance and xenophobia by tabloid-paper propaganda.

A brief scan of readers' comments on the local rag *The Recorder's* website reveals intolerance to the fact that Gypsies are there without planning permission. As if those same locals have any say whatsoever when fatcat businessmen get 'permission' to impose whatever they want on their community.

### CONSTANT BATTLE

Constant & Co – the self-proclaimed "gypsy and squatter eviction specialists" have a long history of violence, serious human rights abuses, and are currently under investigation for breaches of safety law. Their resume includes a litany of traveller evictions in Britain, which routinely involve violently manhandling people, destroying property, digging up and trashing peoples' land, and moving earth or concrete blocks to prevent vehicles getting back on-site.

In 2004 during the Meadowlands eviction – also in Essex – Gypsies negotiated with Constant & Co to allow them to tow ten caravans to another site; instead Constant took them to a nearby lay-by and they were all torched overnight – which saw the company investigated for arson (see SchNEWS 439). At Bulkington Fields in Warwickshire, also in 2004, Roma travellers were booted off violently again by Constant, dwellings and land were trashed by diggers, and a court injunction prevented them returning to land they owned (see SchNEWS 461).

These evictions are never purely financial

*Continued overleaf...*

### PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see  
[www.schnews.org.uk/pap](http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap)

**INFORMATION FOR ACTION**

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decisions because it would be far cheaper for councils to simply buy land for travellers to live on than pay millions more for drawn-out legal and eviction processes. Or even cheaper; simply grant more planning permission - currently they are refusing 90% of applications by travellers. But it's not about saving money, we already know that.

In the past few years there have been High Court cases, appeals and counter-appeals (see SchNEWS 669) which have stalled proceedings for Dale Farm, but after Hovefields it would appear that Constant & Co are gearing up for the big one. Just what scale of operation would be required to evict 1,000 people, hundreds of vehicles, caravans, static mobile homes and more is hard to imagine. If Dale Farm is issued with a 28-day eviction notice they are ready to contest it and apply for a judicial review. If it does get to this, all are urged to get to Dale Farm and help resist the bailiffs.

\* The residents of Dale Farm are holding a demo at Southend County Court on September 16th at 10am to request that the offer of housing from the Basildon Council be changed to an offer for land, in keeping with their way of life.

\*\* See <http://dalefarm.wordpress.com>

## LEWES RD: FORKED OFF

Despite the hoardings having gone up and the plants, pots and garden furniture occupying a skip in the razed forecourt, the Lewes Road Community Garden leaves a lasting legacy for residents and the wider community and may even rise again - so claimed die-hard locals and guerrilla gardeners at a heavily policed demo outside the site on Wednesday (8th) night.

The day before (7th) at 2am - fifteen or more bailiffs backed by a dozen Sussex plod evicted the occupied site after the third time of trying. As well as it being a snide tactic, barging on site in the early hours, the High Court writ contained errors - wrong planning numbers - and the occupant, in the garden office, a legal squatter was forcibly removed. Which all adds up to an illegal eviction as far as we can work out m'Lud, leaving aside the obvious noise regulations shat on.

One local resident told SchNEWS: "I've never sworn so much at the police and not got arrested. The noise went on from 2-3am until 5. And what for? To make way for a Tesco - brilliant!"

On Wednesday Tesco bosses met up with Brighton MP Caroline Lucas. Nice one Caroline - 'horse' and 'bolted' come to mind. And no it's not true she wasn't spotted leaving the meeting with a Tesco haloumi cheese and rocket wrap in her pocket despite strong rumours. Apparently they - Tesco - are going to 'mull it over for two weeks' before deciding business as usual i.e let's fuck up another community.

The Co-op employing more than 20 workers and standing bang next door faces certain closure while a Spar over the road and smaller Turkish shop and other African and Asian greengrocers further down are looking down the same barrel.

Meanwhile garden campaigners - who took over the site in May 2009 after it had lain derelict as a former Esso garage for five years (see SchNEWS 680) - have made an official complaint to Sussex Police about the eviction and are planning to take the case back to the High Court.

During its tenure the garden became a meeting space for residents without gardens, a play area for kids, a community compost centre and an outdoor venue for films, acoustic music and yoga among other things.

\* See <http://lewesroadcommunitygarden.webs.com>

## HIT THE ROAD, SHAC

Four animal rights activists, Jason Mullan, Nicola Tapping, Thomas Harris and Alfie Fitzpatrick plead guilty on Wednesday to interfering with and blackmailing companies linked to Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) in an attempt to close the animal testing lab down. Two others Sarah Whitehead and Nicole Vosper went guilty at an earlier hearing.

In effect they have pulled the curtain down on what was intended to be another show trial of the animal rights movement. The trial was scheduled to begin at Winchester Crown Court next week. Two of the activist plead guilty to a lesser charge under the SOCPA legislation.

This was the second major SHAC trial (see SchNEWS 663) and was a result of continuing massive police action against the militant animal rights movement. Many of the movement's leading figures are now serving long prison sentences.

The judge adjourned the case for pre-sentence reports. A two-day sentencing hearing will take place at Winchester Crown Court on October 21. The maximum jail term for conspiracy to blackmail is 14 years and the conspiracy under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 is five years.

Despite the attacks the SHAC campaign is still going strong - with the major target now being Fortress Finance, a US-based high risk venture capitalist firm who are now HLS's major backers. Ocean Finance, who are a subsidiary of Fortress found themselves under siege on Monday this week, shutting down their Tamworth HQ.

Meanwhile US activists are keeping up the pressure on Fortress themselves with demos in Washington D.C this week.

\* For more on AR prisoners [www.alfsg.org.uk](http://www.alfsg.org.uk) on SHAC [www.shac.net](http://www.shac.net)

## JOCK'S TRAPPED

Anarchist activists are calling out for an international day of action in solidarity with an Australian man imprisoned in Bulgaria on murder charges after he intervened to stop far-right thugs beating Roma youths.

Jock Palfreeman was on a night out with friends in the Bulgarian capital Sofia in December 2007 when he witnessed a group of 16 nationalists surrounding a pair of Roma men, kicking and punching them as they lay on the floor. Jock rushed in and tried to protect one of the men, who was barely conscious when he reached him. As the gang closed in, he took out a knife that he had started to carry after being attacked several times in Sofia.

Jock backed away from the group, brandishing the knife to try and scare them away. But the group followed, surrounded him and began to pelt him with concrete tiles. As the gang moved in, attacking from all sides, Jock swung the knife in panicked self-defence. It was only later, after the arrival of the police, that he found out he had stabbed two of them. One of the men died of his injuries and Jock was charged with murder and attempted murder.

In the ensuing trial, crucial CCTV footage went missing - apparently due to a freak blackout that wrecked the hardrive - and witnesses disappeared, were ignored or changed their stories. Questions have also been raised over the influence of the deceased's family in the case - the man's father is a prominent and respected psychologist. Jock was sentenced to 20 years.

The day of action has been called for the 19th. If you can organise an event in your area contact: [anarchosolidarity@yahoo.com](mailto:anarchosolidarity@yahoo.com)

\* See [www.freejock.net](http://www.freejock.net)

## BLAIR RICH PROJECT

Poor old Tony 'Legacy' Blair - all he wanted to do was take on J.K. Rowling in the best seller charts, but it seems the public have other ideas.

Hounded out of Dublin last weekend by shoes, eggs and someone trying to complete a citizens arrest (will they get paid out for it though? See SchNEWS 707), he was this week forced to cancel other book-signings and a launch party at the Tate to avoid angry protests over the exact nature of his 'journey'.

A new facebook group has plenty of evidence of the book correctly appearing in the fiction section in numerous shops and, to top off the snubs, the British Legion seem far from totally bought off by the Great Manipulator's bribe of profits from the book. Their latest magazine includes a reprint of the famous 'Photo Op' picture (last seen doctored in SchNEWS 707).

Lets hope the war-mongering cry baby isn't forced to turn back to drink to cope.

## ALDER NOT WISER

On Monday (6th), Trident Ploughshares activists blockaded Aldermaston Weapons Establishment to protest against 'Project HydruS' - plans to build a new multi-million pound warhead-testing facility at the site.

Around 20 activists hit the site during the morning rush hour. Four chained themselves together with arm tubes in front of the gate while others stood nearby armed with banners and their singing voices. They maintained the blockade for two hours, preventing the workers from entering.

At the same time three Christian peace activists cut through the base's outer fence then attached a sign saying 'Open for Disarmament: All Welcome'. They were arrested after then entering the site and kneeling and praying.

The actions followed a weekend street protest where Trident Ploughshares activists joined an alliance of anti-nuclear groups.

\* See [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org)

## SKY LARKS

Activists have set up a two person protest camp slap bang on the roof of the Houses of Parliament. Acting in opposition to Britain's military meddling, the pair clambered to the roof laden with anti-war banners on Wednesday afternoon. The activists have settled in nicely and have announced plans to make the rooftop their home for as long as possible.

## ...and finally...

This week it's been a case of Heir today, gone tomorrow as Bonnie Prince Charles has been criss-crossing the country by private Royal train to promote his fluffy message of sustainability.

His 'Start' campaign to nudge disloyal subjects ever so gently towards being ever so slightly greener than they currently are, has started by costing the tax payer £50,000 and running up a carbon emissions bill which is only thousands of times more polluting than estimates of what the global average carbon allowance should be if this planet is to survive its human plague. And this is even after he has manfully had the royal carriages converted to run on used cooking oil.

The PR offensive is set to cost a couple of million quid a year to run and has the enthusiastic support of such climate-caring sponsors as Asda, BT and EDF Energy.

Far from a crowning achievement, Oi Jug ears has merely throne out another load of 'King greenwash'...

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - we have no truck with middle of the road politics. Honest.

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