

# The Loombreaker

No. 21 ♦ August 2001 ♦ Free

## THE ITALIAN MOB

### — impressions from Genoa

By a Manchester activist

*"A police officer came behind me and... said 'who is your government?' The person before me in the row had answered 'Polizei', so I said the same. I was afraid of being beaten." Testimony of Jonathan Blair, held in Bolzenato holding center.*

"I walked from the sea front clutching a CS gas canister for a souvenir and enjoying the sight of a few burnt out banks before heading up to the school. I had lost track of my friends, so went to see what was being reported on the internet. One report said police were in the area, they had arrested someone nearby simply because their hand was injured. I had to catch up with the others and get my stuff, so I chanced it and left. Some people were sleeping on the floor in the building. One of them looked up and smiled at me as I went. Half an hour later the police raided the building and everyone inside was beaten so severely that blood covered the walls.

Like many others I had a lucky escape. During three days of protest and riot one person was shot dead. Since then one body has been washed up on a nearby beach and a missing protestor's body found in a river in Padova. Many are still missing, and hundreds seriously injured and/or under arrest. Given the chosen police 'strategy of tension' there could have been and may well be more dead.

I had to dodge out of the way of CS canisters and run from riot cops a few times. Others had to scatter from the path of police vans heading directly for them at speed - a novel technique for crowd dispersal. More were caught in the crush as helicopters dropped gas into dense crowds. Many were beaten indiscriminately. In amongst the riot, plainclothes police (vaguely identifiable by their blue helmets) pulled out handguns and aimed them straight at protesters. The worst brutality took place later, out of sight in a police holding centre on the outskirts of Genoa.

Genoa during the G8 summit was a scene of chaos and bewilderment. There were few anarchists to be seen although those who were there made their presence felt. The majority of the 250,000 people on the streets were, like Carlo Giuliani, from Italy. Like so many others they'd had enough and as usual the powerful did not want to know. So they did what they do. Capitalists kill people on a daily basis. State terror is nothing new. That, after all, is why so many were there in the first place."

### Prisoner support

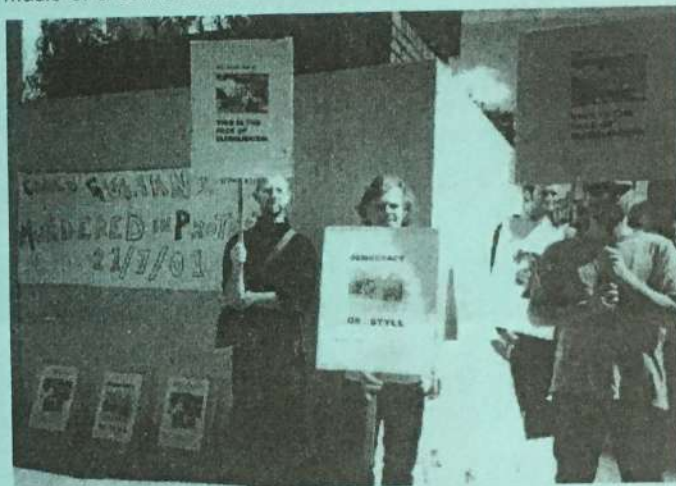
People are still being held for 'interrogation' and some reports say they are facing serious charges. They need your support. Find out what's going on and take action. (see opposite for details of a solidarity demo)

Info, updates and extensive reports - [www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk) or <http://g8solidarity.protest.net/> or [www.infos/ca](http://www.infos/ca)

Send cheques/postal orders for a legal fund to help with the legal work for the Genoa prisoners to: IMC UK, P.O. Box 587, London SW2 4HA, payable to: The Independent Media Centre (IMC) UK

## Meanwhile on the homefront....

While our comrades were getting their heads bashed in Genoa, people in Manchester were supporting from afar. The OKasional Cafe on Charles Street became an infoshop for the weekend of Genoa, showing a rolling programme of inspiring films from other protests, interspersed with ongoing TV footage from Genoa. An info display about the protests was constantly updated from websites, and placards & banners outside the cafe shouted what was really happening, outside the mainstream media. After hearing about the death of Carlo Giuliani, a leaflet was hurriedly put together, and hundreds handed out in the city centre, to the music of a samba band.



### Disturbance at the Italian Consulate

A group of people who came together at the squat over the weekend went to the Italian Consulate on Monday morning. A number of protesters got into the consulate, where a struggle ensued between protesters, & staff and members of the public. Walls were graffitied "Global Resistance to Police Violence", and a fire extinguisher was sprayed into their computers. Eventually the fire alarm was set off, and everyone had to vacate the building - a double action, as the main occupiers of the building are Rupert Murdoch's News International, one of whose papers had stated that Giuliani deserved to die. Consulate staff said they wished Mussolini was still in power, because he would have shot us. Outside, passers-by were leafleted and seemed very supportive. The action will certainly have got back to those responsible in Italy, as it even featured in Italian daily newspapers!

### Vigil

Exactly a week to the day that Carlo was shot dead, people held a vigil outside the consulate. **People are still in Genoese prisons. Meet 12:30, Monday 20th August, outside the Italian Consulate at 111, Piccadilly (at the foot of the ramp of the train station), for a solidarity demo.**

*The next meeting where world leaders try to carve up our future for big business is the World Trade Organisation meeting in Qatar. We won't be going there obviously, but watch this space for actions in this country.*

In this month's Loombreaker

♦ Injustice and the Cornerhouse ♦ Multi-cultural Britain? ♦ Critical suing ♦ OKasional Cafe ♦ Asylum seekers ♦ ♦ global resistance

## Rumblings of the all-new anti-roads movement.....

A local group opposing the Bingley 'Relief' Road in Yorkshire recently held a large protest march against the planned road, watched by security guards employed by the contractors AMEC (who also run British Nuclear Fuels' site at Sellafield and an old ICI chemical works). The road is being built despite it breaching a European Directive requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment.

In Hastings, the opposition to a proposed road is celebrating victory.

Despite previous governments slashing the road building programme, and a general consensus accepting that building more roads creates more traffic, harms people and the environment, New Labour fancies giving it a try, and is keen to stress the environmental and community benefits of all new and resurrected schemes!

A Roads to Ruin Alliance has been launched, and at the recent Earth First! Summer Gathering, various tactics to fight the government's new roads programme were talked about; a meeting to plan direct actions will take place sometime this autumn - watch this space.

## Samba Spurs Anti GE activists to a ripping victory

Manchester's home grown samba band, which has featured in recent protests on election day, and against the police violence in Genoa, led a march of anti-genetics campaigners in North Wales recently. Over 30 people from Manchester had attended the rally beforehand, joining other protesters, dressed in white decontamination suits, in marching to the farm where the last GE



crop in Wales was being grown. Aventis, the company growing the crop, and the farmer, had chosen to ignore the vote in the Welsh Assembly to keep Wales GM free. But they ignored the will of the people at their own expense. After listening to the ill-informed farmer defending his decision, the samba re-invigorated the crowd, many of whom pushed past a pathetic police line to storm onto the GM crop of maize. Managing to wrestle our people back from the beefy security guards, a swathe of decontamination was spread through the field as the crowd ripped up the crop. Six people were arrested.

This action is only a small part of the massive ongoing protests against genetic engineering in this country. For example, 7 of the 12 national seed list trial sites of oil seed rape this year have been 'decontaminated' - ie, destroyed by campaigners (as have many other 'trials'), many field scale trials are abandoned each year, and commercialisation of GE crops has so far been delayed. For more information or to subscribe to the Genetix Update (for £5), contact ToGG, PO Box 77 Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5ZJ, 01803-840098, info@togg.org.uk, www.togg.org.uk

## Gee Cross Action

In Tameside, an old plan has been resurrected to build over a pond and ancient woodland. Though there are currently 1,000 surplus places in the area, the Council want a new (Private Finance Initiative) school creating an extra 750 places. It will be built through PFI, so after it's planned lifespan of 20-25 years, the developer will be free to knock it down and do what they will. The land it is due to swallow is disputed land, part common land, part owned by the Area Health Authority. Three years ago Green Belt land was compulsorily purchased to add insult to injury. The land contains two

## Action at Armed Forces Recruitment Centre

Many bemused passers-by took one look at the front of the leaflet we gave out in front of the Armed Forces Recruitment office on July 29th and immediately turned it over to see what it was all about. They obviously didn't see the connection between the picture of the wheelchair and the military.

We hope that those young men, perhaps "persuaded" by their Benefits Offices into visiting the recruitment centre, will think twice about joining up after reading our leaflet. The soldiers staffing the centre were very keen that potential recruits avoid contact with us, and were ushered in very speedily when we engaged them in conversation!

It was useful to give out info that has been denied British soldiers in the past. It is something a very small group of people can do in any town that has an army recruitment office. You could also leaflet any recruitment or military information stand at a summer fair or show. Contact us for leaflets or posters. You can use your own props, such as an empty wheelchair or a zimmer frame! We have a right to demonstrate peacefully. Let's use it as often as we can.

Contact us for info, Greater Manchester  
CND: 0161-273 8283, gmcnd@gn.apc.org

## Sodexho, Human Rights & the Cornerhouse

Last month, the excellent Human Rights Watch film festival was at the Cornerhouse. Ironically(?), the Cornerhouse's café, bar and coffee bar are run by Sodexho - a transnational profiteer in human misery, war, imprisonment and social control. Sodexho is well known to many as the company which runs the voucher scheme for refugees. Its other activities include privatised prisons & hospitals, prisoner transport, military logistics and, of course, selling shit overpriced sandwiches. Throughout the HRW film festival, leaflets with detailed info about Sodexho were distributed to staff and customers at the Cornerhouse. To complain about Sodexho's catering contract at the Cornerhouse phone 200 1500 or write to Dave Moutrey @ the Cornerhouse, 70 Oxford Street, M1 5NH.

## 'Injustice' at the OK Cafe

The film 'Injustice' made by Migrant Media, which follows the struggles of the families of black people who died whilst in police custody, has provoked controversy around the country. Cinemas due to screen the film have been threatened with legal action by the Police Federation, and have usually bowed to this pressure and cancelled showings. In London's Conway Hall, the audience which included some of the families featured in the film, took over the projector to ensure the film was seen. Here in Manchester, the film was due to be screened at the Cornerhouse as part of their Human Rights festival (see above), but Manchester Earth Firsters, aware of the police threats, contacted the film makers offering the squat as an alternative venue. After a brief 'debate' (people ranting at the cinema!) the audience of 80 or 90 people who turned up to see the film, were shepherded round the corner where a video projector was already in place. They were told that they were in a squat, what other events had taken place there, and donations collected for the campaign for justice.

## OK-asional Cafe evicted

The squatted social centre cafe was finally evicted at the end of July. Since its refurbishment it had hosted a Genoa solidarity weekend (see front), three benefit parties, including one for people in Nottingham who are raising money to buy a building to have a permanent anarchist social centre. It also hosted the screening of Injustice (see story), musicians jam nights, and unusually provided a temporary home for a couple of homeless people.

Anyone wanting to contact the OKasional Cafe, or wanting to get involved with any new OK Cafe should come along to the Riotous Assembly events (see back page)

## The future is officially multicultural....

The last month in Manchester has seen a number of "Multicultural Manchester" events, with the Mela in a play-to-get-in Platt Fields, and the anti-racist Unity Festival in Chorlton. Despite Manchester Council refusing to give any funding to the Moss Side Caribbean Carnival, and pressuring the cops to say they could not police both the Mela and the Carnival the same day, it went ahead. The procession this year brought the carnival spirit, with music, floats, costumes & smiles into the city centre.

Meanwhile, with the tabloids continuing to scream racist anti-refugee headlines at every opportunity and aided by statements by mainstream politicians, racist attacks, arson attacks, desecration of graves, and graffiti have increased in Manchester. A Manchester National Front branch has recently been resurrected, a BNP meeting in Oldham was attended by 100 people, and as fatal racist attacks against refugees and others increases, the planned Anti-Nazi League 'Carnival Against the Nazis' in Burnley on 1<sup>st</sup> September has been banned, whilst the NF plan to march on the same day will go ahead.

Contact 07949-197548 for possible transport to Burnley, & to go up together.

### Refugees 'safe' in prison...

Once they've fled persecution, refugees get greeted in this country by another set of hostile officials, and then either sent to a 'detention centre', or released into the safe British haven of racist attacks and voucher schemes. Record numbers of refugees are being imprisoned without reason or trial or time limit, and more 'detention centres' are being built. Recently, there've been demos outside Harmondsworth and Campsfield Detention Centres. At the former, near Heathrow, there was a rally against the opening of a new wing which will make it the biggest refugee prison in the country. Protestors managed to march noisily round the prison, shouting support to those detained. Harmondsworth (like most other 'detention centres') is run privately for profit by a subsidiary of Sodexho, who will 'offer' the 'option' of full-time work, at £12/week. A No Borders Camp, coinciding with the G8 Summit in Genoa, was planned outside Group 4-run Campsfield, in Oxfordshire, but riot cops pushed protestors into a demo in Oxford. Most refugees detained there were temporarily moved to other prisons.

For further info and future events, call 01865-558145/726804, 01223-700644 or go to [www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk](http://www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk)

### Asylum Seekers on Hunger Strike

Activists from Manchester recently travelled to Liverpool for a demo in solidarity with asylum seekers on hunger strike. Over 60 immigration detainees in HMP Liverpool (Walton prison) were on hunger strike demanding their release. "This time we know we're doing the right thing," one striker declared, "We're always being told we're wrong, but this is the only action we can take." The hunger strike in Liverpool is now over, but is being continued by immigration detainees in Cardiff where 35 prisoners are involved and Rochester, where 50 are involved. Detainees in HMP Liverpool have to live, eat and sleep in a toilet (popularly known as a prison cell). This is degrading and inhumane. Despite their supposed status as "remand prisoners", detainees are typically locked up 23 hours a day, denied education and forced to wear prison uniform. For further info contact: Greg Dropkin, Merseyside Against Detention - 0151-734 0153, [gregd@gn.apc.org](mailto:gregd@gn.apc.org)

18 asylum seekers who were to be dispersed from Liverpool refused to get on the coach when told they were going to Oldham. NASS (National Asylum Support Service) threatened to withdraw their support within 3 days if they didn't go. Liverpool City Council has now rehoused them.

### Asylum seeker support work continues in Manchester

There is a monthly Solidarity Social on the first Saturday of the month from 1.00pm - 4.00pm at Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street, Central Manchester. **There will be a demo in Manchester on 20<sup>th</sup> August against forced dispersals of asylum seekers.** Contact Tony at NCADC below for more information.

More info on planning meetings and other events from Tony Openshaw, National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC), 400 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 9LE, 0161-740 8206, [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk)

### Gorton Tub - the fight grows

Save Gorton Tub campaign held a vigil outside the Neptune's Kingdom swimming pool, known locally as Gorton Tub, on 11 August. The vigil lasted 12 hours - one hour for each year the tub has been open - and was deemed a success. Many new people came along, despite pouring rain, and 1,000 leaflets were handed out. There was a constant volley of car horns hooting in support of the vigilers.

Following the decision of the Executive of Manchester City Council on 25<sup>th</sup> July to close the popular pool, campaigners organised a public meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> August, where it was decided to step up the fight pool, campaigners organised a public meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> August, where it was decided to step up the fight to overturn a decision which would rip the heart out of Gorton. Many link the closure plans, which are driven by cost-cutting, to the millions being spent by the council on the Commonwealth Games.

The campaign is organising a "Fun Day" at the Tub on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August, which will include cheap entry for kids, balloons, face painting, pirate fancy dress, stalls etc. See the campaign web site at: [www.savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk](http://www.savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk), contact them on 0161-231 5827 or [info@savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:info@savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk)

### Climate chaos - go picnic

To coincide with the piss-poor attempt recently in Bonn to get the world to agree to save their arses from human-created climate change, Manchester Earth First'ers took the tram to Heaton Park for a picnic! They leafleted passengers on the way, getting off at each stop and leafletting the next tram, about climate change and the 90% for 90% campaign, to get cheaper public transport fares to get the essential 90% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, by refusing to pay more than 10% of the fare. See the next Loombreaker for more about climate actions in Bonn and around Britain, or [www.risingtide.org.uk](http://www.risingtide.org.uk)

## The Loombreaker

### DIARY

#### AUGUST

- 18 - Fun Day Gorton Tub (see article)
- 20 - action in support of asylum seekers in Manchester (see article), 740 8206 for info
- 18 - screening of 'Injustice' & launch of Jimmy Ashley Justice Campaign: 6:30, The Masque, 90 Seel Street, Liverpool, 07796-253505
- 20 - demo in solidarity with prisoners in Genoa; 12:30, Italian consulate, 111, Piccadilly (see front page)
- 23-27 - 'Green Up North' gathering: climate change focus, Yorkshire; info 0113-224 9885, [www.vis.u-net.com/ngg](http://www.vis.u-net.com/ngg), [GreenUpNorth@purpleturtle.com](mailto:GreenUpNorth@purpleturtle.com)
- 25 - mass trespass against peat extraction (see article); Manchester EF! on 226 6814 for transport
- 31-2 - Scarborough Summer School - building new pluralist chains of resistance; 0116-283 2062, [rooneysg@hotmail.com](mailto:rooneysg@hotmail.com) for info.

#### SEPTEMBER

- 1 - Anti-Racism Carnival, NF march in Burnley (see article)
- 4 - Riotous Assembly (see back page)
- 11 - DSEi arms fair big action in London, call Manchester EF! on 226 6814 for transport & more info

For regulars, latest & more dates, visit the Networking Newsletter website at [www.networkingnewsletter.org.uk](http://www.networkingnewsletter.org.uk)

### Women Speak Out!

Over the weekend of the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> of June, women from all over Britain - and even farther afield - met in Brighton for this summer's Women Speak Out gathering. Despite a few hitches - mainly having to find a new squat on the afternoon that people were due to arrive - this was a brilliant and inspiring weekend. Plots were hatched, newsletters born, food cooked, new things learnt, old friends met and songs sung. Workshops this time round included: resisting the hijacking of Pride by commercial companies; exploring the politics of menstruation, fertility and female health; hearing from veterans about feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and '80s; 'wombing', and self-defence. And, as ever, WSO was an opportunity for women activists from all kinds of movements - environmentalist, peace, disabled, feminist, health, anti-globalisation - to meet and exchange experiences, views and ideas. For those who have never been before, WSO is a warm and welcoming environment in which to spend time with other women, learn from them, and contribute to discussions, planning - and cabarets! A new nationwide women's newsletter, *Bellow*, also came into being - copies are available at the Riotous Assembly; enquiries or offers of help, donations etc can be sent to [Bellow1@bigfoot.com](mailto:Bellow1@bigfoot.com)

## Riotous Assembly

Over 60 people came along to the last Riotous Assembly, where a film on the harrowing experiences of an Asian family in Britain, *The Diary of Rita Patel*, was shown. A number of different issues concerning race were discussed, including ways people can get involved with anti-racist activity. Organising in the community was brought up, and a few different themes emerged. Further discussion will take place on these issues at the next Riotous Assembly on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept (for details see back page), or call c/o 226 6814

## Shell Targeted at Careers Fair

People attended this year's Graduate Careers Fair at Manchester University's Armitage Centre, were greeted with alternative corporate messages. Despite the presence of a wide range of familiar corporations and other baddies, Shell was the primary target. Their stall, which was the busiest there, was soon surrounded by people distributing leaflets about Shell's involvement in human rights abuses and environmental devastation in Nigeria. When Shell insisted that the leaflets be removed, one quick-witted person held their leaflets in the air and shouted out that it was the last opportunity to get information about Shell - a stampede occurred as graduates rushed to get a leaflet! All the leaflets were eventually removed or retreated, with their appetites whetted for future corporate truth-giving.

## Naked Protest against GAP

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June, outside the Manchester City centre GAP store, several activists from Labour Behind the Label donned flesh-coloured body stockings complete with woollen "nakednesses" in order to bring attention to the Gap's fallings in regard to workers in its subcontracted factories. (More info on website)

The people of Manchester were suitably bemused and very supportive of the actions of Labour behind the Label, and hundreds of leaflets were distributed. Labour Behind the Label can be contacted at: 0161 247 1760, women-ww@mcr1.poptel.org.uk or see labourbehindthelabel.org 'The Reality Gap' reports also available.

## Party against Peat

There have been a number of Parties against Peat Extraction in recent months on Hatfield Moor in Yorkshire. There have been occupations of the peat works, mass trespasses on the moors, and the peat pixies had been busy trying to save their homelands, with drainage channels filled in. Rumours abound of feistier pixies getting to the machinery and workings of the site.

Peat moorland is a rapidly vanishing habitat, which supports a great diversity of species, from darting dragonflies to beautiful cotton

grasses (& 5,000 other species). When asking for proposed sites for 'Special Area of Conservation' status, the EU specifically told our government to include peatland - and yet we allow the biggest peatland in the country to be sealed off to the public, dug up, packed in bags and sold for better hanging baskets, purely for the profit of a US company, Scotts. People have been fighting this destruction for decades, from legal challenges to night-time sabotage. It may not be possible to restore the site as a peatland if

Scotts manage to cut as much as they want this season (before September). At the current rate of cutting, there will be no peat left at all in three years.

To come to the next Mass Trespass on 25<sup>th</sup> August, or to visit other days, contact Manchester Earth First! on 226 6814.

Ask your garden centre to stop selling peat compost. Unless it is labelled 'peat-free' it will almost certainly contain part of Hatfield Moor - there are huge piles of bags labelled Irish Peat await there, ready for distribution.

## Your Loombreaker needs you!

The current Loombreaker collective feel the need for a burst of energy from some new collective members. If you either have the skills to put together a newsletter (much of it involves just being able to use the phone) or would like to learn, get in touch. If you feel that the Loombreaker is a great idea and want to contribute in whatever way, such as distributing it at things such as your local tenants meeting, trade union meeting, put them in your local cafe etc, then please get in touch.

COME ON DOWN AND BREAK SOME LOOMS!

And don't forget to send us your stories....next issue deadline, 1st September

## Earth First! Summer Gathering

Over thirty people from Manchester went to the EF! Gathering in the Peak District. The gathering is an annual event with workshops, trainings, and discussions about campaigning on many different though connected social/ecological issues. A big effort was made to make the event more accessible, for disabled people, parents, and people new to Earth First!. A number of actions happened from the gathering - a prisoner support action and an anti-peat cutting action in Yorkshire, and there was impressive evening entertainments. People at different workshops also started planning a climate change gathering in the autumn, anti-roads, anti-human genetics and anti-genetic agriculture gatherings (out of which all hopefully will come actions), a network for people taking action in their local communities, an EF! Winter Moot (in Manchester), linking with the Disabled People's Direct Action Network, and lots more stuff there isn't room to mention here. For more info about Earth First! in Manchester, contact 0161-226 6814.

## Critical Mass -sue the cops

If you know anyone who was trapped by the coppers or witnessed any of it on Rockdove Avenue on June 7<sup>th</sup>, please get in touch with Clive on 226 0370, or Robert Lizar (Solicitor) on 860 7797 as he's taking the cops to court 'cos they can't go around treating people like that. If you were held there by the police against your will, you may also have a case against them - it sure ain't the first time the dibble did something naughty, so see that they get a well deserved clip round the ear and learn the error of their ways

...IT'S THE EDITORIAL  
- LISTEN TO THIS!



The Loombreakers were Lancashire weavers who, in 1826, smashed the machines that were destroying their livelihoods and communities. The Loombreaker comes from the Free Information Network tradition, spreading news the mainstream media won't print. It is @nticopyright.

Pick it up FREE from:

- Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick St., Ancoats;
- Mistys Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road;
- Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly;
- Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton;
- 8th Day Cafe, Oxford Road & Old Birley Street;
- Withington Wholefoods, Wilmslow Road;

If you live outside Manchester, send us a stamp for each issue you want. Prisoners and local action camps get it free - just send us your address.

Please send your contributions, comments, campaign info, cartoons & photos, offers of distribution help, or donations (cheques payable to Manchester EF!):

The Loombreaker

c/o Manchester EF!

Department 29,

22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS

0161-226 6814

loombreaker@nematode.freemove.co.uk

## Interested in taking action?

Come to the Riotous Assembly for direct action, campaigns, taking on the bosses, grassroots resistance, defending communities, earth, animals, and fun! It's a chance to meet & chat. Bring ideas & events each first Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm, Yard Theatre (opposite Junction pub) 41, Old Birley Street, Hulme. Next date: 04/09/01

## Forest saved

Protestors who lived up trees to fight the destruction of Lyminge Forest in Kent for a 'holiday village' are celebrating victory. The plans have been shelved, and a 'de-tatting' party to clear up the wood and take down the tree houses and fill in the tunnels recently happened.