



# The Loombreaker

www.loombreaker.org.uk

No. 26 ♦ February/March 2002 ♦ Free

## FREED TRADE HALL

On Saturday 2nd of February Manchester's Free Trade Hall was taken back into public use, albeit briefly. Furious at the council's decision to sell this historic public space, demonstrators occupied for three hours and banners were unfurled protesting at the sale and demolition of the building.

On the site of the infamous Peterloo Massacre, the Free Trade Hall has a unique place in Manchester history. The building itself was founded in 1840 to house the great Corn Law debates of the 19th century and to provide space for Manchester people to hold political, religious and cultural public meetings. Since then, it has been the scene of Suffragette meetings, the famous electric Bob "Judas" Dylan gig, the Sex Pistols gig that inspired Joy Division to form and much more. The Manchester Corporation bought the Free Trade Hall from the Manchester Public Hall Company in May 1921, "so that the Hall should not be lost to citizens". Yet more recent times has seen Manchester Council's attitude change.

The Council claims that if there were any sale agreement committing the building to public use it has been 'mislaidd'. Despite massive opposition from the city's Civic Society, the council has sold the building on to a private developer to be made into a £45 million luxury hotel.



The occupation of the Free Trade Hall was timed to tie in with opposition to capitalism around the world. The same weekend saw huge demonstrations in Munich, New York and Buenos Aires. In Munich nearly 900 people were arrested for protesting as more than 7000 people took to the streets to disrupt NATO's annual meeting. In New York almost 20,000 demonstrated against the World Economic Forum, with 40 arrests. In Argentina there was a huge "casserole" demonstration, with thousands of demonstrators beating pots and pans in a noise demo in the Buenos Aires' main square.

<http://www.freetradehall.org/>  
<http://www.indymedia.org/>

The opening night at the Font on 21st February saw the first of a monthly event, with screenings of short documentaries about the recent action against the sale of the Free Trade Hall, Tactical Frivolity taking on the World Bank in Prague and some decidedly Dodgy TV. It's got the potential to turn into a really good space for social justice films screenings, an outlet for community media and a meeting space for the like minded.

w: <http://www.beyondtv.org/>  
e: [beyondtv@corporatedirtbag.com](mailto:beyondtv@corporatedirtbag.com)

### For Peat's Sake!

Some of Britain's most diverse and yet rarest habitats lie within peat moors. They are also some of our wildest and most beautiful places, yet they are being destroyed and turned into profits for a few American shareholders. Scotts, a huge US multinational agribusiness, is trying to strip the last few layers of this habitat and turn it into gro-bags. People from Manchester have joined the national campaign 'peatalert' to force Scotts to pull out.

There have been many visits to Thorne and Hatfield Moor in Yorkshire to dig ditches and build dams to hinder the works and a few large trespasses on the site. On 18th Feb there was a national day of action against Scotts, blockading all their offices, factories and peat works in the country.

This is just a foretaste of the big 4-day blockade at the Yorkshire moor from the 25th March. The campaign is well coordinated with local wildlife trusts and environment groups and there will be further trespasses and work stoppages till Scotts curl up and die....

w: <http://www.peatalert.org.uk/>  
e: [info@peatalert.org.uk](mailto:info@peatalert.org.uk)  
07787782259



Beyondtv is an independent media project starting up in Manchester. It's an open publishing site where activist and independent reporters can post up news stories that you don't see on the news. Beyond TV will train campaign groups to maximise the communication possibilities of the internet and low cost video production.

**The Loombreaker is Manchester's direct action round-up. Inside this month's jam-packed issue:**

♦ Burnage housing office occupied ♦ Headache for Bayer ♦ Colin Davies - a healer not a dealer ♦ Anti-nuke actions



## Housing Office Occupied

*"Things are going well - just maybe Manchester City Council are going to back up their grand claims with homes! One is a good start. If we don't get a plan to house everyone, we'll be back."* Claire Lewis.

Around 30 disabled people from the Disabled Access Network (DAN) occupied Burnage housing office on Westcroft Road for 55 hours in protest over lack of suitable housing for disabled people. They left only once the council had an injunction against them.

Claire Lewis is a wheelchair user who has been on the waiting list for a ground floor flat for five years. Manchester City Council repeatedly told her that there were no vacant ground floor properties. However they then closed down their ground floor housing office. Not wanting to miss an opportunity Claire and other DAN activists took advantage of this newly vacated ground floor building, occupying it.

They demanded a meeting with the housing director, which they got within three days of the demo and an accessible home for Claire and her daughter who also uses a wheelchair. Claire has verbally accepted an offer of a ground floor flat on condition that the council carry out necessary repairs and alterations to make it fully accessible.

As for the most challenging part of the DAN demands, they are still waiting to see if the council will agree to a plan and necessary tools to re-house all the disabled people waiting. DAN won't back down on their demands; "A few tweaks won't do. It needs a real plan looking at the problems and planning a tangible end to them."

e: [slowly@whispered.screaming.net](mailto:slowly@whispered.screaming.net)



## New A6 Protest Site

Last November a protest camp was set up in Elvaston Park Coronation Plantation, in Derbyshire. The camp is on the site of a planned A6 bypass. Protesters are living up one of the big oaks (lots have already been cut down), and are in need of more people, as well as donations of food, warm and waterproof clothes and equipment. At the moment there are approximately 10 people living on site.

The Highway Authority have recently moved onto the site - claiming they're building a new wet pond. Quite why they need 2 mobile caravans, metal fencing and floodlights to build a wet pond has yet to be explained.

e: [dot@theadora.screaming.net](mailto:dot@theadora.screaming.net)  
t: 01332 663031, 07812 434217  
or 07769 534725  
w: [www.alvaston-bypass.j8.com](http://www.alvaston-bypass.j8.com)

## Alka-Belter

*With the Genetically Modified Organism industry reeling, German heavyweight Bayer have weighed in to the fray, buying the research arm of failed Dr Frankenstein Aventis, thus making them the biggest GM research company in these islands. As Bayer recently launched on the New York stock exchange, activists from around the country (including Manchester) blockaded their Newbury HQ.*

*Beginning at about 7:40am, roads leading into the staff car parks were blocked by two ten foot tall tripods (with a person dangling from them), and a line of six people with their arms in tubes, forming a human chain between lamp posts. Dressed smartly, some of the protesters managed to enter the building. Others managed to lock themselves together within the revolving doors at both the main entrance and the rear doors, making further entry into the building difficult. Banners were hung saying: 'Bayer get out of GM crops' and advertising the new campaign's website. Throughout the action, leaflets were handed out to Bayer employees and to passers by in the nearby high street. At about 11am the blockade ended as planned and everybody left together. There were no arrests.*

*Bayer's past activities as a bloated capitalist banality-machine have included patenting the formula for Heroin (1900) and forming the company I.G. Farben (which propped up the Nazis, used slave labour and manufactured the Zyklon B poison gas used in death camps such as Auschwitz).*

w: <http://www.bayerhazard.com/>

## Animal Rights

Hunt saboteurs have attended hunt meets in Cheshire and Lancashire despite facing threats, intimidation and violence on an almost weekly basis. Recently sabs were attacked by hunt supporters resulting in a broken leg and other injuries yet are still managing to be effective in saving many foxes lives in the field.

After the foot and mouth epidemic hunting restarted in December so sabs were busy over the xmas period and into the new year. With the end of the fox and hare hunting season in sight sabs will turn their attention to other pursuits that persecute our wildlife in the name of 'sport'.

t: 01273 622 827 Hunt Saboteurs Association  
t: 07951 228 981/07931 586 826  
Manchester Animal Protection  
w: <http://www.nwhsa.org.uk/>  
e: [info@nwhsa.org.uk](mailto:info@nwhsa.org.uk)



## Sweat Shoes give Bad Smells

Foot Locker on Market Street was the target of No Sweat campaigners, who paid a call on the Nike trading retailers on the 23rd February. About 20 people gathered outside the premises with a banner reading 'There is no finish line for Sweatshop workers'. Sadly they were prevented from storming the shop by a line of police officers. Wages for Nike workers overseas are typically around £0.90 a day.

e: [NoSweatManchester@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:NoSweatManchester@yahoo.co.uk)  
t: 07905 564 570  
w: <http://www.nosweat.org.uk/>

## Strike Solidarity

*"Public Transport not Private Profit - Passengers Support the Strike"*

On January 25<sup>th</sup> guards from the RMT union were on strike against Arriva North West over pay. Meanwhile two train users from Manchester climbed onto the roof of Oxford Road Station at evening rush hour with a luminous yellow banner in support of the strikers and against the continued privatisation of the rail network. Other people leafleted passengers about Rising Tide's 90% for 90% campaign. This campaign calls for a 90% reduction in public transport fares to make it more affordable so that we can start to bring about the 90% reduction of greenhouse gases needed to halt climate change.

t: 0161 226 6814  
w: <http://www.risingtide.org.uk>

### Manchester folk against nukes

A minibus of assorted reprobates from Manchester battled the rain-soaked, wind-battered motorway up to Scotland last week to take part in the Trident Ploughshares big blockade of Faslane nuclear weapons base. As the blockade was a 3 day event this time, there were less people there on the first day, when we took part, yet there were lock-ons a plenty, and over 100 arrests.

Having re-read the blockade's non-violence guidelines, which demanded respect to everyone, including therefore police, military, and intrusive media, I felt that I couldn't trust myself to show respect to any of the aforementioned. I also value anger, and the right to defend myself and my friends physically if necessary, so disagreed with the guidelines, and decided not to take part in the action as a result. I played a support role, but as I respect the right of the organisers to set guidelines, didn't want to find myself in a situation in which I either flouted these, or had to compromise my own politics and feelings to avoid flouting them.

The blockade was successful in that we closed all gates to the base for at least 3 hours, and for many it was an inspiring experience - for many the first time they had refused to do as a police officer says, their first arrest, supported by a well organised network right up to court and trial. As I write this, the 3rd day of the blockade is underway.

w: <http://www.tridentploughshares.org/> t: 0161 273 8283



### The Army They Fear Most - An Army Deserting

*"We hereby declare that we will continue to serve in the Israel Defense Force in any assignment that will serve the defense of the state of Israel. The assignment of occupation and repression does not serve that aim - and we will have no part in it."*

Well it's not quite desertion as such, but a growing corps of Israeli reserve officers has begun to refuse service in the occupied territories. Almost three weeks ago, 52 officers signed a public petition denouncing the occupation and refusing to take part in it through military service. The petition was published in one of Israel's leading newspapers. Since its publication, several

hundred more reserve officers have added their names to the petition.

In Manchester there are continuing vigils in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Marks & Spencers have substantial investments in Israel, and are high profile corporate backers of the Israeli state. They also own a large and prestigious retail outlet on Corporation Street, which is where the vigils are taking place. The next one is on March 23rd, midday (see *Loombreaker* 16).

You can contact the Islamic Human Rights Commission at [info@ihrc.org](mailto:info@ihrc.org) or see <http://www.ihrc.org/>

### Police Brutality at Sellafield

*Following on from recent peaceful anti-nuclear protests in Plymouth and at the Faslane submarine base, around 200 peaceful protestors staged a blockade of the two main gates at Sellafield nuclear power plant on Thursday 14th Feb. Despite informing the authorities of their plan to protest, and three previously peaceful demonstrations at the plant, people were thrown to the ground, and police caused injuries as they tried to pull obviously chained together activists apart, while arresting those trying to intervene. The gate was blocked for three hours. Legal actions are being considered against the police.*

w: <http://uk.indymedia.org/>

### Free Colin Davies!

Colin Davies, pioneer of the Dutch Experience cannabis cafe in Stockport appeared at Manchester Crown Court on Feb 15th to have his case adjourned until June. He is still refused bail so by the time he appears in court he will have been confined to a prison cell in Strangeways for seven months, all because he has stated that he will continue to supply marijuana to people with medical needs. Colin is also denied the use of marijuana to alleviate severe pains relating to spinal injuries. Instead he is being supplied with morphine, so that's alright then.

Tens of others are also facing various charges relating to possession and supply

## DIARY

**March**  
*Veggie month* t: 01732 364 546  
**2 Stop the War March**, London. Ring (0161) 273 8283 to book transport - £10/15/20.  
 e: [office@stopwar.org.uk](mailto:office@stopwar.org.uk)  
 w: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/>  
**8 International Women's Day & Global Women's Strike** (see back page).  
**8 C-Day II**  
 Supporters of the Dutch Experience in the dock at Stockport magistrates. (see story).  
**9 'Desire'** women's disco at Retro Bar, Sackville Street, opposite UMIST  
 Special guest: Claire Mooney  
 DJ funkymonkey 9.30 - 2.00 £4.00/£3.00  
**9 Last Chance Rally** - Oppose the GM trial in Long Marston (see back page).  
**11 The Vagina Monologues**  
 Presented by Mcr University drama group, The Lowry Centre, 0161 876 2000  
 £7/£5 (student discount).  
 Proceeds to Manchester Rape Crisis  
**15 International Day Against Police Brutality**  
 w: <http://www.tao.ca/~cobp/>  
 e: [MOJUK@JusticeUK.connectfree.uk.com](mailto:MOJUK@JusticeUK.connectfree.uk.com)  
**16 End Factory Farming - Before it Ends Us!**  
 Rally and march against factory farming.  
 12 noon, Albert Square. t: 01273 777 688  
**14-18 Queeruption IV** (see story)  
**22 Support Bayo Omoyiola**  
 Bayo Omoyiola rescheduled appearance before a special adjudicator (see back page). Aldine House, New Bailey St, Mcr, 9.30am.  
**25 4-day Peat Blockade**  
 See front page for details.  
**April**  
**6 Grand National**  
 National demonstration at Aintree Race Track.  
 Contact Animal Aid. t: 01732 364546

of marijuana. At an earlier 'C-Day' hearing at Stockport magistrates (see *Loombreaker* 25) four more people were arrested for smoking cannabis outside the magistrates court.

The Dutch Experience is still going strong with the court cases and the cafe creating something of a media stir. Even Radio 4's Money Programme have been around to examine the possible financial implications in a legalised world. Of course, home grown marijuana is impossible to tax, and private corporations are unable to dominate any would be cannabis market - not that has anything to with the reluctance of the state to abolish the ridiculous and chauvinistic laws concerning the use of cannabis.

You can find the Dutch Experience at Stockport Village, Hooper St, Stockport.  
t: 0161 480 5902  
w: <http://www.dutchexperience.org/>  
Dodgy Radio report  
<http://www.beyondtv.org/dodgytv/>

## The Loombreaker

### International Women's Day

There is a day of events planned for International Women's Day on March 8th at the Pankhurst Centre on Nelson Street. The events include: a self-defence class, stress busting workshop, DIY surgery, a discussion group on women and sports and more. There will be an evening social (7:00 - 10:30) with a talk on Women in Afghanistan - all proceeds to the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA).

There will be a free creche available (11-1 & 2-4:30, advanced booking required). The day is part of a week of activities from the 3rd to 10th of March organised by the Pankhurst Centre for International Women's Day and coincides with the Global Women's Strike.

Pankhurst Centre t:0161 273 5673  
For information on the strike contact:  
Crossroads Women's Centre, 230a Kentish  
Town Road, London NW5 2AB  
w: <http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/>  
e: [womenstrike8m@server101.com](mailto:womenstrike8m@server101.com)  
t: 0207 209 4761

### Bayo Case Adjourned!

About 40 people turned out to support Bayo Omoiyola before an adjudicator in his application to remain in the country (see Loombreaker 25). Unfortunately the case officer for the home office had laryngitis and the case has been rescheduled for March 22nd. On February 15<sup>th</sup> a dozen people held a protest at Dallas Court "Reporting Centre" in Salford. Asylum seekers living within a 25 mile radius have to report at the centre on a monthly, weekly or sometimes more frequent basis as part of their conditions of asylum. Dallas Court is run by notorious private security company Wackenhut, who also run prisons for profit, mainly in the USA but elsewhere in the world as well.

w: [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk) t: 0151 236 1944  
e: [ncadc-w@ncadc.org.uk](mailto:ncadc-w@ncadc.org.uk)



### Queer As Folk

In March there will be an international five day gathering in London of queer folk of all sexualities with an interest in forging anti-commercial queer community, learning from and sharing with each other and fucking with gender.

There will be workshops about: madpride, pornography, non-monogamy, sex toys, queer pagan, health, healing with wholefoods, sm, sex work and immigration, queer history and more.

If you want to get involved in organising something for the event, or for more information about where and when contact Queeruption, c/o 56a Crampton St., London SE17  
t: 0207 735 3199  
e: [anarquist2001@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:anarquist2001@yahoo.co.uk)  
w: <http://www.queeruption.com>

### Last Chance

"For a GMO free future the summer of action starts here..!" Genetic Engineering Network.

Politicians state it is safe, but you still won't find it at the House of Commons canteen, and in spite of the massive opposition to genetically modified food in the UK over the last few years, profit minded biotech companies continue to peddle their potentially deadly technology. Last year the government announced up to 30 more gm crop trials. One is taking place in Long Marston, Warwickshire, where a national 'Last Chance' rally and action against GM crop trials is happening on March 9th. There will be information, entertainment, videos and displays, organic food and music. For local transport contact 0161 226 6814.

w: <http://www.geneticsaction.org.uk/>  
t: 0207 272 1586

### Moment of Sanity on Market Street

In January a group of innocent bystanders were forced to reconsider the meaning of democracy. After 'careful' consideration of tactics the police stopped six people handing out leaflets and petitioning for support for the picket of the Israeli embassy on 26th January.

As police spokesbroke PC Scratchings explained "I have been concerned about the undermining of democracy in this country for some time. Luckily, we were able to threaten this group with arrest on the basis of one complaint from a member of the public. Even better, we deliberately refused to say why their behaviour was offensive or to be more specific about which particular public order offence they were committing."



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.

Pick it up FREE from:  
● 8th Day Cafe, Oxford Road & Old Birley Street  
● Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick St., Ancoats  
● Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly  
● Misty Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road  
● Pankhurst Centre, 60-62 Nelson Road  
● Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton  
● Top Cafe, Afflecks Palace, Oldham St  
● Vanilla, Sackville St  
● 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 information for action, contributions, comments cartoons & photos, offers of distribution help, or donations (cheques payable to Manchester EFI) to:

The Loombreaker  
c/o Department 29,  
22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS  
0161-226 6814  
[editorial@loombreaker.org.uk](mailto:editorial@loombreaker.org.uk)  
<http://www.loombreaker.org.uk/>

SUBSCRIBE TO LOOMBREAKER BY E-MAIL!  
Send your e-mail address to  
[subscribe@loombreaker.org.uk](mailto:subscribe@loombreaker.org.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! Bring ideas & events each first Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm, Yard Theatre (opposite Junction pub) 41, Old Birley Street, Hulme. Next date: 05/03/02  
Or else come along to the Beyond TV monthly screening. See Front cover for details.

Three Manchester activists have been appearing in the city with a slide show and talk about their recent experiences defying curfews and unblocking Israeli army road blocks in the occupied West Bank (see Loombreaker 25). There are plans for a further trip to Palestine in late March. If you want to join the trip or offer support contact Palestine Solidarity.

e: [palsolidarity@yahoo.com](mailto:palsolidarity@yahoo.com)