

The Loombreaker

www.loombreaker.org.uk

No. 27 ♦ April 2002 ♦ Free

Okasional Cafe Packs in the Fun!

Your favourite cafe/squatted space, the Okasional Cafe, Manchester's most lively and creative alternative venue is currently in its 10th incarnation. This time we're in the Pack Horse, a beautiful old Manchester pub on the end of Deansgate (sown between Deansgate train station and Atlas Bar). Alas the owners have taken us to court already, and as loombreaker goes to press it looks like we'll be evicted just after Easter weekend – so if you're reading this in time, get down there quick and pack in the fun at the Pack Horse.

Background

The Okasional cafe is put together by a loose non hierarchical collective of people who have taken empty buildings in Manchester and transformed them into wicked spaces. Squatting allows us to take back some space for inspiring stuff that could no happen otherwise in the over-

commercialised society today, and also makes the point that land and space should not be only available to rich developers to turn into yuppie flats or posh bars. In previous cafes there have been vegan meals, free parties, live music, inspiring films. Drumming workshops, other workshops, direct action and political meetings, benefit nights, poetry evenings, free shops, art exhibitions, banner making, kids space and always stacks of information about alternative radical stuff going on in Manchester and further afield. The OK caff

is run by people working voluntarily and any money made is ploughed back into supporting radical action to make the world a better place. Decisions are made collectively at meetings before and during the cafe, and everyone is welcome to get involved. The space itself is free and open to anyone who wants to put it to good use, just come on down and help us make your ideas happen.

The Pack Horse

This building was legally squatted on 14th March and since then there has been vegan food, chilled music, free parties, live bands, two screenings of Beyond TV (see later), a poetry evening, a benefit for Peat Alert, a subvertising workshops and more.... Our collective is most impressed however, with our lovely loo. The toilets all having been knocked down, we had to be creative, and our wonderful plumbing friend (you know who you are!) managed to plumb us in a lovely loo. Anyway, on a more serious note, we have not been able to keep the space for long, as yet again, the owners are kicking us out to turn this lovely pub into yet more yuppie flats. There'll be a final benefit party on Ester Saturday to raise money for a new Earth First! Minibus. But not to worry, we hope to reappear another day another place, to shed another ray of light into Manchester life.

TO stay in touch with the Okasional Cafe between squats, and to get involved with helping make the next one happen call 0161 226 6814, come to a Beyond TV show (see later) or look on the loombreaker website. We always need more hands and everyone can help in some way – even if it's just a bit of cleaning.k

MANCHESTER RADICAL BOOKFAIR
 ANARCHISM * FEMINISM * ECOLOGY * PEACE * DIRECT ACTION * SOCIAL CHANGE

SUNDAY 5TH MAY 2002
1.00pm - 5.00pm
 MERCi, Bridge 5 Mill,
 22A Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester, M4 7HR

WORKSHOPS AND FOOD THROUGHOUT THE DAY

for more information and to get involved
 email manchesterbookfair@hotmail.com

The Loombreaker is Manchester's monthly direct action round-up. Inside this issue:

- ♦ peat alert! actions
- ♦ fluffy kitten blah
- ♦ cartoon horrors
- ♦ reasons for being annoyed
- ♦ do something about it



People trashing the GM Crop near Stratford

Love's Labour's Lost

"Public consultation about this trial and trial sites across the country - has been pitifully tokenistic, considering the huge risks posed by GM crops to our own food and the wider ecosystem" Mick Davies, Green Party Local Councillor.

Who in the world cares the most about the needy and the hungry? Surely it's the Biotech Corporations with their new GM foods and the unselfish promise of a world free of hunger... yeah, right. Who knows what Will Shakespeare would have made of it all, but the locals in Long Marston near Stratford-on-Avon are none too impressed by the variant of Oil Seed Rape that Aventis have been growing in their back yard.

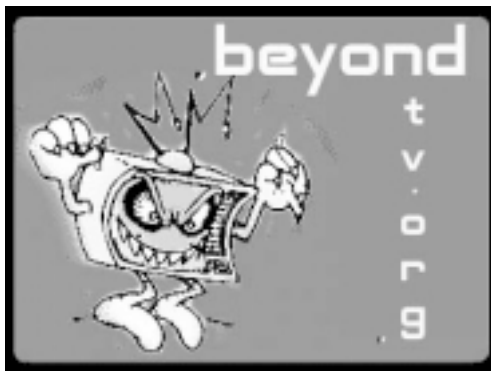
Having tried petitions, lobbying and letter writing to unsurprisingly little effect, more direct means of averting the threat were employed. Fifteen Manchester people joined a couple of hundred locals and activists from around the country teamed up in freezing winds for a spot of gardening, accompanied by a rather bemused local plod. About 100 people piled over barbed wire to decontaminate the site, followed half an hour later by an arrest squad, at which it all turned into a Keystone Cops farce in a muddy field. Five people who tried to peg it were arrested. Strangely, those who ignored the police and carried on with the decontamination were ignored.

A couple of hours later about 10% of the crop is trashed, and everyone is back in the village hall for tea and cake - including the coppers who attempt to take over the running of the action, organising the coaches and making sure everyone is on their way back to Stratford. Are they after some support, perhaps, for their own upcoming industrial action? Who knows, but they would be far more use if they were to prosecute Aventis for criminal damage caused through contamination of neighbouring crops, as requested some time ago, or even doing a spot of digging. But that, of course, would be expecting a bit too much.

www.undercurrents.org/GMO.htm or www.geneticsaction.org.uk/

Beyond TV

As we reported in the last loombreaker, Beyond TV is an independent media project in Manchester. The launch night at The Font in February was extremely successful, and we hope to see Beyond TV having regular monthly slots. The idea is that people can come along, see inspiring short films, meet people involved in action in Manchester, and find out how to get involved in stuff. There have been a couple of Beyond TV screenings at the OKasional Cafe (see front page), and we are currently exploring venues who can host the events on a monthly basis. The idea is to have one screening a month which is a more social outlet, and the next month have a more reflective, discussion element alongside the films and the socialising. If you would like to help, or get involved, and to find out when our monthly screenings will be - contact us at info@beyonDTV.org, 226 6814 or www.beyonDTV.org



End of the Road

A Direct Action Gathering to build resistance to the new roads program and the corporate dominance it fuels....
19th - 20th April in Nottingham

This gathering is being organised to provide a forum for those interested in a direct action response to the resurrection of the government road building program. Though now mainly decentralised to the county level, this multibillion pound program will devastate our environment putting thousands of acres under concrete to provide arteries for the corporate economy. The previous roads program became the front line for radical ecological resistance and opposition to capitalist expansion. It is time to learn from past struggles and evolve new tactics.

For more information contact 07813 505480, or email endoftheroad@hushmail.com. To meet up with people from Manchester for travel to Nottingham contact 226 6814

A6 Protest Update

The A6 protest site in Derbyshire has closed, due to lack of people able to be there. The campaign still managed to frighten the Highways Agency considerably and show that English Nature are too scared to stand up to the HA (decided not to attack HA over the cutting down of Cornation Plantation outside of the License condition times) Thanks to all of you who helped out at the site, sent letters of support, generally helped in the background, lay down in front of fencing and climbed on the digger. Still to go are the objections to the side road order variation, tho' this is looking like a formality

More info from dot@theadora.screaming.net

Road Safety Action, Hulme

Last month, 3 Hulme residents decided that they'd dived with death too many times trying to cross the Stretford Road/ Cambridge Street junction and decided to do something about it. The council do not have the funding to put in a proper crossing and will only do so when it becomes an 'accident blackspot', ie, when someone gets killed. Therefore, we enlisted the help of a 'real' zebra, balloons and placards to alert drivers and passersby to this problem. Initially we were helping people cross the road, but the police warned that we were distracting the drivers too much.....so, we kept to one side of the road for the rest of the day and collected over 800 signatures on a petition. Everyone who passed by agreed that something needed to be done and many had witnessed or actually been involved in accidents here. We are hoping that this action will start a campaign, forcing the council to find the money for a crossing before it's too late. For more details, please contact haysusmog@yahoo.co.uk

Bayo wins case (nearly!)

Bayo Omoyiola completed his PhD in the 1970's at Aberdeen University and made several short trips here during the 1980's. He last came to the UK in 1989, and has been under threat of deportation since 1991.

There are many twists and tales to the story, (see Loombreaker 25) but on Friday 22 March, Bayo appeared yet again at the immigration court in Salford for his Human Rights appeal. He was contesting that the Home Office in effecting a deportation would be breaching his right to a private life. The adjudicator agreed and decided that Bayo should have indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

The Home Office Presenting Officer said they would appeal the decision! For malicious reasons, it's not yet all over for Bayo.

Contact National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns Tel: 0161 740 8206 <http://www.ncadc.org.uk>

Stop Taking the Peat!

A crack team of Manchester residents attended the big 4 day blockade of Scotts peat extraction works in

Yorkshire in March (see last issue). However, a chilly and slightly tuneless street party rendered our cunning plan pointless.....The assembly stopped all trucks leaving with their stolen goods (i.e. the peat - it's our land you know) for the afternoon, but was eventually moved when police arrested about 35 people for breaking section 'not doing what coppers tell you'.

The ensuing days saw more blockades and a Friends of the Earth demonstration and forced Scotts to move their lorries in convoy and police to start hassling vehicles that left our well appointed ex-MoD base camp. The company is worried enough to be ringing up the campaign asking if there is anything they can do to stop the blockade...lets hope they got the obvious answer!

This blockade is part of the ongoing campaign to save the last of our precious peat moors... a campaign which received a boost when only a couple of weeks after having all their works and factories blockaded, Scotts pulled out of 2 moors - although robbing a hefty £17m of our taxpayers money to make up for their lost profits!! This leaves Hatfield moor as their main site in Britain and as they've promised to stop digging there in 2 years every delay they suffer in the mean time will go directly to saving this rare habitat.

Contact: www.peatalert.org.uk info@peatalert.org.uk 07787 782259

Animal Rights News from Manc. Animal Protection

Manchester Animal Protection (MAP) are currently focussing on Marsh UK, provider of insurance to notorious animal cruelty laboratory Huntingdon Life Sciences. No company can exist without insurance, so Marsh are directly helping to keep HLS in business.

The most recent demo took place on March 19th, when 20 activists descended upon Marsh's Manchester offices on Oxford Road and City Rd East. At Oxford Rd protestors laid siege to the Marsh offices on the 6th floor. Workers inside were effectively imprisoned by their own security guards until police arrived, during which time activists let it be known via megaphone to Marsh and other businesses inside the building that there would be no let up in the campaign until they severed their links with animal cruelty firm HLS. Work was completely disrupted not only within the Marsh offices but in neighbouring offices as well, which only puts more pressure on Marsh.

Similarly work in Marsh's plush new offices on City Rd East (and again, neighbouring offices) was disrupted.. Activists occupied the main entrance with a noisy medley of drums, sirens and airhorns.. Paranoid security guards would not let anyone in or out of the building, and some employees were seen sneaking in through the fire exit of the Lloyds TSB offices who occupy the ground floor of the building - how embarrassing!

Apologies

Our humblest go to Clair of Disabled People's Direct Action Network, as we managed to print the unedited version of the story on the action to highlight lack of accessible homes for disabled people in our last issue. Contact slowly@whispered.screaming.net for info on disabled peoples actions



DIARY

(see MAP article for Animal Rights upcoming dates)

April

5 Bomed Out - benefit for Greater Manchester CND Featuring ... Pinhole Change Nothing & The Strap Ons 8 - 1.30am
The Star and Garter - Fairfield Street - Manchester £3.50 Adv. £4.50 Door 0161 273 8283

4-8 Sellafield Mixed Peace Camp (see article)

13 Mark Barnsley Solidarity Day of Action - Pickett David Blunkett on behalf of framed activist. 11am (prompt!), Meadowhall Bus Station (nr Sheffield). See Loombreaker 17. w: <http://www.freemarkbarnsley.com/>

19-20 The End of the Road Gathering (see article)

20 The North in the 60's A day of films and speakers at Manchester's Cornerhouse lorraine.rolston@cornerhouse.org 0161 200 1500

24 Get Kissinger! Tthe world's greatest living war criminal, is speaking to top business people in London. http://uk.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=24625&group=webcast

24 National Day of Action Against Profiteering Employment Agencies - Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, www.simonjones.org.uk/ t: 01273 685913 e: simonjonesaprilaction@hotmail.com

22-28 Real Nappy Week (honestly!) Environmental impact of nappies nappies@wen.org.uk www.wen.org.uk/

30 Subvertise - National Day of Action. Time to reach for the paste brush. www.subvertise.org/

May

1 Mayday - see article

4 Free the Weed! Global Pot Day. Mass action planned in over 200 cities worldwide, including a march and festival in Manchester. Cannabis Coalition, www.cannabiscoalition.org 0161 834 1130

5 Manchester Radical Book Fair (see box on front page)

11 Radical History Conference (see box - Sources of Radicalism on back page)

June 7 Commonpoverty and the Commonwealth

"In midsummer of this year a radical political arts festival will be held in Manchester, timed to coincide with the Commonwealth Games. Half of it will be organised using many city centre venues for visual art, photography exhibitions, musical acts and film. The other side of it will be more spontaneous, with street performers, graffiti kids and muralists decorating the streets." email: june7@corporatedirtbag.com

And don't forget to check out the web site for diary dates - www.loombreaker.org.uk

To get involved ring Simon on 07932 547785. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month above the Town Hall Tavern on Tib Lane, off Cross St, Manchester, 7.30pm. The next meeting is on Wed 3rd April. Or come to our regular stalls on Market St every week.

Forthcoming demo dates:

Saturday 6th April - Grand National National Demo - Noon opposite main entrance at Aintree Race Track. Contact Elaine Toland on 01732 364546

Sunday 7th - - International Animal Rights Festival 'A Gathering of Thousands In Memory of Barry Horne'. Bands, stalls and speakers from every section of the animal rights movement. Noon to midnight at the Astoria, London. Tickets available price £15.90 (inc. postage) from Arkangel Magazine, BCM 9240, London WC1N 3XX.

Saturday 13th Save The Newchurch Guinea Pigs National Demo. Demonstration against a farm which breeds guinea pigs for vivisection. Food by Veggies. Call 01902-564734

Saturday 27th - SHAC RALLY - WORLD DAY FOR LABORATORY ANIMALS Meet noon at The Park, Park Road (A1066), Diss, Norfolk for march and rally, followed by visit to the Occold labs, off the B1077, south of Eye in Suffolk, and actions across the county. Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty: 0845 458 0630

This is a call out on behalf of Fran Thompson, an eco/animal defence prisoner in Knox, Nebraska, USA. She would like to get back in touch with her friend Carly in Holland. Carly is going to college in Wageningen and was last heard from while between Arnhem and Apledoorn. Fran is doing life plus ten years for actions against a battery chicken factory. Get in touch with Ms Fran Thompson, 1107 Recharge Rd, York, NY 14167

Dutch Experience Update

On Friday 15th March, two MEP's charged with possession of cannabis, entered not guilty pleas. Most other people arrested in connection with the Dutch Experience pleaded guilty to possession and generally received cautions. Colin Davies is on remand in Strangeways with another guy called Ruud(?). The big showdown happens in June when he is next in court.

Please Write to
 HH 5239 Colin
 Brian Davies
 C/o HM Prisons
 Strangeways
 1, Southall Street
 Manchester
 M60 9AH



Plans for May 4th Cannabis Day in Manchester are taking shape and on APRIL 1st, 2002 the UK coffee shop invasion begins stage two in Bournemouth, with Liverpool, Rhyl, Edinburgh, London, and many more all to follow in the coming weeks. More info from www.dutchexperience.org

MAYDAY FESTIVAL OF ALTERNATIVES, London

This Mayday in London there will be a Mayday Festival of Alternatives - a week of events which celebrate autonomous, anti-capitalist, co-operative culture. Workshops, film showings, art exhibitions, parties/picnics, and actions.

There will also be a mass action in Mayfair (a olde traditional place of may day celebrations), London on Wed May 1st 1pm - Multiple Independent Meet-up Points. Mayday falls mid week, so make sure you have the day off.

Mayday in Mayfair will be a fluid, spontaneous and exciting return to the Mayfayre, happening everywhere at once, without a fixed starting point or finish. Four separate but intertwined elements of Ye Olde May Day will take place. There's no advertised starting point to the celebrations due to police tactics of containing movement by violently imposing cordons for hours on end. So create your own fun events, play your own games, come with friends, join with others, generate your own street arty/performance/pavement picnic, everyday-reality-subverting- situation — above all keep moving and don't let the cops trap and surround you! This way our festivities will not be crushed.

Info: festivalofalternatives@yahoo.com
 action info: londonmayday@yahoo.co.uk
 Tel No for both: 07786 716 335
 Website: www.ourmayday.org.uk

STOP THE NAZI BNP IN OLDHAM!

Join the mass leafleting Sunday April 7th at noon prompt, Civic Centre Car Park Rochdale Rd, Oldham

Called jointly by: Oldham AntiNazi League; Searchlight Magazine; Side by Side; Oldham United Against Racism; Oldham Women Against Racism; Oldham Trade Unions Against Racism and Fascism.

We will cover all Oldham wards where the BNP have election candidates, with the special 'Oldhamer' leaflet jointly produced by the AntiNazi League, Searchlight and Oldham United Against Racism.

For details phone the AntiNazi League on 0207 924 0333 or Side by Side on 07814581916

Sources of Radicalism

A one day event focussing on the history of popular protest and radical social, political and cultural movements. Saturday 11th May, Manchester. Including: Past and present-day anti-fascism, punk and disco, the General Strike, the Irish in Britain, Irish Republicanism, the Manchester Women's Trade Union League, women and politics in the inter-war years, the Pan African Congress of 1945, the 1970s radical press in Manchester, politics and the internet, and international solidarity.

Entrance fee is £7.00/£3.00 (unwaged), including lunch. Early booking is strongly advised. For info and booking form contact: anne.morrow@man.ac.uk
 Conference website: www.leftdirect.co.uk

Sellafield Peace Camp

Some Faslane peace campers are linking with youth and student CND and sellafield womens' peace camp to do a mixed peace camp from 5th to the 8th April at Sellafield nuclear power station in Cumbria. Sellafield is an unnecessary threat to our health and our environment, and also imposes our dirty radioactive waste on other countries such as Ireland and Norway through pollutants in the seas. We can't continue to pile up radioactive nuclear waste, and we have to oppose the the new plans to build more nuclear power stations - this is no answer to climate change!

There is transport to the camp from Manchester – contact Manchester CND on 0161 273 8283. One of the aims of the action to the press as a solidarity action with Irish citizens opposing Sellafield, and in the recent call to action by the Norwegian Prime Minister.



..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.

Pick it up **FREE** from:

- **8th Day Cafe**, Oxford Road & Old Birley Street
- **Bridge 5 Mill**, Beswick St., Ancoats
- **Café Pop**, Oldham Street, Piccadilly
- **Mistys Café**, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road
- **Pankhurst Centre**, 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 EF!) to:

The Loombreaker
 c/o Department 29,
 22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS
 0161-226 6814
loombreaker@nematode.freeseve.co.uk
<http://www.loombreaker.org.uk/>

SUBSCRIBE TO LOOMBREAKER BY E-MAIL!
 Send your e-mail address to loombreaker@nematode.freeseve.co.uk to get the Loombreaker by e-mail.

Interested in taking action?
 Get in touch with us at the contacts above, come along to any of the actions or meetings in the diary, or better still, come along to Beyond TV (see box inside) and meet other people in Manchester taking action, get inspired, and join in.

Anti War Stuff

We are still rumbling towards all out world war and catastrophe for thousands of innocent people in Iraq, in the wake of Sept 11th. The US attempt at full spectrum dominance must be resisted. CND are holding a demo against star wars (national missile defence) on Easter Saturday, and though this is too late for that, to keep in touch with anti war activities phone CND on 0161 273 8283. A Stategising meeting to look at anti war resistance in Manchester is on April 16th at 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Mount St.