

THE STAINES HOWLER

FREE/DONATION

SUMMER 2012

The Olympic Games Bring the Global Elite to Egham

The Olympic Games have arrived in Egham with the campus at Royal Holloway University going into "lock-down" (the term actually being used) as it becomes an Olympic Village. Surrounded by steel walls and flood-lit at night, the campus is an inescapable reminder to local people that their town is now a host to the "Greatest Show on Earth". In the run-up to the summer, the Olympics have become more and more visible in Egham. First there was the appearance of an Olympic traffic lane, then flags bearing the nauseating Olympic logo lining the route of the Torch, and finally the floodlights surrounding the Olympic Village. All done with little to no consultation of the local community, these things have just appeared, seemingly over-night, on our very doorsteps.

For those working inside the Olympic Village the intrusion is even worse. Normal working practice is forgotten, along with staff contracts as supervisors are replaced by LOCOG officials.



Sponsorships are protected to the extent that staff are unable to bring homemade sandwiches. This is a scene being repeated in communities all over London and surrounding areas. Everything must be just-so for the Games and all normal activity must be suspended to ensure it. It is the ordinary communities who are bearing the brunt of the disruption, while it is the taxpayer who is paying for them. However, it is not the ordinary person who will benefit from them. Many

of the promised jobs for local communities have not appeared, the game organisers preferring to use unpaid labour instead. Many of the 'developments' will not endure, scheduled for demolition shortly after the Games. Even the spectator numbers for the public have been limited, with many of the tickets reserved for the multi-billionaire Olympic sponsors, whilst the rest are prohibitively expensive.

The Olympic Games in London are being shown to be far from a celebration of the human spirit, or sportsmanship, or any other of the clichés repeated by a compliant media. They are a celebration of money, corporate capitalism and elitism. The red carpet is being rolled out to welcome the wealthiest people on Earth to the London Olympics, and nothing can be allowed to interrupt it; neither the concerns of local communities nor the fulfilment of promises made in the run up to the Games. The Olympics is yet another way that the ruling class shows its contempt for us.

Local Pharmacy Refuses to Give Emergency Contraception

Your reproductive rights are not assured. This is the message that has been made clear in a wave of attacks on both sides of the Atlantic recently. In the US laws attempting to restrict women's rights to abortions, to stop them accessing contraception as part of their healthcare and even to criminalise miscarriage have found their echoes on our own shores. The likes of Nadine Dorries, Conservative Party MP, are attempting to push back the time frame for legal abortion and religious group like 40daysforlife have used the cover of staged 'vigils' to harass, intimidate and where possible prevent people from accessing abortion services.



Royal Holloway University Feminism Society brought to light another battle that has yet to be won completely - the right for people to access emergency contraception in a timely and

respectful fashion. When women came together to share their experiences the outcome was a grim reflection of this truth. A flat denial of service was reported in a local Boots on 'religious grounds' and pharmacists and GPs with suspect motives were reported to have told women that they didn't 'really need' emergency contraception due to the time of their cycle. Almost anyone who has sought emergency

contraception has a story of judgemental treatment; a lack of privacy when being questioned on shop floors, not to mention the high cost of the meds where NHS treatment is unavailable. It is a tough problem to tackle, and one that we are inclined not to organise around due to its occasional and private nature. It fails to stir the same passion as abortion rights but the continued stigma it attaches to women, and the failure of the young and the poor in particular to readily access emergency contraception is a continued outrage. Watch this space for more info. In the meantime go to www.stainesanarchists.wordpress.com for a full list of pharmacies and clinics providing this service free in the Staines and Egham area. And if you hear of any local places refusing emergency contraception then feel free to contact rhulfeminism@gmail.com.

The Jubilee: Was it a Cause for Celebration?

Although it is tempting to see the jubilee celebrations as nothing

but an excuse for a long weekend and a piss up - "celebrating the

cat's birthday" as it were - they do reflect a truth central to how our

society is ordered: on the basis of class, privilege and wealth. The revelation in the following days that security for the event included unpaid jobseekers bussed in from as far away as Bristol, who were then expected to sleep under a bridge, was therefore a predictable abuse of power.

It seems lots of people think of the royal family as outside of politics, yet the queen is the official head of state and has the power to dissolve parliament. Laws only come into effect when

she signs them. She is also head of the armed forces and the church. It is not for nothing that in other times and places the struggle against monarchy has been seen as integral to the struggle for wider liberation. The relationship between the monarchy and the fascist movement in Spain is a strong example. Monarchies are not politically inert. In fact, David Cameron's career was kick-started by a call from the Palace to Tory HQ – a move no one denies but for which no royal

insider has ever taken official credit. Both David and Samantha Cameron are direct descendants of royalty, and it is no coincidence that the ranks of the wealthy and powerful are peppered with the children of an aristocracy rooted in a royal legacy. Far from a harmless tradition, the monarchy helps to keep us in chains. The next time the nation needs an excuse to party I for one would rather celebrate Tiddles turning 2 than face down another flotilla.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING LOCALLY...

Anti-Workfare Campaigning

Workfare is a collection of five government schemes that aim to coerce the unemployed into working for free or lose their benefit entitlements. Workfare lowers your chance of finding paid work, and allows private companies to hire people for no money at public expense. Many companies have pulled out of the workfare schemes in the past few months, due to public outrage at such blatant exploitation. However, many are still participating in one or more of the schemes.

In the local area we have picketed



WHSmith, McDonald's and Tesco; just some of the businesses who participate in workfare. More recently we leafleted Staines Job Centre to provide information to

Job Seeker's Allowance claimants on the workfare schemes and whether they are mandatory or voluntary (sometimes the Job Centre will claim a scheme is mandatory when it is not).

We also held a public meeting with a speaker from the Boycott Workfare campaign for those interested in finding out more about workfare. Anti-workfare campaigning seems to strike a chord with people. Many have said to us "Forced, unpaid, work? Sounds like slavery to me".

Surrey/Berkshire Activist Groups Regional Meeting

To kick off the summer, Staines Anarchists held a regional meeting and social event for local activist groups. Each group was invited to present what campaigns/actions they were working on, the resources and skills they had to offer and the dates of

events they had coming up. The groups present were Save Our Services in Surrey, Royal Holloway Anti Cuts Society, Royal Holloway Feminism Society, Thames Valley Solidarity Federation, Englefield Green Eco-village, Guildford Hunt Saboteurs

and Surrey United Anti-capitalists.

Overall the meeting proved constructive and many ideas were shared. Hopefully it will create more of a political culture locally and encourage better networking amongst activist groups.

Eco-village set-up in Runnymede

A camp has been set-up on disused land in the Runnymede area to highlight the gulf in land ownership in our society. Originally intended to be set-up on the Windsor estate (the British Royal family being one of the biggest private landowners

in the world), the eco-camp has moved between several times, whilst looking for a permanent site on which to establish itself. The long term aim is to promote sustainable and self-sufficient living, and to challenge the land

privileges of the elite. Although not a Staines Anarchist campaign, we have been in regular contact with the eco-village. You can find out more about the eco-village at www.diggers2012.wordpress.com.

Produced by:

STAINES  ANARCHISTS

"Anarchists?! Aren't you those people who love chaos and disorder?"

The short answer is, no. Contrary to popular belief we believe in a highly organised society in which workplaces and communities are self-managed by the people.

At the moment a small group of politicians and business owners make the crucial decisions on issues that affect our lives. The choices made are in the interests of profit and the social elite, not ordinary people. Instead we would like to see people making the choices that affect their community and workplaces, and taking control of their own lives.

Anarchism is a way of thinking about how society should be organised and challenging a system where ordinary people are being screwed over.

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