

Earth First! Action Update

No.31 SEPTEMBER 96

30p

'Look upon my works ye mighty and despair' - Shelley.

RAINBOW KEEPERS IN RUSSIA ATTACKED

The Rainbow Keepers are an anarchist ecological movement active in protesting against various projects in the former USSR. They started a camp on the 10th August to protest against the construction of the Rostov nuclear power plant situated thirteen kilometres away from Volgogradsk in the Rostov-on-Don region of Southern Russia.

This project is very unpopular among the local population and even the local administration seem to be not so thrilled by it. In spite of this, the Ministry of Nuclear Energy is putting pressure on the local administration and is quickly recruiting personnel to work at the nuclear power plant. Early in the morning on 22nd August the camp was attacked and people were searched and beaten by people in military clothes who wore no identification. They did this with extreme brutality and people who resisted were given death threats. Afterwards one of the people who had been beaten saw an attacker on guard at the nuclear power plant.

It would be good to show some international solidarity with this struggle since their camp is thirteen kilometres out in the steppe and there are no local people to help them. For more information tel/fax: 7 095 298 3987 or e-mail: rk@glas.apc.org or cube@glas.apc.org. or ed@cci.glasnet.

BRIGHTON RECLAIM YOUR FEET!

Brighton was the scene for over one thousand empowered pedestrians, the vast majority of whom were not only local but were not from the ghetto of the alternative scene, who experienced an afternoon of mirth and mayhem by the sea on 24th August. They had a heavy police presence on the morning of the party and were frantically trying to stop it early and they even broke up a Rotary Club picnic on the beach thinking that that was the party! The original plan to have a street party on one street, transformed into a mobile Reclaim The Streets once the cops confiscated certain items. One up to the Blue Meanies you may think, but the action succeeded in disrupting more traffic and reclaiming more space than a party in a single street ever could have done.

The party began with the sight of many beach-balls being thrown amongst the crowd and finished with all main avenues in town having been walked, and many sore feet were spoken of after it had all finished. Crap arrests by the dozen helped to swell the total number arrested to eighty, but strangely a Rolls-Royce driver who swerved at speed through the crowd was not one of them (metallic bronze Rolls Royce, registration number 67 PHW).

The police effort to stop the action, code

named 'Operation Oscar', cost over £100,000, and they can be proud of their contribution to obstructing the traffic in defence of Mother Earth. They can be less proud of their excessive use of batons and deficient use of brains.



Cops go undercover at Brighton Street Party.

By seven o'clock that evening everyone was in need of a cuppa (or a chiropodist), and the arrestees (including legal observers charged with conspiracy to commit a public nuisance) were in need of a good lawyer in order to sue the police at a later date. Despite a few hiccups, the action was a great success, and this huge Critical Masses without bikes may set the trend in future anti-auto antics.

STOP THE CLAMPDOWN! RECLAIM THE FUTURE!

On 7th September there was due to be a national demonstration in London to mark the two years since the passing of the Criminal Justice Act. Under the banner of STOP THE CLAMPDOWN! RECLAIM THE FUTURE! this event aimed to unite different protest groups including anti-CJA, animal rights, struggles against the JSA and the radical ecological movement. Due to the Metropolitan Police refusing to grant the event a licence, and the fact that around that time links were being built with the Liverpool Dockers, a decision was taken to move the whole event to Liverpool.

The original march has now grown into three

days of celebration and action. The plan for the weekend is a massive march/party through Liverpool on Saturday 28th meeting at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool at 12 noon. The day after there will be relaxation, workshops, direct action training and entertainment and on Monday 30th there will be a mass action, meeting 10am at Seaforth Docks, Liverpool.

This weekend of party and action signifies a linking up of apparently diverse struggles, and with this happening we will see our weakness as isolated groups diminish, and our collective strength grow through the coming together of people with different experiences. The problems that various groups, campaigns and individuals face all come from the same source and only by uniting our struggles will we be able to overcome it.

This event has massive potential and it is vital that as many people as possible from around the country attend for the entire three days, but most importantly the Mass Action on Monday 30th which has now turned into an International Day of Action in support of the dockers. Accommodation and catering will be provided for the Saturday and Sunday nights.

For more details on this event contact Freedom Network on: 0171 582 3474, Liverpool Dockers on: 0151 207 3388 or Advance Party on: 0181 450 6929. For transport details contact London Reclaim The Streets on: 0171 281 4621.

A30 UPDATE

On Thursday 22nd August the camps, which are there to resist the construction of the A30 road from Honiton - Exeter in Devon, had a preliminary visit from the Under-Sheriff extraordinaire, Andrew Wilson, but apparently he was last seen fleeing across a field, minus most of his (rather interesting) notes, with the Swamp Monsters from Allercombe in pursuit.

One of the A30 actioneers continues the story: "Amidst our rightful jubilation at this dispatching of the Dark Overlord, we must realise that this is the beginning of the end for Trollheim, Allercombe and Fairmile after two years of resistance. We know for certain that they are due to start building the road on 1st October and it seems very likely that the evictions will be in late September, so help is needed now! There are not many of us here at the moment yet we have got some of the most well barricaded sites the movement has ever had and we truly have the chance to kick some industrial arse. It looks like the CONNECT consortium are footing the bill for the evictions rather than the DoT, so let's make it a big one! We haven't got much time left and you'll regret it if you miss this one so get down here. If you can't get down to the sites you can really help by writing 'Tettors of complaint' to CONNECT or whatever seems appropriate."

For more details call the A30 Action on: 01404 815729. New A30 website address <http://www.fury36.demon.co.uk/a30/index.html>

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Letters of support and literature for Ted Kaczynski, the suspect for the Unabomber bombings in the US, would be much welcomed. Send them to: Ted Kaczynski, Sacramento County Main Jail, 651 I Street, Sacramento, California CA 95814, USA.

A new Anti-Newbury Bypass group has been set up called the Reading Roadbusters. It meets every Sunday at 7pm at the RISC in London Street, Reading. Contact: 01734 503682.

The Motor Show this year, 'celebrating' the centenary of the motor car, will be held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Birmingham Reclaim The Streets are currently planning an action for the first day of the show Tuesday 15th October. Anyone who wants to be involved is invited to contact Birmingham Reclaim The Streets on. 0121 449 5452.

At the Earth First! Gathering in Wales, it was decided that closer links were needed between Earth First! activists and campaigns in the north, and to help this the Northern Network was started. If you want to be on this please contact York Earth First! Get in touch if you have fliers which they can distribute (send about 50 copies), regional actions you want networking, or if you can provide transport to Northern campaigns from your area.

The six people charged with incitement to commit criminal damage by publication, including the alleged editors of Green Anarchist, will now be appearing at Portsmouth Magistrates Court between 6-13th December rather than the dates mentioned last month. Support on the first day would be appreciated. The meeting to set up a defendants campaign for them will be at 5pm in the Club Room on Sunday 29th September at the Mobilise Against Big Mac Day at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. According to a barrister who has studied the evidence this case is one of the most politically motivated that he has seen in a long time. For more information contact: Green Anarchist, BM 1715, London WC1 3XX.

On 20th August the Earth Liberation Front visited Camas Aggregates Rockbeare Hill Quarry near Exeter in Devon. A control room was damaged, a fire started under an articulated Scania lorry, a pool of diesel leaking from a storage tank was set alight and a non-mechanical incendiary was left inside a storage building. For more details of similar actions read Green Anarchist, BM 1715, London WC1 3XX or the new issue of Direct Action Direct, due soon from: Direct Action Direct, c/o Mid-Sussex Earth First! Box A, Public House Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 2HQ.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER:

The editors of the Earth First! Action Update do not intend to encourage people to conduct any illegal action. The information in this Action Update is for purely information purposes only.

LYMINGE FOREST

Final planning permission has now been granted to the RANK organisation to go ahead and build a holiday village in this beautiful woodland area. The only legal chance now is the judicial review that is due to be heard in September. Despite RANK'S announcement that they plan to delay construction the work could start at anytime. Surveying work and a small amount of clearance work has already taken place earlier this year. A camp has been set up in West Wood, but only has a few inhabitants. More people are needed for the camp although it is not urgent yet!

As well as this Canterbury saw it's first Critical Mass in July. Around thirty people turned up to cycle right around the ring-road before going through the city centre. Police responded in their usual style by filming everyone and accompanying them with three police cars and a riot van, but they still failed to stop the ride.

For more information on Lyminge Forest and events in this area contact The Flat Oak Society on: 01227 463368.

BIRMINGHAM STREET PARTY

Around five hundred people turned up for the Birmingham Street Party on Saturday 17th August. Party goers carrying banners, drums and other musical instruments assembled in a park near the venue.

A Critical Mass bike ride set off and the eighty or so cyclists headed for a major road junction that that they had been led to believe that the police thought was the venue for the party. The people on foot left the park by another gate and met up with the van that was carrying the sound system, surrounding it to prevent it being impounded. At first the police tried to clear a path through the crowd for it, telling the driver 'not to worry, we'll get you through.' Once the police realised what was in the vehicle they tried to stop it going any further by letting it's tyres down and driving police vans in front of it.

By this time the cyclists had returned from their diversionary ride and had occupied the venue. Eventually, after much pushing and shoving and negotiation, the sound system was set up and the party got going.

It appears the police had information that the 'London Anarchists' had infiltrated the party and were planning to dig up the road! Everything that came near the road was checked and one arrest was made for conspiracy to cause criminal damage, then, having stopped the threat to the road the police relaxed a little. As there was never any intention of digging up the road the police found it difficult to find any evidence and the charge was dropped.

At the end most of the party people moved off but about ten people were arrested. The police searched the house of the person arrested for conspiracy to cause criminal damage and having completed their search returned to the bottom floor by lift. It appears that some seven or eight police officers squashed in the lift, overloading it, and thus trapped themselves inside. To escape they had to force the doors open from the inside. The engineers who came to repair it said that this was not the first time that they had had to repair lifts

damaged by the police in this way. The local residents group, backed by a letter from a solicitor, are pressing the council to send the bill to West Midlands Police.

For more details contact Birmingham Reclaim The Streets on: 0121 449 5452.

TUBE WORKERS SUPPORT ACTION

On 7th August, London Reclaim The Streets had two actions in support of the striking tube workers demands for shorter continuous driving shifts and more notice in regard to shift changes and holidays. This was not about money, it was, as one tube worker said, that strikers "want their lives back".

The morning started with four Critical Masses heading into Central London from North, East, South and West. After the 500 cyclists had assembled in Trafalgar Square they paid a visit to Parliament Square and Downing Street before heading back to Trafalgar Square and the heavy handed police, who then penned everyone into a bus lane before starting to push people and bikes around. They then wouldn't let more than one cyclist at a time leave the area.

Meanwhile another group of people from Reclaim The Streets decided to 'Take it to the Top' by visiting the London Underground Offices, in St. James Park. A group of about 40 people rushed into the reception area. Two people were grabbed by security while ten ran straight past and up to the 7th floor and the Chairman's office. There they introduced themselves to Peter Ford, who was, at the time, expecting other visitors from the BBC, but instead found himself being interviewed by protesters about the working conditions of the tube drivers. They then talked together about their ideas for a sustainable transport system for London and he at least agreed that public transport was underfunded.

Care was taken not to cause criminal damage to the office as a banner was hung out the window reading 'Squeeze the Car not the Tube' and someone handcuffed themselves to a piece of furniture.

Minutes later around fifteen police stormed into the office completely over-reacting, scattering everything on the floor from the desk of Peter Ford. Laughable, as they then arrested everyone on suspicion of not only assault on a police officer and breach of the peace, but criminal damage also.

On release from police custody that evening the protesters discovered that their bikes had all been impounded. Apparently they were a security risk! According to police, no notices have to be in view for this to be legal. Not very clever of the police really to use hydraulic bolt-cutters on bikes that could, by their reckoning, have contained bombs! Even the police at the pound said it was strange to get a request to remove bikes from the place they had been locked up, as they had never removed them from there before. For more details of forthcoming actions contact London Reclaim The Streets on: 0171 281 4621.

PLEA FOR PHOTOS

Action Update needs photographs of actions that have happened that month, please send them to the P.O. Box below.

How to Contact the Earth First! Action Update

By Post: Earth First! Action Update, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY. By Phone: 0171 561 9146 By E-Mail: actionupdate@gn.apc.org.

Please enclose a SAE for replies, and to subscribe to the free e-mail server - send us your details.

Earth First! Website address: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earthfirst.html>

OXFORD RECLAIM THE STREETS

After a period of relative dormancy Oxford Earth First! has been relaunched, capitalising on the energy generated locally by the Newbury campaign. The focus of the group will be on local issues, predominantly development schemes and transport.

The inaugural action was on Friday 30th August, where the monthly Critical Mass was followed by a hugely successful Street Party in Broad Street. About two hundred people turned up and played music, danced and feasted. The three policemen present enjoyed the event too with their biggest complaint being that since they had not been forewarned they were still in their short sleeves and feeling the chill by 9pm. However, this was largely due to them being less responsive than Oxford's other residents, to adverts for the party in the form of banners that had been dropped from the Carfax building the week before.

Ever since receiving massive criticism for their rough treatment of protesters over squatting two years ago, Oxford police have been very keen to avoid conflict. This leaves many interesting possibilities for the future!

For news of upcoming actions contact Oxford Earth First! on 01865 791391.

NEWBURY FLIM FLAM

Injunctions against ten people were granted on Friday 13th August at the High Court by Justice Cooper. He permitted the defendants to go onto the land at Gotan camp in order to pick vegetables until midnight that day. Unfortunately he couldn't make the delicious harvest supper on Sunday evening.

On 25th August over 2,000 people enjoyed a mile of art at 'Art Bypass', organised by Friends of the Earth. Several art pieces involving cars are now on-route lock-ons. The route walk saw almost two hundred colourful and festive people flim-flamming down it.

A compound at Rickety Bridge was occupied for almost 24 hours and a generator reportedly worth 12,000 pounds was written off when it fell down a hill and a considerable amount of fencing was cut due to the notorious cutting nocturnal winds of Newbury which altogether amounts to a severe Compound Fracture. Police expectations of a Reclaim The A34 were dashed when, "Operation Magic Roundabout, proceed to target" was broadcast over the CB radio causing the immediate stationing of police on the A34 roundabouts.

A Police Press Release accusing Pinkertons of incompetence and requesting an increase in numbers of security was found to be a hoax. M15 is suspected. Numbers were considerably increased by numerous bands playing up and down the route. Trespass Thursday resulted in a mass bail break ... protesting about the Newbury Sausage bail conditions. Altogether it seems to have been a very successful week, with hundreds of people passing through (and a good number passing out!)

As the Action Update goes to press Costain will be holding their AGM, and something tells us that it will not be one that they are looking forward to. For more details call Third Battle of Newbury on: 01635 45544. More than a few people are being held on remand for various offences allegedly committed at Newbury. Please contact the Third Battle office for a list and then write to a few of them.

A1(M) ACTIONS

Another day of action against the privately financed A1 motorway (from Alconbury to Peterborough) construction took place on 8th

August. Although work was only halted for three hours, extensive media coverage resulted from the action. Police presence was heavier than last time, with 2 van loads waiting at the meeting place, though the main group of activists drove straight to the action, thus outwitting any intervention.

As the devastation caused by the construction becomes more apparent to the local people, increasing numbers of them are coming out to support the protests. More actions are planned, with a Pumpkin Party Protest sometime in October. For more details phone: 01767 692326.

REVOLUTIONARY MONEY DEFACEMENT LEAGUE

Further to the mention in the last Action Update of a new campaign starting up, this month we have had our first communique from them. It reads: 'The Big Green Gathering saw the emergence of a new ReMeDiaL (Revolutionary Money Defacement League) class. This poetic pressure group made up of self styled human beings have constructed a ramshackle collection of sentence structures designed to provoke thought, discourse, laughter, happiness and the joyous destruction of the industrial capitalist society that oppresses and destroys beauty wherever it finds it. In order to have the biggest effect with the least effort, and to strike at the belly of the beast, the group has decided to use the machines lifeblood of paper money as a billboard for thoughts, ideas and feelings that are subversive to this life-denying society.'

As they say, 'Our pens shall not rest until happiness is common currency.' Their suggestions for slogans to write on the money include: 'Turn your life into a counterfriction to stop the machine.' 'People need to rediscover their ability to have fun outside of consumption'. 'Let us hope for total economic collapse before total biological collapse.' Reclaim your pens and start scrawling!

BATH RECLAIM THE STREETS

On the 17th August around one hundred people closed a major route through Bath at the city's third Reclaim The Streets.

The police intelligence effort was a bit sad with it only seeming to comprise of them ringing Avon Gorge Earth First! and stopping an activist in the street a week before the event to ask them what was going on. Nobody told them and they didn't notice the fly-posters, so they only caught up with the action half an hour into the march through town! It stopped on Walcot Street where cones, diversion signs, chairs, a play-tent and a see-saw appeared from nowhere as people began to enjoy a party in gorgeous hot weather. The usual cake eating, sofa-sitting, juggling, music-making and relaxing began and lasted for nearly five hours whilst traffic wardens diverted cars and a couple of cops looked on helplessly.

Passers-by were supportive and as one said: "Why can't it be like this all the time?" Even motorists didn't complain too much and some traders joined in, although one shop-keeper threw stink bombs and rotten eggs. Traffic chaos was reported all over the city, even though this was probably due more to it being an average Saturday in Bath rather than the Street Party itself.

No arrests, no pretend ambulance emergencies, less noise and less fumes.... more Street Parties are planned so don't miss the next one! For more details contact Avon Gorge Earth First! on: 01225 448556.

EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 14 Cambridge Reclaim The Streets. Meet 1pm at Cambridge train station.
- 28 Stop The Clampdown! Reclaim The Future! Massive march/demonstration/party in Liverpool. Meet 12 noon at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool. For more details contact: 0171 281 4621 or 0151 297 3388.
- 29 McLibel Gathering: Mobilise Against Big Mac. A day to expose the oppression, exploitation and ecological damage done by McDonalds. 10.30am-8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Free entrance. For more details call: 0171 713 1269.
- 29 Day of workshops, entertainment and relaxation from the previous days events in readiness for....
- 30 Mass Action! In support of the sacked Liverpool Dockers. Meet 10am at Seaforth Docks, Liverpool. For more details contact: 0171 281 4621.

OCTOBER

- 5 Cardiff Anti-Job Seekers Allowance March. Meet 12.30 pm at City Hall, Cardiff.
- 12 Day of solidarity with McDonalds workers. Picket your local store. For leaflets and information contact: 0171 713 1269.
- 15 Motorshow at Birmingham NEC. Contact B'ham RTS: 0121 449 5452
- 16 Annual Worldwide Day of Action against McDonalds. Contact: 0171 713 1269.
- 19 Anarchist Bookfair at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Stalls, talks, food, workshops and more. For more details contact: 0171 242 8032.
- 24 National Day of Mahogany Actions. For more details and an action pack with details on how to set up your own action locally call: 01603 611953 or 01603 666879.

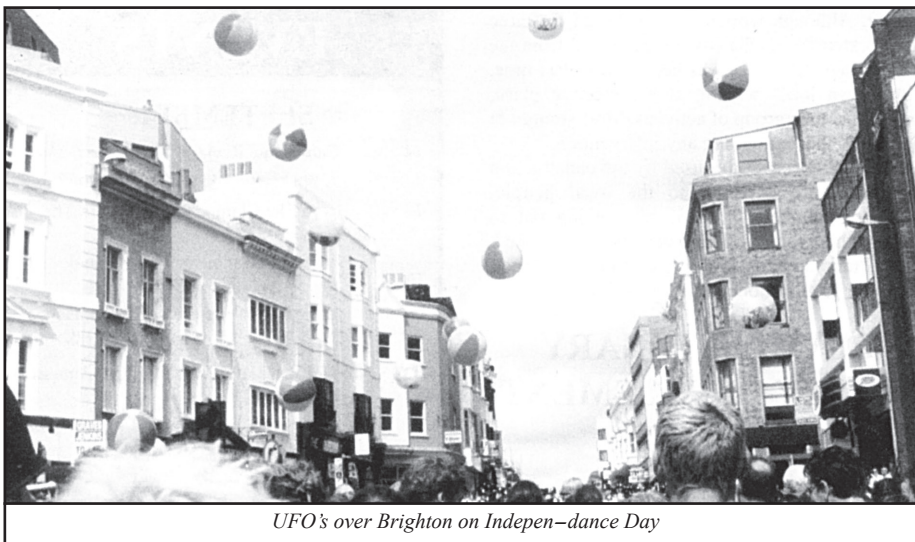
NOVEMBER

- 2-5 Faslane Peace Camp - Bonfire Action. Days of workshops, followed by a big action on the Monday and partying on the Tuesday. For more details call Faslane Peace Camp on: 01436 820 901.
- 5 Stop The COPEX Arms Fair. Meet 9am Littleworth Common, Esher, Surrey. Contact: 0171 281 0297.
- 23 Direct Action Conference in Brighton. Talks, workshops, discussions, stalls, etc.. At a location to be announced nearer the time. Followed the next day by a party to celebrate the 100th issue of the Schnevs. Contact Justice? on: 01273 685913.
- 30 International No Shop Day. Do your bit to overthrow capitalism by doing nothing- well buying nothing anyway! For details contact: Enough, One World Centre, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

DECEMBER

- 4 Twelfth Anniversary of the Union Carbide chemical factory leak at Bhopal, India.

The Earth First! Action Update is free to prisoners. Please send in the name and address of anybody that might like to receive it and we will send out a free copy of every issue to them.



UFO's over Brighton on Independence Day

AVON GORGE EF! NEWS

On 31st July Pioneer Aggregates was given permission to extend Durnford Quarry at Ashton Court park near Bristol. This Australian transnational wants to 'move' twenty one acres of orchids and ecologically diverse grassland and then blast the rock underneath to sell to road builders. This particular quarry supplied aggregate for the roads through Twyford Down, Solsbury Hill and the Bristol Spine Road. Actions to target this company are planned.

More positively the construction of the Avon Ring Road (Stage 2) through Siston Common, which was due to start in Spring '95, has been delayed yet again because the Department of Transport failed to turn up to the High Court hearing in July. Direct action has been promised for years if this project actually happens, but at the moment local campaigners are still hoping that their legal challenge will succeed. For details on either of these campaigns contact Avon Gorge Earth First! on: 01225 448556.

WEYMOUTH

The A353-354 Weymouth Relief Road in Dorset goes through a SSSI, an area of outstanding natural beauty and a toxic landfill site that will have a major adverse impact on a national wetland bird sanctuary. People are setting up camps to resist this road and over the summer Teddy Bear Woods road protest camp continued to grow with the support of the local community. Sir Norman King, inspector at the CPO inquiry (January-February 1996) has made his

recommendations which are now in the hands of the Secretary of State for Transport. A public announcement is not expected until at least January 1997 (due to political reasons no doubt). This delay will jeopardise the chances of Dorset county Council gaining funding to build this road by the time of their projected start of construction 1997-1998.

The intention is now to continue to expand the campaign in the Dorset area through fund-raising, publicity and actions. Help in all these areas would be greatly welcomed. For more details contact: 0468 221 454.

RECLAIM THE VALLEYS 2

Reclaim the Valleys 2 was rockin' and wrecked. With less than 50 hardcore activists on three days, they certainly put the boot further up Celtic Enemy's arse. At 6am on Wednesday, the Celtic Energy offices were stormed and by the time the enemy arrived for work, they found oak trees (saved from Brynhenllys) planted all over the car park, activists d-locked to every door and gate, and superglued locks. Twenty-two arrests were made.

On Thursday, they returned to the now working Brynhenllys site and work was stopped whilst the workers beat activists up and held them illegally. Work then recommenced as twenty activists were arrested for breach of the peace!

On Friday a memorial parade was held with local support going through Selar and on Saturday and Sunday they danced (respect to 'Oops' from Reading). Media coverage was very high with actions being headline news on Welsh television for three nights as well as articles in every paper.

They are now taking stock for the winter while

Nant Helen is preparing defenses for a likely October eviction. All those talking about a new style of tree defence, get down there and check out the possibilities of the dense forestry plantations. As Wales has such a high number of ecologically dodgy projects, new targets must be considered but the fight against open cast goes on. For more information call: 0385 711364.

NABURN WOODS

A direct action camp has been set up in Naburn Woods near York to protect a very beautiful piece of land threatened with development. BAA McArthur Glen are intending to build a huge out of town factory outlet shopping centre, designed to attract people from a seventy mile radius. The scheme will increase traffic along York's already busy and dangerous roads and add to the difficulties faced by the many small businesses in York's city centre.

Court summons were posted around the protest site on 2nd September and the eviction hearing was on 5th September, which means that it is possible that the eviction will have taken place by the time that you read this. If not then they really need as many people to get down to the site as soon as possible for when it does happen. The sum total of the defenses at the moment is one treehouse and three walkways.

This was totally unexpected so they still need lots of tat. Anything you've got we could really make use of, especially locks, cement, harnesses, tarps and expertise. It really is a beautiful site, and now it looks like it might only be there for a few more days. They need you at the moment much more than any of the big campaigns, and every single person will make a difference. For more details contact: 0831 586 938 or 01904 651 407 as soon as possible.

FARNBOROUGH

On Monday 2nd September, at the Farnborough Airshow, two women were arrested on suspicion of causing criminal damage to a Hawk Jet by throwing red paint over it. Both British Aerospace and the MoD denied the incident had taken place and it was left to the Charge Sergeant at Aldershot police station to confirm that the women had actually been arrested. He had obviously not been informed in time that the whole thing should be hushed, so as to avoid even further embarrassment to BAe, still recovering from the 'Seeds of Hope' court case.

Outside the airshow there were around forty arrests during a protest against militarisation. On Nov. 5th there are to be further actions at the COPEX Arms Fair.

For more details contact 0171 281 0297.

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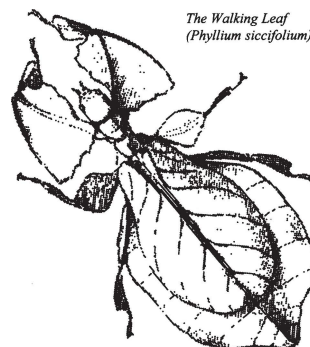
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*The Walking Leaf
(Phyllium siccifolium)*



DIOXIN: A FUNDAMENTAL THREAT TO THE FUTURE

"It is a powerful image: industrial civilization as one vast, stinking extermination camp. We all live in Bhopal, some closer to the gas chambers and to the mass graves, but all of us close enough to be victims"
– from 'We all live in Bhopal' by George Bradford.

WHAT IS DIOXIN?

Dioxin is the most toxic chemical manufactured by humans. Dioxin is a general term that describes a group of two hundred or so chemicals that are highly persistent in the environment, and are produced when Chlorine combines with other chemicals. These chemicals do not destroy living cells, but they mimic the effect of oestrogen within them, which has very serious consequences. Not only is there no 'safe' level of exposure to dioxin, but dangerous levels of dioxin and dioxin-like chemicals have been found amongst the general population.

ID CARD

NAME: Dioxins

DISTINGUISHING MARKS: Deadly, odourless, colourless, tasteless.

CRIMINAL RECORD: Contamination of all humans, plants, animals, water and air on Earth.

KNOWN ACCOMPLICES: The chemical and incineration industries.

HOW ARE WE EXPOSED TO DIOXINS?

Dioxins are formed as an unintentional by-product of many industrial processes that involve chlorine such as waste incineration, chemical and pesticide manufacturing and pulp and paper bleaching. It is not a natural substance and nature has no defence against it.

The major source of dioxin in the environment (70%) comes from incinerators burning chlorinated wastes. Other sources include paper mills which use bleaching in their processes and with the production of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) plastics, cars (because chlorinated chemicals are added to fuels), and recycling smelters.

The major exposure route of dioxin is our diet. Since dioxin is fat soluble, it is mainly found in red meat, dairy products, milk and fish. These toxins become more concentrated as they rise up the food chain so that dioxin levels in fish can be 100,000 times or more than that of their surrounding environment.

"It's like putting a hand grenade into the centre of human biology."

*Ralph Ryder, co-ordinator,
Communities Against Toxics*

DAMAGE TO ECO-SYSTEMS

Wildlife studies have shown for decades that animals are being affected by this invisible, tasteless, odourless, deadly threat. In 1950, researchers at Syracuse University exposed young roosters to DDT (a pesticide containing oestrogen) and results showed that their testicles only grew to 18% of normal size.

A 1963 study showed that cysts and cancers developed in mice treated with oestrogen as new-borns.

Reports of odd behaviour began to appear as well: pairs of female gulls (so - called 'gay gulls') sharing nests, pairs of terns failing to sit on their eggs - neglecting to defend their nests against predators and alligators with penises so small they couldn't reproduce.

'No matter where you live today - whether in NYC, or on a remote island in the Arctic Ocean, anyone willing to put up the \$2,000 for testing will find more than 250 synthetic industrial chemicals in their body'

*- Rachel's Environmental
Health News*

DAMAGE TO HUMAN HEALTH

Damage to human health caused by exposure to dioxin includes:

GENERAL: wasting diseases, suppressed immune defenses against infectious diseases,

MEN: Reduction in sperm counts which have declined by 50% in the last 50 years) and semen quality, testicular cancer, reproductive abnormalities, such as undescended testes. (Basically we are talking about the feminisation of all male offspring.)

WOMEN: endometriosis - a painful growth outside the uterus, breast cancer, (in 1960, a woman's chance of developing breast cancer, during her lifetime was one in 20. Today the chances are one in 8.)

CHILDREN & FOETUSES: Cerebral palsy, mental retardation and reduced IQ, learning disability, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, hydrocephalus, seizures and other permanent neurological abnormalities. (The foetus lives in the womb enclosed inside a fluid filled sac called the placenta, which provides a barrier to many poisons that the mother might ingest. However, unlike many other poisons, dioxin crosses the placenta and begins affecting the foetus. The human body retains dioxin, so a 'body burden' begins accumulating during our early months in the womb.)

Dioxin was the primary toxic component of Agent Orange

SO WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING ABOUT THIS?

Closing down incinerators? Banning the use of PVC? Waging war on the Chemical Corporations? No. Instead, on 25th July 1995 the institute for Environment and Health published a Government commissioned report entitled: 'Environmental Oestrogens: Consequences to Human Health and Wildlife.' One of the main conclusions of this report is that: "Proof of a cause-effect relationship between exposure to oestrogens in the environment and adverse effects on human reproductive health is likely to remain elusive. Similarly it may not be possible to identify conclusively which agents, acting singularly or in combination, are responsible for adverse effects in wildlife populations." Whilst we are all being horrifically poisoned, the conclusion of the research commissioned by the government is that more research needs to be done. If that is what governments do, if that is all the precautionary measures that they are willing to take, then we are far better off without them. It is time to take action ourselves. It is time that more attention be given to issues other than roads. It is vital that releases of dioxins are stopped soon or else the consequences will be grave.

The time for talking is well over. We ALL have a reason to hit the chemical companies where it hurts (in the genitals just where they have hit us). It is time to carry out direct action on the chemical industry so that they are brought to their knees. What are we waiting for?

'It is clearly time for action to stop all further releases of Dioxin into the environment'

- Greenpeace Dioxin report.

GET INVOLVED

Toxic Alert! is a new non-violent direct action network focused on the chemical industry. Write to them: c/o PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DY: Tel 01273 685913. Get on the mailing list, become a contact. Do some actions.

Visit the EF! Toxic Mutants Website: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/earthfirst/toxmut.html>

Communities Against Toxics PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX. Tel: 0151 339 5473 Fax: 0151 347 1213. Email: cats@gn.apc.org CATS also publish a grassroots magazine, TOXCAT, subscription £12 per year.

In future issues of the Earth First! Action Update we hope to use this insert space to print articles covering various topics of interest and relevance to the radical ecology movement. If anybody would like to write an article of between 1,000 and 1,500 words including references, bibliography and a further reading list, please send to the Action Update, including a photograph or graphic if possible. Articles may be edited for length and clarity.

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WHAT IS EARTH FIRST!?

Earth First! is not so much a cohesive group or a campaign as a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and direct action to confront, stop, and eventually reverse the forces that are destroying this planet and its inhabitants and we believe in using all the tactics available to enable us to do this. The contacts are autonomous groups that consider themselves to share the above principles. International contacts are entry points into that country's own network of groups. Other contacts are ones whose aims and principles are ones that we agree with fully or in part, or groups that we think may be of use or interest to people. New additions or alterations are shown in **bold**.