

CISSBURY SELL-OFF

A Brighton group has got involved in a campaign to save land near Cissbury Ring after Worthing Council was caught out trying to flog the family silver for a paltry £200,000.

Cissbury Ring is the site of an Iron Age hill fort in West Sussex - and was supposedly formed by the clods of earth discarded by the Devil when he dug Devil's Dyke.

The land that's in danger of falling into private hands has been described by Dave Bangs, local botanist and author of *A Freedom to Roam Guide to the Brighton Downs*, as "quite simply priceless" and belonging to us all in perpetuity.

Having back-tracked pretty sharpish with a 'review', after being called on their dirty dealings by Bangs and others, the council are now looking to re-group.

This follows last month's protest walk at the Ring at which around 350 people braved some of the most treacherous weather for years.

Don't be fooled by the council taking the land off the market during this 'review' however. In a letter to campaigners, Cllr Steven Waight tried to wheedle his way out of it: "can the National Park Authority be trusted to protect the Cissbury Downland area from development? In addition, how is public access affected, if at all, by the various options?"

Stop Cissbury Sell-Off (SCSO) campaigner, Trevor Hodgson, is not impressed. "He draws attention away from the central matter of land ownership and stewardship, and his council's conduct in this matter, by introducing a red herring of 'development' and 'trust' in the future National Park Authority."

Also, whoever heard of a review with no timescale, no list of consultees, and no public hearings or debates? Hm, doesn't look good.

Now, SCSO and residents are calling for new public access, beyond current rights of way, to the council's land.

Seems that for Worthing Borough Council to take the review seriously another show of force may be required, which shouldn't be too much to ask considering such large numbers turned out in November to trek through a storm.

Trevor added: "We will be stepping up our campaign to ensure every square foot of this precious land remains in public ownership and receives the protection and enhancement it so badly needs."

To get involved, visit: www.scsco.co.uk.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Yet more news of B&H council's contempt for people unfortunate enough to do the jobs that actually matter.


Way back in *RM #2* we reported on the council's attempts to swindle care workers out of their holiday pay. Well, two industrial tribunals later and some workers managed to get what was due to them. But it took a judgement from the European Court to persuade the council that it wasn't acceptable to bundle holiday money in with regular wages.

The council are still up to their old tricks, however. When they realised they would have to pay holiday pay they solved the problem by reducing wages. One worker won a tribunal for 'unlawful deduction of wages' and was awarded back pay. As a result, the boss of Care Crew, Lance Richard, sent everyone a letter saying that Care Crew's wages would no longer relate to council pay scales, again unilaterally altering contracts in order to strip workers of their rights. Workers who received this letter should seek union advice (or drop into an advice session at the Cowley Club, Fridays 4-6 pm).

Care Crew does important work with older people and people with learning disabilities, but it has effectively become the council's own temping agency for support workers in those fields. This allows them to treat long-term workers as temps, exempt from union-negotiated pay schemes. Care Crews didn't receive any back-pay in the recent 'equal pay' settlement (see *RM #21*) and many are taking the council to yet another tribunal.

One worker told *RM*: "The council set up Care Crew because it didn't want to pay extortionate fees to temping agencies, Care Crew workers save them money. However, they are trying to worm out of giving Care Crew decent pay and conditions."

"Care Crew workers provide an integral part of many council staff teams yet they receive low wages, no sick pay and are treated as though they don't have the same rights as 'permanent' staff. If Care Crew withdrew their labour the council bosses would be hit hard in the pocket as temps would have to be employed in their place."



18th Jan 2010
Remember Gaza
Smash EDO Mass Demo

Meet 1pm, Brighton Wear Black
For regular updates and exact location see:
www.smashedo.org.uk
email: smashedo@riseup.net
tel: 07538093930

ANOTHER BLOODY BYPASS?!

The spectre of a resurrected Hastings bypass looms ever closer as the public inquiry into the £95m Bexhill-Hastings road reaches a final decision in January.

The ill-conceived road proposal will undermine rail travel, encourage car trips, increase carbon emissions and cause devastation to the beautiful Combe Haven Valley - all things you'd think East Sussex council and the government (or anyone, for that matter) would want to avoid.

The Hastings Alliance have compiled compelling evidence against the road scheme on their website www.hastingsalliance.com while the council's Link Road newsletter is so biased it doesn't even have train stations marked on the map of the area. So much for sustainable transport strategies! Get down to inquiry before its expected early Dec finish and have your say: White Rock Theatre, Hastings, TN34 1JX.

Should the decision go against us, ESCC will then have to seek confirmation of the financing and might be in a position to start digging in Spring 2010, although saying that, last time the bypass came up even threats of a protest camp threw plans into disarray.

What Is Rough Music?

Rough Music has been played for centuries as the downtrodden's discordant wail against oppression. Civil War Roundheads played merry hell with the bones of deposed aristocrats and we aim to resurrect this tradition with a vengeance!!!

Boss pissed you off? Dodgy dealings at the council? Are you Simon Fanshawe's P.A?

Perhaps you've got a story for *Rough Music*...

roughmusic@hotmail.co.uk

Rough Music c/o PO Box 74,
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Please donate - we're totally skint and running off the goodwill of readers

Brighton's trouble makin' dirt diggin' monthly...

ROUGH MUSIC

Issue 22 www.roughmusic.org.uk Free/Donation Dec/Jan '09/10

Stop Dozin'!

Our 'Issue'

With ...



IMAGINE A GARDEN, THEN BUILD A TESCO

Having been told where to go from London Road (*RM #19*) everyone's little helper Tesco is heading for an altogether softer target - the Lewes Road Community Garden.

The supermarket is sure to face a crop of hardy opposition being the main driver behind a two-shop, seven-flat development on the former Esso garage site.

Having got wind of the rumour that Tesco was the supermarket involved, one canny guerilla gardener phoned the company to ask if any jobs were coming up, to be told - yep, on Lewes Road.

So let's get this right: there's a Co-op next door, a Spar over the road and a Turkish Supermarket five shops up. Not to mention a huge Sainsbury's just round the corner. Does anyone else spot a gap in the market?

The prospect of yet another Tesco has got right up the nose of the hundreds of residents who have got involved in the garden through socialising there, doing yoga, or simply growing stuff

One such local told *RM*: "This has been a green lung for the area. Unlike the developers who've shown bugger all interest in the site for five years, we've cleaned it up and turned it into something productive and community-orientated. Now, thanks to them we're gonna get more flats where you can't open the ground floor windows because of the pollution - more bloody concrete."

Sympathetic councillors missed a major trick here. Unbeknown to the gardeners, Belfast-based Alburn Minos Development Ltd got planning permission to build on the site back in August. If the gardeners had been kept in the know a hefty wad of objections would have landed on the planning officer's desk making the green light by no means certain.

In fact, with the city-wide support that the garden has garnered and the positive press coverage - it's likely that a 'Say No' campaign would've forced councillors to throw the decision out. It's not just the cynical who're wondering if it's a 'hush-up'.

Anyway, while laughing all the way to the bank, Alburn stated they wanted to take the site back at the end of November, but the gardeners told 'em to shove it up their winter onions - and plan to hold out until at least January when they can perhaps move to an alternative site.

In the meantime, a spin-off group from the garden, Lewes Road for Clean Air, is working to highlight the affects of car pollution in the area. The release of a new video, 'Fuming', marks five years of the road becoming part of an Air Quality Management Area. That's five years with not much improvement. There are 38 areas of Brighton with car fume levels exceeding EU safety guidelines.

The 'clean airers' have even spent several days doing their own road-side research to work out just how much traffic is involved in causing such dangerous toxins. They found that, on a typical weekday, over 1,200 vehicles drive up and down the Lewes Road every hour. Nearly three-quarters of these are private cars; sixty-percent of which are carrying just one person.

One of the surveyors, Duncan Blinkhorn, said: "This is passive smoking on a grand scale and it goes on day-after-day, year-after-year. Motorists are fouling up the air for everyone, carrying only themselves around while leaving thousands of people's lungs and throats eternally assaulted."



BINMEN VICTORY!

After less than 48hrs on the picket lines, Brighton bin workers were victorious in their struggle for fair pay. A proposed five-day strike, voted for by 94% of the workforce, started on November 9th - but the dustmen got a settlement before the dust had even settled.

Brighton council (whose new chief exec, John Barradell, happens to be on £170k) were plotting to introduce pay cuts of up to £4,000 per worker. Given that the binmen only get an average of £16,000 a year, it could have meant a whopping 25% pay cut. "We start at seven in the morning," said one, "and since the February re-organisation which involved 56 redundancies, we rarely finish before three."

As reported in the last *Rough Music*, our penny-pinching council dreamt up an unusual wheeze to comply with equal pay legislation: cut all unskilled workers' wages. This is typical of the attitude of the those that run the City-by-the-Sea - "let them eat shit" virtually being the town's motto.

Of course, the only way to put the kibosh on the plan was for the binmen to show just how vital they are to the running of the city. Web designers in £200 trainers don't really want to be traipsing through piles of seagull-ravaged bin-bags on their way to Starbucks. After just two days, probably fearing a flight of the media elite back to Hoxton - Mears and Co binned their plans.

Despite the best efforts of the Argus to stir anti-worker sentiment ("Bin Strike Rat Plague Fears" being one splendid effort of a headline), according to a bin lorry driver *RM* talked to, "Public support has been tremendous".

Now the bin workers have suspended their strike for three weeks to consider a proposal from the council, which will see them re-classified as 'skilled' workers. This means that 97% of workers won't lose a penny.

This begs the question: if it was that simple to sort out why did the strike have to happen in the first place? Why put the workers and their families through that kind of stress?

As one of the strike leaflets put it: "It's the employers' fault that so many council workers have been underpaid for so long NOT Cityclean workers. So why should they have to pay for the council's mistakes?"

COPYLEFT - ROUGHIN' IT UP ON THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON

WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

EXCLUSIVE

Strike action is on the rise at Brighton Housing Trust due to savage cuts and dodgy practice by management.

BHT is a huge organisation, employing over two hundred people and covering a huge range of social services - from immigration advice to running homeless hostels and the Threshold rape crisis centre. For a long time it was a non-profit local charity. Then, two years ago it merged with Affinity Sutton, a much larger national group with a reputation for being strongly anti-union.

This year has seen a savage attack on employment conditions at BHT. "There are funding problems - nobody would deny that," a disgruntled employee told *RM*. "Legal aid has been frozen and the council grants have become specific so we're constantly bidding to become a service provider. We recognised that there needed to be cuts and proposed an across the board pay-cut with the percentage of the deduction increasing as it went up the pay scale - at the time that seemed like a fair way of dealing with it."

But the BHT's boss, Andy Winters, had other ideas. Our man on the inside said, "There was a totally farcical 'consultation' period that produced a totally management-orientated solution. There was a big in-house consultation. Salaries were compared with 'equivalents' in the marketplace."

As it happened, all the management's wages either remained static or went up. Funny that. Meanwhile the lowest paid workers - those actually offering the frontline services - were told they were going to face pay-cuts of 20%. There were also attacks on the pension schemes and threats made against sick leave and maternity pay. Workers were told that if they didn't sign the new contracts they'd be dismissed.

"Their attitude was that the lowest paid workers were unskilled. Now anybody who's worked in a homeless hostel will tell you that academic qualifications ain't gonna get you very far. There's a real skill to working with marginalised people."

After union action, the threats against maternity and sick leave were dropped. Workers staged a one-day strike on August 19th and a three-day stoppage the following month. There was also a sleep-out of homeless workers outside Community Base on 12th September.

"To be fair, at first the union was great. We got full strike pay for the days we were out. But in the later stages of the dispute they really let us down. The local UNISON organiser Alex Knutsen is alright but at a regional level they totally failed to back us. We wanted to start a programme of rolling two-day strikes. They seemed to be more concerned about recruiting new members.

"I feel like the rug's been pulled from under my feet. I feel like I've been sold out by the union, like I'm under attack from both sides. I've always paid my union dues but what did it get me?"

PRESTON PARKING

It started as just the kind of routine anti-traveller harassment you expect in the City-by-the-Sea™. But now it's backfired spectacularly - on the rich tossers who instigated it!

After years of moaning about the number of live-in vehicles parked across the road from their houses on Preston Avenue, they finally got more of the aesthetic cleansing they were after. The whole side of the avenue nearest to the park (i.e at least fifty metres from any of these idiots houses) has been re-zoned as a pay-and-display area.

Now this means that each of them has to pay for the re-zoning of what had been a previously free park-up.

RM can't help but chuckle as all those Beamer driving fuckwits have to fork out £106 a year towards the council's latest favourite money-spinner. Doh, what a truck up!

Rough Music Gig List

- Dec 1 Milan Rai**
A discussion on the politics of the middle east with author and activist, Milan Rai. Organised by anti-war group, Hands Off. Brighthelm Centre, North Rd 7:30pm - 9:00pm
- Dec 4 Old Codes, New Chaos**
Cassetteboy DJ set (legendary cut & paste audio anarchists), Alphabets Heaven (hip-hop), Harry Neve (improv electronics). Cowley Club, London Rd 8pm Donations
- Dec 6 Sunday Roast Benefit for Skylark Housing Co-op.**
Cowley Club, London Rd 2pm - 6pm
The Sussex Colombia Solidarity Benefit
Colombian folk music, celebrating International Human Rights with Pollito Boogaloo + AfroBase. Latest Music Bar, Manchester Street 6pm £6/5
Winter Warmer Xmas Market & Goodbye Garden Party
Performers, bands, carol singing, mulled wine, soup & hot drinks, lantern-making, local films. Lewes Road Community Garden and Edinburgh Rd 2pm - 5pm
Smash Edo Benefit Gig
Music from Meow Meows, Chunkin and Baba Slips. Hector's House, Grand Parade 7pm - 1am
- Dec 8 Open Forum: From Isolation To Community**
A discussion about isolation, injustice, violence and community. Methodist Church Dorset Gardens, Kemptown 6.30pm - 9.30pm
- Dec 19 The Lovely Brothers + Anal Beard**
Aburdist comedy punk. Cowley Club, London Road 8.30pm
- Jan 7 Greenpeace monthly meeting**
Planning meeting for campaigning on climate change, etc. Cowley Club Back Building, London Road 7pm - 9pm
- Jan 12 World Development Movement meeting**
Workshop and planning for climate and trade justice campaign. Brighton Eco-Centre, Surrey Street 7:30pm - 9:30 pm
- Jan 29 Critical Mass**
Celebrating cycling and promoting a fun, healthy, sustainable alternative to petrol-dependant transport. The Level 6pm - 8pm

For weekly Cowley Club listings visit: www.cowleyclub.org.uk

TITNORE FURORE

EXCLUSIVE

Camp Titnore is bracing itself for the onslaught of the 875-home development now that it seems likely to get full planning permission at Worthing Borough Council's development control committee in January.

With the new, fuck-off Tesco already blocking the view of Highdown Hill and set to be up and running by the summer 2010, fat-cat bosses will be rubbing their hands in glee, anticipating the thousands of rezzers from the new homes which will inevitably far exceed the initial 875 figure.

The new supermarket just west of the current carpark is part of an £18-20 million 'mini' development - including other shops to accommodate those due to be demolished in the present New Road shopping centre.

The whole £3bn West Durrington development is under the wing of Taylor-Wimpey, Persimmon Homes and Heron Homes (headed by convicted crook Gerald Ronson, involved in the 1990 Guinness insider trading case).

Despite rapid progress, developers aren't having it all their own way. A vital access route from the west (Fulbeck Avenue) into the store is being held up due to land not being made available to build a roundabout and diversion for a Public Right of Way.

As a result, Robert Curtis, Tesco Project Manager for builders Kier said one HGV is having to come through the existing Tesco car park every seven minutes as negotiations had broken down with the owner of this land north of Fulbeck Ave.

Campers are asking everyone to be on the lookout for Public Notices referring to the diversion. And talking of the camp, morale is high - well some of them are high anyway - with new walkways, weather-proofing for winter, and a new pirate radio station.

One told *RM*: "We'll stick it out as long as possible, even if it means bring here another four years. We're even thinking of putting in an alternative low-carbon planning application ourselves."

RM's well up for a teepee or two - anything to put the mockers on a build which could take upwards of five or six years.

In any case, the call is going out from campers this winter for duvets, blankets, carpets and warm clothing, plus tins of organic grub. For directions to the camp go to www.protectourwoodland.co.uk or www.titnore.wordpress.com.

Titnore is one of only two ancient woodlands left on the Sussex coastal plain. Over the summer endangered, Great Crested Newts, Yellowhammers, Mistlethrush, Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bats have all been spotted.

Worthing councillors could also find themselves on the endangered list. One Worthing-based protestor said: "Councillors who support the Titnore development face losing their seats in the May local elections."

A BIT OF THE ROUGH STUFF

So Brighton council reckon they're going to clamp down on homelessness again!

Ignoring the fact that two years ago they reckoned they'd reduced the number of rough sleepers to just twelve - apparently now it's time to force the homeless to relocate under the jackboot of the 'local connections' policy.

According the Anus: "As part of the strategy to reduce the number of homeless people in the city, anyone with links outside the city will be encouraged to move and referred to services in other parts of the country".

This in the city that proudly once called itself "The Place to Be" and can't get enough of that filthy London lucre. Of course, *RM* has to acknowledge that the poor probably spoil the view from the loft apartments and that anyone on less than 30k needs to be rounded up and bussed back to Liverpool.

ROUGH MUSIC IS ONLINE: www.roughmusic.org.uk

WANKERS CORNER

A regular column featuring our favourite Brightonians



This month the uncoveted title goes to second-rate local rag, *The Argus*. Or, as it sometimes likes to think of itself, 'The Daily Mail-By-The-Sea'.

Of course, its not-very-unique blend of reactionary journalism, celebrity puff-pieces and endless advertorials could have made them worthy winners at any time - but these last few months have seen the paper setting a new record in piss-poor media-ocracy.

The Argus' corporate owners, Newsquest (who produce some 350 'local' titles around the country), are themselves part of US mega-media owning firm Ganett Company Inc. As such, the old cosy image of a parochial local newspaper run by hard-working hacks to serve the community couldn't be further from the truth. Rather, *The Argus* seems solely dedicated to delivering audiences to their chosen advertising partners and squeezing as much money out of the format as possible.

Earlier in the year they decided that a few quid could be saved moving the printing out of town, and then decided some of the advert pre-press editing jobs and such like would be better outsourced to India.

But the most annoying costs of producing a local paper are of course having to employ journalists - so they made a load redundant. Since then, even the meagre standard of content we rely on for *RM* stories has gone down the pan.

Here is a random sample of some of the big scoops gracing the first page of 'news' in the past weeks:

1. Cops raid a house in Worthing and discover an "Aladdin's Cave" of gear. This fabulous trove of treasure consisted largely of talking books.
2. Punters queue for two hours for the opening of a 99p store on London Rd. There are, of course, no other such shops in the area. Unless you count Pound Stretcher and Pound Sense.
3. Acrimonious divorcees wrangle over empty plant pots and a cheese grater. Only readers sympathetic enough to read to paragraph eight will know the couple also own a £500,000 house.
4. David Dimbleby is granted permission to build a tennis court in his garden. Hold the front page!

This desperation for content has led *The Argus* to start hiring students and community police support officers as unpaid writers. Genius. They'll probably start turning the rabid ranting web comment contributors into columnists next. Then again, it might already have gone beyond that. Go to *The Argus* website and you will find that there is an entire page of the 'news' section dedicated to Jordan. No, not the country.

Anyway, the real reason they're getting the award is sour grapes - they haven't yet asked the *RM* crew to freelance for 'em. We'd give you a daily paper with a real punch! For that reason - let alone the dis-informative, propagandising nonsense they serve up - we reckon they're all a bunch of wankers and we wouldn't even wrap the chips on our shoulders in it...

ON THE LEVEL?

Now yer *RM* is ambivalent about the redevelopment of the Level.

Most of what's being proposed seems pretty similar to what's there already, give or take the odd petanque court (are there a substantial number of frustrated boules players out there?). It's a potential squandering of cash, but what's new there?

What's got our hackles up is that both proposed plans include a mini-police station. Having shunted the colourful street drinking community away from their traditional haunts in the North Laine, and moved the travellers away by dint of introducing expensive pay-and-display parking that hardly anyone uses, are we about to see another burst of aesthetic cleansing on what is still technically common land?



A big *RM* thumbs-up to who-ever plastered BRING EM HOME over this poster in Whitehawk.

Originally the poster read "For his family's sake, wear a poppy", but *RM* suspects that whoever designed the British Legion's artwork was asking for it.

What other meaning can you take from the image of yet another dead British soldier being loaded into the back of a Hercules transporter? Perhaps a mischievous graphic designer even hoped that big red stripe would be used for this very purpose...