

TESCO VS TITNORE



Protesters plan to give Worthing councillors a roasting on March 15 when they meet to rubber-stamp the £3bn Tesco/housing development set to wreck the ancient woodlands of Titnore.

The planning committee are meeting at the Assembly Hall on Stoke Abbott Rd (around the corner from the Town Hall). The demo kicks off at 1.30pm.

Since the outline application was submitted to the Worthing council in August 2008, the South Downs National Park boundary has been agreed. It now includes parts of Titnore Woods and Castle Goring which is a bit of good news.

Although fewer trees will be axed than was originally feared, the addition of 400 more luxury houses - 1,250 new homes in total, up from the original 855 - will still play havoc with natural habitats and the woodland ecosystems, however.

Living up to their reputation of build-now-ask-questions later Tesco's West Durrington monstrosity (open in March) is almost complete, taking up half the field near the front of Camp Titnore.

With no regard to public rights of way, Tesco builders trashed a wooden bridge at the top of Fulbeck Ave and erected fencing to prevent any access into the field - despite it being bisected by an ancient footpath leading all the way to Cissbury Ring.

They also redirected a stream which has caused more flooding to an area already a floodplain - yes a housing development which should sink within three decades folks! In fact, earlier this year, two dog-walkers had to be rescued by fire-fighters after they were stuck knee-deep in mud.

Tesco have also closed off all the local footpaths between Durrington and Northbrook so people have a 1.5 mile roundabout walk instead of 100yds to get to their community centre and church. Also health and safety and traffic regulations have gone by the book: the car park used as a 30 ton construction lorry access when there's families with kids within spitting distance, as well as using weight-restricted residential roads for access.

In addition, surveyor's posts have started appearing which suggests that work on the road into the housing development is soon to be started.

The only way to get to the camp is either along Titnore Lane or the top of Tasman Way. It's possible to climb over the concrete blocks at the top of Fulbeck Ave but you need to hack through brambles and watch out for flooded potholes.

A Facebook group called: 'Save Titnore Woods: The battle is on!' has just been set up. Why not join it? Better still why not visit the four-year-old camp and take along polyprop rope, tinned food, waterproofs and other pressies for the hardy souls?

HUNTERS HOUNDED

Local hunt activists haven't been put off by Davy Cameron's vow that he's going to re-legalise the disembowelling of wildlife for entertainment purposes.

According to one surprisingly well-turned out sab, who was sober at the time: "The main season got off to a bad start, with our driver and navigator being attacked by thugs from the Southdown and Eridge FH."

"Undeterred, both were back out on the Southdowns the following week when the Croydon van was joined by vans full of sabs from Brighton and London. The Southdown's attempts to give us the slip by going out early in the morning backfired, as not only did we close them down in less than three hours, but we also found time to give old adversaries the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent FH their first visit of the season afterwards."

Sabs have stayed on the hunters' case and scored some impressive victories, frequently rescuing foxes from right under the noses of the pursuing hounds.

The hunting season is drawing to a close now - with most hunts packing up by late March. But Southdowns Sabs still need you - contact them on southdown.sabs@yahoo.com

*RM Note - Brighton's local hunt

AIRPORT CAUGHT SHORT

RM has long been following the turbulent takeover of Shoreham Airport - now it seems our finger of doom may have struck its biggest victim.

In RM#18 we reported with considerable sadness that that former owners, Erinaceous, had gone bust due to debts of more than £250m. This followed an investigation into an alleged £10m fraud involving the old trick of overvaluing properties (RM#11).

Current owners, Albemarle, now seem to be in similar straits - they're already started looking to save money with cuts in jobs and opening hours. It isn't likely to instil confidence and certainly looks like death throes to us.

There are sixty odd companies based at the airport. Needless to say, the staff and workers are not best pleased. It all looks like Albemarle can't organise piss-up in a brewery - no communication, no warnings - so fuck knows what the control tower's like. Two blokes with their feet up doing the crossword?

A far cry from when they took over: "Albemarle remains committed to the regeneration of the airport in accordance with the vision of the joint owning councils, when the airport was originally sold in June 2006." Oh, those halcyon days when Brighton and Worthing flogged off the site for millions below its market value!

Although the airport runs commercial flights to France and offshore bank havens in the Channel Islands - thanks to climate criminals, Sky South, the prospect of a new runway or even an extension look about as likely as Albion winning something.

Albemarle is staying schtum so the number of lay-offs is unknown. As for opening hours cuts, again no word. The company's commitment to operate as an airport for 35 years and to spend £4m on infrastructure improvement ain't looking too good.

Jean Kitchener from the now-defunct 'Communities Against Runway Extension' told RM: "We've decided to close down because everything's been shelved. It's not a battle won as it could come back if investors think they can turn a profit. And there is the safety embankment they built which could still be used for an extended runway. But in the current climate it's not going to happen for a while."

G20 PROTESTOR GETS 2YRS

Our thoughts go out to Phillip Georgopoulos - a Brighton fine art student sentenced to a vicious two and a half years for his part in the G20 protests.

Phillip was like thousands of others cornered by the police in a 'kettle' in central London. Hemmed in on all sides by armoured thugs, denied food, water or the toilet - is it any wonder that people kicked off?

Okay, it might not have been very sensible to lob a computer through a bank window when the protesters are outnumbered by photographers - but compare the damage done by the greed of RBS to one plate glass window and it's clear just how over the top his sentence is.

Meanwhile, of course, the inquiry into how Ian Tomlinson died* rumbles on without anyone being charged, let alone convicted.

*(RM clue - the policeman did it)

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!!!

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Feb/Mar 2010

TRAVELLER CLAMPDOWN



Seemingly devoid of any new ideas, the Tories have decided to start sticking the boot into one of their favourite group of whipping boys - the travellers. Only difference being that this time, to avoid falling foul of the race relations, they've had to re-define them as 'van-dwellers'.

The leader of our glorious council, Mary Mears, has been the most vocal lately - initially arguing that Brighton needs a specific bylaw to ban van-dwelling. At least that's what she suggested in a notice of motion put before the council. She's backed down from that but is still trying to justify it, by claiming that the council's hands are tied by national legislation. In any case, she's signalling that the council's war on our nomadic friends is set to intensify.

In a recent letter to the Argus, 'half a pound a spuds' Mary claimed that "it is actually unlawful to live in a van on the public highway". Now RM can't keep pace with all the legislation pouring out of the New Labour septic tank so we rang up the council press office and asked what new law Contrary Mary was on about.

Turns out she was on about the Criminal Justice Act 1994. Of course, the CJA was a vicious Tory attack on the traveller movement (amongst other things) but nowhere in its long list of new offences did it actually make living in a van illegal. Section 77 of the CJA allows the council to ask 'van-dwellers' to move on but it doesn't in any way force the council to take action.

The irony is that a few years ago the very same Mary Mears (in her role as chairman of the council's housing committee) was trumpeting the need to do something about the 'housing crisis'.

We all know that getting a roof over your head is one of the most pressing problems for all Brighton residents (unless they're pulling in a £100K in London and using the place as a dormitory). Buy-to-let landlords monopolise the private housing stock, pushing up rents and house prices. The waiting list for council accommodation is longer than a wizard's beard. What better answer to the housing shortage than buying a van, kitting it out and living in it?

You'd think the Tories would be applauding this kind of "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" independent economic initiative. After all, 'van-dwellers' don't claim housing benefit. The Tory's website is full of all the Cameronian guff about empowering communities and their belief "that the best government is that which is closest to the people and allows maximum freedom under the law". But in reality it's crackdown after crackdown.

Abandoning the idea of a new bylaw (at least for the time being), Scary Mary has settled for a 'working group' on the issue.

The group will consult with concerned parties - such as Sussex Police. Not a single traveller or traveller advocacy group has been invited to join the consultation fun.

As documented in previous RMs, the council, both Labour and Tory, has used the creation of new residents-only and pay 'n' display parking zones to displace travellers from Queen's Park, the Level and most recently Preston Park Avenue. The unquestioned assumption behind this is that rich householders don't just own the land their house is on, but have the right to decide what's going on on the opposite side of the road.

Scapegoating the travellers might seem like an easy route to a few votes from the Tories' core constituency. Who's really going to stand up for them? One van-dweller told RM: "The council traveller liaison team are nothing of the sort - they work hand in glove with the bailiffs and the police. The reception here is very hostile."

SQUAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, SEAN?

A troupe of Sussex Police's finest in full riot gear turned up at a squat in January, demanding to search the property on an international arrest warrant. At first, the bleary-eyed soap-dodgers (seldom likely to rise much before noon) refused to the let them in.

According to one: "They smashed their way in, through the front and back doors. We just smiled at them and offered them a cup of tea. Then they threatened me with pepper spray if I didn't put the kettle down." After handcuffing the majority they searched the house for the wanted man. They got him and shipped him off to an uncertain fate in Eastern Europe.

Events then took a surreal turn when the search turned up a satirical picture of a copper. It was of none other than long-time RM favourite PC Sean McDonald (Wankers Corner RM#8). They seized this as evidence in the ongoing investigation into the identity of whichever cheeky blighter has been fly-posting the "Have you seen Sean McDonald?" posters round town. Either that, or Sean wanted to add it to his collection.

RM would like to take this opportunity to state that while we oppose the police as an institution it isn't fair to take it out on individual officers. We therefore request our readers to help Sussex Police by removing from display anything resembling this...



Have you seen me?

COPYLEFT - ROUGHIN' IT UP ON THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON

BLOC HEADS MARCH FOR JOBS

A series of job losses and cutbacks are still hitting Sussex.

Borders and Threshers met bankruptcy while Lloyds TSB and Sussex University have announced massive redundancies. Now, the closure of BOC Edwards in Shoreham will put 200 more workers on the dole.

This is one of the few remaining major manufacturing employers in the area, and leaves hundreds more on the scrap heap, forced to pay for a crisis they did nothing to create. The response from Unite the Union has been predictably toothless – with officials already conceding the jobs lost.

There are now 2.5 million jobless people in Britain and 1.6 million living on dole pay of £64 a week. And more job losses are to come. New Labour's approach to the problem has been to tell the unemployed that it's their own fault while using taxpayers' money to bail out the banks who caused it. Continuing to push through with their attacks on the unemployed, they now have their sights set on the sick and disabled.

In response, Brighton Benefits Campaign was launched on Feb 5 at a packed meeting in Brighthelm Centre. Speakers described the present attacks on those claiming benefits – whether they are in or out of work, sick or disabled.

It was pointed out that benefits are the floor of wages and that many workers in Brighton have to rely on benefits to get by. Brighton Benefits Campaign aims to build a campaign of both benefit claimants and workers to resist these government attacks. The next meeting will be at the Lord Nelson on Feb 25 at 6pm.

In addition, March 6 sees a trade union organised 'March for Jobs' in Brighton, gathering at 12 noon on the Level. Look out for the red and black flags – as a 'Radical Workers Bloc' will be joining the party! The bloc has been called for all those (whether public or private sector workers, unemployed or students) who reject the idea that politicians or union bureaucrats can offer a solution.

Only by taking collective direct action can we defeat these cuts. There will be a pre-march meeting at 7pm on the 2nd March at the Cowley Club to make banners and discuss the bloc.

BEXHILL BRACED FOR BYPASS

A decision is due by March on the Bexhill Link Road – or Hastings Bypass as it will most probably become.

This follows the frequently farcical public inquiry held in Hastings late last year.

Here's a snippet of the 'interrogation' of the Hastings Alliance anti-road group:

QC: "What is the name of your organisation's treasurer?"

H.A witness: "I could give it to you on a piece of paper, but I'm not going to announce it in front of everyone. Anyway I'd have to ask her if she minded."

Inspector: "Mr Price-Lewis, I don't think this is getting us anywhere."

QC: "I'll move on."

Nice to see the public purse being put to such good use – the rigorous questioning by the likes of Price-Lewis brought to us via the playing fields of Eton no doubt.

In any case, the Planning Inspector will complete his report by the end of Feb. His report will then go to two Secretaries of State: for Communities and Local Government, and Transport.

The upshot? The resurrected £95m bypass (the original plans were drawn up over ten years ago) looms ever closer, threatening the beautiful Combe Haven Valley and the wetlands thereabouts.

In fact, the road would have a major impact on two SSSIs, Combe Haven and Marline Valley, in terms of habitat destruction, loss of ancient woodland and disturbance to wetland bird populations (lapwings, fieldfares, redwings) and protected species such as dormice.

The Hastings Alliance have put together compelling evidence against the road scheme on their website which pretty much lays waste to all the council's arguments: www.hastingsalliance.com.

Rough Music Gig List

- Feb 26 Critical Mass**
Celebrating cycling and promoting a fun, healthy, sustainable alternative to petrol-dependant transport. Meet at the Level 6pm-8pm
- Feb 27 Palestine Fundraiser**
Live African and reggae bands with DJs. Cowley Club, London Rd 7pm-2am Donations
- Feb 28 "Jump the Train, Jump the Border"**
No borders info night about migrants in Mexico, with movie screenings, raffle, Mexican food and music. Cowley Club, London Rd 7pm-11pm Donations
- Mar 5 Cowley Fundraiser**
Chukin & Dunkan Disorderly (reggae & beatbox). Cowley Club, London Rd 9pm £3 Donation
- Mar 6 Greyhound Demo**
Demonstration by Brighton Animal Action. B&H Greyhound Stadium, Nevill Rd 6.15pm-7.15pm
- Mar 12 Benefit for Cranks bicycle workshop**
Film: '2 Secondes' + music from DJ Lunchbox. Cowley Club, London Road 8pm
- Mar 17 Remembering the start of the Iraq war**
Smash Edo picket outside Barclays to highlight their involvement with the arms trade. Barclays Bank, North Street 12pm
- Mar 20 The Yes Men**
Open-air screening of the anti-corporate comedy. Lewes Road Community Garden Early Evening
- Brighton Eco Veggie Fayre**
Eco-friendly, veggie-friendly and fair-trade stalls. The Hove Centre, Hove Town Hall 11am-6pm £3/£1
- Mar 26 Critical Mass**
Celebrating cycling and promoting a fun, healthy, sustainable alternative to petrol-dependant transport. The Level 6pm-8pm
- Mar 27 Gypsy Extravaganza**
Cowley benefit with live gypsy bands and DJs. Cowley Club, London Rd 7pm-2am Donations

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

EGO ACADEMY

Businessman Rod Aldridge has renamed the former Falmer High School in Brighton – after himself. The school will now be known as the 'Brighton Aldridge Community Academy'.

Bevendean-based mum-of-two Nikki Edmond, was quoted as saying: "I suppose this means if I turned up with a couple of million quid I could call it the Brighton Edmond Community Academy?"

Labour introduced academies in 2002 – part privately sponsored and independent, part run by the state. £2m gets you in and this is small beer for Aldridge who has a personal wealth of around £100m.

Under Labour, the shrinking violet oversaw huge growth of the outsourcing specialists Capita Group Plc, which benefited from lucrative public sector contracts despite the fact everything they touched went tits-up (congestion charge collection; over-charging schools for IT etc, etc). However he actually resigned as chairman in 2006 over something else: a secret £1m loan to New Labour.

And he's not going to have it all his own way at Falmer. Strike action is on the cards amid fears of job cuts at a new academy.

Unison has written to Hot-Rod, who's due to take over the re-branded £28m Falmer High in Lewes Road in September.

All teachers will shift from the old to the new school on the same dough, but as per it's yer support staff – caretakers, cleaners, caretakers, admin, dinner ladies etc who take the hit.

And with bankers still lordling it over us, and huge bonuses and share options the order of the day, Unison claims that while the low-ranking posts are to be lost, a larger management team, with combined wages around a mil a year, will rear its ugly head.

And not a lot can be done because although the academy will be part-funded by the Government it's managed by Rod and works outside Brighton council's control.

Aldridge won't discuss the job situation and certainly won't be drawn on the caretaker's cottage. Yes, this could come right out of the Crapita archive – the building was destroyed only to have to be rebuilt at a cost of £500,000 to Brighton council.

GUERRILLA GARDENERS DIG THEIR HEELS IN

The Lewes Road Community Garden is staying put. That's the message being sent out loud and clear to Tesco, who want to build an Express store on the site.

After some deliberation the community gardeners decided that direct action to save a green space from yet more concrete was the way forward.

Now the site is manned/womaned/dogged (no, not in that way) 24/7. This is in keeping with the original idea of it being a garden for locals and passers-by to enjoy a quiet read, see friends, or get involved in growing flowers and veg.

With that in mind, future events include a 'grow your own' day on April 11 when the Guerilla Gardeners will pass on tips to neighbouring householders on how to successfully seed and nurture plants, which can then be taken home in pots.

Community spirit is sure to get up Tesco's nose after people-power blocked a giant store on London Road last year.

In this case, the supermarket is the driver behind the development on the former Esso site on Lewes Road. The plans include seven flats and two shops (the other one being a betting shop), opposite a Spar and right next door to Co-op!

Rumours that Co-op may throw in the towel and close down (its lease is almost up anyway) have led to calls for 'Support the Co-op staff and boycott any future Tesco'. A Say No to Tesco group is active and on Facebook.

Belfast-based Alburn Minos Development Ltd, the current owners of the land, are hoping to meet with the gardeners – presumably to ask them politely to leave the keys on the ledge.

Spin-offs from the garden and the newly formed Lewes Road Community Garden Alliance include Lewes Road for Clean Air, whose surveys have found that, on a typical weekday, over 1,200 vehicles per hour drive up and down the Lewes Road. Two thirds of these private cars are carrying just one person.

Then there's the Bike Train, set to be launched during Green Week (March 1-9) which consists of cyclists riding from the Level to the Sussex University in a group for extra safety during peak hours. Trial rides have proved a draw (between 15-30 cyclists including sound system) and it's hoped that by the summer-term kids, students, and workers will use the train with bike train-ers having training from Bike for Life staff.

On a sombre note, one of the garden's lynchpins, Gordon Stalker, was killed in his home on the same night that he helped organise and photograph a Valentine's event at the garden – sadly missed. As is Dominique McDonald who also loved the garden and was found washed up on Brighton seafront in January. RIP both of you.

BOUNCY, BOUNCY!

How d'you offload a bouncy castle you've nicked?

That's a question going round and round *RM* heads. "Oi mate got a loada kids at yours? No worries I've got a bouncy castle in the boot – fancy it? Keep em occupied".

Said castle belonged to the Resource Centre, and was stolen by some chancing scum following the Lewes Road Xmas market last year. Worth £1,500 the local community has had a whip-round and raised more than half the sum.

Anyone with info should contact us at the usual address: roughmusic@hotmail.co.uk and *RM* will personally stump up a pack of Refreshers as reward.

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

WANKERS CORNER

A regular column featuring our favourite Brightonians

And so after twenty three issues we finally turn to favourite Argus rent-a-gob, Tony Mernagh.

Moany Tony heads up the Brighton and Hove Business Forum, which functions as a kind of anti-*Rough Music* and is a major player in the re-branding of Brighton as a buy-to-let business resort for bastards. He single-mindedly worships anything which looks like it might turn over a few quid, regardless of the consequences for those of us who actually live here.



He's publicly taken a stance against the bin strikes (see *RM#22*), fretting that they might drive the all important Xmas shoppers away – but he's delirious about the Marina Towers, the i360, Gehry's bendy towers and all the other crackpot schemes designed to lure unwary punters into emptying their wallets in the City-by-the-Sea™.

Most recently Tony had to get something off his chest about the latest SMASH EDO demo, despite admitting that it hadn't really affected city centre trade. Not bothered by the sight of cops rounding people up in the North Laines with horses, batons and dogs, Tony was more worried about the impact on 'normal people' and the tarnishing of B&H PLC's carefully buffed public image.

"The problem for business is that these scenes are shown on the news as happening in Brighton and it's not great publicity, especially when we are trying to say to companies to come to Brighton and create jobs here". Hang on Tony, the fact we're making bombs to drop on kids in Gaza ain't all that good for a positive public image either – you wanker!

NO PLACE FOR SAFE SPACE

There is currently no overnight shelter accommodation solely for women in Brighton and Hove.

Since January last year, Latitude Safe Space has been working to set up a 15-bed safe space for women who are homeless – with cooking facilities, a lounge, and creative and practical resources. The project is in the process of registering as a workers' coop and charity, before applying for funding to secure a building. More people are needed to get involved. Interested? Web designer, carpenter, accountant, counsellor? Latitude is having a meeting especially for newcomers on 28 Feb at 2pm (location TBC). For info, email: latitudesafespace@googlemail.com or call 07583050705.

PLANE STUPID

People power triumphs in Clyde Rd – at least for now.

The council were planning to rip out a number of mature Plane trees on Clyde Road, Brighton (near Preston Circus by the Duke of York's Cinema).

They were gonna do the deed during the planting season next winter and replace them with more 'upright compact' species. However, just a week after the comparatively posh residents started an e-petition and a Facebook group the council backed down.

Now we don't want to take anything away from this particular gang of eco-warriors and it's great that the trees are staying but we wish the council was as quick to respond to everyone's concerns.