

HAVE THEY GOT NEWS FOR YOU?

Earlier this month, the mongrel newshounds at The Argus downed notebooks, keyboards and phone taps in the third of a series of strikes to hit what is left of Brighton's rag.

The first two day strikes took place in November and December in response to cut-backs and a three year pay-freeze. The Argus newsroom was already doing a passable impression of a ghost town after the loss of over 100 staff under editor Michael Beard.

Then it got even quieter over Christmas with the sacking of the entire subs desk. The work will now be outsourced to a desolate faraway land where the desperate workers slave away for long hours on a pittance: Southampton.

The move has been portrayed as a necessary measure in times of financial crisis by The Argus' sinister owners Newsquest/Gannet, a US owned company that lords it over 17 dailies and over 200 weeklies across the UK. The crisis has so far seen Newsquest post a £71 million profit in 2009 and the salary of chief exec Paul Davidson rocket up from £501,000 in 2008 to £609,000 in 2009.

Never ones for letting truth get in the way, not a word of the story has appeared in The Argus itself. The only mention of the strikes were by a 'community correspondent' (one step above the green ink brigade) and, weirdly, a reposted Brighton and Hove News article hidden away in the comments section of a story about parking.

Not content with having the whole thing hushed up in their own 'news' paper, 'News'quest also declined to comment when contacted by B&H News.

The move has single-handedly wiped out what appeared to be the most extremist wing of The Anus: the subs that come up with headlines. Lest we forget, they were responsible for some seriously vicious and misleading crackers targeting campaigns such as Smash EDO (Anyone remember 'SHAMEFUL'?).

Likewise, we struggle to mourn the passing of sub-editors who can churn out 'The Face of Hate' and 'The Face of Evil' in the same week. Nevertheless, it has to go down as one more blow against the already piss-poor local news industry. What happened to the idea of a local newspaper serving a local community?

BURGER OFF!

That all-pervasive smell of sausages and burgers in Churchill Square has drawn the ire of local animal rights groups.

Every Tuesday there's an anti-meat stall and leafleting session between 11.30am and 2pm. Recently the burger van staff (no, not that twat David van Day, his career nosedived when he left his burger van and went to Channel Five) were spotted giving people free burgers if they ate them next to the animal rights stall.

Obviously all the hormonal red meat went to the staff's heads as they gave a very unhealthy looking geezer a poster to hold up saying "eat more meat - it's good for you." Given that the bloke was obese and a week away from a coronary this didn't really work in their favour.

Meanwhile the 18-month campaign against Beyond Retro, a pretentious 'vintage' shop in Vine St continues. Sussex Action For Animals oppose their sales of fur clothing made in the past five years with some of it shipped in from China. There are weekly demos at 12-2pm each Sunday outside the shop.



Below Zero is Brighton's anarchist response to the homeless crisis - without the red tape and religious bias that sometimes accompanies soup kitchens and the like.

The aim is to provide help to the homeless in severe weather conditions: in the winter, hot soup and dry warm clothing can mean the difference between life and death for those living on the street.

At this stage the group is looking for donations of warm clothes and accessories (that means gloves and hats, not hair braids and earrings) and loads of flasks for hot soup runs. Eventually there'll be regular city drive-arounds distributing emergency help.

WRONG RIBBON STROP



It must be stressful being the Tory Council leader. So it's understandable that Mary Mears might lose her rag sometimes - especially when important matters of office go askew.

Imagine Mary's disgust when, having been invited to open the flyover at the new Albion stadium, she found that she was expected to cut a green ribbon. Green?! Anything but green!

Indeed, the fruit & veg magnate threw something of a hissy fit when she discovered the exact hue of the symbolic sacrificial cord. That night a fuming email was sent out to council minions demanding to know how such a thing could happen.

"This isn't a blooming flower show!" she probably said. "It's a motorway built on Downland for godsake! A green ribbon! Really?"

It's so pathetic we're beginning to see how her support for the Big Society and St George's Day march fits in.

Mears is related to the brothers Vic and Henry Mears of the current Lapland fiasco court case but nothing to do with Mears the council building contractors - well that's what she says anyway.

TITNORE REVISITED

So you thought it was all over: Camp Titnore 1, Developers 0. Not so fast. Looks like the ref has given the devs some extra time to try again.

Developers Taylor Wimpey, Persimmon Homes and Heron have turned up like the proverbial bad penny with revised plans.

The plans' unveiling at the end of January wasn't publicised (surprise, surprise), but these aren't nearly as bad as the first lot, in that the historic four-year campaign to save the trees has won out. There's no access off Titnore Lane through the woods and the housing estate is confined to the agricultural land.

On the down side though, we're still talking about 1,000+ homes on a greenfield site prone to flooding and close enough to Titnore Woods - one of the last remaining ancient woodlands on the Sussex coastal plain - to do serious damage to the fragile ecosystems.

We like the key benefits section of the plans on the developers' brand spanking new website: "A design sympathetic to the site's setting near to the South Down National Park and location adjacent to existing properties."

Ok, so taking a punt, is that gonna mean wood builds with seedum roofs? No, we didn't think so either - it'll be the usual four square Taylor Wimpey luxury bollocks.

And as for the 'wildlife corridors running through the site' - who in the right mind believes a 1,000 home development with attached infrastructure is going to play host to badgers and bats?

The website (www.westdurringtonconsortium.co.uk) does have a comment box - so do let them know what you think.

The next stage is for the plans to go before Worthing Council planning committee who unanimously threw out the £3bn scheme last Spring having taken on board flood risks and the fact that Worthing has more than enough brownfield sites.

Go get involved go here: www.protectourwoodland.co.uk.

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,
Brighton BN1 4XQ

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UNDERCOVER COP

BRIGHTON'S VERY OWN PIG IN A BLANKET



Following the recent exposure of two undercover policemen working in northern activist communities, Brighton was starting to feel a little left out. What's up? Are we just not 'avin it large enough down here? But there's no need to despair, we had at least one undercover here.



Marco Jacobs was in Brighton from 2005-06, claiming to be lorry driver. He infiltrated the SMASH EDO campaign and the organisation against 2005's G8 summit in Scotland, Dissent, sitting in on many meetings and even taking minutes! This was during the time that EDO MBM, on the advice of Sussex Police, was trying to get an injunction to ban demonstrations outside the factory of death.

Marco departed for Cardiff in mid-2006, but not before a number of cases against SMASH EDO campaigners were dropped. Interestingly those cases were dropped because the prosecution were denied the right to keep certain secret evidence out of the trials. Did that evidence concern Mark Jacobs? We'll probably never know.

One of Sussex cops' moans about the EDO campaign, and their main justification for over-zealous and expensive policing has been the lack of knowledge of what SMASH EDO are up to.

"Why oh why," they plead, "won't you co-operate with us and tell us the route of your march, Mr Beckett?" before going for a centre-page sob story in the Anus to publicise the fact that their lack of foreknowledge has forced them to spend a million quid on controlling the protests.

Now that the fact they had a man on the inside for at least eighteen months has become public, that's all starting to sound a little hollow.

There's one winner in all this - PC Jacob's fondness for strong European lager no doubt helped the Cowley Club pay off a substantial part of their mortgage.

We'll leave the last words to SMASH EDO's seemingly unflustered press spokesman, Andrew Beckett: "We weren't surprised Marco turned out to be a cop. It's no surprise that the police try to infiltrate our movements and they'll continue to do so.

"It's not pleasant to find out that someone you thought of, at one point, as a friend is actually an undercover cop - but he did not, as far as we know, disrupt actions in Brighton and our movements will not be deterred by Marco or people like him."

LOCAL NEWSLETTER HIT BY SINISTER CYBER SABOTAGE

Rough Music is under attack! For five years RM has been on the streets of Brighton, fearlessly spitting in the eye of the powerful, kicking the corrupt in the knackers and pummeling the kidneys of profiteers. Well, apparently out efforts have not gone unnoticed.

It started with an innocent looking email dropping into the RM inbox from Nominet - regulatory overlords of the '.org.uk' domain. Apparently not convinced that Mr Rough Music was a real person, Nominet demanded personal details and proof of identification.

Unfortunately, as RM is a single collective consciousness squeezed into the vacant minds of reanimated victims of capitalism, we have no government sanctioned ID. And so we had to let the domain name roughmusic.org.uk slip into oblivion.

But it didn't end there. As RM was getting comfy in its nice, shiny new domain name (www.roughmusic.org) the plot thickened with the arrival of another email, this time from Tucows, overseers of our new domain, again questioning the legitimacy of our registration. The ghoulishly named (but thoroughly decent chap) Paul Karcas was also kind enough to forward the correspondence that led to this action. Step forward Mr Tomas J Stehlik.

Speaking on behalf of an anonymous client or clients, our pal Tomas railed against the 'illegal' group behind this crudely-made A4 newsletter and demanded information on how to break through the RM privacy shield and get his mits on some personal details.

In return Tommy J received an email informing him that our details were closely guarded by Tucows Whois privacy protection. This didn't sit too well with our Tommy. "I would like to ask you to read my previous email as it seems that you didn't read it," he bitched, adding bizarrely, "if it poses a problem, please, escalate the ticket to the management."

Tommy J wasn't happy. "I am not sure on what principles does your company work [sic]," he moaned. Principles of free speech perhaps, Tomas?

After a spot of email tennis, we felt it was time to have a personal word with Mr Tomas J Stehlik. After following the trail to Tommy's business website, Stehlik IT Services, the RM Legal Wizard and Media Fixer rang up for a friendly chinwag. He was informed that "the majority" of RM articles were causing offence and the vendetta would continue to be pursued while we used abusive language like 'wanker'.

"You would not use such language about your children even if they committed some not very nice things," said Tommy, who has clearly never witnessed a Christmas at the RM household.

Tommy went on to admit that his client(s)' fiendish plan was either to wait for a name to stick its head above the parapet so they could take legal action or else hound RM from domain name to domain name in the hope of knocking it down the google rankings. The dastards! Remaining steadfast in his refusal to name and shame his client(s), Tommy instead offered to act as a 'neutral' intermediary and forward our communiqués to our shadowy foes.

At this point the Rough Music war council was convened. Do we open channels of communication with whichever ego-maniac moneybags scum was trying to bring us down, or launch a full blown counter attack and strike a blow for free speech? Rough Music is not one to back away from a brawl. They can take our domain name, but they'll never take our freedom to call a wanker a bleedin' wanker!

See page 2 for a round-up of the likely suspects.

COPYLEFT - ROUGHIN' IT UP ON THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON

