

Hereford Heckler



The bulletin of Hereford Solidarity League

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, COMMUNITY • #15 • AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010



SPOTTED – Hereford’s MP stuck to a lamppost

Herefordshire’s own Houdini

ESG BECOMES HEREFORD FUTURES

To walk away from the smouldering car wreck that was ESG Ltd without a scratch, then calmly settle behind the wheel of an even larger ‘development vehicle’, the supercharged Hereford Failures shows recklessness even Top Gear’s Richard Hammond would admire.

Yet that is just what ESG’s former chief executive, Jonathan Bretherton, has done, becoming CEO of Herefordshire Council’s renamed development company Hereford Failures, which will be “...taking its lead (according to a saccharine-flavoured council Press statement) from the priorities voiced by residents in the council’s successful (sic) Shaping Our Place consultation...”.

The statement is long on Blairite hyperbole but short on hard facts. Hereford Failures, it seems, is to be charged with [deep breath] creating new and better-paid jobs, affordable homes, vibrant communities, an energy-efficient urban village, new retail and leisure attractions, a new relief road, a second river crossing, all flood alleviation engineering work, [inhale] sustainable transport projects (including improved public transport connections), the creation of a higher education campus, strategic business parks for knowledge-based industries... oh yeah, and a retail quarter on the Edgar Street grid site and a new link road. **Same as before then.**

Herefordshire sees first cuts BRING ON THE CLASS WAR!

The county’s children and pensioners are among the first to be hit after the government’s free swimming programme was cut at the end of July.

Government took away the measly £200,000 grant that kept the scheme going, with the council unable to find extra cash locally (it can, however, find £183,724 to keep Chief Executive, Chris Bull, brushing his teeth with champagne).

Herefordshire families receiving housing benefit have also been hit. Housing charity, Shelter, has said the average three bedroom household in the county will see an 8% drop in the amount they receive and will have to find an extra £11.51 a week to keep a roof over their heads. Many people will now be forced to cut back on essentials like food and electric to make ends meet.

The National Housing Federation is already warning that more than 750,000 people in the south-east are at risk of losing their homes because of the benefit cuts.

The Tories are ploughing full steam ahead with their cuts in the name of ‘national interest’: dismantling the welfare state, cutting benefits, drawing up plans to attack unions, ending the right to a council house for life, proposing privatisation on a massive scale ... the list is endless.

“We’re all in it together,” apparently. My arse! **DAVID CAMERON AND NICK CLEGG AREN’T IN THE SAME BOAT AS US, WHO ARE THEY TRYING TO KID?!** The rich landowning toffs around this county aren’t going to suffer. Hereford’s MP and ex-banker Jesse Norman has reportedly just bought a very nice house down in leafy Broomy Hill, we wonder how many spare bedrooms he’s got. **Is he underoccupying?**

We still haven’t forgotten what got us into this mess in the first place: the bankers. They’ve got away with a slap on the wrists and are carrying on just as before. Us working class

people, on the other hand, are now the ones who’ve got to take the hit. **It’s our jobs and services that are on the line; our families and communities that will suffer. The bankers? How are their families and jobs going to be affected?** Are they going to be the ones who will have bailiffs on their doorsteps banging down the door to evict them? Pull the other one!

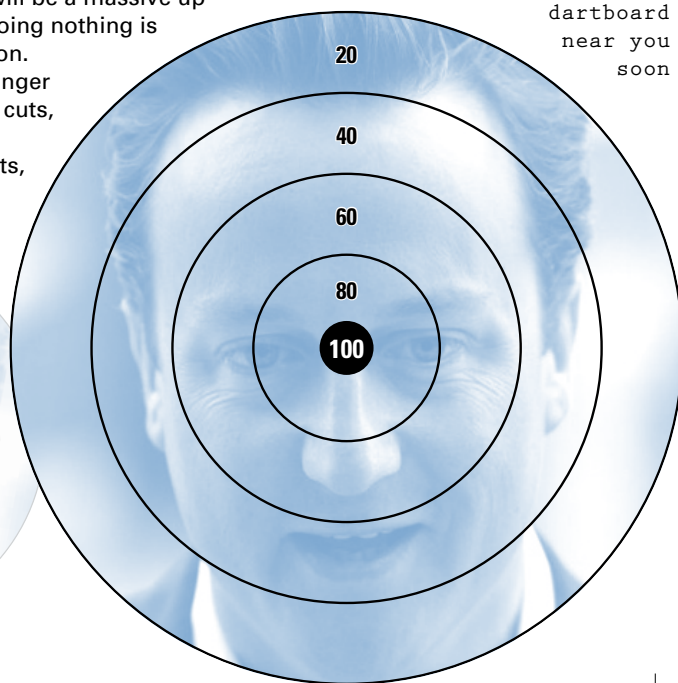
One economic commentator has described Goldman Sachs, the world’s number one investment bank, as “a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money”. How very true!

We now face a full-on class-based attack on our way of life and to stop it will be a massive uphill struggle, but doing nothing is simply not an option.

There is a lot of anger surrounding these cuts, let’s see it on the streets with protests, pickets, riots and more.

Our message is clear: we have the strength to bring down this government and we will!

David Cameron: Decorating a dartboard near you soon



DAY OF RAGE



DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE CUTS AT THE TORY PARTY CONFERENCE CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER, 12 NOON

Become a fan of the *Hereford Heckler* Facebook page for more details nearer the time

National Award for Local Project

Herefordshire Supported Housing for Young People (SHYPP) is celebrating after it won a National Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Supporting People award.

SHYPP, which has helped more than 3,000 young people to manage their tenancies and avoid homelessness, prison and debt, was named winner at a London awards ceremony in July. The award is well timed for SHYPP, which like many other valuable services is facing increasing pressure on resources following public spending cuts.

Hereford Solidarity League recently held a stall at SHYPP's celebration event on the Castle Green where we gave away housing and squatting information, badges and CDs and sold books and our new Heckler t-shirts. The event itself was a great afternoon of fun, food and music. Bizarrely, Jesse 'cut housing benefit and push more young people into poverty' Norman attended; seems they didn't teach irony at Eton!

For more information on SHYPP visit www.shypp.co.uk

HEREFORD HOSTS IBSA WORLD BLIND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The IBSA World Blind Football Championship 2010 starts on the 14th of August, with all games being played at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford.

Day tickets are available now priced at £5 for adults and £2 for concessions. Tickets can be bought online at www.blind2010.com/tickets by telephone on 0161 743 3515 (Monday-Friday 9am-4pm) or on the day. See you there.

FIRST ROUND FIXTURES

14 August – England v Spain 15:00

15 August – Columbia v Japan 13:00

15 August – Argentina v France 15:00

15 August – Brazil v China 17:00

16 August – Spain v Columbia 13:00

16 August – France v Brazil 15:00

16 August – Argentina v Cameroon 17:00

16 August – England v South Korea 19:00

17 August – France v Cameroon 13:00

17 August – Spain v South Korea 15:00

17 August – Argentina v China 17:00

17 August – England v Japan 19:00

18 August – France v China 13:00

18 August – Spain v Japan 15:00

18 August – Columbia v South Korea 17:00

18 August – Brazil v Cameroon 19:00

19 August – Japan v South Korea 13:00

19 August – China v Cameroon 15:00

19 August – Argentina v Brazil 17:00

19 August – England v Columbia 19:00

Hereford's Radical History – part four

The 1914 Herefordshire Teachers' Strike

During the winter of 1913-14 the discontent felt by school teachers in Herefordshire, as the poorest paid anywhere in the country, took a more militant turn when teachers resigned en masse while demanding increased wages and a new pay scale.

The immediate reaction of the Local Education Authority (LEA) was to bring in scab labour to replace strikers. Many of the strikers were popular members of the local communities and not all students were willing to be taught by the strike breakers.

On the first day of the strike students at Ledbury Girls School arrived to be greeted by the LEA scabs. The first sign of trouble was at morning break when 40 students marched into the town demanding their teachers back and chanting "we want a strike". **Upon returning to school it was reported that they upturned inkpots and desks, and "amused themselves on the piano".** Thirty students then followed the new head teacher into town during the lunch break jeering her as they went. When the teachers returned for the afternoon they found **the student 'strikers' were blocking the main entrance and refusing to move**, many sang songs in support of the strike and demanded the return of their own teachers. Other students gained entry to the school via the back door; they pulled down blinds, rang the school bell incessantly and threw clothing out of the windows. By 3 o'clock, with no chance of gaining entry to the school, the scab teachers accepted defeat and left the school, again followed by a jeering crowd of schoolgirls.

Similar scenes were witnessed at Ross Boy's School where two scab teachers were left in charge of approximately two hundred students! Needless to say they lost control completely. During the morning most of the older boys left the school via doors and windows and marched through town chanting "Strike boys, strike".

Most of the students returned to school but 40 stayed outside the main gates chanting and writing "Strike boys, strike" on walls, the pavement and even passing vehicles. By mid afternoon things were completely out of hand with all two hundred students chanting and jeering outside the main gates.

The pressure that the strike put on the LEA and the council ultimately proved successful and a settlement was reached with an improved pay scale that increased wages to a level similar to the rest of the country. Now, almost 100 years later, public service workers are again facing financial pressure from those in power.



Top: Pupils at Ledbury Girls' School surround their new headmistress to stop her getting in to the school.

Below: A group at Ashperton who refused to go to school in solidarity with the striking teachers.

Empty house is 'FLYTIPPERS PARADISE'

A Hereford house is blighting a community after more than 10 years of neglect.

Neighbours of 1 Quicksets, Redhill, (featured previously in the Heckler), say the empty house lowers the tone of the area and has become a "flytippers paradise".

One resident has been in touch with the council for two years to try and get them to clean it up. He has even made a protest video, which has been published on Youtube. Outlining the problems to the Heckler, he told us: • glass from the broken windows is lying in the long grass, injuring at least one child who had to receive hospital treatment • chemical drums have been dumped in the garden and • the property is infested with rats. It is now a serious health hazard.

As usual, Herefordshire Council seem to be doing nothing (this is getting like a broken record isn't it). They should be doing something about the health and safety issue; there are environmental laws to back this up, but there is no action. They should be doing

something to take possession of this empty property; there are housing laws to back this up, but there is no action.

We're sticking to our guns: the place should be squatted! While a lot of time is wasted on legal bureaucracy, a family could be in there with next to no fuss, keeping the garden tidy and making the necessary repairs to the house. It could turn an eyesore into well-maintained family home. Something to consider.

Watch the Quicksets protest video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEW1MJFdbnk



PETER DOESN'T WANT TO BE OUR FRIEND

It seems we're not flavour of the month at Herefordshire Housing at the moment. After reading our front page report on the empty Lloyd Street houses in last month's issue, Peter Brown, the association's Chief Executive, got in touch to tell us: "Your selective interpretation of the information we gave you in good faith will obviously influence how we share information in the future." In other words, **they'll only give us information that doesn't make them look bad.**

Presumably they took the same approach with the independent Audit Commission who, in their 2009 report, said "empty property repairs ... are also completed quickly". Ha, really?

Well, true to his word, after repeatedly asking for updates on the Lloyd Street houses for this issue, Peter Brown is now ignoring us ... we'll take it you've made no progress during the last two months then, Peter. Still, no pressure, there's only 5,000 people waiting to move in!

SHORT OF CASH?

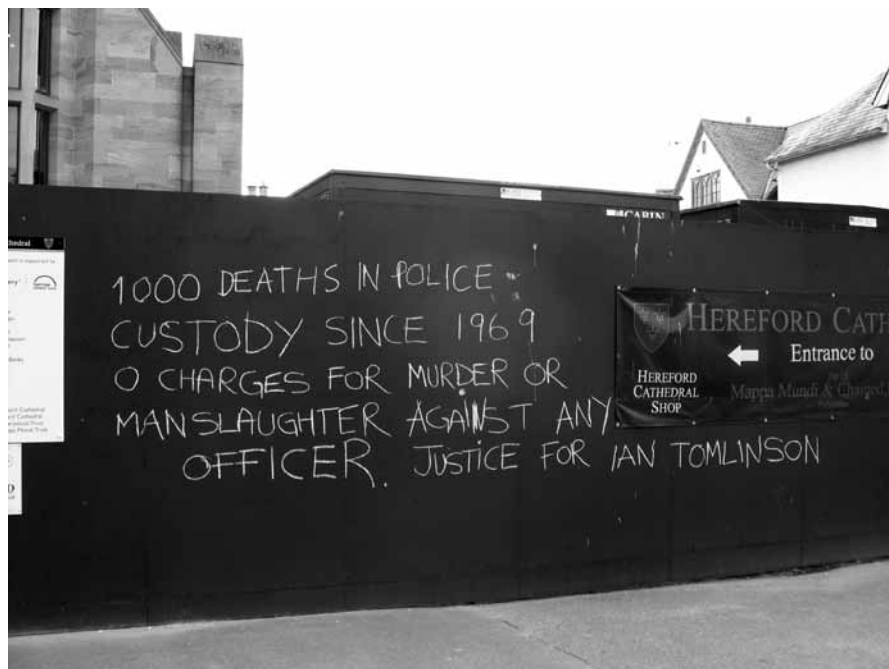
If you're not yet, the chances are you soon will be, with Tory cuts coming thick and fast.

One way to save a bit is the Hereford LETS group. LETS (Local Exchange and Trading Scheme) is a modern barter system that allows people to exchange their skills and goods without using money. LETS are revitalising communities throughout Britain, and as grassroots initiatives, they are open to everyone—all ages, skills and abilities, whether unemployed or working. It allows everyone to give and take, connect to new resources, and find a genuine community identity. Services are as diverse as the members in LETS—from food sharing to skilled craftsmanship, the possibilities are endless.

Hereford LETS is informally part of the wider Freeconomy community, with the aim of connecting people within their local community, through the act of sharing resources—better for the environment, saves you money and builds friendships. Capitalism leads to greed-fuelled over-production, destroying the planet and the people who inhabit it—climate change, oil wars, factory farming, polluted oceans, sweatshops ... who wants to buy into that! Hereford LETS is one attempt to challenge this culture.

Mark Boyle, the founder of Freeconomy, is due to speak in Hereford in October. Everyone's welcome, details to follow. His inspiring self-sufficient lifestyle, living without money may not be to everyone's taste but it can certainly teach us a lesson or two in saving some money.

Visit these website for more info: www.justfortheLoveofit.org or www.thewyexchange.btck.co.uk



SPOTTED
— Anti-police graffiti in Hereford

VIOLENT THUG GETS AWAY WITH MURDER

You're looking for a fight so, unprovoked, you hit a man and shove him to the ground. The injuries he receives kill him. All of this is captured on film. What charge should you expect, murder or manslaughter? Well, if you're PC Simon Harwood, the violent thug who killed Ian Tomlinson at last year's G20 protests, you'd get neither ... not even assault!

The Crown Prosecution Service refused to bring any charge against the copper because of 'conflicting postmortem evidence'. What's conflicting about an unprovoked attack? Why was there no charge of even assault? Oh yeah,

because they dragged the investigation out for so long no charge could be brought against him. If this was the other way around, if a civilian had caused the death of a police officer, that person would now be in jail!

There has been absolutely no justice in the Ian Tomlinson case and it just goes to show what a bent and corrupt organisation the police force really is. ACAB!



SPORT



ANTI-RACISM WORLD CUP

The 16–18th of July saw Belfast host the 4th annual Anti-Racism World Cup (AWRC).

The aim of the event is to promote the common ground that working class people of all creeds, colours and ethnic backgrounds share and to combat racism and discrimination.

Each year the event celebrates the life of those who have fought to promote ideals of freedom and equality. This year the event commemorated the life of International Brigades volunteer Charlie Donnelly who was born in County Tyrone and died fighting at the battle of Jarama during the Spanish civil war.

Here's a take on the weekend from a member of the Aston Villa Anti-Fascists team:

“On the Saturday morning players from 16 international and eight local teams met on the pitch of Donegal Celtic. Having scraped together a team comprising adopted Villa fans from four different countries and suffering the effects of the previous night we didn't fancy our chances. Despite our frailties we ended up drawing our first game 1–1 against Celtic Green Brigade, followed by a draw with Catalonia and a defeat to Cuban Solidarity.

“After the morning football the Palestinian team gave a talk explaining the situation in the occupied territories and the routine oppression that is faced by those living there. The stories told ranged from the saddening to the absurd and infuriating, like how the supply of water in the territories is controlled by the Israeli state so sometimes there is no running water for cooking or washing.

“Having listened to the experiences of the Palestinian team and rested our legs from the morning's exertions we were taken on a tour of Lenadoon area of Belfast. We were shown murals commemorating the struggle of those opposing colonial rule in Ireland and told the history of the area from the breakdown of the ceasefire in 1972 to how today the largest houses in the area are all reserved for the Church while locals suffer from a lack of affordable housing.

“The tournament was won by the Palestinian side whose resolve in reaching the tournament was matched by their performance on the pitch. The event itself was a huge success with 200 international guests and around 500 locals attending over the course of the weekend. Friendships and links were made with some fine people and we will certainly be returning next year when organisers hope to invite representatives of either FC St Pauli or Livorno and possibly members of the Palestinian national team.”

For further information go to www.antiracismworldcup.com

FOOTBALL FANS STILL 'OVER-POLICED'

Heavy-handed tactics by the police continue to be a big problem for football fans in England and Wales, the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) has said.

Spokeswoman Amanda Jacks said in an interview with the BBC that football supporters are “subject to heavy-handed policing week in, week out,” with the majority of supporters being treated like hooligans, regardless of the make up of the fan base, with many supporters being women and children.



Whilst arrest levels have fallen to an average of only one arrest per 10,000 fans, the FSF suggests that many police forces still judge fans based on reputation, rather than on their actual behaviour at the time.

The FSF are due to raise the issue at their next ‘fans parliament’ gathering. The organisation works to protect the rights and interests of football fans across England and Wales.

Find out more at www.fsf.org.uk



Helen Heckler



■ Firstly, the news that Tony Hayward, the head of BP has scurried away from his failing company, in the wake of a disastrous oil spill, with enough money to make millionaire Jesse blush. When questioned about his situation, and the fact that he's taking millions worth of company money that could be going to the cleanup operation with him, he responded with “life isn't fair”. We at Heckler HQ have our own version: “capitalism isn't fair”.

■ First his party loses a mass of seats, then they go into disarray, then no one buys his cover of ‘Springtime for Hitler’, and now Nick Griffin suffers yet another misfortune, as he is refused entry to the royal garden party. That must be a blow; when even Prince Phillip thinks you're too un-PC to turn up to his house, you're DEFINITELY a nutter.

■ ESG, Hereford Failures, the artist formerly known as ESG, The Roger Phillips Experience. A Tale of Two Cities (don't worry, we'll get rid of the old one soon enough). It doesn't matter what you call it, the people of Herefordshire have made themselves perfectly clear: WE DON'T WANT IT.

■ Anyone seen Jesse Norman about Hereford lately? Nah, me neither. Nice to know he's still in touch with the people of Hereford, or ‘votes’, as he calls us.

■ **Hereford Solidarity League** works to build a society based on the ideas of **freedom, equality and community** ■ **Anti-fascism is an important part of our politics**, but we believe that all politicians maintain a system of inequality, privilege and control that divides communities ■ Real change does not happen at the ballot box and can only come about by **independent working class action**; that is, people looking out for each other and organising themselves to deal with the problems that they experience on a day to day basis ■ Our aim is to increase the fighting spirit and self-confidence of working class people to change things for themselves.

Find us on the internet—Join our **Facebook group ‘Hereford Heckler’**; visit www.herefordheckler.wordpress.com; or email kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk

