

Hereford Heckler



The bulletin of Hereford Solidarity League
Anti-fascist • Anti-racist
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Free/Donation

Rozbij rasizm • Contra racismo

RESIDENTS CALL FOR COUNCIL TO STAND DOWN

■ **Big up the man who demanded the whole of Kington Town Council stand down and hold a full re-election!**

■ Mick Rand made the comments at a council meeting, on Thursday 29th May, to cheers and shouts of “hear, hear” from members of the public present.

■ Mr Rand had told the council that they were the **wrong people** to be running Kington and that the number of councillors should be reduced by half.

■ But come on, Mick, all councillors are the same. Don't re-elect any of them. Kington, and elsewhere, will always be better if it were to be

run by everyone. Why get someone to make decisions for you when you can do it for yourself!

■ Residents had questioned the £17,500 costs of the last town council audit when the same service cost the rural council just £35!
Hmm ... sounds to us like someone's got very big back pockets!

NO BYPASS!

Herefordshire Council has yet again raised plans to build a bypass around Hereford. They do this safe in the knowledge that the local media has convinced a large portion of Herefordians of the need for the road.

This knee jerk reaction to what is a major traffic problem in the city consists of two options. The first is a new river crossing at Breinton to the west of Hereford. But it's doubtful whether the 'Chelsea tractor' driving Tory voters who live in that area will fancy a new road through their back door. So the favoured route would run around the east of the city, from the Worcester road in the north connecting up with the new Rotherwas access road in the south. This bypass would divert most of the traffic coming through the city but would fail to alleviate any of the 'inter-city' traffic problems such as journeys to and from work or school that cause most of the traffic jams. The road will also cut through the Lugg Meadows, now recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. These ancient hay meadows, whose records date back to the time of the Domesday Book, have great ecological and historical significance.

The council is looking to borrow the millions needed to construct this road and pay off the debt by selling land to property developers. This is due to government funding being refused for the bypass on a number of occasions. Westminster has previously stated that there are far cheaper ways of dealing with Hereford's traffic problems. But unfortunately the council continues with its rather childish 'everywhere else has got one so why can't we' attitude.

Is there anyone left on the council that does



The soon-to-open Rotherwas access road

not believe climate change is now inevitable and reducing the burning of fossil fuels is an imperative? Maybe they remain unconvinced

THE EIGHT-POINT HECKLER TRAFFIC-CALMING PLAN

- Reduce the amount of haulage on the roads—more local production
- Reduce the need to travel by reviving village shops and services
- Improvements to existing roads
- Free travel on all public transport
- More cycle lanes
- Use of 4x4s only where necessary—no 'Chelsea tractors' for city school runs
- Improved 'park and ride' and city bus services
- Deportation of Jeremy Clarkson to a far away island ... And Roger Phillips

or unaware of the science that tells us global oil reserves are now half empty, making oil more and more expensive to extract? No-one will have missed the price of petrol and diesel currently going through the roof. With oil running out the truth is the cost of motoring will not be returning to the prices that this country relied upon in the 20th century. This means only one solution: changing our lifestyles and improving our counties existing facilities, not new roads.

So will it be a radical set of solutions for Herefordshire, that treasures its resources and building on localised industry? Or a road that's going to be obsolete by the time it's finished, destroying an incredibly rich and diverse landscape, plunging Herefordshire into debt and a reliance on selling land to hungry developers? The fight is indeed on!



HELEN HECKLER

■ A report on crime in Herefordshire* has found that food and **groceries are the most commonly stolen items** in the county. And as food prices keep rising but wages stay the same it's no surprise really. Even the government is taxing the poor (I'm hungry, Gordon). So what do I think of these little tea-leaves? Good on 'em. Why beg for hand-outs when there's plenty of food on the shelves. Tesco make billions—they're not going to notice if a bag of spuds and a couple of pints of milk goes missing. What did that good old Robin Hood teach us, boys and girls? Take from the rich and give to the poor.

■ Congratulations to the *Hereford Times* on finally getting round to **reporting news that happened back in March!** Keep up! Your roving *Heckler* hacks exclusively reported in our last issue how an anti-war film had been banned by local authorities the length and breadth of Britain, including Hereford, for portraying the 'boys in blue' in a bad light. The *Hereford Times* said it was all a misunderstanding about the venue not having the correct licence to show films ... funny how Herefordshire Council decided not to pipe up about a potential licence infringement despite the film being advertised for over a month; they preferred to hand deliver a letter four hours before the screening!

■ And have you heard the news? Tory councillor, **Roger 'I want to close your school' Phillips**, has been re-elected as leader of the council. Well, I'll tell you this for free: I didn't elect him. So Roger, what's in the pipeline for your next period as leader? Maybe close some childcare centres too? Oh, actually, you're already trying that in Kington, aren't you?!

Hugs and kisses to you all

Helen xx

* Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership report
† Finally reported on 22 May 2008, *Hereford Times*

IMMIGRATION: RAKING IN PROFITS FOR MEDIA BOSSES

A recent headline in the *Daily Express* read that immigrants cause more crime. According to the same tabloid, 80% of British jobs are taken by foreigners. But what was not mentioned is that the 80% figure only applies to the least popular jobs. And of course, if they are working, then they are also contributing to tax.

If they are working illegally, chances are they are getting paid below the minimum wage by unscrupulous employers who take advantage of their vulnerable situation.

As a journalist, this author knows all too well that the information we print depends largely on the circulation of people who read the publication.

So if the popular consensus is one that is against immigration, then the facts presented in a newspaper will be selected if, and only if, they support that view.

Of course, there are two national newspapers that do not conform to that rule, when it comes to immigration—*The Guardian* and *The Independent*. And not surprisingly, they are also the two least read newspapers in the UK.

Tabloids are well known for using emotive issues such as immigration and Islam to boost their readership. But immigrants are not the only public enemy subjected to the glare of the media. Muslims are another big evil. Especially after high

profile cases such as 9/11 and the July bombings.

Readers may remember the case of four men convicted of possessing Ricin for the purposes of terrorism. What was not mentioned in the tabloids was no Ricin was ever found and the men were cleared of any wrong doing.

There is hardly a country on the planet that hasn't been affected by some form of terrorism or another.

The predominantly Christian members of the IRA are an example of how terrorism can blight the lives of ordinary people.

A couple of years ago members of the Christian 'Army of God' in the USA were convicted of blowing up abortion clinics—with doctors inside them. But a backlash against Christians based upon a few criminals would be ridiculous. And if terrorism is the crime with which we charge people, then both Christianity and Islam are equally guilty.



It all comes down to the basic principle that for the most part, media is a business that depends upon profits—not necessarily principle—like any other company.

That doesn't necessarily mean that everything printed is untrue. But the facts that are presented will almost always rely to a greater degree on the perspective of their readers.

'CELEBRITY' VICTIMS

Hardly a week goes by without some new distressing story of a families' suffering: the horrific cruelty of Austria's Josef Fritzl; continued reports on Madeleine McCann's abduction; shock over Shannon Matthews's hoaxed disappearance. The British public seems to have unquenchable interest in these stories, being responsible for selling vast amounts of newspapers. It is heartening to know that this level of compassion exists for individuals—our sympathy goes out to all the families and victims in these very tragic stories.

But why is this compassion or fascination just reserved for these 'celebrity' victims? Generally as a nation we seem uninterested in taking responsibility for the suffering caused by our lifestyles.

Can you imagine the 'man in the street' passionately telling his friend that: "You can only buy a t-shirt for a fiver from Asda because it's been made in a sweatshop, where people work 18 hour days, seven days a week, with pennies for payment and no right to join a union". Or ranting about the chocolate we eat: "Unless it bares the fair-trade label it involves child labour,

as the farmer can not afford to allow their child to go to school, robbing them of their childhood". This information would certainly not sell papers, as this would cause us to face the consequence of our everyday actions, or relatively cosy lifestyle. The suffering that's caused to millions of people on a daily basis is perhaps too unimaginable compared to the 'celebrity' victim's experiences.

And of course there is no easy solution, boycotting companies that employ sweatshop labour potentially feeds back to those who rely on those pennies to survive. Of course not everyone can afford fair-trade goods, but everyone was ability to question or even the ability to demand that these rich corporations pass on their wealth to those who facilitate their success.

Maybe the conversation in the street should go something like this: "Oh did you hear about Terry Green, the head of clothing at Tesco? He was on £2.5 million per year but they cut it back to £50,000 so that they could give the money to the sweatshop workers and still keep the prices low. Every little helps!"

DECENT HOMES FOR ALL

... ESPECIALLY FOR MICHAEL AND KIM

The BBC's *Panorama* programme has taken up the case of a young Ledbury couple who describe their town centre flat as an "absolute dump".

Michael Dowding, who lives in the flat with wife Kim and two-month old baby Charlie, says the problems are having a detrimental effect on the family's health.

"We've got damp in one bedroom," said Michael, "the ceiling is coming down and if you go to the toilet at night all you can hear is rats scratching around."

The couple have been on the Homepoint waiting lists looking for a property in Ledbury for five years with no success. Which isn't a surprise, as the Council's own figures from a 2005 report state that an extra 175 affordable homes are needed in Ledbury alone. Where are they?

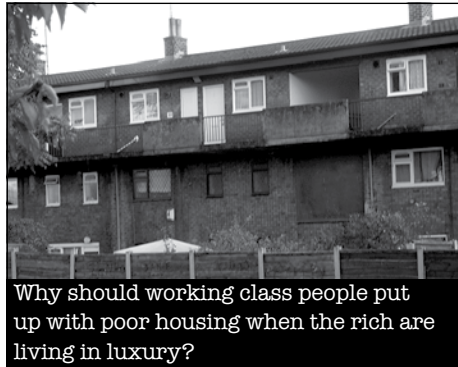
One thing is clear: there is a desperate need for more houses in the county. Not posh homes, swanky apartments or luxury penthouses that are way out of the price range of working class people. But decent, well-designed houses that are well within the budget of even the most modest of earners.

The Tory-run council have wasted millions on a new road into Rotherwas. They are willing to gamble millions more of taxpayers money

to build a proposed bypass. And even more millions are being put into moving the existing cattle market out of town and developing the much-criticised Edgar Street Grid.

In short, the council are doing everything they can to help industry bosses and large private companies. But when it comes to actually helping the people of Herefordshire, what are they doing? Proposals to close schools. Proposals to close nurseries. And where's the millions of pounds that's needed so badly for cheap, affordable housing?

Herefordshire Council clearly can't do the job properly—kick 'em out!



Why should working class people put up with poor housing when the rich are living in luxury?

A RAGE IN THE EAST END

JEWISH ANTI-FASCISTS IN THE 40s

Radio Four's 'Archive Hour' recently told a little known story of a conflict that took place in the years following the Second World War, when British Jewish ex-servicemen and women returned from fighting the nazis only to find fascist groups promoting their politics of hate back in the streets of London.

They formed the anti-fascist '43 Group' in response to the revival of organisations such as the 'British League of Ex-Servicemen' and Oswald Mosley 'British Union of Fascists'. Mosely had been imprisoned during the war for his sympathy for the nazis. Once released he advocated that the war had been without purpose and the Jews where the reason for society's problems. This was the message being portrayed by Hitler during the German depression of the 1930s.

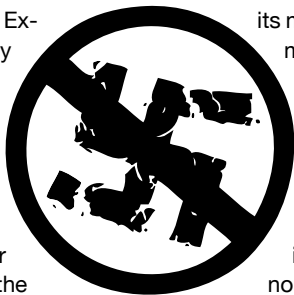
The activities of these fascist groups included anti-semitic speeches in public places, inciting racial hatred and violent attacks on Jews and their property. Many Jews were shocked by the level of police protection these groups were given at meetings, voicing exactly the same political beliefs as the nazis they had been fighting abroad. The government was unwilling to take a hard line, believing the new public order bills could control demonstrations and that freedom of speech should be upheld.

Many of the returning soldiers had witnessed first hand the horrific scenes of the camps such as Belsen. Driven by anger, the 43 Group took action with members braking up fascist meetings, on many occasions demolishing speaker's platforms mid-sentence. They infiltrated fascist groups and engaged the fascists in street fighting. Their goal was to

drive fascism from the streets and silence its message of hate forever. Violence may seem like an extreme response today in a society without these close historical reference points but they were in no doubt of the danger these fascists possessed; they had been trained to fight the nazis in the war and to them this was no different.

The group grew to include many hundreds of men and women, not all Jewish. Once the immediate threat had passed and support for the fascist groups dwindled the group voluntarily disbanded in 1950.

Don't be fooled that the British National Party is any different to the British League of Ex-Servicemen, British Union of Fascists or Hitler's nazis. The BNP now use migrants and Muslims as the scapgoats for society's failings, driving divides through communities in an attempt to gain support for their message of hatred. No pasaran!



ANTI-FASCIST NEWS AND VIEWS

■ **Biff! Kapow! Splat!** Just a few of the sounds that could be heard in central London in April when neo-nazis attempted to get to a fascist conference. A lively anti-fascist presence in the area made sure that most of those who tried to attend were denied their afternoon of stiff right arm saluting. Four more determined neo-nazis decided to debate the issues of the day with the anti-fascists, an area where they came off second best. **Thud!**

■ Meanwhile up in Glasgow, the BNP recently attempted a paper sale in the city centre. They were surrounded by anti-fascists and one of their number was apparently so scared **he phoned his mum**. Aww, sweet. The BNP were sent on their way after having all of their papers confiscated and binned.

■ And the fascists aren't just facing a rough time in the UK either. Neo-nazis marching in the southern Polish city of Wroclaw were forced to pick up the pace a little when they came face to face with local anti-fascists. The choice was simple: run home fast or get a lift in the back of an ambulance. Like us, Polish anti-fascists haven't forgotten Adolf Hitler's famous words: the only way the nazis could've been stopped is if their opponents had smashed them on the streets from day one. Remember, **fascism doesn't start with the gas chambers, but that's where it ends.**

■ And back to England, and to London BNP's Chief Organiser, Nick Eriksen who in April was exposed for his vile opinions on rape: "Rape is simply sex. Women enjoy sex, so rape cannot be such a terrible physical ordeal. To suggest that rape is a serious crime is like suggesting force-feeding a woman chocolate cake is a heinous offence. A woman would be more inconvenienced by having her handbag snatched." Scum.

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with 'subscribe' in the subject line

Sport

KICK THE RACIST SCUM OFF OUR TERRACES

... or keep your chanting McLean!

In a season that has seen so many highs (see right) it's a shame to have to dwell on the lows. But last season saw several incidents of racist chanting by a small section of people at Edgar Street. One incident that was particularly sickening was the racial abuse suffered by Peterborough striker Aaron McLean. It seems almost unbelievable in 2008 that anyone could be stupid enough to think that this sort of behaviour is acceptable.

Of course it's part of the game to hassle opposition players, especially if they cheat to get our players sent off. But this kind of brainless abuse has no place in football or society in general. Thanks to campaigns like 'Kick it out' these sort of incidents are few and far between in football grounds in England, but one racist at Edgar Street is one too many.

Real Hereford fans often put forward ideas for improving the attendance at United games. Surely stamping out this kind of behaviour would go some way towards that. Who would want to bring their children to a game if they had to put up with idiots like these? Luckily some Hereford fans have been able to point these racists out so their faces are now known. But there needs to be a concerted effort to



A colourful crowd of anti-fascists behind the emerging FC St Pauli players

rid the terraces of people like this. Maybe it's time to take on the example set by groups like the Green Brigade at Celtic or the fans of FC St Pauli in Germany and **organise an anti-racist supporters club**. These groups not only work to remove the racist elements from their grounds but they improve the atmosphere with some awe-inspiring displays of colour and songs.

So let's kick these scumbags off the terraces and out of Edgar Street and keep Hereford United the family friendly community club that welcomes real football fans no matter what colour they are.

THIS MONTH'S TOP 5 'THOUGHTS ON CRIME'

1. The police force was established nationwide in Britain by the County Police Act 1839. Since then crime has gone up and up. Maybe it's time to accept that this enforcement experiment hasn't worked and disband the police?
2. Sixty percent of people who are sent to prison re-offend within two years; prison clearly doesn't work for most people. Maybe it's time to look at alternatives such as treatment for drug addictions and illnesses instead of punishment.
3. There is now one CCTV camera for every 14 people in the UK. We're told we need them to cut crime but you are more likely to be the victim of corporate crime than street crime. So let's divert the money wasted on CCTV and deal with real criminals like the ones in Westminster and the White House.
4. Fifty percent of criminal offences are drug related. It doesn't take a genius to see that the laws with regard to drugs need to be changed. Decriminalising drugs could let addicts be treated for the illnesses that they suffer, instead of locking them up which doesn't work.
5. And so to the next big waste of money ... yes of course folks, it's ID cards! Are you going to be happy paying up to £200 for a card that will just upload your identity onto a database or a CD to be stolen or mislaid? ID cards won't stop crime, terrorism or make you safer; they're just a tool for the state to assert control and encroach on our privacy and dignity.

THE WHITES ARE GOING UP!

You've guessed it, we're talking about Hereford United Football Club. As many of you will know, we love our local team here at Heckler HQ and to say we were over the moon is an understatement. Lets break the season down, with the highs ... and the lows.

HIGHS

Promotion—It was a hot April day when the boys and girls of Hereford travelled to Brentford to see the Bulls secure a place in League One. Winning 3-0 away, it was the highlight of the season for many fans. The party continued all week, with a victory parade through the city and a packed out, party atmosphere at Edgar Street to see Hereford United's last game of the season against Grimsby, which we also won 2-0. '...And now you're gonna believe us, the Whites are going up ...'

A great cup run—United also managed to beat not one, not two but three League One sides to reach the fourth round of the FA Cup, where we were defeated by the finalists and our friends from across the border (hehe) Cardiff City. Lets hope we can do the same next season!

LOWS

Low turn out—Despite a very successful season, the average attendance was *down* on last years, possibly having something to do with high ticket prices. Next season let's get behind the club, for the whole season, not just the last couple of games! Well, what else you going to do on a Saturday?!

Racism—The clubs football on the pitch may be developing, but the vocabulary of a small minority of fans is not. Racist chants and racially orientated abuse aimed at people on and off the pitch were heard at numerous games during the season, something which can not be tolerated. This has been, is being and will continue to be dealt with. Let's kick racism off the terraces!



United fans congratulate the team after securing promotion at Brentford

Hereford Solidarity League is an anti-fascist community action group committed to opposing the rise of the far-right in Hereford. We believe that fascist organisations like the British National Party must be stopped and we are active in opposing their efforts to organise. Get in touch with us at kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk

