

Hereford Heckler



The bulletin of Hereford Solidarity League

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, COMMUNITY • #16 • OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2010



GREAT BRITISH DEMOCRACY...

Tory Party conference, Birmingham, 3rd October protesters are surrounded by police and penned in for over an hour on a wet Sunday. They were eventually let go after having their details taken and being individually filmed. Their crime? Well, turning up to a march. Police believed a crime was 'about to occur'. Despite this almost 10,000 people marched against the cuts, Hereford Solidarity League included. An important first step.



NO. 1 VENNS LANE, HEREFORD—owned by Herefordshire Council, empty for well over 12 months. Last November the council decided that the house should be refurbished and leased to Marches Housing Association to be used as temporary accommodation. Yet when we had a recent look around, there was no evidence of any building work going on and the place was still empty. Why?

We encourage anyone in desperate need of a house to consider squatting it. Houses like these should not stand empty. With nobody maintaining them, they are an easy target for vandalism, arson and can quickly become a health hazard. Take the housing problem into your own hands—squat it!

Another Tesco in Hereford?

WE DON'T THINK SO!

Supermarket giant Tesco have announced plans to open another store in the city.

They are currently in talks with Enterprise Inns, the owner of the Gamecock pub on Holme Lacy Road, in a bid to open a Tesco Express on the site.

But plans have already met with opposition from locals who see no need for another store in the area that already has two similar shops close by.

Soon after plans were announced Cllr Chris Chappell called a demonstration outside the Gamecock; a petition has been started and has now been signed by over 1,000 people from the area; more recently, Hereford Solidarity League organised a picket outside Tesco's Bewell Street branch. The majority of shoppers we spoke to there were overwhelmingly against another Tesco store in the city—**why do we need another one when they have three stores already?**

The Gamecock has now closed but it is still on the market as a pub. With the right landlord, this important asset could be turned into the thriving community pub it once was.

Yet there is more than just a pub at stake. Holme Lacy Road has two small supermarkets, a pet supplies shop, a greengrocer/flowerist and an off license/post office, all within 150 yards of the proposed Tesco store. All of them, apart from Co-op, are independent family run businesses, and are open seven days a week, selling competitively priced produce. Greenflynn's the grocer have been there for four years, and

buy their produce almost entirely from local sources—all their vegetables and most of their fruit is grown in Herefordshire. Their free range eggs, honey, jam, pickles, strawberries, apple juice and flowers also come from all over Herefordshire—healthy food with a minimum of environmental damage. They have over 10 local grower/suppliers who would all be affected if this shop were to go under.

The only benefit of having a Tesco open on this stretch of road would be for Tesco themselves and at the detriment to all the existing businesses there.

A public meeting has been called to organise opposition to Tesco's plans. It takes place on Friday 22nd October, 6pm at the Baptist Church Hall, Web Tree Avenue.

TEN REASONS NOT TO SHOP AT TESCO

1. Uncontrollable expansion damaging the local economy, social inclusion and local identity
2. Bullying – with its massive 30.8% UK market share power to bully suppliers and drive down prices paid to farmers
3. Corruption – including abuse of planning laws
4. Environmental damage – less than 20% of the total 40,000+ Tesco lines are from the UK meaning a bigger carbon footprint
5. Poor animal welfare – eggs from battery hens and intensively reared pork and beef.
6. Animal cruelty – it is involved in selling live turtles and live frogs in China.
7. Genetically modified food
8. Palm oil – over 1,000 products sold by Tesco contains palm oil and it is a major shareholder in Greenergy Biofuels Ltd – both linked to large-scale rainforest destruction
9. Workers' rights abuses – allegations of union-busting, chemical poisoning and poverty wages in the UK and beyond
10. Tesco continue to sell products from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories

Whoever you vote for, It's Still THEIR County

Central ward councillor Mark Hubbard launched his new political party this September to a packed out Shire Hall of almost 200 people.

It's Our County claims to be "a new kind of political party dedicated to returning democracy to Herefordshire and to finding local solutions to local problems". They are now campaigning ahead of next year's local elections under the broad banner of 'change'. But hang on, haven't we heard all of this before? Blair in 1997; Obama in 2008; Cameron in 2010. **What we quickly find out is that they're just more of the same.**

It's Our County was formed out of It's Our City, the campaign against the Edgar Street Grid. It's Our City now looks set to be wound up at the decision of those involved in It's Our County, despite the fact that firm plans are still in place for the ESG development.

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Since its launch in September last year, It's Our City has dragged its feet over the ESG issue. Over the course of a year it has amounted to little more than a petition and it has

WELL DONE, TUDORVILLE!

Tudorville Youth Centre in Ross has now been saved from closure!

The council had previously branded the building 'unfit for purpose' but Tudorville locals knew it was an important asset. Their campaign against closure now means that the centre will be run by the community, for the community.

Members of the Tudorville and District Community Centre association had engaged in several months of fundraising for the building and will now begin repair works to bring it back into use. The association aim to operate it as a community owned not-for-profit asset.

It just goes to show what can be achieved when a community comes together and acts together. Well done, Tudorville!



Tory crook, Cllr Harry Bramer (right), hands over the keys to the youth centre

WE'RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER ARE WE?

It must be part of every government minister's job description at the moment to bleat out lines like "we're all in it together" every time they open their mouths.

One of the latest ministers to be afflicted by this sheep-cross-Pinocchio curse is Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond: "We have a huge fiscal deficit to deal with, we have to get to grips with this problem, we're all in it together, we're all going to have to share in the pain." **NO WE'RE NOT ALL IN IT TOGETHER!!!** None of the rich in this country are in the same boat as us. How are they affected? Might they have to pay more for their private schools, private hospitals and days out at the races when VAT rises? Aww, diddums. Are they having their housing benefit cut? If they lose their jobs will they be struggling to pay the bills? No!

If we really are all in this together then why aren't the bankers paying for this mess as much as us? For them, it's business as usual. In fact, for the remaining banks, business is as good as it's ever been. So here we have the guilty parties doing better than ever whilst the innocent are taking all the pain! And study after study has shown that working class people will suffer more than any other group because of these cuts. So how the hell are we all in this together?!

failed to mobilise its 13,000 supporters—a campaign against a major development like the ESG cannot be fought with the single tactic of a petition alone.

In November when the petition was presented to the council we organised a feeder march to arrive at the time of the presentation. Despite repeated requests, they refused to advertise the march because it might lose them their air of respectability. For us the choice was simple: did they want to look respectful or did they want to win, because you can't always have both.

When the petition failed we pushed for action: pickets at council meetings, marches, mass street meetings and rallies, occupations of council buildings ... whatever it took. Many people told us that it was time for It's Our City to take a more militant approach. Not knowing where to go next, the campaign went into near shutdown, emerging months later with its key members planning a new political party—It's Our County.

It's hard not to be cynical about this—was It's Our City just a strategy to galvanise support for a future political party? Have they ridden on the backs of discontent over the ESG just to gain power for themselves?

It's Our County is now claiming to be a more serious fight against not only the ESG but the council's 'growth agenda' as a whole—the plan to build 8,000 new houses and a bypass in Hereford.

What we're fed up with is Herefordshire Council making all the decisions for us. **But It's Our County will be more of the same.** If they take control of the council next year it will still be 'them' making the decisions and 'us' who get no say. Their version of 'democracy' is exactly the same as all the others: we get a vote once every four years and if you don't like what they do in between then tough!

NO MORE LEADERS, NO MORE POLITICAL PARTIES, LET'S HAVE SOME GENUINE PEOPLE POWER INSTEAD.

HECKLER POSTERS IN WEOBLEY

LAST MONTH WE TOOK THE ANARCHIST MESSAGE OUT TO THE VILLAGES OF HEREFORDSHIRE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.



MP SETS UP OFFICE IN HEREFORD

Tory toff and Hereford MP, Jesse Norman, now has an office in Hereford. If you want answers regarding, hmmm, why we have to pay for the mess that the bankers created, or why this country is still at war with Iraq and Afghanistan or even why pensioners living alone in a small three-bedroom council house are being made to feel guilty for 'under-occupying' when tiny rich families can get away with living in huge country mansions, then pay Jesse a visit at Suite 3, Penn House, Broad Street Hereford.

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CUTS TO HIT THE POOR HARDEST

The spending cuts by the ConDem government are to hit the poorest in society 10 times harder than the richest, a study conducted on behalf of the Trades Union Congress has found.

Using publicly available data about the services people use, the research predicts the impact that the cuts will have on different sections of society. Unsurprisingly, it's the poor who are to be hit hardest.

Many trade unions have spoken with a sense of militancy—at the recent TUC conference they overwhelmingly approved a 'co-ordinated political and industrial campaign' against government public spending cuts. This will take the form of a rally at Westminster in October on the eve of the spending review, a national demonstration in March and a co-ordinated campaign of strike action.

Whilst a united and militant campaign is needed if we are to have any chance at stopping the cuts and saving our services, we should not be relying on the unions to lead the campaign. The last few decades have seen a serious decline in the number of unionised workers and a change in the direction of many unions—some of which have taken on a conformist nature. This has mirrored a change by the political left and the moving to the centre ground by the Labour Party, who many of unions are affiliated to and fund.

The unions and the 'traditional left' have so far failed to seriously challenge cuts and attacks on workers/union rights by successive governments—including Labour. This is a result of bureaucratic and

careerist union leadership. Most unions are run from a 'top-down' position instead of the democratic approach of being run by the rank-and-file members.

Instead of relying upon the unions to oppose the cuts we need a grassroots mass movement. This movement must be run by the people that are most effected by the cuts—workers, service users, the unemployed and the vulnerable. We need a broad-based campaign, run on the principles of solidarity, creativity and determination if we are to succeed. A variety of tactics needs to be used, and that means more than just strikes. That means 'go-slows' and other acts of resistance in the workplace. 'Refusals to pay' and boycott tactics, as was seen during the huge anti-Poll Tax campaigns, could be used. Demonstrations, pickets and civil disobedience should be used ... whatever the people involved think is needed and necessary.

Groups in Norfolk, Oxford and Bristol have already taken the lead. Norfolk Coalition Against the Cuts has been formed with involvement from many unions and community activists. After a successful launch meeting it aims to co-ordinate action against the cuts in the county.

Hereford Solidarity League will be getting involved in local campaigns in the near future—the cuts must not go unopposed in Herefordshire!



Hereford's Radical History – part five

The Ledbury Turnpike Riots of 1735

September of 1735 was a turbulent time in rural east Herefordshire and the borderlands with Gloucestershire. Ledbury and the surrounding areas were subjected to a 'terrifying riot by ax-wielding mobsters,' which left several dead, dozens injured and led to the arrests of 11 people.

Turnpikes (or 'tolls') were largely set up in 18th century England as a way of collecting road taxes. Turnpike trusts were set up to administer them and over-see the collection of the toll.

Ledbury Turnpike Trust was set up in 1721 and was in charge of turnpikes on nine of the roads leaving the town; opposition had been growing since their introduction. Many locals despised having to pay to use roads that they had previously been free to travel on and complained of the 'deadness of trade and heaviness of taxes'. The Ledbury Turnpike Trust was seen as 'an unnecessary and unjust tax collector'.

Disturbances had occurred before, but they came to a head on the 21st September 1735. The anti-Turnpike mob consisted mainly of local farmers, their servants and according to the authorities, 'the criminally-minded and the unemployed'. In a bizarre scene, many of the rioters dressed as women or blackened their faces as a way of disguising themselves—something that had been outlawed in 'the Black Act' of 1723. The local Justice had rallied a militia of around 100 men to put down the riot and 'defend the last turnpike'—this militia was armed with guns, pistols and swords.

Fighting had lasted much of the day and night, and after the mob managed to destroy the turnpike their fury continued. At about 9 o'clock they "made an attack on the Justice's house. Several of the rioters were shot down but they refused to give up and responded with equal force, injuring several of the townsmen protecting the Justice."

They had threatened to burn down the house unless two of their own were released, after a particularly nasty and violent arrest in town earlier in the day.

After hours of fighting the remaining rioters were chased away into the surrounding countryside. The two men that the mob was trying to liberate were apparently executed in Worcester, amid the tight security of 100 bayonet-carrying troops. Further disturbances followed this particular riot, with troops coming to quell the disturbances.

Over 100 years later similar events happened on a larger scale in south Wales with the Rebecca Riots. Turnpikes were eventually phased out in the mid-late 19th century, amid much celebration.

Article heavily citing 'Today in 1735' entry from the Ledbury Community Portal using facts from Old Bailey Online and the National Archives. www.ledburyportal.co.uk

Support for Young LGBT in Herefordshire

So what do you do if you are bullied because a member of your family is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)? Well one young Herefordian who wasn't prepared to put up with that kind of crap dealt with it by setting up a support group.

'Outside In' is a youth-led group for young LGBT individuals, their friends and family. The group was set up in 2008 and with the assistance of individuals and organisations such as Hereford Rainbow Forum and Supported Housing for Young Peoples Project. They are now working toward their aims of reducing homophobic bullying; supporting young LGBT people; raising awareness of LGBT issues and challenging stereotypes and misconceptions.

Outside In told the Heckler: "All young people struggle with adolescence but it can be made more complicated when dealing with being LGBT. Issues such as telling friends and family, bullying or confused emotions can be very isolating, particularly in a rural county like ours.

"Through our own personal experiences of growing up in Herefordshire, we feel that peer support and space to meet other individuals and be free from prejudice and discrimination can help. So we've been developing a social network to provide information, advice, and a supportive peer network for young LGBT people."

Outside In are currently organising a schools project where they plan to inform year 10–11 students about LGBT issues such as perceived stereotypes, homophobic bullying, health and relationships.

"We appreciate that many problems arise through a lack of understanding, people react out of fear and ignorance. So we feel that through education, we can help tackle the inequality faced by LGBT people," they said.

Visit www.outside-in.org (under construction) or email outside_in@live.co.uk for advice.



SPORT

GREED AND CORRUPTION IN CRICKET

With the announcement of the squad for the upcoming Ashes series you'd expect England cricket fans to be excited about the winter ahead. Unfortunately many of us are not. This summer's match fixing and spot fixing allegations during the series with Pakistan have made us wonder whether we should give up watching the sport, and instead spend the winter betting money on pointless insignificant probabilities, like 'how many times Bret Lee will rub the ball on his groin' or 'how many times Swannys balls will knock out Pontings middle stump'!

But it's worth having another look at international cricket in light of what happened this summer.

Let's take Mohammed Amir. He's been accused of deliberately bowling no balls in exchange for money. For this he has been branded greedy and corrupt. This is an 18 year old lad who comes from a small impoverished village in the Swat Valley, an area that is regularly bombed by the US and Pakistani military. Cricketing authorities have known for some time that Pakistan players have been targeted by illegal betting syndicates. They manipulate players with threats to families and shower them with gifts. And it's worth remembering that Pakistan players are among the lowest paid professionals in the world game.

The chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Giles Clarke, who refused to shake hands with Mohammad Amir when presenting him with the Pakistan Man of the Series award, is a former investment banker who has appeared on the Sunday Times Rich List. This is the bloke who sold the England team to Texas billionaire Robert Allen Stanford in 2008 for a Twenty20 Championship against the West Indies, for prize money of \$20 million. When Stanford was arrested in June 2009 for a \$9 billion bank fraud, Clarke refused to stand down, insisting that their dealings had been above board.

People like Giles Clarke and the ICC chairman, Sharad Pawar, who is the wealthiest politician in India, are completely motivated by money. That is why there are so many tournaments and matches. The money is pouring in from sponsorship and television deals. And the involvement of betting firms in all sports is on the increase. Where there is money to be made companies like Skybet will be there and if sports governing bodies can take a cut then they will.

People like Clarke and Pawar rake in millions of pounds in profits made on the back of players who lack proper support or representation. Cricket is being screwed by the greed and corruption at the top of the game and its players and fans who suffer for it. It's due to scumbags like Clarke and Pawar that people like Mohammed Amir end up being manipulated and abused. Amir may get a life ban if found guilty, but the real guilt lies with those controlling the game.



ANTI-FASCIST FOOTBALL CLUBS

Every anarchist's favourite football team, Germany's St Pauli, have made a solid start to their first season back in the Bundesliga. The predominantly left-wing/anarchist supported team from Hamburg are one of the most famous of Europe's left wing clubs. Teams such as Olympic Marseilles, AEK Athens, Livorno, Besiktas and St Pauli are well known for their colourful supporters (ultras) who wave anti-fascist, anti-racist, anarchist and leftist flags and banners. Brain dead racists like those fools chanting EDL at the back of the Meadow End, would be kicked off the terrace at clubs like these. Hereford United Anti-fascists anyone?



Helen Heckler

■ So how do all those people feel who voted for Jesse Norman just because 'he's a really nice chap, only to find out that he's a benefit-cutting, money-obsessed, right-wing enemy of the working class? If you don't feel guilty now then you soon will do.

■ Great news. Herefordshire has a new political party: 'Its Our County'. So at next year's local elections, instead of voting for old, wealthy, middle class politicians, you can vote for, err... young, wealthy, middle class politicians! Can't we just get on with the bloody revolution?

■ So Tesco want to open another store in Hereford? A few years ago in southern France a McDonald's was built in spite of local opposition. That didn't stop the locals. They fought back and demolished the building, dumping the rubble outside the town hall. Now that's direct action!

LOCAL LAD PENS FIRST FOOTBALL CHANT

It has been revealed that 'local' lad Elgar was the first person to write a football chant. Turns out he was a Wolves fan and he wrote "He Banged The Leather For Goal" in honour of 1890s striker, Billy Malpass.

Elgar set these lyrics to a piece of piano music which was performed in public for the first time recently. Apparently Elgar used to cycle the 40 miles from Malvern to Molineux to watch the games. Now that is a loyal supporter.

■ **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

