

Free

# RED RAG



18 March - April 1

Reading's only  
newspaper

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## Money

Red Rag desperately needs your money! Each copy is costing about 10p (there are about 1300 copies of each issue). Standing orders currently bring in about £50.00 per month which is only half of what we need. When was the last time you made a donation? You can pick up a standing order form (one percent of your income shouldn't be too much of a burden) from acorn, or phone 374532 and ask for one. You can also put you lose change in the collecting tin at Pop Records, (Kings Road) or Acorn Bookshop. Recent issues have been ten or twelve pages long which is great as far as copy goes, but grim on the money front - the more pages the more expensive it is. Please send money to Box 79, Acorn Bookshop, 17, Chatham Street, Reading (cheques made out to Red Rag) quickly. The last issue has not been paid for yet because we don't have enough in the bank. If you can do anything to raise some money (gigs, jumble sales, discos, barleycup mornings etc.) please do. Reading's only newspaper deserves more than those ha'pennies that linger in your pockets!

## Motor madness!

Reading is about to see a new boom in road-building as the County and Borough Councils push through a whole series of new roads and road-widening schemes. The decision to complete the IDR has now in effect been taken and the A33 relief road passed the County's 'Environment' committee last week. Apparently these schemes are 'non-controversial' and 'received a resounding yes' from all three parties on the County Council. Which I suppose, makes it all the more important to point out why some of us believe that the road schemes could turn Reading into a transport disaster area.

The Borough and County Councils have long held the view that major road developments are needed to keep up with the steady commercial growth in Reading and the high levels of commuting both into and out of town, which has brought streams of rush-hour traffic into residential areas such as Whitley, Basingstoke Road and Northumberland Avenue.

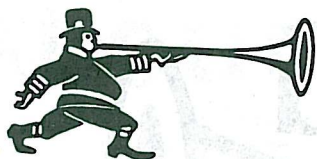
A huge new road network is planned. Most significant is the Inner Circulatory Route, which will form a four lane, 60 mph loop around the town centre, including the present IDR and massive new roundabouts. The Valley Road will run from Vastern Road through King's Meadow and eventually to the A329(M). The A33 relief road will connect the IDR to the M4.

A third Thames Bridge is another possible scheme; the King's Road is to be widened, London Road (by Newtown) already has been, and parts of Oxford Road and Bath Road will have increased capacity. There are also long-term plans to provide more car parking in the central area.

The council's methodology for calculating the need for roads appears to be as follows: they record the volume of traffic then calculate the road space needed to support it. There seems to be little attempt made to understand the long-term effects of road-building on the pattern of road use or on the life of the town itself.

cont. on p.4





# CITIZEN CAIN

## EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY?

It isn't often that the Royal County of Berkshire rates a major feature in the ethnic minority press, which is why it's a pity the ethnic majority press in Reading didn't pick up the centre-page spread in the Caribbean Times of March 9th. And specially the statement that out of the 20,000 people employed by the County only 400 are black, although blacks form 5% of the population as a whole and of course a lot more in the urban centres of Reading and Slough. But then the Reading papers also didn't report the revelation in the Reading Council Chamber a year ago that the Borough only employed one black manual worker outside the Transport Department. Both Berkshire and Reading advertise themselves as equal opportunity employers; perhaps some people feel that that is enough.

## ACTION MR GUMMER?

Courtesy of Searchlight, may I bring you two quotes from 'Round Robins', the newsletter of a group called Tory Action. On royal tours: "On every occasion the monarch has to be photographed beaming at a piccaninny, while Prince Philip and Prince Charles caper about in yarmulkas". And closer to home: "It would be too much to expect a repeal of the Race Relations Act or the disbandment of the Commission for Racial Equality from a government whose leading members include Lithuanian Leon and Latvian Lawson". Tory Action claims links with two dozen Tory M.P.s and organises against "wets" in 160 constituencies.

I link this report with the visit of Conservative Party Chairman John Selwyn Gummer to Reading on April 30th to rally his troops before the local elections. It is John Selwyn who said on Panorama that "there will be no question of racials who have connections with racist parties taking part in Conservative activities. If we find them, they will not do so.". A question he might ask while he's here is whether the two Reading constituencies are among the 160 where Tory Action operates? And whether Fred Pugh is the sole former NF member in their ranks?

## TAKING THE HUMP

On a lighter if still Tory note, the next Council meeting will be the last for Simon Coombs, now M.P. for Swindon, whose retirement is expected to enable Thames Councillor and Tory Party Leader Deryck Morton to stay on the Council despite losing his plush Thames seat to Mrs Fuad. A memory that still brings tears to the eyes of Council oldtimers is a suggestion from Simon, long before he became Chairman of the Transportation Committee, that in order to allow double-decker buses to get through the Cow Lane bridges British Rail should be persuaded to make them into hump-back bridges and take the trains over the hump. Well, Mrs Thatcher is said never to have been on a train either.

## PRIVATISATION PRESSURES

Disturbing stories are coming out of the NHS about use by management of the threat of privatisation to force hospital ancillary workers to accept higher work-rates and worse working conditions. And there are worries among the black workers that they may not be taken on by private contractors to whom an enthusiastic Health Authority is trying to dole out their work. The Authority is working to a Government timetable of putting all laundry, domestic, catering and portering services out to tender by Sept. 1986: 2½ years of enforced low morale.

## ELECTION NOTEBOOK

Election fever is breaking out spottily over Reading, with noteworthy symptoms among its victims - the candidates. The Tories were very excited about their 4p rate cut, which they thought would buy them the election. Indeed, over in Kentwood they thought a 2p rate cut would be enough and published an "In Touch" proclaiming it and accusing the "Lib-Lab Pact" (what?) of opposing it. Blue faces began to turn red when the Labour Party pointed out they had been going for a 7p rate cut and demanded a formal retraction: Saatchi & Saatchi rule OK? There was a lot of fuss at the Council

meeting about renovating the Whitley flats, and Tory Housing Chairman Jewitt suggested Labour must be worried about losing Whitley and Church Wards: they didn't tell him the flats were actually in Redlands Ward which Labour hopes to take from the Tories (but I understand Redlands Councillor John Oliver didn't half blow his cool when a damning report on the flats came to the closed meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee). His son Simon, who is struggling to hold his seat in Park, was allowed by the Tory Whip to support a Labour move to improve the changing accommodation in Palmer Park: the Tories had enough votes to defeat it. Back in Kentwood, Liberal Tom Heydeman (ousted from Tilehurst to give the seat to Jim Day) was showing an interest in new play equipment for a recreation ground that Jim Day had never shown during his 20 years representing the area. He was also championing, on behalf of the SDP candidate in Katesgrove, the extension of the A33 Relief Road to meet up with the IDR, rather to the indignation of Labour spokesmen (sorry, spokespersons) who clearly remember thinking of the idea themselves and pushing it through the planning process. Up in Thames Labour is expecting to campaign on the need for late-night buses (or at least buses after the pubs and the flicks shut), although there has sometimes been a Labour view that as people north of the river persist in voting in Tory Councillors who support cuts in the bus service north of the river is just where those cuts ought to be. And in Battle, Labour's Joe Bristow (Chairman of the Governors of Oxford Road School) is rather sorry in a way that the Tories changed their minds and withdrew - at least temporarily - their threat to close it: it would have made a very nice campaign issue but the Tories aren't all daft. With annual elections now politics has become the art of the presentable

## POINTS FROM THE POST

Commercial Break The happenings in Caversham reported in the last column have aroused the curiosity of at least one Sunday newspaper. Which was presumably the intention of the senior Conservatives who asked for the report to be included in the first place.

Greenhamcourt The Attorney General told Labour M.P. Chris Smith in the House of Commons that it was "not known" how many of the magistrates on the Newbury Bench had previously served in the armed forces or to which political parties they belonged. But as the Mirror's Paul Foot points out, the form from the Lord Chancellor's office asks both "Any previous employment?" (Question 10) and "Political views of the candidate (how does he normally vote?" (Question 16). What was that about the right to know?

Blackleg The SDP candidate for Katesgrove (see above) is Andrew MacLuskie, who last hit the headlines when as a NATFHE delegate to Reading Trades Union Council he went to the press without informing either his NATFHE branch or RTUC and accused the RTUC of being a Labour Party front organisation. His colleagues at Reading Tech. were not amused.

District Health The Oxford Regional Health Authority have now admitted that they are seeking nominations from other organisations for the "trade union" seat on the West Berks. District Health Authority for which the S.E. Region of the TUC has given them the choice of Pete Ruhemann or Danny Buckley. Wonder why?

Tout Cort Robert Cort & Co. didn't tell the press about their third batch of redundancies in two years, and the 'Post' only published it after a tip-off. Perhaps Corts didn't want to put a damper on the budget, although it took away capital allowances for manufacturing firms like themselves.

Silicon Lobby The House of Commons Register of Interests shows Reading West M.P. Tony Durant as a "consultant" to GAMBICA (Group of Associations of Manufacturers of British Instrumentation, Control and Automation). As well as to Delta Electrical (Holdings) Ltd., British Film Producers Association Ltd. and Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association. That last one anything to do with Metal Box?





## CAIN cont

Butts, contd. Kleinwort Benson, the new owners of the Butts, gave £20,000 to the Conservative Party last year. Let's hope it stands them in good stead.

Wearing the Apron The reputation for benevolence of the Freemasons may perhaps be impaired by the revelation in 'News from Nowhere' that one of their members is Reading and Berkshire Councillor Joe Slater, the man who seconded Tony Markham's attack on Readibus at the Transportation Committee on January 31st. The omnipresent cyclist, who is also a member of the Oxford Regional Health Authority and chairman of Age Concern Reading, is a subscribing member of the Caversham Lodge.

Entryism? It may not be wholly coincidental that the dinner the Reading Chamber of Commerce and Trade is giving for the Transport Minister Nicholas Ridley to convince him of the town's need for more roads is being given at the Berkshire Masonic Centre (Joe is after all Chairman of the County's Transport Committee as well as a member of the Borough's). And it's interesting to note among new members of the Chamber Olivers Radio(Reading)Ltd., the life support system for Tory Leisure Chair (and father of Simon) John Oliver.

KEEP IT COMING!

Citizen Cain

## Watching

### WATCHING THE PROFESSIONALS

You probably aren't aware of it, but an investigation has been in progress over the past couple of months into the activities of certain senior staff at Grafton House, Berkshire Social Services Department's Assessment centre in Reading (Usually the first port of call for young people being taken into the care of the Local Authority). Both the Officer-in-Charge and one of his deputies have been suspended while the investigations are in progress.

Apparently certain financial 'irregularities' have been discovered which need some pretty good explaining:- Why, for instance, did money that was deducted from the residents' pocket money, supposedly for the purpose of paying to the courts in respect of fines, never actually get paid in? - One consequence of this is that some young people are getting demands for the payment of fines which they thought they had already paid.

In addition, there are rumours that an examination of the regular shopping done for the centre revealed an unusually large number of bottles of spirits and the like amongst the baked beans and the cake-mix. No-one seems exactly sure what an institution of this type would want with them.

So far, news of the progress of the investigation is pretty thin on the ground. It would be nice to assume that when they have concluded their enquiries about the nature and extent of these dubious goings on we will all be told - if not, watch this space!

Marco Polo



### PEACE PLEDGE UNION MEETING



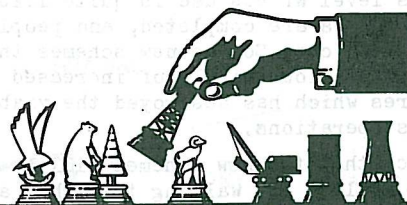
Reading PPU last met on Weds. 7th. March. We discussed future events on the PPU calendar. These were a summer camp to be held in Reading on July 13-15th., 'On The Road' - a travelling peace education project which we are hoping to have in Reading sometime in August with film shows and an exhibition, and the Film Van which will be returning to us in the summer.

For anyone who is considering imprisonment after taking part in a nonviolent protest, there will be a Prison Workshop at Fairview Community Centre on March 25th. between 10am. and 4pm (see article in this issue). We also talked about the evictions at Greenham Common and heard that there is a fund for buying survival bags and other equipment for the women peace campers who have had their homes destroyed. Ring Kingsclere 298512 for details of where to send money.

Other announcements were Action '84 (a blockade in London on June 9th.), a civil defence meeting at Reading Shire Hall on March 15th., a march in High Wycombe on April 14th., and a Peace Festival at Boscombe Down, Wilts. on June 16th. and 17th. More details of these will appear later.

Reading PPU recently sent a donation to the 'On The Road' peace education fund. The money was raised at our benefit gig in February - perhaps we can have another one soon.(?).

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 20th. March 8pm. at 'Willows', Nursery Gardens, Purley Tel 374532 for details. If you would like to know any more about the Peace Pledge Union, please come along to our meetings which are always advertised in the Rag, or phone 588459/374532/868384, or write to Box 10, Acorn Bookshop, 17, Chatham St., Reading.



## STOP 'THE CITY' CARNIVAL



+ PROTEST AGAINST  
WAR, OPPRESSION  
AND ECOLOGICAL  
DESTRUCTION

THURS

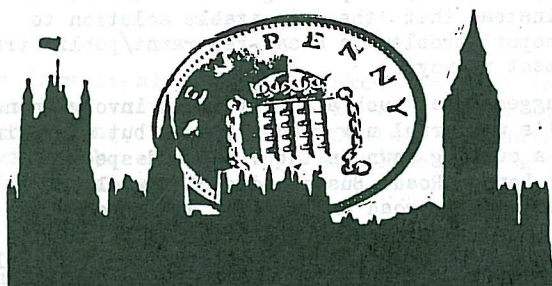
MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>

8 AM - 6 PM

See ya there!

ASSEMBLE  
- St Pauls  
- Finsbury Sq  
- Tower Hill  
or direct to  
Bank

celebration of life







# Motor madness! cont. from Page 1



One example which may well shed some light is that of the widening of London Road between Cemetery Junction and the Suttons Seeds roundabout, which was carried out in 1981. The road was widened to three lanes and free passage made easier. Newtown Community Association believes that the London Road and residential streets are now more dangerous and accident prone. The London Road is now much harder to cross, a source of considerable irritation to local residents. The local no. 98 bus service has been withdrawn since then as it was thought 'no longer viable'. There have been a series of accidents on the London Road since the scheme came in; London Road shops report a drastic fall in custom; and the Reading cycle campaign found that rush-hour cycle use on the road fell between 1981 and 1981 whereas it rose by 24% on Readings other main roads during the same period. What is perhaps most significant is that rush-hour congestion on this road seems hardly to have been affected. The traffic jams are just as bad as they ever were!

Not all the new road schemes will be quite as bad as this, since few will be so close to residential areas. But they are likely to be self-defeating since they will encourage the use of cars. Most of the new roads will be dangerous and intimidating for cyclists, as anyone who has cycled along London Road will know. The original plans for the ICR would have included no provision for cyclists whatsoever until Reading cycle campaign successfully proposed to include some underpass and cycle crossing arrangements at major junctions. At a recent cycle campaign meeting an officer from the County Council admitted that little financial provision was available but hoped that cycle routes could be found room on the footpaths and the bus lanes! Cyclists, bus users and pedestrians are to be marginalised to allow room for the cars.

At the moment some 25% of Reading people travel to work by bus, compared with around 10% in most towns, which partly explains why Reading's bus service is in relatively good health. This level of bus use is quite likely to fall as the new road schemes are completed, and people are encouraged to travel by car. So the new schemes threaten to set of the infamous vicious circle of increased losses and rising bus fares which has destroyed the viability of so many local bus operations.

If I am correct that the new schemes will be detrimental for buses, cycling and walking then they are likely to be counter-productive. Cars fill far more road-space per passenger than other forms of transport, so total car use will rise considerably as other forms of transport decline. The driver will be able to whizz round the ICR and rocket down the radials but the point is that every journey has to finish somewhere. So in the long run the congestion will merely build up on the residential areas and around the car-parks. Some transport specialists such as Plowden have suggested the rule that 'in the long run, traffic levels increase to fill the space available'. Indeed the Borough Council itself accepts that the ICR will only be able to cope with traffic until about 1990, when congestion will build up again. There is an odd way of looking at the problem; they plan to spend the rest of the decade causing congestion by a series of new roadworks. After that they expect the congestion to build up of its own accord!

There is of course an alternative transport policy for Reading. The Civic Society believes that the ICR 'is only at best an expensive way of putting off the inevitable' and suggests instead that 'the only stable solution to Reading's transport problem is a car-restraint/public transport investment policy'.

I would suggest that such a policy would involve none of the council's wonderful new road schemes, but would instead involve a cutting down on the width and speed of roads such as London Road. Buses and cycles would have their own lanes on each road and drivers would be encouraged to leave their cars at home or on the outskirts and travel in by bus. The benefits from cutting down on pollution, noise levels, road accidents and congestion would be enormous and travelling would become much easier. You

will no doubt hear the complaint that car drivers would lose some of their 'freedom'. But what sort of freedom is it that claims the life of 6,000 people per year in this country and makes our towns uninhabitable? What sort of freedom burns out limited reserves of fossil fuel and takes a gamble on the continued viability of the ecosystem? The £24 million to be spent on the IDR an A33 alone would be enough to provide freedom on the street for every bus, cyclist and pedestrian and to make sure that traffic jams became a thing of the past.

ANDREW HARDY



## Cycle news

On March 6th. about 30 members of the Cycle Campaign met at the Crown to hear Mike Barr of Berkshire County Council outline the present policies and future plans for cycling provision in Reading.

Since our main concern in recent months has been the impact of the Inner Distribution Road on cycling in the town, a good part of the meeting was taken up with this. It seems that the County Council is likely to actually improve cycling in the South of the town by providing a cycle link through (an access only) Watlington Street to the 'new' Kennetside route. Bus lanes which will be provided after the IDR is built will also be available to cyclists. The building of the A33 relief road and an extra lane in Kings Road will allow Elgar Road to be closed off to through traffic and a cycle lane to be provided in London Road. Whether these two facilities will definitely happen is still debateable.

Now the bad news. Cycling facilities in the Caversham Rd., Vastern Rd., Reading Bridge part of the town looked pretty sparse to say the least. Mike Barr said that the highway design for this area wasn't well advanced yet, so it was not surprising that cycling facilities hadn't been identified. Campaigners couldn't help feeling that things might not improve with time, given that any solutions would be more expensive than on the South side. So this area must be our next target.

Although the County Council has spent about £1 million on cycling schemes in Berkshire, only £10,000 has so far found its way to Reading. This doesn't appear to be the County's fault but arguably lies in the greater enthusiasm of the Borough Council for designing and building highway 'improvement' schemes. So, this 'free' money is going to other parts of the County because of Reading's inaction on designing cycling schemes.

Mike Barr was closely questioned on a range of issues - potholes, identification of accident black-spots, possible sites for new facilities, BMX facilities and cycle parking provision. Overall, he managed to have a positive attitude to any ideas put forward by the Campaign. We should try to keep his in-tray full!

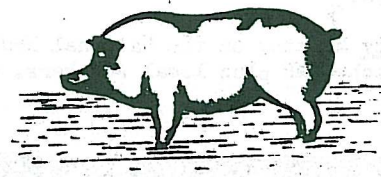
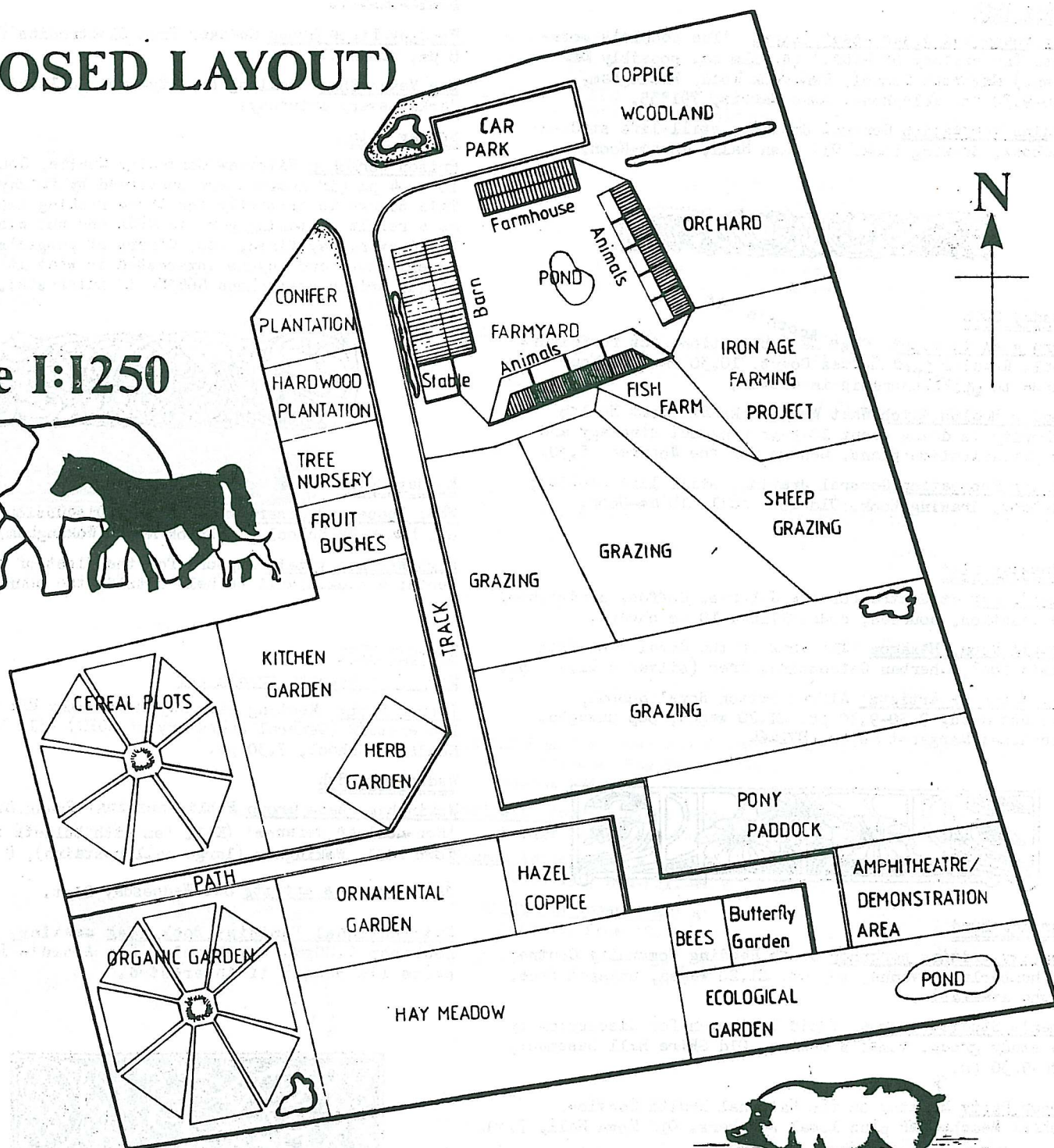
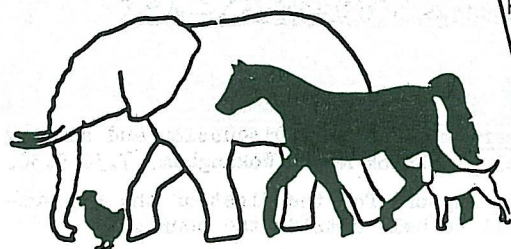


# READING CITY FARM



## (PROPOSED LAYOUT)

Scale 1:1250



Reading City Farm in Whitley Wood has published a handbook summarising the history of the farm and discussing the prospects for the future.

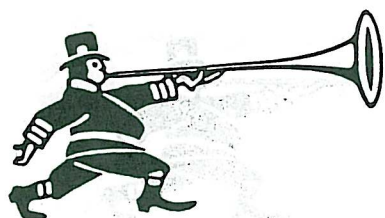
The City Farm Group started in 1980, and by 1982 had negotiated a lease on the Blagdon Road site from Reading Borough Council. Last year they held an Open Day to attract publicity; and this year they hope to get seriously under way.

The City Farm now needs some considerable capital investment to get going, providing essentials like water, electricity, storage and office space on the site and fencing round it. Eventually they aim to be financially self-supporting.

The farm is also on the lookout for skilled or unskilled volunteers to help with building, landscaping, gardening, painting, accountancy, legal work, engineering, architecture, artwork, printing and much more.

Contact Alan Edwards, 242 Gainsborough Rd, Reading or Terry Denton, 38 Hartland Road, Reading (872730) for more information.





# EVENTS



## Monday 19th

WEA: Peace and disarmament issues 'The people's movement. The history of NVDA.' (A film may possibly be shown.) Emmbrook School, Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, 7.30-9.30 pm. Telephone: Anne Harris, 791335.

Reading Recreation General drawing, still-life studies; notebook, drawing book. Old Town Hall, 10 am-Noon.



## Tuesday 20th

Acorn goes to court ~ see Acorn's Bit ~ Publications Act forfeiture trial. Reading Magistrates Court, 10.30 onward. Your chance to Adjourned ~ censorship in action.

Reading Health Watch What West Berks District Health Authority is doing about 10-year regional strategy and its privatisation plans. Centre for the Jobfree, 5.30.

Reading Recreation General drawing, still life studies; notebook, drawing book. Old Town Hall, 10 am-Noon.

## Wednesday 21st

Women's Day at Centre for the Jobfree. Coffee, sandwiches, conversation, courses, counselling. 10 am onward.

Vachell Room, Hexagon "The work of the Royal Fine Arts Commission", Sherban Catecuzina. Free (silver coll.) 8 pm.

WEA: Women as artists Alfred Sutton Boys' School, Crescent Road, 7.30-9.30 pm. £1.20 waged, 50p unwaged. Telephone: Margaret Keyes, 872464.



## Thursday 22nd

Creative writing workshop South Reading Community Centre, Northumberland Avenue, 1-3 pm. £1.20 waged, unwaged free. Creche available.

Women's Studies Course Topic left open for discussion by the study group. Women's Centre, Old Shire Hall basement, 7.30-9.30 pm.

Labour Party Meeting on the National Health Service. Michael Meacher MP plus local speakers. Old Town Hall, 7.30.



## Friday 23rd

United Nations Association Local branch public meeting: Michael Harper on 'The United Nations'. All Saints Church annexe, Wokingham. (Entrance in Norreys Avenue, corner of Wiltshire Road.) 8 pm.

VeggieDining Fairview Community Centre, George Street, 8 pm. Tickets from Acorn: £2 waged, 1.50 unwaged.

## Saturday 24th

Woodley Peace Group Speaker from Electronics for Peace. 8 pm; venue ???

The Vegan Shop Selling cruelty-free toiletries. Reading Market every saturday.

## Sunday 25th

Prison workshop Fairview Community Centre, George Street, 10 am-4 pm (if numbers are confirmed by Friday 23rd). This course is primarily for those risking imprisonment as a result of taking part in NVDA and not wishing to be bound over, pay fines, etc. Offers of people's prison experiences, and anyone interested in what it's like inside prison now: phone 868384 if interested.



## Monday 26th

WEA: Peace and disarmament issues Discussion and summing up. Emmbrook School, Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, 7.30-9.30.

High Wycombe trials Support for the first of the adjournments: a picket will be held outside the court.

## Tuesday 27th

More High Wycombe trials....

Labour Party Meeting with Roy Hattersley MP; Rodney Bickerstaff (General Secretary of NUPE) will be there too. Kendrick School, 7.30 pm.

## Wednesday 28th

Wokingham Peace Group Public meeting: Frank Barnaby on 'Non-nuclear defence' (Kill 'em with bullets instead!!) Town Hall, Wokingham (large hall upstairs), 8 pm.

WEA: Women as artists See Wednesday 21st.

International Feminist Book Week meeting, Acorn Bookshop 8.00pm. Women only. See Acorn's Bit or phone Liz 584425 if interested.



## Thursday 29th

Stop the City Mk II People not profit: a day of creative protest in the City of London. Starts at 8 am, assemble at St Paul's, Finsbury Square, Tower Hill or wherever you want. See you there!

Creative writing Eighth in a series of ten. South Reading Community Centre, Northumberland Avenue. £1.20 waged, free to unwaged.

Women's studies course Topic left open for discussion. Women's Centre, Old Shire Hall Basement, 7.30-9.30 pm.





# EVENTS

Friday 30th

Amuse yourselves or see 'Going out'.

Saturday 31st

Ditto. Or go busking. Or prepare yourselves for Mothering Sunday.

Sunday 1st

Reading Vegans Bread-making demonstration by Sid Smith, a professional baker for 60 years. Neighbourhood Centre Hall, Ly ns Square, Tilehurst, 2.45 pm.

(Fun and games all morning)

Reading Young Businessmen's Club Lecture, 'Opportunities in Oman' by M. Thatcher. Ramada Hotel, 9 am.

Monarchist Action Group Mass meeting: 'The Royal Family as a non-sexist collective'. Call box, Chain Street, 4 pm.



Monday 2nd

Reading Cycle Group Meet at the Rising Sun, Forbury, 8 pm. Details from 64 College Road.

Wokingham Peace Group Wokingham Town Hall, 8 pm.

Tuesday 3rd

ROAR meeting Back room of The Crown, Crown Street, 8 pm. Ring 477790 for details (evenings only).

Wednesday 4th

RED RAG SOCIAL Event of the year! Don't miss it!! The Crown, Crown Street, Reading.



Starting at the Women's Centre on Sunday 18 March and continuing on Sundays regularly:-

**PRACTICAL PARADISE CLUB (2pm-6pm)**

The aim is to continue the positive feelings and relevance of the recent conference... to share skills and above all, to have fun!

For the first few weeks there will be keep fit and self-defence from 2pm to 4pm ... what happens after 4pm is up to you ... is any woman out there good at massage/music/games/yoga/singing/assertiveness training/poetry/storytelling/theatre/juggling etc etc? leave a message on 666681 and volunteer to do a workshop!

Bring mats/loose clothes/massage oil/musical instruments/books/voices...whatever you want! We can sort out a programme if need be...

## Regular events

Photography: sessions every Tues (10-12, 1-3) at Centre for the Jobfree, East St.

Housing & Welfare Rights: Thurs evenings, Community House, 117 Cumberland Rd.

Reading Gay Switchboard: Tues & Fri 8-10. 597269.

Silkscreen workshops: Fri 10-1, 117 Cumberland Rd

Mini-market: Thurs 9-1 St Mary's House, Chain St

Women's Centre: Open Tues 10-2; Wed 10-2; Sat 11-3 All women & Kids welcome. Pregnancy testing: Tues 7-9, bring urine sample from first pee of the day.

Incest Survivors Group meets regularly. Write c/o Rape Crisis line, 17 Chatham St, for details

Anarchists: meet every Mon. Details via Box 19, Acorn Bookshop. Autonomists: contact via the anarchists. Libertarian bookstall: Thurs in term time lunchtime downstairs in students' union, Whiteknights.

Peace Pledge Union: meets fortnightly, always active. Contact Mike 588459 or Box 10, Acorn.

Ecology Party: meets 1st & 3rd Mon of month at 25 de Beauvoir Rd & 38 Long Barn Lane respectively. Contact Maria 663195.

Socialist Workers' Party: every Wed, 8pm Red Lion, Southampton St.

Labour History Group: meets monthly at Red Lion. Contact Breda 584558 or Mike 665478 for details

Vegans: First Sun of month, 2pm, 1 Orrin Close, Tilehurst. Contact Steve Shiner 21651

Women's Peace Group first Mon of month at the women's centre. Contact Rheinhold 662873.

Amnesty: second Tues of month, St Mary's Centre, Chain St. Contact Jean 472598.

History of Reading Soc. 3rd Tues of month, Abbey Gateway.

Berks Humanists: meet 2nd Friday of month, Oct - May, 8-10, Friends' Mtg House, Church St. Details: Crowthorne 774871.

Cyclists' Touring Club: outings Suns 9.15 from Caversham Bridge or Henley. Details: Richard Dumelow 50949.

Sahara Asian Women's Centre: open for support and advice 9.30-1.30, Mon-Fri, 48 Eldon Terrace, tel 51158.

Wednesday is women's day at the Centre for the Jobfree, East St. From 10.30: coffee, advice, courses etc

Silkscreen workshop: Sat, Newtown Community House. 11-12.30 14-18yr olds; 1-2.30 others.

## Cruelty-Free Toiletries Stall

There is now a stall selling cruelty-free toiletries in Reading's open market every Saturday. You'll find us at the side of Tesco's, the last stall as you walk towards the Hexagon! We sell a range of soaps, shampoos, moisture creams, natural medicines, etc, all of which have not been tested on animals, and contain no animal products or by-products (unlike many brands which claim to be cruelty-free!). Being natural, pure, plant products, they are also hypoallergenic - suitable for sensitive skins and allergic conditions. Better still, we sell at prices a fair bit below the RRP, except for the Caurnie items which include a donation to Sea Shepherd Marine Conservation (saves seal pups, whales etc). We're making a loss on the stall at present, so please come and support us!

Liz and Steve Shiner, Who Cares?  
(The Vegan Shop)







# GOING OUT



## MARCH

### MONDAY 19

- MOSCOW DISTRICTS TEARS, USSR 1949 (R9). SHP.
- PROGRESS THEATRE 'LYSISTRATE' by Aristophanes, presented by Reading Youth Theatre 7.45 p.m.

### TUESDAY 20

- TARGET - BEENE TONIC 12.00
- ANGIES Wokingham STORVILLE TICKLE (Jazz) 11/45p Members.
- PROGRESS 19th
- SHP Pete Allen Jazz Band 12.30 - 2.50, 8pm.
- THE HONORARY CONSUL (Film) 11. 7.45 p.m.
- DISCUSSION ON GREENE'S NOVEL by Peter Peggall 8pm 50p.
- OXFORD PLAYHOUSE Extensive Dance Theatre. Ring 0865-241133 for info.
- HEXAGON Theatre Antonin Artaud. Puppets from Switzerland present Romeo + Juliet '80. 12.30 - 3.30. 4.30 p.m.
- GAY DISCO. Tudor Arms.

### WEDNESDAY 21

- CENTRAL CLUB. Dance (no more info.)
- PROGRESS 19th
- OXFORD PLAYHOUSE 20th
- SHP FILM AS 20th
- HEX. Theatre Antonin Artaud present 'Babel' - "An amusing tragedy" 7.30 p.m.
- RPT. "ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST" (16). Dir. Sergio Leone. Italy/USA 1968. (Spoof Spaghetti.)
- HERMIT CLUB Upper Deck Duke St.

### THURSDAY 22

- SHP. Positive Response (Local Band) 7.15.
- 20p Theatre Company pres. Doris F's "Can't Pay? - Won't Pay." 7.45 p.m.
- 12.25 - 2.50.
- FILM AS 20th.
- RPT "TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS" (18). Dr. Marco Ferreri 1980. Apparently not for the squeamish.
- FOLK. Horse + Barge. Duke St. Ray Harris. 8.15 p.m.
- SPORTSMAN Shinfield Rd. Free music.
- BRACKNELL COLLEGE - Nigel Wilkinson Free music 12.45 - 1.30 p.m.
- TARGET Larry Miller 11.50.
- ANGIES W'ham. After Dark (local band).
- PROGRESS AS 19th.
- OK. PLAYHOUSE AS 20th.
- HEX. Midlands Dance Co. 7.30 p.m.

KEY. SHP. South Hill Park Arts Centre Bracknell 424242.  
RPT Reading Film Theatre. Whiteknights Park.  
SHP. Sportsman Shinfield Rd. 12.45-1.30

### FRIDAY 23

- PARADISE CLUB (formerly Caribbean) MARCUS - Disco. 12.50.
- ANGIES - Devitos
- GAY DISCO - Tudor Arms.
- PROGRESS 19th
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 20th
- HEX. Midlands Dance Co. 2pm, 4.30pm.
- SHP Porfirio Fleming Roberts Trio - Beethoven. 8pm. 12.45/13.20.
- Curved Air - reunion. 9 p.m.
- 12.50/13.45 advance, 12.45/13.20 on day.
- 20p Theatre Co. and Honorary Consul 85 above.
- Bad Timing (15) 11 p.m.

### SATURDAY 24

- PARADISE. Volcanos + Buffet + Dance 8-2. 12.50 (2.50 w/o food).
- TARGET. Bulletproof 50p.
- HEX. Motley Crew (local R+B band) Free lunchtime music. 12.15.
- Midlands Dance Co. 7.30.
- ANGIES Motley Crew
- SHP COME ALL YE - "Songs of Protest" 8pm 11.20/1.50.
- 20p, Honorary Consul and Bad Timing 85 above.
- PROGRESS 19th
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 20th

### SUNDAY 25

- FREE JAZZ. BUTLER. CHATHAM ST.
- JIVE DIVE. TREATS. KINGS RD.
- ANGIES. JUVENTENCE (Jazz Rock).
- SHP. Honorary Consul (yet again).

### MONDAY 26

- OK. PLAYHOUSE. Children of a Lesser God with Elizabeth Quinn + Ron Aldridge. Ring Bar Office 0865-241133 for info.
- SHP. Astation for Two (R9.) 7.45 p.m.

### TUESDAY 27

- ANGIES. Storyville Tickle (Jazz)
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 19th
- HEX. The Gondoliers. Reading Operatic Society. 7.30 p.m. 12 - 13.
- SHP Stepm. (Modern Jazz) with support in line. 8 p.m. 12.20 - 2.40.
- 20p RUNNERS (15.) 7.45 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY 28

- HEX. 19th
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 19th
- HERMIT CLUB Upper Deck Duke St.
- SHP DIVERSIONS. (Theatre) "Comic, Absurd, Looney". 7.45. 11.40 - 1.40.

### THURSDAY 29

- TARGET - Lory. 11
- ANGIES - Reactors.
- BRACKNELL COLLEGE. Garrick Wind Quintet 12.45 - 1.30pm Free.
- FOLK CLUB Horse + Barge Duke St. 8.15 Singers Night. Singers Welcome. (Sewing Machine Exhibition?)
- SPORTSMAN Shinfield Rd. Free Music.
- HEX. 19th
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 19th
- SHP. XIX and AFTERMOVES. Local bands. 9pm.
- Divisions and Runners as above.

### FRIDAY 30

- PARADISE The Skeletal Family (is this the post-nuclear family?) and Creed of Bliss. 9-2. 12.
- GAY DISCO Tudor Arms.
- ANGIES Fork Buck.
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 19th
- HEX. 19th
- SHP. Divisions, 19th
- Liquid Sky (15). 7.45 p.m.
- The Pit and the Pendulum (18) 11pm.
- "London Cabaret comes to Bracknell" with APPLES AND SNAKES CABARET: Punk poets 1962 + music from JOHN HENLEY and THE POETICIANS. 9pm. 12.45/13.20 advance, 12.45/13.20 on day.

### SATURDAY 31

- ANGIES. Lorraine Brown.
- TARGET. After Dark 50p.
- HEX. Postcards Moon. Lunchtime. Free.
- Evening - Gondoliers, as above.
- OK. PLAYHOUSE 19th
- SHP. The Chris Burn Group and Pendulum 8pm 12/2.25.
- Divisions, Liquid Sky, Pit + Pendulum. 19th
- ERIC - "unlikely tunes and songs, improbable instruments". 8pm.

### APRIL

#### SUNDAY 1

- BUTLER. FREE JAZZ.
- TREATS. JIVE DIVE.
- SHP KATES GROVE STEEL BAND - Free.
- PAK SINGERS. Festival of Music of Shakespeare Settings. 8pm. Silver coll.
- Liquid Sky Film as above.

#### EXHIBITIONS

- SHP. MARCH 31. Angus McBean. Photographs. (Long Gallery).
- Architectural Evolution of the Wilde



# RED RAG PARTY



## Stillate

### ★

## april 4th.

The Crown, Crown St.



RUSH JOB PROMOTIONS  
present the

# CARDIACS

in concert  
SATURDAY 31st MARCH

SOUTH READING COMMUNITY CENTRE  
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE

## full support

7.30 til late + BAR  
Tickets £2.00 in advance £2.50 on door  
50p reduction for wageless

# red rag benefit





A prison workshop is being held at Fairview Community Centre (bottom of George St., Nr. Central Swimming Pool, Reading) from 10am - 4pm on Sunday 25th. March (or drop in for any part of the day).

Anyone who would like to share their experiences and feelings about going to prison may like to attend this workshop. It is intended to be a laid back day (fun and games and food included) primarily aimed at people contemplating prison sentences (for non-payment of fines, refusing to be bound over etc.) as a result of taking part in a nonviolent direct action.

People with experience of prison (old lags?!) are being asked to come along and help facilitate.

If anyone is interested please phone Paul, Huw, Andrew or Debbie on Reading 868384 for further details, and so we can get an idea of numbers (for food etc.) Overnight accommodation may also be provided for those attending the hearing on Monday 26th. at High Wycombe court, or those travelling some distance. There are hearings on March 27th., 28th, too - all support is welcome.

152 people were arrested for blockading USAF Daws Hill (Cruise Control Centre) on December 19th. 1983. No publicity hit anything outside the town of High Wycombe bar sketchy afternoon news, Peace press and a photo in the Guardian. (Oh! alright then - and a spread in the Rag!)

Stay tuned folks.  
lovepeace,  
PHP

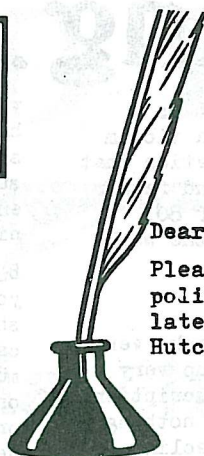
## Acorn's bit

Our court case has been adjourned until after the Old Bailey trials of the wholesalers Knockabout and Airlift in May. We decided that made sense for all of us. So we will (still!) be needing your support in the summer. Thanks to everyone who's helped us so far.

The next stage in the saga of the Obscenity raid is our BENEFIT on Thursday April 26th. at the Upper Deck in Duke Street, with Roy Hutchins, Sharon Landau and Tony Allen of Alternative Cabaret. More details later but mark the date NOW!

On a more positive note, there's going to be a really amazing International Feminist Bookweek all over the country in the second week of June, including events in Reading! Plans are still a bit tentative but if any women are interested in helping make it work do come along to a meeting at Acorn Bookshop 17 Chatham St at 8.00 on Wednesday 28 th April. The current outline is to host meetings with Susie Orbach, Sheila Kitzinger and Rosemary Stones and have a workshop with local women writers and a visiting writer. There are other possibilities too.

If this is incoherent, that's because Acorn is ill. No apologies, we're only human.



# Letters

Dear Red Rag,

Please find below the description of an unmarked police car I spotted racing down Oxford Road late one night with its silly little 'Starsky & Hutch' blue light stuck to the roof:-

Light Ford Sierra  
Reg. No. A104 KUD

Cheers, Mick

Dear Red Rag,

With regard to the advertisement I sent you for a meeting on the Morning Star Newspaper, I have a number of criticisms to make. These criticisms I would like to add are representative of a substantial body of opinion.

Firstly Red Rag goes under the title of Reading's Only Newspaper. By this I understand it as the only paper to print articles which are not subjected to the prejudices of the editors but aims to reflect truthfully and factually what happens in the community.

The title Red Rag also indicates a tendency to the Left or progressive and popular forces, that is, those whose priorities are concerned with the welfare of people. When an article is written to your paper and actually distorted in meaning by interference from the editorship one feels that the above principles are being contravened (Is Red Rag attempting to be a true community newspaper or is it simply a vehicle for the expression of its own particular ideology?).

The policy of the editorship becomes no better than that followed by the "Evening Post" which frequently heavily distorts facts by the way it sifts and presents them eg. an article on Tony Benn's victory at Chesterfield.

The actual criticisms I am writing about concerning the advertisement for the Morning Star are as follows:

1. "Socialist" has had commas put around the word implying it to be a phoney socialist paper. This may be the opinion of the editorship but is certainly not the opinion of a vast body of opinion of the Labour Movement which exists at present and has its roots in the SDF (Social Democratic Federation) of the late 19th. Century.
2. The part about the Moscow line- "we hear, currently in trouble with the CP for its Moscow line" (quote) has been inserted by you. In addition, it is a distorted opinion of the relations between the CP and Morning Star, which is fairly complicated.
3. With! - had an exclamation mark put next to it which introduces a meaning to the following part, that is, the name and relevance of the editor and chief executive, not intended by myself, but introduces a critical and defamatory note - again an example of how your prejudices distort the facts.

Surely it is possible for you to represent the community - the interests of progressive forces in Reading without distorting their meaning and relevance by your own prejudices.

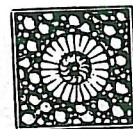
The emphasis in Reading should be on Co-operation for progressive change, among those people who are concerned enough to do something - this is particularly necessary now in 1984 under the Thatcher government.

Jane Carter.

Footnote: a Red Rag collective meeting a year or so ago established the principle that comments by typists and others in signed articles submitted for Red Rag were to be discouraged. The events diary and going out guide were specifically excluded from this, however, the feeling being that the more comments here the better. What do others feel?



# About caring...



10

What follows was not written for publication, but as a personal letter to someone close who lives with a victim of Alzheimer's Syndrome, form of mental deterioration that has turned a once-brilliant scientist, husband and father into a frightened and sometimes petulant child of 80, unable to cope or communicate meaningfully with the world around him.

\*\*\*\*

Dearest Muriel,

Your family round-robin arrived this morning; thanks very much. I found the portion about your support group very moving, but what really tugged was your quiet description of what life is like now for you. It told me as nothing you have ever written before just how much the decline has affected Pop.

It has a special poignance for me because the condition has such close parallels in some ways with Korsakoff's Syndrome, the dementia that will eventually affect some 5 per cent of alcoholics who continue to drink. The parallels are not in many ways exact: the Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome (it's proper medical name, alias 'wet brain') is sudden in its onset - and perhaps 20 per cent fatal - but stable thereafter, in the absence of alcohol, but many of the behavioural presentations are very similar. Also, unlike most other types of dementia, it can be fairly simply prevented. As it is the result of acute vitamin B1 deficiency consequential to alcoholic liver damage, large doses - 200 milligrams a day - are usually effective as a prophylactic measure, and massive injections as a treatment if given early enough, if precursor symptoms or the onset of the acute phase are correctly diagnosed. Tragically, they often are not, especially in those most at risk - the homeless, alienated, rejected 'hopeless' alcoholic.

Working with the 'walking wounded' of the Affluent Society, and having equipped myself with a caring layman's knowledge of the basic medical side of alcoholism as a supplement to the gut understanding that comes from having been there, or nearly there, I can see it hovering somewhere just outside my ken, waiting - perhaps for someone I've begun to know as a human being, and to love. For G, perhaps: 42 years old, ten years my junior and looking ten, sometimes twenty, years older. G, who plays disjointed boogie-woogie on the black keys only and sings incoherently eloquent spur-of-the-moment songs about being sick and homeless and despised when the methylated spirits have a real hold on him. Gentle G, who knows that somehow I understand and that I love him, and so desperately needs understanding and love that whenever he meets me and asks 'All right, Davey?' he must touch my hand, my arm, my shoulder as if to reassure himself that I am still there for him. Or does he hope that somehow a tiny bit of my recovery will stay in his hand afterward? Perhaps, in a way, it does.

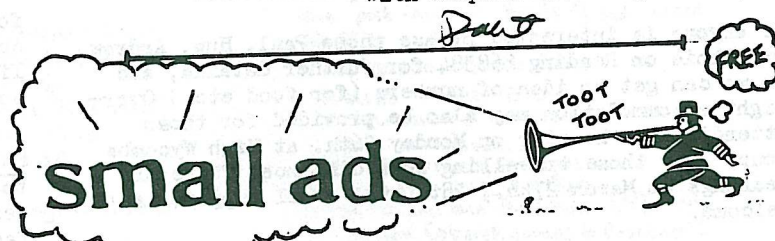
I see him, and T - even younger and still kidding himself that he's still in control - and others whose names I don't know because they're too cut off even to come to the soup kitchen or use the night shelter; I see them walking with the splay-footed, mechanical duck-walk that comes from the deadening of the nerves spreading inch by inch upward from the toes, the muscles weakening first in the feet, then the calves, then the thighs as their livers take up less and less of the little B1 their diet provides. And I know that they walk that way because otherwise they'd fall, that they walk that way because their legs are little more than prostheses now. I know that for any one of them it may suddenly be not the legs but part of the brain. And I want to scream.

I want to shake them and scream, 'For God's sake man, stop: stop before it happens!' and I know that they won't listen or won't understand if they do listen. I want to drag the doctors out of their surgeries and scream 'This is a sick man, a desperately sick man; for God's sake treat him while you still can' - and I know that even if the doctors understand and care they can't treat someone who is too afraid or too confused to come in the door, that even finding someone to treat him properly is beyond reason when 'No fixed abode' is a monstrous understatement. I would if I could make the rounds of the skippers and the doss-houses, the spikes and the park benches, with a pouch full of

vitamin tablets like some urban Johnny Appleseed, shoving handfuls at them and waiting like Nanny till they've been swallowed - even if they're washed down with cider and surgical spirit. And all I can do is hope that I can pack enough nutrition in a couple of mugs of soup on Sunday night to do some tiny amount of good.

But this is my situation, and self-chosen at that: not yours. These are not people I have known intimately and shared my life with year after year; I know that if I can't take it, if their pain and sickness threaten me too much, I can walk away from it. And in any case there is only the 5 per cent or 10 per cent possibility - not the present reality - and I only live with it a few hours a week. Out of my own sickness and recovery I am beginning to learn to care, and in learning to begin to understand a little. But only just a little.

With deepest love to you both,



For Sale: Walking boots size 6, hardly used. Offers around £5 please. Proceeds to go to Red Raf. If interested phone 861305.


4 kittens only one week old will need homes soon. If interested ring Jane 861305.

Place to live wanted for two women (mother and teenage daughter). Phone Maureen at 90 770507 or Debby at 584674 after 5.30pm.


1 person wanted to share terraced house in Central Caversham. Must be prepared to put up with/participate in peace campaigning, cycling and various other grassroots pastimes. A smoke-free zone for £60 p.c.m. + split bills. Phone 483183 after 6pm.

**MEAT'S GOT THE LOT....**

drug residues  
cholesterol  
salmonella

nice animal? 

**DON'T EAT IT!**  
go vegetarian

Let me be   
**Don't kill to eat**

**KEEP DEATH OFF THE DINNER PLATE**  
go vegetarian

These stickers are available free from the Vegetarian Society in return for a contribution towards postage costs. The ones with the accusing finger are designed to be used adjacent to the recent issue of beef-cattle stamps on envelopes, but the rest obviously can be used more widely.

Write to  
VSUK Ltd  
53 Marloes Rd  
Kensington  
London W8 6LA

~THAT'S ALL FOR NOW FOLKS!  
