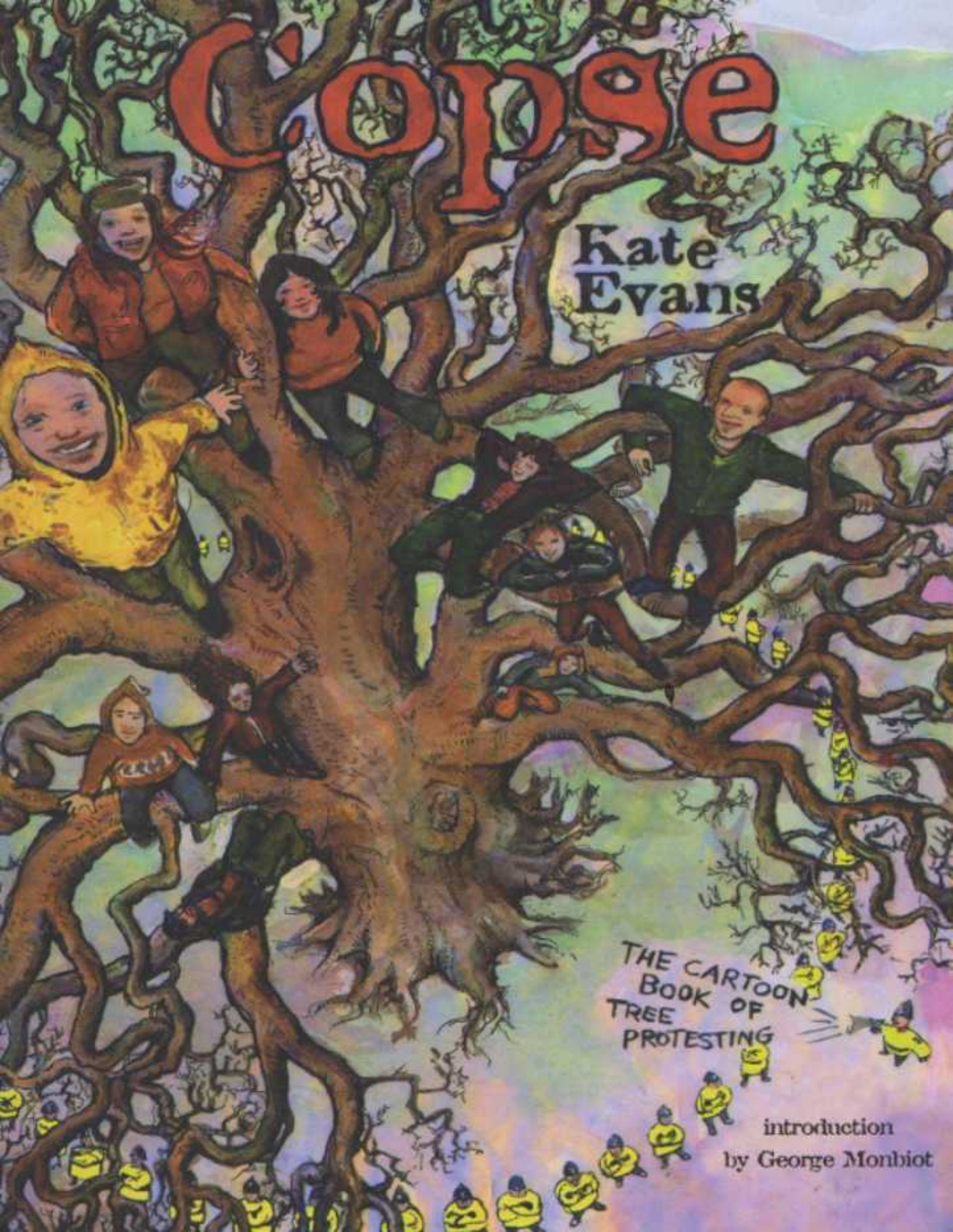
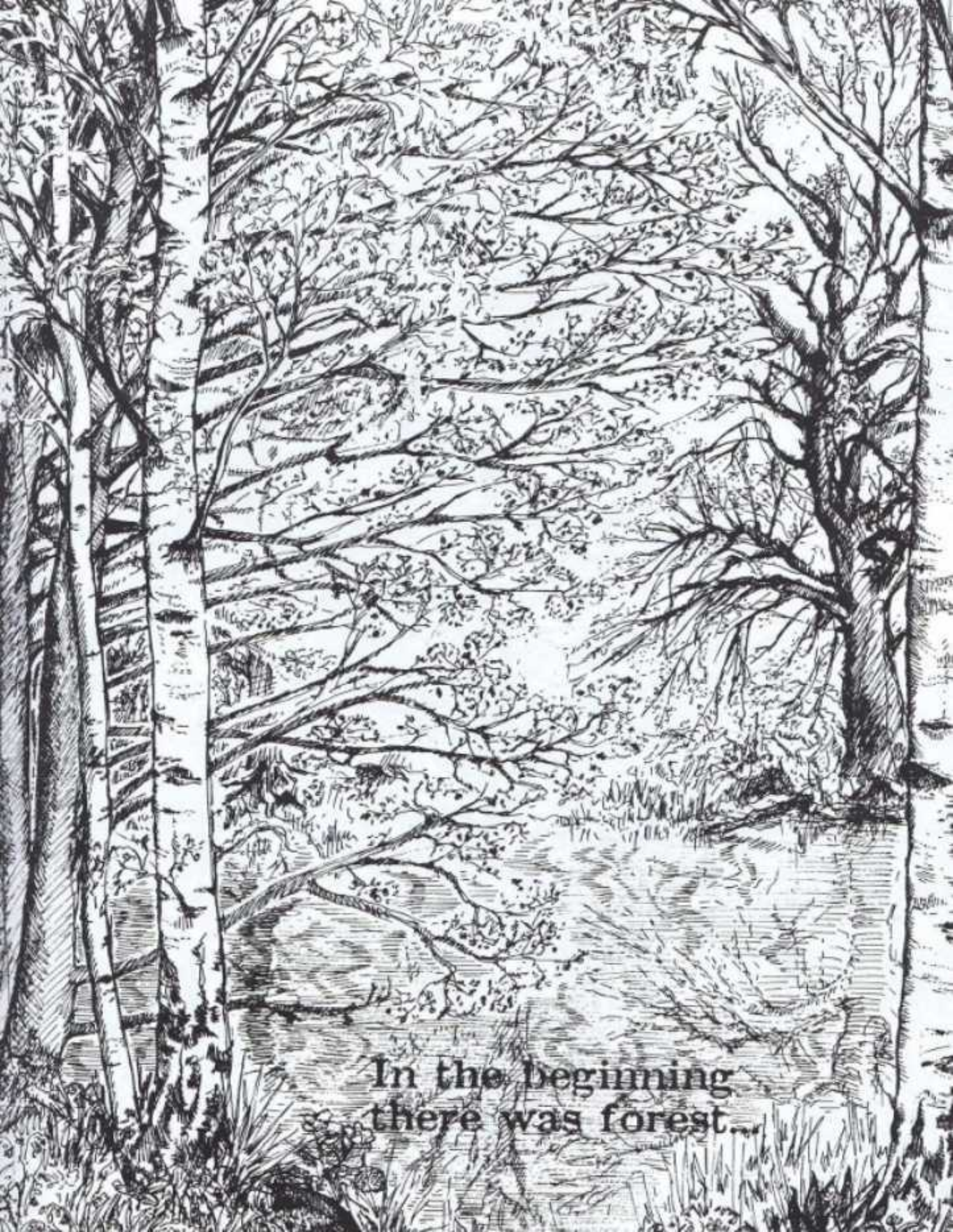

Coppice
Kate Evans
THE CARTOON BOOK OF TREE PROTESTING
introduction by George Monbiot


In the beginning
there was forest...







Copse

A Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting

Written and Illustrated by Kate Evans.

Photographs by Andrew Testa,
Adrian Arbib, Nick Cobbing,
Julia Guest, Tom Lloyd, Sarah
McLaughlin, Steve Johnson,
Gideon Mendel and Tash.
Poems by Hattie, Nicky Crow.
Additional illustrations by B. Dahl,
Nicky Crow and
Jimmy Johns.



And the Words of
Alice Troll, Animal, Bunker Brian, Bubbly Emma, Cathy Morley, Dan Troll, Dave, Dave Troll, Dolly, Flora, Fraggle, Gremlin, Indra, Janie, Jaye Troll, Jelida the Marvellous, Lighten Up John, John the Cook, Josh, Justin Time, Curly Kate, Kerris, Kirsty, Leila, Lillian, Lucy, Maeve Troll, Mary Lark, Melski, Neil T. Potts, Nicky Crow, Oleeevia, Diminutive Oli, Ollie-from-Manchester, Pablo, Busker Paul, Penny, Sunnyside Pete, PP3 Pete, Reuben, Roy, Sean, Simon, Steph, Stig, Sunflower, Taff, Sunnyside Tom, Bardy Tony, Trollie, and Wanda.

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A nice hefty wodge of the money from this book is going to support non violent direct action in defence of the environment.

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Contents

Foreword
by George Monbiot....8

Introduction
by Jay Griffiths....9

Contradiction
by Someone Else....11

Prologue
In which the cartoonist fondly remembers Greenham Common women's Peace camp....12

Aquae Sulis
About the strange tribe of Ewoks who inhabited Solsbury Hill, near Bath, in the long, hot Summer of 1994....16

Avin' it!
In which the residents of Leytonstone and Wanstead in East London conduct a completely full on campaign of direct action against the M11 Link road....30

Stanworth Valley
In which people protesting against the M65 motorway near Blackburn, Lancashire, experience living without the ground....50

The Criminal Justice Act 1994
The theory....68

In the Vale of Neath
About anti-opencast protests in the Welsh Valleys. It's not just about roads y'know....74

Ten Thousand Trees
Which are destroyed to build the Newbury Bypass, in an orgy of destruction and violence by the State....103

The Elves and the Trolls
About two of the three camps set up to save Devon from the A30, a motorway built by corporate finance....134

Eco-Feminism
How to piss in a harness....151

A Beginner's Guide to Tree Protesting
How to hang about in trees....154

Media Frenzy
The aftermath of the A30 evictions....178

The Criminal Justice Act 1998
The practice....180

A Short History Lesson
By the Diggers of George Hill protest site....185

Contacts....200

Further Reading....204

Glossary of Terms....205

COPSECOPSECOPSE

Introduction by George Monbiot

The direct action campaign against road building in Britain is the most successful revolutionary movement in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th Century. Never before in this period have such radical aims been so comprehensively achieved in so short a time. Never before has a central component of government policy, to which billions of pounds had already been committed, been not simply removed but almost wholly reversed, without the need of a change of government, by citizen politics. The humble, impoverished people who fought and won this war have plenty to be proud of.

In 1992, when two New Age travellers pitched camp on a hill near Winchester, the government's roads budget stood at £23 billion. Mrs Thatcher, deposed as Prime Minister but still revered by the ruling Conservative Party, had announced that "Nothing can stop the great car economy", and her transport minister had boasted of "the biggest road-building programme since the Romans". Road-building was an ideological keystone for a government which regarded public transport (and the social interaction, unionism and limited contractual opportunities that accompanied it) as anathema and car use (with its private ownership, individualism and juicy road-building contracts for party donors) as the stairway to heaven.

As a result, the government left nothing to chance. The decision to build a road was taken BEFORE the public inquiry began – all the inquiries were allowed to discuss was where the road should go, not whether or not a road was either necessary or desirable. Questions such as public transport alternatives or the effectiveness of traffic management were ruled outside the terms of reference. If the Department of Transport described the road in question as a bypass, it had to be discussed as such, even if everyone knew that in reality it was a stretch of motorway. Of the 48 inquiry inspectors, all were men, just eight were under sixty, and 32 were retired officers of the armed forces. They knew plenty about engineering, and nothing whatever about democracy. The department's decisions to build new trunk roads resulted from a cost-benefit analysis so fraudulent that even its own civil servants disowned it. It deliberately ignored compelling evidence, available since 1938, demonstrating that road building caused, rather than relieved, traffic growth. For the molested people of Britain, watching as their most precious landscapes were torn apart, their children choked, their peace destroyed, the inevitable response was unmediated despair... until those two New Age travellers arrived on Twyford Down.

Astonished that this most ancient and remarkable of landscape features, crossed by Bronze Age tracks, inhabited by the rarest downland plants and insects, was to be destroyed for a theoretical saving of two and half minutes' journey time, the visitors swiftly concluded that words had failed the people of Britain. Only deeds could fill the democratic void. As work on the road began, the two protesters were swiftly joined first by scores, then hundreds, then thousands of others, and the most vivid and astonishing mass movement of the 1990s had begun.

Within months, the brave direct actions at Twyford Down began to spread to other parts of the country. Roads protests sprang up in east London, at Solsbury Hill near Bath, the Stanworth Valley near Preston, Pollok Park in Glasgow, Newbury, Exeter and dozens of other threatened places. Thrilling, colourful, quite unlike anything else taking place in Britain's increasingly drab political landscape, the protests rapidly turned into a wider political awakening, the means by which tens of thousands of excluded, ignored, persecuted people recovered their self-respect and found a means of engaging once more with national life. It turned, in other words, from a protest into an enfranchisement movement.

At first the protesters were ignored, then they were persecuted. Thousands of security guards, poorly trained, many with criminal records for assault, a brutal army of licensed thugs, were drafted in to try to stop them. When this failed, protesters were imprisoned, threatened with crippling lawsuits and, finally, specifically

COPSECOPSECOPSE

targeted by a series of new laws, starting with 1994's notorious Criminal Justice Act. Then, as even these extraordinary measures seemed only to harden the campaigners' resolve, as their cause began to resonate more widely among British people, and their message to be taken seriously even by the conservative press, the government began to sweat.

Officials at the Treasury used the protests as an excuse to put financial pressure on the profligate Department of Transport. Suppressed reports about traffic growth and environmental pollution began to surface. Protests started springing up in city centres, demanding that money from the road building programme be diverted into proper public transport. With astonishing and gratifying speed, the government's resolve collapsed. By 1996, the road building budget had been cut to just £6 billion, saving the taxpayer £17 billion, and the fabric of the nation some of the most monstrous abominations ever proposed. Government ministers admitted they were wrong. Public transport became a byword for progress. As protests continued and the government changed, road proposals were cut still further.

There are still some asinine plans on the drawing board, though far, far fewer than before, and they are still being fought. There's still a long way to go before Britain gets the sort of transport policies it needs. But never again will a government be able to trample so brutally upon the wishes of the nation in pursuing its demented development plans. It's a remarkable victory, one of the very few genuine triumphs that people power has ever enjoyed. The roads protests have already taken their place in the folklore of these islands; the 1990s will be remembered as the time when the gargantuan monsters of corruption and repression were slain by the little folk. And the story of our victory will be all the more enduring because Kate Evans was there to record it. Nowhere is this, the most astonishing of recent political movements, better represented than in her truly beautiful book.

Forward by
Jay Griffiths

Imagine a bomb up the bum of suburbia. But the bomb is made of organic flour, wrapped in ivy, painted in funky colours and thrown by pixies; half punk, half pagan. The spirit of the direct action protest movement is like this, half 'spiky', half 'fluffy' – half politically hard, half warmly, humanly, soft. The movement boils with life lived to the brink, to the full, it's emotions intense, raw and extreme. On the one hand, it is explosive with vitality, teeming, playful and elastic. On the other hand, there are the gaunt faces and skint lives, the itching irritations of (animal) nits and (human) nutters. It is the spirit of unrivalled chaos, of unbridled, wondrous daftness, the drawbridges of 'Fort Trollheim', the soya milk cartons made into water pistols, and it also has a wistful sweetness – a love of trees, a respect for land. Yes, perplenty of drugs, yes the starlit life in tree villages. Yes the hilarity, yes the madness, yes the risk and yes, always, the rainbowy rewards.

Set against that spirit of protest, see the monolithic slabs of concrete authority (– more suburbia, more roads, more quarries –) represented by a flatter, nastier cast of characters, the private detectives, the bailiffs, the evicting climbers. And the prisons and the fines and the CJA, that hideous injustice which is the sinister backdrop.

This book portrays it all. It's a full, beautiful record, as witty and wise as its subject. It is also a how-to manual, how to build a bender, a simple shelter, and how to climb trees with the right gear, and it contextualises the movement historically with the Diggers and Levellers. Kate Evans has an eye for beauty, in a mudscape or a moonscape or in the human heart. She also has an ear for honesty; hide nothing, tell it as it is from the voices of those who made – and make – the whole circus happen, in extended interviews with her fellow protesters. And she has, too, a quick eye for cruelties great and small, (the bailiffs, the vigilantes,) and for stupidities – of politicians, English Nature, and half the population of Newbury.

The cartoons look oh so winsomely cosy-cosy, but their spiky remarks are made the sharper for it. This book is as appealing as childhood, while being as politically purposive as a lock-on point. (With tinsel on top.) Nobody tickles better.



A. Testa

IT MAKES ME LAUGH WHEN PEOPLE CALL US TERRORISTS, BECAUSE RADICAL CHANGE IS GOING TO BE THE ONLY PEACEFUL WAY.

What sort of change do you see happening in your lifetime?

OLI: The breakdown of the global market? I mean this is what I hope for, it isn't necessarily what will happen. The re-emergence of strong, small communities of people in society. The emergence of art as part of everyday life, something that everybody does, and not locked up in museums and art galleries. The greening of the cities. The doing down of the big corporations and companies. People not having to work for a wage to buy food. That's quite a lot of what I hope.

Alternatively we could carry on the way we are, refusing to face the fact that the people who are entrusted with power and influence in our world are the ones who are making a profit out of its destruction. We are sold out to the blindest form of short-termism, and one of the biggest changes that my generation will see is the mass realisation of that fact.

But what will be left? How much has to be destroyed first?

OLI: Even though people don't have any faith in the political process, and they know how corrupt big business is, they don't see any way around this. This is the biggest triumph that the people who keep us in check have got over us. That most people don't think that they can change their world.

Thinking outside the system, this book describes a succession of acts of faith and imagination that became a reality, a victory.

OLI: It's something like 600 roads schemes that haven't gone through. That's hundreds and hundreds of places saved... But then again, that's just a little bit of reform in a world of shit.

The government may have accepted the one about no more roads, but it doesn't seem to have grasped the idea of fewer cars. And what's with all these new housing estates on green belt land? And what about genetic manipulation of our food? And the insidious moves of corporations more powerful than nations to consolidate their rights? And? And? You still can't vote to save the planet. You have to act.

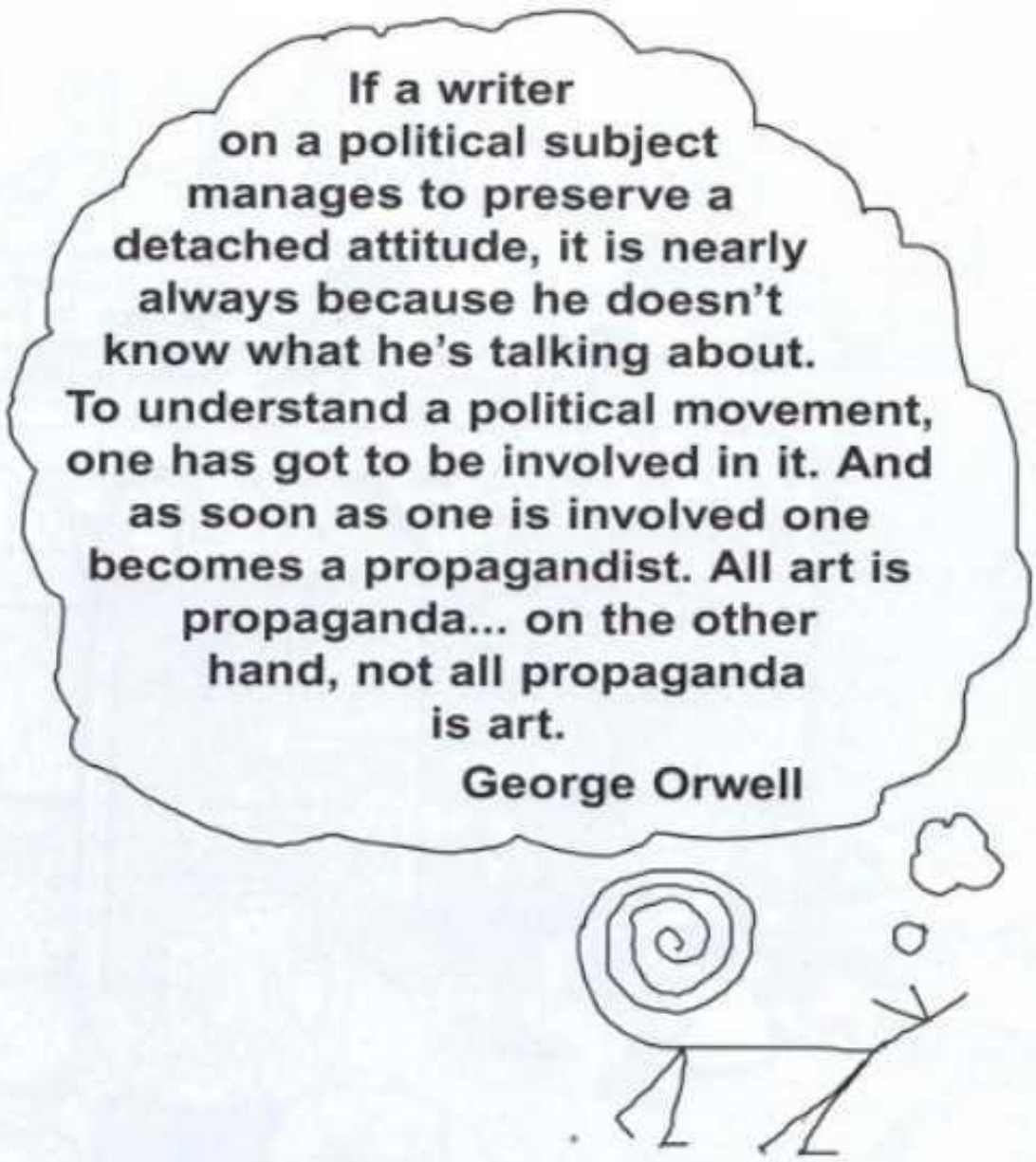
This is a new thing. As a race, a species, an entity, we've never faced the situation before where collectively we are engineering our own destruction. And so opposition to the State, the Status quo, is fuelled by an entirely new drive. All previous grass roots movements for social change have been motivated by moral concerns, by a sense of the injustice of exploiting our fellow creatures, human and animal.

But now we are fighting for survival; a selfish call for altruism.

OLI: The alternative to changing this society is even more ridiculous, because we're on the road to ruin. Something's got to give, and occasionally it does.

British Road protesting started at Twyford Down in 1992, which is not where this book begins. Twyford deserves it's own book, and is getting it: "Twyford Rising", available from Friends of Twyford Down. The first sustained British tree protest was not at Solsbury Hill either; the Flowerpot Tribe at Jesmond Dene occupied trees to try and stop the Cradlewell Bypass in 1993, and nobody knows about that because it was in Newcastle and too far away from London for the national media to find out about.

This book is partial, incomplete and not entirely chronological. I haven't included Leadenham, the Pollok Free State in Glasgow, Patterton Woods (twinned with Paeschendele), Thanet Way, the Wells Relief Road, M66 Daisy Nook, and the Swamp things of Allercombe, in the few years that this book covers. And those are just the ones I can remember. There have been many different protest sites in Britain. There will be many more.



CONTRADICTION

HIS-STORY....It is only the dominant form of history written by the bourgeois white liberal males entrenched in the universities and the media that claims to be objective. This book is subjective history, spoken history, a history of resistance and history in resistance. This book will infiltrate the British Library! This is our two fingers to all the sucka m.c's who've spoken for us, who've mediated and twisted our words over the years. J'ACCUSE.... the broadsheet journalists that cut a head from the many headed hydra, and held it up to their gaze before feeding it to the tabloids. That was a friend of ours; we're coming for you too...

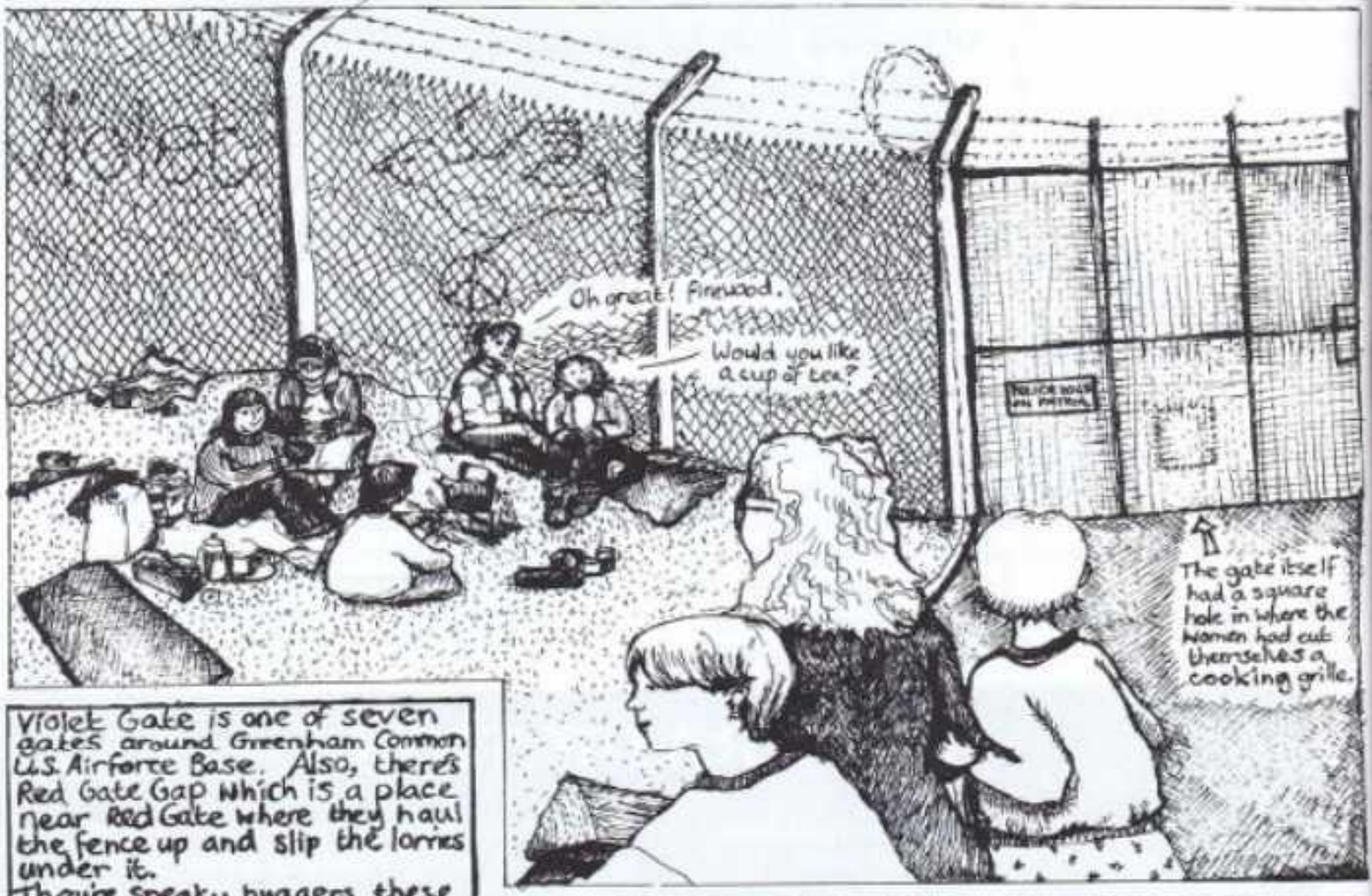
Ideally this book would have as many authors as it does voices. No names on the cover, no names in the book. Stories arising out of nothing like echoes from the underground. But we're too slack for that, so Kate compiled the book. But Kate Evans doesn't exist, she's just a figment of your imagination.

GOOD MEMORIES



1994. kate evans

When I was 11 and my sister was 13 and my mum was 37 then we went to Greenham Common. We went to Violet Gate The first time we brought firewood and packed lunches and we stayed all day.



Violet Gate is one of seven gates around Greenham Common U.S. Airforce Base. Also, there's Red Gate Gap which is a place near Red Gate where they haul the fence up and slip the lorries under it.
They're sneaky buggers these missile convoys.

We realised that we weren't going to eat our packed lunches as they had chicken drumsticks in and maybe the other women wouldn't like us chewing animal legs around the fire. So we ate something from a big iron cooking pot on the fire. It had all sorts of vegetably beany things in that I would never have eaten at home.

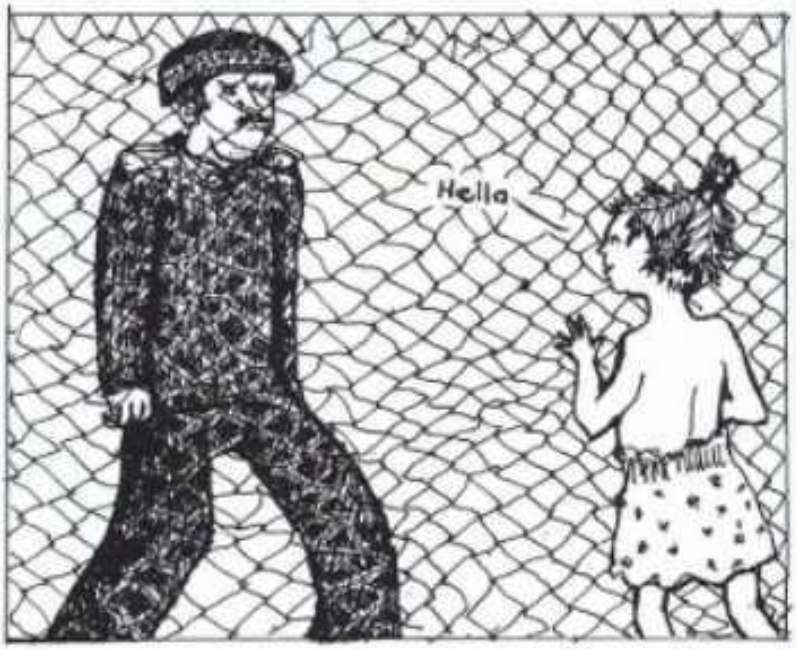



After lunch we went for a walk and looked at the fences.





And we gave cups of tea to some policemen who were our side of the wire. They were alright – Thames Valley police drafted in for reinforcements. The horrible policemen were the MOD. Plods who were patrolling inside the base. Of course, being caged up, it wasn't surprising that they'd turned nasty.



At sunset, one of the women persuaded us all to go and stand on the golf course opposite the Gate and celebrate something spiritual which I think was to do with the moon.

It was quite nice, but me and Mama and Alice had to try not to laugh. We were standing on a golf course after all.

When we got home, Greenham things lingered:

PEACE

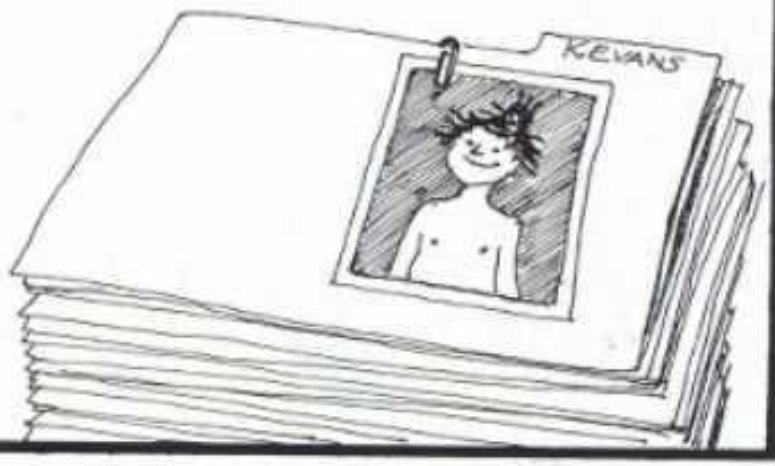
(I still have this bit of fence.)

our clothes smelt excitingly of woodsmoke,

and we could tell when the convoys were out because our phone would go dead for hours on end.

Mum! It's happened again!

Somewhere there's probably a file with my name on it.



Aquae Sulis

The Solsbury Hill protest. 14 March – 20 July 1994



A. A/66

Solsbury Hill, seen from the watermeadows.

THERE IS A GREEN HILL FAR, FAR AWAY...

It is four years since a road was built through Solsbury Hill, and the story of the people who fought against it has fragmented into snatches of reminiscence. Like dreams. A story. A fable. Armed with my dictaphone, I will track it down, pin it, cut it into hard fact. But I find that everything about the Hill is overlaid with myth and legend.

Solsbury Hill, Sulisbury Hill, near Bath. We know the Romans called it Aquae Sulis, but 'sulis' is a Celtic word. It means gap, hole, orifice, cunt. Aquae Sulis is the warm waters of the goddess's womb.

The Celts took this life to be a ghostly incarnation, a pale imitation of the real, vital world of the underworld. Within the Earth lay both heaven and hell. Whenever a new discovery was made by the people it was granted by the gods beneath the ground. Wherever water sprung forth, that was life given by the goddess. At Bath, the only hot springs in the country, the water was that of the goddess herself.

The Celts buried their dead, dusted in red ochre for blood and curled up like a foetus, into earth that received them as their mother.

On 14th March 1994, Amey Construction, working for the Department of Transport, began to build a road across Solsbury Hill. It was to be a bypass, they claimed, for the traffic stricken village of Batheaston. They didn't mention that the 'bypass' linked up with several other stretches of new road, to form a new motorway from Dijon to Belfast. Part of a Europe-wide roads building programme, the Trans Europe Road Network, which has been imposed upon an entire continent without discussion or consent.

Spontaneously, people came there to pit themselves against the destruction. Almost magically, they were there, in a little train of chaos, and goodwill, and infectious summer madness. These new people, like the old, recognised that *this Earth is our life.*

OLD STORIES

I haven't told this story in years! There was a time when you would be telling somebody round the fire pit every day. "Not the Bladerred story!"

King Bladerred was a Celtic King, and the father of King Lear. He was kind of outcast and he kind of cast himself out, because he got leprosy. Off he went, bimbling around the Wessex area, and got himself some pigs and became a pig herder. He took his pigs to some marshland, which was Bath, or rather, it wasn't, because there was nothing there yet. The pigs started drinking this water and behold, they had no leprosy. And then Blaederred took the waters himself, and he got cured of leprosy. So he then devoted the spring to the goddess, Sulis.

The Romans came to conquer. They liked Bath because it had hot running water, in this damp and drizzly, pissy little island. So there was a great battle, and all the people on the Hill were killed. Women and children as well. And the story is that Bladerred was beheaded and his head rolled down the Hill. His head, rolling, with the hair going in all directions, is the symbol of Solsbury Hill, but it's also the symbol of the Green Man, the spirit of the woods.

NEW STORIES

INDRA: The hill was big. I remember the first time I climbed up it; I was with a few other people and it was just going dusk. We got up and circled the top of the hill – it's got like a cropped top, such a flat top. I looked down one end and it was a sheer drop. You felt like you were flying, at the edge of a precipice, like you were suspended in mid air. I was looking over the horizon in Bath, it was misty, and suddenly all the lights of Bath came on, and I shouted, "Oh my God! The Romans are coming." ...We wet ourselves laughing, and then Stanley started fire juggling.

JANIE: It was the Beltaine party [spring celebration], but I'd had one pint of cider and that's all. I climbed the Hill, put my foot on top of the Hill, and I tranced out and saw all the Old People coming out of the ground. It was amazing. Beltaine was amazing, but that was what did it for me, the feeling of being called there. Of having belonged there, been there since time began, connected to that place.

I'd seen things before in my life, but I'd never seen them with other people. Loads of people saw the same things. The Old People marching to battle. Warriors. And just people living, animals, dwellings... It just stopped me in my tracks – they're going to trash *this*?

INDRA: Things were getting quite spooky down there... I was walking on the Hill, at night, and a hand came up out of the grass, not grabbing so you'd trip over, almost going through the skin, but definitely, you're getting a kind of tingle up the back bone, and then there's more of them; it's happening quite a lot. It's like, "OK its cobwebs. OK its the morning dew? OK its long grass!" but you just knew inside that it was something quite strange. Then somebody else had the same experience, and then somebody else. One day we started talking about it. "Yes, that happened to me too."

There were many strange occurrences on that hill, but that didn't scare us, if anything it bound us to the place. It made it exceptional. It made it the only thing in the universe that was going on at the time. It made it the most important experience of our lives... We had a lot of good times, a lot of bonding, and a lot of pain and head fucks. "Why can we not get through to these people? What they're doing is so wrong."

The A46 Batheaston – Swainswick road was being built through greenbelt land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and proposed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Solsbury Hill is a World Heritage Site; the road cut into the ancient hill fort.

INDRA: We sent letters to the local archaeological society saying, "Did you know that this Celtic settlement is about to be dug up?" They wrote back saying, "No, we didn't actually. We tried to find out about it." And at the bottom of the letter it said, "This is somewhere between a cock up and a conspiracy," and that is in their words. So they equipped two people with a wheelbarrow and a trowel and off they went to dig up one of the most important uncharted sites in Britain. They were one step in front of the bulldozers as they dug...

It obliterated one of the oldest badger setts in Europe. Badger setts get larger with time:

INDRA: We had a whole nation of badgers... The 'badger relocation plan' was a joke. We put our trust in a lot of experts, the Badger protection people were very sweet, but they weren't badgers. A badger under threat will suffocate itself rather than come out. They are very fierce. They defend themselves to the death.

But the worst of it was the threat the road posed to the hot springs of Bath itself. The Hill acts as a natural hydraulic head that forces underground chasms of water down onto molten lava, thereby producing the hot, bubbling springs. A road cannot be built upon a bed of sand and clay without drilling boreholes to stabilise it. Nine boreholes were planned, straight through the aquifer.





A. Arbib

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE ECO WARS, DADDY?

Non-violent techniques for obstructing road building were first improvised in this country at Twyford Down in 1992. Two years on, the method was much the same. Go there, live there, create as much local interest in the issue as possible, and get in the way of the work.

Protesters began a campaign of bulldozer diving: physically scrambling onto the machines. The D.o.T. responded by hiring some nasty, thuggish security guards who took lots of speed and enjoyed beating people up. Sometimes security were wrong footed:

Tom's diary entry for 12/6/94:

One man climbs in a cement mixing truck. the driver owns the truck - he wants him out as it would ruin it if it set. The bloke won't get out unless the truck drives off. The agreement is settled amicably, with a handshake, and the man gets out and the truck drives away. NVDA! 26/6/94 Party starts - drumming - bulldozer still working in the background - all of a sudden about 100 of us storm the digger. Emma and Angel with their tops off - security don't know what to do. Whilst scuffle takes place, Mikey shoves 6 potatoes and a loaf of bread up the exhaust. It's not just the hardcore regulars, but middle aged housewives in dazzling white skirts jumping on the bulldozers. Everyone is chanting "The Earth is our mother - and we will take care of her" Some of the yellow hats [security guards] + the big fat blue hat on the gatepost drumming on their knees and tapping their feet.

SUNFLOWER: Digger diving? The thing that made me laugh was these big security men being spun and falling over trying to catch these elf-like nymphs running around in the dell who were so much better at it. I learned that being big and heavy doesn't work – you're better off being light and nimble...(Just to dispel any stereotyping here, Sunflower is a gruff, ex-army Londoner in his forties. He now lives, unlike the other people interviewed in this chapter, in a council house in Slough.)

...I was decoying security, making out I was going for the digger. They'd go, "Watch him – he'll be trouble." But I didn't think I'd get on the machines, I'd just make a gap for the girls to nip through.

Sometimes the security guards won:

JANIE: So many security guards were so violent. They'd get hold of your hands and twist and pull. You did end up getting trashed.



A. Arbib

How many protesters were there? That's the first question many people ask and it's usually impossible to answer. Tom's diary says five on the weekend of the Glastonbury festival, and sixty eating dinner the following week. Although living with sixty people isn't always easy, and Wanda remembers doing a fair bit of non-specific ranting "to the air" when things were crap, the random conglomeration of individuals quickly evolved into a community.

WANDA: [The campaign at] Bath was totally accepting of anyone who walked up to the fire. It didn't matter what your past had been, if you were there for the same reason, then you were accepted. And that just doesn't happen in society in general.

BUILD A FUTURE INSTEAD!

What was their motivation? Well, it isn't easy to attribute one common aim to such a diverse collection of individuals. Certainly for most people, the opportunity to do something about the crisis facing the planet came as a relief.

EMMA: You're sitting there and you're working it out, or you're dancing and you're working it out. Feeling. Thinking and thinking and thinking. But that's the first time I got off my arse and said, "Let's put all this feeling and thinking and believing into practice." I had to go somewhere where the need was greatest. So that however little I did, it would mean that much more.

SUNFLOWER: The people I met doing it went from sixteen up; young people and creative. They weren't the media vision of dirty, scrounging people with no imagination. They were creative, intelligent people there because they believed in something.



A. Arbib

To campaign against a motorway is a negative ideal: protesters at the Hill wanted to create an alternative future.

WANDA: It was a lot about learning to live on the land and making, in the site of the road, what could be there in the long term.

And they were there because they were having a right laugh. And they were there because they had fallen in love with the people and the place.



A. Arbib

TREE LOVE NEVER DIES.

The diggers encroached. The protesters retreated, until, in the grounds of what had been Whitecroft house, in a small, dense copse of beeches, they constructed a unique defence.

Some experienced rock climbers had arrived at the Hill, and they began to apply rope access techniques to tree climbing. With the aid of a climbing harness, anyone could learn to climb safely. And so they did, and various people built platforms or slung hammocks up in the treetops. These were connected by rope walkways: a single rope to walk on and another, above your head, to hold. It added up to a kind of village, sixty feet in the air.

PETE: Whitecroft was the first time that people had lived up trees full time. Rather than just climbing a tree, hugging a tree, people were building their homes in them. You'd be standing at the fire at nights, and it would be the first time you'd been down to the ground all day. You'd look up and there would be all these little twinkles from candles up above you...

This exciting thing, it was total new ground. How are they going to get us out? It did seem totally possible that we could win.

WANDA: Such an amazing thing, to live in a tree.

I don't think I can describe here how special it is to sleep and wake and live in the branches of a tree. To see the stars and the moon. To feel the sunshine and feel the rain.



T. Lloyd

SUNFLOWER: Magic moment – laying in a hammock. Purple Emma's hammock which I took over, right out in some branches. It was a job to get to it. And I was laying in this hammock on a warm summer night, with a little breeze and the tree was moving a little. And there was somebody playing a flute really well.

Just laying there, relaxed, feeling the tree moving with the wind. Feeling the spell of that night.

I was hooked.

ONE PEOPLE ONE SPIRIT ONE LAND ONE LOVE



T. Lloyd

Tom's diary:

Late Friday night [17/6/94] - Loads of barricading - 20 or 30 of us did lots all day. Party at mine - Lettuce tea, menali, skunk + Tennants Super.

SATURDAY, 11/6/94 I try to make it to the top of the hill for sunset as often as possible. Tonight was a beauty - about 30 of the tribe dancing to drums - later hash cake from Matt (psychedelic trifle) arrives as do two African drummers and the party carries on at the bender site.



T. Lloyd



T. Lloyd



A. Aldo

How did they get them out then? The defences had gone far beyond anything that bailiffs had experience of evicting.

EMMA: Apparently the Sheriff's office had professional climbers come in and look, and they stood on the ground and shook their heads a lot as if to say, "We're not going up there! On those walkways? Along those little bits of slippery plank?" Shaking their heads most sincerely.

In yet another weird, fairy story twist, it is the evil Under Sheriff that is responsible for evicting protest sites. On the morning of Wednesday 5th July, the Sheriff erected fences all around Whitecroft and increased the security presence until the tree dwellers were under siege. Then he brought in bailiffs, with chainsaws, in cherry-pickers (hydraulic platforms that could reach up to the branches) to try and drag the protesters out.

The trees were defended superbly.

PABLO: That was the most full on day. We didn't let any branches go. Everybody was everywhere.

The method, which was incredibly effective, and which hasn't been used since, was belaying. This is where one person secures themself high up in a tree, and lowers another person down on a rope fed through a device on their harness. The people being belayed bounced and flew about from branch to branch. They ran rings around the cherry-pickers. The bailiffs didn't fell a single tree.

It was a long, long day for the protesters who were up from first light, and it was searingly hot. Every one was tired, but the bailiffs worked on into the evening...

Tom's diary:

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5.10 pm: Cherry-picker stops.
6.10 pm: Cherry-picker starts
         again.
6.30 pm: MATTHEW FALLS!!
         Breaking many bones.
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No one was quite sure how or why.

PABLO: There was a big flurry of leaves, bosh, and then everybody started screaming. People trying to take the fences down on the ground. What the fuck's going on? What's happened? Who's dropped? It was horrible. You're trying to climb and you're shaking too much.

This is Sunflower's account, which is at odds with some other versions:

SUNFLOWER: ...the cherry-picker operator had trapped Ben against the tree. Matthew went to jump off a tree onto the cherry-picker, but just as he was doing it, the guy pulled the cage back. You know when things are happening in slow motion? Matthew was falling and I was looking from above. He caught a few branches on the way. There was a dull thud. He fell about 40 foot.

He was in Stoke Mandeville hospital. Maybe 30 breaks. Spinal injuries.

Emotions were running high when that happened. That stopped work. They had to go back and have a rethink.

Shock. Fear. Anger. Grief. Matthew was at the centre of the Whitecroft family. He was one of the first tree climbers, and had been instrumental in building the village and training other people.

EMMA: It was Matthew that got me up in those trees. I just felt that I trusted him so much. I didn't really trust myself at all: "I'm too small, I can't stretch, I can't reach, I can't do anything." There were people up there and I heard them laughing and I wanted to do it more than anything. Then Matthew took me up.
WANDA: He was the first person who turned up with harnesses. He did a lot of building there and made the first walkways. An awful lot should be credited to Matthew.

THURSDAY 6/7/94: News of Matthew is critical - parents on their way to hospital - problem breathing with collapsed lungs.

Then there was more waiting, while the Under Sheriff thought up some new tricks. Ten days later, two articulated lorries appeared near Whitecroft. Speculation was rife about their contents.

TUESDAY 19/7/94 (2.00 am (ish))
A scuffle breaks out on the ground - screaming and shouting - all dark - confusion - one of us is set on by about five blue hats [security guards]. Everyone is out and on the walkways. Half an hour later, about 100 people appear at the top of the compound. Shrieks and howls from the trees to let them know that we're here. They're issued yellow jackets and form a human chain - the lorry sides are pulled back and cardboard boxes are passed out and down to the trees. Boxes folded and stacked. Hundreds of them.

Cardboard boxes!

EMMA: It was meant to be like what they use in stunt tactics, but that's only when the boxes are all taped together. These were just thrown loosely, all higgledy piggledy around the bottom of the trees, and with massive gaps around the trunks, so if you did fall...

To go with this strange attempt at safety, the Under Sheriff imported his new bailiffs from the film industry.

EMMA: They were Equity paid stunt men.
SUNFLOWER: Overdeveloped, testosteroned, steroidy, pumped up monsters. Those were the bailiffs! They had singlets, tattoos, the lot. They were freaks. They just grabbed hold of people and pulled them out through sheer brute strength.

The story seems to be turning from fairytale to pantomime at this point, except it isn't funny. They did go on to evict the trees. (Oh no they didn't!) Oh yes they did.

Tom's account is brief:

First come for the horse chestnut - Wanda, Percy + Graeme? 3 attempts to get them down.

2 cherry pickers come in from the back, so me, Tim, Emma, Emily, Percy defend, climbing right into the tops - dangling feet inches from chainsaw blade - shaking branches in their faces - police camera arrives - they make many passes but can only get to the outer branches.

Meanwhile Wanda is on the walkway - they've come up with stunt men and bolt cutters + literally cut her harness so she has to come off the walkway - she's taken off and arrested - spent 2 hours in a cell wagon - but they brought her tea and ice cream at the station. Her dope is spotted by the policewoman who says, "I think you'd better have that back, don't you?"!!

I lose my specs

TOM: I lost my specs, and I'm blind without them. So that was me out of it. I just sat up in my tree house with Pete and smoked spliffs and chilled out until they got to me.

EMMA: I was seeing double from tiredness. I actually fell asleep on a walkway. I heard this voice go, "Emma!" and woke up, and then I saw that they were going for the tree that I'd been living in. I thought, "Right, I've got to go and defend my tree." So I went over there. If I hadn't, I might have lasted another night.

As I went along the walkway, they were coming for me, and there were people in the tree behind me so I couldn't get off the walkway in time. It was like, "Oh no, they're coming for me! I know they're coming for me! I've got nowhere to run to and oh Bollocks! Don't get me!!!" All I could say was, "FUCK OFF" and they wouldn't. They were smiling and laughing and saying, "Come on darling". *"Don't fucking call me darling!"*

And nothing mattered more. Nothing had ever mattered more in my life, that I clung on and that I was there. I was knackered and I was fucked and it got to the point where everything was so important that it was about life and death. Totally. And only things that are about life and death are that important.

And that was the end of Whitecroft woods.



A. Aitib



The protesters left Solsbury Hill and went to parties and festies and other campaigns and did whatever they wanted to with their lives. And the following summer, some of them met up again. They had had enough of fighting for the land. Now they were into living on it, and with it, and walking the earth.

EMMA: You know, when I was very young I always had this picture in my head of a horse and a gypsy wagon and a quiet country lane. But I never ever thought that people still lived like that. It was a total mythical dream – I didn't know it was possible.

Tom started it, with two of his father's fell ponies and a little cart, and Pete travelled along with him. Wanda and Emma got sturdy, no geared, old post office bicycles, and they came along too. They went to Tan Hill Fayre, a small, vehicle-free festival, where Pete bought a horse so that it was a traditional horse fair in the eyes of the authorities. Then they went to Devon and got Feth, and he bought a horse, and the whole troupe headed north.

WANDA: On average we'd do about 20 miles a day of travelling, and then we'd stop for a few days and chill. Or we'd need a farrier by then. We were travelling with two other women who each had horses, so there were six horses altogether, but we always found verges for them. Never once did they go hungry. But that's the magic of horse drawn travelling; you have faith.

Some days were long mind you. Since then, travelling on our own with only one horse, we've had some long days, but just when you're going, "Oh my god, I don't want to make her do another step–" a field turns up! Always the way.

We had a little eight foot hedgerow yurt that was on the back of one of the carts, and every night we'd put it up, all pile in there and take it down in the morning. But then we stopped in Wales and built the first of the 16 foot yurts; the first of the tribal yurt family. It was built by all of us and will always be owned by all of us. It is such a beautiful thing to make together, and that structure says a lot about all of our friendships.

A yurt is a collapsible, portable room made from a criss-cross lattice of wooden poles with a tarpaulin cover. Wanda's is beautiful. The winter sun streams in through a window in the middle of the roof. It highlights one of those ancient, sensible, cast-iron wood burners which, if you provide it with a couple of smallish logs in the morning, chucks out a steady blast of warmth throughout the day. Haley, the baby, plays the other side of the fireguard.

"Yurts are definitely the way forward," says Wanda, with a brimming kettle in her hand. "The Mongols had it sussed."

WANDA: My horse is called Betty and she's twelve years old. She's great because I hadn't done much driving; I'd been around a lot of driving horses but I hadn't done much until I got her, and I let her teach me really.

They're a big responsibility horses, and a lot can go wrong with them. Betty's an absolute star, and I've never seen her span out, but saying that, she probably could: I could take her out tomorrow and she could do something totally pear shaped. And if you're going to take a horse on the road, then it's your total responsibility that it's not going to get injured on the road.

How can you be physical master of a horse?

Well you don't. Ultimately to work with a horse it has to be mutual agreement, and mutual respect as well. I totally respect Betty and she totally respects me. At the end of the day, if she doesn't want to do something, she's not going to, but there is a bit of bluff; she thinks that I could probably stop her, and I know that I probably couldn't.

PETE: That's why the old road protest camps are so good aren't they? All of a sudden there's your little way of learning to live out doors. One of the ace things about it is how it's all very accessible, and how everyone's welcome. The horsedrawn trip's very similar to that really. The same way that you learned how to put a bender up, you learn how to put a horse together.

You actually have to assemble your own horse?

Aye, you get a packet, a bit like an airfix kit.

You rehydrate it.

Add boiling water and then get the enamel paints out. (Seriously, folks.) Getting into horses. Find folk who are horsedrawn and blag 'em as a hitcher. Get a bike or get a rucksack. Bimble along. Carry most of your own tat and just go with it. That's your way to get your head around being horsedrawn.

We've had all sorts of people come with us. It's

good; makes it easier. There's other people to do wooding and other people to ride the horse.

There's no rush. Some people are like, "I must have a horse and I must have a wagon and I want them now and I want all my own things." That's how you get it wrong. Chill out. You can have a horse. Walk along. Go and see what's over that hedge. Surely that's the reason for doing it, after all.

JUST BIMBLE ALONG...

PETE: Loads of opportunities come, because you're really accessible with a horse. People come up and chat to you. You can chat to the farmer – you're not a threat. "It's alright mate, we're moving in the morning, look there's only that amount of grass."

Yeah, you just bimble along, see loads, chat to loads of people, go and see what's behind that wall. You're always skanking around looking for park-ups, because you need so many of them, so it's a great excuse for being nosey.

Do you always take the quietest, greenest roads?

Most of the time I take little roads, but then sometimes a dual carriageway can be better than a little lane, because cars can overtake you. A little lane is twiddly, with fast tractors and locals legging it around. So I like to do a main road sometimes, so I know the horse can take it; so he doesn't forget what an articulated lorry is...

...Round here's been good this year, we've been getting to know the area. I know quite a few of the park-ups, which especially in winter, is really nice. I know there's going to be grass for him, and with the short days, you don't want to be pushing on, you want to know where you're heading. It is nice having a little circuit, especially if there's work.

But then it's nice doing a big A to B mission, and it's new ground. You're covering the length of the country before you know it. Long days. Loads of miles.

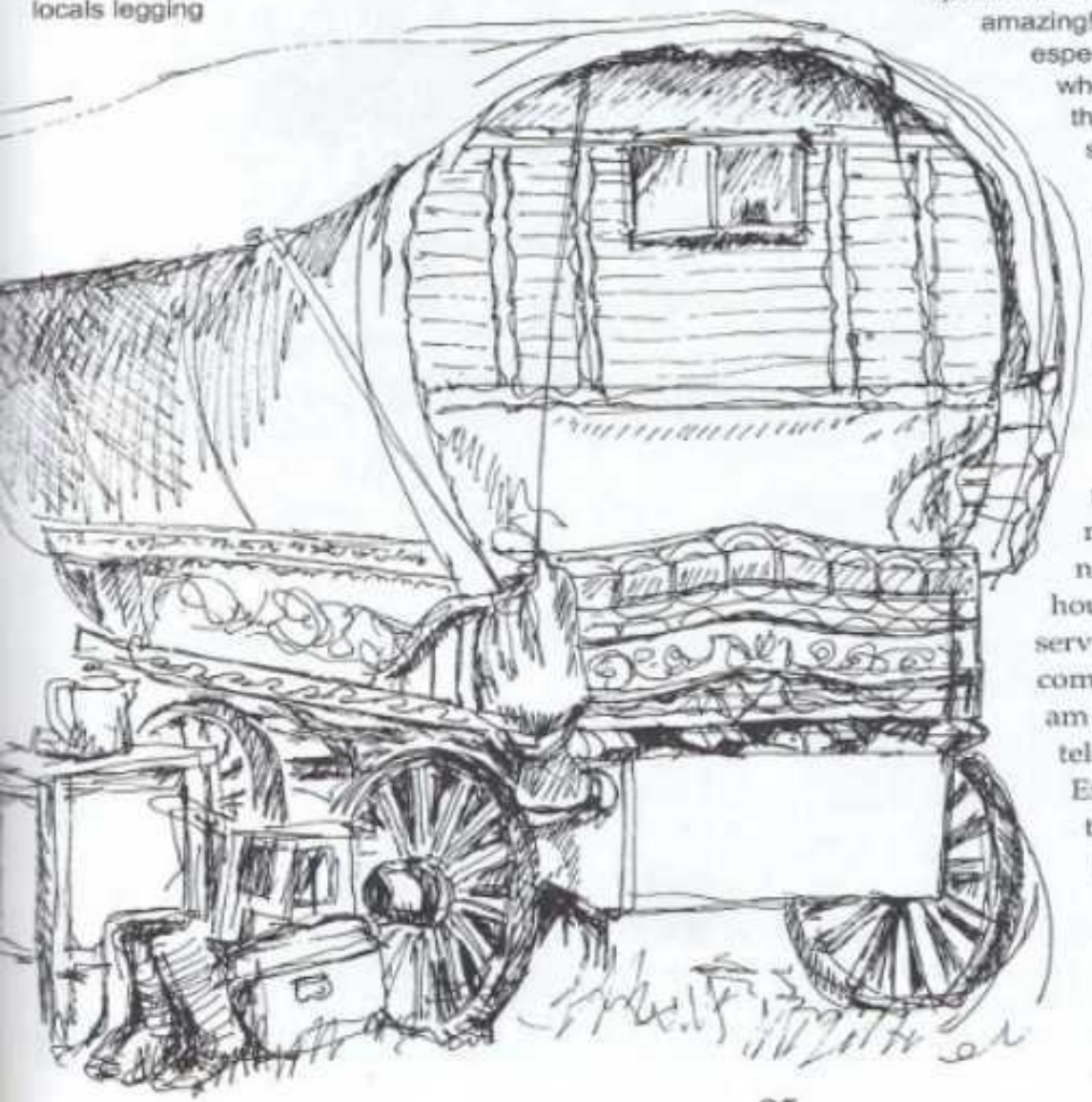
WANDA: The magic, and the fires, it's just brilliant.

Even in the rain?

Yeah, even in the rain. Even on a frosty morning when you have to wait for the frost to thaw so they can have a morning munch and it's so cold that your hands hurt. It's all part of it.

And people's attitudes are just really nice. You get people in their eighties who remember when there were more horses and wagons on the roads than cars. It wasn't that long ago, yet these people didn't think they'd see it again in their days. And that's given them optimism: they come out and say, "How amazing!". There are a lot of old people, especially those living in the country, who are very anti roads, very anti the traffic problems and who are shocked by the amount of cars.

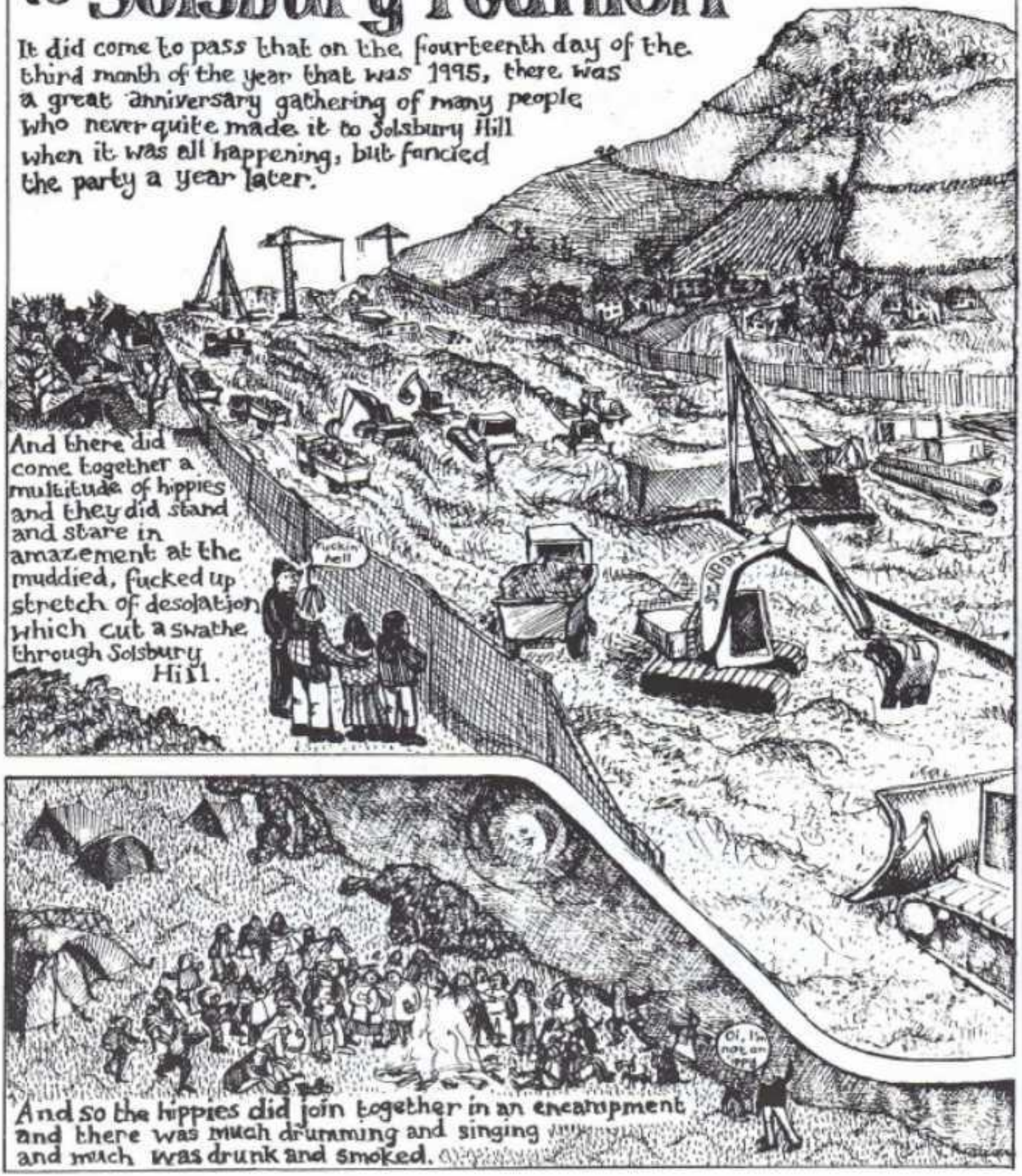
It's a nice way to communicate with people, and you see the country: it's the most beautiful way to travel. And it makes you even more anti car. There are too many bloody cars on the roads.



Then I get in a car and drive back to London. The motorway streams out before me as I hurtle along in my nauseous little space pod. Ten hours and several free sachets of service station ketchup and complimentary coffee pots later I am in East London. It's like being teleported. I think of Wanda, Emma, Pete and Tom and Feth travelling the same distance, having seen and felt and smelt and heard the land for every single step.

sing a song of direct action ~ Solsbury reunion

katevans '95.



Then forsooth, in the morning the hippies did rise up, up to the top of Salsbury Hill, and they listened with patience to rallies and to speeches. And then (this is the good bit) they did with one accord clasp the hands of each other, and spread out into a ring, and there were happy smiling hippies as far as the eye could see.

I'm not a hippy either. I'm a professional working person who cares about the environment. But I am happy & smiling though.

And then a great rage did come upon the hippies, and they did swoop down upon the roadsite, and the gates and the fences were as butter before them, and the utmost efforts of the yellowjackets were in vain.

LET GO OF HER!

Don't grab my shoe. I'm much less likely to get down without my shoe.

And so the hippies did come to be in occupation of many cranes and diggers, and they did drum and sing with hilarity, and they did taunt and tease the yellowjackets from a great height.

WE LOVE JIM!

BYE

And one man, Jim, did hear the call of the righteous, good environmentalists, and he did cast aside his jacket of much yellowness, and he did quit his job. And verily did the smelly, crusty hippy types rejoice.

I'll have an abortion please!

And then when the sun had set, and all were cold and hungry and needing a piss, then the great unwashed hordes did descend the cranes and the diggers, and lo, they did go unto the chip shop.

Avin' it

The No M11 Campaign 1906 – 1995

I go back to London, and I hit the crew that I always stay with there, a mash up mix of folk from everywhere, on their way to everywhere, doing everything in between. But they're here in this part of East London because five years ago, the M11 link road started coming through.

They're a fast living lot of opportunivores and freegans, my mates, and it's difficult to interview them about the history of the protest because the £5 a litre Kalashnikov vodka gets in the way. When I live there longer I start to meet their more respectable neighbours and comrades from battle who also saw and did amazing things in the fifteen months of direct action against the scheme. They don't look like roads protesters. They look like ordinary people. They are ordinary people.

JUSTIN: That's something to say about the M11 campaign. The distinction between 'locals' and 'activists' didn't happen. There was none of that 'them and us' feeling at all. A lot of the stalwarts of the campaign, the long term campaigners, lived in the local area. People who are still doing direct action to this day started because they lived on the route of the M11.

However, by this time the late nights and vodka begin to take their toll, so I probably don't do justice to such a vast and mad and well fought campaign. Sorry.

The M11 link road was first proposed in the early 1900s and there was strong opposition to it then. So how much more intense that opposition must have been when construction work started in 1993, against a background of rising road related disease, (asthma, cancer, stress) and road induced traffic chaos. We don't need any more roads. We've got enough roads. And people feel that especially strongly when a motorway is planned right through the middle of their town. When the homes that they lived in all their lives are compulsorily purchased by the Department of Transport, and demolished. The road ploughed through some last fragments of Epping Forest, but as well as that, three hundred and fifty odd houses, home to a thousand people, were demolished for the M11 link.

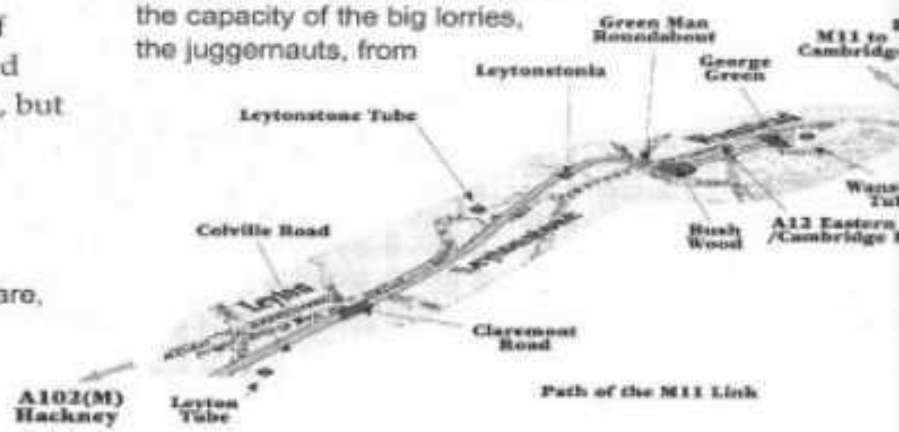
JOHN: Twenty years ago they decided that it was madness to build urban motorways, yet here they are, building another urban motorway coming straight into London. You wonder what is driving these people. It's almost suicidal. What they're doing is committing suicide. Why are they doing it?

The residents of Wanstead and Leytonstone gave the democratic process their best shot. The last public enquiry was in 1989, and it's terms of reference were limited to the details of the Compulsory Purchase Orders and land transfers; to reconsider the scheme was outside it's remit. Local residents were not impressed and were ejected from the enquiry by force. Still, they battled on, meeting every week, writing letters, leafletting local houses with a newsletter about the campaign and raising funds for legal action.

Campaigners tried two legal challenges to the scheme, based on planning law and housing law. They considered getting a judicial review on the basis that subcontractors were acting unlawfully, but all the dirt that they dug could not be unequivocally proven. They then took the case to the European Environment Commission, on the grounds that there had been no Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed road.

CATHY: We could have won, but there was a stitch up at the highest level. The Government really wanted this road. There's the Docklands 'Enterprise Area' and other schemes for shopping malls and business parks in the Stratford and Temple Mills areas; just ways to make shit loads of money out of run down East London. And I think they thought they wouldn't be able to make that money without the infrastructure in place. Although the road is a complete travesty; all it does is shift the bottleneck three miles up the street.

JOHN: The reason they're doing it is because of profits. Money. They always explain it in terms of benefits for the local people, "It'll take the congestion away with a specially designed road." But what they don't tell you is that the intention is to increase the capacity of the big lorries, the juggernauts, from



38 to 44 tons and beyond. The bigger the lorries the more goods they can shift, and the faster they can turn around their profit.

They put across this fragmented approach. They don't go to the people of Britain and say, "We are intending to put in a new road infrastructure. Do you want it or not? We are gong to widen all the A roads and make them motorways." They know what the British people would say in a referendum: they'd give it the two fingers. So they split it up into little fragmented bits and say, "No it's not a motorway, it's the M11 Link road," or "it's the Birmingham Northern Relief road" when it's part of a much bigger strategy to link up transport road routes throughout Europe, to open up markets in eastern Europe, and probably in Asia as well. That's what behind it.

Bulldozers moved onto the route in September 1993. The protesters had exhausted 'democratic' channels, but they didn't give up.

CATHY: We had always seen it as, "Well, we're banging our head against a brick wall, but what the hell, let's give it a go anyway. Then other campaigners, direct activists arrived, and there was a new energy, a freshness that we hadn't had before. And when it got to November, and the tree thing really took off and was such a success, media wise, we thought, "Hey! We've got a new weapon here."

The direct activists were just a handful of assorted people who had improvised methods of obstructing road building at Twyford Down over the past year, and they found the residents of Leytonstone and Wanstead eager to learn:

LILLIAN: I'd attended a lot of meetings and we didn't seem to be getting anywhere. We went and asked questions, people were corresponding with the council, writing letters to various addresses, but we never got an answer. We didn't know what the hell to do. The only thing I knew was that Wanstead was my patch and I wasn't going to fucking well shift. [Lillian is eighty. It is always more shocking when old people swear.]

And then we got talking to the people around the tree. "How do you propose to stop them?" and they told us how they thought they could and this seemed a very good thing, so from then on, like the rest of the people in Wanstead, we used to go and support them and take them food, and what not, and simply walk around and show them we were there...



The Sweet Chestnut Tree

had stood on George Green in Wanstead for 240 years. In that time the environment around it changed from forest to city, but for the people of Wanstead, the tree retained a special significance.

FRAGGLE: That tree had been a meeting place for generations. Certain families had used that tree to be together on whatever occasion they met.

JOHN: When you come into Wanstead you'd see that sweet chestnut tree, and in the Spring it was in full bloom.

SEAN: When they fenced off the common, George Green, there was just this spontaneous anger that happened. Children were walking to school and there were old people sitting at the bus stop next to it. With a little bit of help from us (although we weren't really the catalyst) loads and loads of kids started pushing at the fence. There were probably about a hundred or so, maybe more, pushing. I was pushing with them. Right next to me there was this 80 year old granny. She was pushing and her force didn't have much effect, but combined with the force of the whole community it pushed these massive 10 foot fences down.



S. Johnson

She was crying after this, and I chatted with her. She was saying that for literally decades she felt totally powerless as her community was changed and developed. She felt alien in this modern world, and suddenly, for the first time in decades, she'd had some power, and was part of the community. She felt empowered, as we say over and over again. She actually felt that.

JOHN: There was a genuine revolt by I suppose a couple of hundred local people who said, "No we're not having it." So we smashed all the fences down. It was brilliant, such a buzz. There were so many people from the local area, mums and dads, and it was local police as well, so they had to stand back and watch while everybody piled into all the fences. We just went for it.

SEAN: After that people swarmed onto the site. There was a bit of land that had been trashed and loads of children started getting their jumpers and, much to the consternation of their parents I imagine, filling them with soil, taking them back and filling in holes. Most famously of course was the lollipop lady who was using her lollipop stick to get soil and fill it in. That was the beginning of the campaign in a major way.

JOHN: After that I thought, "That felt good. I want to do some more of this"... And I met so many people who I never knew lived around there. They'd always been there, yet it took that action to get us all to get to know each other. New friendships happened; a whole new group of people sprung up. That was really positive because we all still know each other now.

A tree house was built in the tree, which went on to make legal history. When the Department of Transport applied for repossession of the land, the campaigners successfully argued that the fact that a letter from a well wisher in Cheshire, had been delivered to the tree itself meant that it should be recognised as a legal dwelling. (State recognition of treehouses as dwellings is the basis upon which all subsequent tree campaigns have been fought). The D.o.T had to apply for possession all over again, and the vigil in and around the tree continued.

There was intense interest from the local and national media; this was a cute story. Local support grew.

JOHN: If we could really have gained mass popular support for stopping it being evicted then it could have stopped the whole motorway. If we get say 10,000 people to defend the Green, from the local area, then there's a pretty good chance that they'd put their hands up and say, "Oh well, we'll forget about this one for a while.

But the Department of Transport were not about to let that happen. 400 police were sent to fell the tree, before dawn, on December 7th 1993.

LILLIAN: On the day the Chestnut Tree fell... I was told to be there at five o'clock, which I was, and it was raining terribly. It was just a sea of mud... It wasn't five o'clock, it was earlier than that, half past three, because I didn't go to sleep ...About a hundred and fifty residents were there, I think, wandering around and wondering, because we'd had no experience of this before, what was going to happen. [Lillian is eighty, remember?]

Anyway it got to five o' clock and Marion said, "Lillian, just stand still" and we all stood still and linked arms and a stream of black creatures came over the road. No one saw them until they were there and they came charging over; 'surging' is the word, there was a surge of them. They didn't say anything, they just grabbed me by one shoulder, crushed the other, and swing, and over you go. And that's as much as I knew for the moment because there's this dreadful scream and a nine year old child (that's Marion's child he was nine then – he's fourteen now) he was flung flat on his face in the mud... That was as much as I saw for the moment, because I had mud in my eyes and my temper was foul; I asked to see the Chief Constable and I had as much chance of seeing the Prime Minister.

FRAGGLE: We first circled the tree, like you do, and interlocked. Then the police were pretty damn violent with us; they were quite hard. Pulling hair, punching, and hands around the throat. Pulling us by our feet, and that. We had sort of briefed ourselves beforehand and said, "If any copper punches you, take his number." I got fifteen lapels.

In the heat of the moment, you can't think, "Ah, I'll get my notebook out and write down the number"; I just grabbed each one and pocketed it...

Eventually, we'd been sort of fighting around the tree for hours, and all of a sudden a cherry-picker come up the road. So everyone pegged it for the cherry-picker and while everyone was heading that way, and all the police were heading that way as well, a few police started piling all our tat away from the tree; putting all our bender tat in one pile. It was obviously going to get trashed by the diggers that were approaching.

There was one copper who was just about to pick the burner up and put it next to the tree and I walked up to him and said, "Mate, just let me take the burner. That's what's keeping us warm." And he, he was so scared, he instantly punched me right in the throat, so I hit the floor. A really hard punch. And then four more of them jumped on me. I was being kicked and punched by four or five policemen, just for calmly asking for our burner back. I huddled in a ball and waited for it to- I think maybe somebody dragged me out. I can't remember how it happened, I was surrounded by reporters all of a sudden going "Well!" and trying to take my details, but I ran towards the cherry picker. And got dragged off. And got arrested.

There were so many locals there. The lollipop lady, and the kids. It was really really gutting. Really gutting.

MacGregor says where do you want this bitter driven?

LILLIAN: I didn't know what was going on. I hadn't been on one of these things before. I thought that this was not the way to treat people. What was going on around the tree.. Fiona got her arm broken in two places. The police behaved disgustingly.

It went on like that, walking round trying to say, "We're watching you. Mind where you put your hands!" to stop them hurting people, because they won't do it if they think anyone's watching who will talk about it. And that is the only thing that we old people found that we could do! We felt very inadequate. Somebody hit one of them with an umbrella and I said, "Be careful, you might get arrested". But he didn't; he just took the umbrella and stamped on it.

JOHN: It seems to me that the police were told that they were going up against anarchists and ne'er-do-wells and people that just hated the establishment.
And what they were going up against was 200 local people and I suppose about 200 people who were concerned about the environment and stopping the road programme. So they were very violent against the local people. Very violent, hitting people, throwing people.

Afterwards I think they realised that they hadn't been told the truth. When they saw who they were beating up – pensioners, and kids – I think some of them had a guilty conscience about it. You could see them sitting in their coaches when they came off their shift, and they were really stressed out. They had their heads in their hands, not quite sure what they'd been doing or why they were there.

FRAGGLE: They were really quite nasty, but it's strange because a lot of them didn't want to do it either. We saw them all sitting on the coach getting briefed, we walked past the side of the bus, and so many of them were facing away, looking out of the window, sort of hiding their heads away from the others. And there were lots of tears. These police were crying. It was pretty weird.

I made one policewoman cry actually. I think I told her I loved her, or something ridiculous. That's it, I said, "What about your kids, love?" and she said, "I'm not your love." and I said, "Yes, you are. I love you." and she went "Aaugh!" (blub blub).

YOUR CHILDREN ARE OURS! THEY'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER. THEY SEE WHAT'S REALLY GOING DOWN.

SEAN: Loads of kids were bunking off school that day and taking part, and there was a big crowd of about 40 or 50 lads and lasses in their mid teens who were standing at the edge, not quite sure what to do, who got involved as well.

JOHN: They were trying to cut the handcuffs off the people around the tree, and this little 11 year old went through the police cordon from one side, shot through the middle, grabbed hold of the snips, went out the other side and chucked them in a ditch and was gone. In a flash!

LILLIAN: There were an awful lot of young lads who were going to school, and young business people who would stay until they had to go to work, go to work and come back. It had become a personal crusade right around the area to stop this, because it had gone beyond a struggle about just a road. People realised suddenly what it meant. If it happens here, it can happen anywhere at any time, to anyone's piece of land that happens to be in the way.

SEAN: The tree got evicted. The police, the newspapers, everybody prophesied, "That's the end of the campaign" despite the fact that it was only one tree on a route with 300 to 400 hundred houses. So they were expecting us all to fuck off but of course the campaign just got bigger.

While all this was occurring in respectable Wanstead, in the poorer district of Leytonstone a more low key war was being waged. The majority of the houses on the route were in Leytonstone, where several miles of streets were being demolished, piecemeal. Residents and activists tried to squat houses as they became empty and resist eviction.

Cathy was living on a small street called Claremont road.

CATHY: The construction work and the major demolition started in September of '93, and despite the fact that most of the activists were busy up in Wanstead, down in Leytonstone, we were able to get small numbers of people together when key evictions were expected. The very first house they attempted to evict was early in September '93. We managed to get some activists to come down, and we got together. We had 50 people there and the bailiffs didn't know what to do. They stood there scratching their heads until 10 am, when they all went home. We could have had a hole in our terrace, you know. Through these concerted efforts we were lucky enough to keep the terrace in one piece.

They'd evict a house, put in security guards, and then the next day come and trash it. Literally saw the floorboards up, smash all the electrical sockets, smash all the plumbing. So that was the kind of stuff that we were living with. While up in Wanstead you had the battle of the tree going on, ours was a more low level thing. Less dramatic.

JUSTIN: There were really small struggles for just one house; maybe five of us, 20 bailiffs and a couple of police. Little struggles for just one house. There was 300 houses on the route, and I reckon that for least half of them, there was some kind of resistance to the eviction.



The Free Independent State of Wanstonia

mid November to 16th February 1994

CATHY: The next emphasis was on a row of four huge Edwardian houses, and that was what became Wanstonia. A free republic. We barricaded those houses and opened them to the public and invited people to come and see what they were and look at pictures of the campaign.

JOHN: Number 2 Cambridge Park Road was big enough to hold all kinds of events. There was dinner parties and exhibitions...

LILLIAN: ...meetings. Feasts. There was a very strong social life and I really enjoyed it immensely. And everyone was so kind because it didn't matter how old you were, you were welcome.

SEAN: A declaration of independence was drawn up which was based, sarcastically, on the American declaration of independence. It was declared an autonomous free zone. People made up joke passports and the like. They were big houses, with three or four floors, large rooms, massive roofs and big gardens: all really good things you want for defence. We were digging this huge trench all the way around the site. Doing that probably had almost zero tactical effectiveness but it really made us feel that this was where Britain ended and our space started.

JUSTIN: Somebody did actually contact the UN, and they got a reply back explaining how you register as a country. You have to be recognised by 2 or 3 other countries, so they got on the case trying to persuade some obscure African countries to recognise Wanstonia. There was an element of publicity stunt about that, but there was still a real definite point where you left Britain and entered a Free State.

Work started on defending the houses in earnest. Wanstonia was the first group of houses to be extensively barricaded for eviction on a protest.

JOHN: If you're going to defend a building you want to take the staircase out first. Barricade the front door; in that small space you can barricade really effectively. And then if you take the floors out, it means they can't really get possession of the house unless they use a cherry-picker. At Wanstonia, the whole of the inside of some of the buildings were removed and you had to get up ladders.

In addition to this, lock-ons were constructed on the roofs, cement blocks to which people could handcuff themselves. (See p. 158 for a diagram)

SEAN: You were sitting there with no harness on, building various things, nearly falling off, getting your hair caught. It was great. Being on top of those roofs you could see a large stretch of London: it was a whole new world.





No. 2 before it seceded from the UK

SEAN: Wanstonia was evicted in mid-February. The eviction only lasted a day, but we were all amazed at this; we thought it was really impressive.

The eviction was the largest that had happened yet:

JUSTIN: About one and a half thousand police, bailiffs and security guards turned up in the morning. They did this huge drive by. About thirty, forty vehicles drove past and then all the way around and drove past again. I was sat on top of this roof and I really had no idea what to expect. ...When they came in it was like an armed force invading. Loads of people were calling for the United Nations.

People were scared that the eviction would see a repetition of events at the Sweet Chestnut tree, but it would seem that bailiffs and police were more careful. Most of the resistance was passive.

SEAN: It was slow because there was just such a large amount of human flesh to get out of there, and nobody was going to walk out, everybody had to be carried and would grab on to everybody else.

Although the bailiffs were a bit slap-happy with the sledgehammers:

JOHN: They were taking roofs off while people were still on them. That was outrageous. Stupid, ignorant and callous. How far does it have to go? Do they have to actually kill someone?

SEAN: The overall feeling was less of, "This is war" and more kind of, "This is Very Weird".

We were one of the last groups to be tackled out of two or three hundred people. It was in the evening and we had seen all the trees come down. We'd had all the emotional bit. We'd had the, "Oh my God, they're destroying the world" bit: that had happened about five hours before. There were bailiffs going "zzzzzz" with these pneumatic drills and hacking through the lock on, but it was like five in the morning when you've been partying all night, and you're seeing the world through different lenses. You're thinking, "Oh for fuck's sake!" Half of you is thinking, "I'm going to stay here for hours! WE'RE GOING TO BE THE LAST PEOPLE TAKEN OUT OF HERE! FUCK THE STATE!!!" and the other half is thinking, "Oh for Gods sake, hurry up and get us off this cold piece of nowhere so we can go home and drink some tea"...

It got to sunset and they were still evicting the roof of one of the houses and the big treehouse. You just saw these vast arms of the cherry-picker surrounding the treehouse, flood lights pointing at them, total darkness all around. There was a helicopter overhead. It looked like huge alien tentacles coming up against the sunset.

Georgina had a bloody nose

During all this time, everyone enjoyed a little digger diving on the side.

SEAN: After the M11 they divided the clearance contract from the construction contract. I think they learned their lesson. What they did at the M11 was they cleared one bit while working on another. You were sitting around bored waiting for them to evict you, so you went out and trashed the machines, or sat on some machinery. They provided lots of exciting things to do. We did large amounts of site fence jumping and bulldozer diving during the day, and at night we'd be barricading and/or wandering around with balaclavas on our faces.



G. Mendel

Operation Roadblock

15th March to 15th April 1994

After the eviction of Wanstonia, and the illegal eviction of 'Wanstonia Rising', a sweet shop down the road, it was decided to formalise this into an organised attempt to slow down the construction of the road.

CATHY: In March, we decided to do a full on thing called Operation Roadblock. We set up phone trees, ringing around environmentalists trying to get 100 people every day to stop the construction work.

SEAN: We contacted everybody who was interested in campaigns and got them to promise that they'd turn up on a certain day. We organised on a rota basis to get 100 people, every day, for a month. That was just ridiculous amounts of action. Each morning you'd be doing direct action training with people who'd never done stuff before and then you'd go out and do an action and then you'd go home, and then the next day, rather than having a rest, you'd go out and do it all over again...

Mainly it would be a case of getting everybody to climb over these 12 foot fences with a bit of barbed wire on, all at the same time, from different sides of the sites. The security would see you and they would chase you and you would try and divert their attention, it would take three or four of them to catch you. While they were after you, somebody else would manage to get to a pile driver and climb up these stupidly high things. It took ex-rock climbers to do this. Cranes were easier, these pile drivers were just intense. One hundred and twenty feet high.

JUSTIN: That was mental. We kept giving them the run around. Every single day people got on site... There were a few people who kept it going and fair play to them. The actions were quite well structured because they were happening all the time, so there was loads of, "Well last week we tried *this*, and *this* happened." So much innovation, and there were a few seriously inspiring people. Particularly stunning climbers and fast runners; people who managed to dodge and jump and get up the most ridiculous stuff.



G. Mendel



That way down by the M11.

The next squatted community centre was **Euphoria,** another free state, formed from some houses adjacent to Leytonstone tube station. One of the houses hosted the first M11 cafe, which fed sixty people a night for the duration of Operation Roadblock.

Then there was **Leytonstonia**, a squatted patch of backyard woodland which was an oasis of countryside for tree loving environmentalists. There were a few rudimentary tree houses, some benders, open fires, live music..

I got 40 dead carpets
And 1000 bike-locks that don't work
Any idea who I can give them to?



Yes I think they can be easily given

JUSTIN: One of the prominent things at the bender site was the yew tree. Which was why some people reckoned that everyone at the bender site was off their heads, because they had their fire pit directly under this huge yew tree. You just had to sit around their fire pit for five hours and you would be tripping.

OLI: I could see St Pauls from the top of my oak tree.

Leytonstonia was trashed in June, by 60 security guards in black overalls.

JUSTIN: That morning was horrific. They smashed Vikki's head on a brick. It was fucking mindless. Every single instrument on site was systematically broken: they even nailed a guitar to a tree.

...the few people that were left were appealing to the police to do something about the fact that there was an illegal eviction going on. One of the images I remember was of a girl being battered quite severely, and sexually assaulted behind this policeman. I was just screaming at this copper to turn around, just fucking turn around! And he was going, "No I'm here to prevent a breach of the peace. I think you're the most likely person to cause a breach of the peace, so I'm looking at you." And I was going, "I'm just asking you for a split second, I'm not going to hit you, just turn around and have a look at what is going on over there." He could hear it, but he didn't want to see it, because then he might have to do something about it. That was the time when I realised that they are not there to protect us.



Just take everything down the M11

Things had changed for the people of Wanstead and Leytonstone. Squatting and digger diving became the new way of life, and local people developed a tolerance of silly haircuts, mild alcoholism, partying and and the continual flux of itinerants who drift to different destinations on a whim.

Lillian was in hospital for the Wanstonia eviction, yet she still offered her house to people who were made homeless by it:

I gave my keys to my friend and said if you get any people who want to rest, or want a cup of tea, or go to the loo, or whatever, then take them down, as long as it's someone we approximately know.

The campaigners became accustomed to subterfuge.

LILLIAN: You had to be careful what you said because it was reputed that everyone that had communicated with the office by telephone, that their phones might be tapped. I'm not sounding melodramatic; We were very careful what we said... We never discussed plans.

And, since the Sweet Chestnut tree, they saw the actions of the police in a different light:

LILLIAN: It changed my perception of the police totally. I had always thought that they were there to help me and protect me, not fling me in the mud!

And the things that I saw and the way they behaved! I realise that this was mainly the heavy mob but then, through later sieges of the various houses, I used to see people from the local police here. They'd come and they'd change their uniforms and pitch in with the rest of them. And to be truthful I quite hate them now. I can't think of a good thing to say about them because I can see under the rather hypocritical veneer.

The campaign was growing larger. More people were getting involved, and back in March the biggest focal point of the whole protest was just forming from the disparate squats along the various streets of Leytonstone due to be demolished for the road.

CATHY: They started demolishing Fillebrooke Road, and Grove Green Road was in tatters, Dyers Hall was in tatters, suddenly everybody moved to Claremont Road.



The single mother with son number 7 Both out on the

Claremont Road E11 – The State of the Art



G. Mendel

Claremont was a quiet line of houses on the way to nowhere, facing the Central Line tube track, but it was short and compact, and its vigilant residents had managed to keep it nearly intact. They decided to block the road to traffic and occupy the entire space.

JUSTIN: It started off as just a few individual houses and then somebody decided at some point that we were going to try and take the whole street. There were loads of people running out in the road and building barricades and then all running back into the houses, and then the police would come along and we'd all laugh at them through the windows. They took down the barricades, but they never caught anyone in the act. They finally got worn down. One day they just couldn't be arsed; they had had it about four times a day for over a month, pulling down barricades in the middle of Claremont Road.

CATHY: It warmed up and we blocked up the street to traffic, and from then on there were more and more places for people to sleep.

And more and more people arrived.

JELLY: It was a point where people who hadn't known each other from all different places with lives that had been so so, started this amazing life with loads of weird and wonderful things that were not so so. Either brilliant or awful, but certainly different.



G. Mendel

BOOM CREATION!

One of the first acts of claiming the street involved painting the fronts of the houses with a large linking daisy chain. Then Claremont consciously became the State of the Art. Number 68 was designated the Art House, decorated throughout, a free gallery for all. But as well as this, inspired, improvised sculpture and painting covered the whole street in time.

JELLY: It was a chance for people to be creative; there was space to be as wacky as you wanted and it wasn't going to get smashed down. Well. Not for a while.

What was the art like?

JUSTIN: It was always changing, the street itself was art, every single house was painted, every single fucking foot of the road was painted on. The trees were covered with adornments.

The practical and the art met in the middle. Cars filled with concrete with scaff bars going out at all angles, painted all mad colours, with little pennants flying from the end of each scaff bar. The fact that even

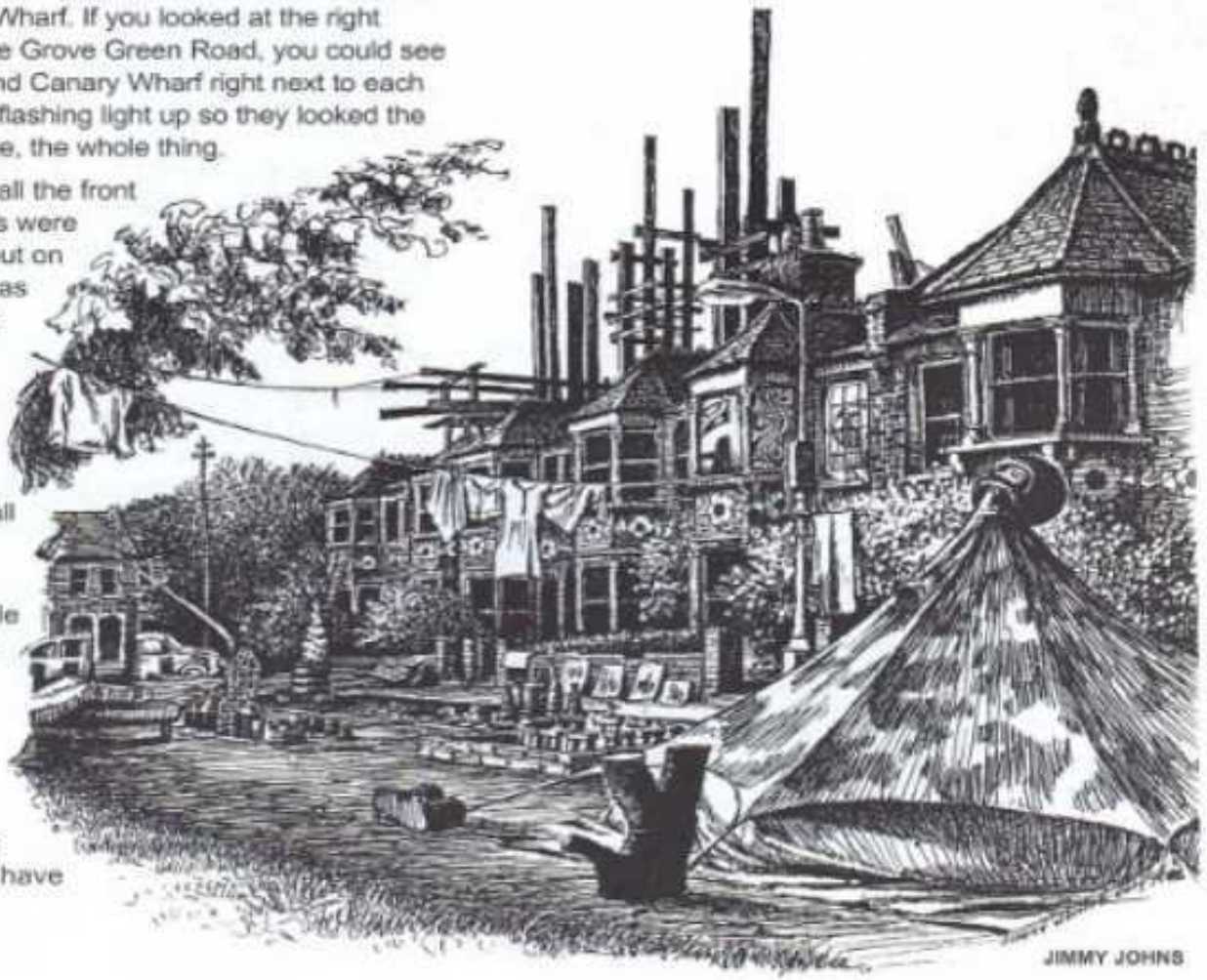


G. Mandel

the Claremont tower was painted luminous pink and blue with a flashing light at the top that went at the same speed as the one on Canary Wharf. If you looked at the right angle, coming along the Grove Green Road, you could see the Claremont tower and Canary Wharf right next to each other. We stuck a little flashing light up so they looked the same. It was a piss take, the whole thing.

JUSTIN: The furniture, all the front rooms of all the houses were taken out, whole and put on the street. Whatever was in the room, the carpet the furniture, the tat, was taken out and erected exactly the same way in the street. The personal, private, home, street; all these concepts were getting mashed up.

CATHY: Also, the whole thing about putting the furniture out onto the street in Claremont Road was, "You are putting us out of our houses." They were telling me to look for a mortgage, but I didn't have any money.



JIMMY JOHNS

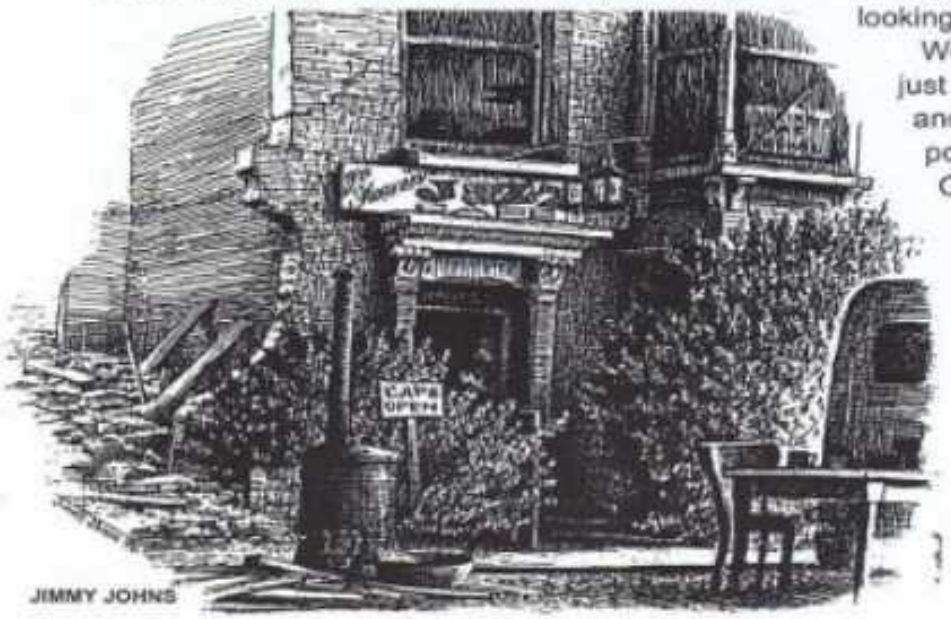


G. Mendel

JUSTIN: There was just always something going on. There were two cafes, a cinema at one point and a little club type thing. Huge numbers of people that didn't live there would pass through. There were parties every weekend.

At times the Claremont cafe had like an Amsterdam style. It wasn't like a squat cafe; it wasn't secluded, secret, barricaded, it was in the middle of a street. The street itself was the barricade; the volume of people. You could just walk on to the street, walk into a cafe, get yourself a toasty, and roll up a spliff. Because of that there was a hell of a lot of people who got involved with Claremont, who got severely caned.

But then that helped with the whole art side of it.



JIMMY JOHNS

JELLY: I didn't want to live in one particular house, I just wanted to live on the road. Half the time me and Fiazal used to sleep by a fire on the road...

The Jazz Cafe was good... The time Fiazal swallowed my contact lens and I had to make him puke up so I could go on an action – I was in the Jazz Cafe, and I'd given my lenses to some total drongo space cadet while I went to the loo; gave them to him and said, "Guard these with your life." While I'm out Fiazal reels in, and all he's had for breakfast is two cans of Special Brew and a bread roll and he spots the glass of water with my lenses in and downs it. I come back out and say, "WHERE'S MY CONTACT LENS?" and Fiazal's standing there looking sheepish.

Well, I said, "I'm not waiting for you to shit!" so I just had to make him drink lots of hot salt water and stick my fingers down his throat. At which point everyone said, "Can you leave the Jazz Cafe now."

We went in the garden. I made him puke. I found it in the puke, which was pretty amazing, and as I pulled it out Fiazal sang, "Have we got contact?" which was very spot on for somebody who's just been forced to be sick. I rinsed it off and popped it back in my eye. All in the line of duty.

Oh yeah, and when I came back, Fiazal just looked at me and said, "You make me sick, Jelly." A class line.

CATHY: I was still living on there. I got an extension on my notice to quit and then I was in court and got another extension on it. I was the last legal house at the top of the street. Dolly was the last legal house at the bottom.



G. Mendel

Dolly was born in her house on Claremont road, in 1901. She had lived there all her life. It is difficult to imagine how traumatic it must be to have to leave your only home of 90 odd years. For several elderly people forced to leave their houses in late 1993, the change proved too much, and their deaths can be directly attributed to the road link. Dolly was made of stronger stuff. She wasn't going to go.

CATHY: I'd known Dolly since 1985, and I'd been getting her pensions in for the last five years. She was very organised in those days. She had about five people, somebody paid the leccy, somebody else paid the rent, somebody did a Saturday shop and I did a fortnightly. She had us all organised. It all worked really well...

Old Frank sat Dolly down and in his very direct way said, "Look Dolly, these houses are going to go, one day. What are you going to do? Because bailiffs might come into your house and actually bodily carry you out. How do you feel about all of this?" And Dolly replied, "Well dear, there is nothing else for it. I shall barricade up like in the war."

The office wrote a press release, with Dolly's permission and the press were interested, and turned up.
JUSTIN: The press expected her to be a doddering old fool, and she isn't!
CATHY: Dolly is a very strong personality. Very witty. She has an unusual way with words. She has tremendous spirit, and that's what shone through in her interviews and made them realise that they weren't dealing with just anyone.

JOHN: I think she enjoyed a revitalised sense of community. Someone would go down the shops and buy her a pint of milk, bring her a bit of breakfast and sit and chat to her for quite a long time.
CATHY: Dolly is a very open minded, bohemian, wacky sort of a lady, really and she just loved the company. One of the funny little things that she said afterwards was, " Well dear, I was the belle of the ball. But I knew it would have to come to an end."

DOLLY: I loved it at night when all the little fires were lit. I'd stand on the doorstep and take a last look.

On 4th August 1994 the police illegally evicted and demolished four houses at the end of the street, an event which was thereafter known as 'Piss Tuesday' in the oral history of protest culture:

JOHN: They illegally evicted in August, and they cut all the mains power and gas off to the street. They brought cherry-pickers in and threw people out of houses onto the street. Shortly after that illegal eviction Dolly collapsed and went into hospital, which isn't really surprising. Dolly was moved, unwillingly, from hospital to an old people's ghetto. She never returned to Claremont Road.

After Piss Tuesday there was a construction site at the bottom of the street, which increased the tensions and divisions inherent in such a mad-cap, free form space.

JUSTIN: It was huge, open, supposedly free space in the heart of a working class area of East London. You can't have that without getting trouble...
JOHN: Because it was an urban situation, there was a lot of people there who shouldn't have been there. Or maybe it's not fair to say other people don't have a right to be there, but they weren't well, put it that way. It got to a stage where, collectively, people had to take a person off the street, sometimes pick them up and carry them, put them off the street and say, "Don't come back, or you'll get a lot more than just being carried off." As long as it's dealt with collectively, and there's enough of you, it's not a problem.
JUSTIN: We were firmly fluffy. The Direct Action side of it was non violent but there were times when violence was used, particularly when policing ourselves. Several people were physically removed, some with quite extreme violence, people that came back and came back.



G. Mendel

JOHN: Close the front door of Frank's house, and there was another, massively heavy wooden door which you lowered down on ropes and pulleys. There was no way they were going to get in there. The windows were barricaded, with joists going from there to the floor, and then blocks behind them nailed to the floor. They never actually breached that house. They knocked it down whole.

JELLY: It was weird barricading using the old buildings that had been smashed down. You'd find little Valentine's cards and kid's toys in the rubble. That was a bit poignant.

JOHN: We filled a house up with rubber tyres, and when the bulldozer hit it it just bounced back off again.

BRIAN: Tyres. I can't remember where the idea for that one came from, but it's quite nice and circular, because we're stopping the road by chucking this toxic waste (which is what tyres are) back at the Department of Transport so they can't go and evict us. Then they've got to go through the rubble and separate the tyres out to go to special landfill sites. This makes extra work for them. We would fill whole rooms with tyres.

You can get paid 20p a tyre for taking tyres away. Claremontians also employed other unscrupulous methods for acquiring materials. The Criminal Justice Act came in at the end of the summer, which made the simplest acts of peaceful protest illegal. If you're a criminal anyway, why not go the whole hog?

Activists have mentioned that another immediate effect of the Criminal Justice Act's outlawing of digger diving was to increase the amount of pixieing that was going on on the construction sites. (Pixieing. verb. to pixie: to magically enchant a machine of environmental desecration into not working.)

Anyway, back on the Street:

JOHN: Lots of people enjoyed the street and being there, but there weren't as many people who were actually prepared to do the barricading. Saw up the wood. Go out and find the materials. Get their hands dirty.

JELLY: All different types of people would come down. You'd get a lot of nutters, but there was a complete mixture... What I loved was that loads of people had gone there for the so-called 'Wrong Reasons', not political, not trying to save anything; they were there to meet friends or girlfriends, for social reasons maybe, whatever, but they'd *end up* being active. They'd end up climbing up stuff and chaining themselves to it, trying to do their bit... There was tension between people who would sit around and people who would work too much and moan at the people sitting around, but when it came down to it, even the people who were sitting around with cans and that, they ended up defending the street too.

CATHY: We had a guardian angel or something. All the things that could have turned out to be a real problem, never happened. It's just amazing, nobody got really badly hurt, nobody died. No one ever fell off the Tower. The way things came together was incredible.

IT'S ALL GOTTA GO!

After an irritating number of needless panics, Claremont Road was finally evicted on 28th November 1994.

JELLY: There had been a false alarm the week before and it was awful. We weren't prepared very well and I was really nearly panicking. I was in the office, phoning people up on the phone tree and saying, "Well we're not really sure, it could be a tip off, please don't be put off coming to the real one if this isn't it." It's hard to know what to say...

Then a week later it was the real one, and we had a very good tip off and we knew it was definitely going to be on that day. In that last week people had put up brilliant barricades and worked very hard. When you walked up the road on the night before the eviction there was this incredible buzz, knowing that it was happening. We were all ready and fired up on adrenaline, and calm, not panicky.

Someone called a legal meeting and got everyone to listen to some legal details, and then I did a really hippy

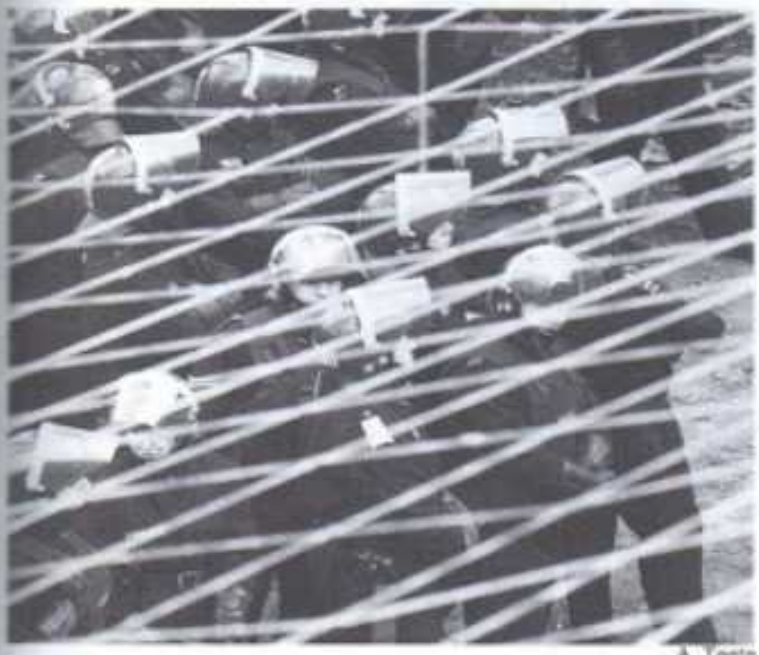
thing and got everyone to hold hands and raise their arms up and say, "Yes we can do it. We will be strong. We will be peaceful. We will be safe. We can do it. We are a family." We all raised our arms up and we all felt like stupid hippies, but it was a little quick way to get the unity that we needed. Sometimes you have to do things that you're a bit embarrassed about, like being a hippy.

All the old people, the ladies and the kids were there. There were lots of little fires, and people were giving each other gifts: amulets to hold during the eviction for moral support. There was a feeling that we were as prepared as we could be. Everyone had done their best. Everyone was there who could be. Over the whole week that the siege went on for, it was as well organised as it could be, considering that we were all people from all over the place, who had no experience of anything like it.

LILLIAN: [That night] reminded me of the fighter pilots going off in the War. Everybody preparing for action. There was that strange atmosphere. Everybody being very bright, very cheerful, and there was a lot of strong, happy talk, and you could feel the tension underneath.

Cathy was walking round with a video camera filming her first and last film of her street. She asks someone how long they think the eviction will go on for and they say, "A day?" because that is how long every previous eviction has lasted. A figure in the background shouts, "A WEEK!" and that is how long it took.

The eviction was code named 'Operation Garden Party' by the police, and cost £2 million. It lasted for five days working around the clock and, in terms of numbers of people removed and bailiff hours worked, is the largest and longest eviction in British history. That Monday morning there were hundreds of people on the roof of Claremont Road.



A. Testa

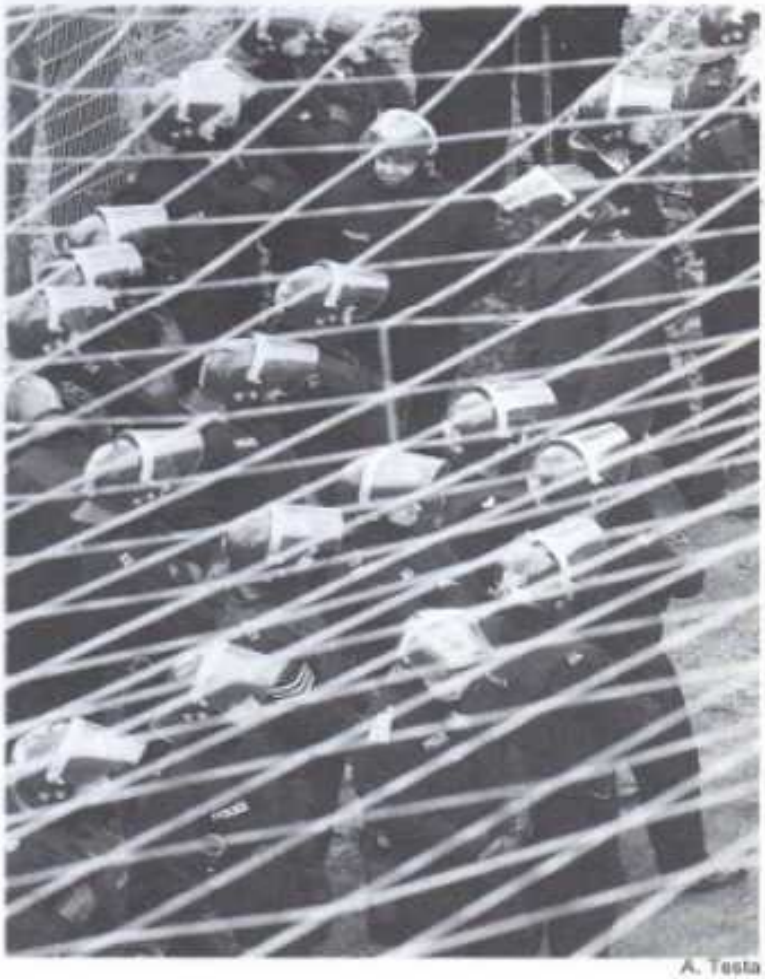
JUSTIN: Claremont Road was opera, dramatic opera. The eviction, more than any other eviction I've been in, I really felt that we were turning this event into epic theatre. When you see all these hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of blacked up, helmeted nutters with big sticks all running into the street: a never ending sea of black, the police, all wearing their riot gear. And everybody cheering; everyone was cheering them in, which must have freaked them a bit. There wasn't abuse being hurled at that point, everyone was going, "Yay! Here we go. Hooray. This is the beginning."

There was this pause, everyone went a bit quiet after the first cheer, and the person who was operating the sound system in the Tower had been waiting for that little lull. They kicked in with The Prodigy: "WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH HERE IS A TOTAL LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE LAW" Then three hundred and fifty people started dancing! That moment in my life was just stunning, it blew me away. There was all these police and you could just see the confusion on their faces. That total defiance, and the theatre of it all: they were there with their fucking big sticks and we were dancing.

So many people. So many different evictions.

JUSTIN: There are loads of mad little stories. You can't relay them all.

Well, I can relay some.



A. Testa



G. Mendel



G. Mendel



Jamie loses his watch. G. Mendel

The street was cleared of Press, legal observers, first aiders and anyone else on foot. Then the people who were casually lounging about on mattresses were discovered to have their arms locked on deep in the tarmac of the road. They had to be drilled out before the diggers could move in.

JELLY: When they're actually doing angle grinding I often blank out exactly what they're doing, because I'm not looking. I'm trying to concentrate on being safe; thinking, "I'm safe. I'm safe" and trying not to be scared... It did scare me. The drill was so loud, and big, and massive, coming straight towards my arm, and the filings that were coming off it were going everywhere...

Annoyingly, I was taken off early, and I didn't get to see the rest of the eviction. They carried me out by my arms and legs with my tummy facing the ground, so I was singing the Superman song as they ran along with me. They dropped me outside the cordon, and everyone was cheering.

Bulldozers moved in through the barricades, but the nets still impeded cherry-picker access to the roof. Evening drew in. The police changed shifts. The floodlights went on.

JUSTIN: It was surreal; it was theatre, and then they added to it by bringing in all their stage lighting. It was the most surreal eviction that I've ever been in.

Sleep deprivation was making everything seem twinkly...

MARK: I'm sitting on a roof and down there are the most massive amount of police that I have ever seen, stomping down a street in East London. It was quite a shocker. I was getting quite scared because I was scared of heights, and I still am, and Bob said, "Don't worry, just do one of these acid." And I thought, "I'm not doing that," but I ended up doing it. Then I thought I was Spiderman. Came down off the acid about day later in, in Armageddon really. Fucking apocalyptic. It was a laugh though – it certainly was.

JOHN: We were in the rat run. We'd taken out the stairs in all the houses and then knocked holes in all the upstairs walls. Then we barricaded each section up, so as they come through one wall, we were nailing up the next one. We designed a weak point, so we knew where they would come in, then they had to smash through all the rooms, all the way up the street, until the last room, which was so heavily fortified that they couldn't get in it. We were in that room for something like 36 hours and then we were taken off the street.

CATHY: I was a street liaison person, coming in and out getting people's tat. I always have this thing in my life where I always get a major work deadline at the same time as a major eviction. I had to go back to work after the first day, and just come in the evening which was grim really. If I'd been there I would have been more heartened to see how good it all was.

SPARKLY BOOTS

kakevans '11

Once upon a time I had a pair of sparkly boots. They twinkled, and they glimmered, and they shone.

People that I met would say "cool boots!" because I had brought a little sparklyness into their lives.

And then they would say...

did you sew all those sequins on yourself?

Sometimes I would say Yes, which was a lie because they were actually probably decorated by a very poor woman in Thailand who was paid about 2p.

The last place I wore my boots was at Claremont Road in London.

That afternoon police and baliffs arrived to knock down the homes and trees and build a six lane motorway. But they had to evict us first.

Do you want to come down now?

No, because, you see, if we come down off this roof then you'll bonk the house down and build a motorway here.

I don't think you've answered my question.

I think we have.

I stayed on the roof for a night and a day. My boots helped me grip on the slates.

But then baliffs came in a cherrypicker and pulled some of us off.

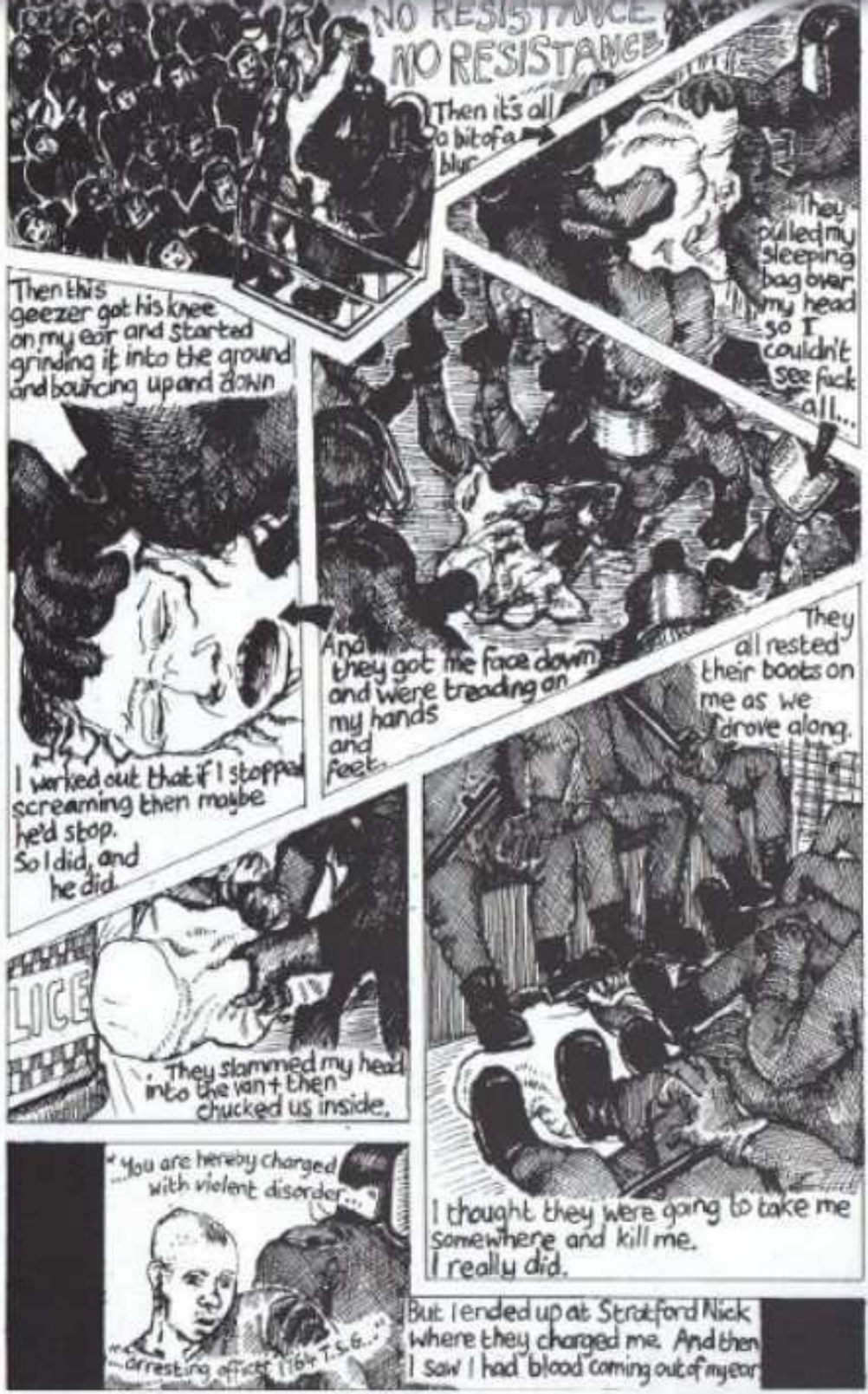
My boot fell off when the cherrypicker hit the ground and the police dragged me away without it. I had to go back to Brighton in my socks.

HOMES NOT ROADS

Deep in the foundations of the M11 road link there is something that once twinkled and glimmered and shone.

SHINY BLACK BOOTS





BRIAN: I slept. I was in a bunker in the art house. I'd been up all night doing various last minute things and then I locked it up and went to sleep. It was about two or three days before they got to us. The entrance to our bunker was in the house next door, behind a picture on the wall. It was like where people hide the safe in films. The bailiffs couldn't figure out how to get in, until eventually we heard them shout "Eh! It's in here!" They drilled through the wall of our bunker. We were locked on but they had long, knife thing which they stuck down the armhole and cut the strap. That was very annoying. We thought, "It's going to take them six hours to dig us out now! They think they've won but .... Oh shit ! They've won!"

The police cordon imposed a 'sterile zone' around the eviction site which extended for several streets in each direction, but still the siege was not entirely unrelieved. People wriggled in and out through 'Vicky', the secret tunnel, or crawled, commando stylee, down the Central Line tube track which bordered the site. There are more little legends of smuggled food. "Hot chips!" someone remembers, with all the amazedness of one who has sat on a roof in November for three nights without food.

STEPH: We were there when they discovered the tunnel. We were watching them from the Tower and they were looking at this tunnel that they'd discovered, and they were going, "Fucking Hell!" You could see it in their faces. "What are we dealing with here?"

JUSTIN: I was in the middle net and they couldn't get us, so they were trying to come through the houses that were next to the net to cut it's supports... The bailiffs were sawing through this joist to make a big enough hole to come through onto the roof, so I stood on the joist. I kicked the saw away and said to the bloke who was sawing, "If you saw this I'm going to fall." he carried on sawing, and I booted the saw, and he still carried on sawing. Eventually he did saw through it, and as I dropped all these people on the roof grabbed me, but these coppers grabbed my legs.

There were loads of people on the roof and I was this tug of war, and we were winning. It was such a great feeling to be grabbed by all these hands and pulled to safety. Then this one copper reached up between my legs and grabbed my bollocks, scrunched them up and started pulling on them. At this point I told all the people on the roof to let me go. I was up for being a tug of war, but not with one half being my balls.

They dragged me down, gave me just one kick, and then threw me down the stairs. Then they asked one of those weird questions that policeman ask you: this copper said, "Are you going to cause us any trouble?" No one could see me there, I'd just been dragged out by my bollocks, kicked and thrown down the stairs. No I'm not going to cause you any trouble.



None of that scaffolding was paid for.

A. Testa

POWER TO THE TOWER

STEPH: I was on the Tower and to be honest, we didn't really do very much. We just sat on the Tower, and had a laugh and watched everything happening, and then got applauded because we were the last off. Loads of people got loads of hassle: what happened to Mickey was totally out of order, Justin got pulled out by his bollocks. We had it easy. We just sat there for five days and got a bit cold and ate nuts.

JUSTIN: Part of what we do as activists, if we do anything, is we bring a thousand people to watch a scene [of destruction]. Its a Situationist thing. We bring all these people in to watch. We bring coppers, we bring security guards, bailiffs, TV crews, to see something that they wouldn't see otherwise. They've got to get their heads around it afterwards.

I think quite a few of them never quite got their heads around what we were about at Claremont Road.

CATHY: Ken told Dolly, "You were the Queen Mum of Claremont Road." And she said, "If I were the Queen Mum, I'd knight all those boys up there on the roof."

DOLLY: Oh the time of the barricades – I did enjoy it! Everything that goes on today is shown around the world, so it'll go down in history!





A. Testa

JOHN: After Claremont finished, the general word got out that the campaign was finished. As far as the media were concerned, there were no more sites for big evictions, and people that you'd talk to would say, "Oh, that's over now, isn't it? The M11." But in actual fact local people were invading construction sites for another two years after Claremont, and we had two more sizeable evictions.

The Last House

Sometime in April – 20th June 1994

JUSTIN: There were still people living in different squats around the area. Some of them were walking back from the pub along Fillebrooke Road and there was this one house, a big mansion house, that due to various complicated legal battles, was still standing. Nothing else on the route. They were walking back from the pub, and they decided to give the security guards some grief. Got to the front door and there was a note pinned on it saying, "Security guard number 9 has gone to make a phone call. Will be back in five minutes."

JOHN: That cost them fifty grand, that phone call.

JUSTIN: They promptly ripped the note off, got into the house, barricaded themselves in, got on the mobile phone and rang everyone up. "Can you believe this ? We're in the last house." Because there was still loads of people living in the area they got there pretty quick. The police turned up but they could do shit because all the people in the house were now leaning out the windows waving this bit of paper that proved that the house had been unoccupied. Security guard number nine probably never got a job as a security guard again.

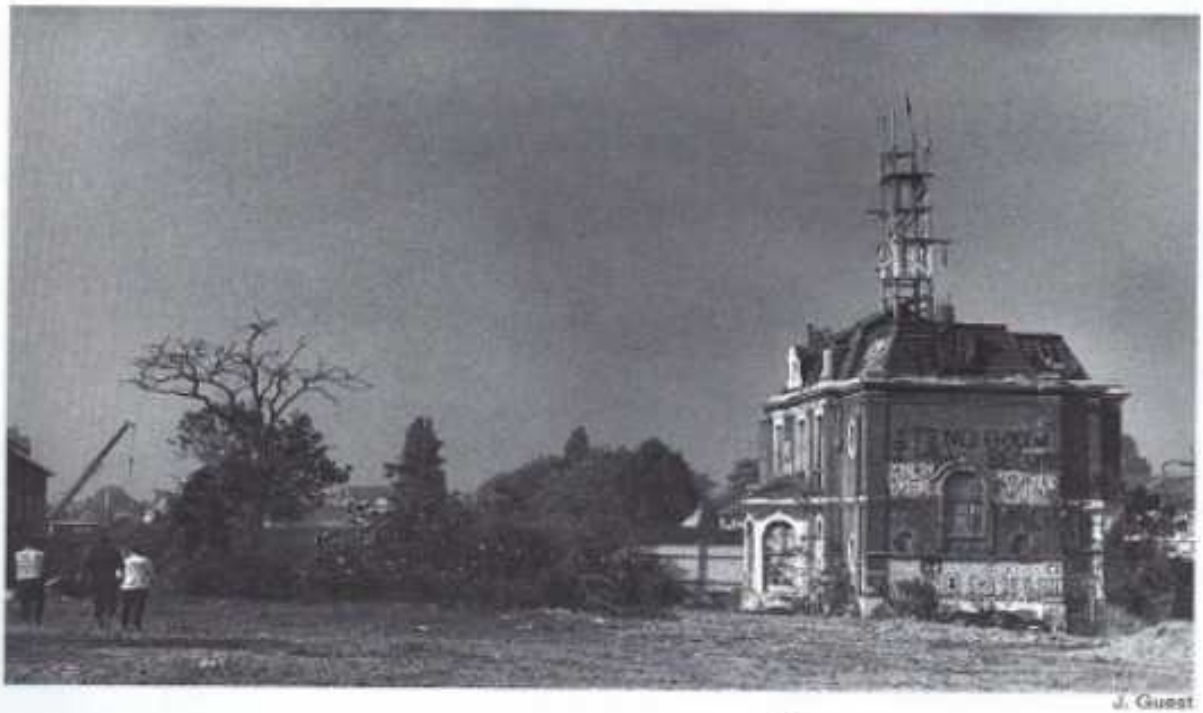
JOHN: It looked like the house out of the Munsters, so we called it Munstonia.

JELLY: It was painted amazingly. Covered with various political slogans that were quite cheeky and funny: "We are more possible than you can powerfully imagine". And there was this big thermometer painted on the front like you see on charity appeals, with the amount of money that we'd cost the D.o.T., going up and up.

JUSTIN: There was a massive banner down one side of the house saying NO COMPROMISE IN DEFENCE OF MOTHER EARTH in huge letters. It looked mental. One house in this wasteland; everything else had been trashed. You could see traces of so many houses which had been fought for; all memories of battles for these different places. And then like during the First World War, poppies came up over the route. A sea of red poppies where all the houses had been.
It was beautiful, and tragic.

Munstonia wasn't evicted until June 1995. It was summer. There was music on the roof. It rocked.

JELLY: I was squeezing two halves of an orange on Sis's tits while Vicky licked the orange juice off her tummy and Alex Mc Naughton took millions and millions of photos. Apparently the police afterwards called that 'Tits Tuesday'. Also on the roof with us were quite a few of the local Wanstead ladies. All the Wanstead women who do more than all their excellent campaigning and fund-raising and paying the phone bill, they actually do NVDA like the rest of us.



J. Guest

The price of 15 months of direct action?

JOHN: The evictions came to £26 million, and then there was a certain amount of night work, which isn't talked about, that must have cost them much more.

PIE'N MASH!

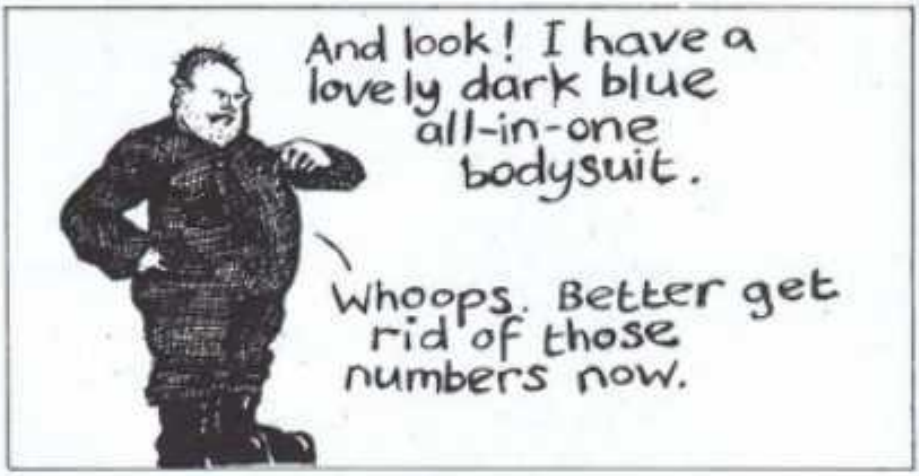


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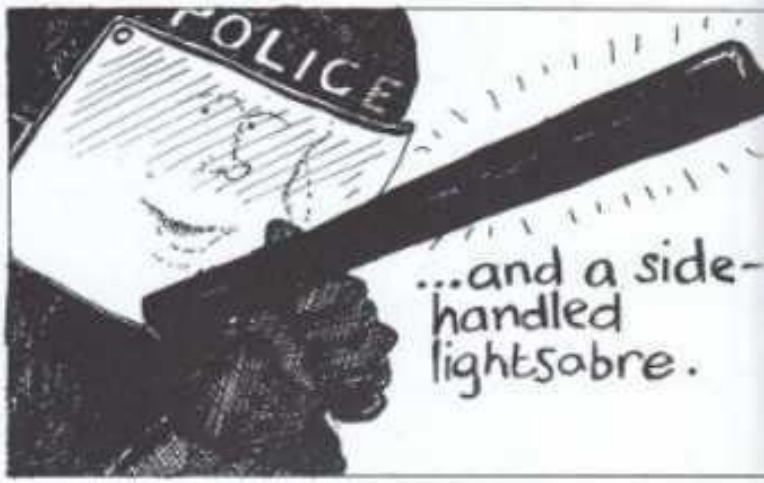
T.S.G.

katevans












We follow our leader Darth Howard.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT
He gives us the Power of the Dark
We crush illegal dancing.
We build new superhighways
We preserve the right of foxes to be killed.
AND NO FILTHY, CRUSTY, SMELLY, HIPPY, PEACE + LOVE SHITSCUM WILL STAND IN OUR WAY.
Come join us...
MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU.

Stanworth Valley

7th August 1994 to 5th May 1995



The M65 extension. Another motorway, another campaign. M11ers helped kick off the direct action with the occupation of Cinderpath Woods in May '94. Protesters were evicted from here, and from sites at Cuerden Valley and Bamber Bridge before they moved into Stanworth Valley in August.

Stanworth was magical. They called it a Cosmic Pixie Tree Village, and they just didn't care.

LEILA: I loved it totally, but I just got into it all then. It was really small to start with. Nine of us moved down there, together, then a couple of weeks later more people came. All winter there was about 15 of us – maybe a few more. 'Till Spring, then loads of people turned up and built loads of treehouses.

It rained all the time! And you didn't have any burners!

Yes but the treehouses were all really small so they heated up quickly, and they were all lined with blankets. A few people lived on the ground, but most people lived in the trees because it was much easier if you had a treehouse. Basically we didn't come out of the trees hardly ever; except to go to the toilet and that was it. Ate up there – visited each other.

It sounds like a proper village.

It was.

'Snot fair. You ate lots of porridge?

And lots of lentils.

NEIL: Very muddy. Almost entirely sky based because the ground was just too fucking muddy. We stayed in the trees all the time, most of us.

Nice trees?

Yeah. Nice as trees go. Big.

See any pixies or fairies?

Nah, that's for hippies.

OLI: Autumn hit, and that was really really really hardcore weather. Lancashire is a raincloud vortex, and we were in the bottom of a valley with a river in. It pissed down.

The word 'quog', short for quagmire, was coined at Stanworth.

STEPH: There were bits of quog that nobody knew how deep they were. I've fallen in as far as my thighs before.

DAVE: When I first got there there were people I didn't meet for weeks. They were up in the trees, and I was scared of heights and refused to go up a tree for the first week or so. I said, "I'm not going up there. No way!"

Eventually someone taught me how to prusik up a rope and abseil, and I just totally got into it then. My desire to live in a tree overweighed my fear... I was still shitting myself every time I went up a rope and across a walkway, but the buzz of doing it was, nice. Nice to conquer a fear as well.

So Stanworth Valley was muddy, and you didn't have any burners in your treehouses and you were wet for months on end.

GREMLIN: Yep. But we were hard.

And you had to eat porridge for breakfast.

GREMLIN: Every day. And Donga slop. Which was



A. Testa



A. Testa

basically swedes and cabbage. And no flavourings. Boiled to a grey mush. Normally by Becky or Busker Paul. And we used to sit around the fire pit and when their backs were turned, flick curry powder or stock cubes in.

ROY: That were way back when.

GREMLIN: In the good old days. The even better old days.

ROY: We could make porridge now.

GREMLIN: We've got loads of oats here.

ROY: We've got no sugar or anything to go on it.

GREMLIN: We used to have mud on our porridge at Stanworth.

MARK: The first time I went there I was pelting about being gutted about my trainers being trashed. I'd come straight out of London and they were totally fucked. A bit of a grim moment, but there you go.

We were coming back with this stainless steel bin to light a fire – because the bender was in quog and we couldn't light a fire, and it was just terrible really, everything was sodden – I was coming back with this bin on my shoulder... I come falling down the side of the Valley going AAAAGH!!! and all anyone can say is, "Hey, watch out for the bluebells" and I thought, yeah, this is a sure fucking sign of a weird hippy happening in the woods.

ROY: We had to pay for everything.

GREMLIN: We did.

ROY: Polyprop, harnesses, head torches. No donations ever.

GREMLIN: And the ones we did have got lunched out. We used to find cheques for £100 in the bottom of wardrobes in the office. Got forgotten. And you'd take them out and put them somewhere safe, like. And next thing, you'd find them at the bottom of the bin.

KERRIS: There was no organisation, there were no meetings or circles – there were a few, but they weren't, like, structured. So spontaneous – people just did things. And it worked. It wasn't planned.

DAVE: Everything that you needed just seemed to happen. We'd sit round the fire – right, what do we need? Beer. (You know, you want a drink or something). And then someone would turn up an hour later with three cases of beer and bottles of cider. Cake – we need cake, and suddenly cake would- yeah, everything just used to appear.

We had a lot of support from Manchester Earth First. They would bring a transit van full of people and a trailer full of building wood and drop that off, then drive back to Manchester and do it again. Stay all weekend and get really involved. I think that helped, the fact that we had, well I don't want to call it 'part timers', but people that didn't actually live on the protest but supported it, put a lot of energy into it, coming in every weekend regular. We could either get stirred up by it and get really active ourselves, or we'd just lunch out and let them do it. It worked both ways.

OLI: We were all deeply in love with the place. I don't think I've ever felt as connected with any place, or with a group of people, as I felt then.



Larch!

A. Testa

NEIL: People were into the place. Everyone loved where they lived and really felt good about what they were doing. Pure as pure notion of what was going on, and fucking no cynicism, yeah?

Did you ever think you were going to stop the road?

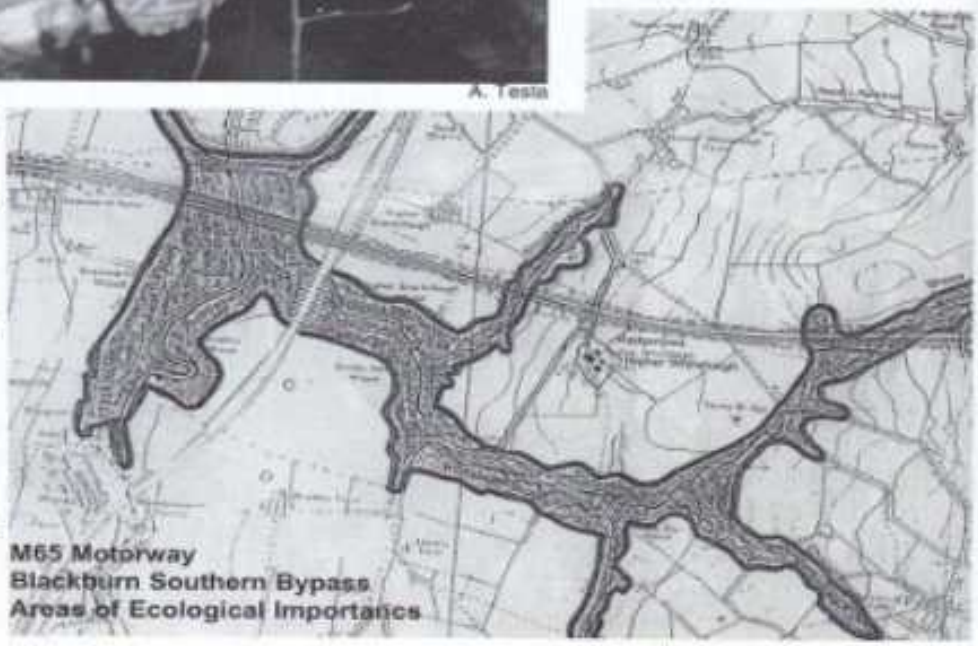
Did we fuck! All we hoped was that we could string the eviction out as long as was humanly possible.

MARK: If a road were to be stopped, it would have been stopped there. Strategically it was located in such a perfect position: a deep valley with treehouses running right the way along the top, almost level with where the road would have been. And all the trees were a decent size. The lowest walkways were 30 or 40 foot, and the tallest treehouse was 90 foot. Such a condensed amount of defence in it. It could well have been the best chance we've had.

DAVE: I think that was the main thing – that we had lots of fun there.

GREMLIN: The last count I made there was about 45 treehouses; somebody added up there was four and a half miles of walkways, but there was more by the time the eviction came.

It started off as four benders; about four people there. It stayed that way with maybe up to ten people for months and months. Then treehouses started going up. Then there'd be a break, like, and it would all be quiet – nothing would happen. Then in the space of a week about ten treehouses would appear. Come to the end we just lost track of it all.



M65 Motorway
Blackburn Southern Bypass
Areas of Ecological Importance

Digger Diving

KIRSTY: The most empowered I've ever felt, probably, was when I went to Preston and did some actions there... and I ended up on top of this digger... It was the most amazing feeling, looking at this horrible machine that had been clawing away at the earth, thinking, "Fucking hell! I'm sitting on this! I'm stopping it!"

SNAKE : That's when protesting was protesting.
STIG: Yeah, I remember then. When you could not be arrested, and there was no police anywhere.

KERRIS: Security didn't know what we were doing, because we didn't know until we did it. We'd all be sat round the fire and we'd go, "Oh, we're bored, what shall we do? Shall we go and jump on some diggers? Yes, come on then!" And we'd leg it up the hill. There was no way they could know we were going to do it.

There was one day we came up and there was about 80 security there: we were like, "What's going on?" and they said, "Ah, we've been tipped off. You're going to do an action today." So we said, "Oh yeah, right, that must be later." We sat round laughing at them all day. We didn't need to do an action any more, and they couldn't go away because they thought we were coming back.

DAVE: You'll be sitting round the fire one minute, and the next minute it's, "Right, let's go and do an action". You get up, run across the woods and jump on a digger. There wasn't heavy security there until the eviction and you could get away with digger diving. Just have a bit of rough and tumble with the security guards, which got aggressive sometimes, but usually it was controlled, on both sides.

It's a bit like a game, isn't it?

Definitely, yeah. I'm sure I said that sometimes, when they got a bit too rough. "Hang on, hang on, this isn't in the game. You're not actually supposed to hurt us. Stop us – not hurt us."

GREMLIN: Earth movers, they're by far the best... Huge, like a house on wheels, and they've got a big kind of scrapey blade thing in the middle of them that scrapes off layers of earth. They're enormous. You run after one, followed by security guards – run up the back ladder, and then keep on running once you're on it. Which is brilliant, like. It's like being in some kind of James Bond film.

ROY: Watch out for dodgy hardcore lorries that drive many miles down the motorway with you on the back of it. I'm surprised you haven't heard this one before.

No, I haven't heard this one before.

Brave Sir Robin, me and Steve from Bridlington got on the back of this wagon and were hanging on to the mesh, and it tipped its load. The back door were swinging backwards and forwards, like, and we all hung on for dear life. [Literally]. And then he dropped the tilt on it and sped off at high speed, so we couldn't jump off. He drove us from the top of the Valley all the way to Horinge, Greater Manchester.



A. Testa



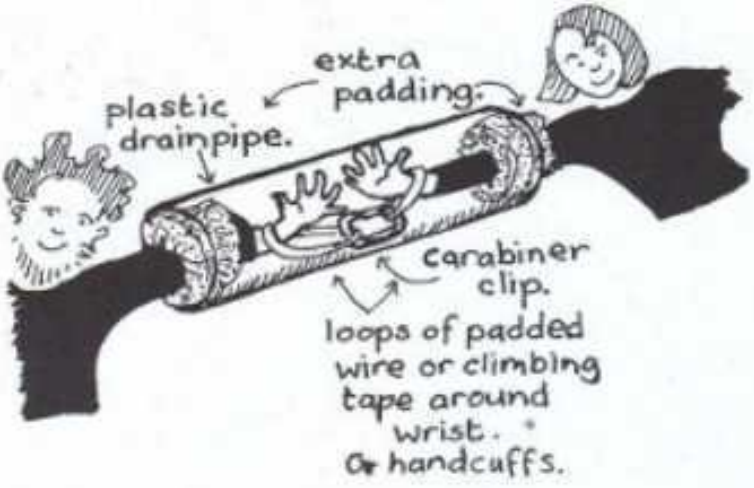


Get underneath, but be fucking careful, when it's on soft ground. Diggers sink. The longer they stand still, the more they go into the ground. Someone was underneath one, locked on, and they were dragged out and it was really fucking close.

Another thing is don't scream all the bloody time. Because if everybody screams all the bloody time, when someone actually gets hurt, no one takes any notice.

One thing that is really simple is put a tape around one hand, tape around the other and put a [carabiner] clip on it... rather than just grabbing on, holding on, you can get a few more minutes by clipping your tape on. Then they started getting knives on us, so people started doing it with pipes; plastic tubing. You clip onto your wrists inside the tubing... but it fucking hurts; they just pull against it, and the tube digs into you.

One technique that was a very good idea was sewing tapes into your coat lining so there is a clip on point in each armpit. You clip your wrists to inside each armpit, around the digger, and that's a nightmare for them because there's nowhere to cut it; they can't get to your hands to cut the tapes.



NEIL'S TOP DOZER DIVING TIPS:

What did you do? Get on them?

Just get on. Hold on for as long as is humanly possible.

Any top tips about where to hold on?

Yes. Not the exhaust pipe.

Although there was one idea that was never put into practice. It's simple; it's called the 'tin of beans' idea and its like, some of the exhaust pipes haven't got a cap on the top of them, and they're about the same diameter as a baked bean can.

You don't really have to elaborate on that one, do you?

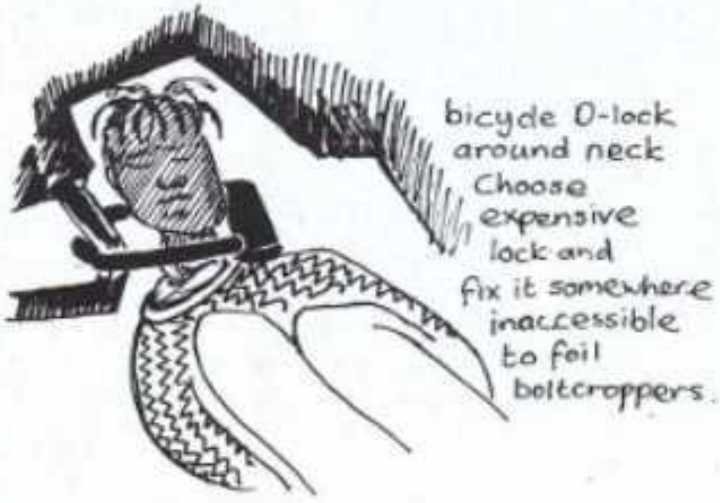
We never put it into action.

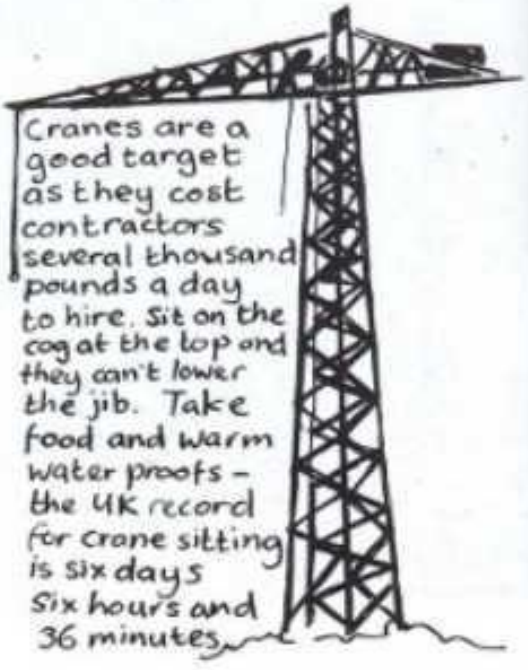
D-lock around your neck?

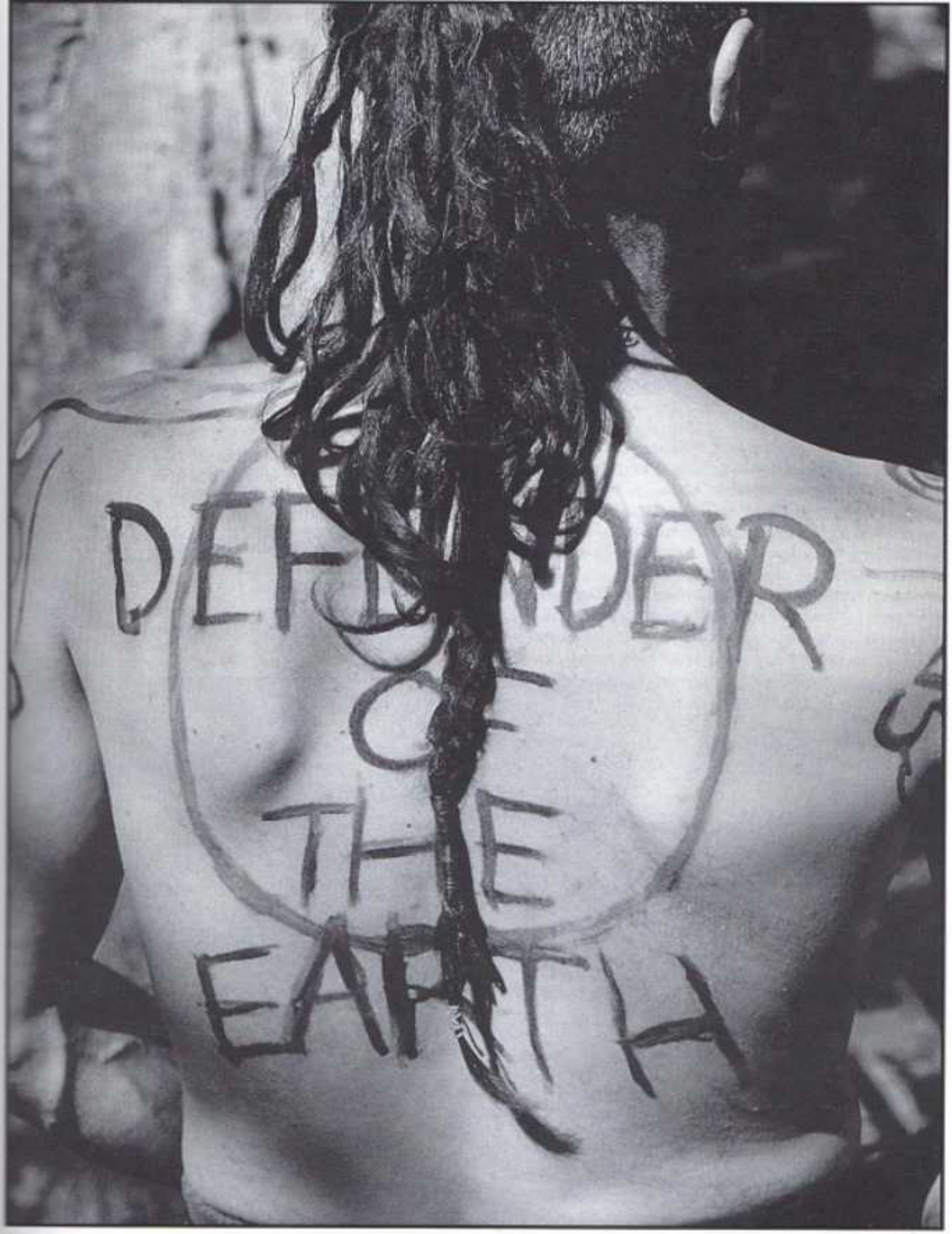
We didn't bother. Too expensive... The only time that was ever used was for compound gates.

False actions... They had a long route, so one group of people would go off to do an action, right? And they'd call all their security in. So then the rest of us would go and do the main action somewhere else. I'm sure everyone knows that one though. It's old hat now.

I dunno. I never seem to plan actions, I just go around trying to make money out of them afterwards.







A. Testa

Stanworth was evicted on May 1st 1995. The eviction lasted for five days.

May 1st is the spring celebration, Beltaine, in the pagan calendar; one of the most important festivals of the year. When you live outside in the wild you can feel the first rush of Spring as a noticeably energising, celebratory time. It is a mad time for a tree eviction.



A. Testa

OLIVIA: The night before the eviction we had this amazing sweat lodge. It was Beltaine, and we all prayed loads for the land, to give strength to the land and to us, because everyone knew the eviction was going to happen the next day. And then everyone got out of the sweat lodge, and jumped in the river which was fucking freezing – it was in the middle of the night, in May.

And then from there we went and danced naked in the compound which was really cosmic. All the security guards were really freaked out, and all they could do was switch the generators off so they wouldn't see us!

We felt really strong. You know when it is full-on partying, loving, celebrating energy. And we got up the trees at dawn, and that's when they arrived.

The Sweat lodge the night before?

DAN: Yeah, that was good.

Are you in them photos?

No, I'd taken far too much cocaine to do things like that. I wasn't going to get naked for nobody.

First thing in the morning...



A. Testa

NEIL: First thing in the morning, pigs arrive; people are still doing things. Pablo was down washing his plates and Larch was still talking to the media. There was a row of pigs at the top of the Valley, a row of security, vans parked everywhere, you could tell it was the eviction... Pablo was just getting up his tree as the police got to the bottom of it. He was going, "One more plate-"!

PABLO: I could tell you what happened on the Monday.
MARK: Go on then.
PABLO: I wouldn't want to bore yer. I was having a shit, it's true, because I didn't honestly think it was going to happen.
MARK: There was a huge denial moment wasn't there? Oh fuck, the fence is on the fucking edge – they are all there – we can see them – Nah, they're not going to come in. I'll go and do the washing up I think.
PABLO: I put the washing up on the end of the rope, lowered it down, jumped down, had a shit. Then all of a sudden these Landrovers were all over the place. Legged it up the tree and sat down and thought, "What's going on?". It still didn't click that it was happening.

Then all these little geezers in red T-shirts and white hats come running down. This had never happened before. It was the first time that they had used climbers.

They legged it down with a ladder and whacked that up against Percy's tree, and everyone went across and beat the fuck out of them, basically.
MARK: In a non-violent way.
PABLO: In a fluffy kind of, lovely kind of way.
MARK: A huggy, kissy kind of way.
PABLO: And they did, they were scared, man... We jumped all over them really. We told them we're not hippies. We're not going to come down. You know what I mean, like GET OFF THE FUCKING TREES...

They went down. They said, "You're not coming down" and we said no. They backed off. For about half an hour they backed off.

Then they brought all the other ones in... the geezers in green. That's when all the knives started coming out. They started all going really violent.

THE SHERIFF'S A LIAR!

DAN: There was a safety meeting just before the eviction with Andrew Wilson. The basic ground rules had been set up between protesters and bailiffs. These ground rules were, you know, no knives, people to be taken down safely, etc. After about an hour or so on the Monday morning Andrew Wilson realised that if he went and did the eviction safely then there'd be no possible way that he'd evict everybody. So he set about being dangerous, and the Sheffield climbers got a name for themselves as being outright dangerous psycho bastards.

LEILA: On the first day of the eviction there was half as many people there as on the second day, because loads of people were at Fairmile [Beltaine celebrations]. If everyone who was there on the second day had been there on the first day, the bailiffs would just have gone away and not come back.

MARK: I think Stanworth Valley was the best opportunity we've ever had for stopping the road and it was a crying shame that there wasn't more people there on the Monday morning because it would certainly have been put off for a good while. At that point it was as new to them as it was to us. They were expecting a straightforward Go up, Get people, Come down, and they didn't in any way near think that they were going to encounter a sort of tactical assault – in a non-violent way of course. The first day was fought so well, so ferociously; people did some absolutely incredible things. Completely heroic shit.

Swinging out of trees... being chased around a tree and showing up the climbers, leaping off small branches onto branches below, generally behaving as if they could walk on air. Unclipping. Before, everyone was like, "Ah, we've got these harnesses, so we should clip on", but that was making it easier for them: they could clip on to you and belay you off. So everyone began taking their harnesses off. And at 60 or 70 foot, taking your harness off on a walkway when they're scared, and all the ground people, police and that are going, "Get that harness back on!" Andrew Wilson giving it plenty through his megaphone shouting, "Larch, Larch, get these people to put their harnesses back on" and we're going, "Fuck you, you're a lying bastard." Not Larch, the sheriff. Larch never lies. Larch is a saint.

I saw some outrageous things. I saw a chainsawman cut a branch from this lass Tracey, just by her. She was hanging about by this branch, and he was cutting this branch that was an inch, maybe two inches from her face. And the way he was doing it he was hanging out, on top of the cherry picker bars... being held by two bailiffs by his belt so he was totally at a 45 degree angle, off the top bar, chainsawing *extremely* close to her face. And she didn't move. Fair play to her.

It would have been outrageous if he had slipped. It's a hell of a risk to take for a branch. A lot of people did take that risk all the time, which is what shocked them, I think.

After the first day one of the climbers packed it in. But Ian and the rest of his crew carried on.

OLIVIA: That is when I think we were really stronger than them, because they were not prepared for the skills that a lot of people had in the trees.

GREMLIN: In the first day I think they took one tree, like. Which was very satisfying.

KERRIS: Some of it's fun and games. The climbers all had five or six different tapes on their belts. People would go up and nick all the spare tapes. You'd leave them with one so they were still safe, but you'd take the spare ones just to hamper them.

PABLO: It was like, fight as hard as you could for each treehouse or tree, and then when it was too much you had to back off, get everybody back. And then you'd cut your walkways, so they couldn't come across them and they had to climb up again. Everything makes it a bit longer.

MARK: The whole thing was a mad process. You had some people who were climbing up as high in the branches as they could while the rest of them were retreating. It was hard, leaving people behind when you knew that they were going to encounter violence and you weren't going to be able to help them...

While everyone was retreating, and there was a fight going on on the front line, everybody else in the treehouses behind were evacuating and getting all their food stashes and sending them back to the next trees. Because you knew what was North, South, East and West, everyone was shouting like, "Climbers in the West End! Help needed in the West End!" and people would go along the walkways to there. It was such a complicated walkway system – we had access to all the different trees. It was tactical. It was a well fought eviction.



OLLIE: [Some people] actually struggled when they got caught. I was more into climbing out of the way onto stupidly thin branches, in tears, going, "Fuck off and leave me alone you bastards".

ROY: It was a lot more emotional than nowadays, like. People in tears everywhere; squawking. Hugging each other. Going to the pub every night.

I thought that was the funniest thing about the eviction, being able to get down from your tree at night, with the fence around you. Go off to the pub. Get pissed up. Come back.

GREMLIN: They fenced the valley off in sections starting at one side. They fenced off one area and started evicting that. Everyone was going up the trees in the rest of it, like, and getting dragged out, and going back. And they carried on like that; moved the fence slowly forward.

ROY: Why did they have the fence? You could get in until the last day, the Friday.

KERRIS: They were shouting, like, "GET DOWN FROM THOSE TREES. IT'S DANGEROUS. DON'T YOU KNOW?" and we were shouting, "GET OFF THAT GROUND. IT'S DANGEROUS. DON'T YOU KNOW THEY'RE PUTTING A ROAD THROUGH. YOU'LL GET RUN OVER!"... Dylan's famous one – I think it's in The Face – "Eh sheriff, I shagged yer ma last night. She weren't much good." It was like, "Dylan, did ye have to shout that?"

GREMLIN: We'd had precious little local support, for the most part [of the campaign], like. No one ever come down with food, so we had to buy that out of our giros. And shoplifting. Then the eviction came and it was on the news all the time; we had fucking so many chocolate biscuits and other such niceties. Which of course no one had a chance to eat, so we threw them at the bailiffs.

ROY: Yes, here have some beans. Sorry I didn't have a tin opener.

GREMLIN: Soya milk cartons; stab them with a knife and they're excellent water pistols. We got the sheriff with them many times. A pan of anything you've got; curry, coffee, marmite, anything like. Barrels full of the most revolting things you can think of. We never actually went for the shit.

Percy said they had wallpaper paste and tinned tomatoes at Solsbury Hill, and they tipped it out of the trees going, "Here, have some of our menstrual slop". The bailiffs ran away to get HIV tests.

GREMLIN: Didn't Anne get arrested at Stanworth for assaulting the sheriff with a chocolate cake? And it wasn't even her!

KERRIS: They wouldn't let the press in.
There was nothing about it on the telly, except Channel Four news which had a vicar on it saying, "I'm really sorry that it's not all totally non-violent."
The vicar came round to tell us how we had to be non-violent, and that's fair enough, but if you're being pulled out from a tree by your ankles and you think, "If I fall, I'm gonna die" then you are probably going to stamp on their hands. It's not like kicking someone in the face and knocking them out of the tree, it's like saying,
"Get off".

NEIL: There was a lot of fuss made at the time about violent protesters, which is bloody ridiculous. The climbers were going for us with axes and knives, every time they lost the plot a bit, yeah? They didn't give a shit. And our lot weren't doing that much.

The classic one was where there was a picture of someone allegedly kicking a climber in the head and at the time all she was doing was pushing him away with her boot. Which is quite common. But the photograph doesn't look like it. Same where one of our lot is supposed to be going for a climber with an axe. Actually he just grabbed the axe off the climber because the climber was having a go at him with it. No explanation as to why the bailiff would have an axe with him.



LEILA: A lot of people wanted to stay with their tree because they'd lived in them for so long. And the valley was so wide – it took ages to get from one side to the other – so lots of people stayed on their side of the valley, and didn't go where the climbers were.

KERRIS: All you could hear was just the diggers and people shouting. You didn't dare leave your treehouse in case they came in. We didn't know how quick they were going to be, or anything...

We were just totally panicked; didn't know what we were doing. Didn't have a clue. Didn't want to be arrested. No idea. And suddenly the walkways were cut and they were in the cherry-picker coming up and it was like, "Oh dear".

Well we just– we said, "We'll go"... just delayed them a bit, that's all. And then I wanted to abseil down myself, and they were saying, "No, you can't. We're going to belay you down".

"No, I want to abseil out of my fucking tree!"
In the end they let me.

As I came down there was about four coppers and two security guards all clustered round the bottom, which totally freaked me out. I lost it and slid down the bottom bit and really burned me hands. "You bastards! I've never done that before!"

And then I was just really upset. Hugging my tree and cried for ages and ages. And they were going, "What do we do? Do we have to make her stand up, or can we just leave her for a moment?"...
It was horrible... what they'd done to the Valley, the way that they'd attacked it. It had completely changed the landscape and I didn't know where I was. I didn't know where to walk, how to get out or anything. It was like, "Ohmigod! Where am I?"

OLIVIA: When I was taken down... I didn't put up any resistance or anything. I pretended to be dead, like I was a dead body because that was all I could thinkof doing...

I used to be so scared, being up in the trees, and after those three days, seeing so many people being so absolutely brave, so devoted, prepared to give their lives totally to what they were fighting for – and just the fact that I lived for three days without being able to come down – it totally changed my perception of what's dangerous and what's not dangerous, and what bodies can actually do.

I touched the earth and it was another world. Up there I was with loads of really amazing people that I had got to know in the eviction. Friends to admire and respect. And then down, that was police territory, and I was taken away and arrested.



A. Testa

THE CLIMBERS

Cherry-picker access to the Valley was limited by its steep sides and the extremely muddy conditions: a small road had to Be built to get the cherry-pickers in. So the decisive factor in the eviction was the use of professional climbers as bailiffs. The same climbers and protesters have met in evictions ever since and the whole thing has become strangely personal. Anyway, these are some of the people involved.

DAVE: I did talk to them, and found it very difficult because they seem like nice blokes. When you talk to them, I dunno. Their argument was always if they weren't doing it, the bailiffs would be rougher with us, and they care about our safety, blah, blah. And you kind of want to believe them, because you don't want to think, "No, you're just a bastard!".

You want to hate them, but they're still just another human being, when it comes down to it.



A. Testa

MARK: We were having an argument, me and this climber. I can't remember his name which is probably fitting because these people, I think they get off on their celebrity status; being a scum bag. If you've got 200 or 300 people who know your name then its got to be in some form or another gratifying. So I'm glad I can't remember his name, but he's an ugly skinhead...

Anyway in this verbal exchange with me saying, "You're a fucking twat"– What basically had happened was they'd come onto the net with knives. We were all linked together by our harnesses in the net, all huddled up in a really big ball. There was about 10 people maybe. All the bailiffs and all the climbers steamed in, and we were all bouncing around everywhere. They had their knives out and they were trying to get them in between us – and we were really tightly together – trying to get them in between us to cut our tapes while we were bouncing around. It was only a matter of seconds, I reckon, before they would have gone into somebody. And everyone erupted. There was a fight really. Everyone vacated the net saying, "Fuck it, they've lost the plot. Time to retreat."

We all got back and I was on a rope on the side of the net shouting, "You twat, trying to kill us!" And he shouted back, " If I was trying to kill you, I'd kill you" and then he cut the top line. I was still on it. I managed to scramble off, but it was a bit dramatic.

Steph met the same ugly skinhead.

STEPH: It was when I was evicted from my tree, one of the climbers, I was crying and trying to talk to him – basically going, "You wanker! What are you doing?" I was standing on a walkway, clipped on, and he was standing there with a knife going, "Shall I cut it? Shall I cut it?" under the bottom rope. Just playing mind games with me. So I had to clip off, then walk along the walkway. And there was another guy, another climber going, "Oh leave her alone".

LEILA: I was in Larch's treehouse when they came up, and we sat there and we had a chat with them and smoked spliffs and pipes for about three quarters of an hour. They told us that they didn't know what they were doing. They just come along thinking it was another job; they work for an agency. They said they would never have done it if they had known. I said to them, I really want to go back to my treehouse: I don't want it to be cut down and not even be there to protect it, and they let me and Steph go past them on the walkways all the way back to my tree. Then they came in for me with a cherry-picker.

It was me and Lary Mark, Steph and Larch, and about three or four climbers. I don't know if they had spliffs, but they definitely had a pipe. They were there, honestly, for about 45 minutes and the sheriff was on the ground not knowing what was going on. There was nothing coming from the treehouse. No shouts or screams.

I was so shocked to see the climbers at Brynhenllys. That was the next time I'd seen them after Stanworth, and I really didn't think that they were going to do it again.

STEPH: I could forgive them Stanworth, even though it was the place that I lived in. You can convince yourself that maybe once is alright. You know, they came along, it was just a job, maybe they didn't really know what they were doing. But since then, what have they got up to? Brynhenllys, Selar, Newbury, Fairmile... They must be Evil. They are the Evil Ones, I reckon.



A. Testa

TAFF: The bailiff said, "Let go of theFuckin' rope, or I'll cut your fingers off." So I did.

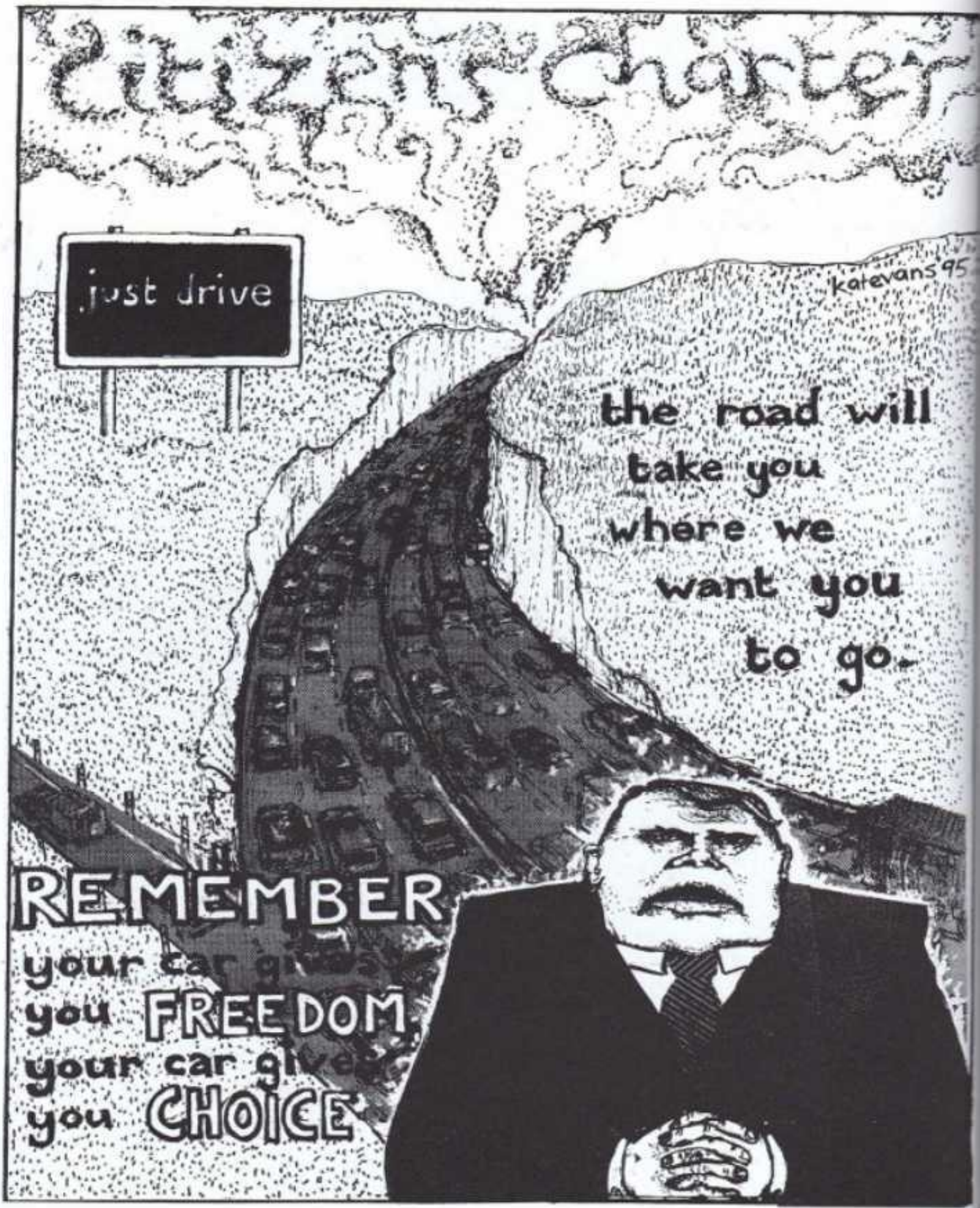
LEILA: I dunno. I've got to be in the right mood to talk about stuff like that. There were good times, but the evictions, you try and blank it from your mind.

PABLO: It's all been said – we all know how we feel. Only when you're pissed, you get a bit emotional, on certain days.

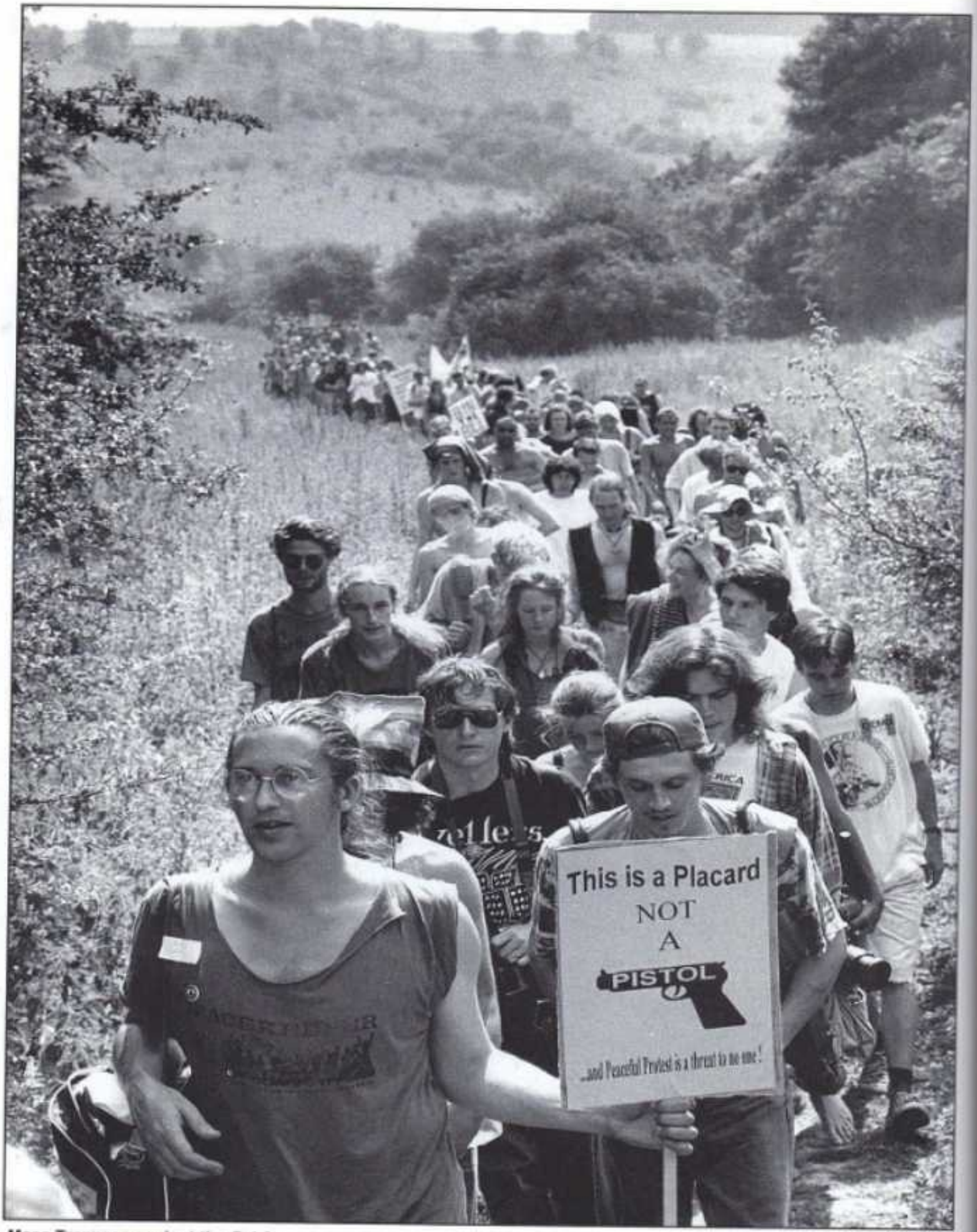




KERRIS: Even though there's diggers there now, I know that those trees are going to be inside me forever. Nobody, no fucking motorway, nobody nowhere can take away what we had there. It's still there for everybody who was part of it – Stanworth still exists.


citizens charter
just drive
katevans'95
the road will take you where we want you to go.
REMEMBER
your car gi
you FREEDOM
your car gi
you CHOICE


WE WILL FUCK YOU OVER.
WE WILL FUCK YOU OVER.
If you have a problem
please phone the
Cones Hotline
0345
504030
Department of Transport
STAY IN YOUR CAR.
STAY IN YOUR CAR.
THIS IS ONLY A
TEMPORARY DELAY.



Mass Trespass against the C.J.A.
Twyford Down July 1994

N. Cobbing

1994: The Criminal Justice Act - the theory

This is where I come into the story; spurred into action by disbelief at the C.J.A.

HOW CAN IT BE ILLEGAL TO DANCE?

Learning to dance was the first really uninhibited thing I did. Head back, arms up, hair plastered to my neck, one part of a bigger thing – not a group, a mass, of sticky, slippery, panting madness. In the dark the beat got louder; legs and arms moved faster. And sometimes it rained and we didn't care as our thumping feet sounded as loud as the bass bins, as loud as the blood pulsing in our heads.

A cool breeze on my face. Gazing out at dawn over the Downs as seagulls swooped and the music glided into another effortlessly fluffy, bouncy tune. Pale rays of sunlight on the faces of the people around me. Dawn on ancient hill forts. Dawn on white breakers crashing and sucking pebble beaches. Dawn on the roofs of crumbling factories where the buddleia on the rubble and the shopping trolleys seemed like the loveliest thing I had ever seen.

Donations only. No uniformed thugs on the door to stick their hands on your tits. No fifteen pound entrance fees and two pound bottles of water. No queuing for flooded toilets where the water has been turned off in the taps. Just hundreds of people having a good time.

The Criminal Justice Act came as a bit of a shock to me.

Section 63 Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave

(1) This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons (whether or not trespassers) at which amplified music is played during the night... For this purpose –

(b) 'music' includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.

(2) If, as respects any land in the open air, a police officer of at least the rank of superintendent reasonably believes that –

(a) two or more persons are making preparations for the holding there of such a gathering

(b) ten or more persons are waiting for such a gathering to begin there, or

(c) ten or more persons are attending such a gathering which is in progress,

he may give a direction that those persons are to leave the land...

... failure to do so constitutes an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding THREE MONTHS or a fine not exceeding £2,500.

I first read about it in the News Statesman, I think, with a sense of outraged incomprehension. It wasn't just dancing – there was so much more. Police powers were extended to allow them to stop and search people in vehicles at whim, and to take DNA samples from people's mouths whether or not they are convicted. Police, not magistrates, to set bail conditions after arrest. The right to silence was abolished, and how that is supposed to prevent miscarriages of justice is anyone's guess.

Squatters:

Section 72 Violent entry to premises legalised for Landlord's hired bullyboys, after court hearings where the occupiers are not allowed to state their case...

Travellers:

Section 61 (1) If the senior police officer present at the scene reasonably believes that two or more persons are trespassing on land and are present there with the common purpose of residing there for any period and



'wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats'

TALLY HO FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT



Diddicoi, tinkers, hippies, bender dwellers, party people or just families in caravans who can't afford houses. The 1968 Caravan Act, which required local authorities to provide sites for travelling people, was repealed and powers of eviction were greatly reinforced:

Section 77 Power of a local authority to direct unauthorised campers to leave land.

(1) If it appears to a local authority that persons are for the time being residing in a vehicle or vehicles within that authority's area

(a) on any land forming part of a highway;

(b) on any other unoccupied land; or

(c) on any occupied land without the consent of the occupier the authority may give a direction that those persons are to leave the land...

failure to do so constitutes an offence punishable by a fine not exceeding £1000.

(a) that any of those persons has caused damage to the land or to property on the land or used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards the occupier, a member of his family or an employee or agent of his, or

(b) that those persons have between them six or more vehicles on the land,

he may direct those persons to leave the land and to remove any vehicles or other property they may have with them.

('Damage to property' expressly includes 'trampling down wild grass'!)

So no travellers. No Romany gypsies,

CONFORM or Do Time

But there was more. It was now illegal to protest against these changes, or anything else.

Section 70 Prohibiting Trespassory Assemblies

14A (1) If at any time the chief officer of police reasonably believes that an assembly is intended to be held in any district at a place... and that the assembly –

(b) may result –

(i) in serious disruption to the life of the community, or

(ii) where the land, or a building or monument on it, is of historical, architectural, archaeological or scientific importance, in significant damage to the land, building or monument,

he may apply... for an order prohibiting for a specified period the holding of all trespassory assemblies in the district.

That's a catch all. Demonstrations in towns, 'disrupt' the community; those out of town are likely to occur on land of some kind of scientific or archaeological significance. So peaceful assembly is only to be allowed at the discretion of the police – a very simple step to a police state. And then, the new offence of Aggravated Trespass:

Section 68 (1) A person commits the offence of aggravated trespass if he trespasses on land... in relation to any lawful activity which persons are engaging in or are about to engage in... does anything there which is intended by him to have the effect –

(a) of intimidating those persons so as to deter them from engaging in that activity

(b) of obstructing that activity, or

(c) of disrupting that activity.

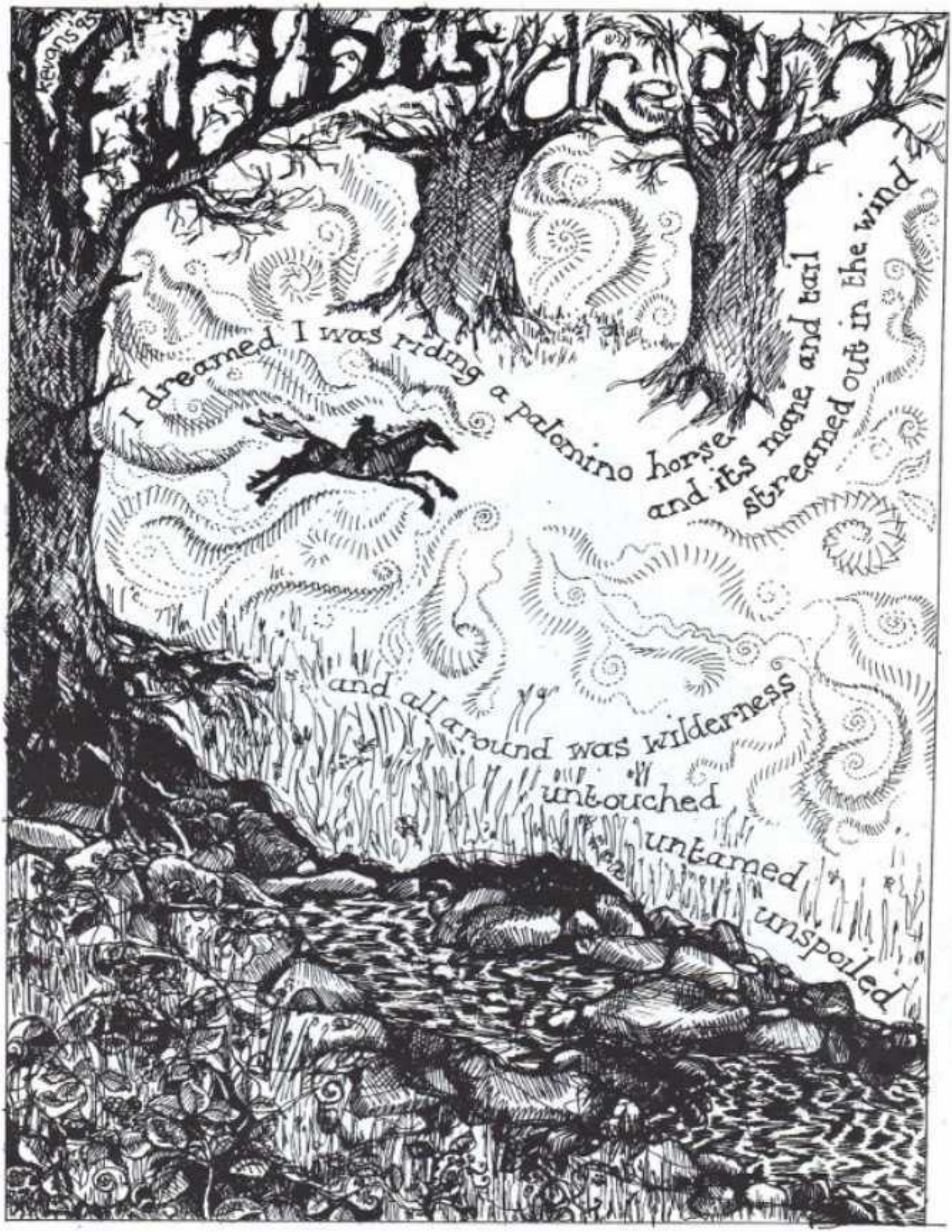


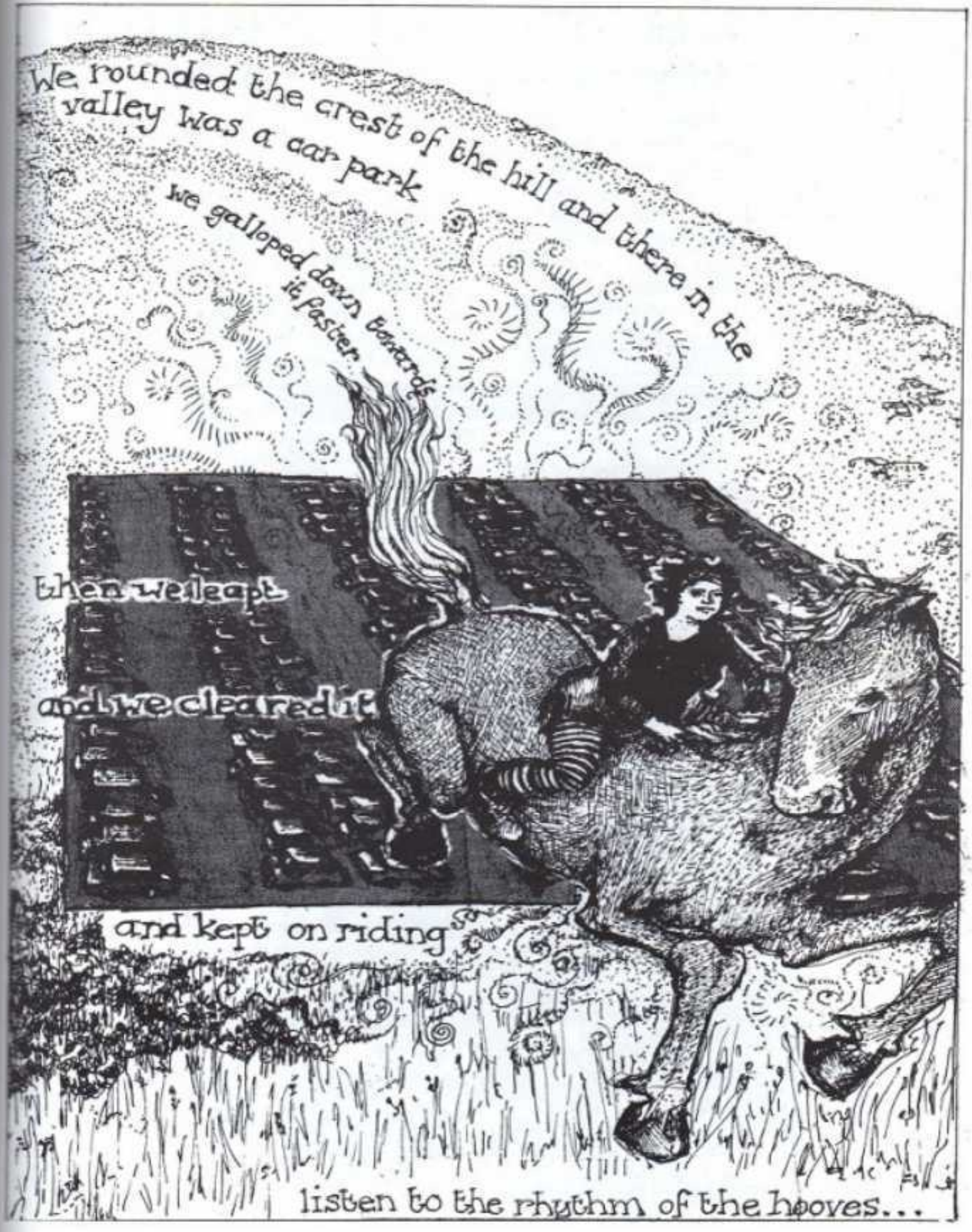
It becomes a criminal act to protest directly anywhere. You don't even have to dive on the digger; you can just appear to be about to 'intimidate' the driver. Three months in prison for trying to stop a road which is itself a crime against the environment. £2,500 fine for sabotaging the gentlemanly blood lust of a load of upper class twits.

It seemed very simple to me, as I watched the Bill pass through Parliament, without opposition.

If the law is wrong, then break it.




Kevan's
I dreamed I was riding a palomino horse
and its mane and tail
streamed out in the wind
and all around was wilderness
untouched
untamed
unspoiled


We rounded the crest of the hill and there in the valley was a car park
we galloped down towards it faster
then we leapt
and we cleared it
and kept on riding
listen to the rhythm of the hooves...

In the Vale of Neath

Selar Anti-Opencast - May 1995 to February 1996

There are dragons in South Wales.

They curl around the valleys, their massive backs sprouting Forestry Commission plantations, their breath rising wispily from the treetops when the sun shines after the rain. Small towns huddle nervously on their flanks. Occasionally they are decapitated by new major trunk roads.

Opencast mining rips out their bellies for the black gold lying beneath.

The folk tales of Wales map out the hills and valleys. The Vale of Neath is the land of the Celtic Lord Nedd. A Zeus figure, he is the male Creator, an incarnation of the great Horned God. GlynNeath is the glade of Nedd, where he hunts, and above, Cwmgwrach, the Valley of the Noble Kind, is where he holds court. Until the opencast companies wipe out his seat.

His son Gwynn ap Nedd is the King of the underworld. He gathers the souls of great warriors slain in battle and escorts them thither. And he is Winter as well, and each Beltaine and Samaine he fights Summer's Lord Gwythyr for the hand of Creidelyadd, who is the Earth goddess in her maiden form.

I come from battle and conflict
With a shield in my hand,
Broken is my helmet by the pushing of spears,
Round-hoofed is my horse, the torment of battle,
Fairy am I called, Gwynn, son of Nudd,
The lover of Creurdilad, daughter of Ludd,
I must hasten to Drwm, my home on the Tawe.

from The Black Book of Carmarthen

You may know him by his hounds which are white with red ears. On the Drwm, on lonely nights, you may hear them barking. Once the blast of explosives from Nanthelen opencast have died away.



Creidelyadd is the Maiden, and Modron is the Mother aspect of the Goddess. Mother Earth herself. Her son is the Mabon, a child like figure, who is liberated from long imprisonment in the saga of Cwllwch and Olwen, a tale which is deeply allegorical of druidic practice. At Cwllwch's behest, the Mabon chases a great Boar from Ireland all through South Wales. He drives it through Cwmtwrch, the Valley of the Boar, across the hillside which later became Brynhenllys Farm.

Now go to Brynhenllys Farm and you will find a bloody great big dusty black hole. Not a trace of the ancient contours of the land remain.

In July 1995 I hitched to Selar Farm in Cwmgwrach. Selar is the site of the biggest hole in Europe.

The new mine will cover 880 acres, with plans to expand to 1600 acres in time. It will extend downwards for 164 metres, to below the level of the valley. Celtic Energy has signed no bond for the restoration of the land, so if they declare themselves bankrupt before their lease expires there will be no money to fill the hole back in. A huge motorway extension is being built to link Cwmgwrach with the M4. Childhood asthma rates are rising. Local unemployment runs at 30% since the deepcast coal mines closed. Most of the jobs at the Selar site will be filled by relocated workers from decommissioned opencast elsewhere, with only a handful going to local people.

Eventually the graves of the people of Cwmgwrach will be surrounded on all sides by the opencast mine and connected to the village by a bridge.

And on the Cwmgwrach site lies Selar Farm, an old farm of little patchwork water-meadows, one time playground to the children of the village. On either side of the fields, avenues of oak trees weave their twisty fingers together. Beneath them are mossy boulders and trickling streams, which

turn to torrents in the winter gales. In the fields there are Sundew, Pettywhin, Crested Dog's Tail, Moonwort; the golden grasses are kept in check by a carpet of Devil's Bit Scabious. On the Devils Bit Scabious lives the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, a protected species.

Selar is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.

If you leave the farm and walk up through the Forestry Commission you come to a wide lake which reflects the jagged crest of the hill in its still, blue, cold waters. Celtic people, as I heard, lived on this lake in a village built on stilts.

The land around here used to all be water meadows and lakes and great trees until the opencast companies came. Now Selar Farm is the only bit of real Welsh land left in the valley. The rest of it has been reconstituted by the Forestry Commission or the corporations. Reclaimed opencast land has bland smooth Legoland contours. It can grow four foot high conifers. The streams are concrete pipes. There is grass and nothing else and when you kick the ground with your heel there is grey silt and rubble. And the birds have gone.

Celtic Energy describes this as improved quality farm land. Apparently it can yield more monoculture grazing per hectare than land which butterflies grow on.

There was no public enquiry. West Glamorgan council waved it through.

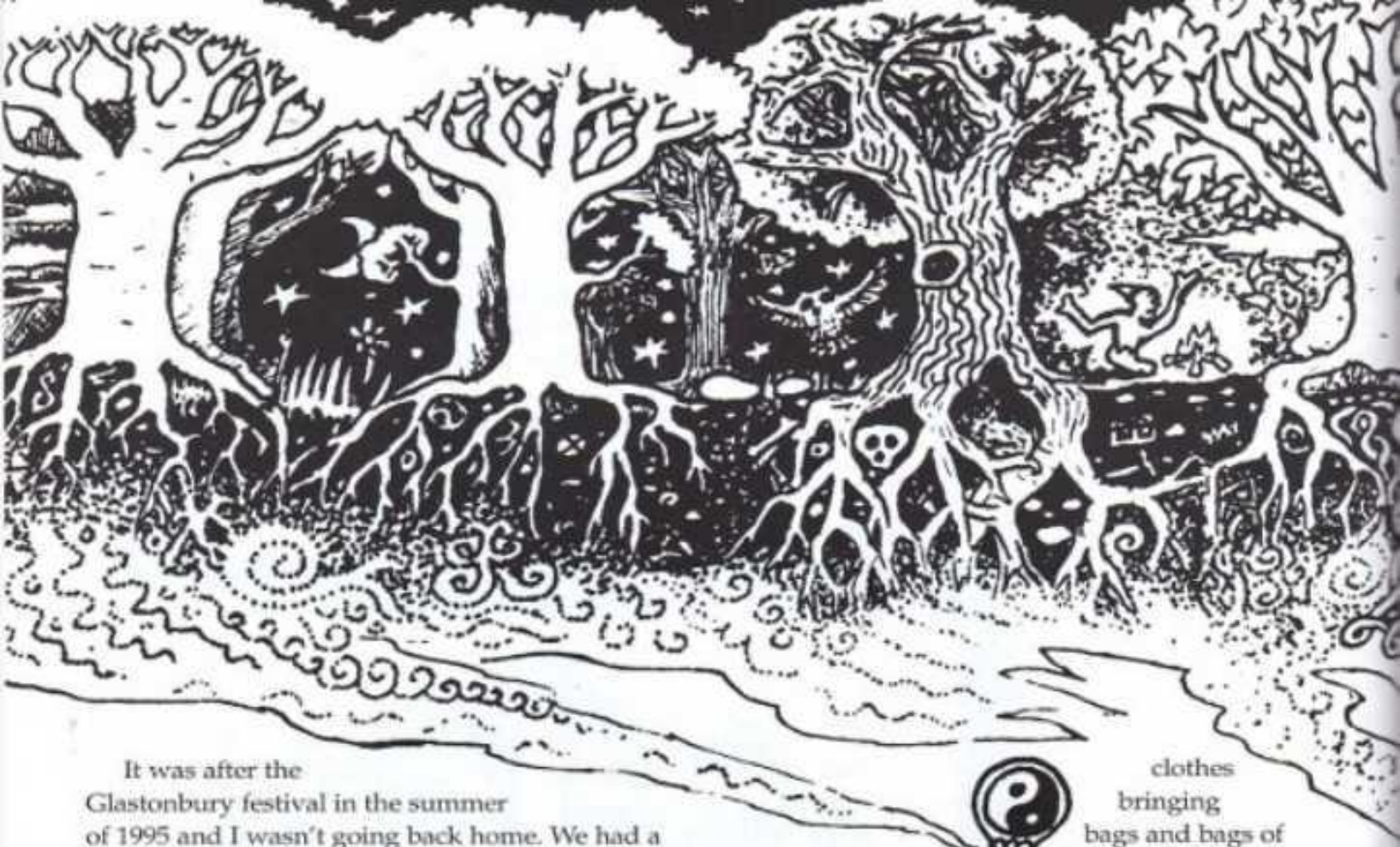
"But what about our butterflies?" the people said, "Our rare and protected butterflies?"

and Celtic Energy revealed its plans for the butterflies. The company would chop up the bits of the water meadow with the grass and butterflies on and pick it up with a translocating earth cutter. They would load it onto flat bed trucks and drive it to an exposed and acidic slag heap. Where they would dump it, in the blazing summer sun, without watering it. The butterflies would find it just like home. (Of 56 attempted translocations of Marsh Fritillary butterflies, not one has been successful.)

Which Celtic Energy proceeded to do, until the villagers phoned Cardiff Earth First! and together they legged it up the hillside and jumped on the diggers.



"no open coal"



It was after the Glastonbury festival in the summer of 1995 and I wasn't going back home. We had a nightmare hitch from Pilton, which involved sleeping by a motorway flyover in Bristol, then a dream hitch from Neath where a friendly man with a tiny car piled us all on top of his tat and drove us straight to site.

From the motorway, to Glyn Neath, to Cwmgwrach, a cluster of red brick houses with their fronts on the streets but with gardens which stretch back with a countryside sense of space. Across the stone chip expanses of the motorway extension (under construction), left at the roundabout, right up the road. Climbing up and up. People wave from their doorsteps. Up and up past secluded retirement cottages with pristine lawns and technicolour flower beds. Up and up and down and up and the road gets narrower and the ancient hedges threaten to touch overhead.

Then some dusty benders and a flat baked earth space where the diggers were before they were stopped. A welcome board with leaflets that are even now beginning to disintegrate. Lots and lots of people – there was a teddy bear's picnic that day. Local children with painted faces swinging on ropes from the trees.

Clusters of Cwmgwrach residents in pale, clean clothes bringing bags and bags of tins of beans and sausages and soap and kitchen paper. Politely refusing muddy cups of tea.

I looked with a kind of awe at the sunburned, dirt streaked residents of the camp, and I said to someone, by way of introduction, "I've just got here today". And he said, "So have I".

Kel and I chose a little, domed oak tree that leaned out into the stream bed. It wasn't more than 35 foot tall. I couldn't climb it at first and clung to the trunk, roping my harness to the branches with shaky hands. Kel stood on a branch above me going, "Look, its easy" – and since she is six inches shorter than me, I was gradually convinced.

A month later I could shin up it in the pitch black of no moon, in the rain, without slipping, drunk on white cider.

We built a tree house. Lots of other people helped. I'd never built a bender before and cut tiny twiggy poles which blew away with the first winds of winter.

The days were filled with deep yellow sunshine and cool green leaves. The nights had fires and drums and singing. A week went by. I was in love with Selar. I realised it when I got flu. Instead of

going off in a van to the Mother festival, I lay under an oak tree, then crawled to the water meadows to be sick between the grasses. People came and sat with me and held my head and fed me peppermint tea. I had never had such a nice time being ill.

That was my first taste of a real community, being bonded in one purpose. Everything was shared – spliffs and cider travelled the camp fire circles. I had no money, but I never went without, and then I had money and it was spent on everybody and gone, and I never had to worry. We slept together in tangles of bodies in benders. We swam naked in the lake and had mud fights. More fires, more drums more singing.

MARK: It was a beautiful place. Many a fucking enjoyable summer day was spent there. Running about naked in the Black Mountains painting ourselves with purple bird shit. Not that I'm a hippy or anything.

A tree is the biggest living thing you'll ever see.
And strange as it may seem, you can feel the life of it when you put your hand to it's trunk.

I didn't think of this when I sat up in the mossy little branches of my tree; when it swayed when the wind gusted; when I lay on my belly and peered idly out of my treehouse at the stream below. But later, when I revisited Selar I would skip up my tree and a strange peace would descend upon me. Cosmic, huh?

OLIVIA: For a while, when it was summer, the sun was rising at a certain angle – my treehouse wasn't totally covered, so the sun was rising and I would get woken up by the first ray of sun on my face. And I only had a little bit of transparent plastic on top, so I could see the moon going all the way around. I watched so many moons from the top of my tree. It was so amazing.

Then gradually as autumn came and winter came it got covered and more covered until it was a proper bender on a tree, but for at least four or five months it was a couple of bender poles and a bit of plastic on top. Which was really living outside...

Still now, it's a long time ago you know, a year ago, and when I can't sleep at night I close my eyes and pretend to be in my treehouse at Selar. And I sleep then. I have each little branch still in my memory.

And another thing – climbing a tree every night (and morning, and afternoon, and every other time you need some stupid piece of tat you left all the way up there) makes you beautifully, joyously agile and strong.

Balance, stretch, turn, reach, swing, leap, clamber higher, higher. The birds are beneath you. Move to the sky.

ME (talking to Olivia): I remember from that time being really dirty and really fit and really free. And feeling really mad all over my body. Physically fit from climbing, I think.

Maybe.

TONY: Before Celtic Energy grabbed it, the land was owned by a woman who just left it to go wherever it went, and I don't think anyone had actually been there for a long time before we got there...

That place, I think it had more magical energy than anywhere I've been... I get this feeling sometimes when I'm walking in places like that, like an exhilarating cold wind blows through you. It gives you loads of energy; it makes you jump about. Like an ancient feeling, cold and barren maybe, but not desolate.

I had a bit of my tree above my bed for a while and I had to move it, because every night I would dream myself back in my copse, the water trickling under the tree.



Very suddenly, at the end of July, police and bulldozers arrived to continue the massacre of the water meadows. The Criminal Justice Act was in force. We tried to stop them: we were arrested.

The police, to their credit, didn't seem to like doing this. Most of them were surprisingly courteous and enlightened, and all had lost lifelong friends during the miner's strike ten years before. Still, they did it anyway. Some of us were cautioned, some charged and given bail conditions excluding them from Selar until the court date: guilty until innocent, it seems. This backfired on Celtic Energy, though, because we set up a new site for people who were 'bailed off' at another proposed mine 15 miles away; Brynhenllys Farm in Cwmtwrch.

With our hands tied in the day, we stayed up all night and frenziedly plotted physical and legal impediments.

TONY: We funnelled a whole jar of coffee into this big pan and me and Huw drank it, and we were there with our pickaxes digging up this road. And the next day the police came along and were shocked to see this bridge dug up. They go "Right. Who's responsible for this?" and me and Huw are there with our hands behind our backs. We had blisters all over our hands; scarves tied around them.

MARK: The next day they were quite shocked. The entire road had been dug up. There had been a lot of seriously back breaking hard work. And a lot of gnat swatting because the midges were outrageous.

That didn't stop them, and neither did legally squatting areas of land. And neither did invading Celtic Energy's offices, partying on the roof and torching their flag. Well, we didn't expect that to stop them, although it did make the evening news. The HTV news presenter conducted a vitriolic interview with an Earth First! spokesperson which then prompted a record number of complaints from viewers. HTV was a bit more on side after that.

Valleys people are special folk. Whatever they may have felt about the mad, heathenish English folk up the hill, they didn't forget that it was their land that was being defended. Genteel Welsh grannies linked arms with us before the bulldozers, although they stopped short of getting arrested. And then they brought many more tins of baked beans and, subtly attempting to sort us out a bit, offered to wash our clothes. I was embarrassed when they returned my tatty rags ironed and folded.

One afternoon that week we led sixty or so villagers in a charge of the machinery on the top end of the site. Some kids, meanwhile, hung around the main gate and, of their own volition, built little barricades for the police to dismantle every time they drove through...

MARK: The village kids were all shouting, "Eh, Mochen" which is Welsh for pig, and singing, "Old MacDonald had a farm, and on that farm he had a pig!" It was getting a bit tense because the TSG were there and they were swinging their batons at the kids and people were getting a bit uptight. We were coming down from the hill and a Group 4 Securitas car, with all the top bods, all top brass, drove up. We were thinking, "Fuckin hell. What are they doing? They're gonna get the [security] contract". And the kids had barricaded the road.

Perfect timing that while all the police were up the top, the Group 4 people got to the front gate and were confronted with this barrier. As it tried to reverse away from it, it reversed into some kids on bikes who were trying to block it in a very nervous kind of way. So all these Welsh fathers and mothers are walking down the hill to see these two kids that they know getting run over by a Group 4 car, so all hell broke loose and everyone launched themselves at the car.

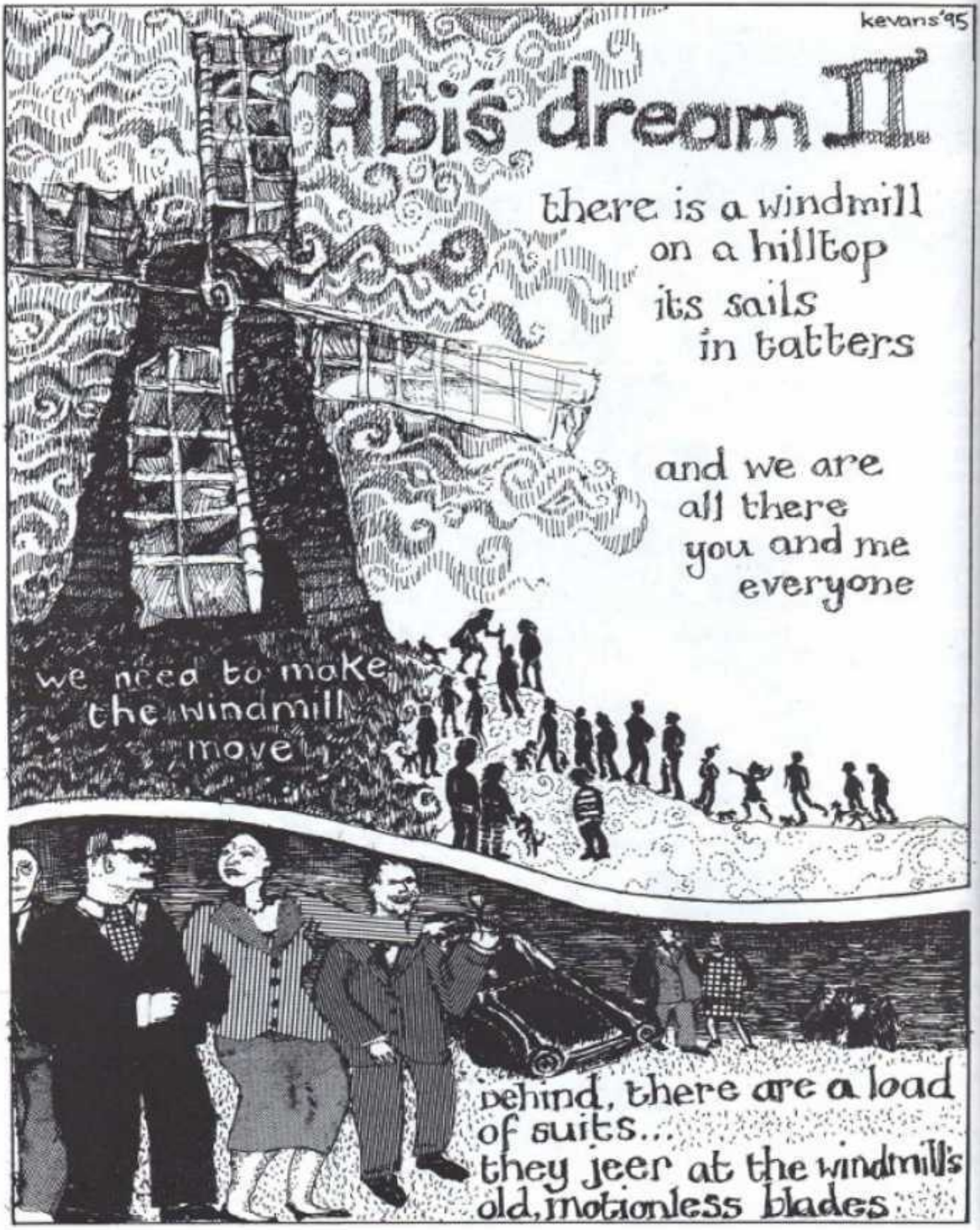
This is what happened to the car:

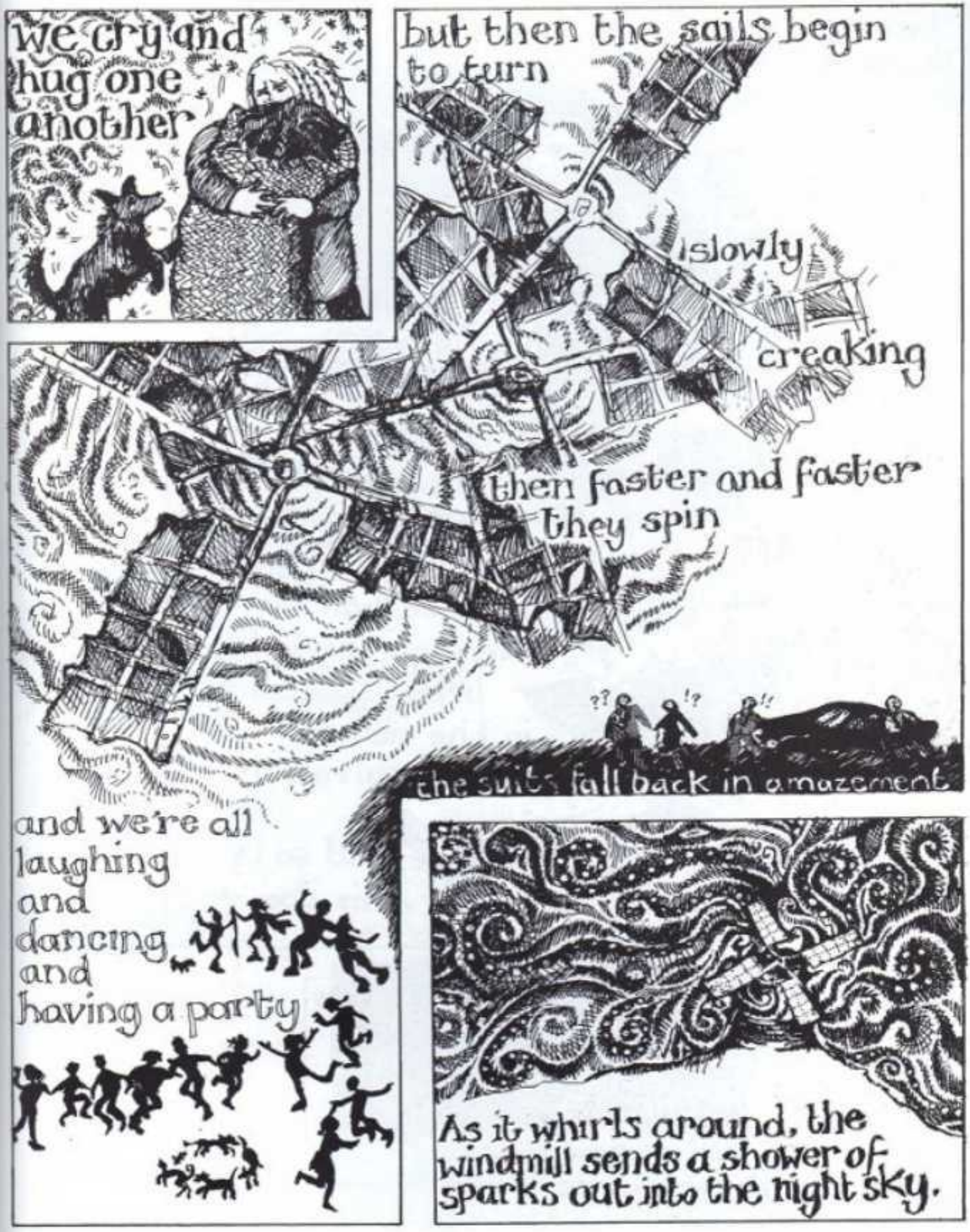
It squeaked away cautiously, and the bigwigs inside it then had to wait for taxis and trains to take them back to wherever they came from. They were confronted, while they waited, by the men from the village leaning up very close to them and saying, "Don't ever come back to Cwmgwrach!" The moral of the story is that Group 4 have not done security on a protest since. They leave that to Reliance Security these days, while Group 4 run the private prisons and prisoner transport services, getting us a little further down the line, so to speak.



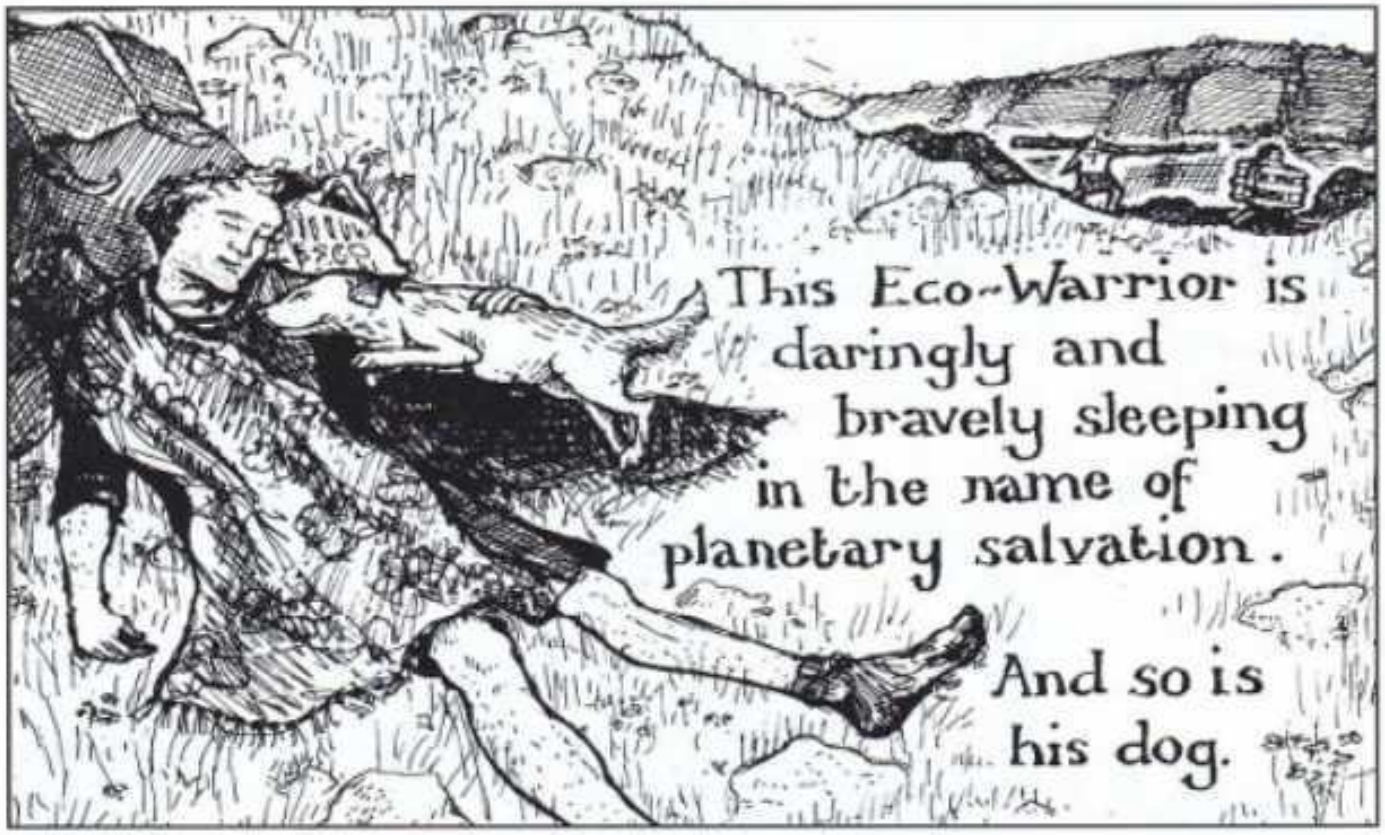
Anyway, we didn't save the water meadows. On the last day of work we found out that metal poles or 'spikes' such as two foot lengths of rebar, driven into the ground in clusters of eight or nine, are quite effective against translocation machines. Bit late by then.

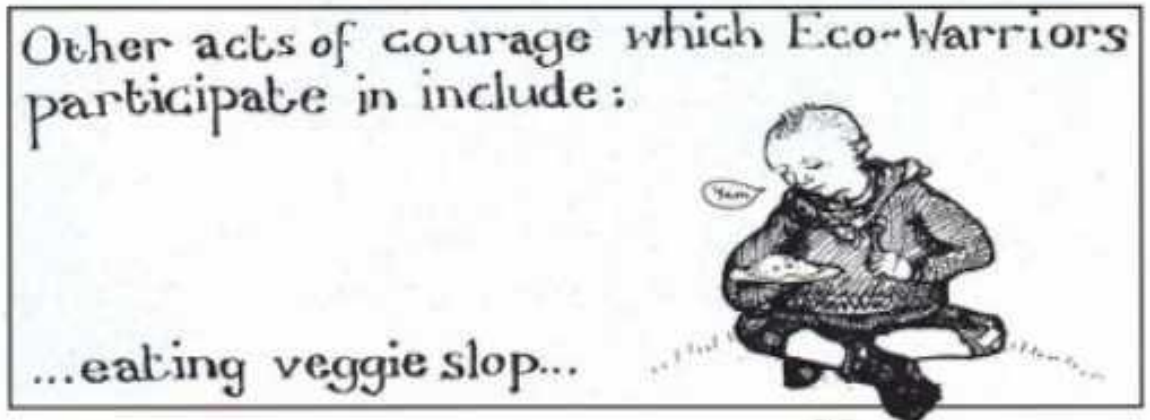

I met a man named Manier, and for him everything was wonderful.
is wunnerful...
kevans
"Your eyes they are like the night..." he said to me one morning
no they're not!
is magical...
and in the evening he peeked through the curtain to watch us because (he said) we looked so pretty as we sang.
You could hear his laugh three fields away.
is beautiful
Like running water... a chuckle, a giggle,
I love this gypsy life
a roar.
But once, I saw him look serious. "Such games you children play..." he said "...in Venezuela they would shoot you..."
"they would shoot you, and then they would shoot the trees."

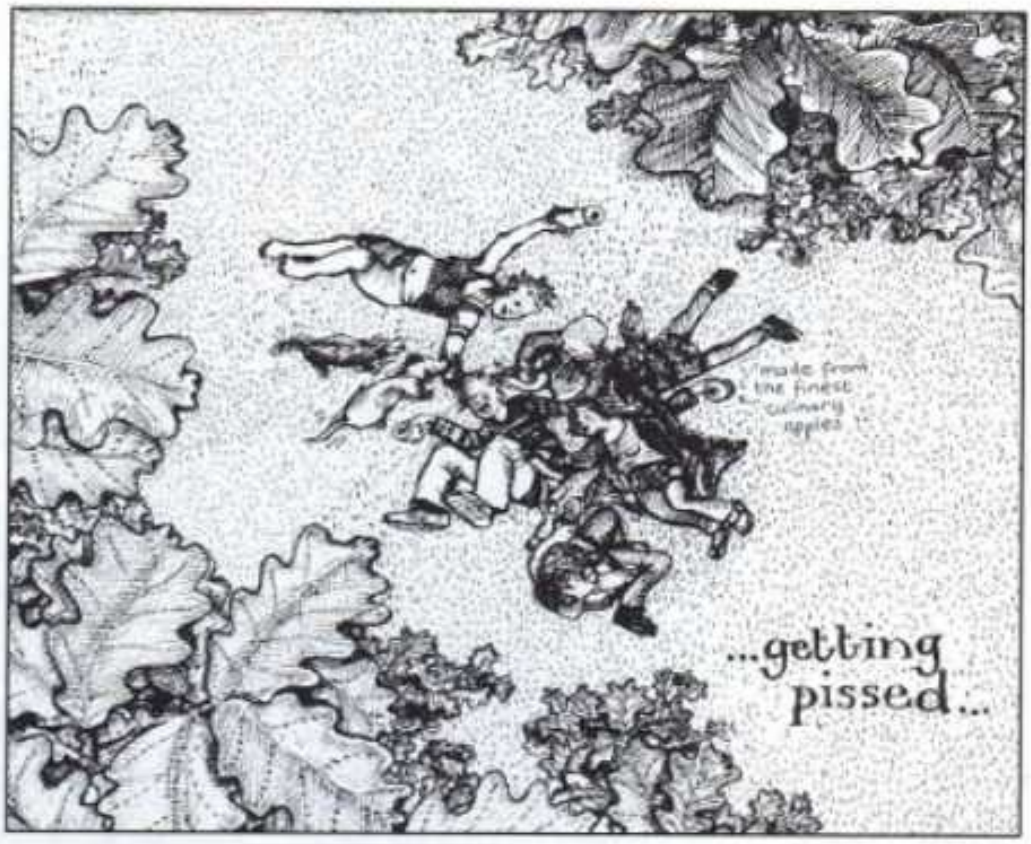

kevans'95
Abi's dream II
there is a windmill
on a hilltop
its sails
in tatters
and we are
all there
you and me
everyone
we need to make
the windmill
move
behind, there are a load
of suits...
they jeer at the windmill's
old, motionless blades

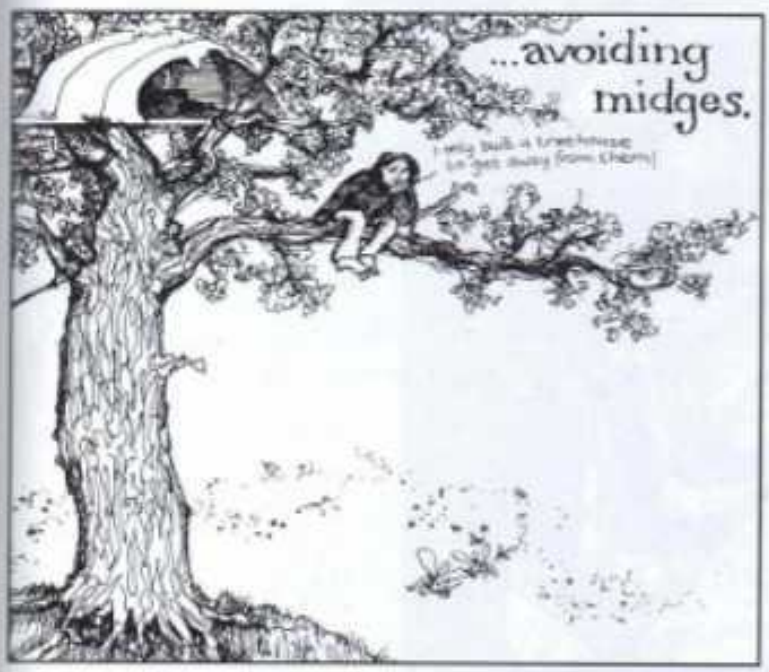

we cry and hug one another
but then the sails begin to turn
slowly
creaking
then faster and faster they spin
?! !? !!
the suits fall back in amazement
and we're all laughing and dancing and having a party
As it whirls around, the windmill sends a shower of sparks out into the night sky.

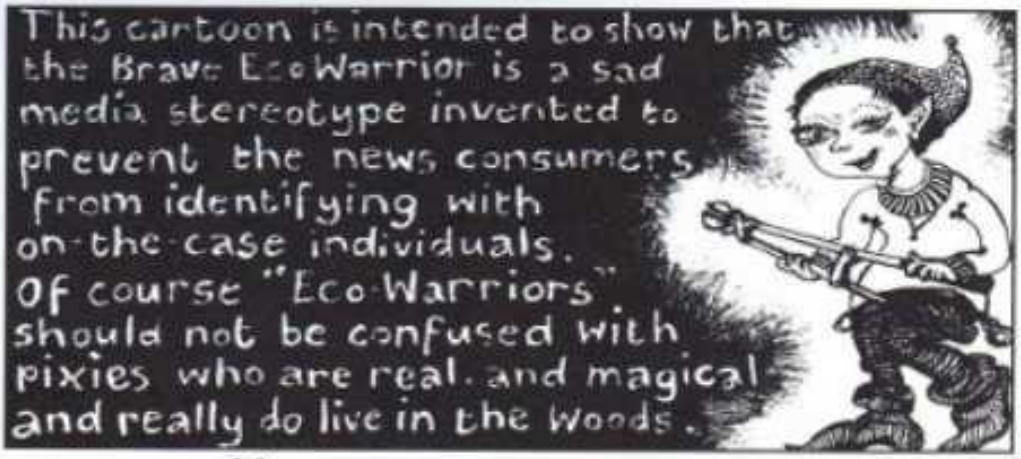

Here is an Eco-Warrior displaying incredible Bravery and Daring by having a cup of tea.


This Eco-Warrior is daringly and bravely sleeping in the name of planetary salvation.
And so is his dog.

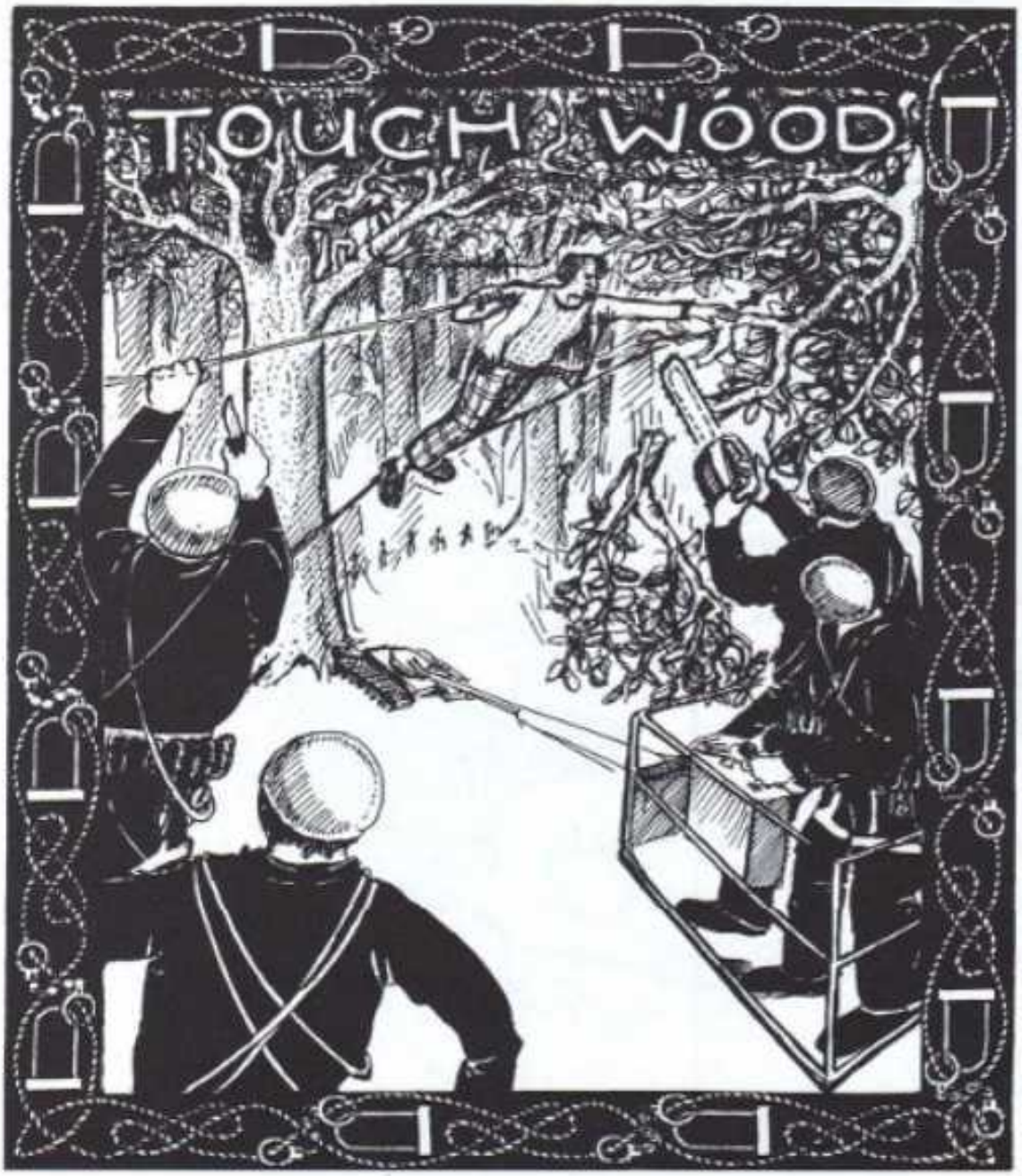

Other acts of courage which Eco-Warriors participate in include:
...eating veggie slop...
Yum


made from the finest culinary apples
...getting pissed...


...avoiding midges.


This cartoon is intended to show that the Brave Eco Warrior is a sad media stereotype invented to prevent the news consumers from identifying with on-the-case individuals. Of course "Eco-Warriors" should not be confused with pixies who are real and magical and really do live in the Woods.

So Selar was brilliant then? Well, we loved it and it was amazing, but the site itself had some problems. There were a lot of people, like me, for whom it was their first experience of living outside and who didn't realise that it wasn't really reasonable to expect local people to be providing all the food and bringing all the water up. Without a vehicle it was impossible to co-ordinate tatting missions to get building materials or go busking, or get food. Without an office, we couldn't get money from environmental groups or publicise the protest. Without a financial commitment from even the people living there it was difficult to get anything done.

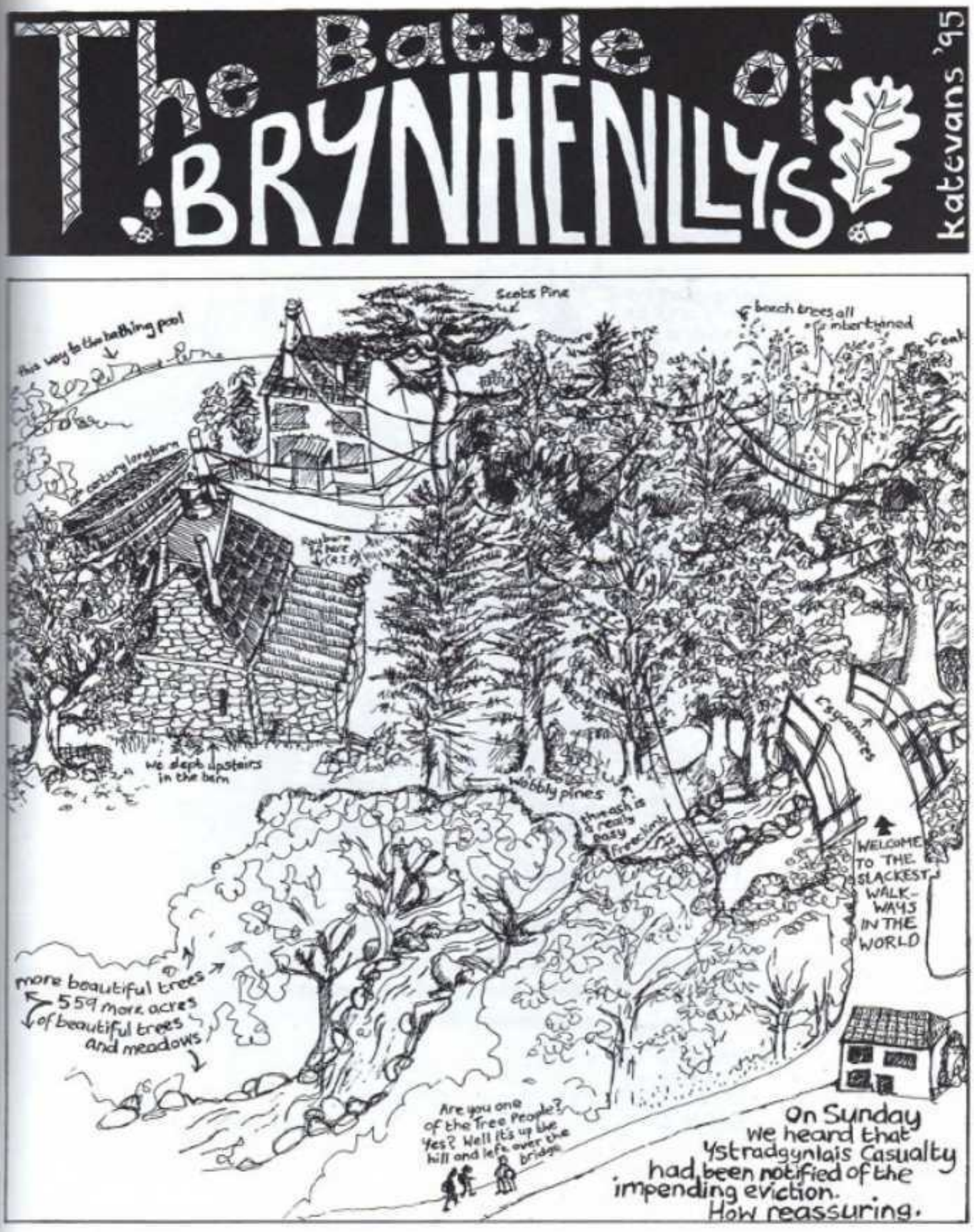


TONY: We didn't even have a mobile phone that worked. I went to Newbury and then came back to Selar; I said to Chris "Down at Newbury they've got as many mobile phones, they've got walkie talkie networks, they've got as much polyprop as you want. If you ask the office you can get what you want, really" and there were people down there complaining about it! But at Selar we had nothing at all! There were a lot of piss heads and a lot of people who were lunching out a lot in the summer. People weren't willing to give like ten quid a giro to spend on rope.
REUBEN: Selar was quite, er, organic. Sometimes people didn't even do their washing up.

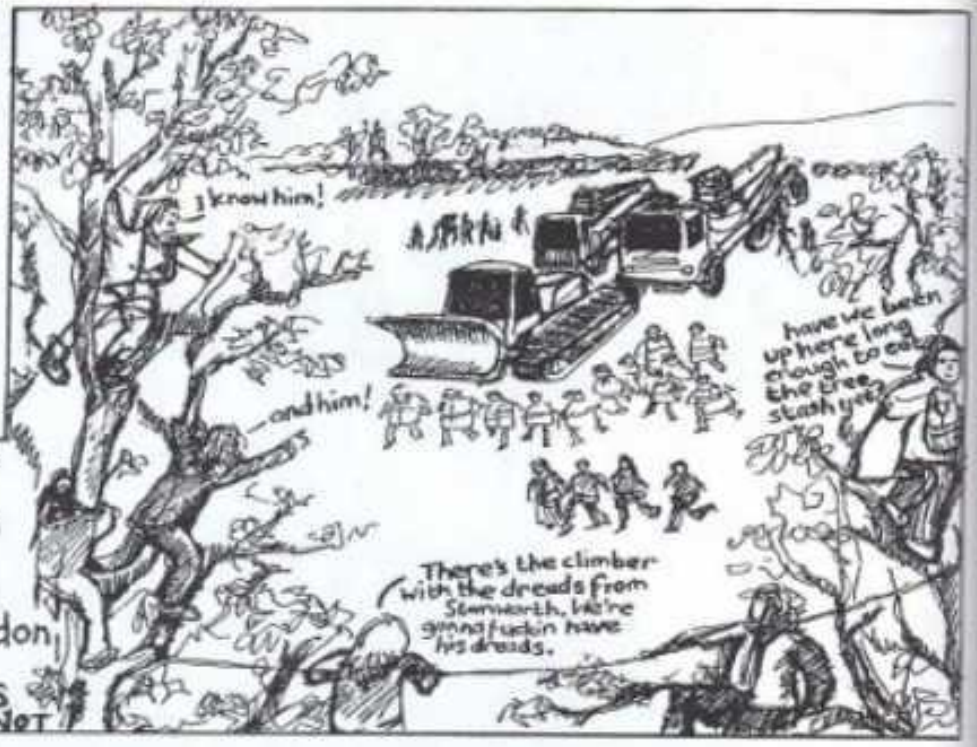
As autumn drew in, and rubbish began to drift across site quite a few people left on new missions, and I left too. Well I didn't really leave, I mean, I was always on my way back there, but I got kind of distracted by a disastrous love affair on the way.

Brynhenllys was evicted in October. It was my first tree eviction and I was very scared. It looks like Celtic Energy were intending to do Selar then as well in that week, but we did them over quite severely, so they couldn't. Richard Turner, head of the rope access firm that provides the climbing bailiffs commented later: "You stuffed us at Brynhenllys."

We were trashed too, but we were all together and these days I remember it all with quite a rosy glow. After the eviction I did two cartoons; one fluffy and one spiky.

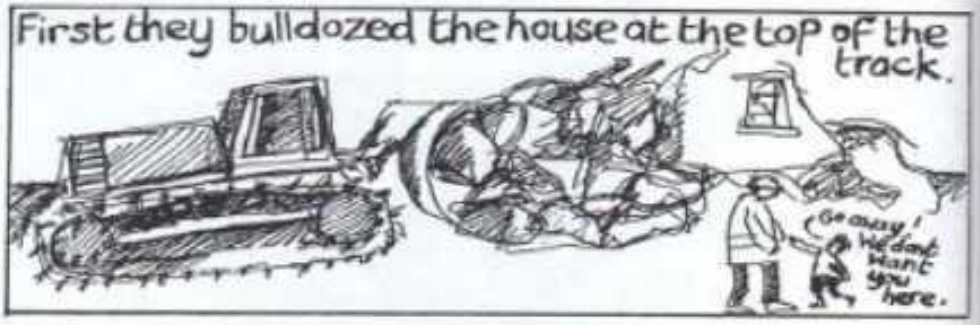

The Battle of BRYNHENLLYS
katevans '95
Scots Pine
beech trees all intertwined
the way to the bathing pool
sycamore
Oak
16th century longhorn
Caravans
we slept upstairs in the barn
wobbly pines
thwack is really easy freeclimb
WELCOME TO THE SLACKEST WALK-WAYS IN THE WORLD
more beautiful trees
559 more acres of beautiful trees and meadows
Are you one of the Tree People? Yes? Well it's up the hill and left over the bridge
On Sunday we heard that Ystradgynlais Casualty had been notified of the impending eviction. How reassuring.

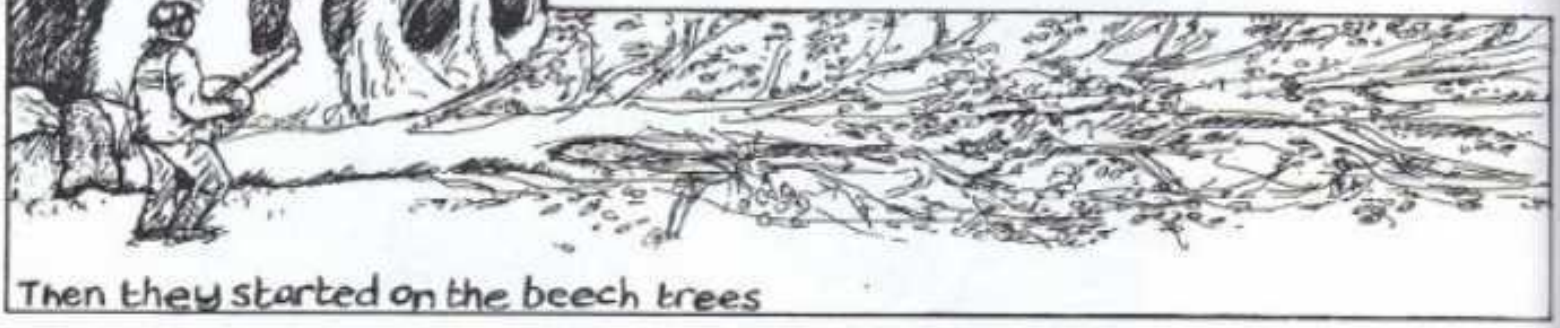




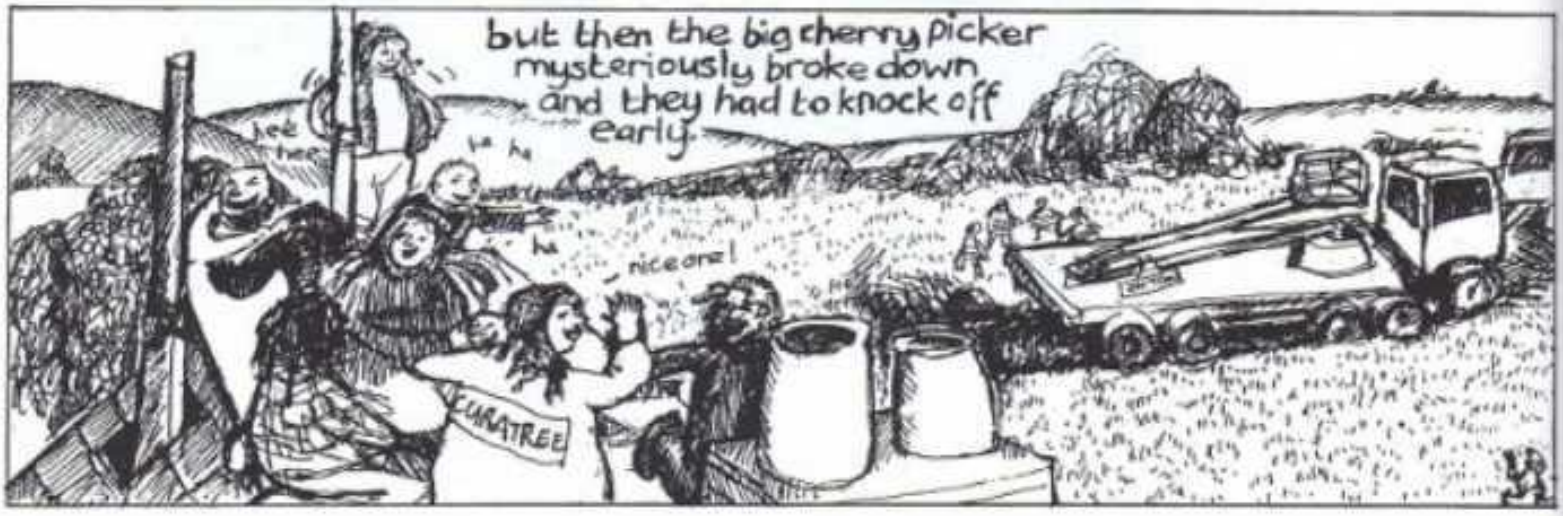
9o'clock Celtic Energy arrived with two cherry pickers and a digger, and four climbers from the M65 eviction at Stanworth Valley, and Reliance Security who did the M11 campaign in London, and Solsbury Hill in Bath. It was like meeting old friends NOT

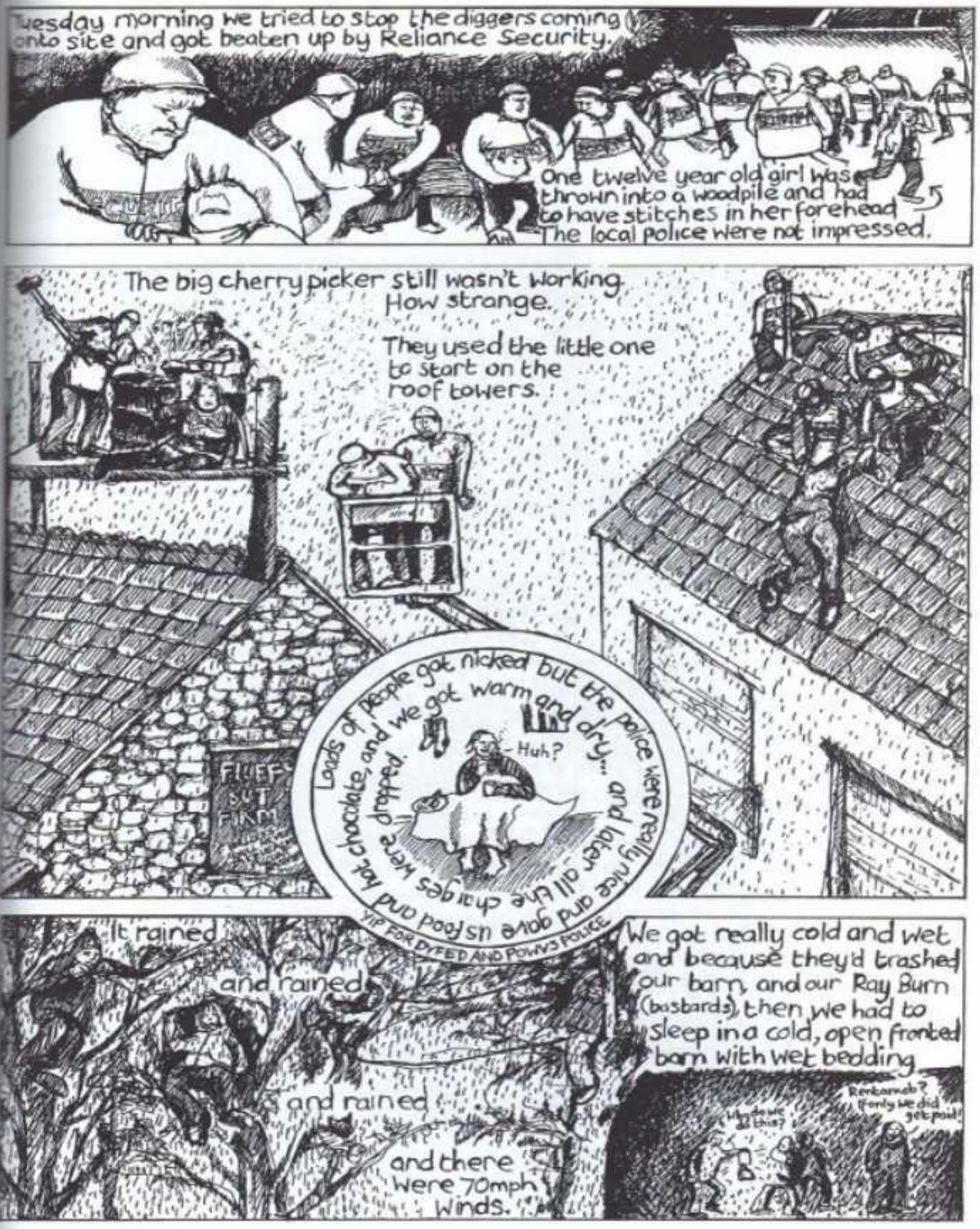






Then they started on the beech trees




Tuesday morning we tried to stop the diggers coming onto site and got beaten up by Reliance Security.
One twelve year old girl was thrown into a woodpile and had to have stitches in her forehead. The local police were not impressed.
The big cherry picker still wasn't working. How strange.
They used the little one to start on the roof towers.
FLUFF SHIT FIRM
Loads of people got nicked but the police were really nice and gave us food and hot chocolate, and we got warm and dry... and later all the charges were dropped.
Huh?
YIP FOR DYFED AND POWYS POLICE
It rained and rained and rained and there were 70mph winds.
We got really cold and wet and because they'd trashed our barn, and our Ray Burn (bastards), then we had to sleep in a cold, open fronted barn with wet bedding
Reckoned? If only we did get paid!
Why do we do this?


Wednesday morning they cut down the Scots Pine tree.
They were using both cherry pickers now.
this person is swinging frayed polypropylene rope into the chainsaw to jam it up.
We fought them on the beeches
and the oaks...
Bart kept putting his hands in the way of the chainsaw - what a nutter.
and the ash
this person is wearing a tape around her wrist with a carabiner clip on. If you wear a proper climbing harness they use it to pull you out of the tree
trying to keep the climbers out of the tree.
PASTA LA VISTA BABY
SCLAT





surreal moment



At the end of the day only about six of our defended trees were left standing. There were loads of us in the sycamore - too many for them to take on. Olivia was cut off, stranded on another tree. She had been there for four hours in the rain with no food or shelter or friends or warmth. Last thing the chainsawmen did was pull her down, and then they cut the tree down right before her eyes.

They couldn't get to Chris, he was clinging to the very top branches of the pine with no harness (and no shoes). He refused to get down, and they wouldn't give him a rope, and then they cut every branch off the trunk and left him. He had to climb down the swaying trunk in the dark, wedging his bare feet and fingers in crevices. It was the scariest thing I saw in my life.

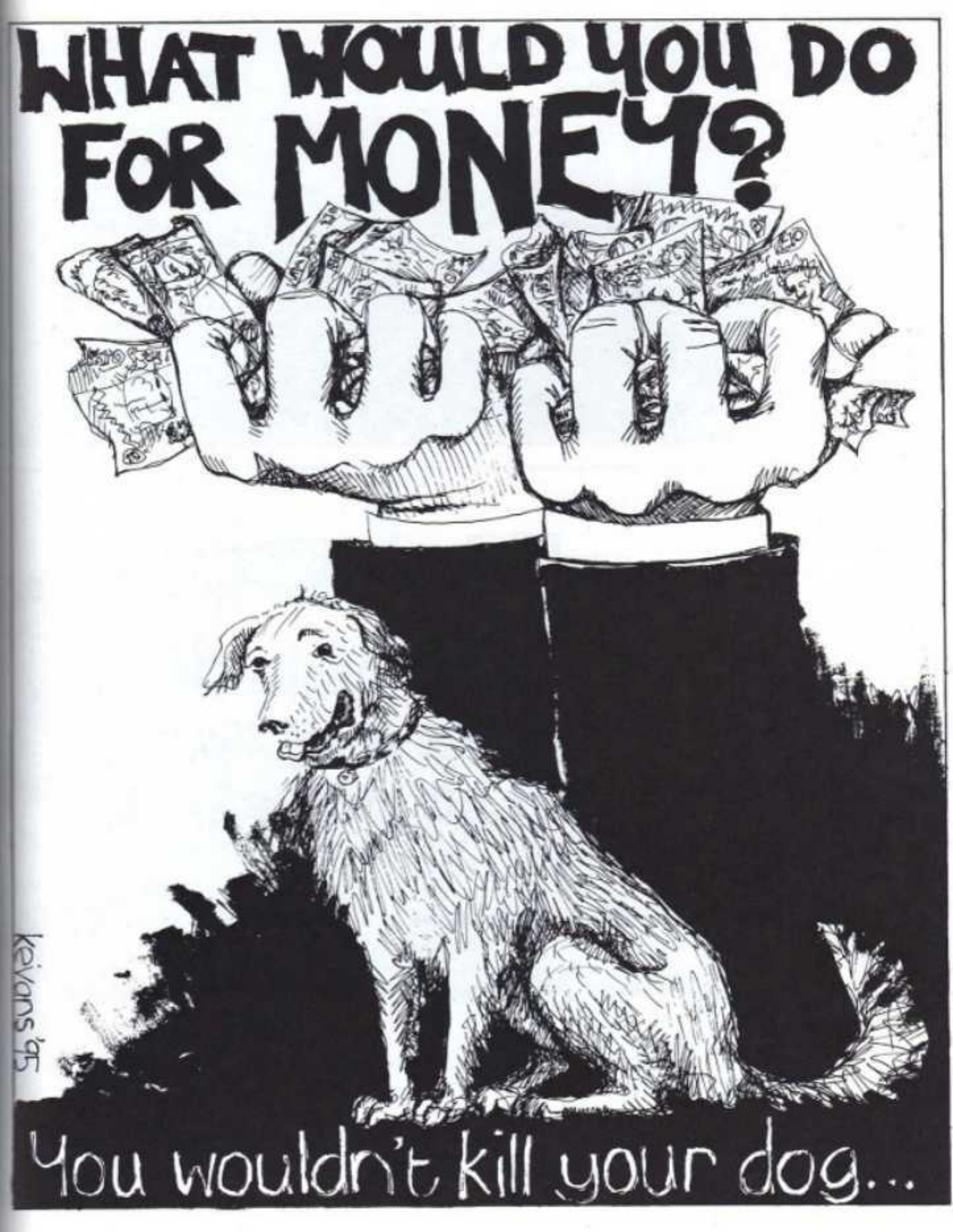


There were same people who stayed in the trees overnight so they had to use the cherrypickers and security to evict them. The rest of us went on the offensive and invaded Celtic Energy's opencast site at Nanthelen.

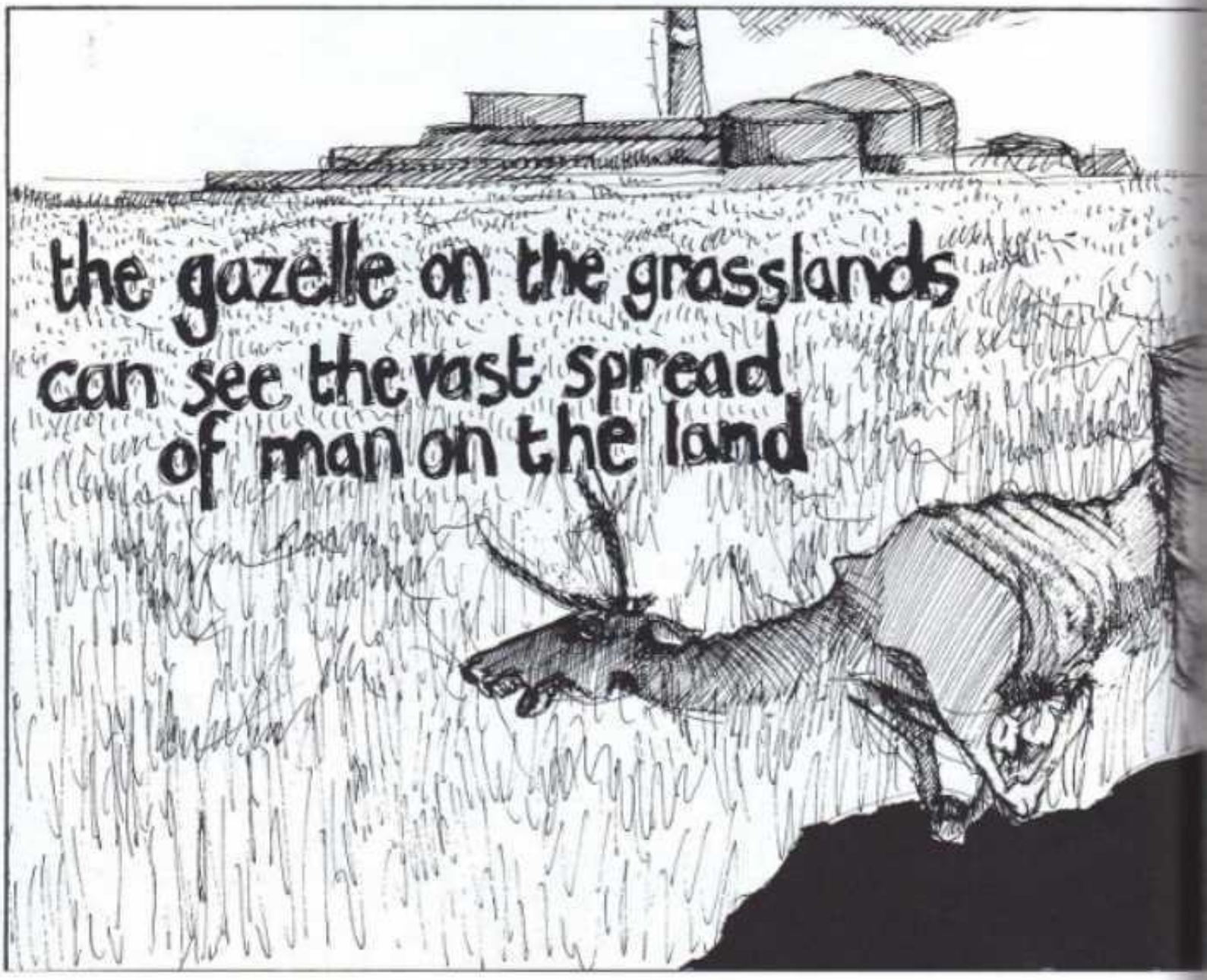


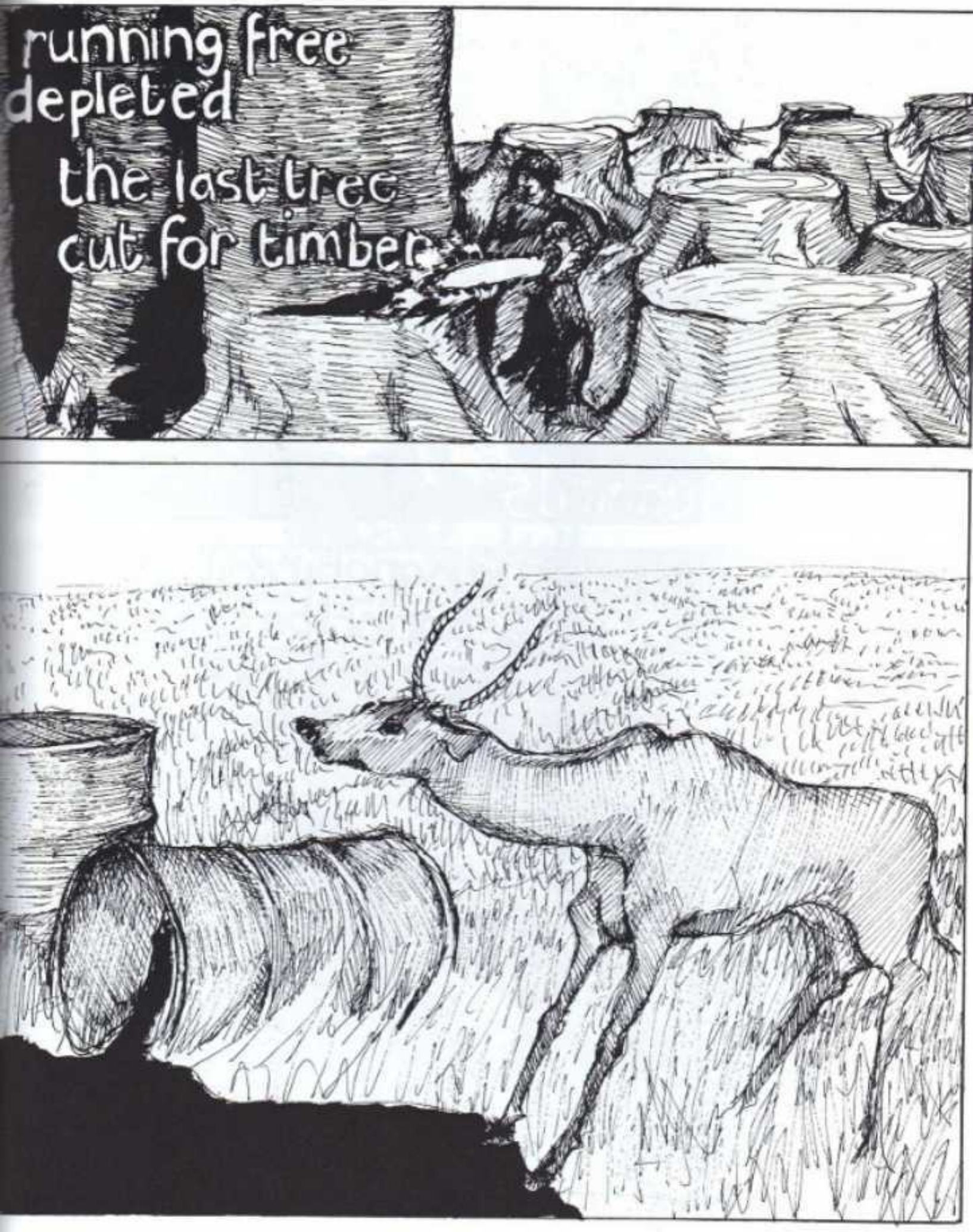


I stood by one edge where the trucks go and I felt really weird, remembering back to the summer when I stayed at Brynhenllys... it was very hot and we went to a beautiful bathing pool, set between huge granite rocks and overhung by little trees... we took all our clothes off and swam, and made a rope swing which went out over the water... walked back very tired and ate pasta and drank crap cider... and we sang through the long summer evening. And now its an opencast mine.


WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR MONEY?
You wouldn't kill your dog...
keivans '95

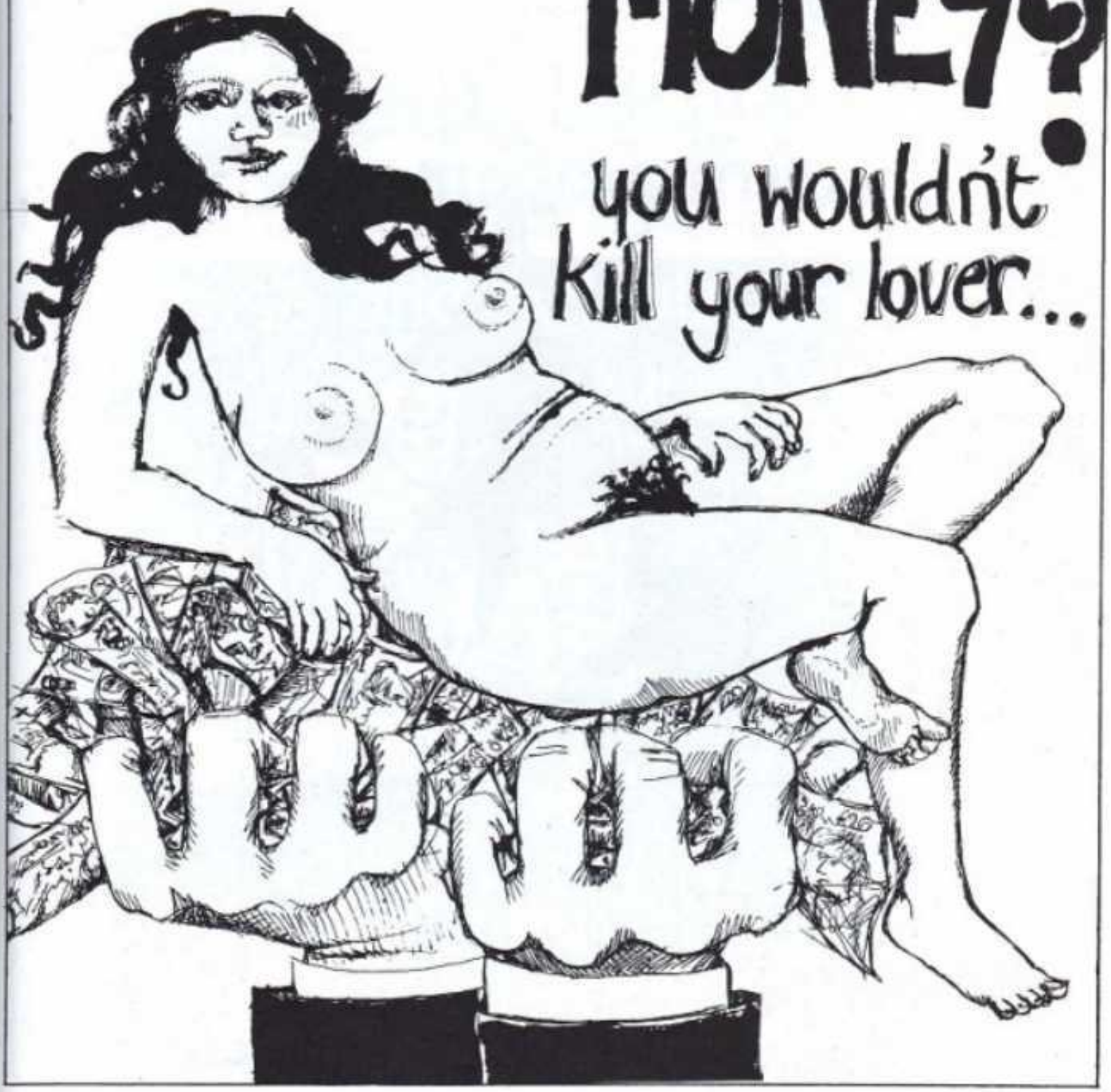

but the wolf in the forest
finds the woodland

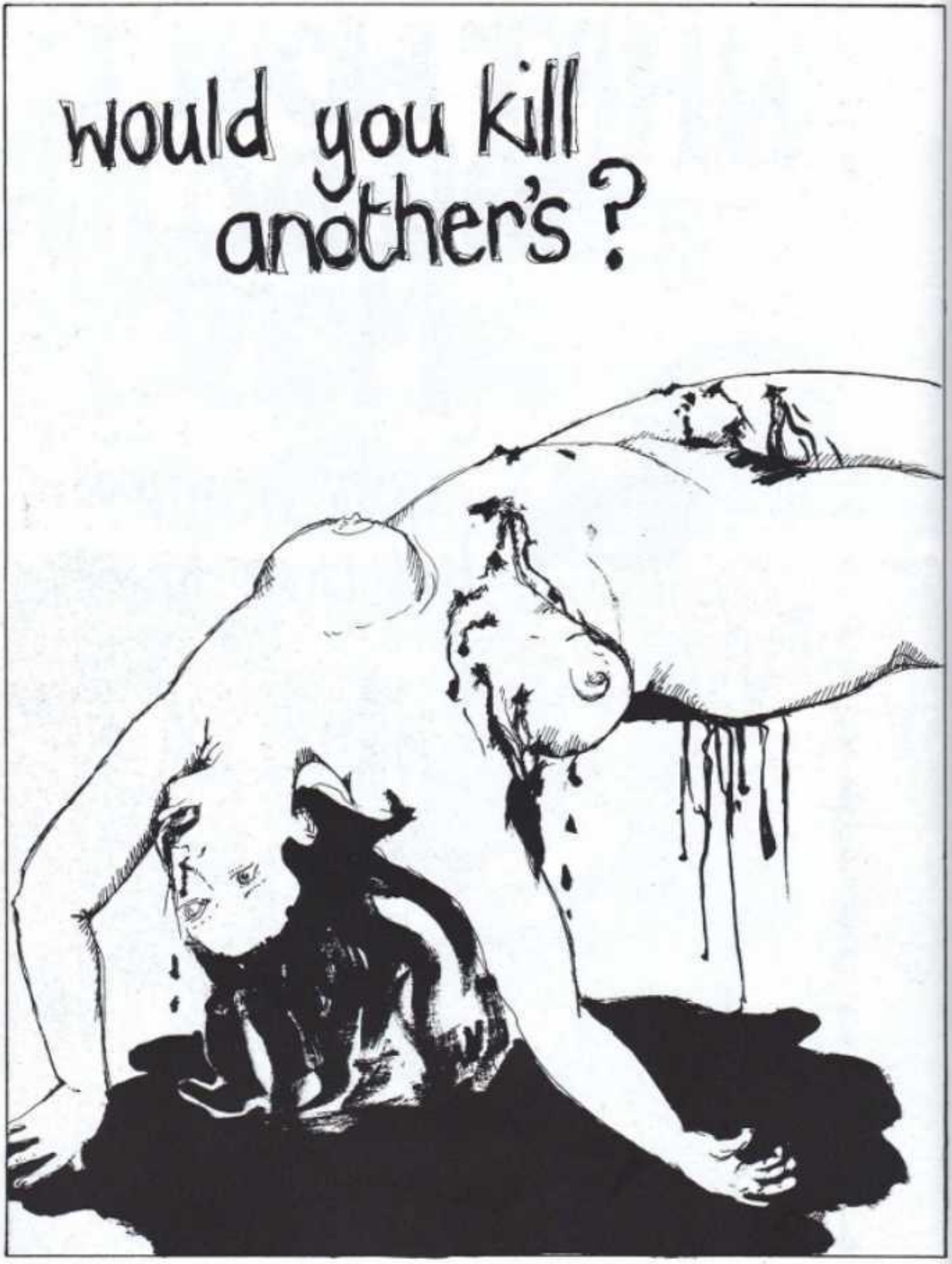

the gazelle on the grasslands
can see the vast spread
of man on the land


running free
depleted
the last tree
cut for timber


listen
seabirds
and songbirds
cannot be heard
Now look at your hands
Tell me what do you see?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR MONEY?




would you kill
another's?

money buys the guns
that keeps the arms trade going



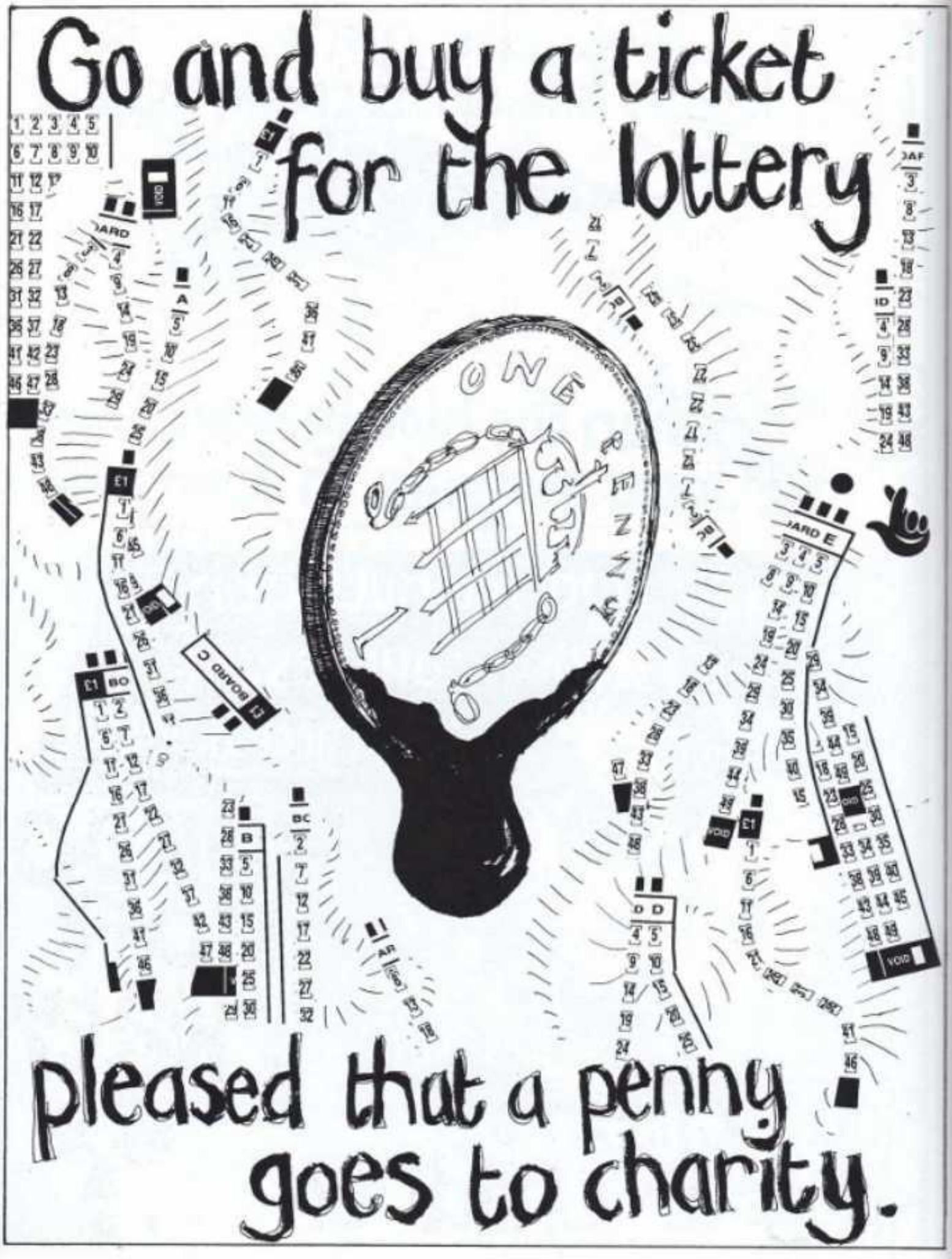
when the bloody cycle's done
the same money's in your pocket

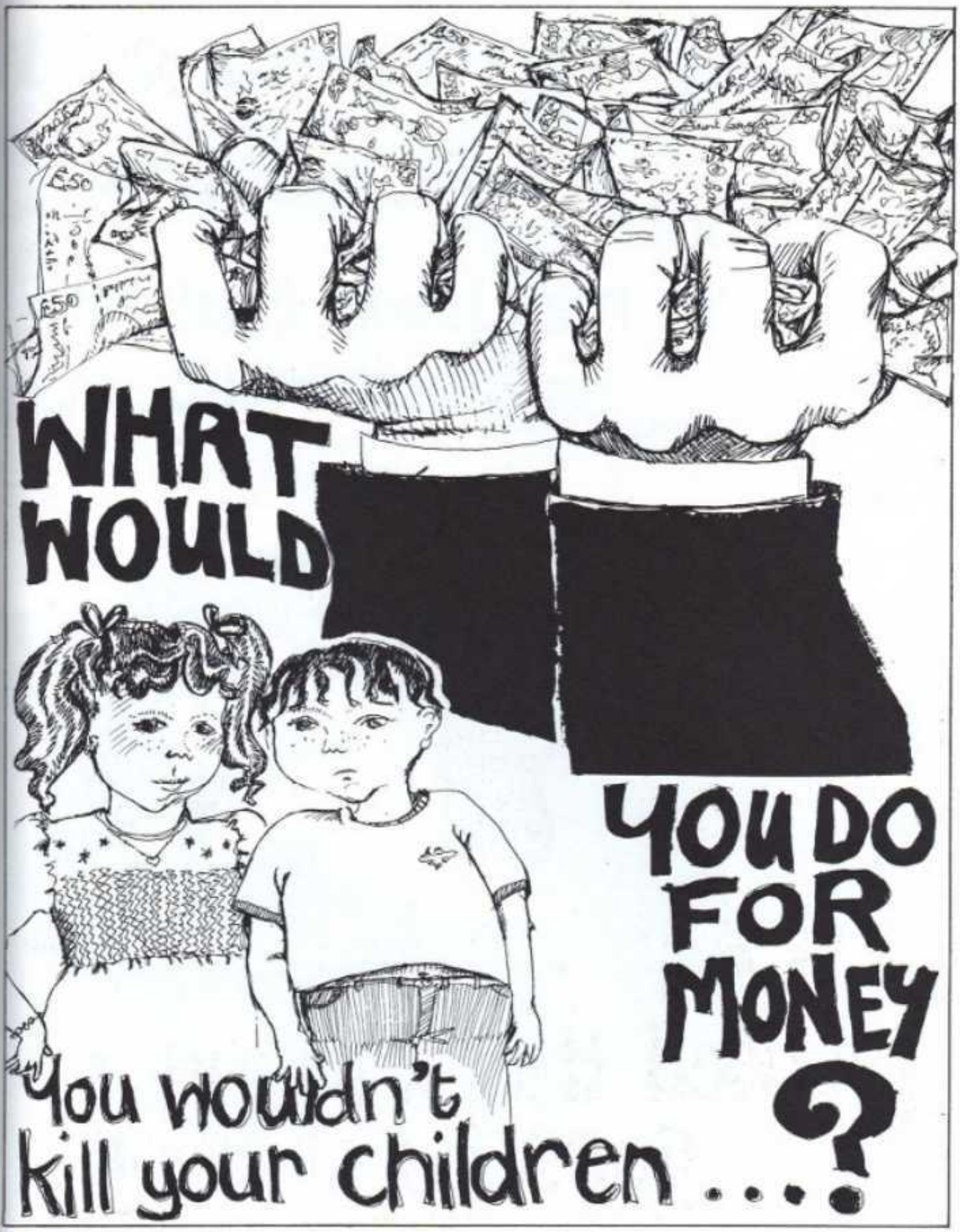
disease and malnutrition
courtesy of
Third World debt.

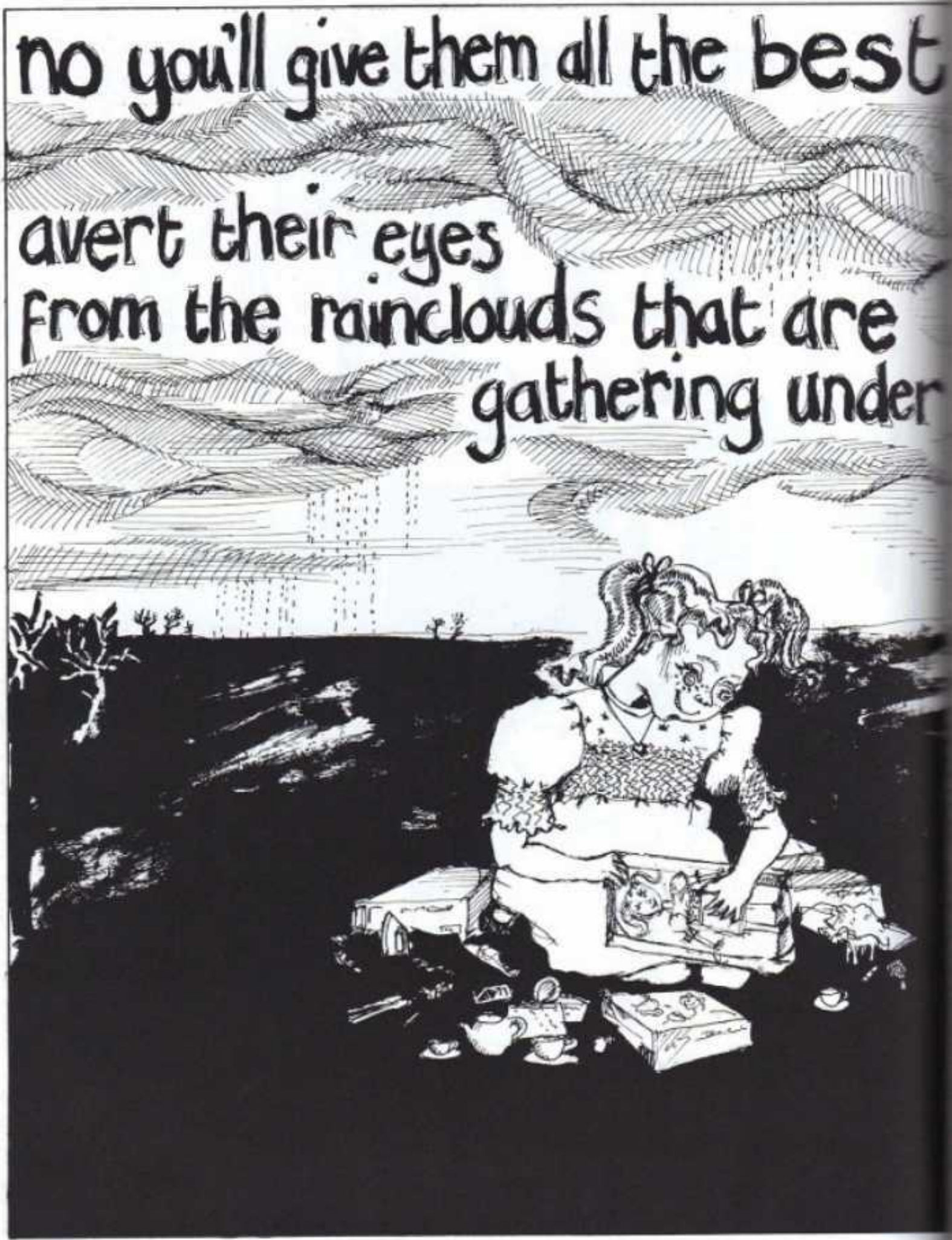


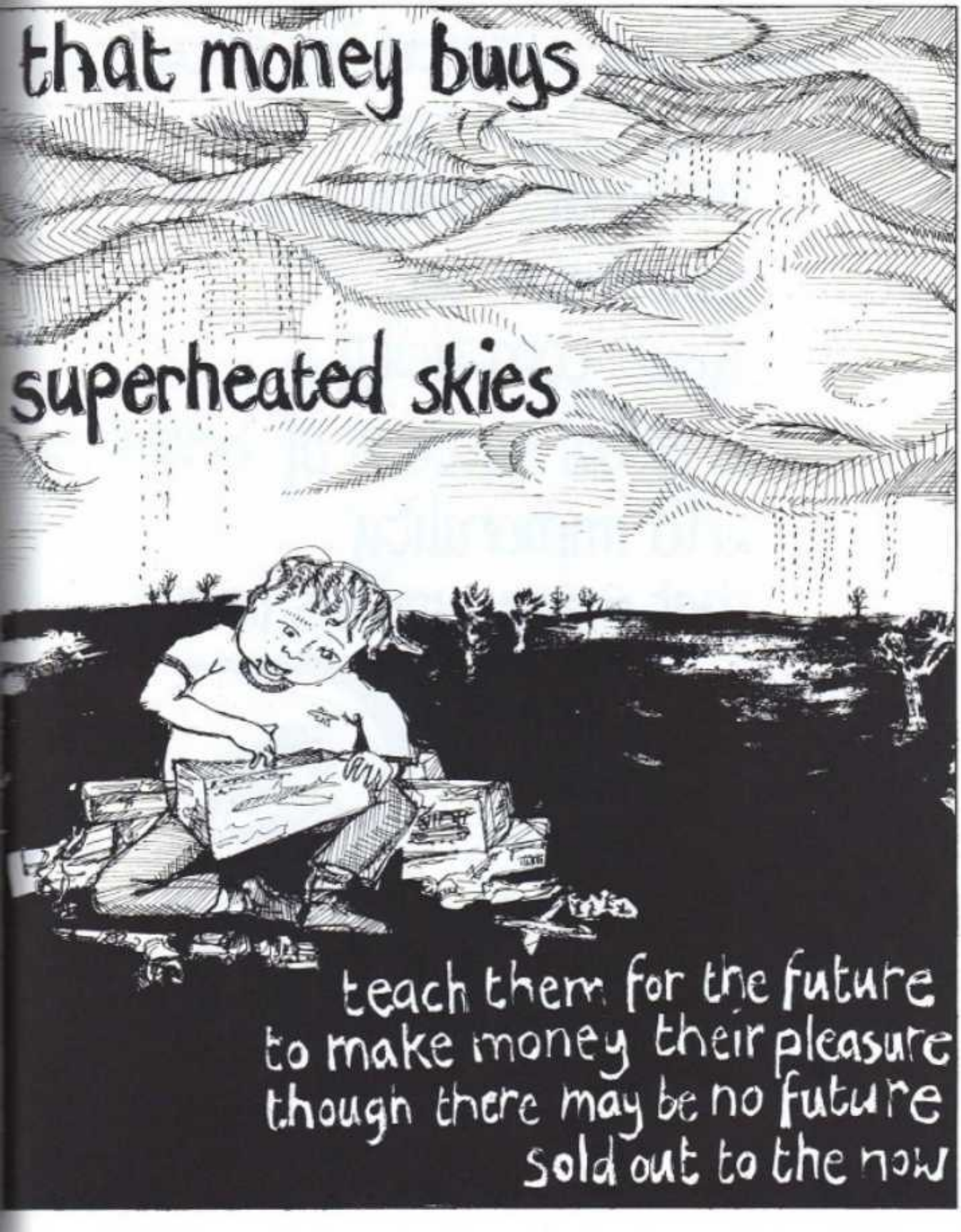
How blinkered
is your vision?

There's the bank
there on the High Street

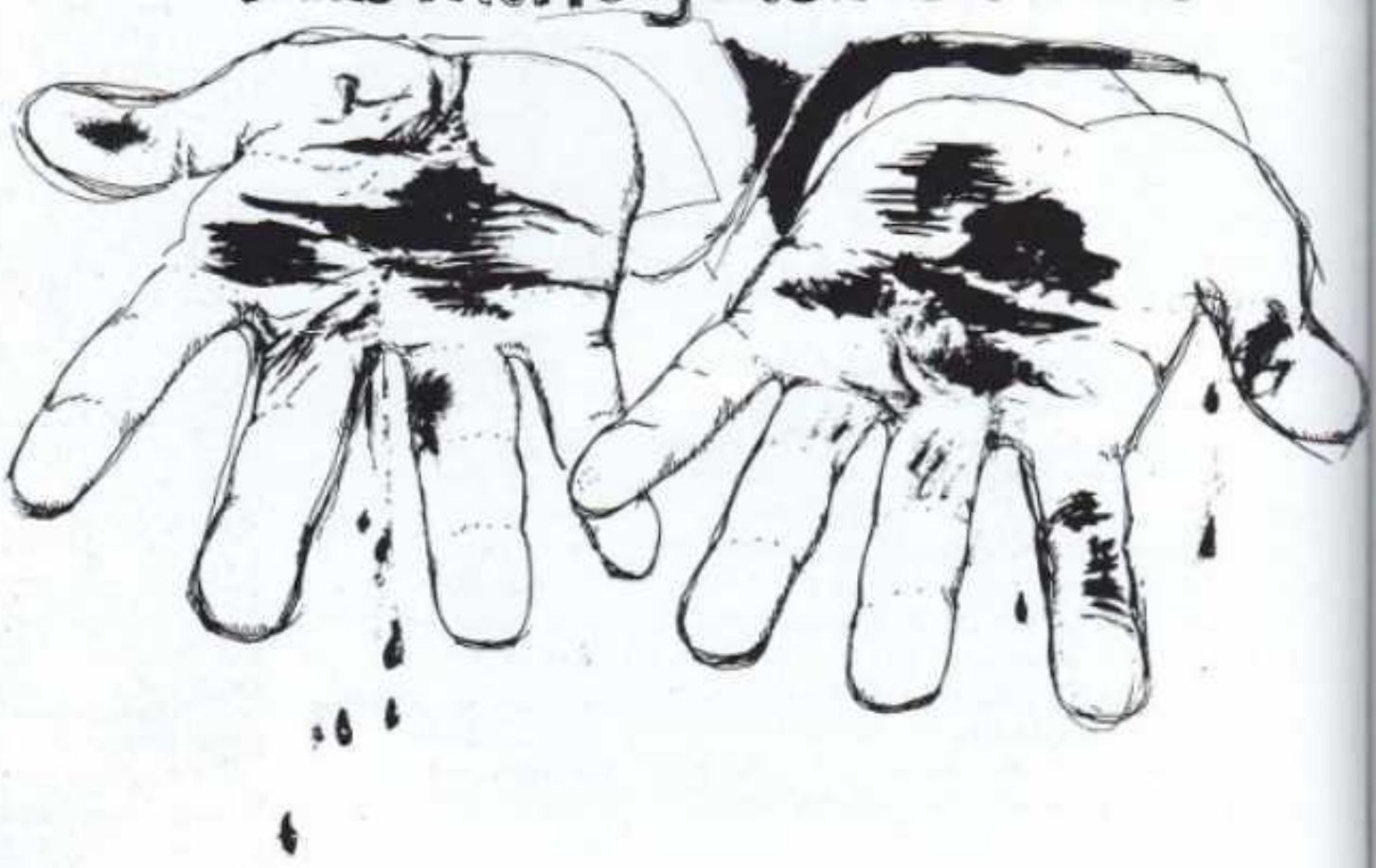

Go and buy a ticket
for the lottery
ONE PENNY
pleased that a penny
goes to charity.


WHAT WOULD
YOU DO FOR MONEY
You wouldn't kill your children ...?


no you'll give them all the best
avert their eyes
from the rainclouds that are
gathering under


that money buys
superheated skies
teach them for the future
to make money their pleasure
though there may be no future
sold out to the now

In your sad scramble for security,
respectability,
personal equity,
you fail to see
your complicity
with the global system of brutality
and immorality
that money means to me.



Ten Thousand Trees

The Newbury Bypass protest. January to April 1996

The Newbury bypass. One nine mile road. Which manages to pass three times through North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and obliterate three Sites of Special Scientific Interest, an ancient Stone Age settlement, eleven other archaeological sites and two perfectly preserved Civil War battlefields. As well as destroying the habitats of kingfishers, nightjars, hobbies, bats and dormice, all protected spices, and one of the last remaining colonies of the Desmoulin Whorl snail. And polluting the river Lamborne, one of the cleanest in the country. That is because the whole thing runs through woodland. To build it means chopping down an estimated ten thousand trees.

In December 1994, in the face of concerted environmental opposition, the Transport minister Brian Mawhinney announces a year long review of the scheme and promises to investigate 'other options'. The World Wildlife Fund and Friends of the Earth commission a £15,000 report into less damaging alternatives, to be presented to the Department of Transport in August 1995. In July, however, half an hour before he leaves office in a cabinet reshuffle, Dr Mawhinney announces that the review is complete and that the bypass will proceed. No evidence has been considered other than that submitted by the Highways Agency. No Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out (breaching a 1988 European Union Directive). Mawhinney ignores his own government's 1986 Landscape Committee declaration: the proposed road is "quite unacceptable" and "massively destructive of a largely intimate landscape, unable to absorb the impact of a major highway".

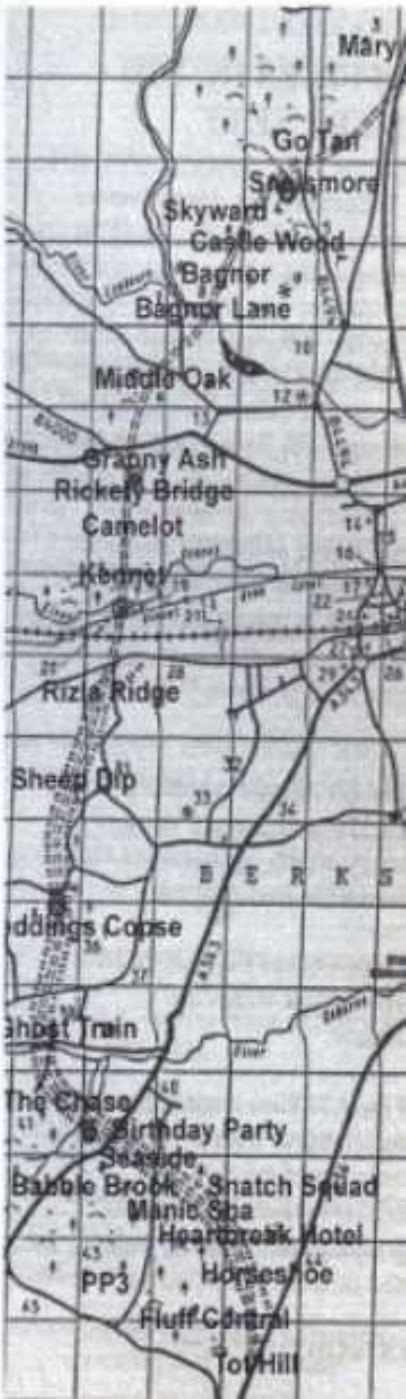
Newbury already has a bypass, but it is slowed down by five roundabouts where it skirts the town. Sainsbury's has built a huge superstore on the busiest roundabout, which means that traffic lights are installed, and the road becomes a slowly chugging, fumey car park. Shall we sort out the superstore? Or put tunnels under the roundabouts? Or perhaps invest in public transport? No, let us destroy some ancient forest for a road that will form part of the new network of Euro-routes, in this case connecting Glasgow to Northern Spain (a fact which we forgot to mention at the public enquiries).

We shall also overlook the fact that only 15% of traffic will be removed from the town by the new road. That 70% of traffic in Newbury is local. That there will be just as much traffic in the town within 5-7 years if car use increases in line with forecasts. And that is before we have considered the 700 applications for infill development along the new road – 5000 new houses means 8000 new cars (and 1400 more houses are being built in Sandleford to the south). Just remember that we have the backing of Newbury's two largest employers, Vodafone and Bayer. We'll give the pro-Bypass lobby offices and a shop in town at the tax-payer's expense, and then conduct a media hate campaign against protesters sponging off the state. And then we'll carry on property speculating, as unprofitable Sites of Scientific Interest become potential Little Chef material.

The 1995 review of the Newbury Bypass calculated that two minutes would be saved on off-peak journey times. The Highways Agency then stated that: "We don't just build roads to save time. We estimate the road will save 28 lives over a 30 year period."

Many more than 28 lives were risked in its construction.

How was Newbury for you then Dan?
Psychotic, really





A. Testa

I spent a rainy November there at Skyward camp, trying, of all things, to fix a crappy little van, in the mud, with my head in little pieces as only a disastrous love affair can leave it.

Then in January my van was kind-of working and I was on my way back to Selar and I stopped in at the Chase, another camp along the route. And then it really was happening; security had been hired and were living in barracks down the road. The tribe gathered, with hugs and shouts and hellos. We were all sleeping in tiny benders together again and getting up at six in the morning to race the security to the trees. This cheered me up quite a lot, the love of good friends being better than the love of crap men. Besides, what was happening each day behind the thin yellow lines was so incredibly shit that it put a little personal heart ache into perspective.

What happened, basically, was that every morning, anything up to 1600 security guards would be driven in coaches from strange, macho security bunkers to some point along the nine mile route. One thousand, six hundred men in day-glow yellow; that's quite an army (and some of them were soldiers on special leave, as it goes). People would track them in fast cars and we'd listen nervously to our CB radios to find out which way they were headed. The Chase was at the South end of the route; sometimes when they were going North I'd go back to bed, but then I'm a slack fucker. Most of my friends were burning the candle at both ends, and in the middle as well.

Omigod!, they're heading for Penn Wood, Tot Hill, Redding's Copse... A mad scramble to race them to their destination. You had to get there before the lines were properly assembled as any later attempts to charge them would mean an arrest for aggravated trespass. They weren't interested in the camps themselves, as possession orders hadn't been granted for them yet. They were just clearing the land between the camps. Of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of trees.

Sit in a tree, in the January cold, without food or water as often as not, while all those trees are felled around you in a sickening frenzy by the chainsaw gangs. Then at night, stick up Section Sixes and squat the land that you saved. Build walkways and platforms by the dim light of head torches. Stumble with flasks of strong coffee through land that had been familiar until the chainsaw men turned it horizontal. God the route was so huge! And they were coming for it all at once.



A. Testa



OLIVIA: Sometimes I felt we are really mad; hardcore like fuck. I can't believe we are here in the winter in snow and the rain and the mud and we manage to carry on and do it every single day.

NICKY: There were loads of people who overdid it a bit. Somehow I managed to get by without collapsing and giving myself a hernia, but I did overdo if for sure and got loads of sleep deprivation. And it was quite a trip, going round with these bug eyes and my body somewhere behind me; with my head thinking I was really on the case and could do anything while my feet stumbled around in the mud.

It was a shame that everyone – I mean it seemed like the thing to do at the time, but everyone got on such a mission about it all! And we were looking after each other, but we could have looked after each other more. We could have been more sensible and more into cosiness.

I was well into cosiness.

I wasn't. I was crap. I used to go and lie in my unheated treehouse with all my clothes on. I spent maybe one night in a communal bender where there was a stove, and that was only because they'd chopped down all my treehouses.



A. Testa

The route was huge, and they were coming for it all at once, but lots and lots of other people were coming there too. The press are fickle in their affections, but this was January, a dull time of the year, and Newbury was only a short blat away from journalistic London headquarters. With saturation media coverage, hundreds of people headed for the protest.



OLIVIA: Every time you met someone new. There was so much knowledge and inspiration going on. So many different people from different backgrounds coming together.

If there had never been a road building security operation on this scale before, it was because they had never encountered this amount of opposition.

TROLLIE: I remember the first day it kicked off, walking into town, all of us Kennet posse, seeing all these cars full of protesters; people that were coming because they'd seen it on the news. It was like, "Yes!" The Clocktower [pub] at happy hour, it was a pound a pint. It was buzzing. Loads of amazing people coming together and having a party. Sod them chopping down trees.









All by S. McLaughlin





S. McLaughlin

But me, I couldn't get much consolation from the new people that were constantly turning up. I wanted to include them and would make introductions and explanations, but then I'd instantly forget their names. Sometimes it would take a while to register what I had seen.

Like the day in Penn Wood when they moved the security cordon and I happened, for once, to be in the right place to climb a tree that was then behind the lines. There were three chainsaw operators working at the same time, as quick as they could, laying the trunks down one on top of another like a very sick game of spilikins. Licensed chainsaw operators are supposed to ensure that no other person is standing within an area twice the height of the tree that is being felled, but here those rules were being flouted and the Health and Safety Executive seemed strangely unconcerned.

They would slash at the trunks and then sometimes they would push them the last little bit, two men leaning on the trunk to help it fall, then on to the next.

I was watching them, blankly, at the base of a tree not ten yards away from mine and I watched the trunk start moving, backwards, towards them, the wrong way. It fell the wrong way. It fell onto a



tree with someone in it and I saw the white face of the man in the tree who it so narrowly missed. He was wearing a hat. I thought it was the face of a dead man. Later I saw it was Jem.

The tree bounced from there on to the line of security guards, but before it reached them it was stopped by the thin blue rope of a walkway that had just been rigged up. It took the security a second to look up and see it and leg it away in panic. The rope stretched perilously. Matt was standing on the other end of it; no harness; he would fall if it broke, and he was shouting his head off. All the people on the ground were shouting and screaming too.

Jem didn't look like he could speak.

So there's my battle story. But worse were the days when the coaches would pull up and discharge their yellow armies and I wouldn't get there in time, or I'd run the wrong way in panic.

All those beautiful alder trees around the Chase; they'd made such slender, fragile, winter patterns against the sky. I discovered that alder wood is bright orange when it is cut.

Further into Penn Wood my friends had more living nightmares. Diggers began to progress through the once-forest, shovelling the trees into huge hell fires that would burn for days and nights, spewing out thick clouds of smoke and



S. McLaughlin



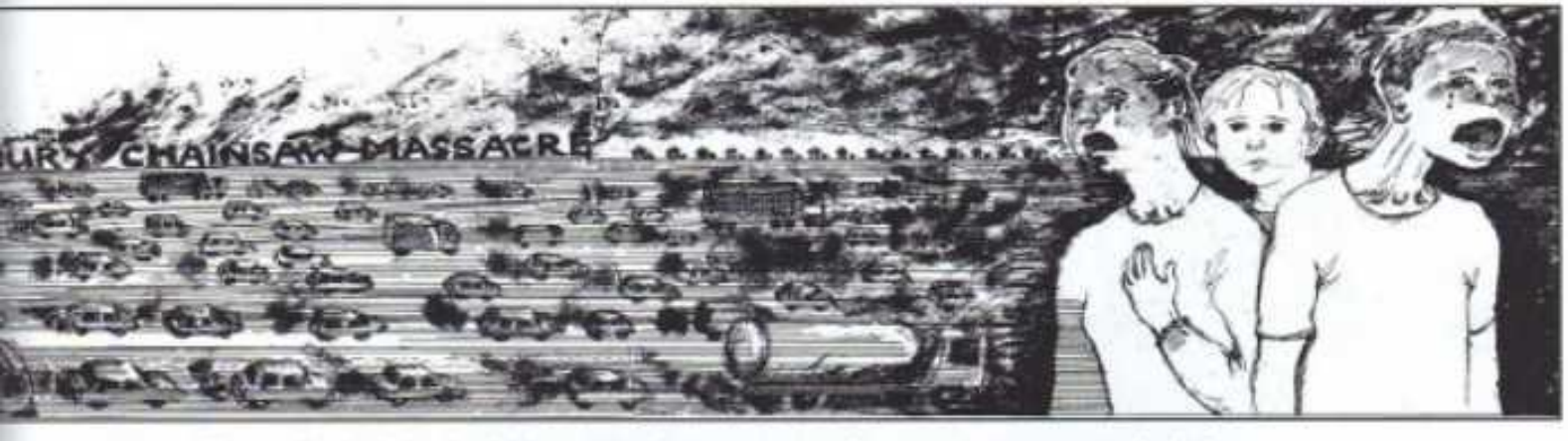


A. Testa



S. McLaughlin

dealing with the media was strange...



raining flakes of ash. It looked like some bizarre nuclear winter. People huddled stoically around the cooking fires. "Bloody hell I think we're on the set of Apocalypse Now!" Several security guards were hospitalised from smoke inhalation. Our lot just got hacking coughs and chest infections.

At times the yellow jackets would return for spontaneous illegal evictions where trees that were not actually inhabited would be felled.

OLIVIA: Its really hard if you try and protect lots of trees at the same time, running around. They were climbing up with spikes on their boots; two of them go up, and one threatens to cut one walkway, and the other to cut the other walkway... and each walkway leads to a tree. Have you ever seen the movie *Sophie's Choice*?..

DAN: They came in one morning without any paperwork and just started cutting down trees and trashing things and cutting walkways on people and being pretty out of order. Beating people upon the ground as well. But we managed to save what we saved and carried on.

Dealing with the media was strange.

So why are you against the road?

"I'm not, I'm for the trees. And could you call us environmentalists rather than Eco-warriors PLEASE."

How can you justify your presence when the people of Newbury don't want you here?

"I think you'll find what the people of Newbury want is a solution to their traffic problems. And that will best be achieved by a comprehensive system of public transport, not by this needlessly destructive new road, which traffic forecasters have predicted will be redundant within five years in any case."

That one was too eloquent for ITV and they didn't use it.

And then the other way around, me interviewing Meridian film crew about what their angle was as a particularly stunning avenue of huge sycamores crashed down.

Well, yes, we're not actually going to do a report as such – we're just here in case anything happens.

What do you mean? Things are happening. Look at those beautiful trees on the ground.

Um, actually we were looking at more of a human interest angle.

Like what, exactly? After a little prompting, this was the reply:

I mean just look at the way Jill Phipps brought the whole issue of animal exports into the public eye.

Death. That's my friends, you bastards. That's me.

But then I did get to draw cartoons for The Guardian newspaper which was a buzz, although rather complicated in the mud. I bought a vehicle with the money, to replace the one that self destructed while I zoomed it through Newbury rush hour. True to the curse attached to all roads protesters that try to own vehicles, it fell to pieces.

BYPASS NOW

Actually, a large proportion of Newbury residents did not want us there at all. People would greet us on the street with icy stares. Taxis wouldn't take our money; buses didn't stop. I once watched the women in the cake shop systematically search out and give me the smallest doughnut on the rack.

The town was polarised. There was those who vehemently opposed the road, who did their bit and more: making food, distributing supplies, taking to the trees. But the town has been Tory since time began and the shopping streets were crowded with rednecks and County types who directed at us, the invading crusty hoards, a singular amount of unspoken venom. It was a bit of a contrast with the generosity, curiosity, and friendliness of the people of Cwmgwrach.



A. Lodge

IT'S HARD NOT TO BE PARANOID WHEN THEY REALLY ARE OUT TO GET YOU.

As time went on our numbers diminished. Every time someone was arrested, the police would set bail conditions excluding them from the 'Newbury Sausage', a one mile perimeter around the route. And the next time they got nicked they ended up in prison.

The government of this country employs private detectives to spy on environmental protesters, which is an extraordinarily blatant abuse of peoples civil rights. I suppose you can take it for granted that the Secret Service include monitoring 'enemies of the state' in their make-it-up-as-we-go-along-because-we're-not-answerable-to-anyone remit. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, it is difficult to see what else they do. Then Special Branch officially announces that people who non-violently protest are terrorists and subject to it's ministrations. On top of this, Bray's Detectives, a Southampton firm, get paid to harass and spy on us; an outfit who are officially unconnected with the government and are answerable to none, but who just happened to be paid several million pounds by the Home Office.

Brays didn't seem to have made it into South Wales; I wasn't really aware of them before. Now, by the smoky security lines, a man with a yellow jacket and a green hat said, "Hello Kate" and I looked up, then felt sick that I'd given him that spark of recognition. I had never been charged with any criminal offence.

A month later I was stopped in London the night that the IRA bombed Canary Wharf, and maybe the policeman got some special 'terrorist' information on his screen when he punched in my number plate because he said, "Great march they had at Newbury today, wasn't it?"

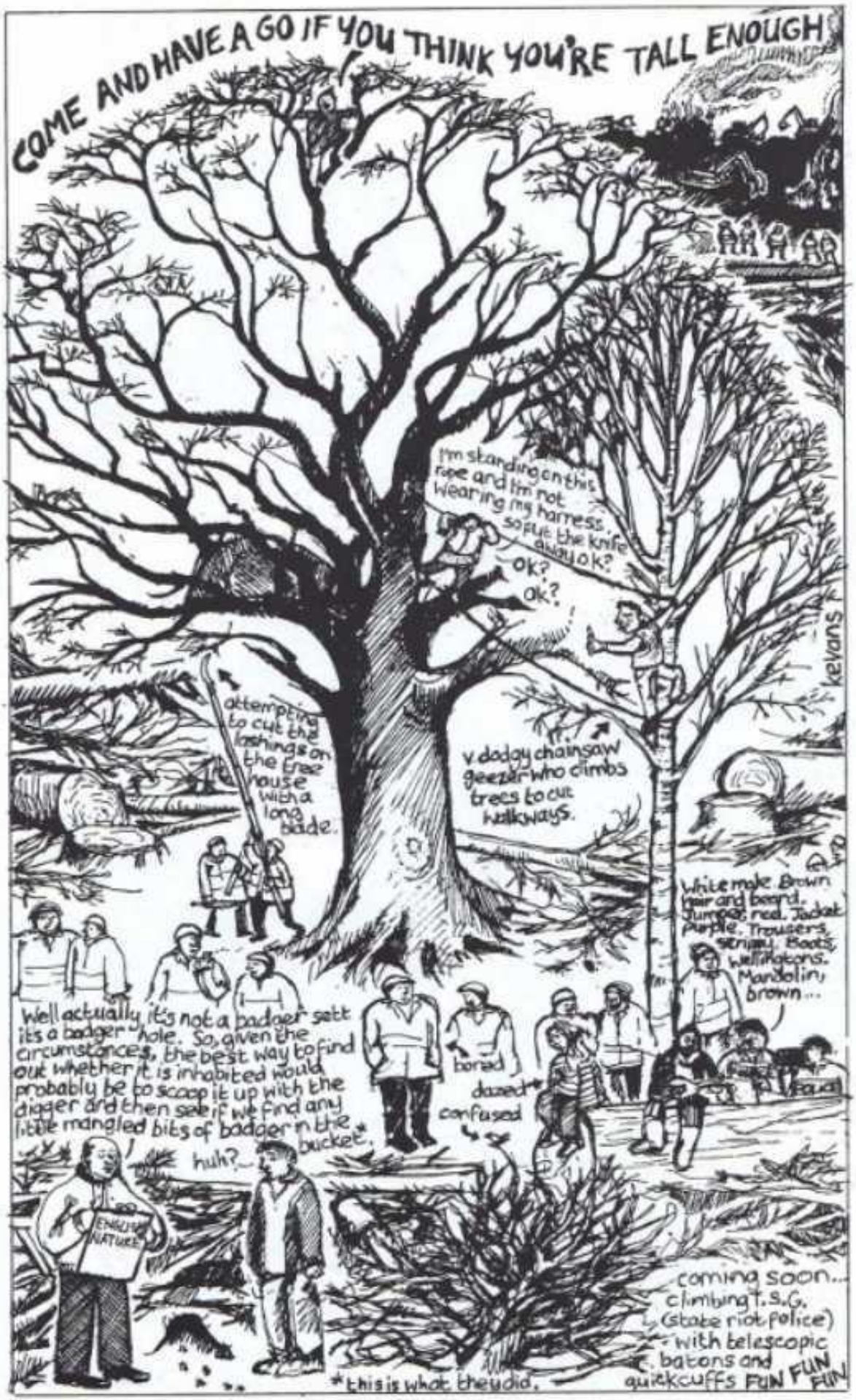
I'm not a paramilitary soldier. I'm a cartoonist that likes living in trees.

SUNFLOWER: How serious are they when they record you? Is it just a tactic to make you paranoid? You don't know what they're going to do with it. Are we all enemies of the state that are eventually going to be– ???

They were out in force, trying to fit up and seize the men that they saw were good at getting into trees. There were teams of photographers, and snatch squads, and a large book of photographs which they were matching with names. People found themselves being tailed by police, marking their every move. Then squads of police started coming into camps to get people, which was horrible, because it was our space, and they had no right to be there.

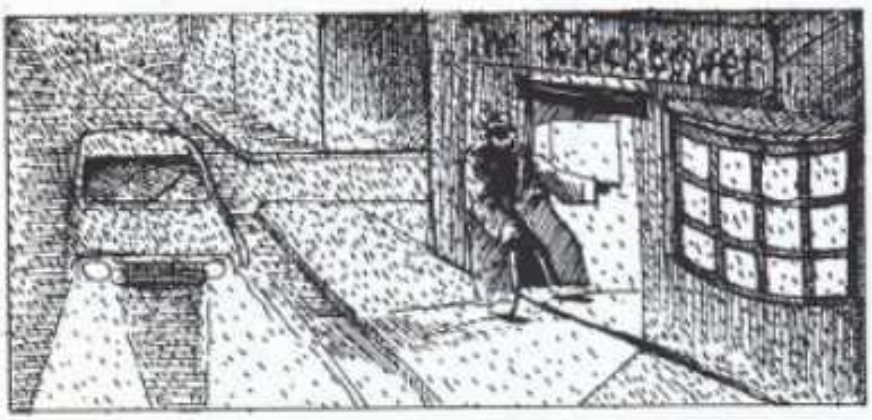
The strange thing was, though, that when you were arrested, the Newbury police were none the wiser and you could get away with giving a false name and date of birth. What do they do with the information? *I'd love to see my file.*

That was the clearance work around the camps and it went on for 10 weeks. The court cases came and went and we vaguely hoped that "they" the lawyers, the unmuddy campaigners, would get us an extension or an appeal or something. The authorities had until May 1st to clear the route, when the bird nesting season began: this was a new European law and assurances had been made that it wouldn't be broken. Back in January we had slowed them down so much that we hoped, what with the court cases and everything, we did hope we would delay it. We could have had some storming festivals on the trashed bits in the summer.


COME AND HAVE A GO IF YOU THINK YOU'RE TALL ENOUGH
I'm standing on this rope and I'm not wearing my harness, so I've the knife away o.k?
ok?
ok?
attempting to cut the lashings on the tree house with a long blade.
v dodgy chainsaw geezer who climbs trees to cut walkways.
Kevans
White male Brown hair and beard. Jumper red. Jacket purple. Trousers, stripy. Boots, wellingtons. Mandolin, brown...
Well actually it's not a badger sett its a badger hole. So, given the circumstances, the best way to find out whether it is inhabited would probably be to scoop it up with the digger and then see if we find any little mangled bits of badger in the bucket.
bored
dazed*
confused
huh?
ENJOY NATURE
*this is what they did.
coming soon... climbing T.S.G. (State riot police) with telescopic batons and quickcuffs FUN FUN FUN

PRIVATE DICK

96 xkevans














MAYBE IT WAS LINDA MCCARTNEY WHO WAS FRONTING THE WHOLE OPERATION, I'D SEEN A PACKET OF HER SAUSAGES AROUND THE CAMPFIRE.
Hey. These aren't vegan
AND WHO WAS THE SLOOGE WHO WAS GIVING THE ORDERS? THOSE TREE VILLAGES DIDN'T GET BUILT BY THEMSELVES
YEE HA!
TAPPING HER MOTHER'S PHONE DIDN'T HELP ~ ALL I LEARNED ABOUT WAS HER AUNTY DOREEN'S ILLNESS AND WHY DIDN'T SHE GET A PROPER JOB?
Yeah mum... Yes I really am warm enough... Honestly...
Yes thanks for the jumper... You're right, diamond patterns do go with anything... Acrilic, yes... it's so practical... ...Thanks...
Where's she headed now?
WE MONITORED HER MOVEMENTS BY NIGHT...
...THEN SENT THE SWAT TEAM AFTER HER BY DAY, BUT SHE WASN'T GIVING NOTHIN' AWAY
jacket-green, scarf-green, boots-green, jumper-green, leggings-crushed velvet, green...
Would you kindly fuck off?
NATIONAL ARCHERY
BUT THEN, CALL IT A HUNCH, A LUCKY BREAK, I COPPED ONTO ONE NAME THAT JUST KEPT CROPPING UP...
BUT WHO EXACTLY WAS THIS GUY BRIAN?
I'm Brian!
I'm Brian!
I'm Brian!
I'm Brian!
I'm Brian!
I'm Brian and so is my wife.

There existed, at Newbury, two levels of reality, the physical world of camps and chainsaws, and the parallel, ethereal web of the Citizen's Band radio.

Come in Tango Charlie, this is Tango Bravo

PP3

keyons96

Tango Charlie, do you read me Tango Charlie...

Tango Bravo, this is PP3, shall I relay that message to Tango Charlie?

Each morning we would group around the CB, waiting for crackly, fizzly clues as to where the chainsawmen were headed.

They're at Enbourne Row guys - get in them trees

Can Sue please ring her mum!

And throughout the day other messages would filter through

Hello, Tango Hotel... this is Kilo Charlie... come in please.

Yes this is Tango Hotel, this is Tango Hotel...

FUCKIN DIRTY SCUM ~ THEY SHOULD CHAINSAW THE TREES DOWN WITH THEM IN THEM!

Not all the messages were from people on our side.

This is PP3 - switch to the backup channel

This is Tango Hotel ~ what Kilo of Charlie?

The centre of CB world was PP3 Pete's ambulance. Pete existed almost entirely in CB world. By staying awake 23 hours a day, he managed to oversee the maintenance of all the CB's along the route, recharge and distribute batteries, and with his shit hot CB, relay any messages that otherwise wouldn't get through. He also made lots of cake.

On drizzly afternoons me and my mate Kel would often end up at Pete's ambulance.

Hello Bellagio!!

Hello. Can we come and thaw out?

We were attracted by tea and warmth and cake, and also by the entertainment value of watching someone hold three conversations at once.

PP3 ~ this is Mango Chutney, over

Yes, come in... cup of tea?

Shall I skin up?

Mango Chutney, this is PP3 receiving... Do you have a message for us Pete?

Can you feel your toes yet?

Oh yes. We have plenty of Cake for tommorows action. I repeat: We have Plenty of Cake

Lets see what MI5 make of that one eh?

As the evening drew in, more and more of the good citizens of Newbury would join us on the CB for a spot of hippy bashing.

FUCKIN' DIRTY HIPPIES - THEY SHOULD CHAINSAW THEM UP... hur hur

one bloke tapes conversations and plays them back

Pete got to know them all quite well.

FUCKIN' NEED A FUCKIN BATH... hur hur... DIRTY FUCKIN SCUM

and another one plays chainsaw noises...

THEY SHOULD ALL GET A FUCKIN' BATH... hur hur hur FUCKIN HIPPIES... but this ones quite boring

can I talk to him?

hello, can I talk to you?.. ...what's your name?

eh, wassat?

what do you look like? I'm small and dark and have blue eyes.

....

CHUNK

The court cases were lost. The evictions were imminent, except they decided to stop off at Selar and evict that first.

Selar had been very quiet over the winter. Very quiet and very cold.

You were there in the winter. What was that like?

Tony: Nice.

Really?

Yeah, it was really nice. You'd get dry days and wet days basically. And you'd wake up and on a dry day there'd be frost on the ground and there'd be icicles hanging from the bottom of the tree house, your abseil line would be frozen, all the branches and twigs would be covered with frost. You know where the water meadows were all trashed? ...you could see what it would have looked like before.

At one point it must have been about minus eight, probably colder than that with the wind chill. I remember waking up one morning, I wore a hat in bed, and I rolled over and my perspiration had frozen the hat to the side of the tree house. I pulled it off and thought, "Well this is a bit silly. I'm going to have a drink of water". Went down in my sleeping bag pulled out my water bottle and it was frozen! I was like, "Now this is getting really silly. It's Very Cold."

...we were outdoors, when it was light, working away doing something and sitting round the fire... You didn't get cold because you were busy doing stuff. Or you'd go for a walk.

The locals were going, "You'll freeze to death!" but no! Even when it snowed you'd wake up and the treehouse would be covered in snow, and it would be warmer because there was this layer of snow insulating it. It was like, "Wahey, this is alright!"

I remember at Newbury when it froze and the vegetables were frozen, and the gas bottle was frozen. Trying to chop a cabbage with a machete.

That was a problem. You'd wake up and try and have a cup of tea and the big, solid water-butt would be frozen all the way to the top. You'd have to kick it and kick it and drop bits of ice out.

You'd get warm kicking it though.

Cold, and beautiful. The streams were ice sculptures. The winter silhouettes of the trees could take your breath away.

It only took them three days to evict Selar. It was probably the most violent eviction the Sheffield climbers have done. Perhaps, when there are no national TV cameras about, then they have evicted other protest sites like that, but I don't think they have, because people would be dead.



A. Testa

(Check out the knives in the hands of the bailiffs.)

Slaying the Dragon

The Selar Eviction

Tree evictions are fraught and physical things, and unless you have been in a tree and seen a layout of walkways and tree houses it is difficult to describe what they are like. The protesters were scared at Solsbury Hill and Stanworth and Brynhenllys. Their lives were endangered, when ropes were cut when people were about to clip on to them, or when people took their harnesses off to evade capture. But at Selar and Newbury, the climbers were systematically brutal. They were under pressure to evict a large number of camps in just a few weeks, and they did it by every means possible.

There was a false alarm and we travelled to Neath for it, then another and we didn't go. Then on the third Sunday we squeezed into a van and arrived at Selar at midnight, and there were all the old faces from the Selar crew. We looked at each other and we knew. I went and swang on the swing under the tallest oak tree, and let Selar go blurry and whirl around.

At first light: the police and the security guards and the new all terrain cherry pickers and the climbers. More climbers than ever before.

TONY: When they came in on that morning there was loads and loads and loads of them coming clinkety clanking across. It was a really scary sight – all the frost on the ground and them all coming across in their armour like, I don't know what, like the army basically.

Selar was a big site (unsurprisingly, given the scale of the opencast). Defences had been built across as much of it as we could, but then when the eviction came the fifty or so of us that made it to that remote, frozen mountainside were scattered about; a few in this tree, a few in another. Whereas at Brynhenllys we were all defending one clump of trees against one cherry-picker and four climbers, at Selar a few people in each tree were no match for three cherry-pickers and fourteen climbing bailiffs.

The first thing they did was to storm in and cut the web. This was a complicated hexagon of walkways which connected the tallest trees on 'the Boulevard', the road which ran up one side of the site. We were ready for them, standing on the web, some wearing wrist clips rather than harnesses. Justin knew that if everyone clipped onto the top line of the walkways, they could cut the bottom one, so he clipped his harness to the bottom rope.

They cut it, and everyone fell with their weight onto the old polyprop of the top section of the web. Che was dangling by one wrist, and Justin was falling, falling, until a knot in the rope caught in a tension bar, a small section of rope connecting the top and bottom walkways of the web. Matt had rigged up the tension bar about 15 minutes earlier. Justin swung down and stopped just short of the ground

I was in my tree on the other side of site. Kel and I were asleep still, wrapped in the spell of our old tree house. A gently rocking cocoon.

We awoke to shouts of, "They're on your walkway!" as climbers came through our side of site, cutting what they could. Then we were pretty much left alone for the rest of the day, listening to the screams and crashes and the roar of the chainsaws from across the fields.

About mid-morning they ran a bulldozer across the bank in front of our tree. That was where Nat and the kids had lived in the summer, and it had been the children's play area, with a special low-down tree house. I had learned the path that ran through it so that when there was no moon I could let my feet predict its turns. We were inordinately careful about not crushing the little oak saplings. They ran a bulldozer through it and it became some corrugated earth and a pile of splintered bushes.

The battle went on around the web all day.

NICKY: It had always been my idea that I would like to have offered them a cup of tea when they came into the treehouse, but I had quite a while, so I managed to open loads and loads of cans of eviction stash as well. They started kicking up at the trap door, and I'd just finished making my cup of tea and I offered them a cup of tea and they didn't want one. So I managed to drink it while bouncing up and down, while they kicked at the bottom of the trap door. Then they stared to break through, so I took the bucket of rice pudding-spaghetti-baked beans-lucozade-pickle that I'd gotten together and poured it through the little gap that they had made. It sort of oozed out, and the geezer goes "Go on then, get him" and the other one goes, "Ah! No, I can't. I feel sick! I've got to get this stuff off me!" And then I got taken down from there

without a big load of fighting. The original plan was to have four people locked onto the walls and stuff, so it was a shame it was just me in there.

SCARY STORY

LEILA: I don't really know what happened. What I think happened was that there were three of us on a walkway. We decided to stay on a walkway, me Huw and Mel, and I was in the middle. And we all clipped on to each other and then clipped off the walkway. A climber in the tree grabbed onto Huw and they tried to handcuff him behind his back. Which I think they did, eventually.

And they were, like, pulling. There was a big tug-of-war type thing.

He was clipped onto you two who weren't clipped onto anything?

Yes. And, there were three climbers and a cherry-picker, they took Huw , belayed him down. Me and Mel went back to the middle of the walkway. The cherry-picker came up one side and grabbed hold of Mel, so [a climber] was holding Mel, with a rope wrapped round her, and I was hanging off Mel's cowstail. Then they cut the walkway, so basically they were holding Mel with me hanging off her.

Then they cut the rope between me and Mel.



And at some point, I don't know when they did it, they clipped a really long tape onto me, which was about seven feet long, probably; so when they cut Mel's cowstail I just swung down on that tape, which I didn't know at the time I was attached to until I stopped swinging.

TROLLIE: She was in a Leveller's video

You were in a Leveller's video?

LEILA: Yeah, that bit was on it.

You've been on MTV?

I've been on MTV twice, I think.

At the end of the day that side of site was unrecognisable; a huge jumble of rope and earth and trunks and tarps. The security guards stayed through the night, making fires with burning plastic under the treehouses and trying to stop people getting up their trees.

OLIVIA: I had this confrontation with the security guard looking him straight in the eyes. And he was saying "No." I was saying "I am going to get up!"

That was my home! That was really my home. You know a lot of time in evictions you say, "Oh this is my home, blah blah," but that was really really really my home; my only home. My real home. Who are you? You are getting paid by the fucking hour! You say I can't get up this tree?

Olivia called people over, one of whom went through the history of Reliance Security with the red hat in charge. He traced how Reliance had grown from a poxy little collection of jumped up night-watchmen, before Solsbury Hill, to the awesomely huge force that was presently building the Newbury bypass. The red hat was eventually persuaded that it was in fact in the interest of his company to let protests become as long and as effective as possible: "We pay your wages, mate." So Olivia and others got up the trees and at dawn the whole thing started again, and today they came for our side of site.

They had a new method of pulling people from the trees; they put a loop of steel cable around a person's chest and threaded it through itself so it tightened up as they dragged them away. They haven't used that since.

I was hauled out of my tree, which now seemed very small and undefendable. Kel was the last out and the steel noose tightened around her ribs as she was crying. It left a long, purple bruise.

By the time we had been taken off site and walked back around the cordon, our tree had been felled. It grew at an angle, out over the bank, and the stump had split so you could see that it had only taken one slash of the chainsaw for it to crash down.

Olivia's tree was larger, and it took them a while to get everyone out.

OLIVIA: Che, he was looking at the climbers; I can't remember the words he was saying but basically it was like "I'm strong – you're weak. I'm strong in peace and you're weak in your violence. I am with life and you are with death." It was powerful, what he was saying. They ended up tying him up and pulling him with the cherry-picker away from the branch. Che was so strong that he held onto the branch for ages and ages, and all the strength of the cherry-picker, and all the people driving it, all the climbers and all the security guards couldn't get him off

NICKY: They put a steel tape around Che's middle and then they used the hydraulics of the cherry-picker to pull him out of the tree. The tape was made in such a way that it got tighter the more pressure was put upon it. Olivia was having a really hard time, really crying, and then they came and got me, and they did the same thing with the steel tape and the cherry-picker. I was trying to hold onto the tree. The guys were breaking the branches so they came away in my hands, this tree that Olivia had lived in for so long. And I was saying sorry to her, but I didn't know what to do because I didn't want to be pulled off.

They got me and I was really winded and suspended in the air by this horrible steel tape thing... I tried to hold on to the side of the cherry-picker and [the climber] stood on my fingers. Anyway, I managed to gasp out that I was winded and he let me hang on.

They suspended these men, by a self tightening wire loop, *outside* the cage of a cherry-picker while it made its slow, hydraulic descent. That is not just dangerous; it is vindictive.

OLIVIA: I remember clearly this feeling of them cutting the branches; it felt like they were cutting my arms and legs. I felt it physically in my body. Actually a climber asked me, laughingly, he said "Oh, it looks like we are cutting you", and it was like that. Lots of people have been telling me how I was screaming and shouting and crying – I can't remember that. I remember crying after, but I don't remember shouting and screaming while it was happening at all.

I ended up climbing really high up and I think they broke the branches beneath me and took me away with the whole branch. I can't remember exactly – I was really off my head...

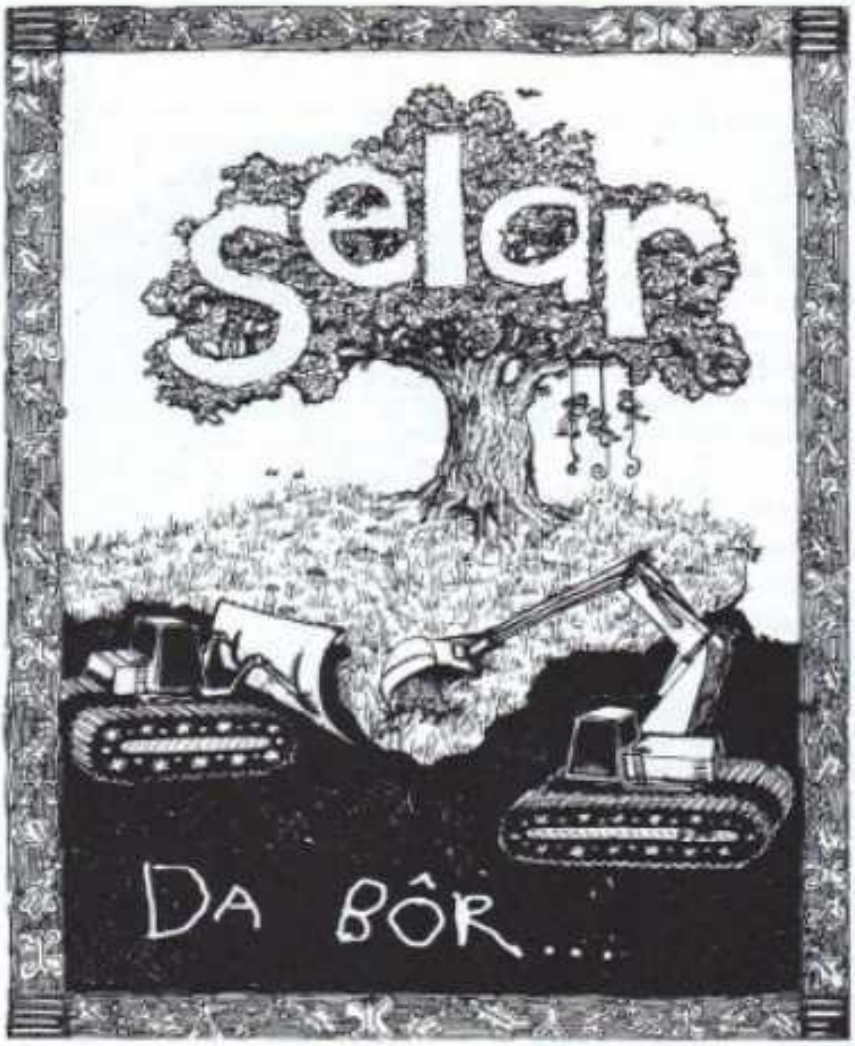
Maybe I'm spoilt, but I usually manage to get what I want when I want it badly, I usually do. If I concentrate all my energies and really fight for it, I get it.

I couldn't get it. I couldn't save Selar. That was the thing that mattered most to me in my life. Although now I see it in perspective, at that time that was my only desire. And my life wouldn't have saved it. I could have died for it and it wouldn't have changed things.

VIOLENT

TONY: The guy that took me out, never seen him before or since, but he was a complete psychopath. He had dead eyes, like a fish, and any time I'd go to do anything he'd go, "That's assault. That's assault." It ended up with me whipping the chainsaw [with some frayed rope]; I got the polyprop caught in the chainsaw and it stopped and they went down, and I thought, 'Wicked. They ain't going to do anything."

Then four of the climbers came up, and they bent me over this branch, a really thin, bendy branch, and they handcuffed me behind my back and said they were going to lower me down like that. Handcuffed. I said, "No you're NOT!" and started kicking about. They'd put a rope around my waist, but I didn't know about that, and I slid off the end of the branch and I thought I was falling out of a tree. I went *wooop* and stopped. I was dangling upside down in the air. [No harness, just a rope, upside down, handcuffed. Oh dear.] Cathy got nicked because she was swearing so much at the copper on the ground, going, "You're going to fucking kill him!" He goes, "Say that again and you're nicked" and she goes, "YOU'RE GOING TO FUCKING KILL HIM!" She got nicked.



They put me in the cherry-picker and the guy said, "Do you want me to give you a kicking now, or are you going to come peacefully?" I said, "I'll come peacefully" and he just went, "oh, I'll give you a kicking now then" and he starts kicking me in the ribs!

I got down and there was Andrew Wilson standing there [the under sheriff responsible for the eviction] and they took off one handcuff and I went [two finger salute]. So it's Fingers Up to Andrew. I thought I was nicked for sure but they just let me go.

The only not-particularly-bad thing about the eviction was that relatively few people were arrested

The next day was the last day, when they took all the other trees around the edges that had never been lived in before.

NICKY: It was a really fucked up morning actually. That was the morning that one geezer went to set fire to his leg and a branch and some walkways. Some people nearly fell. They just managed to get off in time.

Someone else was going along with a noose around his neck going, "There'll be the first hanging today if you cut this tree." Everyone just got so desperate because the whole eviction was supposed to last for ages with loads of defences, and we'd just been totally trashed in a matter of days.

TONY: But it was really symbolic, that last day. There were these four big oaks, at the top by Terry's caravan, and this huge digger was going like, I dunno, like a dinosaur, like a huge dinosaur head THWACK on the trees, like that. Trying to knock them over, and they wouldn't go. I was cheering, "Hooray! Yeah! Stay up!". Bang Bang BANG.

Those trees had bats in, and the 'conservation' geezer from Celtic Energy had said, "Oh, we'll lower that tree with the digger arm. We'll knock it down." So that'll be alright. Instead of chainsawing it, we'll knock it over. That's their idea of saving the animals that live in the trees – much less distressing.

One of the last trees, by the road, had a big Welsh flag in. And the first thing they did when they climbed the tree was they cut the Welsh flag off. It fluttered down, floated down, and then it lay in the road and all the vehicles drove across it and ground it into the mud.

Bye bye Selar.

MARK: To have to go to such an extent to get some publicity about some English people raping the Welsh Valleys is quite unbelievable.

OLIVIA: **I have each little branch still in my memory.**

Back at Newbury...

...they started the evictions immediately. They went into Snelsmore with a load of bailiffs who didn't really know how to climb so they could take out the tunnels while Jose, the man who built them, was still at Selar. So there was a showy kind of mock-eviction for the TV cameras, like the digger diving back on the very first day. Then the climbers arrived.



A. Testa

From PP3's log:

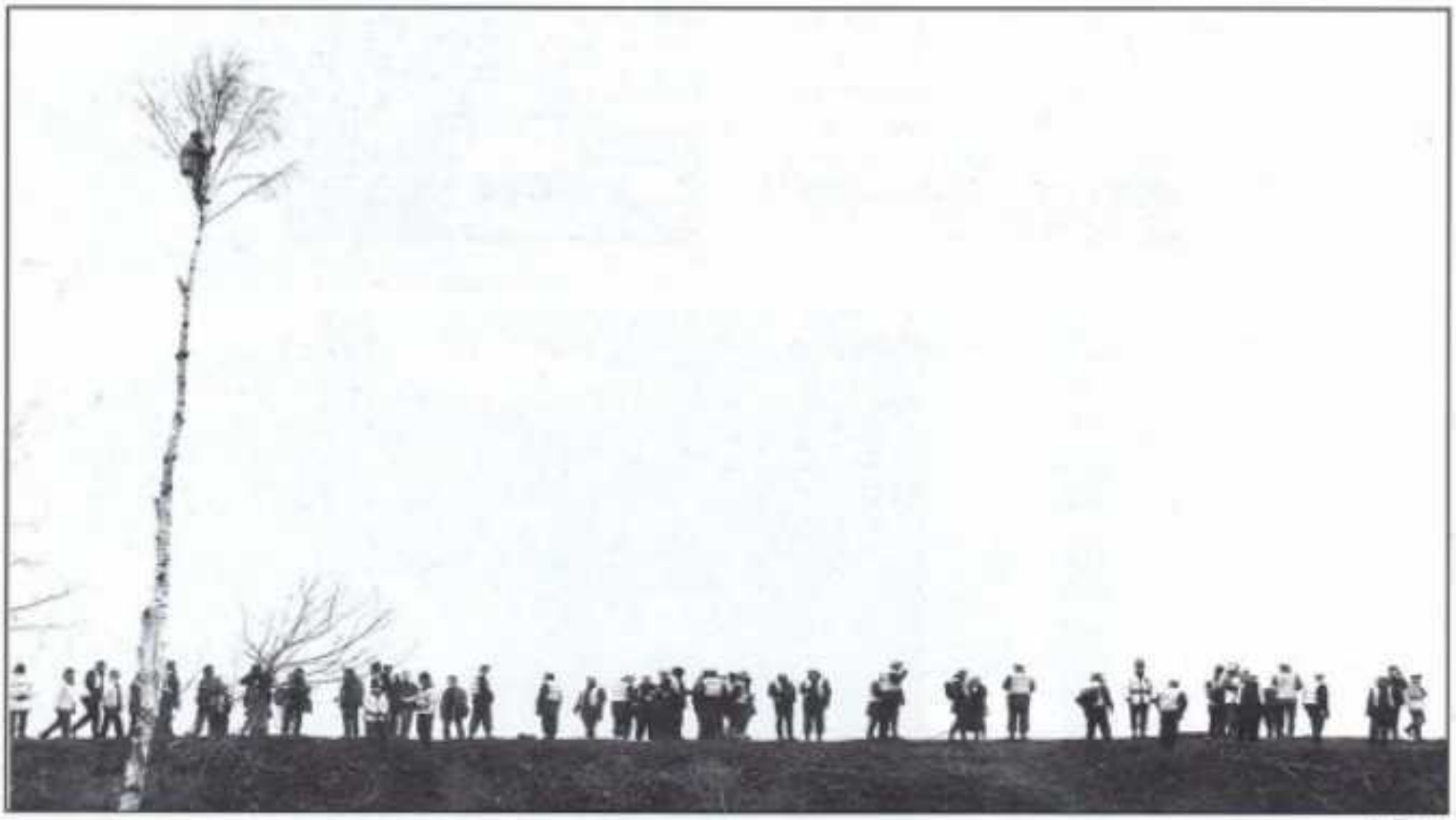
Thurs 29th Feb: Snelsmore.. Fri 1st March: Snelsmore... Mon 4th: Granny Ash... Tues 5th: The Chase... Wednesday 6th: Bagnor Lane... Thurs 7/3/96: Snelsmore and Skyward... Fri 8th: Skyward cont... Tues 12/3/96: Gotan... Weds 13th : early hit on Kennet... 14/3 Kennet... Friday 15th Kennet then Castle Wood... 18th Seaside, Babblebrook, Manic Sha 700 police, 30 vans... Tues 19/3/96: Manic Sha cont. (12.40) Heartbreak Hotel... Wednesday 20th: Beddings Copse, big cherrypicker... 21/3 Tot Hill... Friday 22nd: Enbourne Row...



A. Testa



A. Testa



A. Testa

I woke up at six in the morning at the Chase to a dream that my mother's house was on fire. Tongues of flame were licking her bedroom ceiling as I tried to abseil out of the window onto the street. The pictures stayed with me as I groped for my harness which was hung from the roof of the bender, and went out and made tea for what I knew was the last time.

They came in at ten to seven, I think. There was fifteen of us in the trees and the same number of bailiff climbers, so it was over by lunchtime. It was all very anti-climactic. When we had lived there and built the defences there had always been a vision that this net and those tree houses and those high walkways and that swampy terrain would delay them for days, weeks, not hours.

Still it happened early enough in the day to make the papers.

This photo of Ellie got everywhere. They did the same to her as they did to Chris at Brynhenllys, in a thinner, twiggier tree. When they brought the cherry-picker up to her she climbed even higher in the branches. The climbers snapped the trunk of the tree as she clung to it – they didn't have to use a saw. Later, I clambered through the corpse of the copse and found that silver birch on the ground. I could close one hand around the trunk at the place where it broke.

The next day I walked nine miles to the other end of the route and snuggled up next to someone in a tree house at Skyward camp, where I had lived before Christmas. At half past six the following morning his mobile phone went off and the office informed us in a nauseatingly cheerful way that, "It looks like it's you this morning chaps."

Again.


Dawn awakening.
A weak warning crackle from the CB. A knot of cold fear in your stomach as the lines of fluoro-yellow scramble to assemble themselves around the camp.
I feel sick.
Don't worry we haven't got any food anyway.
Diggers blitz the undergrowth safe behind police lines. The funeral pyres burn for days.
OH SHIT THEY'RE COMING FOR US THEY'RE REALLY COMING FOR US
Lizzy was belayed 35ft by her ankle. The climbers snatched her Ventalin Inhaler from her hand and threw it away.
Take off your harness so they can't catch you by it.
You don't see the height any more. You don't see the danger.
3 months imprisonment or a fine of £1000...
Then you feel like the digger drove straight through your head. You look at the space where your tree was and you still see its shape against the sky in your mind.
Wait a minute. I thought cartoons were supposed to be funny.



A. Testa

picker, helping another bailiff to jump on Matt's legs.

So now we had our own Sheffield climbers, and some amazing aeriel acrobatics resulted.

Britain's best climber Ben Moon tied up the bailiffs at the Gotan eviction and was arrested for attempted kidnapping. That made the papers again (Oh, to think of the number of column inches of dead trees that we filled). It was very educational, watching these guys, as they used strength and skill to outwit the bailiffs. *They were clipped on all the time.* They were safe: they removed the whole suicidal aspect from the contest, which was an infinitely better way to fight.

Ben Moon demonstrates his immunity to gravity.

At Skyward and later at Gotan there were more Sheffield climbers, but these ones were not paid by the Department of Transport – they had come along to bear witness to what their mates were up to. They shinned up into the trees at Skyward and were stunned by the beauty of the place. Huge oaks. Clear winter sky. And by the scale of the destruction. One of them was telling me in disbelief how he had travelled for years with Ian Harrison, climbing some of the worlds wildest, loveliest, natural peaks, while at the same time his former friend was in a cherry-



A. Testa

The Kennet eviction was nasty. There was no cherry-picker access to the camp, which was situated between the river Lambourne and the Kennet canal. So the eviction had to be climber only, and this meant there was a chance for as serious showdown between the protesters and the bailiffs – it is quite possible for a motivated group of people to prevent climbers from getting into a tree from the ground.

The authorities decided to load the dice back in their favour by storming the camp at three o'clock in the morning; an SAS style raid, with police wearing balaclavas and black overalls over their uniforms. They started on the trees before it was light, despite the obvious risk incurred by protesters climbing without safety equipment in the dark.

TROLLIE: We were so sure, because we'd put so much work into defending it. We had loads of walkways – the whole place became an island because we dug trenches and flooded the canal – all sorts of things..

Then that was it. Three in the morning. I remember Ruth shouting "THIS IS IT THIS IS IT THIS IS IT" – it was like, "Down half a bottle of brandy. Sorted. Out of my treehouse. Wahey! On the walkways" but ours was the first tree they came up, which was unfortunate.

It was pitch black. I remember looking down, there were two of the tree surgeon geezers [bailiffs] and there was this other guy. I remember him arriving the night before; I think he was German, or something like that, and he was running around going, 'Where do I go? What do I do?" The tree surgeon just punched him in the face! I remember hearing the punch and hearing him fall to the floor, and then I remember seeing him run up to the police going, "They just punched me!" and the police just looked at him like 'Yeah? And? What?". And he was just an average human being that was fucking freaked out to fuck, and I'd hate to have been on the ground; thank God I was in the trees.

They were firing catapults at us and everything, in the dark. And then they came up our tree.



THEY'LL NEVER TAKE THE KENNET! A. Testa

Trollie was sent to Holloway for a week for the way she reacted to the bailiffs when they came up.

The Chase... Skyward... Gotan... The Kennet... Castle Wood... Seaside... Babblebrook...

One after one, the big camps and then the little ones. There was only one time when they faltered in their stride....



A. Testa

They came for **Reddings Copse**, the camp with the 120 foot Corsican pine tree. (The "Pinus"; some men got *so* excited about it.) For the biggest tree they needed the biggest cherry-picker, which was imported specially on a boat from Holland. They drove it triumphantly down the winding lanes of Enbourne to what had been an ancient oak forest at Reddings, but which was now reduced to just five trees.

They were tall, these oaks, at sixty foot, and the pine was twice their height. But the shiny new cherry-picker was taller still, and the bailiffs jumped eagerly into the bucket and proudly extended it until it was as large and as long as it could be. They raised it up to the very top of the pine and took the flag that flew there that could be seen all along the route.

Now they worked at different things all the time in these evictions. When the cherry-picker went up, a digger driver climbed into his cab and started wrenching earth and saplings from the forest floor. And when it came down again, he shunted around the trunk of the oak that bordered the pine and started digging at its roots. And when the bailiffs got out and went to stand ten yards away, the bucket of the digger caught the roots of the great oak tree and sent it spinning, spiralling, crashing down, across the big shiny cherry-picker and onto four bailiff climbers. They saw it fall and ran away, but one of them didn't make it and a branch caught him across the head so that only his climbing helmet saved his skull.

Nicholas Blandy [the under sheriff] didn't even stop eating his lunch. He wandered over and had a look, and just carried on munching on his sandwich. –[press photographer that was present at the scene.]

I was sitting in PP3 when the news of this filtered in over the CB, along with another report that a Landrover full of Brays detectives had rolled in a ditch, and one of them had broken his leg. I thought my head would explode. All this time worrying, worrying, about when one of us would die (please don't let it be anyone I know) and then Mother Nature strikes an almighty blow at two of them.

My friends offered sincere condolences at the hospital, since we were not in the business of wishing anyone injured. Sheriff Blandy did not repay the courtesy and told reporters that protesters had sabotaged the ambulance. Which wasn't true, but who was going to believe a load of anarchic hippies against the word of the Under Sheriff?

All the parts of the route I had known now looked like the one wide, flat, deep brown stretch of earth, except for Penn Wood, where the chainsawmen had stared three months before. I returned there on the first true day of spring, a quiet Sunday afternoon when golden sunshine was streaming sideways through the branches of the trees. The camps were what had been snatched from the chainsaws, and here were a patch of pines, there a line of oaks, every hundred yards another little outcrop of the old forest. It looked like the ghost of Penn Wood; a sort of sculpture of half road / half country. Birds sang. Local families put their wellies on and brought us sandwiches and flapjacks.

They started on Penn Wood the next week. The evictions were still pretty low-key: so many people had had to leave and those that were left were exhausted from having to stay. No one screamed or shouted any more except when they were being tortured out of lock-ons, and always there were too few people to really hold them off. I did feel bitter, when the yellow lines arrived, as I thought of the people who really cared about Newbury, and about roads, and about the world, and wondered where the fuck they were.

Seaside... Babblebrook... Manic Sha...

Shamanic **Manic Sha** was one of the nicest, fluffiest camps in Penn Wood, in a group of rather lovely oak trees.

OLIVIA: Compared to most we were a pretty sorted camp and we always managed to have proper communal meals and a warm communal bender.

A good fire, good music.

The best fire around Penn Wood I would say.

However, it wasn't the nicest, fluffiest eviction:

NICKY: ... they'd cut the rope walkway, but there was a steel cable that they couldn't cut in between the two trees. When they went down and came back up with some bolt-croppers to cut the handcuffs off the girl in the tree opposite me, I realised that they could go for the steel cable, so I lay across it to make sure they didn't cut it.

They cut the girl's handcuffs, and they took her down, and the guy had the bolt-croppers and he went to cut the steel cable and I thought "Ha! He won't do that. I'm lying on this steel cable with nothing else to support me" and then he looked across at me, and then he chopped it. I was stunned. I was like, "Uh?". It felt like for a few seconds; I just didn't know what to do, and then I started falling and luckily I grabbed a branch on the way down. The branch went all the way to the point where it was going to break, and then it didn't. I screamed at the two guys, and then got my head together a bit and I talked to this bailiff, I said, "You really should have seen that; you should have done something about that," and he just hung his head in shame.

The guys who were going down, that had done it, they were wiping their hands across their foreheads going "Phew!"

And before that everyone had been going like "Keep it fluffy, keep it fluffy." Everyone had been really nice and fluffy and our camp had been full of really nice, fluffy people, and it was all going fine and even people who weren't usually fluffy were being fluffy. And then suddenly it was like FUCK FLUFFY – YOU NEARLY KILLED MY BROTHER!!! And they were like, chucking baked bean cans at the bailiffs and one of them got cut, and they went down and just stopped the eviction for that day.

The next day:

OLIVIA: It was Sally, Kath and me inside the tree house, and we had this mad idea of taking our clothes off. The feeling was, well first of all, it would take them ages to take us down, because they would have to get blankets, and get authorisation, blah blah blah. The other thing we thought was, what is more powerful than vulnerability? We felt there was a strength in our nakedness. It was just us. Against the sheriffs, security guards, cherry-pickers...

What happened when they came up?

It went all totally crap.

There was this guy, this climber on the roof of the tree house, laughing and saying "Hey you'll like this guys." The tree house had a lot of chicken wire underneath so when they were taking apart the roof they scratched us and we were going, "Oh, stop it" – it was really painful because it kept getting on our skin, and then they made lots of really sexist, silly comments. And there was this dodgy, psycho climber, the brown hat –

I know him

he grabbed me from behind, tried to put this rope around me, and he kept on grabbing my tits. And it was really hard because. Yeah, OK, I had put myself in this situation, but it was being abused. It was really hard to defend myself.

I was the only one arrested because, I think Sally and Kath walked into the cherry-picker and I was faffing around, so in the end they tried to put a rope around me. I was the last one in the tree, all the others had gone and I was surrounded by male climbers. And I had forgot why the hell I was there with no clothes instead of being with clothes, running around, running away from them! Climbing higher up. With a harness on that I could clip on somewhere. Really, I thought, "I am so stupid. Why did I do this?"

I was taken down after having been touched loads by this wanker and I was arrested. I was all on my own and all these policewomen were telling me, "Oh you bitch. You did a really outrageous thing. Disgusting!" When you keep on getting told something and you are shocked and vulnerable and unsure, I started to, not really to believe it, but – I wouldn't think it would hurt normally, policewomen saying things about me but it did.

I got charged with Obstruction of the Sheriff and I got 28 days conviction for that, which I have appealed against now. The policemen were lying their heads off in court because they said I was being really violent and kicking the bailiffs. There was six climbers around one naked woman and I was being violent? Then the police said I tried to jump out of a cherry-picker – naked with a blanket around me – and grab branches. And in the video it showed when I got in the cherry-picker I just sat down in it. "



A. Testa

By **Horseshoe**, I had invalided myself out of the trees with dodgy knees so I did a ground lock-on and had a boot level eviction, staring up the bailiffs noses instead of looking down at their hats. There were black shiny boots all around me. Poppy was in her own little eight-year-old sized tree, quite near to me, and the bailiffs asked me, "Why have you made him do that?" unwilling to grasp the idea that she was up there of her own free will. She wanted a cherry-picker to take her down. I don't think she got one.

Rickety Bridge was different. That was a YeeHa! eviction – a totally storming one.



A. Testa

Through some complicated arguments in court the eviction date had been delayed until the last possible opportunity so people managed to gather together there and put up a proper resistance.

The land was untouched by preliminary clearance. The trees were coming into leaf and the river Lambourne flowed around the camp; it was an island of tranquillity and beauty in a sea of desecration. People gathered in the trees with bated breath. And then a kamikaze sound system in the trees kicked in, and people cheered, and it became, well, a party:

EMMA They were playing *I Shot the Sheriff*, and I was singing, 'Sheriff Blandy always hated trees, For what, I don't know....'

OLLIE: They sent a guy across the river in galoshes and put up a bridge, and the police came over on it. Blandy came over and gave his little spiel, yeah, then off it goes; standard eviction stuff. Lots of climbers up the trees. By the afternoon they got the cherry-picker in and they worked their way around.

But just after the second break on the second day they really had difficulty getting started. They'd cut down about a third of the trees, or something, but lots of other people had come. Everywhere they looked to try and get going there were loads of people in the tree saying, *"Come on then!"* They were nearly at a stage where they couldn't continue.

There were some brilliant lock-ons. A platform had been built on an intersection of steel cable walkways, and then a lock-on put on it, which was too heavy for the cherry-picker to bear. They had to build a scaffolding tower to take that one out.

"Standard eviction stuff":

EMMA: The things I saw people do! The most amazing things I've ever seen human beings do. There was this guy who carried on making walkways all the way through the eviction like it wasn't going on around him. More and more walkways to the bitter end. He was at the top of this really bendy tree and just bouncing across trying to reach this other tree to rope it off...
OLLIE ...one of the bailiffs got onto the platform with us, and it started cracking. One of the major branches cracked so the whole platform was at a thirty degree angle. We said, "You will be careful won't you, because we don't all want to die"...

They worked their way around gradually, and everyone did all the insane and heroic things that they never believed they could or would, and it took them three days to take that site.

OLLIE: It was very strange at the end. Totally trashed. I'll always remember that big pile of mud; piles of burning trees. Like a first world war no-mans land. Like the Somme, the landscape. And a load of hippies wandering around in the mud going, "Have you seen my sleeping bag?", "Do you know where Abi is?", "Have you seen my climbing tape?". All in a total daze.

And that is when I left Newbury.

Plenty of people stayed after the last camp, Camelot, went. They set up ground camps, vegetable gardens and tunnels, and had a good time. There was a whole other set of evictions, months later, of the new camps that were established and many more trees were felled. But I left. I felt it was definitely time.

NICKY: I sort of came to the end of my tether with the whole Newbury thing. It was most of my time from November to the end of March that I was there and it was just too much destruction. Doing my head in. I found myself on the ground in an eviction, for the first time, and I just wanted to go and slap the bailiffs – and I knew that would get me into trouble. I was getting really really increasingly agitated, and the Selar eviction didn't help things at all....

Much too much destruction. I could see rows of trees toppling against my closed eyelids. Image after image of woody, leafy, magical places – the most beautiful places I have ever lived in – coming down around my ears. When I saw fluorescent jackets my heart would race. I would jump when I heard the word 'eviction'. No matter how proud we all were that we had been part of the resistance, we were all carrying mental scars.

CRASH Morning after morning I awoke, with friends, from yellow jacket dreams. We would look at each other and say, "Not more evictions!" Still, today, the sight of a fresh tree stump makes me suck in my breath. Even now the sound of a chainsaw makes me grit my teeth.

I had an excellent summer. I didn't go near any protest camps except Fairmile, I told myself that I never lived at Fairmile: I didn't build a tree house. Just visiting. But if you added up all the time I spent there, it turns out that I lived there longer than I lived anywhere else.



A. Testa



A. Testa


As the evil, planet trashing forces of Babylon smash their way through our native countryside, it is time to bid a fond farewell to Newbury.
Three months, thats thirteen weeks, or ninety-four days, or in fact a whole bloody 1996 of stressfulcoldhungry chainsaw massacre.
A nine mile route, and we fought for every inch.
But now Spring has Sprung, and the tree people are off to the land of the free
Wahey! I can cast aside my muddy combat fatigues and put on a fresh summer frock!
Cor, yes, so can I
presence of new + hitherto unsuspected muscle
And a final message for the Highways Agency (Salsbury Hill ~ suspended; the M11 ~ London's most expensive building site) . . . CONCRETE THAT NEVER SETS.
kevans 96


OBSOLETE

The Elves and the Trolls

The A30 Campaign – September 1994 to January 1997

Like at Solsbury Hill and Newbury, the new A30 between Devon and Honiton is a stretch of motorway posing as a bypass. Yet another strand of the web of Euro routes, this one runs across the south coast of England, from Penzance all the way to... ??? The public enquiry concluded that the existing A30 is dangerous and so approved its replacement, although this does nothing to solve the 11 accident black spots on the old road. The enquiry also decided that 157 residences will be relieved of noise from the old road. Weigh this against the 117 that will suffer increased noise from the new one, and it doesn't amount to much of a justification for destroying 15 miles of countryside. However, unlike the new roads at Newbury and Bath, the Government decided not to build it.

Instead, in August 1994 the A30 was put out to tender as part of the Government's new Private Finance Initiative. The scheme is known as Design, Build, Finance and Operate (Destroy, Burn, Fell, Obliterate): DFBO for short. A private consortium of companies builds and runs the road and after 30 years the Government pays a 'shadow toll' for every car that has passed along it. Protesters have only just been plucked from the trees at Whitecroft and the Government is mindful that this new plan means that Market Forces, rather than the State, is seen to be responsible for new road developments. After all, the public can demand a change of policy from their elected representatives, but the actions of multinational corporations are beyond their control.

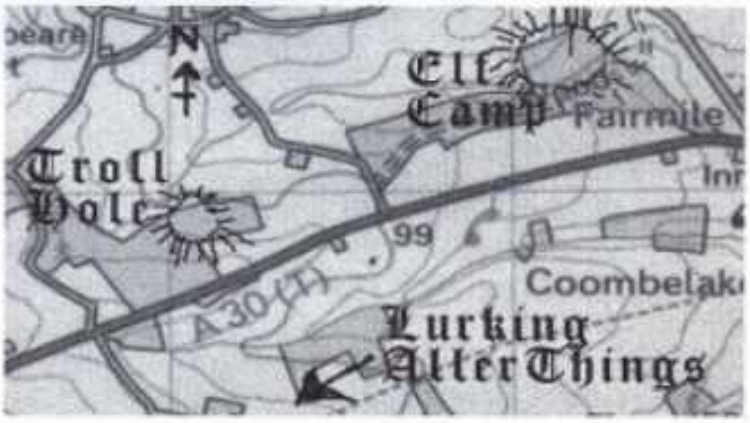
The Private Finance Initiative is a convenient name for the privatisation of many future government projects, in line with Conservative policy. After all, why should the Government bear the burden of equitably providing the populace with the utilities that they have no choice but to use, when a bunch of shareholders can take over the monopoly and cream off a profit. That, according to the Tories, is just sound economic sense.

Nicky's picture

ROAD TO RUIN

If DFBO roads are paid per car, and they have to make a profit, then their whole function, in fact their duty, is to increase car use. The private consortia lobby to discourage efficient public transport, they excessively signpost the new roads, and they develop as much of the surrounding land as they can. In the case of the A30, Devon County Council obliges by 're-zoning' the land along the new road to allow for the development of a technology park, a power station, a quarry extension, houses for 10,000 people... How many new cars and trucks does that represent? And then how much is a fair price for each car? We are not allowed to know how much the shadow toll will be. All details surrounding the contracts are secret, even the names of the companies behind the builders, the Connect Consortium, can only be surmised. All that we do know is that the next generation will pay the price. In more ways than one.

Clearance work started on the new A30 before the contracts were even awarded. In September 1994, while people were still barricading Claremont Road, the chainsawmen moved in to clear a route five times as long as the one at Batheaston. Opposition was localised and sporadic: digger diving and tree occupation managed to save just one copse at each end of the route. At the western end, a camp is established at Allercombe which had its own community and trials and tribulations. At the eastern end a more widely publicised camp was set up at Fairmile. And that is the one that I visited, so there is where I am going to write about.





S. McLaughlin

Three people held the site over the winter, the same rainy winter which saw the cosmic tree village built at Stanworth. And then in Spring it was decided to hold a Beltaine gathering at the Fairmile camp. That was fab.

There was a handfasting (pagan wedding) with food and drink for all. There were horses, oxen, children, fire breathing, drums and whistles. In other words there was a great deal of yoghurt weaving, culminating in people taking off their inhibitions and jumping naked over the Beltaine fire. That's a dangerous thing to do, incidentally, as, depending on your beliefs you might either get pregnant, or get burned feet.

FRAGGLE: ...colour and vibrancy and joy and spirit. I remember walking around and being unable to speak because I was so blown away by the beauty and by everybody being there. We were all just going "Wow!" Each to their own intoxicant, however. Mickey and Peg Leg were falling over drunk on Special Brew, laughing at the hippies.

The camp at Fairmile was swelled by the celebration, with experienced campaigners bringing a positive vision of what they wanted to see at the site. There were benders and display boards and palletted pathways. There were gardens, recycling bins and little children's playtreehouses. Banners hung from the trees; flags brightened the barricades. The kitchen had more food in it than I ever saw at Selar, and the Magic Hat went around every mealtime to keep it stocked up.

There was a healthy emphasis on supervised climbing lessons. It wasn't until I visited Fairmile that I learned how to walk walkways, and at fifty, sixty feet up, it was quite an introduction. There were triple decker tree houses, twigloos, hammocks and nets, and even a boat slung up in the trees. There was night watch every night, long before eviction threatened.

The protesters, not local supporters or Friends of the Earth volunteers, ran their own office, which meant that it properly supported the needs of the campaign. In a house in Ottery St Mary, about three miles away, it provided the essential functions of a place to have baths, bake cakes, dump kit and play computer games into the small hours of the morning. As well as haphazardly handling phones, computers, faxes, journalists... The media picked up on the organised, motivated vibe at the camp that summer, and dubbed it 'The University of Road Protesting'. I don't know where they get these stupid titles.

PENNY: University? No it's more like first grade at the school of DIY culture.

PAUL: And unfortunately Grade 1 is what gets put across to the public as the pinnacle of environmentalism. **We *are* the cutting edge of the environmental movement. That's what's going to sell this book.**
KIRSTY: Yes we are – buy the book about it, then Kate can buy us all a pint.

But the A30 campaign did come up with an important tactical development: tunnelling. The first shift rose at four-thirty am, and after the coffee was brewed and the porridge dished out, they went down to dig. They went down. They branched out. In time, moist little sleeping spaces were built and the warrens came to rival the villages above. Now the inhabitants came up for breakfast. Their skins acquired a sandy hue.

Tunnels had been started at Solsbury, but never shored up. They were built at Snelsmore at Newbury, but were uninhabited when the bailiffs came. It was at the A30 that their full potential was realised. A potentially unstable, poorly shored up tunnel prevents the authorities from bringing any heavy machinery onto site during an eviction. So no bulldozers, and more importantly, no cherry-pickers, which means that the climbers lose their easy access route into the trees. With all the advantage of height, it is possible for a concerted group of protesters to stop bailiffs from climbing up a tree, and this is what Fairmile was planning. After Whitecroft, and Claremont, and Stanworth, and all the others, this one was going to be a show down.

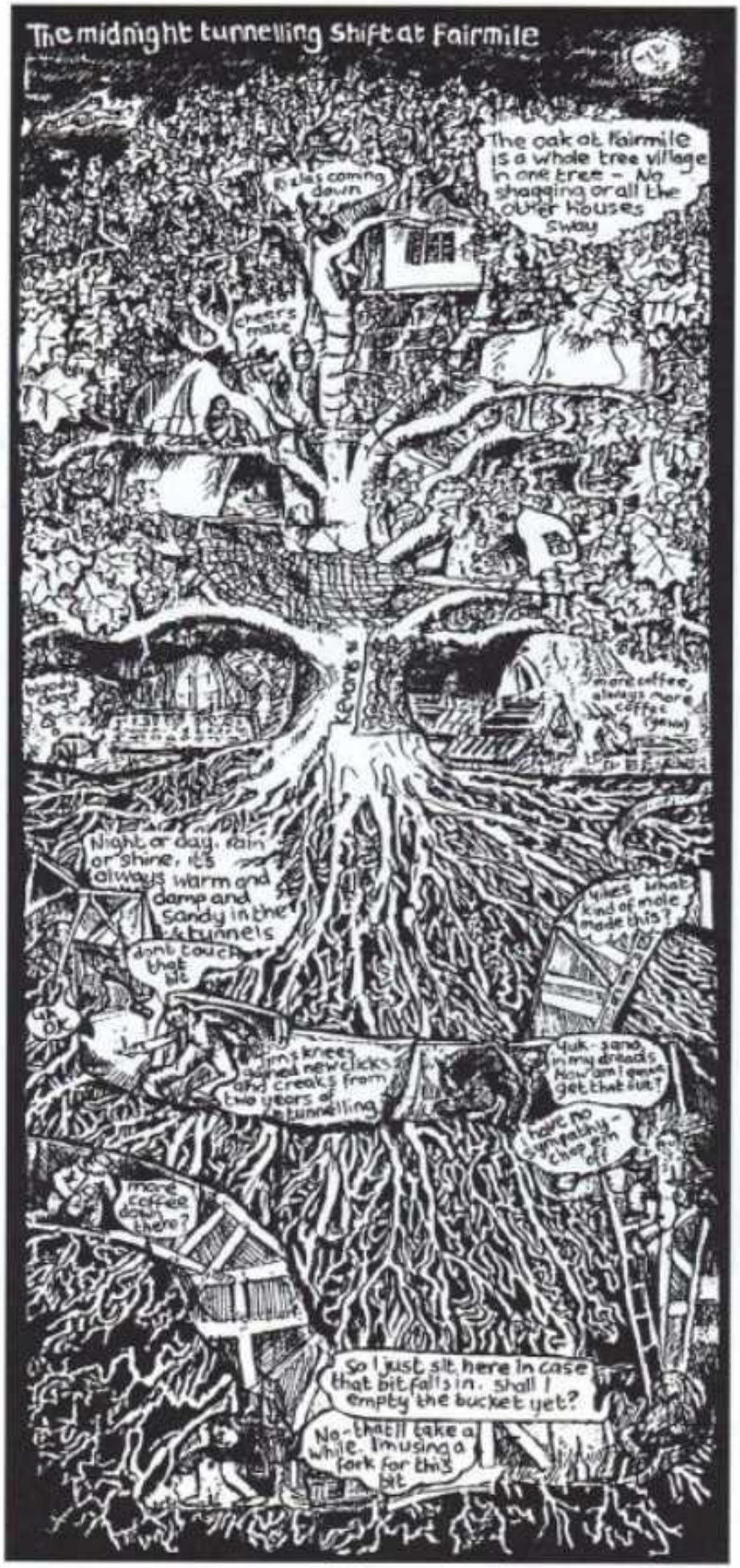


S. McLaughlin

FAIRMILE UBER ALLES

Fairmile had a work ethic, which some residents carefully cultivated. Protests are usually for anyone and everyone that stumbles up to the fire pit: the work that gets done is a compromise between the superhuman efforts of people who feel the weight of the planet directly upon their shoulders, and the token efforts of those who contribute little more than smiles and banter until they are prodded into doing the washing up. At Fairmile, some people made it clear that they had had enough of the lunch-outs. They embraced the ironical use of the term 'fascist' to show that they weren't afraid to tell people what to do. So a lot of work did get done by those that stayed, but then other people left because they felt that they were being expected to match that hard labour.

NEIL: Fucking Fairmile! This is the New Reich of the



Eco-Fascist. You must work. Here is workfare. Tunnels! Dig! We dig holes. You fill them in.

MARK: After the Stanworth eviction we had been led to believe by the bailiffs that they were going to Fairmile next – so loads of people went to Fairmile and the eviction didn't happen. Fairmile were a bit pissed off. I think they had a bit of a Beltaine hangover, and a bit of an "oh shit, we missed the fucking war" sort of thing. So a lot of merriment went on there, with a lot of cutting comments about piss heads and lunch outs, which went by unnoticed because we were too lunched out and pissed to care.

We went and got unconscious in Exeter and had a really quite severe bender that lasted for about three days, and that was quite a laugh.

There speak some ex-Stanworth posse who didn't choose to live at Fairmile; there were plenty of other people who did. Fairmile stood on one side of a debate that everyone enters into when they live in a communal, voluntary environment. Does anyone have a right to tell anyone else what to do? But then do people have to put up with living with someone who contributes very little? Some folk turned up there and then left for the sister camps of Trollheim and Allercombe, where they did lots of work without anyone telling them to. And many

people stayed at Fairmile among the tall chestnut trees, and the spreading oaks and beeches.

As the false eviction alarms came and went, months turned into years. They watched the leaves float down past their bedroom doors. They saw webs of frost on the bark as they climbed into their homes (swinging effortlessly now from branch to branch). They awoke to the first rush of spring sap coursing to buds jewelled onto every twig. Firewood was carried, sawn and split; water butts filled and emptied. New moon, half moon, full moon, half moon; twenty seven times.

These are some of Hattie's poems from when she returned from Newbury to her beautiful, huge beech tree:

STREET LITERATURE
Our world is being devoured
by the tarmac monster
it's thick
and it's black
and it stinks
it's as sticky as shit.
And the fatter the monster gets
the more cars fit.

Tree
I wish I was a tree
With nothing to
think of except growing
towards
the sun.
I wish I was a tree
so I could sleep
all winter,
celebrate with
blossoms in the
spring and
dance with the
wind,
knowing that
summer would
bring warmth and
freedom
and that autumn
would bear sweet fruit
and winter
would bring blessed sleep
And that I had nothing to do
except grow
towards the sun.



Your Black Hat.
Come on then
you yellow bellied scum
Get your newly polished
Black leather boots on.
Shining with hate,
While we wait here
in the darkness
Flinching at shadows
Tying our brains in knots.

The power of this place
Gives us what we need
To fight you with open arms
And full hearts
To the sweet end of our part in all this aliveness.
We hold the Spring sap
of these trees in our feet
And you can't touch it.

So when you're done
And your black boots are
muddied with innocent blood
And you think we're crushed and homeless
And your cock is hard
With the desire
For our pain
And your power

Think again,

All of this will grow elsewhere,
And it won't forget your fat face
Or the number on
Your black hat.

One day our garden
will become a warzone
And we will have nothing
nowhere
A roof of sky
A blanket of air,
And each other
And forever
To find
somewhere
To come home.

FORT TROLLHEIM

Trollheim was built after the Fairmile Beltaine party, on the other side of the valley on the crest of the hill. The woods had already been felled on this part of the route, and the newcomers decided to build a model Iron Age fort. Well, that's what it started out as; it ended up being something much weirder. Physically it was a strange scrap wood and brush wood castle keep, with draw-bridges and battlements and tunnels and concrete bunkers. Mentally, in contrast to all the hippy dippy yoghurt weaving and folk singing that occurred at Fairmile, Trollheim was punk as fuck.

KATE: People say, "You've got no trees to defend", but it's an anti-road protest, innit?

I think it's a lot better doing it with no trees cause you don't get fucked up by seeing things you love get chainsawed up.

But we are, I mean, I love the fort. Even though it's quaggy I love it. I think it's amazing.

This is the Independent Free State of Trollheim. We declare that as a Free State we have no allegiance to the United Kingdom and it's environs, except Essex, Glasgow, Brixton, parts of Hackney and a few small pockets of Devon. We do not recognise the government or monarchy's authority over us, except giros and legal aid. We have a hierarchy based on dog worship. Our currency is to be based on quag barter system. We do not recognise the Gregorian calendar: by doing so this day shall be known as One. We do not recognise history, patriarchy, matriarchy, politics, communists, fascists or lollipop men/ladies. We accept no responsibility for our ancestor's actions, or our own. Also it should be known that PT3 is a satellite state and under our protection.
Be afraid, be afraid all ye that hear. Respect this State.



A. Testa



A. Testa

You must explain about worshipping orange dogs.

ALICE: Orange dogs at Trollheim. We found that every single dog that lived at Trollheim had orange fur on some part of it's body. Then Muppet moved in and he was a sort of silvery colour and we thought, "Oh no!". But, we found that if you stroked his fur the wrong way, there was definitely orange fur underneath.

Sort of 'shot orange'?

Of course Winston is our leader because he was conceived and born there; conceived in public in front of all the Trolls. Son of Jake and Pye; the only dog to be born and raised there. Therefore he is our leader and is just resplendent.



So who are the other dogs then?

Pye. She's the queen. Jake was Dad. Callie was the Princess. We decided that Muppet was the Ambassador. Pepper was definitely The Lady. Then there was Bella who was the scatty sheep dog. Various other dogs came and went. And there was one dog that was really foul and putrid and horrible, and that didn't have any orange fur.

Basically a lot of the people that lived at Trollheim lived there because they had dogs, so they couldn't live up trees. So we built a lunatic asylum on the hill. With our dogs. At one point we had 11 dogs there.

JAYE: We had more than that!

ALICE: Eleven was the most adult dogs. So there was lots of barking.

ALICE: Trollheim Catering Incorporated was the most supreme camp food ever. And we very rarely burned it, unlike Fairmile. And we didn't have a hideous rat problem, unlike Fairmile. And we didn't spread jardhia to everybody that ate there. (That's just slagging off Fairmile a bit).

Korma. Chop up lots and lots of onions and fry them with lots and lots of other nice veggies. But do the hard ones first and the soft ones later. Unlike most people who fry everything together so some things are slop and some things are hard. Sequence, man. Fry it in ghee if you can.

If you've got no vegans.

Fry it in ghee if you can – if you can't, oil. Don't put garlic in it kids. When it's all fried up add loads and loads of milk or soya milk, and ground coconut. Lots of ground almonds, but that's really expensive – you can not use it if you use more ground coconut. Bananas are nice. Then you can add fruit, but don't fry up the fruit because it goes all mushy. Then the spicy bits that you need are loads of turmeric to make it go yellow; a lot more salt than you would normally use – I don't know why. Cardamom, cloves, fenugreek, cumin, star anise, pepper. A bit of mace or a bit of nutmeg.

Then that's a sort of sweet, fruity curry. Feeds loads. It's quite cheap apart from the almonds.



A. Testa



What makes you a Troll then?
DAN: I think it's your perspective about things. You're reality based. Into practical things. And you don't like penny whistles.

The Troll gardens were beautiful – the best gardens. People used to do everything. Nothing'd get really lunched out. People'd always be into doing stuff. A good atmosphere.

And you got tanks as well!

The tanks were the toys of the AAA sound system, some pop-star geezers who used to be 'KLF' and burned a million quid to get in the papers. Their new stunt was to kit out two Saracen tanks with state of the art sound equipment, quite a radical thing to do in an age of police raids on raves. Still, it's what you do with it, innit?

They tested it on a hillside and a cow had a miscarriage, the farmer sued, that made the papers again – 'sonic weapon'. Then they came and parked them by Trollheim and handed out AAA tanksuits and drank vodka with us and did another media circus. They claimed that they were staying until the eviction, whereupon they would weld the doors shut and play the soundtrack of the Troll's choosing ('The Ride of the Valkyries' I believe) and no one would be able to get them out.



A. Testa



A. Testa

On the Saturday night before they arrived we had been wandering up the path below Trollheim doing vocal renditions of drum and bass in bored desperation at the amount of time it had been since we'd been to a good party. We were well chuffed when TripleA turned up. A bit less so when they played snatches of Frank Sinatra unbelievably loudly, and extremely realistic helicopter noises, which swept across the valley in some kind of obscure comment about repetitive beats.

We never did have a party though, because a few days later, in the middle of an amplified harp recital, the police turned up and confiscated the tanks. They had arrested the top bloke, whose name escapes me, in front of his wife and children and held him on trumped up firearms charges until the tanks were repossessed. 'Sonic weapons' again. I kid you not. They make it up as they go along, these policemen do. We were pissed off, the police brought out their riot gear and we all got on telly again.

RUMOURS

It wasn't until September 1996 that possession orders for the land on the A30 were sought. Once the court had granted them, the continual eviction alerts which had emanated from the office began to have some substance and there was another gathering of familiar faces at the Fairmile camp.

It was all a bit soggier by now. The long term residents had moved up the trees or down the tunnels and the benders left on the ground were mangy and damp. From the tramp of many feet, the ground around was flat grey-brown mud. Worse, rats had moved in, and resisted our own attempts at eviction. The palletted pathways, which had seemed such a good idea when they had been built, now concealed complicated systems of rat runs. I decided that rats all around the country had set up local branches of Rat First! and had hired minibuses to bring them to Fairmile. There they had established a thriving and advanced ratropolis, where, of an evening, they would hang out on street corners and have drive-by shootings.

"There's a convoy of police on its way down from Exeter!" would come the cry and we would drop things and look at each other, unsure whether to rush up the trees. It didn't matter how often the false reports came through, it always made the blood pound slightly in my head.



September, October, November: new moon, half moon, full moon, half moon. I remembered that psychic certainty I'd had at Newbury and Selar and would climb a tree on Sunday evening saying, "It will be tomorrow. I can feel it." And it never was.

But I would just be setting off for Exeter to get some money, or to the local village for some fruit and another alert would filter through. It became a joke: the old eviction cry of 'Arooga!' turned into 'A rumour! A rumour!'. On the bread bin in the kitchen bender someone wrote HELP! HELP! THERE ARE 36 POLICE IN HONITON POLICE STATION!

They were being cleverer than us, this time. We had all the defences we could build, but we needed people to man them. After Newbury, I'd had visions of everyone who had populated that protest being at the A30 evictions, of the great oak and the beech so full of people that the climbers couldn't get a foothold. But that couldn't happen if we didn't know when it would be. That real, conclusive tip-off would arrive, it always does, but would we know it when it came?

They did strike without warning, at Allercombe in the small hours of the morning on the day after Boxing Day. The person on night watch didn't cry out and the protesters were carried out without being able to make their stand. They moved to the camps at the Eastern end of the route, and waited.

The tension grew. After months (years) of imminence it was now even more emphatically, certainly Soon. Fairmile? Trollheim? Trollheim? Fairmile? When squads of riot police marched into the valley at 3am on Sunday, January 12th *(Sunday morning?)* the inhabitants of either camp knew not which they would hit...



The Trollheim eviction

DAN: It was so strange. The fact that they just used police, riot police. The way that they went about it, as though it was a military exercise.

They turned up about half past three in the morning, the Sunday morning. But we'd had one good tip off and there was quite a few of us up that night. All the Trolls that had been away for a while, a few months here and there, had all come back within that week, and about three had turned up that day.

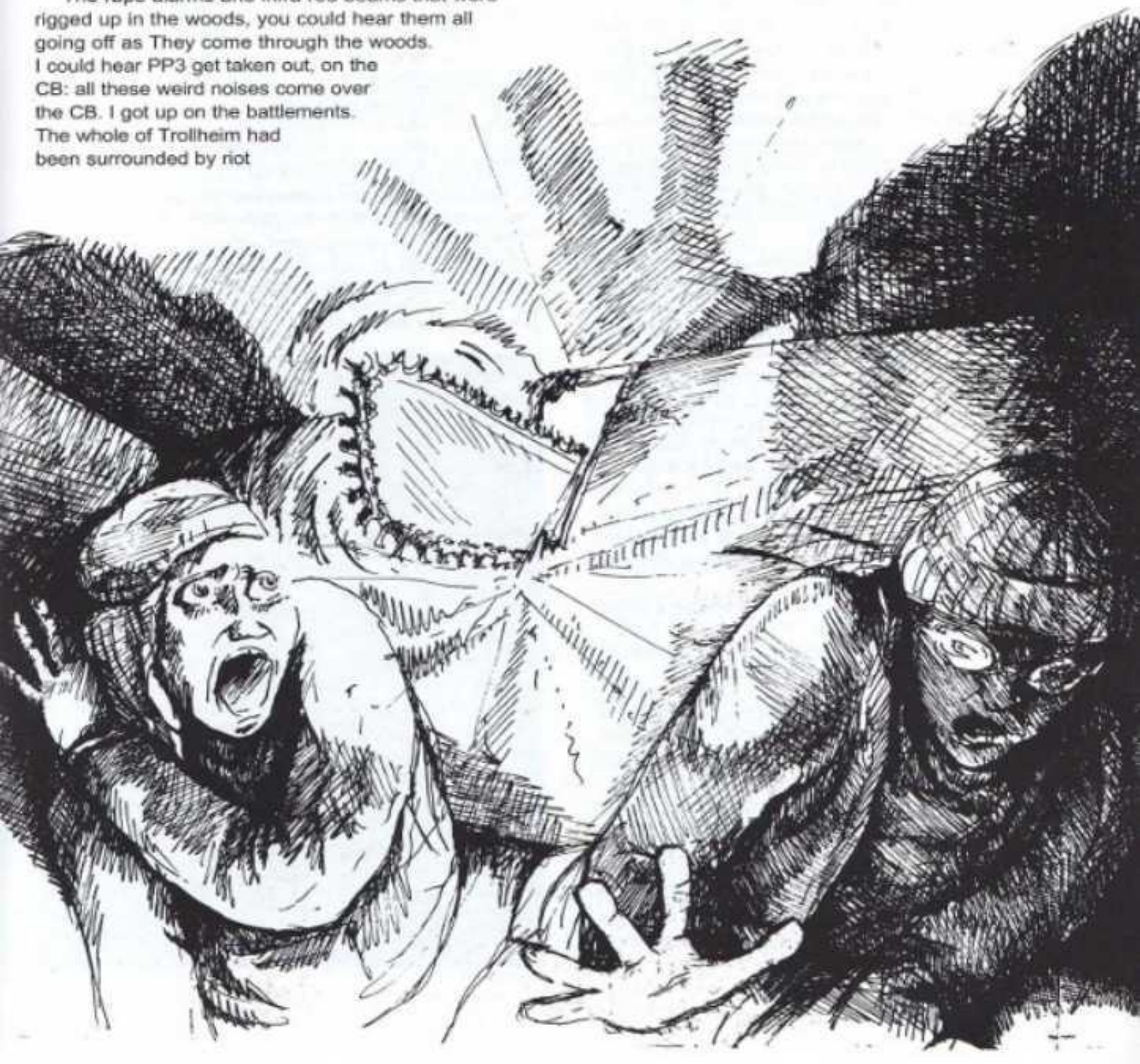
We were just sat round and we sort of knew it was going to happen without anybody saying anything. We got a call that there'd been police turning up, so we woke everybody up and made sure everybody had a cup of tea... Everybody got down into their holes.

The rape alarms and infra red beams that were rigged up in the woods, you could hear them all going off as They come through the woods. I could hear PP3 get taken out, on the CB: all these weird noises come over the CB. I got up on the battlements. The whole of Trollheim had been surrounded by riot police, all in body armour and full head shields and everything like that. And they put all siege ladders all the way up around.

All instantaneously – they must have been communicating with each other – they turned big flashlights, big dragon flashlights all on at the same time. At that exact second they started up steillsaws and big chainsaws and started going through the battlements. So precise and so fucking well timed.

They went and put screens around afterwards so that no one could see what was going on in there. All you could hear all night was chainsaws and people screaming, and, yeah, it was all misty and shit like that. It was really surreal and fucking quite scary.

Scary, really scary.



The police that evicted Trollheim had been up for 36 hours before they struck, planning the attack.

DAN: Different squads concentrated on different lock-ons; they were all in teams concentrating on different bits all at the same time. Steillsaws going through metal and concrete. They came across some of the best lock-ons they'd ever come across.

STIG: I was with Kate in our, um, we thought it was a canon fodder lock-on. We built a little 10 foot sort of grave thing, put a couple of beds over the top and put a bender on that and said, "Right that's our lock on". But there was someone from London who had their squat evicted, and there was loads of this Sitex metal boarding, and they donated loads of that... We had it all lined with that, and they called it an 'incarcerated bunker' on the day, which we were quite proud of...

Well they were going to dig down beside us and come through, but they thought, "There's all this Sitex lined with concrete – we can't possibly do that – it's too dangerous." So they had to jump in with us. There was just enough room for me and Kate in there, laying down, and there wasn't enough room for anyone else at all, so they were tiptoe, tiptoe, between our bodies, trying to shove us apart. Even when they really shoved us apart, there was only like an inch space. But they still got the pneumatic drill in there anyway.

They started with an electric one, going jigga jigga with that for about four hours. Then they changed to a petrol one which was loads of fumes – nobody could breathe – and the bailiffs couldn't breathe neither, so they changed back to the electric one.

After a while they realised that we had a steel drum in there, and they were digging on the outside of it, and they had to start all over again. Which was really nice. They were really pissed off by then. Started from really friendly, nice bailiffs to really grotty, pissed off ones.

All the half push bikes and stuff, they had to angle grind through that. And the metal barrel, they had to angle grind through that as well. Loads of stuff they had to stop and pick out by hand.

They were working in a two inch space and using an angle grinder?

Yeah. They were quite good at it though. We didn't have any cuts or anything at the end of it.

DAN: They were kicking people. Stringing people up. Kicking all the shoring out of the tunnels. Kicking the doors through. Suffocating people out! They'd ripped all the ventilation out of the tunnels, out of the bunkers. Blocked the vents. In the bunker the oxygen level got down to below 17% and people were starting to suffocate. They said somebody had killed themself to get people out of the pill box. One of their comrades, they said he'd taken an overdose. Three people left because one of their friends had supposedly died.

The first British tunnel eviction

Excerpt from PP3's log:

Between 7-8.00 the main tunnel was entered. They forcefully opened the locked door which was clearly marked as 'attached to shoring', with a crow bar, thus causing shoring to become dislodged and sand to fall. The ventilation system was then removed.

With no air supply, the potholer bailiff decided to forcefully remove two of the protesters by dragging them into the first section of the tunnel... rolling them onto their backs and handcuffing them. They were then pulled to the surface by a 15 foot rope attached to their handcuffs.

The bailiff saw a third protester at the far end of the tunnel. The bailiff claimed he was exhausted from being awake for 36 hours and he was finding it hard to breathe. He returned to the surface for a five minute break, leaving the protester without air.

I heard the protester asking me for air, and I tried to contact the under-sheriff to inform him of the situation but I was told everything was under control.

The potholer bailiff returned into the tunnel (still cloudy from condensation) and moved onto the third protester. A half boarded wall of timber blocking half of the tunnel was kicked out causing shoring again to be dislodged. Large chunks of the ceiling began to fall. All of the timber was removed from the tunnel along with all the water and bedding.

A noose was tied around the curled up protester's feet and he was stretched on a rope in order for the bailiff to clamber over the top of him to check he was locked-on. He was. At this point the intercom speaker was broken.

The bailiff swore and left the tunnel leaving the protester being suspended by a taught rope. Approximately every 10 minutes the rope was yanked on.

A cave rescue specialist brought in to monitor the 'overdose' casualty was asked to look into the tunnel and assess the situation. He entered the tunnel and instantly described the bailiffs as "animals". He ordered the installation of intercoms, compressed air and untied the protester's feet. After a long chat, the protester agreed to unlock and leave the tunnel.

Note to our transatlantic readers: the following excerpt employs irony and sarcasm.

ALICE: They decided to take off the four walls of the pill box, and they somehow expected the roof to levitate. It seemed like it. We were in there and we were screaming and shouting, "If you take off the walls, the ceiling will collapse" and they didn't really take much notice... It was slightly disconcerting. And then the best bit was when they chainsawed through the corner where me and Suzy were huddled up, through towards us when they couldn't see what they were doing. That was just brilliant, as my life flashed before me. Really really good.

Various people screaming from the tunnel going, "It's caving in and collapsing and handfuls are falling on our head." Things like that.

The skunk was good. I was practically Japanese eyed when I came out.

Then when we came out they had this kind of folder: it had pictures of me doing things at Newbury in it. And they said, "She's so and so" and nicked me. Even though they said I wouldn't be arrested... They were really on the case. It was quite scary because I didn't even open my gob and say who I was.

There were lots of lights, and my bender wasn't there.

So you couldn't go and sleep in it.

Nah, didn't want to anyway because I was sharing it with three blokes and three dogs.

ALICE: Don't focus on the evictions too much because I think the best thing about Trollheim, and Fairmile and Allercombe was that the camps lasted for so long. That's much more an act of defiance than an eviction.

DAVE: The eviction's just the end.

ALICE: The fact that we were there for two years, squatting Department of Transport land and having a right good laugh, doing whatever we bloody well felt like, I think is much more Up Yours and making much more of a statement. Day to day living a life of resistance, rather than resisting at the end, in an eviction, which is very easily distorted by the media. And fucks you up.

Trollheim was a groovy place to live and we had lovely gardens and a really good kitchen and a really sorted posse of people. Some tossers, of course, but the main stay Trolls were really sound. THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE CALLING THEMSELVES TROLLS NOW THAT AREN'T!



A. Testa

And finally – Fairmile

I arrived back at the A30 the next week and the Trolls that were still camped out at Fairmile or at the office were dazed. Newly rootless, they began to drift away to deal with their shock and grief.

People at Fairmile were scared. Our collective memories of all those near misses, all those nearly-falls and really-falls in the trees, and the fact that ever since Solsbury, this one, Fairmile, was going to be the Big One, made us dread the eviction as an escalation of all the horrible things we had ever seen and done. People openly said that they didn't want to do it all again, but neither could they abandon the land that they loved and vowed to protect. Nor could they watch their friends and comrades face the bailiffs without being there by their side.

Then there were the tunnels; larger, older, sandier than those at Trollheim. They had demolished shoring at Trollheim, and they had brought diggers onto the site. Would they really care, at Fairmile, about a cave in?

PP3's log: `If the under-sheriff and his not-so merry men use the same tactics as were used at Trollheim on the ancient muddy warrens of Fairmile SOMEONE WILL DIE.`

The false alarms continued.

"There's a convoy of police on its way–" yeah, yeah. It was half past nine on a Thursday evening and we were in the pub. I had just been sympathising with Andrew, the photographer, about travelling down from London for yet another false alarm. "No. There really is."

With a feeling of great unreality. I downed my pint. It could have been a coincidence, but it was still so unfair that the people I was drinking with were five Fairmile old timers who had weathered with the camp, winter and summer and who had put in, between them, eight years of unstinting effort. They didn't get dole, so it was rare for them to be able to afford a drink.

A van hurtled back to site. By the time we got there it was bathed in floodlights and ringed with yellow. I felt sick.

I was aware that we would be tracked, all tumbling out of the van together, so I cut up the hill alone to circumnavigate the site and check out the options. I had learned from Newbury that in the first hour the lines are not drawn yet. The police don't know the land as well as you. They are



confused. It is dark. The site is large. In those precious first moments there is always a way in.

Kel walked through the undergrowth, quietly, through the police cordon to the base of the beech. She had a little spell of invisibility. I clocked pretty quickly that Nicky's tree was unguarded, outside the cordon, and I got to the bottom of it. There was a protruding branch about twelve feet from the ground that if I stood on someone's head I could reach.

So I got hold of that. I knew I didn't have the strength to pull myself up above my head but I managed to swing my cowstail over it to clip on. But my harness was not my own, and the carabiner had a bayonet fitting on which my clumsy, freezing fingers couldn't manage. My coat was bulky around my shoulders. I struggled. The muscles in my arms were giving way. Nicky heard me crying out but couldn't reach me. Finally I swung my foot over the branch and he anchored me in the tree by treading on my leg. I sank back. There was a yellow lit Fairmile upside down before me. I wondered how much it would hurt to fall ten feet onto my head.

Then I heard voices, an oddly familiar Yorkshire accent, "Does she need help?" "We'll throw a rope up" and a rope was passed up and around a branch. It was a familiar rope too – the thick hemp rope of the brown-hat bailiff. I gazed at him narrowly, upside-down beneath me. He was with another climber that I hadn't seen before. They had my weight on their rope, and they pulled me *into* the tree. Bizarre.

The lights and the generators stayed on all night. There were shouts and catcalls, and people watched tensely from the branches in case the climbers started anything. But it was clear that there weren't many of us in the trees; some of the people who had lived there for so long were staring in sadly from outside the cordon. It wasn't going to take long for the climbers to get us down.

Except they didn't really try. Mr Brown-hat and his mate came up my tree in the morning and my stomach lurched once more. "I've done this too many times" I thought, and I remembered him below me in a tree at Skyward, ripping his hands on barbed wire in a frenzy to get up. I had seen him slashing ropes at the Chase with a five inch blade. He had leaned out

on the walkways at the Kennet and held the same knife to a girl's stomach. He had fingered Olivia's tits at Manic Sha, the dirty git. Now we exchanged "Good mornings". He had his friend with him and we all smiled.

They went through the motions of chucking ropes up while we caught them and threw them down. Brown-hat and I had a little mock struggle over a carabiner clip; I was gripping it as hard as I could but he could easily have wrenched it from my grasp. I tickled them, and bailiff no. 2 did genuinely crease up and was incapacitated for a while (that image hit the papers, which was positive, I think). But they made exaggeratedly slow progress. When they got to the top of the tree they stood around and chatted, and then every so often they sawed some twigs up to make it look like they were doing something. Then they said they had to go down and have breakfast.

Three more climbers came up, one of whom was the one who had cut the steel cable on Nicky at Manic Sha. Faced with the utter impossibility of speaking civilly to someone who had so nearly murdered him, Nicky climbed down.

The bailiffs were upset. They had obviously expected more work from this eviction: they wanted the kind of money that they had earned at Newbury. Allercombe had been a washout. Trollheim had no trees. Now at Fairmile, the Big One, people were voluntarily climbing out of the trees. Gutted.

I watched Hattie abseiling out of the beech that she loved so much, a wry smile on her face. She had chosen not to lock on.

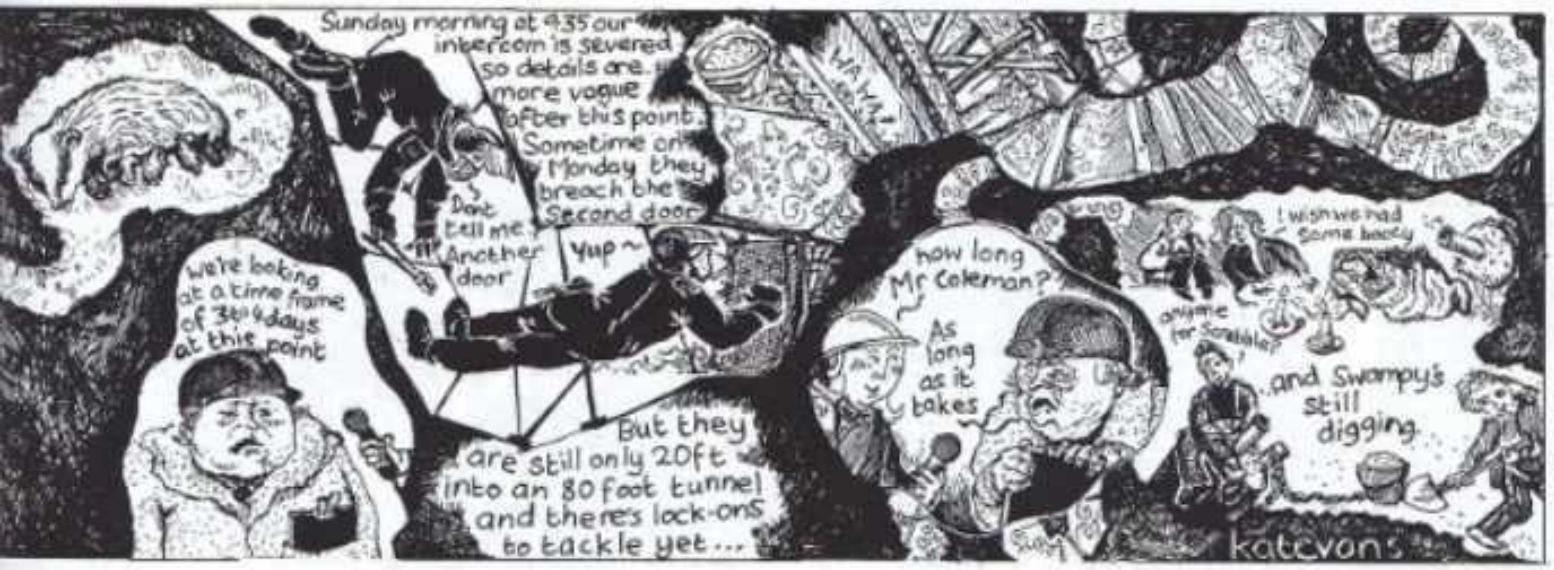
The climbers were standing around chatting again, so I turned the conversation to things I wanted to know. Who had cut the web at Selar? The bailiff (the blonde one, Danny) said he didn't know, but he told me that the climbers had been discussing methods on the long drive from Sheffield to Devon. There was "one incident in Wales" he said, and two at Newbury that they didn't want repeated as "it wasn't worth it". I was glad that they had decided that trying to kill people was outside their job description, and wondered who the other person was that they had cut out of a tree at Newbury.

Why did they do it? Danny spoke of how he'd been brought up in an ordinary middle class family. How distressed his parents had been at his wandering, globe-trotting twenties, his choosing climbing, of all things, as a career. And then how pleased they had been when he had got a steady proper income, mortgage, car. My heart bleeds for you Danny. "It's the money then" I said.

"I don't like it when people call me Scab" he said, apropos nothing. "I mean I don't mind it here, on the protest, but I don't like it when I'm at home and with my mates, and that."

"That's Hattie's home," I said "just there". SCAB.

And then it came time for them to take me down. I had food and water and a sleeping bag. I was at the top of the tree, ready to clamber onto some skinny branches where they couldn't pull me down and do what I had always done: try to make my protest last. But the branches looked very spindly, and for once I saw the height, and the



danger. So I shrugged and said OK. They put a harness on me, and then a chest harness too before they lowered me down. It was very different from the days of self-tightening wire loops.

You see, the tunnels had worked. Before, they had come in with bulldozers and chainsaws and wrested the trees from us, branch by branch. Their advance meant devastation, and we clung on for as long as we could, because once we were down then everything was reduced to mud and splinters. Now, with people walled into catacombs beneath us, they couldn't risk felling even a branch onto the fragile, tunnelled earth. Tree occupation became symbolic; the real battle was being fought crawling, doubled over, in the damp soil below the roots.

Police and security guards surrounded the copse, then one, then two fences, with razor wire between. But all the trees stood. That night January mist seeped past the floodlights and projected lacy twig patterns into the air. It was a huge museum of doomed trees; still and silent, save the roar of the generators.

We stood vigil outside the cordon, waiting with the trees. Waiting.

The tunnel eviction proceeded surprisingly slowly and cautiously, possibly owing to the intervention of the mine rescue workers who insisted that oxygen levels were monitored and that everything was securely shored up before any evicting took place. The tunnellers nailed more barricading into place while the bailiffs removed it. They discovered that they could dig new shafts faster than the bailiffs could assemble shoring. They had created a situation that really could not be evicted.

There was none of the frenzied violence that had characterised the Trollheim eviction. To be specific, this time they didn't suspend someone by his ankles and tension him off against his locked-on arm.

PP3's log: The mine rescue workers told us that the bailiffs who tied up the person in the Troll tunnels and stretched him out were given a serious telling off. The sheriff's man is still trying to say it didn't happen. Maybe one day we'll play him the tape.

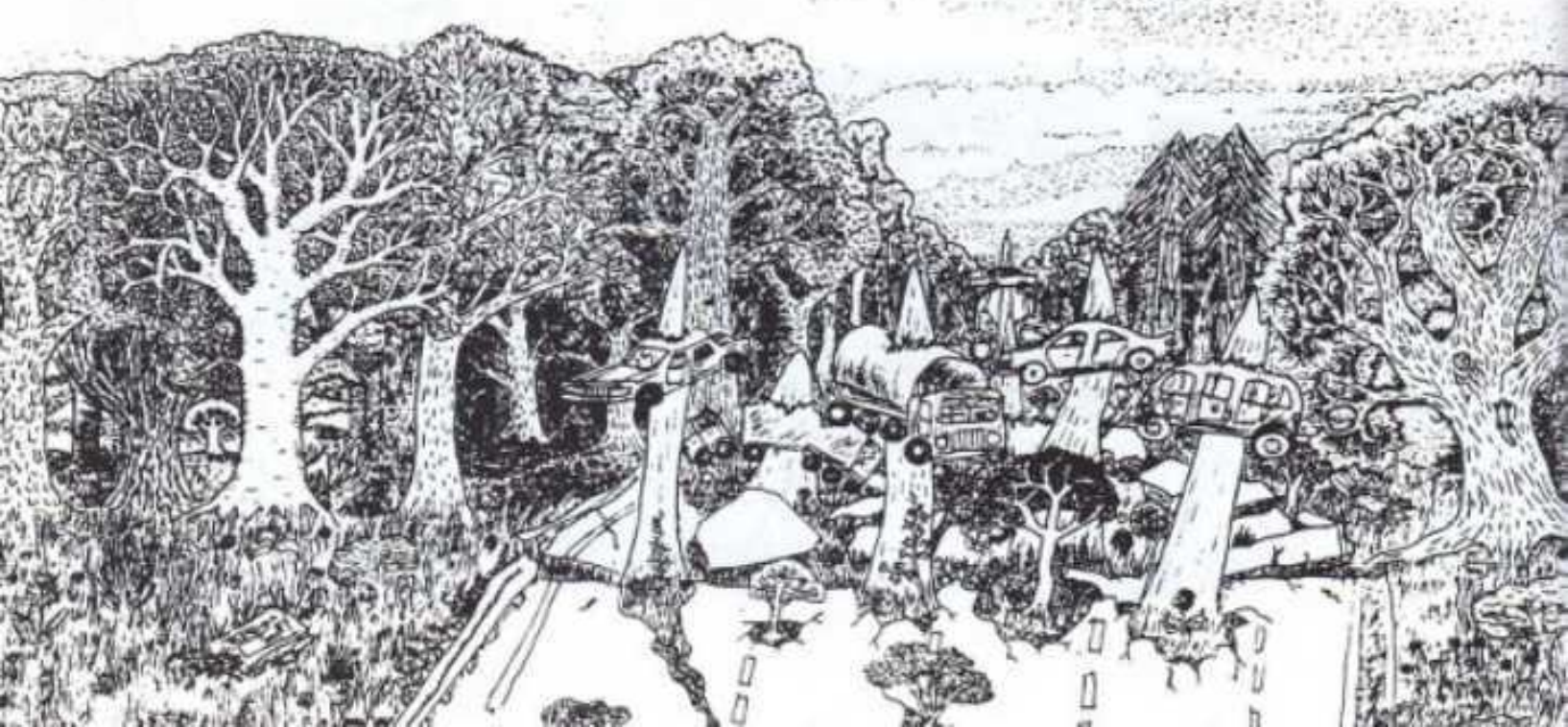
In fact the whole eviction was far, far fluffier than the Trollheim one. It was also an international media circus, whereas the blitz on the Troll fort was subject to governmental reporting restrictions. It is not difficult to see a link there.

Sleepless and homeless, the Fairmile residents stood by the cordon. The police wouldn't let them make a fire. They had waited so long for the eviction and they had never wanted it, but they had longed for it, and it still wasn't done. Police dressed like Robocop stalked the perimeter fence and filmed them and took photographs.

After five days, the people of Fairmile spoke to the last tunneller on the police intercom and asked him to come out. The eviction was over.

I had left that day on a free lift to London and the bad timing made me cry. I had loved the trees; somehow I thought it would be better to stand with everyone else and watch them fall. Sweet chestnut. Beech. Oak. Yew. I could see them all. I still can. I have not been back.

NICKY'S PICTURE



Ecofeminism,
or How to Piss in a Harness.



I reckon feminism is about practical things. I live in this world as a woman: being a woman is sometimes different from being a man.
I started off this book writing about Greenham Common, which was women only. That was really funky. For me, a person who was only just starting to be a woman, it was excellent to be in a place where women were totally doing their own thing, and taking on something a scary as a nuclear convoy, and winning. Women roller-skated up the runways at Greenham Common. They dressed up smart and wandered through security checkpoints; pushed pushchairs into military bunkers and shoved confidential files into their babies' nappies. They camped out for so long inside the perimeter of the base that they got bored and came out. All over Europe, people learned of the Greenham Common camp and focused their energies for protest.

When Ronald Reagan, unscheduled, put forward the Zero option at the Rekijivic summit he was prompted by huge popular resistance to the scramble for mass suicide being played out by East and West. Reagan's logic seems to have been to attempt to quell the storm by proving that The Soviets wouldn't accept non-proliferation if it were offered to them. Unfortunately for him and the American military machine, the Russians accepted. The Iron curtain began to crumble.

So yeah, Greenham Common was a really positive and empowering place for me. Some men I've spoken to about it don't see it that way. No-one likes to be left out.

Since then I've lived with positive and empowering men and women. Together. I like being around men. I like the ways in which they're different. I fancy them sometimes. And if I've got a problem with them, I want to be able to tell them about it.

But tree protests are confrontational places. More so than at Greenham, where the aim was to set up a peaceful, obstructive presence, in a tree protest you actually have to fight for the land. And while at Greenham a major tactic in the face of physical ejection was to go limp and be removed, tree evictions are more successful if you are active rather than passive; if you struggle; if you physically resist. It is a battle. And men, I think, find it easier to identify with the idea of being soldiers for the environment.

More men than women gravitate towards protest sites, and when they get there they are marginally more likely to wear khaki and balaclavas.

It is constructive when men get together and get enthusiastic about pickaxing roads apart, or building incredibly tall towers, or the like. They get a lot done, and it's very amusing to watch. However, sometimes I have felt that I don't want to join in with them; that I'm not as good at building things and maybe I should go and do something that I'm more familiar with, like massage, cooking, child minding. Well that is my choice, but I do think that women shouldn't let the macho, ego-warrior stereotype predominate or put them off. They should get together and talk about how they feel.

Fortunately women are very good at doing just that. While I have seen groups of men, at times of stress, talking intensely about 'tactics' (which translates as 'what everyone else should be doing') at the same time women are far more likely to be lying on the floor of a bender moaning about how everything is so crap.

It is important for women to remember that no matter how self assured the men are, women are essential for non violent direct action to work. Women are very good at living communally and non hierarchically. In my experience some (not all) men like to challenge each other or compete or even fight each other on site, in a kind of alpha-male, top gorilla syndrome. Women do not.

And when it comes to evictions, or site invasions, or office occupations, or any kind of direct action, women have a decided psychological advantage. Evicting bailiffs are all men and they

find it more difficult to be nasty to women. One bailiff climber commented while waiting for a cherry-picker to get me down at the Chase eviction:

> I wish you were a bloke. You can get physical with blokes.

You see men can be beaten to a pulp by climbers or security or police, and that's OK.

At the Rickety Bridge eviction Kel and I and a few other women linked harnesses around the top of the trunk of an ash tree. The climbers didn't immediately whip out their knives and plunge them between us (as they did at Stanworth in the net). It took five men a good while to untangle us; hands and feet and harnesses and teeth. My jaw is every bit as strong as a man's, and I never knew that.

The same bailiff, it was, said:

> It's always the women! If they had a tree which was all women, you know, we'd never take it.

The best person to lock on in the biggest lock on at the bottom of the deepest hole is someone who is either old and venerable, or little and female and cute.

You don't have to play it little and girly either; bailiffs are just as freaked out by women that are full on raging in their faces.

TROLLIE (talking about the Kennet eviction): It was total bedlam madness. And all I was called was dyke, lesbian, hippy. Because I was a woman being on the attack they instantly thought I was a dyke. It was like they expected me to be what? sat in a kitchen cooking food or what?

Why was Stanworth Valley so amazing then?

NEIL: Basically it was because it wasn't a male dominated camp, it was a female dominated camp. Not so much as to be annoying though. It can be bad when things are really matriarchal - "The Goddess has come to heal us all" FUCK OFF.

Being a woman is sometimes different from being a man. Feminism is about allowing each sex the strengths and freedoms of the other. Men should be free to cry. Women should be free to piss where they want.

Seriously – why is it that we can't take our shirts off without it being a sexual display? Why do men casually whip their knobs out in fields, in car parks, on the street (at night) while women hobble, cross legged, to segregated toilet cubicles. These days, if I see a line of men weeing by a bank or a wall, I'll have a piss there too. Watch their reaction.

Feminism is about practical things. It took me ages to find out that I didn't have to take my harness off to urinate if I simply pulled my leggings down underneath.

So how do you piss in a harness then?

ME: Elasticated bum straps.

ALICE: Detachable bum straps.

EMMA: You really want to know how to piss in a harness? It's really easy, yeah? You tape onto a branch; swing out onto that branch; then you just wear leggings that you can pull down underneath your harness and you do it in mid air. Or better still you climb down and go on the ground – that's for emergency situations.

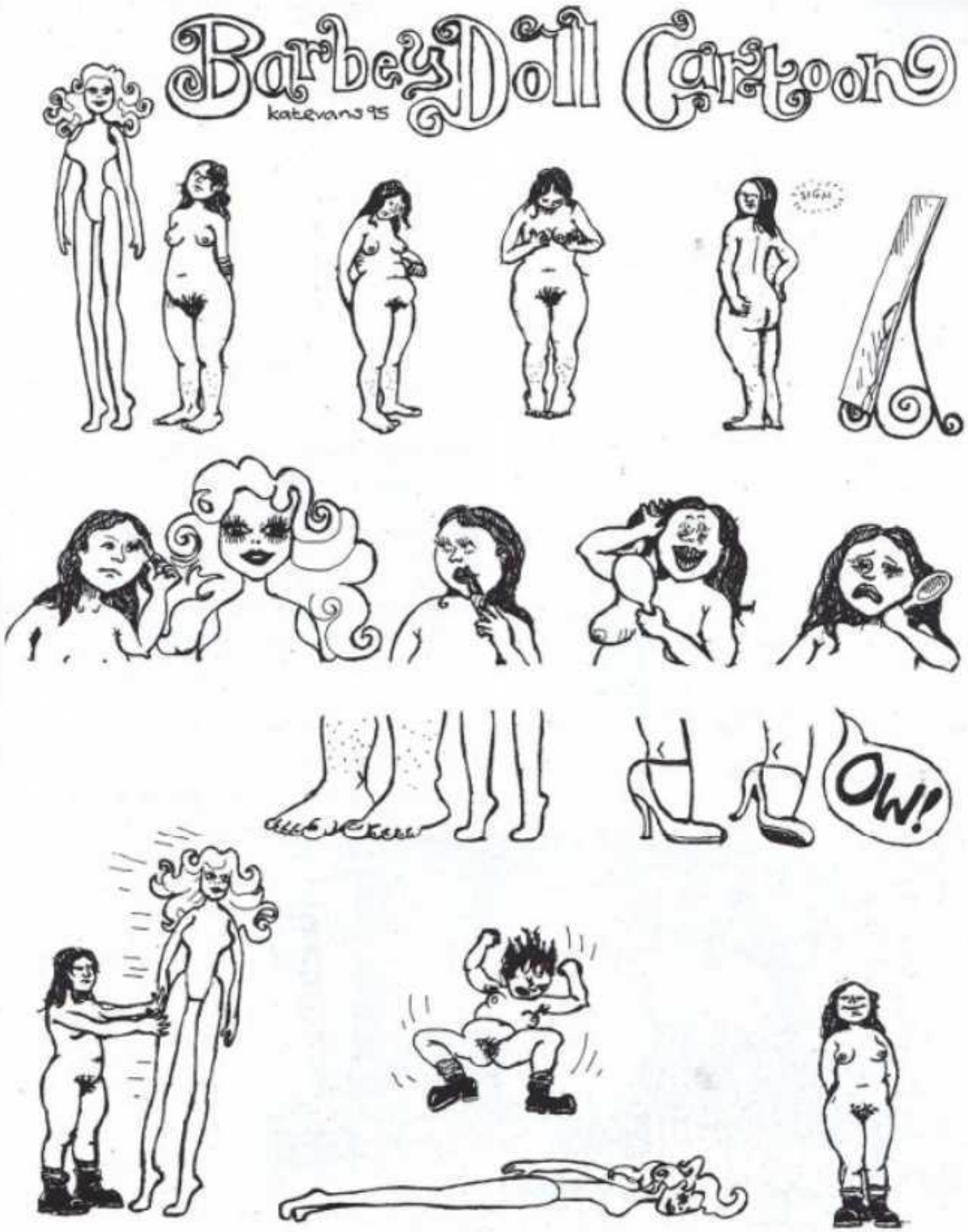
Or, when you're in an eviction and you're in a treehouse that's got, sort of, eight blokes and just you in it, and you're bleeding as well like I was at Rickety Bridge-. I was really self conscious about pissing on the carpet, because it was a piss bottle, so I put my coat down and I ended up pissing on my coat.

Did you make them all shut their eyes?

No, I just thought that they probably understood. They were much more interested in looking somewhere else. And if they didn't, well it was their own fault.



S. McLaughlin


Barbey Doll Cartoon
katevans 95
SIGH
OW!

A Beginner's Guide to Tree Protesting

You will need:

- A desire to protect the environment.
- An identified area of land that is about to be trashed.
- Some other enthusiastic people.

Everything else just turns up. Honestly. However, a copy of *Road Rage*, available from Road Alert, is very useful as it is packed with more detailed practical and legal information than is included here (see Further Reading section at the end of this book). Also, try to befriend someone with a Transit-type van to help transport people and tat.

The 'success' of a campaign depends in part on who is attempting to trash the land. The Department of Transport will always eventually get the work done, even if it has to bring in the army and arrest every citizen in the area, but a local council may prove more sensitive to public opinion. One notable success was the camp in Windsor Great Park which embarrassed Prince Philip (the then president of the World Wide Fund for Nature) into not felling a stand of 300 year old oak trees.

It also depends upon who is protesting, and when. When local, ordinary people lead the campaign it is more likely to be effective, as the police and judiciary might just respect their right to protest. When a camp is established before all legal channels have been exhausted, the threat of direct action may be enough to persuade the decision makers to be sensible and responsible, for once.

Another measure of perceived success is the amount of media attention a protest receives. Have a decent office nearby with telephone, computer and fax. Learn how to do press releases, do lots of wacky stunts for the media, and try to be in England, near London, or you'll never get nation-wide media coverage. Or alternatively, don't bother. Protesting is about doing what you want to do, for yourself. If you want to do what a news editor wants, go and be a journalist.

YOU WON'T WIN, YOU KNOW

Ultimately questions about whether protest camps win or not are irrelevant. They are about people joining together in a celebration of the beautiful places that are left on this earth.

They are about letting people be strong together, where singly they are weak.

They are about helping people discover a new way and rhythm of living in harmony with the planet.

In all these things protest camps win.

Besides which, if we lose, that is, the planet loses, then everyone loses.

BUT YOU WONT STOP THE ROAD

Ah, yes. Well, although that does depend upon who is doing the building, experience has taught people that many roads probably will be built.

LUCY: The feeling isn't that we're going to stop the road, it's that maybe the act changes the world, and changing the world may stop all the roads.



The basic principle is to take residence of the land so the authorities have to take you to court to evict you. This works best in countries where squatting is a civil, not a criminal offence. Then when the time comes for the eviction, make it as difficult as possible by building lots of defences, and actively, non-violently resisting the bailiffs. Basically make lots of fuss and cost them lots of money and totally do everyone's heads in about the issue, especially your own.

LEGAL WARNING
(SECTION 6 CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977)
TAKE NOTICE

THAT we live here, it is our home and we intend to stay here.

THAT that all times there is at least one person here.

THAT any entry without our permission is a **CRIMINAL OFFENCE** as any one of us who is in physical possession is opposed to any entry without their permission.

THAT if you attempt to enter by violence or by threatening violence we **WILL PROSECUTE YOU**. You may receive a sentence of up to **SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT** and/or a **FINE** of up to **£2,000.**

THAT if you want to get us out you will have to take out a summons for possession in the County Court or in the High Court, or produce a valid certificate in terms of Section 7, Criminal Law Act 1977.

THAT it is an offence under Section 74(8) Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) to knowingly make a false statement when signing the said certificate. A person guilty of such an offence may receive a sentence of up to **six months imprisonment** and/or a **fine** of up to **£2,000.**

Signed..... The Occupiers

N.B. Signing this legal warning is optional. It is equally valid whether or not it is signed.

SQUAT THE LAND

Mark off the area of land that is to become your camp and put up Section 6 notices around the perimeter, like the one above.

If there are any buildings on the land, gain entry (without being arrested for criminal damage), change the locks and put up Section 6 notices in the window.

Right, this is now your home and as long as there is someone on site at all times, you cannot be evicted until you have been taken to court and a possession order granted (except in the case of Interim Possession Orders served against people squatting buildings under the Criminal Justice Act; contact squatters advisory groups for further details).

Well, you shouldn't be evicted:

ROY: I've been in the smallest eviction in the world. Cinderpath Woods on the M65. Me and Gareth got carried out by security guards. They turned round with a video camera when they'd chucked us out and said, "Sorry, you weren't here". There was one copper, 60 security guards and me and Gareth being carried out. Crap.

PUBLICISE THE PROTEST

Get an office with fax, phone, computer. Assume this phone is tapped. Get a bank account. Get the numbers of local and national media, chat up journalists and do press releases. Have open days on site, tea parties and kids fun days.

Sit around in the office when it's raining and get pissed and laugh at GCHQ having to listen to all the bollox you talk.

How to Build a Bender:

You can live in tents, if you like, but benders are warmer and more substantial.



Cut young, bendy coppice poles, preferably hazel or willow. Many old woods have stands of neglected coppice in them. Bender poles are best cut in winter, when the sap is down, as this does not damage the tree. Angle the cut outwards, so that rain isn't diverted into the centre of the coppice.





Make some holes in the ground in a circle with a stake and mallet. The size of your bender depends upon the size of your tarpaulin. Put the fat ends of poles in them. Weave the centres together. Weave the other shoots through them in a baskety sort of way.

Tie a layer of blankets over the poles for extra insulation on winter benders. Now get your huge canvas tarpaulin and drape it over the top. Make the doorway face down hill so the rain doesn't get in. Plastic sheeting can be used for kitchen benders or partially open rain shelters, but is no good for sleeping under as the condensation makes everything damp.

Dig up turves and lay them over the edges of the tarp for extra rain proofing.

Cover the floor with pallets or planks and carpet. Get a wood burner (small cheap ones can be welded out of gas bottles) and a length of flexible flue. Cut a large hole where the stack pipe comes out and fix a piece of aluminium sheeting around the flue. Light the burner regularly to drive out damp.

You can put a window in too if you like. Funky.

Communal benders rapidly become communal blenders, containing jumbled layers of every conceivable human possession. They have to be taken down and remade every few months to prevent them reaching the stage where it's safer to torch the whole thing.



BASIC CAMP THINGS

- You need a kitchen bender with cupboards and rat proof containers for storing food in. Don't let dogs in it. It's nice if it's big enough to cook in when it's raining.
- You need water butts for water, with lids on.
- Put lids back on everything else too.
- Everyone has to get the hang of doing their washing up after every meal, so someone has

to tell everyone to get the hang of doing their washing up after every meal.

MELSKI: We all got really really ill with Fairmile belly. 50% of the camp all the time had something wrong with them from food poisoning, but still the dogs licked the plates and everybody lunched out the washing up. So I used to stand up every dinner time and say, "This is the Kitchen Fascist notice board and here we have the food hygiene and safety rules. If you don't follow them, you will DIE!" And then everyone would go, "Shut up. You're putting me off my dinner."

Strangely enough, all protest kitchens always contain the same six items:

- half a sack of green potatoes
- some carrots, a cabbage
- some rice
- some tinned tomatoes
- some red kidney beans which no-one will ever be bothered to cook.

So if you are going to visit a protest camp, don't bring these things. Bring exciting things like vegan cake, pickles, cheese, hummus or filter coffee (essential for night shift).

HYGIENE

Dig a hole and bury your shit.

When you cut yourself, wash the wound in water with a few drops of tea tree or lavender essential oils or commercial disinfectant in and put a bandage on it. A rag boiled for 20 minutes and dried makes a sterile dressing. Cobwebs are good, with natural coagulant and antiseptic properties, but don't get dusty ones with dead bluebottles in.



Blackthorn scratches rapidly turn septic so be extra careful with them.

Try to discourage people from washing their hands in the washing up water to prevent the spread of impetigo.

For nits, get plentiful supplies of chemical death nit lotion or try boiled quassia chips, although they don't work for everyone. Cider vinegar helps loosen the eggs if you can get a Napp comb through your locks; a swift hair cut works very well if you can't. Bergamot, lavender, rosemary, geranium and eucalyptus essential oils all repel further head lice invasions once you have got rid of them, but what with the cider vinegar you do end up smelling like a salad dressing.

Scabies looks like an intensely itchy rash of small red pinprick spots. Most doctors can't diagnose it and it's hell to get rid of. What to do? Immerse yourself in lindane or other nerve poisons? Try alternative therapies, and risk infecting others? I dunno: that's your choice. In the meantime, tell everybody, machine wash all your clothes and bedding and leave in disgrace.

Try Corsodol mouthwash or a few drops of tincture of myrrh for gingivitis, and be careful who you snog.



COOKING FIRES

The fire pit is the natural centre of the camp. Don't cook on fires made from treated wood, i.e. pallets, fence posts or furniture. Never burn elder, laburnum, rhododendron or laurel on open fires; the smoke from these is poisonous only use them in efficient, unsmoky wood burners. Seasoned hard woods give off more heat than crappy pine, also, ash and hazel burn green – useful to know if you're living in the middle of a chainsaw massacre.

A billhook or machete is essential for splitting wet kindling very finely, so it will burn. However don't be caught with it in your hand when police storm the camp.

NUTTERS

You will eventually find a few of these around the camp fire. I don't know how they get there, but they do.

MELSKI: You've got enough on your plate as it is, but then you've got to welcome people in, or turn them away if that's what you need to do. Because there's always a high proportion of wing nuts and fruitcakes, dime bars and spanners. It's always different with every person, and once you're personally involved with that person it's very difficult to say, "Right, they've got to be sectioned" or, "We've got to just turn them out"... and then the police turn up and say, "They were throwing themselves in front of traffic as a form of protest. Take them back", and we're going, "No, no, no, we don't want them here."

Protest camps don't really function well as the last post of care-in-the-community. While some nutters are gentle and lovely, if anyone is being genuinely disruptive, threatening or violent then its a very good idea to get together and put them on a train to somewhere else before the pressures they put on the community forces others to leave. This is a particular problem in urban camps or community squats. You may have to refuse to operate an open door policy, otherwise nutters and gangsters end up in the majority, and then you're fucked.



Ejecting nutters is the only time I've known camps to have meetings about anything effective or decisive. *Road Rage* recommends plenty of meetings and decision making structures to ensure that all decisions are communal and camps are non hierarchical, which seems a bit unnecessary to me. Official meetings tend to reinforce, rather than challenge the hierarchies which spring up on site, and while it is good to get together to hear what everyone has to say, is also important to stay spontaneous, unstructured and free of rigid bureaucracy.

LOCK-ONs

The illustration shows yer basic oil drum lock-on. Build lock-ons in chimney pots, hollowed out tree stumps, holes in the ground (with buried scaff poles anchoring them in place), in trees, in tunnels, EVERYWHERE. Then try and find people who will commit themselves to being drilled out of them.

The idea is that the evicting bailiffs have to angle grind through the metal, kango hammer through the concrete and then pick out all the other little bits by hand to get to the tube to cut the strap that's attached to your wrist.

Of course, the other way they can get you out is to torture you until you unclip. They have been known to send a little camera down the tube to check whether you really are handcuffed, and then apply extreme pressure if you are not. Foil this by smearing grease around the inside of the tube and shoving some rags or newspaper down to obscure their view.

Lock-ons should be made weeks ahead of time, as the concrete needs time to go off. I asked Stig what the best concrete mix is because she's built loads:

SNAKE: Um, four parts stone, four parts sand, two parts cement.

STIG: Nah, I think it's best to do five parts stone, two parts sand and two or three parts cement.

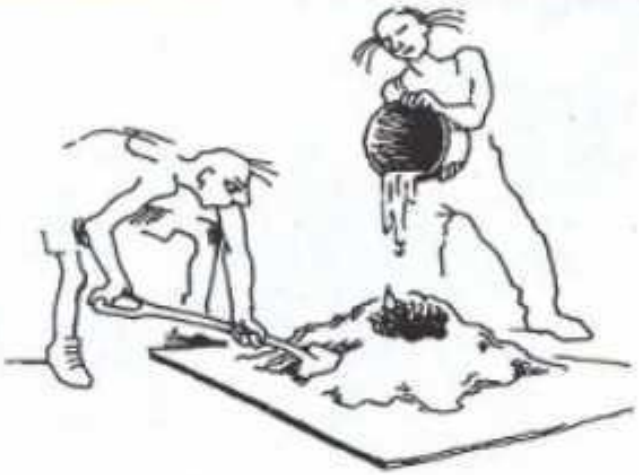
SNAKE: We've used 16 big stone, 16 small stone, seven sand and four cement before.

STIG: John reckons one cement to at least four parts stone and one sand maybe. Sounds a bit dodgy but if you've got months for it to set then maybe its OK.

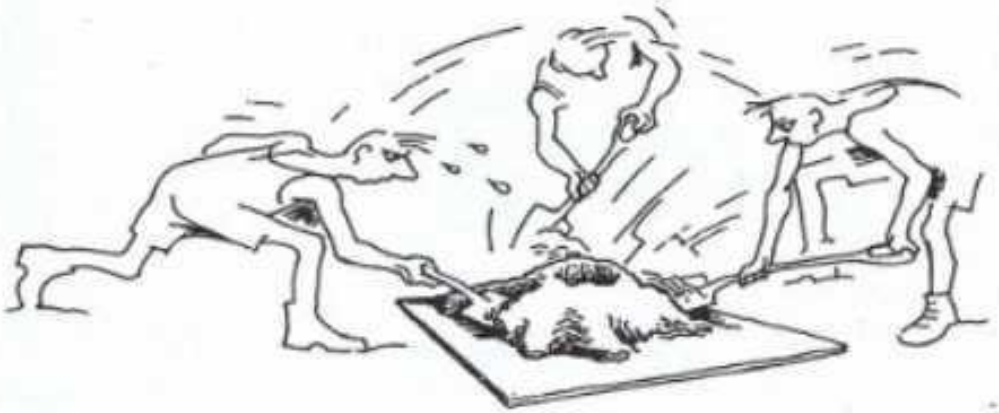
I hope that clears that up.

More usefully, Dave Troll says 1 part cement, 6 parts fine, clean sand, and one part clean gravel - 10ml chipping. Get the sand and stone from builder's merchants and wash any other lumps of metal, ceramic, glass or quartz that you chuck in. Mix the dry ingredients for the concrete, then add clean water and keep stirring all the time. Washing up liquid strengthens the mix.

Alternatively, you could get some money together and get Readymix to deliver some extra tough stuff. Why not make all the lock-ons first in someone's garage, using power tools, and then turn up, install them and fill with concrete? All you need then is a slap up meal and you have an instant Trollheim.



STIG: With our lock-on they looked at it and said, "That's crap concrete" and started digging through it. Five hours later we were like, "*So what do you think of our concrete now?*"



BD

CARE OF YOUR LOCK-ON

Check that the lock-on is comfortable for you: PP3 recommends padding the top of the tube. Sort out your stash and keep the tube covered so it doesn't collect water.

Don't lock on until the very last minute and try to go to the loo first. Use your left arm, if you are right handed, and since you are in a vulnerable position, wear a silly outfit and keep it fluffy.

BARRICADING HOUSES

Take the stairs out. Nail lots of bits of tin and wood to everything. Reinforce this with concrete. Fill up spaces with anything else available.

BRIAN: [At Claremont] the whole point was nothing was done to a plan. At one point a couple of guys sat down and designed a plan for doing the bay windows of the houses. Then they realised, "Hang on, this is a bad idea. If we do them all the same they'll find a weak point, and they'll go for that all the time. If we do them all different, they have to figure it out each time.



BD

PICTURES BY B. DAHL

Tree Villages



Warning:
Tree villages are inherently unsafe. The whole point, at Whitecroft, and later at Stanworth, was to create something that evicting bailiffs wouldn't trust. Fantastical structures.

A Canadian friend who lived on the Clayoquot Sound protest in British Columbia was taught far more uncompromising safety measures than we practise in Britain: get your own harness and your own climbing rope, rig it up yourself and never trust anyone else's. With anything other than this, you are risking life and limb.

So the following information is written to show you how we did it, not necessarily how it should be done.

GET THE RIGHT ROPE

Climbing ropes are expensive, woven, brightly coloured things that you get from climbing shops. They are essential for prusiking, abseiling or for clipping onto when climbing, as the 'give' in the rope stops you hurting your back if you fall onto it. (A fall of just four feet onto a static line can break your spine.) The ends of the rope should be bound with sticky tape to prevent them from unravelling, and you must keep your rope out of mud and grit, as this affects its stretchiness.

Blue polypropelene rope has traditionally been used for both treehouse building and walkways, because it is cheap. It is strong, but it biodegrades in sunlight so must be replaced over time. It can be obtained from builders merchants and ships chandlers. For treehouses, use 6mm polyprop for lashings and 8mm for anything else. For walkways, it is advisable to try to get hold of **polysteel rope** (white with red flecks in) which has steel woven into it for extra strength. With walkways it is very, very important that the rope doesn't break.

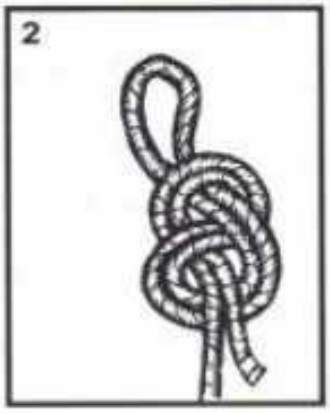
Rope unravels when cut, so bind cut ends tightly with electrical tape, or melt them with a lighter and mash the fibres together.

TIE THE RIGHT KNOTS

This is extremely important - you can't just make it up as you go along.

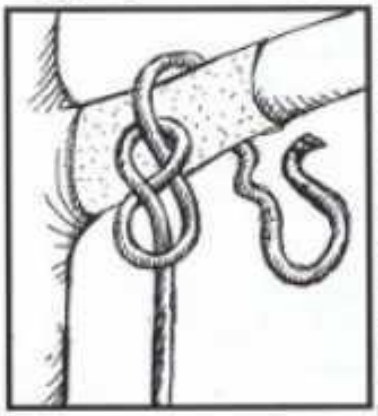
Figure eight knot:

This is a strong, easy knot.

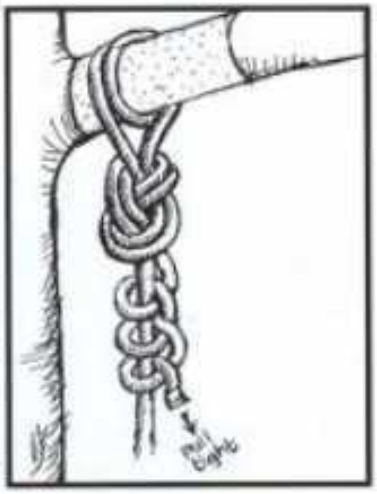


(Figure eight knot cont.)

Rigging a climbing rope up in a tree:



Find a strong, accessible branch. Tie half a figure of eight a few metres from one end of your climbing rope. (If the rope is going to be up for a while, you may want to tape some carpet tightly around the branch to protect the tree).

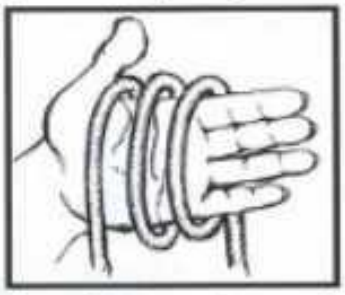


Wrap the rope once around the tree, then feed it back through the knot. Finish off with a line of half hitches or if you want to be flash, stages 1-4 of a fisherman's knot, (below). Tape the ends of the rope together.

Your climbing rope must reach all the way to the ground. If it is a too long, tie the excess up in a knot so it doesn't trail in the mud.

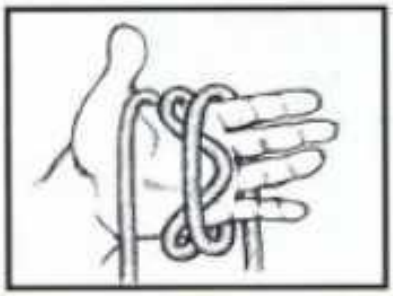
Alpine butterfly:

This is a bit more complicated. It forms a loop, like a figure of eight, but you can untie it more easily. Use it to make loops in a length of climbing rope to provide clip-on points for clambering about in trees.



Wrap the rope three times around your hand.

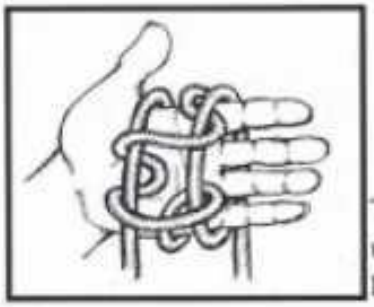




Pass the second strand under the third one and around in front of both,



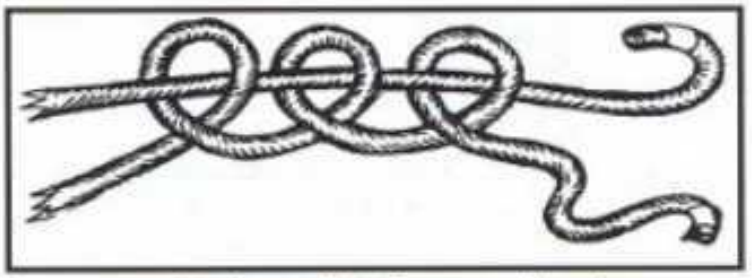
then slide it behind them, down your fingers and off your hand.



Try again until you end up with something that looks like this.



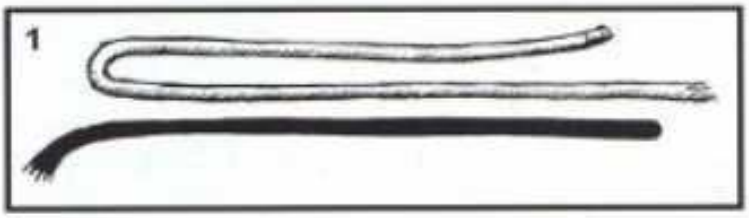
Half hitches:

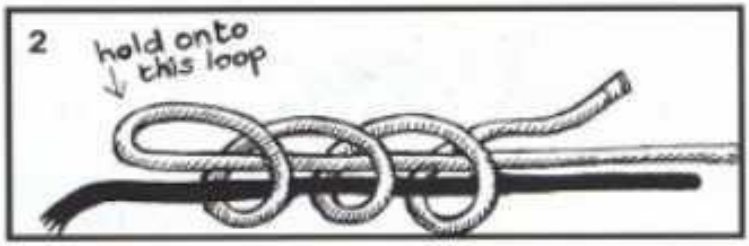


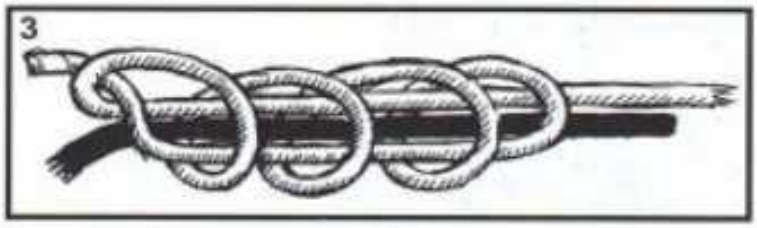
Easy peasy. Tie them all in the same direction.

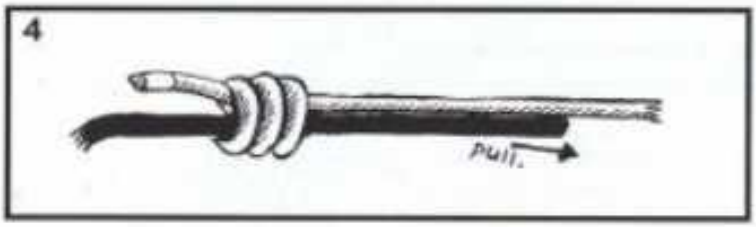
Fisherman's knot:

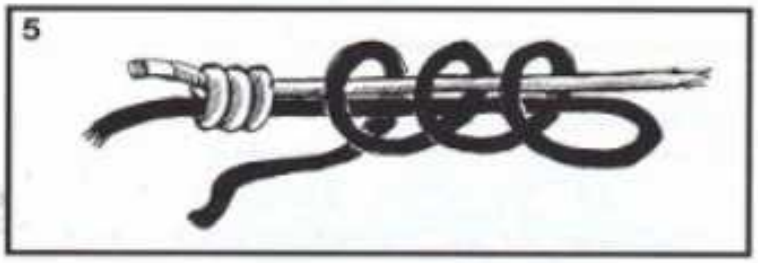
Very swanky. Use this to tie ends of a length of prusik cord together to make prusik loops. It can also be used *in an emergency* to tie any two pieces of rope together. (Splicing is a safer method of joining rope – refer to your Boy Scout Manual for details).

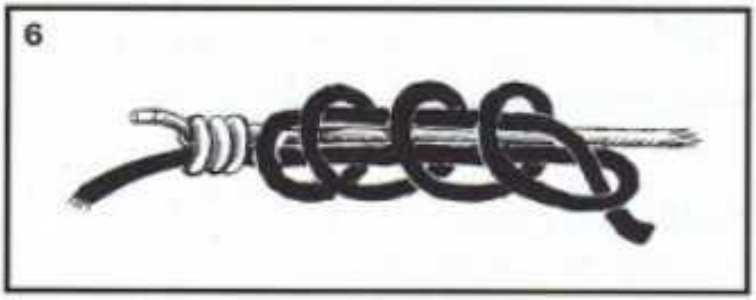


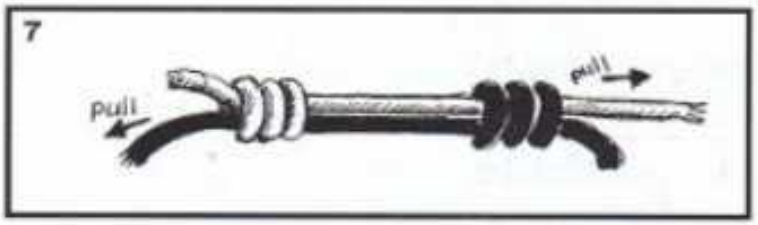


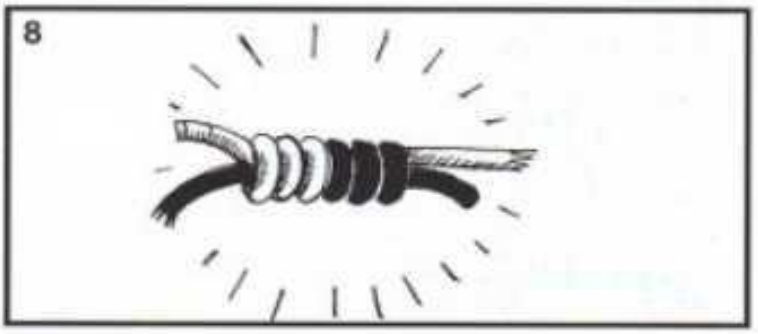






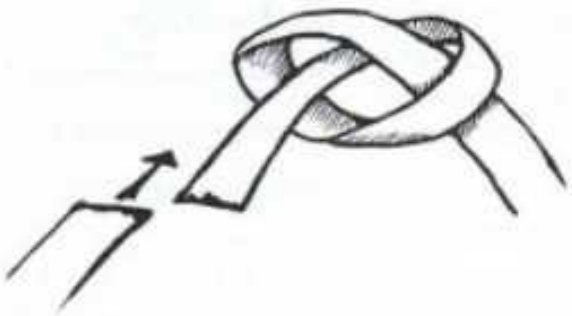


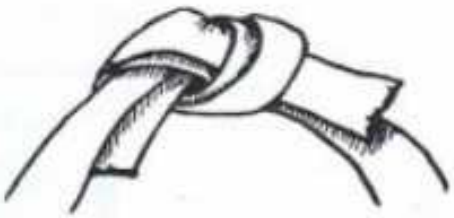






Tape knot:
For making a loop out of a length of climbing tape.





There is another knot to learn, the Clove hitch, which is illustrated in the 'Making Walkways' section.

Practise tying knots with your shoelaces; it's easier than trying with polysteel rope.

Your Harness is the Swankiest thing about Roads Protesting



It is also what stops you falling out of a tree. Make sure yours is safe and fitted correctly and that other people's are too. Buy proper climbing equipment from climbing specialist shops (if you explain that you are saving the planet they may give you a discount – we nearly got a sponsorship deal at Newbury). All this information is intended as a guide. Don't rely on it.

All unsafe climbing equipment **must be destroyed** except for old carabiner clips which can be firmly attached to lock-ons.

The safest sort of harness is a full body harness. If you ever come across one of these lunched out anywhere, appropriate it. In it you can do fun things like abseiling upside down. However, for tree protesty things, a sit harness is adequate, and cheaper. When you are hanging about in one of these, your weight is suspended at a point below your centre of gravity, which means it is possible to turn upside down. Always make sure that the waist band is tightly fastened, so there is no chance that you can slip out of it.

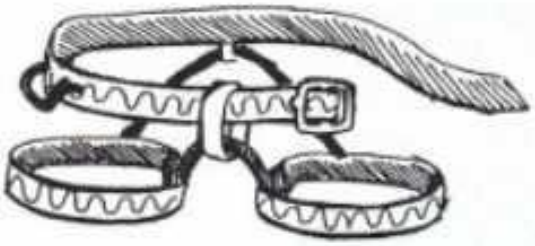
The first time you try on your harness, get the person in the shop to show you how. When assembling your equipment, get someone who is sussed to check that it is safe.

NB Children under the age of 10 should only use a full body harness.

WHAT YOUR HARNESS WILL LOOK LIKE



Unclip all the metal bits of tat and untangle and rethread the various belts and elasticky bits until your harness looks like this:



a normal sit harness. These come in different sizes.



or this, a DMM style adjustable harness.
These harnesses are not very comfortable for girls, but then no harnesses are comfortable for boys, with their squashable dangly bits (hee hee).
Now put it on like a pair of knickers.
Do the waist band up tightly, around your waist, not your hips, and adjust the leg loops (if possible) so they are snug.

VERY IMPORTANT

Now check that all the buckles are doubled back on themselves so they cannot slip.

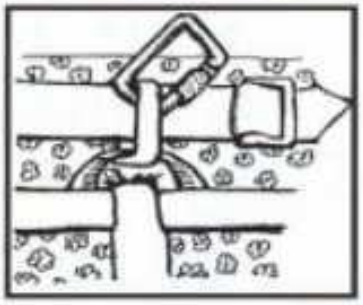


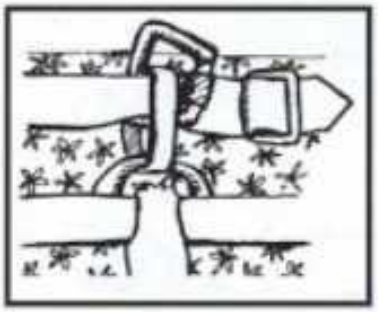
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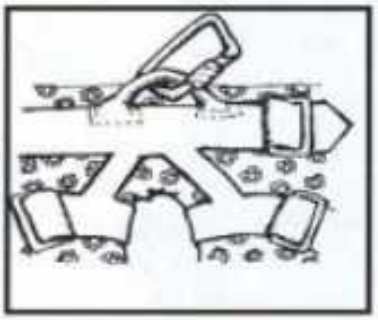




always always always always always always always do this.



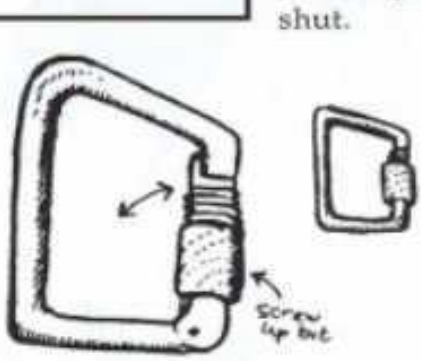




CARABINERS

Now for the rest of the climbing tat. First a large (seven ton) screwgate carabiner attaches to the front of your harness, just above your rude bits. Floral leggings strictly optional.

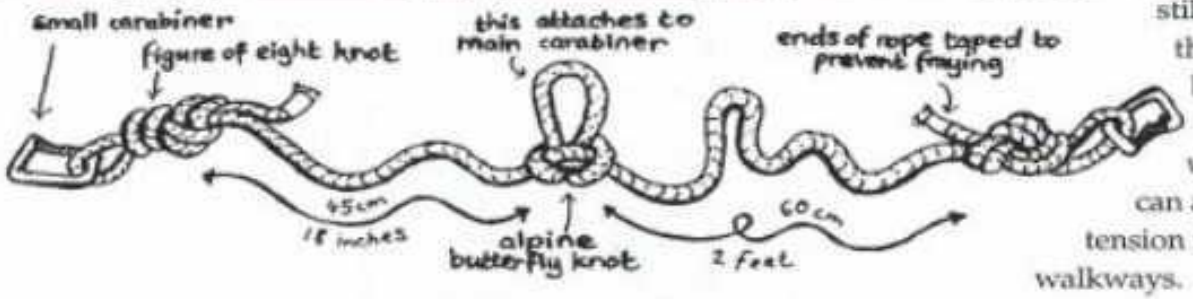
A carabiner is a specially designed clip. It should open and close freely and show no signs of wear. Screwgate carabiners have a screw attachment which does up over the opening. This should be twisted upwards and then undone half a turn, to prevent it from jamming shut.



COWSTAILS

The next essential bit of climbing tat is made from a few metres of climbing rope and two carabiners (next page). It must be climbing rope, as cowstails take your weight in a fall and must 'give' slightly so as not to break your back. Wrap the long cowstail around a branch for

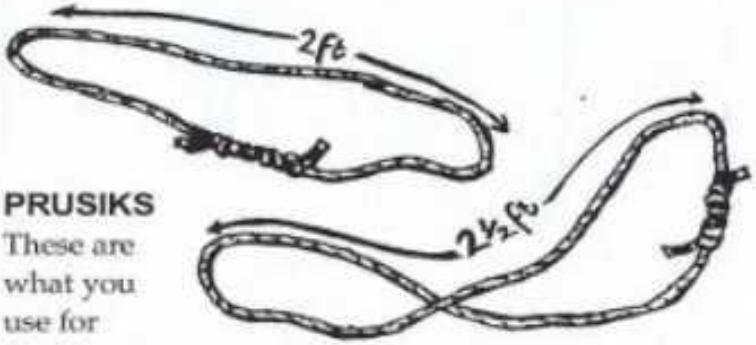




still worth buying, though, if you feel rich, because you can shin up ropes quickly with them and you can also use them to tension ropes when making walkways.

safety when free-climbing, or clip them onto rope clip-on points installed in the tree. Then walk the walkway to the next tree, using the shorter cowstail. This should be the length of the reach of your arm, so you can haul yourself up if you slip from the bottom rope.

You now have the basic equipment for free-climbing trees and doing walkways safely. But your harness is not nearly swanky enough yet; no, spend the rest of your giro on some extra shiny things to hang off it.



PRUSIKS

These are what you use for climbing up ropes. Buy four metres of the cord from a climbing shop and cut this in unequal halves. Tie each section into a loop with a fisherman's knot (see 'Knots') and tape the ends. Now hang them off the tat loops at the side of the harness. You can learn how to use them later; at the moment we are just concerned with looking good.

ASCENDERS

These are also used for climbing up ropes, apparently with less effort than prusiking, but I've never had any because they are so expensive. Some ascenders are intended as a secondary back-up in rock climbing and should not solely bear your weight – ask about them in the climbing shop. Some ascenders have little teeth in them which will make your climbing rope go all furry over time. They are



FIGURE EIGHTS



These are for abseiling, which is wicked. They come in lots of different colours and shapes and hang off the main carabiner on the harness like some kind of penis substitute. Figure eights need to be very strong to withstand the friction of abseiling, and it is possible for them to fracture internally without it showing on the surface so never drop your figure of eight, (or any climbing equipment) on to a hard surface. If a fall does occur, test your figure of eight by suspending it from a string and tapping it with a bit of metal – it should chime, 'ting' – if it makes a dull 'thuk' it could be broken and might shatter when you abseil on it. Actually, that sounds a bit dodgy. Look, you don't want your fig 8 to explode in mid air, so just don't drop it, OK?

Stitch plates are for belaying, rather than abseiling, but you can abseil on them, and figure of eights are for abseiling, rather than belaying, but you can belay with them. Is this all getting unnecessarily complicated yet?

PULLEYS



Climbing shops also sell little strong pulleys which you can use to rig up a block and tackle to get people or tat into the trees. Some boy protesters buy them and then get enthusiastic about the possibility of whizzing along walkways on them like Superman, but this is not actually very practical, as in an eviction you are not likely to want

to hassle about with putting one on a rope and then threading the carabiner through it. Really they are just for having a swankily laden harness.



TAPES

Now these are useful. These are just loops of special fabric tied with a tape knot (see 'Knots'). A tape can be wrapped around a branch like an extra long cowstail, or to make a foot loop. You can use a tape and two extra carabiners to make a chest harness for extra safety, useful for occasions like getting your mother up to your tree house. And you can make a temporary sit harness out of a long tape and one large carabiner; adjust the knot in the tape so it is the right length to fit snugly. This is obviously dodgy, but a lot better than nothing at all.



Tapes are also used for shinning up tree trunks, and for climbing lamposts during riots.



You are now a fully kitted out Ego-Warrior. All you need to complete the image is an inexhaustable supply of anecdotes detailing the vital role you have played in the Direct Action Movement over the last few years. But remember, no matter how beautiful and valuable your harness is to you, NEVER, on pain of severe ridicule, NEVER EVER WEAR YOUR HARNESS TO THE PUB.

Prusiking

Prusiking is the safest way to climb trees, and it doesn't damage the bark or branches. As you are attached to the rope the whole time, it also makes it easier to overcome a fear of height.

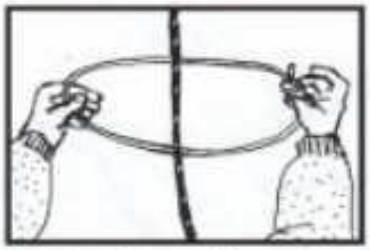


1. Check that you are climbing a climbing rope. It should be woven, stretchy and a funky colour.

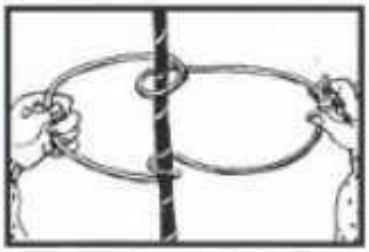
Is the top of it firmly attached to the tree?



2. Untangle your prusiks.



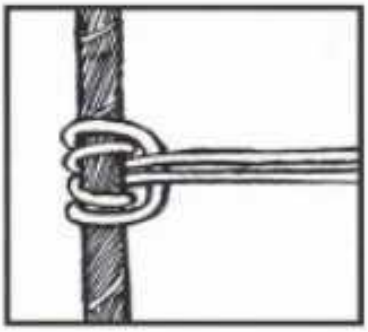
3. Take the smaller of the two loops and hold it out behind the rope, with the knot in your right hand if you are right-handed. Pass the knot around in front of the rope and back through itself.





4. Pass the rope around and through again, and pull it tight...

Now sort out the knot so it looks like this:



5. Your prusik will slide up the rope, but once you put any weight on it, it will tighten and won't slip down, much. Attach the rest of the loop to your main carabiner, do-up-the-screwgate-and-undo-it-half-a-turn.



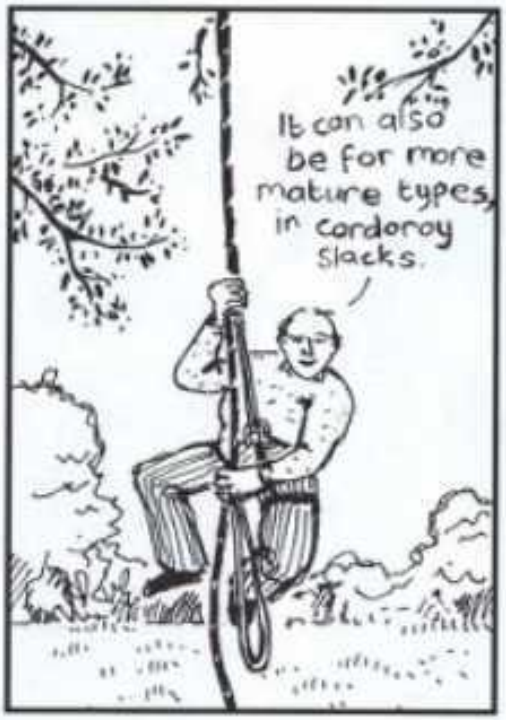


6. Repeat with the larger prusik, underneath the first. This is to put your foot in.



7. How it works is you stand in the foot loop and then slide the waist loop up the rope...





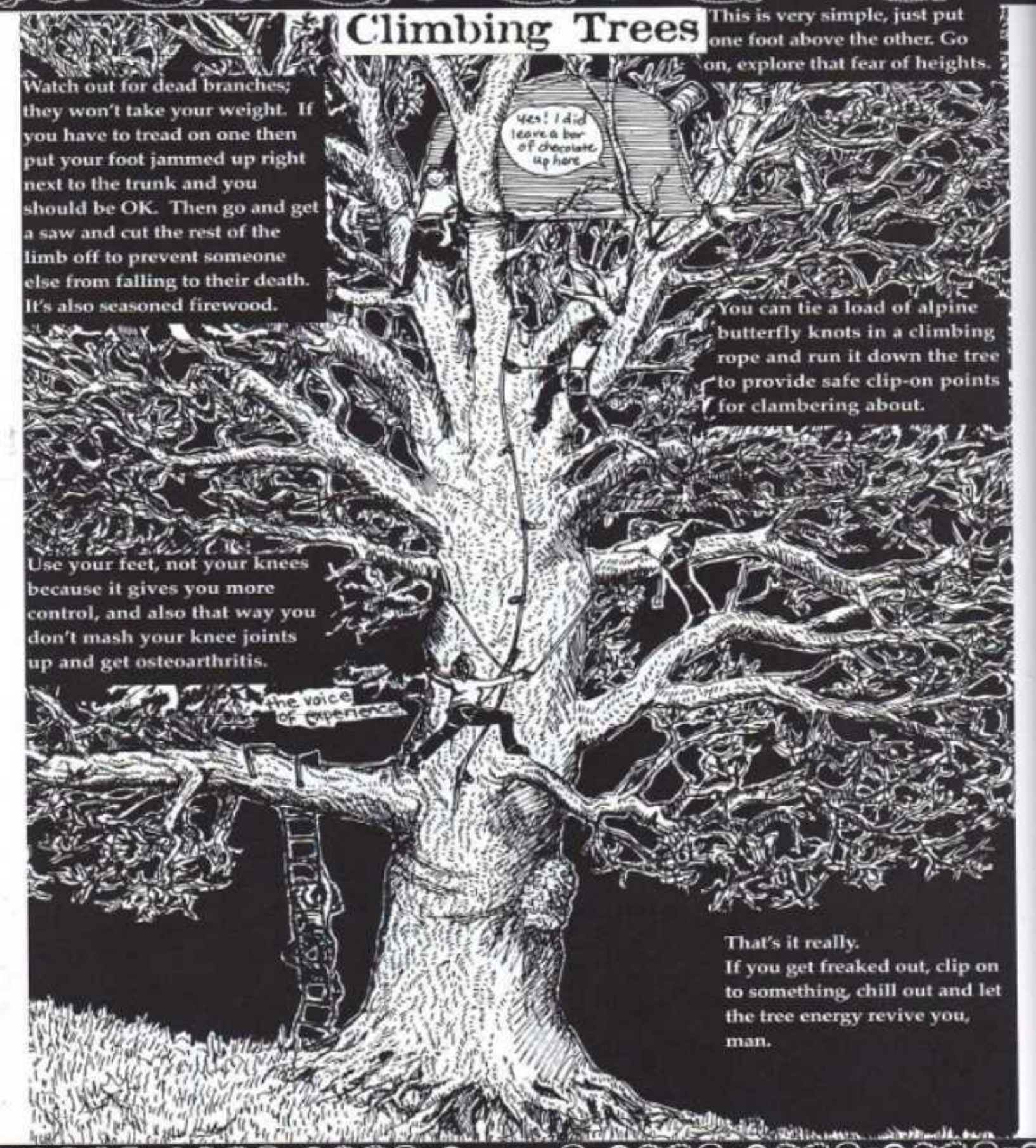
...then you sit down in your harness and slide the foot loop up.

When you get tired you can stop and chill out and swing about. You have to take all your weight off the prusik and loosen the knot slightly to get it to move. If the knots slide down the rope, which may happen if the climbing rope is thin or new, then retie your prusik knots wrapping the prusik three times around the rope.

Prusiking is great when you are too tired or out of it to free climb. I know someone who woke up still swinging in their prusiks after a nasty lot of drinking the night before. Prusiking is crap in icy rain, when the knots freeze to the rope and you have to retie them in mid air. However, it is so exhausting that at least you will be warm when you get into bed.



Climbing Trees



This is very simple, just put one foot above the other. Go on, explore that fear of heights.

Watch out for dead branches; they won't take your weight. If you have to tread on one then put your foot jammed up right next to the trunk and you should be OK. Then go and get a saw and cut the rest of the limb off to prevent someone else from falling to their death. It's also seasoned firewood.

You can tie a load of alpine butterfly knots in a climbing rope and run it down the tree to provide safe clip-on points for clambering about.

Use your feet, not your knees because it gives you more control, and also that way you don't mash your knee joints up and get osteoarthritis.

That's it really.
If you get freaked out, clip on to something, chill out and let the tree energy revive you, man.

CLIMBING UP TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Strong people like boys can usually shimmy up tree trunks if they hold onto them tightly enough, but this is a cheat method for wussy girlies, like me. These methods only work for trunks which are narrow enough for a person to reach around.

1. Wrap a long tape around the trunk of the tree and back through itself, then attach it to a small carabiner and clip this onto your main carabiner.
2. Wrap another long tape around and put your foot in it.
3. Stand up. Move the waist loop up. Sit down. Move the foot loop up.
4. If you come to a branch sticking out, wrap a third tape with a carabiner on around the trunk above the branch and clip this onto your main carabiner. Unclip your other waist tape and carry on up.

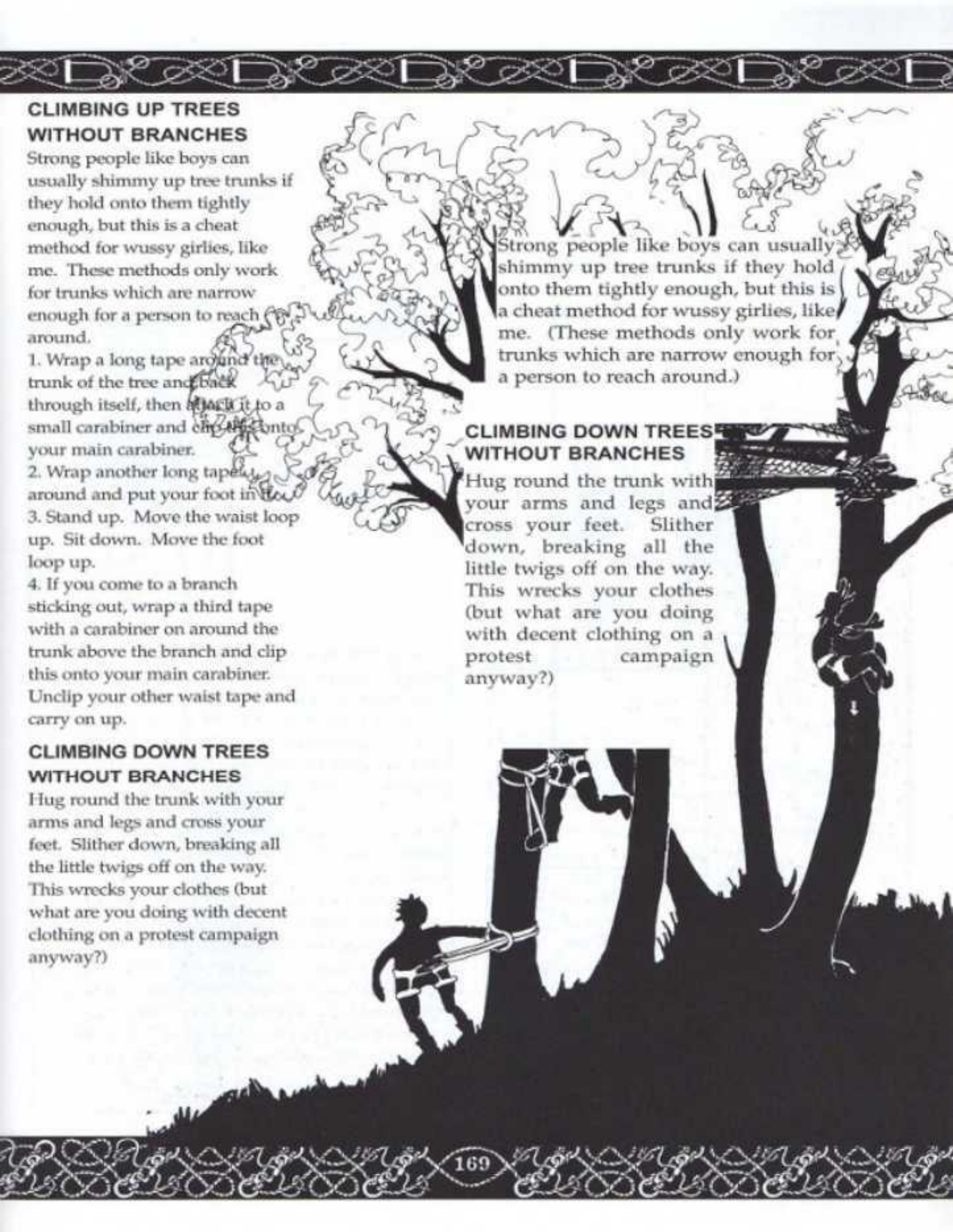
CLIMBING DOWN TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Hug round the trunk with your arms and legs and cross your feet. Slither down, breaking all the little twigs off on the way. This wrecks your clothes (but what are you doing with decent clothing on a protest campaign anyway?)

Strong people like boys can usually shimmy up tree trunks if they hold onto them tightly enough, but this is a cheat method for wussy girlies, like me. (These methods only work for trunks which are narrow enough for a person to reach around.)

CLIMBING DOWN TREES WITHOUT BRANCHES

Hug round the trunk with your arms and legs and cross your feet. Slither down, breaking all the little twigs off on the way. This wrecks your clothes (but what are you doing with decent clothing on a protest campaign anyway?)



Abseiling

Great fun. Although bear in mind that abseiling has caused more serious injuries on tree campaigns than anything else. Really, I mean it, get someone to teach you properly. Anyway, this is how you abseil with a figure eight.



1. Find a climbing rope that is firmly attached to a tree and which reaches all the way to the ground.



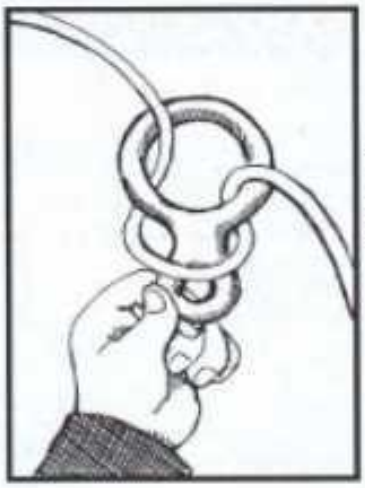
2. Tie your hair up and tuck your necklaces in.



3. Unclip your fig 8 and hold it this way up.



4. With the rope in your right hand, if you are right handed, push it through the large hole from the front.



5. Pull the loop of rope around the bottom of the figure 8.



6. Attach the bottom of the fig 8 to your main carabiner. Do-up-the-screwgate-and-undo-it-half-a-turn.

Now this allows you to slide, in a controlled fashion, down a rope ONLY provided that you hold the protruding rope DOWNWARDS.

If you let go of the rope then you will fall.

If you go too fast, then you may burn your hand, let go of the rope and fall (avoid this by wearing a leather gardening glove).

And if you have any stray locks of hair or necklace type things near the fig 8 then they will be magically sucked into it and make you very unhappy.

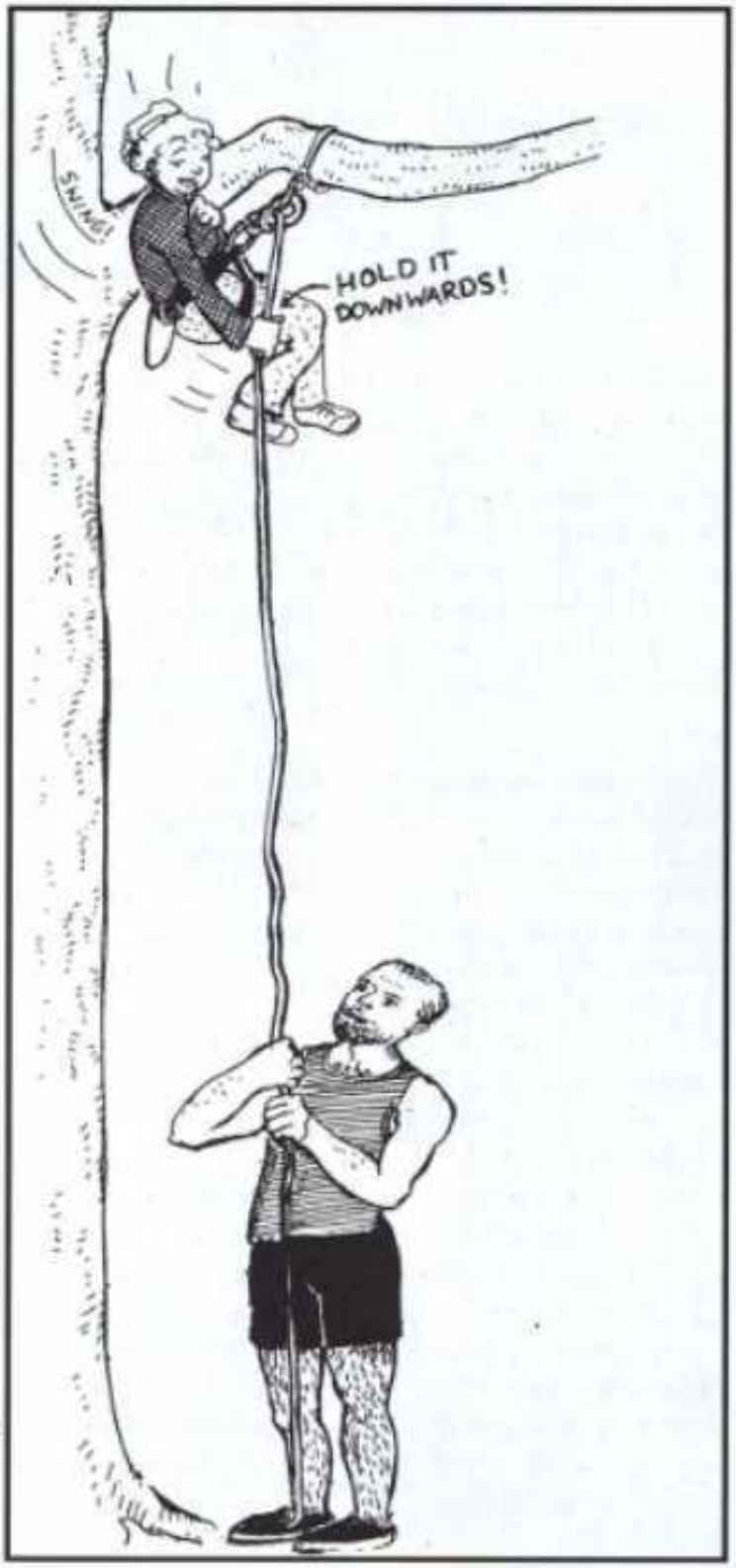
SO the first time you abseil, it is as well to get someone to hold the bottom of the rope, slackly, so that if you yell, they can pull it downwards and slow you down. You can also try passing the rope under your bottom and holding it with your other hand, or wrapping it loosely around your lower leg and gripping it between your boots.

Don't hold onto the rope above the fig 8.

Got that? Ready?

7. Move the fig 8 as far up the rope as you can. Tuck all your hair and necklaces in again and grip the rope firmly downwards.

Now swing out on the rope (this is the scary bit) and slowly and gracefully descend.



9. You can stop by wrapping the rope twice around your leg.



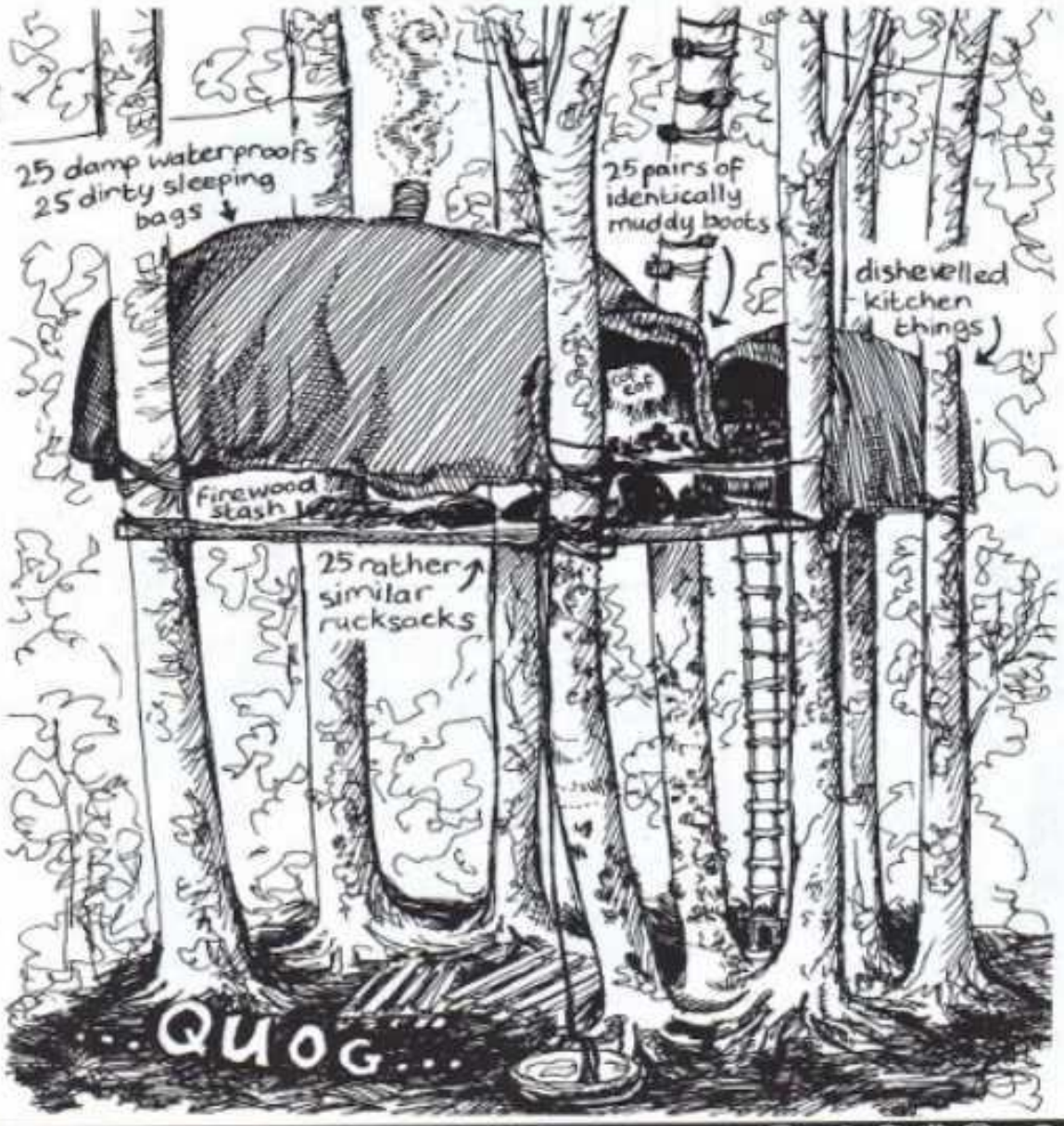
Right, now you're in the trees (although you've been taught by an experienced climber rather than relying on this book, I hope). Now to build the tree village. This consists of treehouses to live in, and walkways to get around, with maybe the odd steel cable walkway or big net and lots of lock-ons for added defence.



Funky Treehouses I Have Known.

Hattie's treehouse had beautiful windows, Special Branch that went through it (all shiny with being leant on) and a Mystery Squirrel



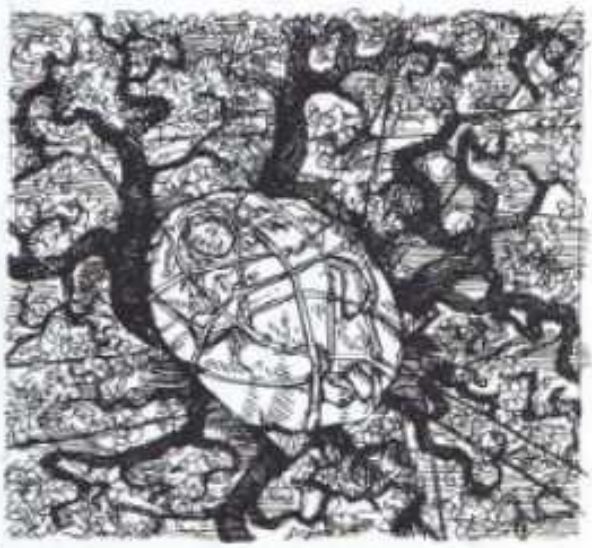


The Mothership at Kennet Camp, Newbury, was built between eight slender trees.

It slept anything up to 30 people and had a little kitchen and a very smoky burner.

The Beech at Fairmile had a kind of three storey affair.





Mark's treehouse, or the Kinky treehouse at Selar was so small that you couldn't sit up in it. It was like sleeping in an egg.

How to build a treehouse

You will need:

hammer nails, saw

a canvas tarpaulin for a house that will be lived in, or plastic sheeting for a temporary summer affair

joists, pallets or planks for flooring

Also, for winter; a burner (this one has been welded from a gas bottle) with a length of pipe for chimney and some aluminium or steel sheeting.

polypropylene rope for lashing, at least 4 mm thick

carpet and underlayor flattened cardboard boxes for insulation

knife, lighter.

bender poles, that is, coppiced hazel or willow shoots (or any wood that bends) best cut in autumn or winter to avoid damaging the tree.

wide gauge bit + brace or sharp chisel.

You will also need a long rope for hauling things up, someone on the ground to help, and a tree.

① Climb the tree. you cannot see the structure from the ground

② Find a place where your joists can be tied that is approximately level

joists may also be suspended use strong 8mm rope for this

build your treehouse as high as you practically can

③ Lash more joists across.

The number needed depends upon the strength of your flooring

④ Split the pallets and nail the boards across the joists

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG

It is a good idea to tie a length of rope to your saw and hammer + tie them to the tree.

Definitely time to go have a cup of tea

⑤

Drill or chisel holes in the edge of the platform Trim the fat ends of the bender poles to fit the holes.

⑥ Now nail in the bender poles and skillfully weave them into an organic whole.

Or cheat and use string and gaffa tape

Drape the tarpaulin over. Tie it on

To lash things together:

Wrap the rope around the branches as shown and then back around the join to pull it tight Do this a lot on main weight bearing joists. Finish off with a row of half hitches. Don't forget to melt or tape the ends of the rope to prevent fraying

Fit underlay and carpet.. Move in.

Make sure anything near the burner is fireproof.

A HAT ON TOP OF THE STACK PIPE STOPS THE WIND BLOWING BACK

Walkways:

Although walking along two bits of rope sixty feet in the air looks like utter insanity the first time you see it, walkways are actually quite safe. Well, not-particularly-unsafe anyway.

Provided that the rope doesn't break, and your harness is sound, then there is no way to fall off a walkway. A good way to overcome your fear is to get someone to check that your harness and cowstails are safe, then step out onto a walkway and jump off. Look, you really can't fall. You can wobble about a lot though.



Provided that the rope doesnt break... Use strong rope. Tie the correct knots. As the trees thrash about in the wind, the walkways will get slacker; don't continually re-tension them to tighten them, REPLACE THEM. In fact, spend all your time on environmental campaigns raising money for more polysteel rope.

Another precaution that makes walkways safer is to use two ropes, or a rope and a steel cable for the 'handrail'. Clip your cowstails onto different ropes.

A good thing to do when becoming familiar with walkways is to build one at ground level to practise going across. Then get lots of people to jump on it, re-tension it, jump on it, re-tension it. See if it breaks.

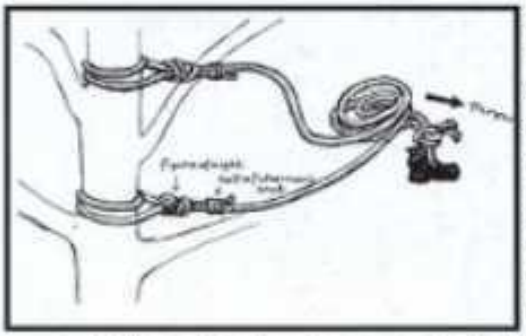
MAKING WALKWAYS

There are two ways of making walkways. This is the Clove Hitch method. The other is illustrated by B. Dahl in 'Road Raging'. Heated debates arise about which is safer, but all walkways are potentially unsafe. Check the ropes.

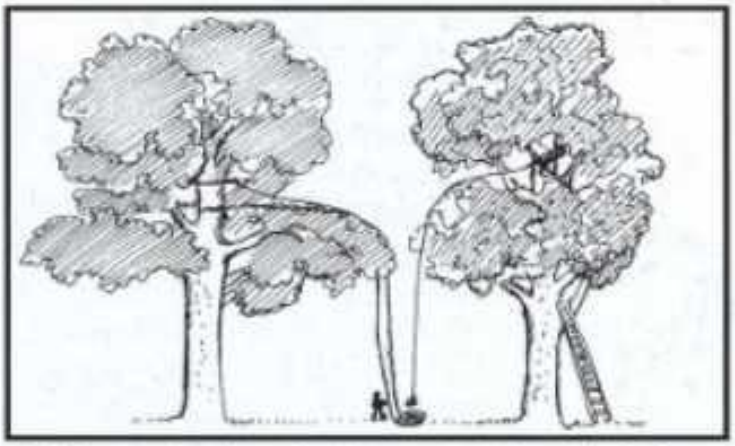
Making walkways is easier with two people, so you don't have to climb back down the tree if you drop the rope. You also need two 50 foot lengths of rope or twine to haul things up with, a knife, small bits of carpet and gaffer tape, and a lighter or some electrical tape.



1. Suss the trees out from the ground and cut two lengths of polysteel rope a good bit longer than the distance between them.

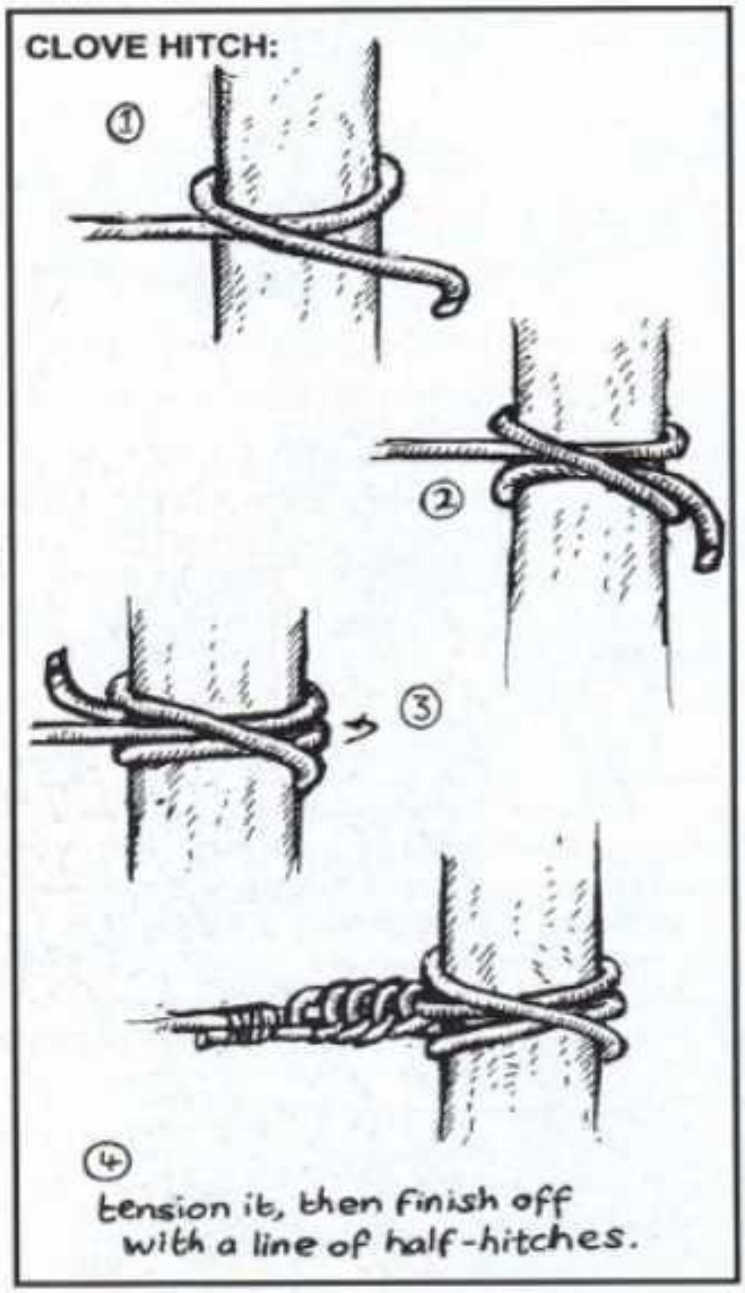


2. Now climb one tree. Find a place where you can attach the two ropes about five feet apart, with a clear route throught the branches to the next tree. Tie the ropes on using the same method as for rigging up climbing ropes (p161). Coil up the ropes, weight the end with something (I always use my boot) then chuck them out of the tree in the direction the walkway is going. This is so they clear the lower branches and don't get all tangled up.



3. Take another length of rope or twine, climb the second tree, weight the end of it and throw it out. You will have no boots on by now. Get someone on the ground to tie the ropes on to your line.

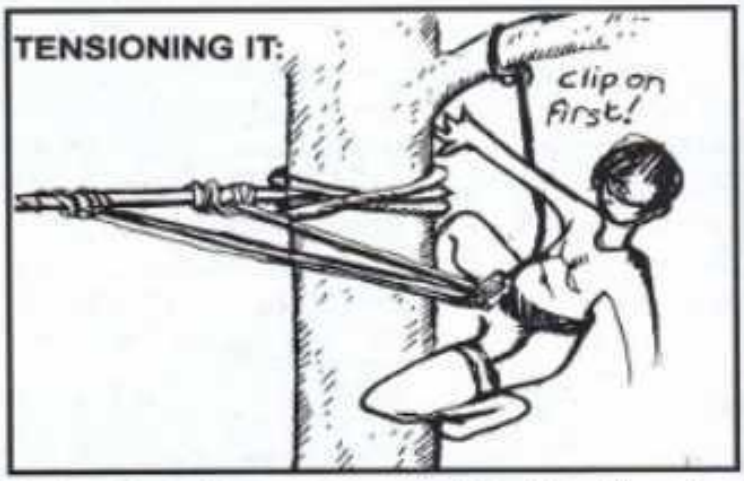
4. Tie the other ends of the ropes onto the second tree with clove hitches, again about five feet apart. Make sure the ropes lie neatly together all the way around the trunk.



5. Tensioning it: Your walkway will be wobbly and slack. Tension it by attaching your prusiks to the rope and to your harness and leaning/pulling back. Feed the excess through the knot. This is easier and more effective if one person pulls and the other tightens.

6. The end of the rope must now be tied back onto the walkway with a line of at least three half hitches. Tie them all in the same direction. Tape the ends of the rope together securely.

7. Walk along your walkway. If the ropes rub against branches at any point, fix strips of carpet around the branch with gaffer tape to prevent the rope fraying.



Steel cable walkways are more difficult for them to cut. They involve steel cable, a ratchet device for tensioning and U-bolts to fix it, otherwise the procedure is the same as above. Wrap carpet around the tree trunks so the cable doesn't dig into it, and when walking along cable walkways lift your carabiner up with your hand so the cable doesn't wear it away.

NETS

Nets such as big cargo nets were used to best effect at Claremont Road where they stopped the progression of the cherry pickers up the street for days. The cherry picker would move under the net and seize hold of someone to cut them out. Their partner would then stand over them so that they would then fall through the hole if the net was cut. Most of the time in tree evictions, though, nets get swamped with loads of bailiff climbers and everyone is hauled out.

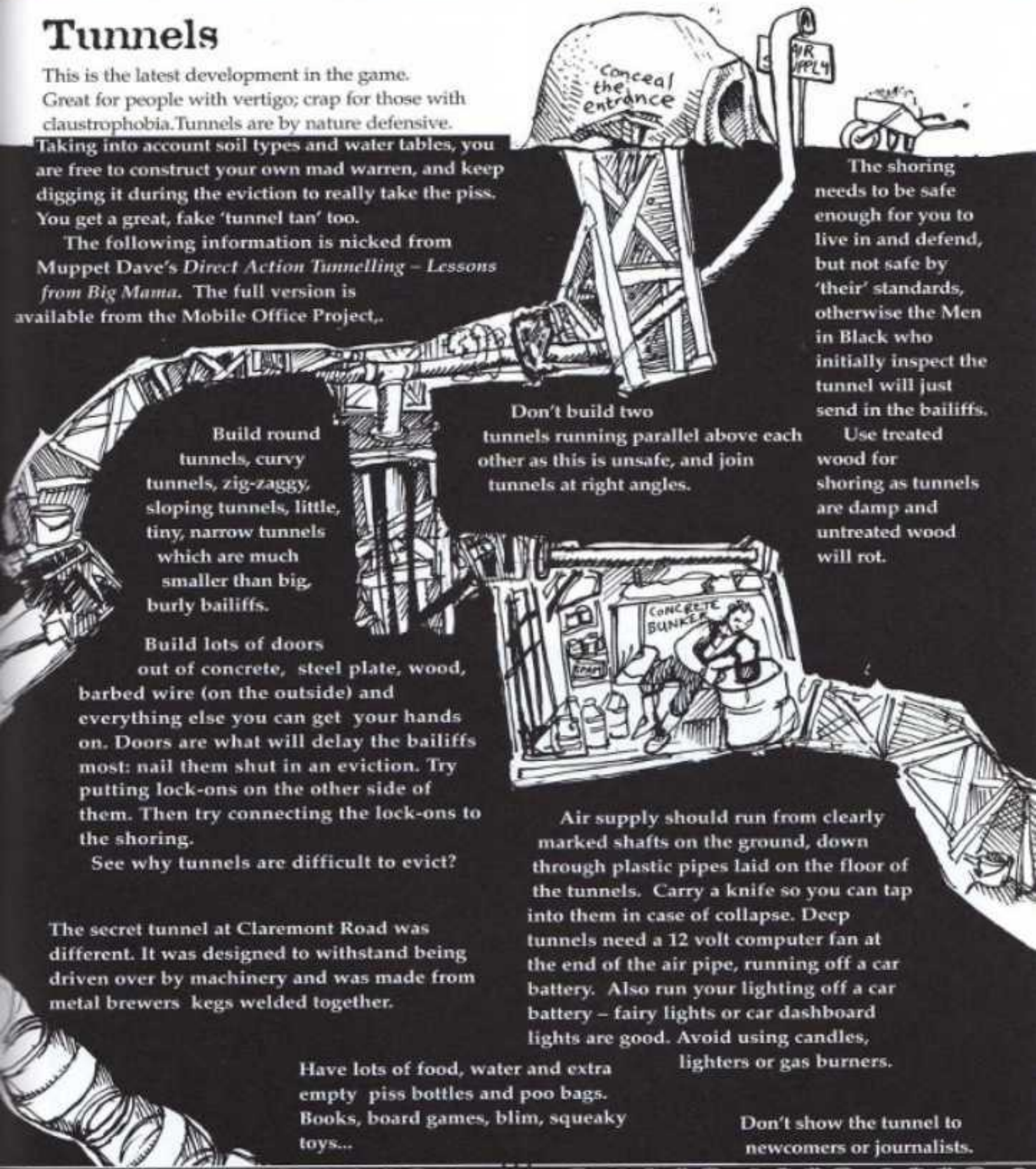
There are plenty more amazingly unevictable combinations of all these defences that can be built, although the advent of tunnels has made tree villages less important these days.

Remember, as far as tactics go, a site with limited cherry-picker access is most defendable; twenty people in two trees is much better than a hundred people in fifty trees, and three righteous, full-on, locally resident mothers are worth any amount of scuzzy, young hippies.

Tunnels

This is the latest development in the game. Great for people with vertigo; crap for those with claustrophobia. Tunnels are by nature defensive. Taking into account soil types and water tables, you are free to construct your own mad warren, and keep digging it during the eviction to really take the piss. You get a great, fake 'tunnel tan' too.

The following information is nicked from Muppet Dave's *Direct Action Tunnelling – Lessons from Big Mama*. The full version is available from the Mobile Office Project,.



The shoring needs to be safe enough for you to live in and defend, but not safe by 'their' standards, otherwise the Men in Black who initially inspect the tunnel will just send in the bailiffs.

Use treated wood for shoring as tunnels are damp and untreated wood will rot.

Don't build two tunnels running parallel above each other as this is unsafe, and join tunnels at right angles.

Build round tunnels, curvy tunnels, zig-zaggy, sloping tunnels, little, tiny, narrow tunnels which are much smaller than big, burly bailiffs.

Build lots of doors out of concrete, steel plate, wood, barbed wire (on the outside) and everything else you can get your hands on. Doors are what will delay the bailiffs most: nail them shut in an eviction. Try putting lock-ons on the other side of them. Then try connecting the lock-ons to the shoring.

See why tunnels are difficult to evict?

The secret tunnel at Claremont Road was different. It was designed to withstand being driven over by machinery and was made from metal brewers kegs welded together.

Air supply should run from clearly marked shafts on the ground, down through plastic pipes laid on the floor of the tunnels. Carry a knife so you can tap into them in case of collapse. Deep tunnels need a 12 volt computer fan at the end of the air pipe, running off a car battery. Also run your lighting off a car battery – fairy lights or car dashboard lights are good. Avoid using candles, lighters or gas burners.

Have lots of food, water and extra empty piss bottles and poo bags. Books, board games, blim, squeaky toys...

Don't show the tunnel to newcomers or journalists.

Media Frenzy

Suddenly, at the Fairmile eviction, we were Big News. As the siege of the tunnels continued, fleets of sleek press control units camped out in the churchyard at the bottom of the valley, waiting for a One person that they could hang the movement on.

Animal, being young and female, got it first.

ANIMAL: The eviction wasn't weird. The eviction was like just being in bed for four days, and eventually they knocked down the door and you were forced to get out of bed...

I was in the tunnel and I was thinking what I'd do when I got out. "Oh I should go and see my mum. How am I gonna get there?" I was going to borrow a tenner to buy some Issues, and go and sell them and get the money and go and see my mum.

And then I came out of the tunnel and suddenly it was like £500 for an interview, and I couldn't go home anyway because there was a fucking press conference to do!

It isn't necessarily a positive thing to have the national press hanging on your every word, however much you have to say.

It was really difficult because they wanted to know my personal politics. I was sitting there going, "I will not compromise. I will not compromise." but at the same time, thinking, "Am I saying something that most people on the campaign would agree with?"...

They twist anything bigger than a sound bite. When you're talking to them for anything that they can edit, you have to talk in as small sentences as possible and make sure that there's just no way they can edit it to make it into something else.

...And you don't know what line they're going to take. I mean you could be sitting there making sure everything you say is tailored to them not thinking you're a bunch of violent lunatics on drugs, and then they go and take the completely opposite road, sort of, "They're all so cute and fluffy and middle class and harmless", and then everything you said suddenly seems not at all hardcore enough.

The Fairmile residents tried to steer the interviews towards discussion of DFBO road finance, but the journalists wanted a nice little human interest story:

There was this one guy who was trying to push me into saying I'd like to be an M.P. or something... "Do you think you'd consider a career in politics?", and I'm thinking, "I've already got a career in politics."

And then, quite automatically, the person in their focus becomes a celebrity.

You'll never believe this one thing they said to me. They asked, "How do you get around the country then?" and I said, "I hitchhike." And the guy goes "Oh!" and I thought he was going to come up with the one about being hypocritical 'cause you're using cars, but he didn't, he said, "That's dangerous. Don't you think you're setting a bad example to other 17 year olds."

And I'm like, "Hang on. Before yesterday no-one in the world gave a fuck what I did."

Our movement doesn't have any leaders, so why make someone into a figurehead? The next person they focused on was known as Swampy, although "Swampy" is now a separate, mythical being; a phantom that haunts the man it was conjured from. The press picked up his image and ran a mile with it, officially adopting him "the nation's favourite eco-warrior". The focus was so arbitrary, and so irrelevant, and so overwhelming.

TAFF: It really hit me how ridiculous it had got when I jumped the fence into the Glastonbury festival this year, and, you know how it's all Sell, Sell, Sell? The first thing anyone tried to sell me was a signed Swampy t-shirt. This geezer had a pile of white t-shirts with "Swampy" written on with black marker pen, and he was selling them for a tenner a time.

Dennis Skinner heckles, "Stop digging Swampy" in the House of Commons.

"Swampy's purse" reads the sign on a box of WWF wallets sold cheap at the market in Brighton. What next? An exclusive modelling contract for the Body Shop?

"Do you know Swampy?" people still ask, and no I don't, because the person they're referring to has been entirely constructed by the tabloid press.

ANIMAL: Up until then, everybody wanted the media around. Everybody thought that it was really useful for a campaign to have them commenting on what we were doing.

Obviously it is easier to raise awareness of the issues if you include the press in what you're doing. If your actions are reported in the paper, you won't have to explain to your average punter why you are there, but you may have to debunk a few myths about who you are.

'Eco Warriors' is one. I don't know any Eco Warriors. (Although I know loads of Eco

Worriers, and a few Ego Warriors.) The label is indicative of the media focus on the confrontational side of environmental campaigning: "A raggle taggle army of eco-warriors play an ariel game of cat and mouse with bailiffs in the tree tops" or, "grapple hand to hand with bailiffs in Viet Cong style tunnels". When you live on a site, the eviction is only a part of what you remember.

WANDA: Why focus on those two days, which is Babylon's two days? I don't want those memories to live on. I really want the memories of the trees standing to live on.

Eco Warriors are weird and different. Cathy remembers, of the press coverage of the Sweet Chestnut tree:

They were looking for a kind of typical wacky protester, somebody like me who just looks like your ordinary person didn't fit the bill. "Can you move out of the way, we're taking a picture – we want that nice Donga and that nutty old man."

And then, added to these casual cliche's, we had to deal with the hand of Fame which descended upon the scene. I was shocked when at the next protest, at Manchester Airport, I met people who were there because they wanted to meet Swampy, as though that were an end in itself.

Swampy in Armarni suits. Swampy in the bath. A movement of radical resistance was reduced, in the eyes of the nation, to a representation of a harmless crusty turning squeaky clean. The contextualisation was radically disempowering. While the journalists were of the impression that they were feeding us the oxygen of publicity, for many people in the movement, the phenomenon reinforced the need to keep a critical distance from the press.

Specifically, when you're all planning an action, there often comes a point when someone, usually someone new to campaigning who is impressed by the media interest, pipes up with, "But what will the press say?" The argument then always comes round to "Who gives a fuck?" because the press will say what they say. At the end of the day, they are there to make a story, and we are there to make a difference.

In addition to this one might argue that any attempt to define the movement is setting its limits. If it is truly anarchic, then it should transcend any definitions that can be made of it. Including this one.



A. Testa

The Criminal Justice Act ~ the practice

A lot of filming went on at Fairmile that didn't get on the telly: Special Branch Evidence Gatherers mounted more intrusive surveillance than I'd ever encountered before. The policemen had more odd, jointed sections of matt black Kevlar body armour, and larger cameras with huge, round, unmissable flashes. They would stalk up to the wire when you were feeling especially miserable and take very ostentatious photographs.

I stayed at the office one night, frenziedly drawing a coffee-fuelled cartoon for the papers, and three squad cars sat outside the whole time and shone flashlights through the windows. It must have been a slow night for crime in Devon.

"We don't mind if these people protest just so long as they keep within the law" appears to be the standard police comment. Which conveniently ignores the fact that nearly all protest which doesn't have the prior permission of the police is outside the law. Once you have earned the tag 'illegal protester' then your motivations become irrelevant. If the law is wrong then break it, but then realise that the general public understand above all else that those who break the law must be punished.

Getting arrested was curiously liberating. My fear of it was of the unknown; once I had been photographed and finger printed and locked up and left alone I realised that that was all that was going to happen. There was no threat of physical torture, just the petty snubs of bored policemen.

OLIVIA: They were quite funny because I had quite a lot of nice, healthy munchies with me and they kept on not letting me have any because I might harm myself or others with sesame seeds, or halva and fennel.

I knew I was right, and I wasn't alone for long. My friends ended up there too and we were soon singing songs, doing handstands, refusing McDonald's breakfasts.

EMMA: I got arrested with this German girl, and we were waiting in the queue to give our names and stuff and we just fell about laughing. The police were mystified. And I said, "Well, if you can't see the joke!"

But then comes court, before magistrates who are trained to implement the law, not to question it.

JOSH: I decided that I was going to plead not guilty and try and do a defence of lawful excuse, say I had a good reason for doing the damage. What I should have done is read up on what really constitutes lawful excuse, because I would have been able to phrase things better and it's all word games really.

Basically I went through all the Government reports I could get hold of... The Standing Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, and the IPCC intergovernmental report on climate change... I was trying to show firstly that roads lead to more cars, secondly that cars are a major source of greenhouse gases and thirdly exactly what effect greenhouse gas is going to have. My contention was that because the government know what is going on and are still building roads, it is impossible to stop them except by protest.

I did go through it in quite a lot of detail and I think the court was quite impressed. But the magistrate then put it off for a presentence report, and when I came back it was a completely different magistrate. They did that deliberately, I think, because the guy didn't want to have to sentence me when I'd just spent two hours explaining to him about the greenhouse effect, and he agreed with what I was saying.

It is OK the first time, with a good lawyer:

"Yes ma'am, the accused is middle class... university education... promising career as a cartoonist.... brave, committed, young hero... not one of those scruffy dole scroungers you read about in the Daily Mail... No ma'am, never touched a drop of Special Brew in her life..."

But what about the second or third time?

"With reference to her criminal record, I see that we are dealing with a Repeat Offender here, and my sentence must reflect that."

Sentences for environmental activism are rising; six to eight weeks imprisonment for a second offence. At Newbury, where custodial sentences were rarely given, some of the most active tree dwellers incurred £500 fines. Friends of the Earth, who co-ordinated the fund raising, didn't help them out, so they now have warrants out for their arrest for non-payment of fines. Others forget their court dates, and then realise that with a record of non attendance in court they will be held on remand until their trial, which means three months in prison, guilty or not. And then there are people who are already on parole for something else...

Fear of the unknown becomes fear of the known. When it is not just a night in the cells, but a month, or a summer, or a year or more, then that is something to be scared of. Feel your blood freeze when you see a police car. When will they get you?

AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT WAS JUST THE START OF IT.

The Police Act was rushed through Parliament in the months after Fairmile, which gave the police the right to burgle people and bug their houses in the pursuit of incriminating evidence. Criminal activity is defined, for the purposes of the act, as expressly including 'large numbers of people gathered together for a common purpose'. So that means us then. Or just about anyone else. It could be any common purpose. It could be the Women's Institute or the Boy Scout Movement if a Chief Constable and the National Crime Squad Commissioner agree about it.

With the implementation of the Police Act all sorts of fears crossed my mind which I hadn't thought about since I'd first realised that my mother's phone was tapped. I phone my mum every week. Do I tell her what I'm doing, where I'm going? Does it really matter if they get this information, or the name of my dog, or my boyfriend, or the colour of my caravan? But what of my friend who have warrants out, do I mention them? Will they get nicked if I do? Now it's not just the phone; I can wonder when I'm talking to my own family in their house. Is it safe?

The office at Newbury was bugged, unsurprisingly. The evidence came following a casual conversation we had there about the devices you can buy at bicycle shops that deflate car tyres without causing criminal damage. We went out that afternoon to buy some, and found that a mysterious man had gone to every shop within the hour and bought up the entire stock.

EMMA: I'd love to look at my file. It would be so *funny*. I remember going up and opera singing really madly at the cameras.

I don't think they do listen to the phone every time I speak on it. I don't think that they have the time. And they could have made life much more difficult for me and my friends if they had acted on all the information that they have collected. But when a car drives into London these days, random photographs are taken of its number plate in an 'anti-terrorist' offensive. In the police station at Newbury before I was charged, a man took a photo of me with a little, curved box, like a space ship, that had two lenses at the front. It plotted the co-ordinates of my face so they can be fed into a computer: now any video tape can be analysed for my mug shot. And when I walk down the High Street, CCTV cameras stare down from the roof tops...

No, I don't think they act on all the 'intelligence' that they gather. Yet. When they want to, they will.

Environmental activism did change with the implementation of the C.J.A., and it was more than just digger diving that stopped. The police no longer pretend to be neutral; activists are more marginalised; they appear more extreme. There isn't as much music any more.

FLORA: In the past it was all like music and flowers and singing and chilled and feeling that our love will conquer them. Now protest has become much harder. There is more reacting against the violence instead of finding different ways...

But maybe it is me that is different. Perhaps the change from face paints and picnics to hoods and masks and midnight raids wouldn't bother me if I still had the enthusiasm that I first carried into the fray. Because there came a point when I wondered if it was good for me to be fighting so much and for so long.

PABLO: You see so many things that in the end you start to think, "Fuck you", which is their manufactured emotions.

MARK: They try and push you into a psychotic state.

FLORA: To be really nonviolent is so difficult. It's not about not hitting someone. It is about feeling at peace inside yourself, and being able to protest like that.

FRAGGLE: While they are killing your planet.

Protesting involves being pitted against groups of men who are geared up for battle, who actively enjoy having a go. This is never clearer than in the strangely personal relationships which have been forged with the bailiff climbers:

NICKY: [at the Manic Sha eviction]...um, because I've got a bit of a pixie in me, I was just sort of knocking off [the climber's] helmets and trying to steal their chainsaws and clipping their climbing tat onto other bits and stuff. And they all decided to gang up on me. One of them nearly grabbed me and then his mates go, "No, not him, we *need* him." And that really tripped me out and it made me realise that I was actually helping them get lots of money and could probably work out some way of

making it much more boring for them. Instead of getting an adrenalin rush while they made loads of cash chasing me around a tree.

I was tired of giving them that satisfaction. I was tired of watching things die. I wanted to do creative things.

(From one of Nicky's raps) *Time to share a dream. Make a new scene. Love to the green. Be a human being. I'd like to present an alternative: a way to live with a lot to give. A happy smiling loving nation to bring the population out of sedation. Are you part of the problem or part of the solution? Time for a CONSCIOUSNESS REVOLUTION!*

I miss it. I miss the space I had when the wilderness was my playground and there were always beautiful places to sit in alone. When a car passed down the track at Selar you could detect its fumes for several minutes; now I can't smell exhaust, but I can see it, hanging over the city in a browny purple cloud. When we went into Swansea from our days in the treetops, the town looked like the alienstrange place it really is, with crowds of discontented strangers passing through glassy shopping money-temples. Now it is familiar again. I watch my reflection in shop windows and all the things I could buy or be are superimposed behind it.

..are you choking on fumes from your brand new car? Are you happy to walk when it isn't that far? Do you say throw away out of sight out of mind? Left for the next generation to find. Did you think it would never come back to you? Are you wondering how this cancer grew? This ecosphere won't go on forever. Can't you tell by the smell and the fucked up weather?..

Nothing compares to being truly outside with the wind and the stars; watching the moon pass through its phases.

TONY: Yeah, I totally miss that. Once you've had that, that's it. You have to get back to it.

I am not romanticising. I knew it was special when I had it. It was even more precious because it was all going to go.

Anyway I don't miss having to eat pasta slop every night, and I can survive just fine without the risk of catching scabies.

I miss my tribe, most of whom like me, have left to get a space away from the chainsaws. I miss the companionship through the days and the fires at night. I miss their hugs; we had no reserve. People now seem strange and distant with their fear of being touched.

OLI: Nothing quite comes close to the sense of community you have when you're there and you're together resisting something, and living together. And it's a hell of a shock to go back into normal society, even normal 'alternative' society, after that because you see how alienated people are from each other

We're drifting now. We don't have a centre, a space, but we're all special to each other.



Nicky's picture



OLI: When I go up to London, where lots of people from the M11 are... I don't need anything to say, you know? Even if we've got nothing to say to each other, even if we've got very little in common apart from memories any more, I'm still totally comfortable. I don't have to say anything, I just have to be there with them, and it's nice.

JELLY: We all find that we are all still mates... Most places you go in life you find that you may stay friends with a couple of people, but this is bigger than that. It's more nationwide...

I like to think that when everything does go pear-shaped, the fact that I'm part of a group of people who can totally trust each other and who know we can do things together, means that we might stand more of a chance of surviving. Maybe we'll get our permaculture plantations together and it'll still be a free space, and it'll still be a party.

In the meantime, even if we don't live on protest sites, we'll still turn up for the eviction when we fancy a cheap adrenaline hit.

And there is a lot more to it than tree protesting.

MAEVE: It comes down to sorting out your rubbish. Take full responsibility. I'm not saying that I do, but everyone has to try.

...even if you're outnumbered a thousand to one, a time has come, a change has begun. The stirring of people asleep for so long, to ***get up, stand up, fight what is wrong.***

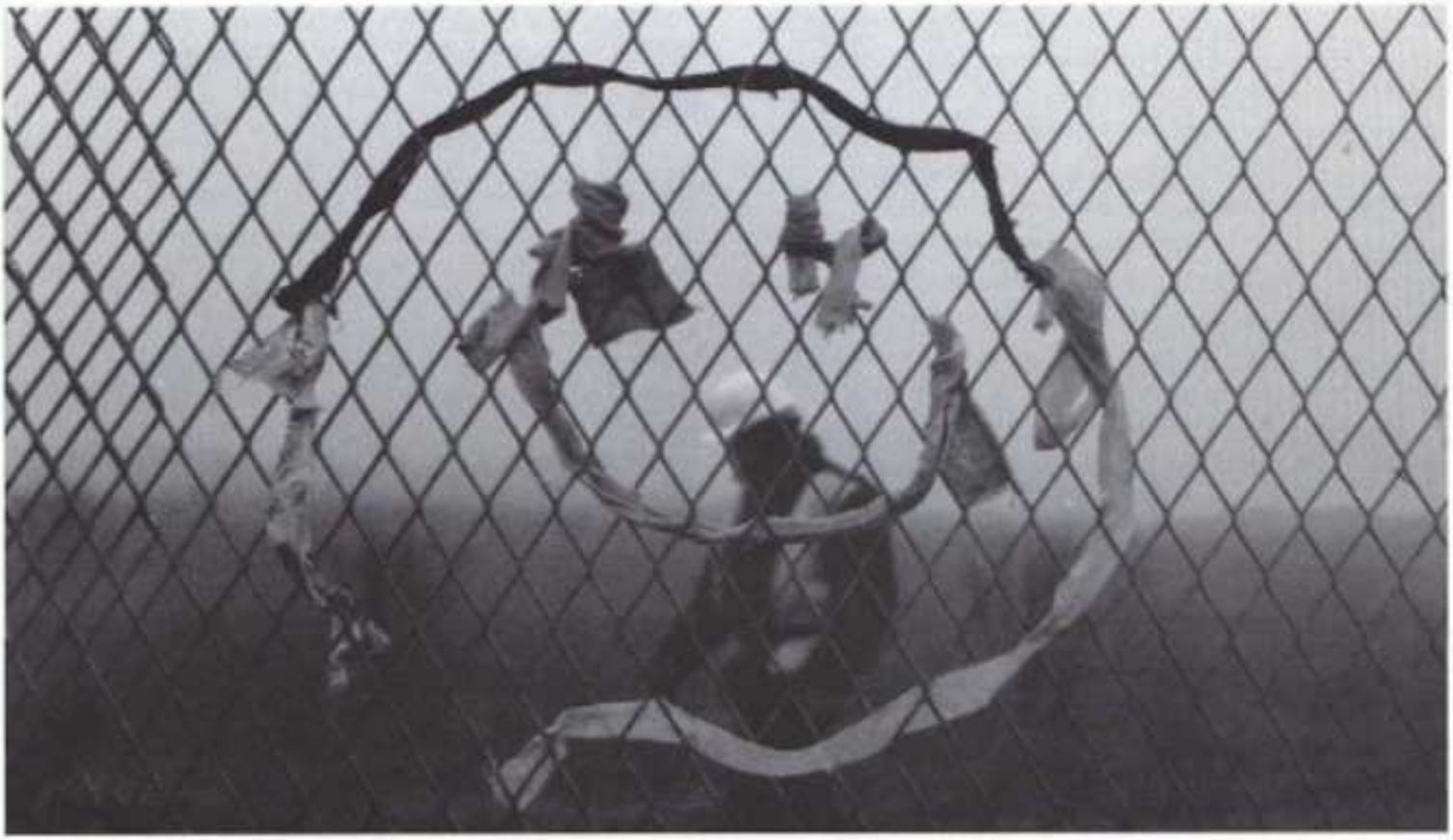
There needs to be as many sorts of protest as there are people and places to protect; urban gatherings like Reclaim the Streets and Critical Mass do more to mobilise people than a few hippies in the woods. And why should we appear to be battling on single issues when there is a whole positive agenda to campaign about? Most of it is in the Green Party manifesto, it is simple, and it can be peacefully implemented...

Don't trust politicians, though. Do it yourself.

VICKY: Tell you what, since I've started protesting, I've been so free of all the shit that Babylon ties you down with. I hate the word Babylon, but society, their rules, their regulations. I've been so free of it.

Before I was there I was a nursing auxillary living in a bedsit. Now I'm Vicky. I'm doing trapeze, I'm doing fire clubbing, I'm travelling all over the country, meeting the most amazing people. And I'm me. I'm discovering who I am and what I want to do. And fucking hell it's the most amazing thing that ever happened. It's brilliant.

Why do people just exist to die? You should exist to live! You should be full of love and full of spirit, and the sky's the limit. You can do whatever you want to do.





Stanworth Valley 1998

A. Tosta

POSTSCRIPT:

Despite a change of government, the country's hellthy economy has carried on track. The Private Finance Initiative remains in place, and is funding a new ring road north of Birmingham with attendant industrial and housing developments, which directly reneges on Labour's election promises. They have started tarmacking the A30. No one is talking about housing co-ops or workers co-ops. Most of the new Government's policies start where the Tories left off.

Dancing is still illegal, so protest is too, but tunnel evictions have become increasingly expensive, protracted and successful. The widening of Stringers Common Relief Road in Guildford and the building of a holiday village in Lyminge Forest in Kent have been stalled through direct action. However, there are no decent free parties in Brighton any more.

Selar is a huge black scar on the south side of the Black mountains, but those activists who stayed in Wales put what they learned from the site into practice:

MARK: We stopped them getting an extension at Nanthelen [opencast mine] which was a result. Now they know all about tree evictions: they know the cost, they know what's involved, they know how to do it and they just budget for it. That's just being predictable – there's not the element of surprise.

What was effective at Nanthelen was it was at the public enquiry stage. We went and put up the camp, did loads of petitioning, got a theatre group involved and did a village fete thing. There wasn't a massive turn out, but I don't think there needed to be because we'd put an effort in. We'd involved the local community and we'd talked about Agenda 21. We got a connection with some women from West Papua and the Philippines who were under threat from RTZ and we got them to come to Ystragynlais. We got a hall and about 30 people turned up and the women there met the women from West Papua, and they all had the same story. Other than the fact that the people from Indonesia are under threat from armed soldiers.

Celtic Energy went along as well and tried to stop us getting into the public enquiry. There were lots of huge opencast workers there too, but fortunately Di John was with us and he's one of the hardest men in the Welsh valleys and he's on our side. We went in the bar. He said, "You coming for a drink?" and we went in the bar with the Welsh opencast workers and managed to have a good chat with them really. Going, "Yeah, yeah, we may be dole scrounging scum, but we're happy scum."

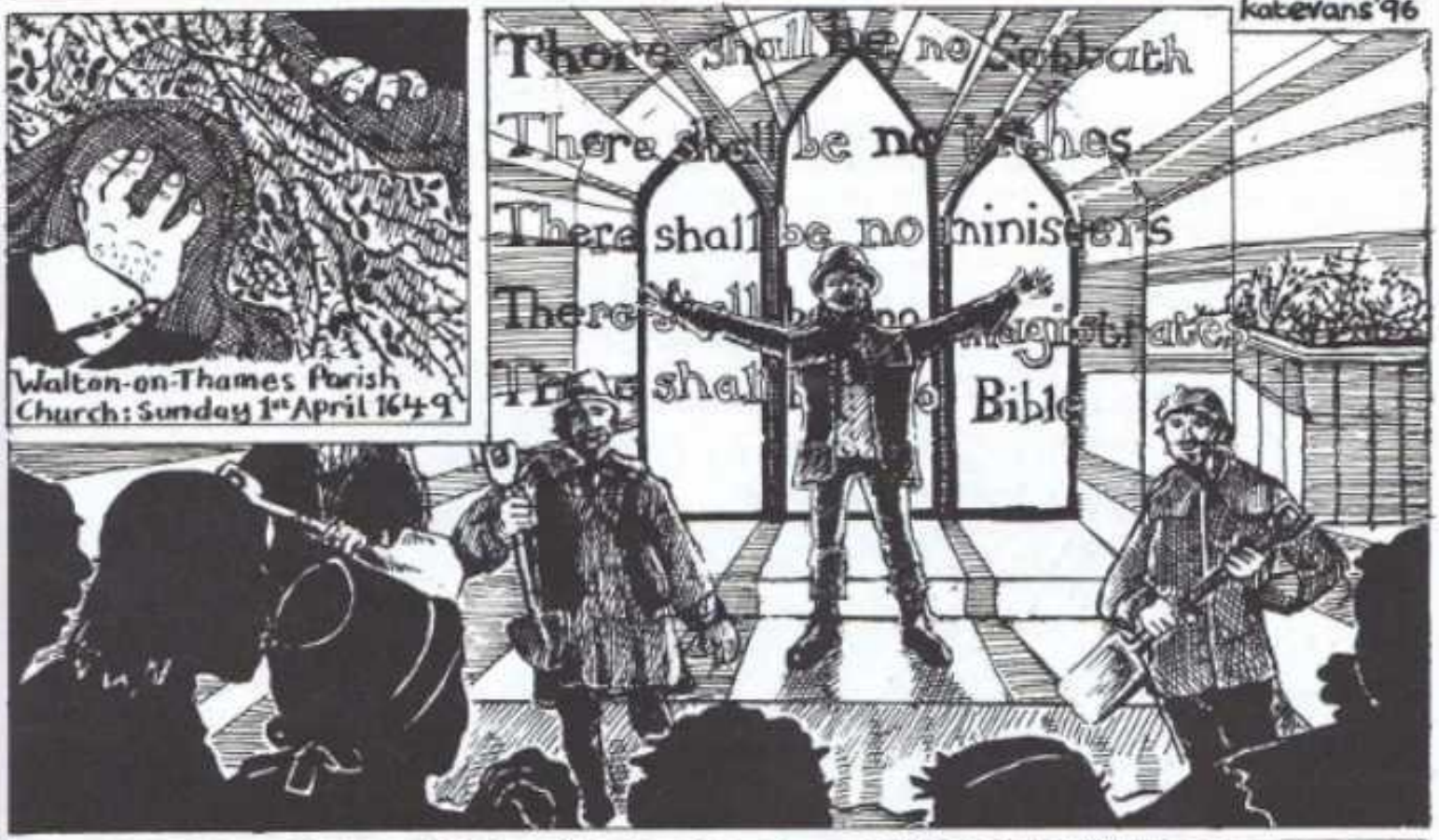
Because we'd set up a camp there was this huge threat of imminent direct action. We were like, "There'll be thousands of us" when there was only about 20.

We did a banner drop on the roof of Llandridnod Wells Council – then after loads of umming and ahhing, they turned it down.

Celtic Energy has 71 more sites to develop.

TONY: [And] at Selar there are places where there are Marsh Fritillary butterflies still there. I've seen them. There are pockets of deciduous woodland and other watermeadows still there in the opencast zone. It's not over yet, up there, no way.

A SHORT HISTORY LESSON



Council of State, 15th April 1649: "On Sunday sennight last there was one Everard, once of the army but was cashiered, who termeth himself a prophet, one Stewer and Coulton and two more, all living in Cobham, came to St George's hill in Surrey and began to digon that side of the hill next to Camps Close, and sowed the ground with parsnips, carrots & beans...











On Monday following they were there again, being increased in their number... On Friday last they came again, between twenty and thirty and wrought all day at digging... They did then intend to have two or three ploughs at work... They invite all to join them and promise them meat & drink & clothes.

It is feared they have some design in hand."

from The True Levellers Standard Advanced ~ Gerrard Winstanley. "...we begin to Digge upon George-Hill, to eate our bread together by righteous labour, and sweat of our browes, It was shewed us by Vision in Dreams, and out of Dreams, That this should be the Place we should begin upon...

"This work to make the Earth a Common Treasury, was shewed us by Voice in Trance and out of Trance, which words were these, *Work together, Eate Bread together, Declare this all abroad.* which Voice was heard three times: And in obedience to the Spirit, We have Declared this by Word of mouth, as occasion was offered. Secondly, we have declared it by writing, which others may reade. Thirdly we have now begun to declare it by Action, in Digging up the Common Land...

"Another Voice that was heard was this, *Israel shall neither take Hire nor give Hire* And if so, then certainly none shall say, This is my Land, work for me, and I'le give you Wages...

bread and veggie slop!

"...That which encourages us to go on in our work, is this; we find the streaming out of Love in our hearts towards all; to enemies as well as friends; we would have none live in Beggary, Poverty or Sorrow, but that everyone might enjoy the benefit of his creation; we have peace in our hearts, and quiet rejoicing in our work, and filled with sweet content, though we have but a dish of roots and bread for our food."

from to the City of London, Freedome and Peace desired. ~ Jerrard Winstanly

"Not a full yeere since, being quiet at my work, my heart was filled with sweet thoughts, and many things were revealed to me which I never read in books, nor heard from the mouth of any flesh, and when I began to speak of them, some people could not bear my words, and amongst those revelations was this one, That the earth shall be made a common Treasury of livelihood to whole mankind, without respect of persons; and I had a voice within me bad me declare it all abroad, which I did obey...

"Yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thought run in me, that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing."

What is it that our Gerrard labours at that he stops indoors all the day?

Oh he be at another of them pamphlets.

I should try this book learning, you know, I could fancy the life of a pamphleteer.

"wherefore is it that there is such Wars and rumours of Wars in the Nations of the Earth and wherefore are men so mad to destroy one another? But only to uphold the Civil propriety of Honour, Dominion and Riches over one another..."

from A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England. "... we must neither buy nor sell: Money must not any longer (after our work of the Earth's community is advanced) be the great god, that hedges in some, and hedges out others; for Money is but part of the Earth."

"... we shall meddle with none of your Properties (but what is called Commonage) till the Spirit in you, make you cast up your Lands and Goods, which were got ... by murder, and theft; and then we shall take it from the Spirit, which hath conquered you, and not from our Swords, which is an abominable power."

From To the Lord Fairfax, Generall of the English Forces ~ Gerard Winstanley

"some of your soldiers... did... go up to George-hill, where there was only one man and one boy of our company of diggers...

"diverse of your souldiers, before any word of provocation was spoken to them, fell upon these two, beating the boy, and took away his coat off his back, and some linnen and victualls that they had, beating and wounding the man very dangerously, and fired our house.

"Which we count a Strange and Heathenish practise, that the souldierie should meddle with naked men, peaceable men, Countrymen...





From a New Yeer's Gift sent to the Parliament and Armie ~ G.W "..

The supposed Lord of the Manour hath arresbed me twice; First in an Action of 20.l Trespass for Plowing upon the Commons, which I never did; and because they would not suffer me to Plead my own Cause, they made shift to pass a Senbence of Execution against some cows I kept, supposing them to be mine, and put them away...





"And now they have Arresbed me again in an Action of 4.l. trespass for diging upon the Comons, which I did, & own the work to be righteous & no trespas to any...

"they will not suffer me to plead my own Cause, but I must not Fee an enemie, [Attorney] or else be condemned and executed Without mercy or Justice as I was before, and so to pay me in Prison till I pay their unrighteous sentence."

from A New Yeers Gift sent to the Parliament and Armie ~ G. Winstanley

"...When the two Lords of Manor sat among the souldiers on horsback and coach, and commanded their fearfull tenants to pull down one of the Diggers houses before their faces, and rejoyced with shouting at the fall; yet some of the Diggers stood by, and were very chearful, and preached the Gospel... which are the words of life.

"And the poor tenants that pulled down the house durst do no other, becase their Land-lords and Lords looked on, for fear they should be turned out of service... And when the poor enforced slaves had pulled down the house, then their Lords gave them ten shillings to drink, and there they smiled upon one another; being fearfull, like a dog that is kept in awe, when his Master gives him a bone, and stands over him with a whip; he will eat and look up, and twinch his tail; for they durst not laugh out, lest their Lords should hear... for in their hearts they are Diggers."

Councell of State Oct 11 1649

For suppressing ye Diggers

We have received information that there are at present a great number of persons gathered together about Cobham in a tumultuous and riotous Manner and that the power of the justices of the peace is not sufficient to disperse them... Wee therefore desire your Lordship to give Order to such of you shall thinke fitt to march to that place and there give assistance to the justices of peace for dispersing these riotours...

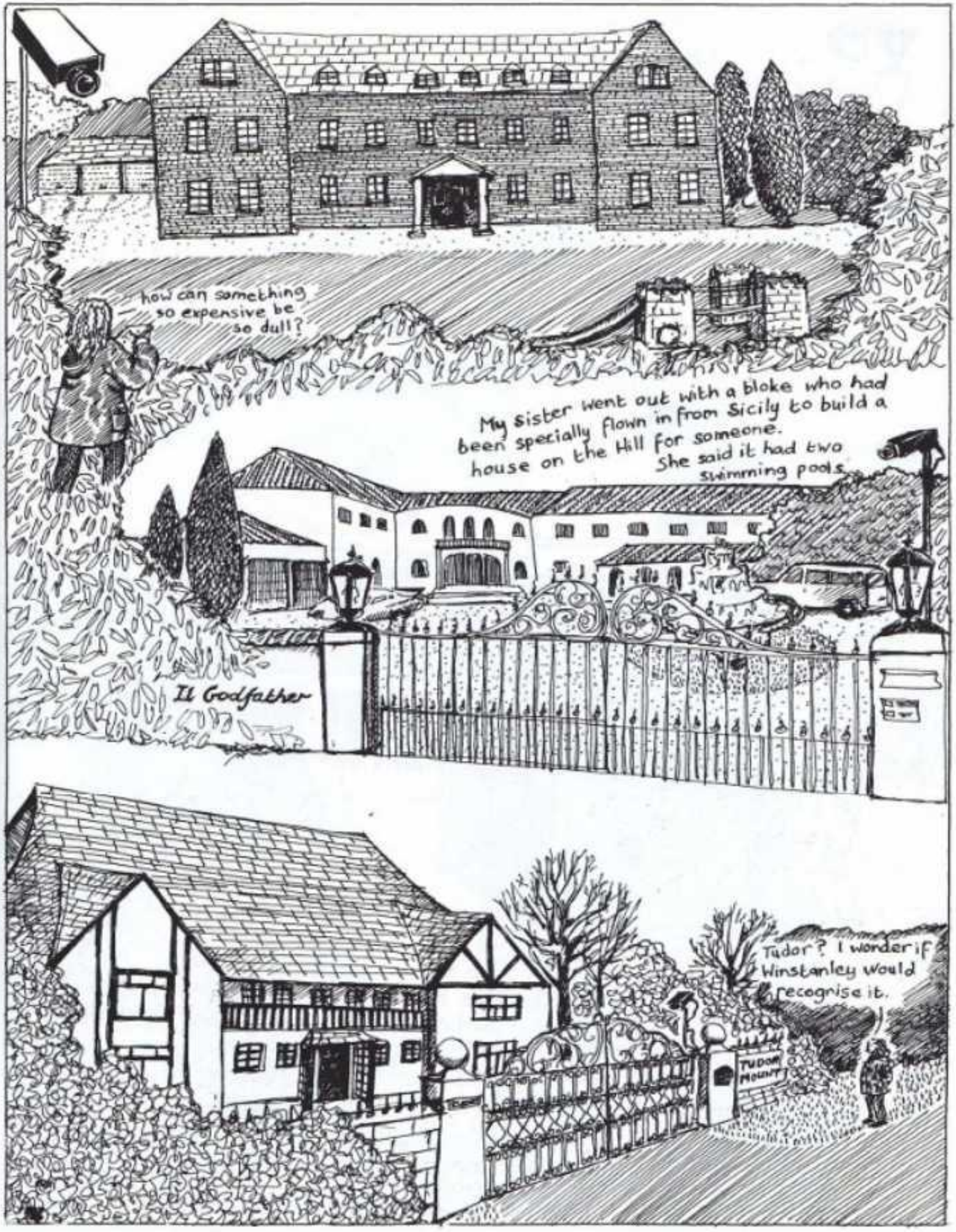
I grew up in the shadow of St George's Hill. We used to see women from there in the supermarket wearing sunglasses and fur coats. Now they have their own supermarket to go to, built on Green Belt land opposite the estate.

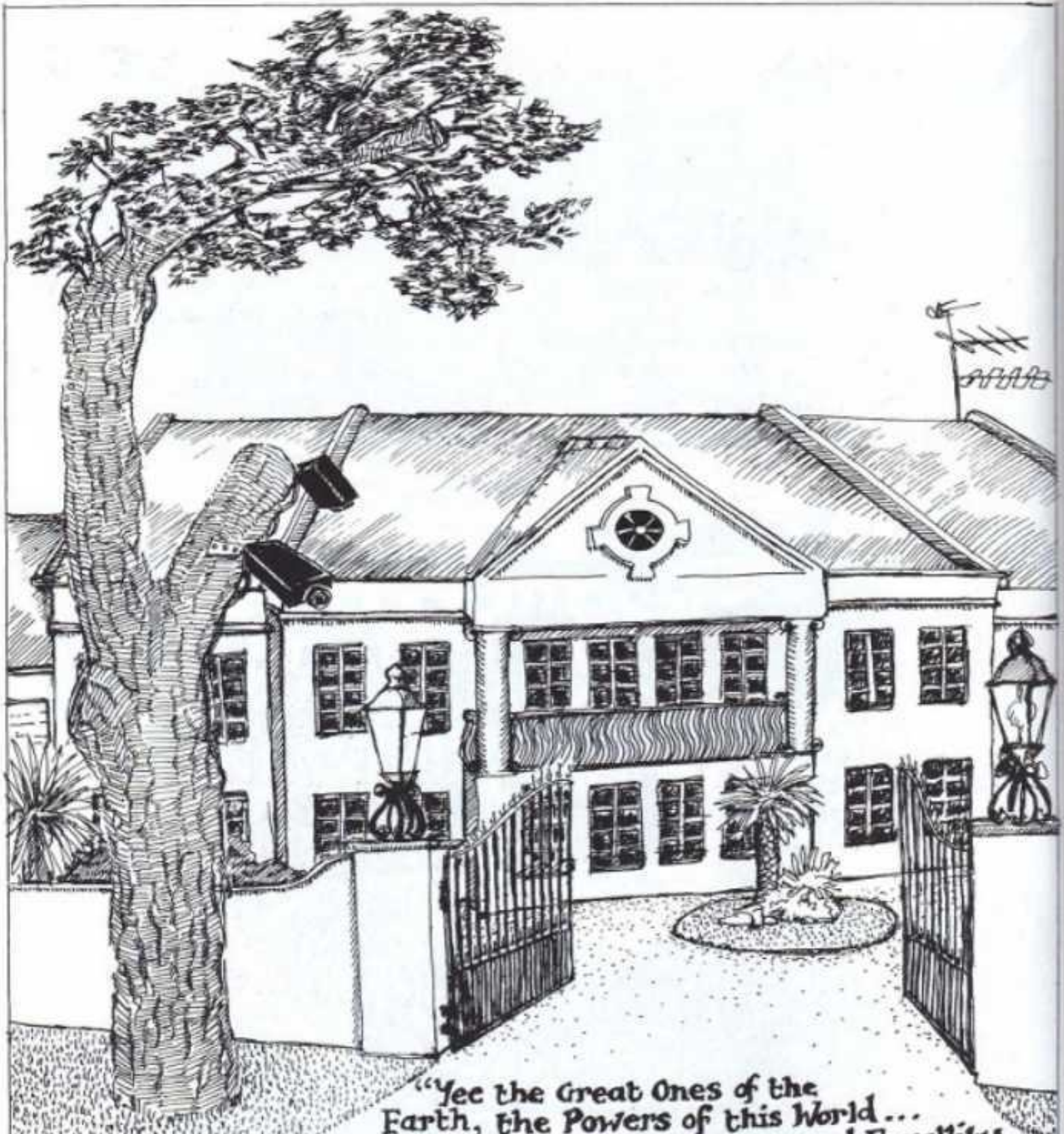
I used to have a cat that colour

Go on, stop me. I'm a hippy - I'm trying to be subversive!

ST GEORGE'S HILL PRIVATE ESTATE RESIDENTS ONLY VISITORS PLEASE REPORT TO RECEPTION

Two roads lead onto the Hill, and there are checkpoints and security guards on both. This is the most expensive place to live outside London.

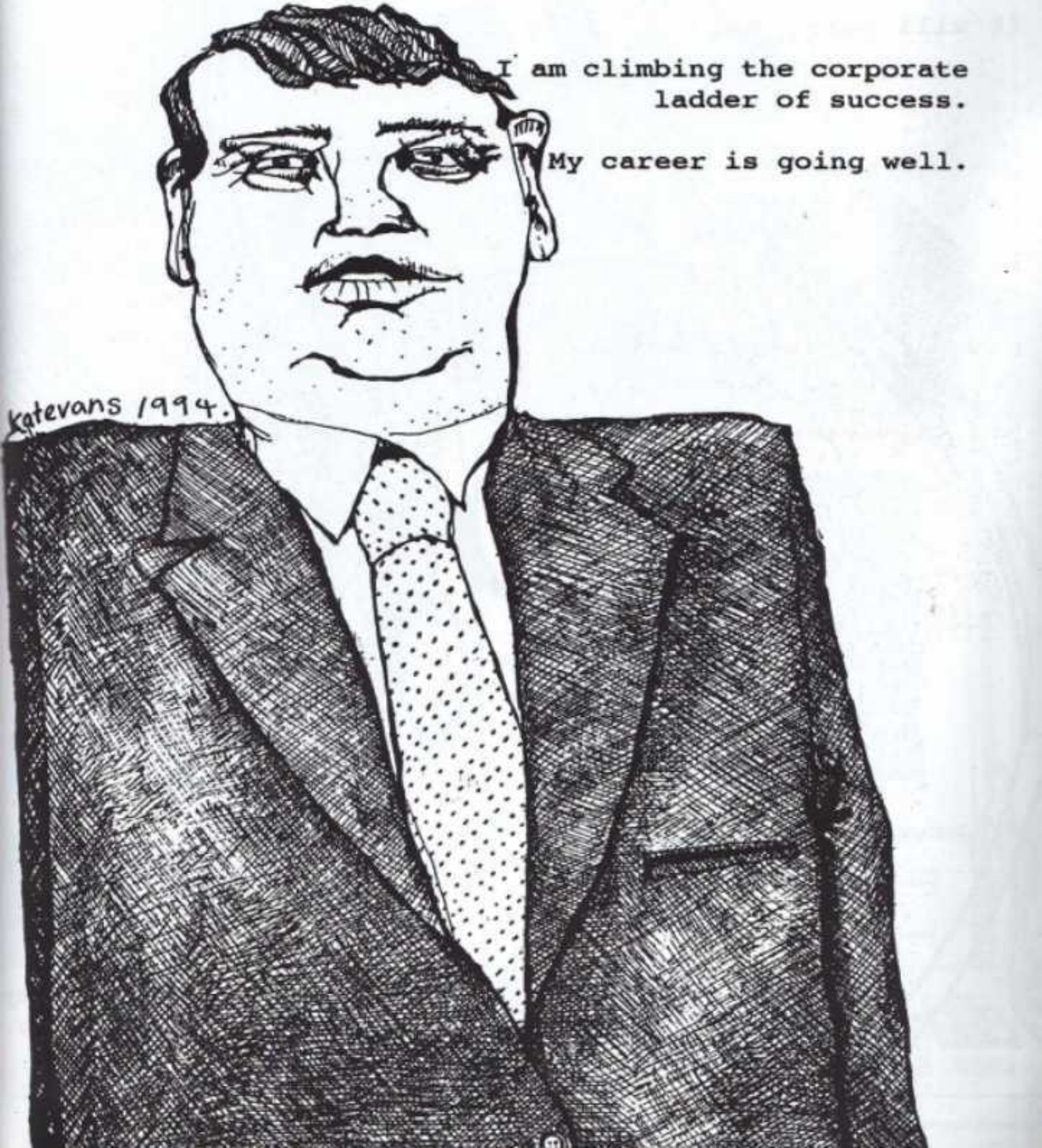

how can something so expensive be so dull?
My sister went out with a bloke who had been specially flown in from Sicily to build a house on the Hill for someone. She said it had two swimming pools
Il Godfather
Tudor? I wonder if Winstanley would recognise it.
TUDOR MOUNT



"Yee the Great Ones of the
Earth, the Powers of this World...
Your First Estate was Innocency and Equallity
with your fellow creatures, but your Lordly power over
them, both Persons and Consciences, your proud fleshly imaginations,
lofty thoughts of yourselves, are the fruits of darkness which you
are kept under: The whole Creation groaneth and is in bondage
even until now waiting for deliverance."

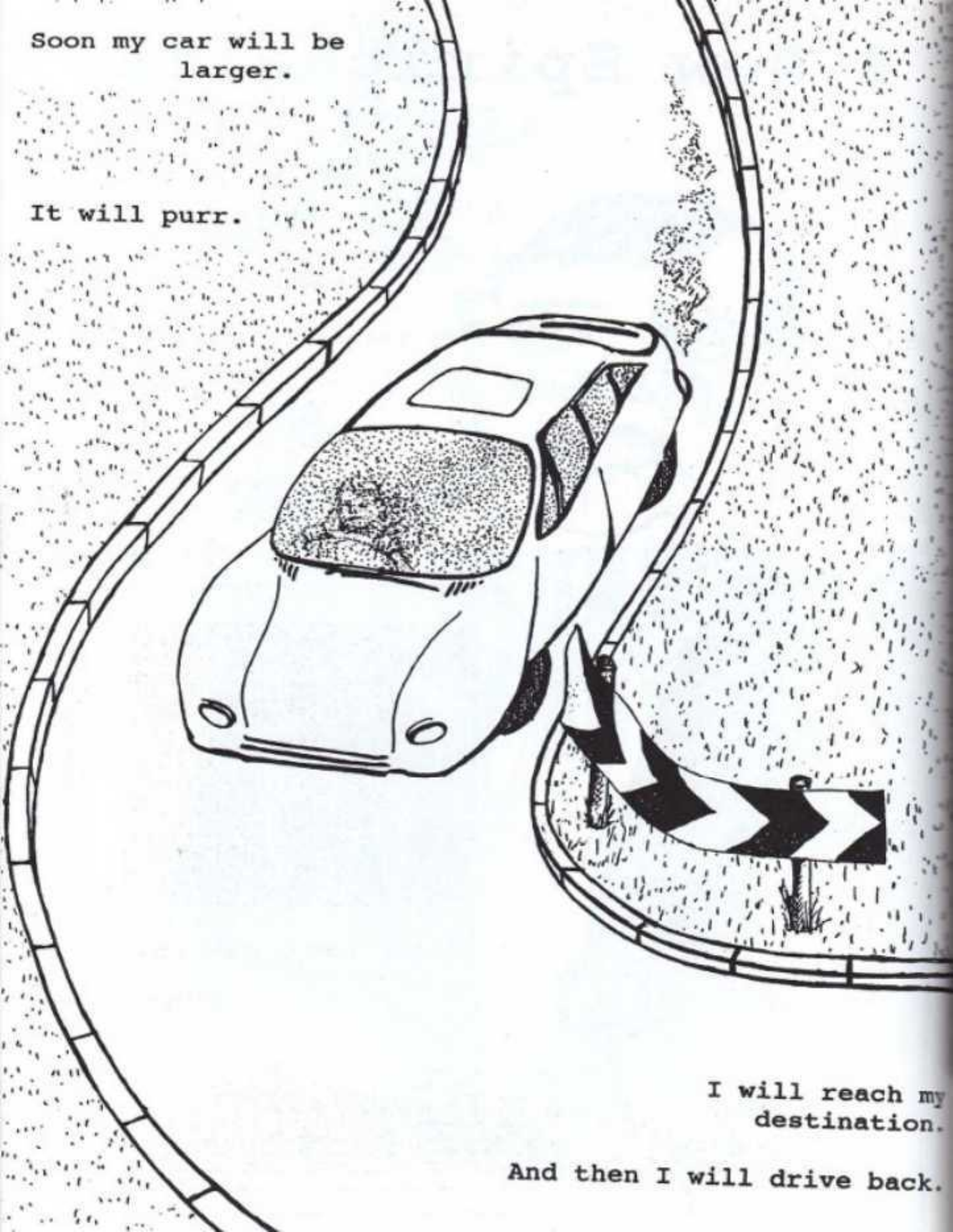
John Taylor ~ The True Levellers Standard Advanced.

A New Spirituality



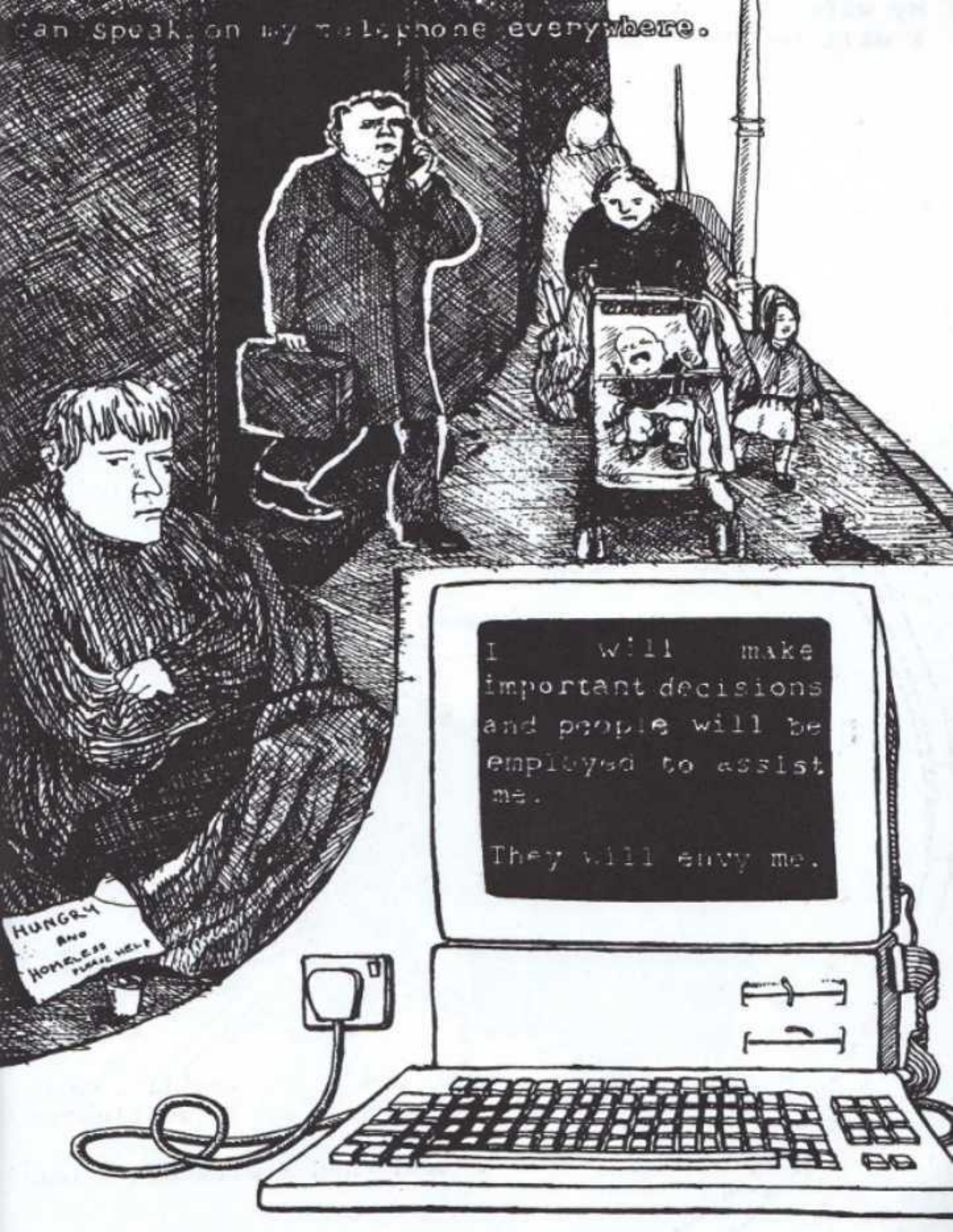
Soon my car will be larger.

It will purr.



I will reach my destination.

And then I will drive back.


can speak on my telephone everywhere.
I will make important decisions and people will be employed to assist me.
They will envy me.
HUNGRY AND HOMELESS PLEASE HELP

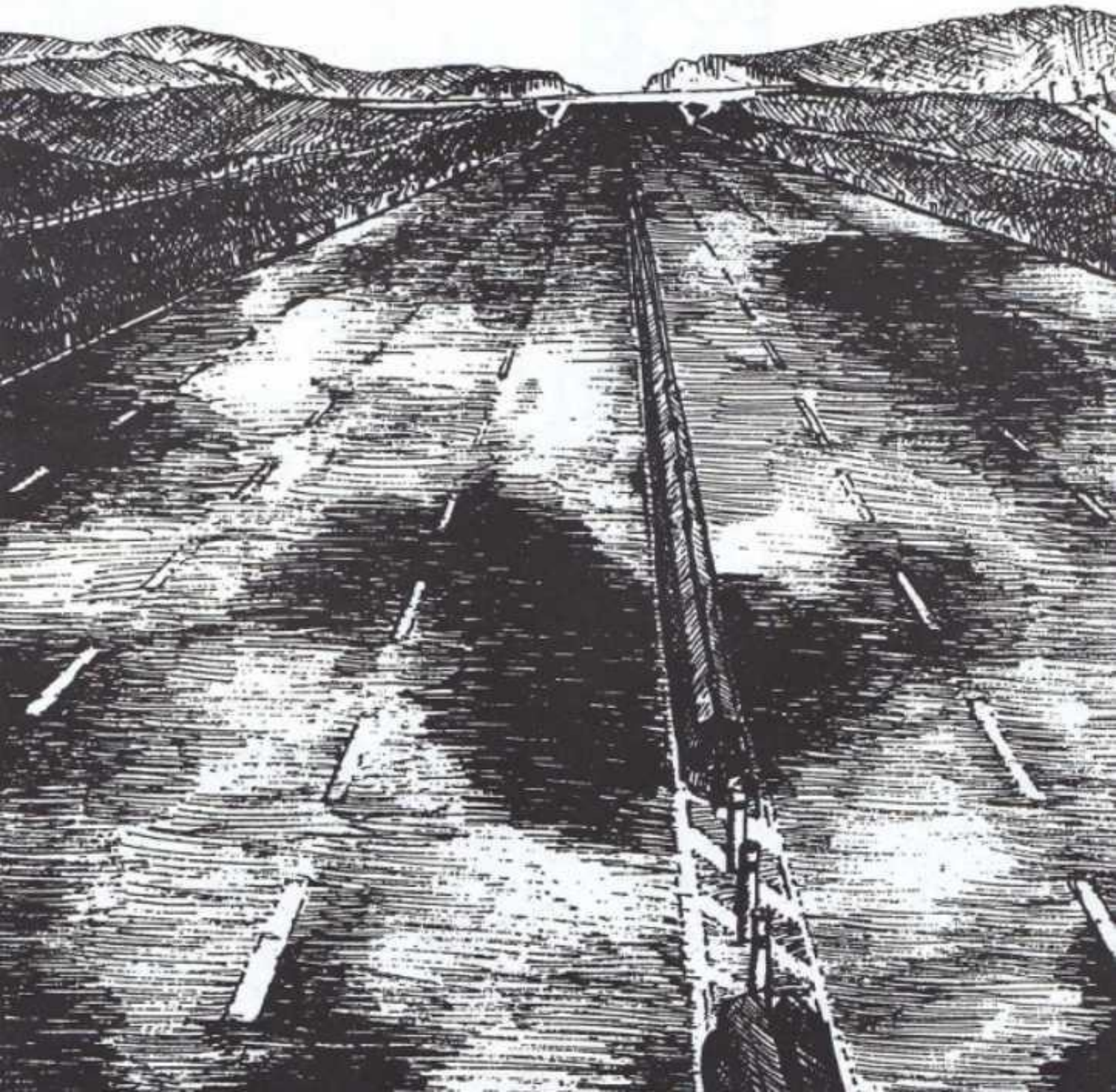
My wife will remain younger looking.
I will buy her expensive cosmetics.

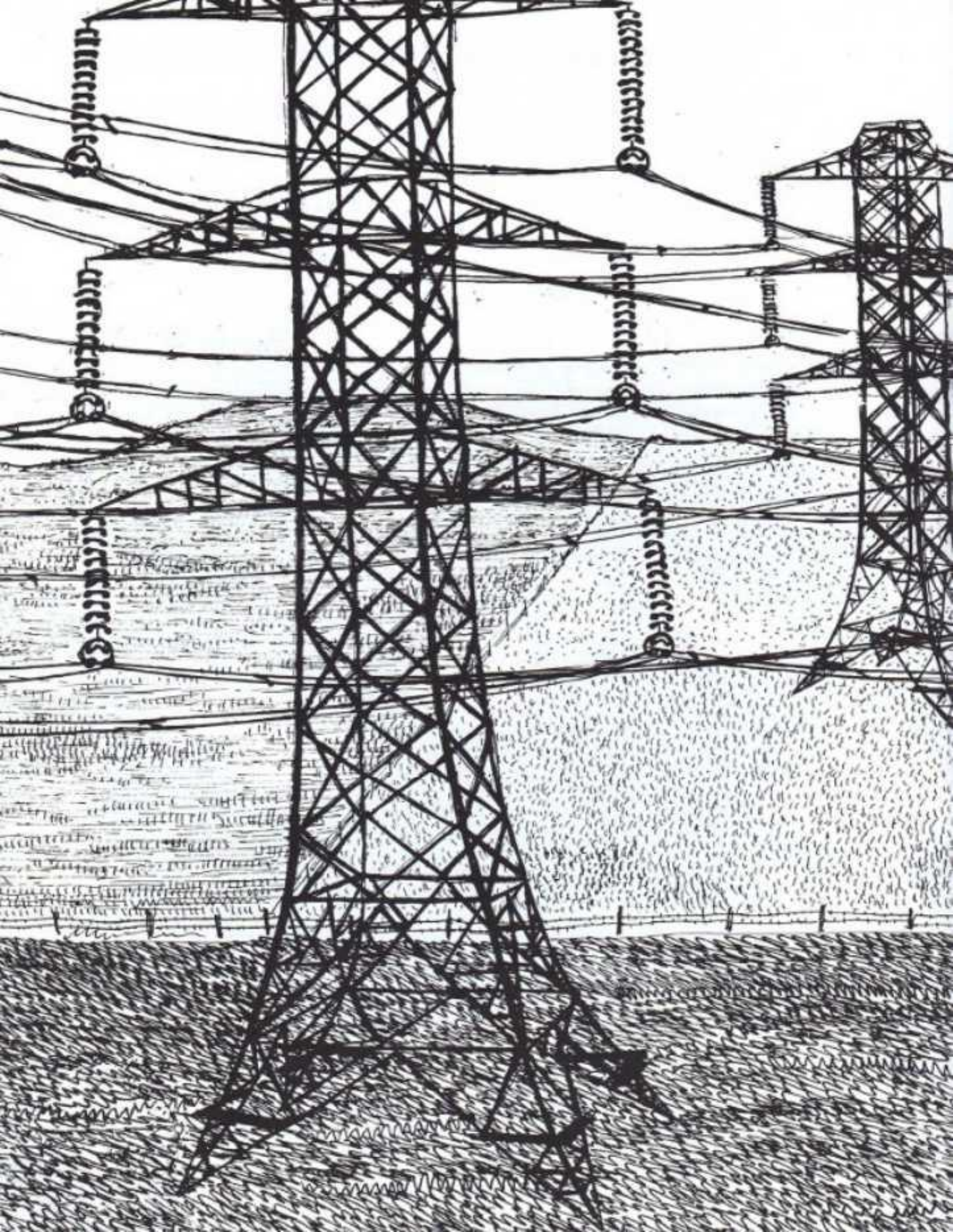


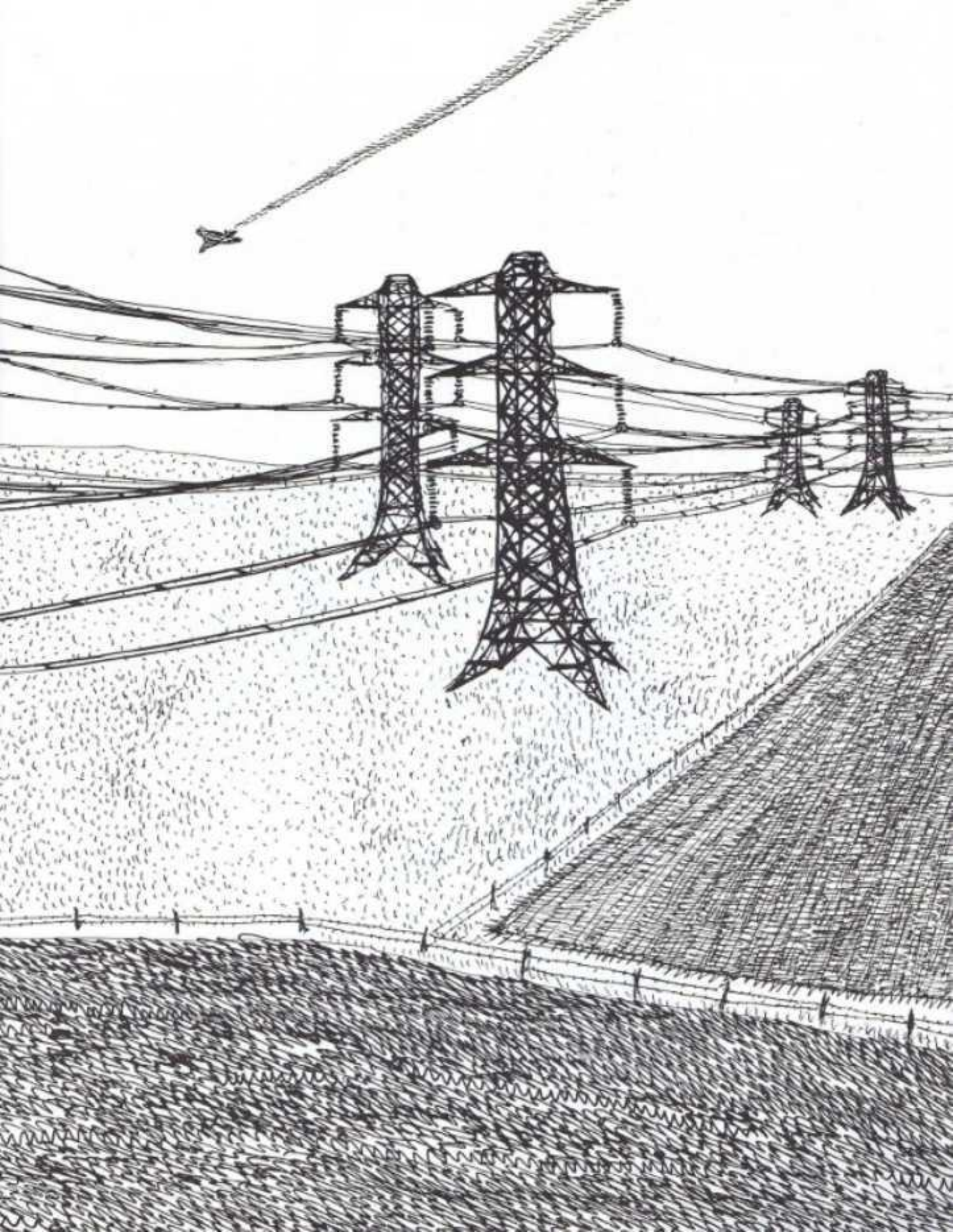
The roads are wider and smoother,

I can drive faster.

This makes me happy







Don't just sit there...

Acme Tat Supplies
climbing equipment at cost
16 Shorebrooke Ave
Leeds

Advisory Service for Squatters
2 St Pauls Rd
London N1 2QN

Anarchist Black Cross
umbrella group of nationwide prisoner solidarity groups
c/o 121 Railton Rd
London SE24
0171 837 1688

Anarcho-Primitivist Network *we don't know what this does but it sounds cool*
PO Box 252
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 3AY

Anti-Fascist Action
BM Box 1734
London WC1N 3XX
0161 232 0813

Anti-Quarry Action
c/o Coral Cottage
Ventiford
Teigngrace Nr Newton Abbott
TQ12 6QL

Arun Valley Earth First!
c/o 1 York Rd
Littlehampton
West Sussex
01903 721615 arunef@radicalfluff.demon.co.uk

Ashton Court Quarry Campaign
0117 942 0129

Bath Earth First!
P/o Box 426
Bath BA1 2ZD
01249 7137742

Blackburn Earth First!
12 Balmoral Rd
Darwen
Lancs BB3 2EW
01254 777079

Bristol Earth First!
c/o Box 51
Greenleaf Bookshop
82 Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BB
0117 939 3093

Broadleaf Conservation
land purchase and tree planting
Freepost
Llanygog
Powys
Wales

Camborne Earth First!
c/o Hartis Farm
Copper Hill Troon
Camborne
Cornwall

Cambridge Earth First!
Box E
12 Mill Rd
Cambridge

Campaign Legal Group
43 Swann Meadow Road
Poolstock
Wigan WN3 5BJ
01942 513792

Cardiff Earth First!
c/o Green Group
Glamorgan University SU
Pontypridd
Mid-Glamorgan
CF37 1DL

Cardigan Bay Earth First!
Temperance House
Taliesin Powys
Mid Wales

Chichester Earth First!
c/o West Sussex Wildlife Protection
P.O Box 3058
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN16 3LG

Disabled Action Network
3 Crawley Rd, Wood Green,
London N22 6AN
0181 889 1361

Environmental Ploughshares
accountable environmental NVDA
Dept 12s, 1 Newton St
Manchester M1 1HW

Fife Earth First!
c/o 91 South St
St Andrews, Fife
Scotland KY16 9Q

Forest Action Network
4 Kingsley House
Avonmoor Place
London W14 5RW
0171 602 5889
afu01b@bangor.ac.uk

Genetic Engineering Network
c/o Po Box 9656
London N4 4JY
0181 374 9516

Genetically Manipulated Free Prisoner Support
Manchester EF!
Dept 29
1 Newton Street
Manchester M1 1HW
0161 224 4846

Glasgow Earth First!
PO Box 180
Glasgow G4 9AB

Green Anarchist Network
BCM 1715
London WC1N 3XX

Guildford Earth First!
PO Box 217
Guildford GU1 1WS
01483 203212

Gwendraeth Valley Earth First!
Y Gymru Annibynnol
24 Yr erw, Burry Port
Carms SA16 0DA

Gwynned and Mon Earth First!
Muddy Paradise
Tan-y-Coed Canol
Ceunant
Caernarfon
Gwynedd LL55 4RN
01286 871 874
afu01b@bangor.ac.uk

Head State Support Group
support for burnt out activists
72 Park Rd
Worthing
East Sussex BN11 2AN

Hereford Earth First!
58 Aylestone Hill
Hereford HR1 1HX
01432 358618

Hillfort Earth First!
21 Tower Hill
Dilton Marsh
Westbury
Wiltshire BA13 4DA
01249 650078

Hills Not Holes
fighting the destruction of the Mendip Hills for agreggate quarrying
Po Box 2113
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4

Holy Island Project
Reforesting Holy Island
Samye Ling Tibetan Centre
Eskedalemuir
Langholm
Dumfrieshire
DG13 0QL

Hull On Earth
PO Box 33
Hull HU1 1AA
01482 218377

Hunt Saboteurs Association
PO Box 2786
Brighton BN2 2AX

International Peace Forest
PO Box 7
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 1JQ

International Tree Foundation
Crawley Down
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 4HL

Justice?
Be-Right-On rentamob
c/o On-The-Fiddle
PO Box 2600
Brighton
East Sussex BN2 2DX
01273 685913

Leeds Earth First!
16 Sholebroke Ave
Chapletown
Leeds LS7 3HB
0113 262 9365
cornerstone@gn.apc.org

Legal Defence And Monitoring Group
BM Haven
London WC1N 3XX
0181 533 7116

Liverpool Earth First!
96 Bold Street
Liverpool L1

London Greenpeace
5 Caledonian Rd
London
N1 9DX
0171 713 1269

Lune Earth First!
c/o Bookcellar
9 Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TJ
01524 849 313

Making Waves
doing exciting things in paddly boats
PO Box 13
Ottery St Mary
Devon EX11 1ZD
01404 811006

Manchester Earth First!
Dept 29
1 Newton Street
Manchester M1 1HW
0161 224 4846

Mobile Office Project
sustainably powered techno tat for protest around the country
c/o Glanetrve
Blaenporth, Ceredigion
Wales SA47 2HP
PP3mo@aol.com

Mid Somerset Earth First!
PO Box 23
5 High Street
Glastonbury
Somerset BA6 9PU

Midlands Anti-Opencast
01530 813010

Mine Watch
campaigning internationaly against large scale mining
Methodist Clubland
54 Camberwell Rd
London SE5 0EN

No Opencast
190 Shepherds Bush Road
London
W6 7NL
0171 603 1831

Norfolk Earth First!
The Greenhouse
42-46 Bethel Street
Norwich NR2 1NR

NorthEast Anti-Opencast
0191 377 2027

Nottingham Earth First!
c/o The Rainbow Centre
182 Mansfield Rd
Nottingham NG1 3HW
0115 9585666

Oldham Earth First!
Dept 110
1 Newton Street
Manchester M1 1HW
0161 628 5128

Oxford Earth First!
Box E
111 Magdalen Rd
Oxford OX4 1RQ
Parents Action Network
Brambles Housing Co-op
82 Andover Street Sheffield
S3 9EH
0114 279 7164

Opposition to the Destruction of Open Green Spaces *snappy title, huh? – produce guide to protest against supermarkets*
6 Everthorpe Road
London SE15 4DA

PaRTiZans
anti RTZ mining campaign
41a Thornhill Square
London N1 1BE
0171 700 6189

Pensioners Rights Campaign
Rivanner, 77 Holme Rd
Market Weighton,
York YO4 3EW
01430 873637

Plants for a Future
permaculture people
The Field, Penpol
Lostwithiel
Cornwall PL22 0NG

Reading Roadbusters
Reading Int. Solidarity Centre
35-39 London Street
Reading
Berkshire
0118 986 6362
chris_a@waveland.org

Reclaim The Streets
PO Box 9656
London N4 4JY
0171 281 4621
rts@gn.apc.org

Reclaim The Valleys
c/o Swansea Environment Centre, Pier Street
Swansea SA1 1RY

Reforesting Scotland
21a Coates Crescent
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH3 7AF
0131 226 2496

Road Alert!
PO Box 5544
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 7RY
roadalert@gn.apc.org

Scottish Opencast Action Group
01501 785202

Sheffield Earth First!
c/o Shefin
201 Crookes Valley Rd
Sheffield S10 1BA
0114 267 1200
bjgoss@pine.shu.ac.uk

South Devon Earth First!
Birdwood House
44 High St
Totnes
Devon
The Woodland Trust
Autumn Park
Oysart Road
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6LL

South Downs Earth First
Po Box 2971
Brighton BN2 2TT
savage@easynet.co.uk

Swansea People Earth First!
c/o Green Action
Swansea University SU
Swansea
Wales

The Flat Oak Society
c/o 3 St Alphege Lane
Canterbury
Kent CT1 2EB
01227 463368

The Land Is Ours
Box E
111 Magdalen RD
Oxford OX4 1RQ
01865 722016

Trees For Life
The Park
Findhorn Bay
Forres IV36 0TZ
Scotland
01309 691292

Tree Spirit
promoting love for trees and regenerating forest
Hawkbatch Farm
Arley
Nr Bewdley
Worcestershire
DY12 3AH

Trident Ploughshares 2000
42-6 Bethel Street
Norwich
Norfolk NR2 1NR

UK Subs
Dept 125
1 Newton Street
Manchester M1 1HW

Upper Nene Earth First!
Box E
24 St. Michaels Avenue
Northampton NN1

Warwick Earth First!
c/o Green Society SU
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL
suuad@csv.warwick.ac.uk

Women's Environmental Network *get their briefings and get depressed*
Aberdeen Studios
22 Highbury Grove
London N4 4JY

Wolves Eco Action
c/o Wolves Hunt Subs
Box H
Wolverhampton Uni.SU
Wulfruna Street
Wolverhampton

York Earth First!
c/o York LEAF
PO Box 323
York
01904 410185

Yorkshire Anti Opencast
01924 864451

INTERNATIONAL

ASEED (Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Development)
PO Box 92066
1090 AB Amsterdam
Netherlands
31 2 0614 2510
or-31 2 0668 2236
fax-31 2 0665 0166
Autonomous Green Action
POB 4721 Station E
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1S 5H9

Australian Earth First!AU
Po Box 12046
Elizabeth Street
Brisbane 4002
Australia
ef_au@hotmail.com

Vimla and Sunderlal Bahuguna: *representatives of the Chipko women*
Chipko Andelan
Navjivan Ashram
Village and Post office Silyara
via Chanshali
District Tehri
Garhwal
UP India

Coast Mountains Earth First!
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Vancover BC V5L 3X9
Canada
604 708 9660

Earth First! Journal
POB 1415
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USA
541 344 8004
earthfirst@igc.apc.org

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eco-ction.ef.mala@waradoo.fr

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ransu@sci.fi

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Yorckstrasse 59 HH
10965 Berlin
Germany
00 49 30 78913144
mprowe@jpberlin.berlinet.de

Groene Front!
Postbus 85069
3508 AB Utrecht
The Netherlands
ruigoord@hotmail.com

An Talamh Glas/Pobal an Dulra *Irish All*
Unit 66
Liffery Trust Bldg
117 Upper Sherriff Street
Dublin 1,Eire
00353 1 855 0965
allenr@bluewin.ch

Rainbow Keepers (Ukraine)
Po Box 322
Kiev 252187
Ukraine
nadia@gluk.apc.org

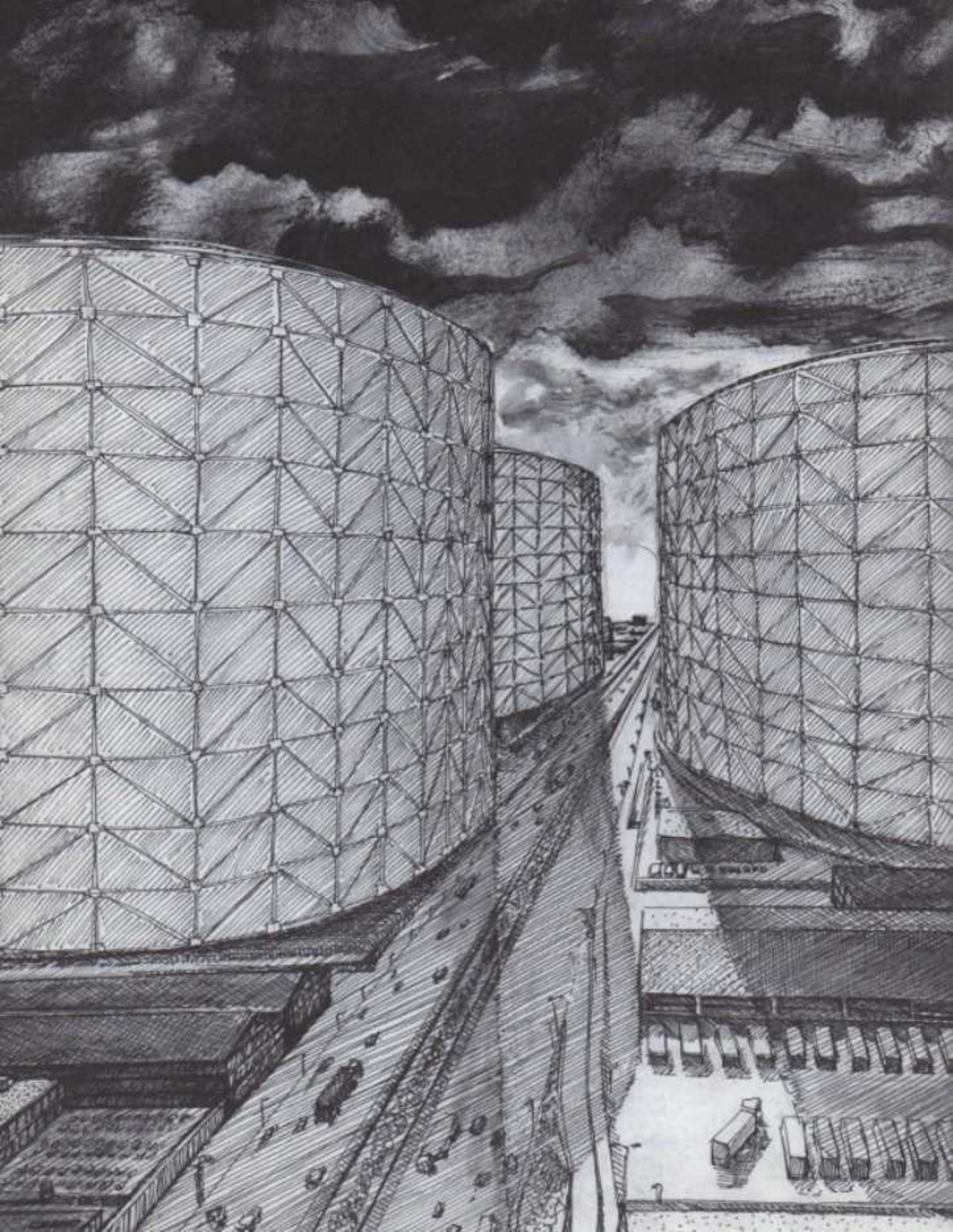
Rainforest Action Network
450 Sansome Suite
700 San Francisco
CA 94111
USA

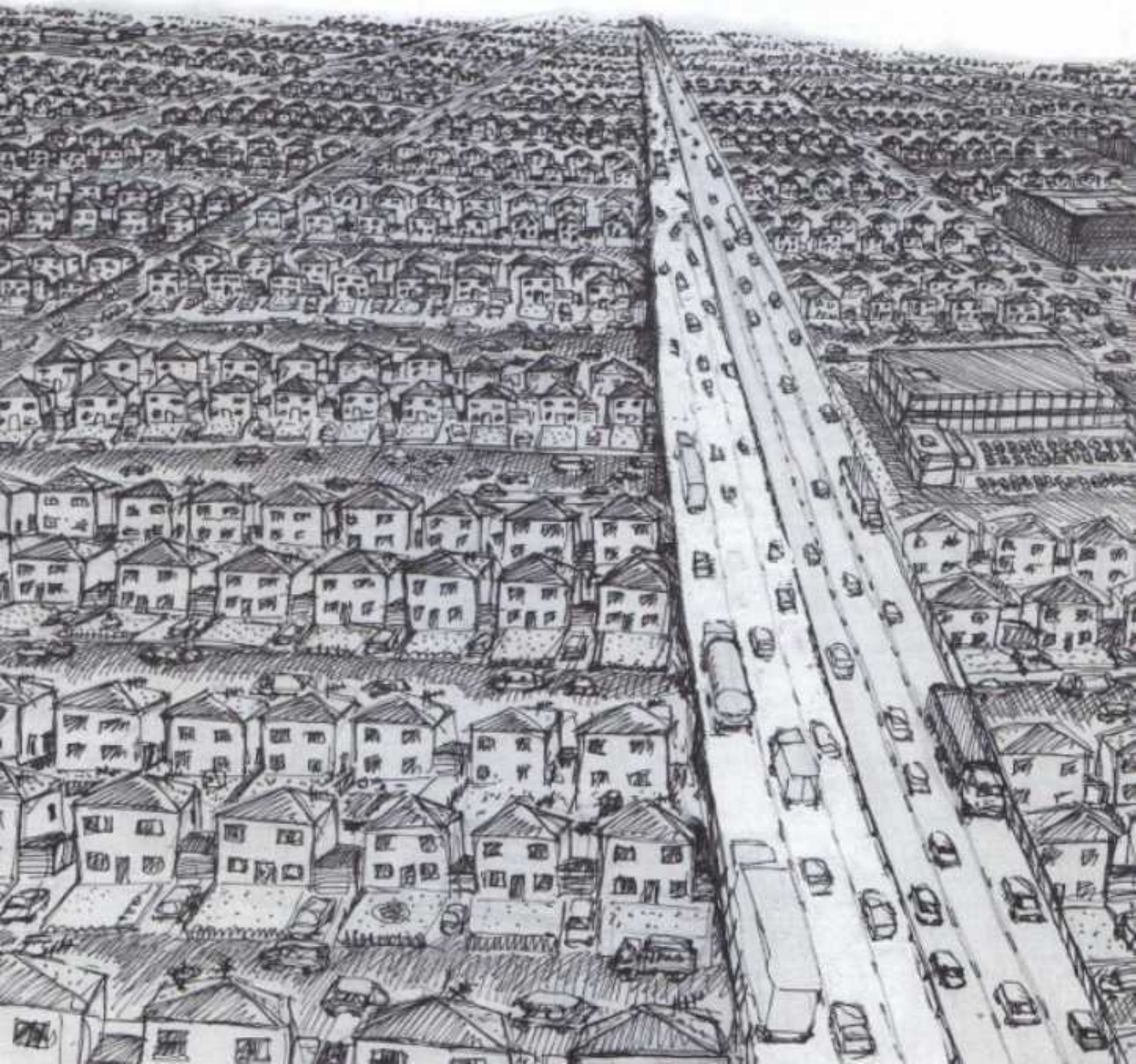
Rainforest Info. Centre
POB 368
Lismore NSW 2480
Australia
066 21 85 05

Slovakia Earth First!
A.Hlinku 11
96001 Zvolen
Slovakia
kolenka@uvt.tuzvo.sk

The Valhalla Society
PO Box 224
New Denver
British Colombia
V0G 1S0
Canada (Trying to save the amazing untouched Princess Royal Island)

Volunteers For Earth Defence
189 San Antonio Ext
SFDM
1105 Quezon City
Philippines





Or if you're quite happy just sitting there...

HISTORY OF BRITISH ROADS PROTEST

General:

Senseless Acts of Beauty by George McKay
DIY Culture: parties and protest in nineties Britain
ed. George McKay.
Academic analysis. A vital lifeline for frustrated university students who need to research free festivals for their PhDs.

Gathering Force: DIY Culture
by Elaine Brass and Sophie Poklewski
Badly written.

Do or Die
South Downs Earth First!, c/o Unemployed Centre, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY
Voices from Earth First! Heavy analysis and Eco-revolutionary rants. Back issues available, containing contemporary accounts of lots of interesting things

Squall Magazine
Beautifully produced, indepth articles on all kinds of alternative culcha. Back issues, including articles on road raging, available for a couple of quid from PO Box 8959, London N19 5HW.
website: http://www.squall.co.uk
Squall posse are producing books too. Write for titles.

SchNEWS
Wicked Brighton based weekly free sheet. Yours for a first class stamp, from Justice? c/o On the Fiddle. PO Box 2000, Brighton, BN2 2DX.
SchNewsRound and SchNewsAnnual are book form editions of back issues, plus funky articles and cartoons. Valuable source of info etc. £6 + SAE each.

Undercurrents Video magazine. Issue 6 (I think!) has a good film about Selar on, other editions cover other protests from the activist's view. 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4 1BG. Cost about £13 each.

Specific:

Twyford Rising
Co-operatively written account of direct action at Twyford Down plus photos. Forthcoming, from Friends of Twyford Down, PO Box 162, Winchester, Hampshire.

M11 protest. Try to get hold of *Claremont E11: A Festival of Resistance*, broadsheet picture newspaper with interesting articles, also *Dear Tree*, letters sent to the Sweet Chestnut Tree and *Claremont. The end of the beginning*, informal zine from Claremont Road

Life In The Fast Lane: The No M11 Story
37 Nightingale Lane
Wanstead London E11
Documentary film type thing, giving a good impression of the campaign from one who was there.

Battle For The Trees
By Merrick
£3 from Godhaven Ink
PO Box HP94 Leeds LS6 1YJ
Nice little personal account of the Newbury campaign.

PP3 homepage: http://www.geocities.com/rainforest/3081 has accounts from the A30 and more recent campaigns

RESOURCES:

Road Raging – Top Tips For Wrecking Road Building
£3 plus p+p from Road Alert!, PO Box 5544, Newbury Berks RG14 5FB A practical, illustrated handbook for action. Send them your money.

Ozymandias Sabotage Handbook
Top tips for wrecking just about anything else.
Use search engine to find it on the world wide web.

Earth First! Action Update
Manchester Earth First!
Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester
Monthly Direct Action News, actions, dates and contact lists. Send 30p and an SAE.

Transport trends and transport policies
Useful statistics from Transport 2000
10 Melton St, London NW1 2EJ

Basic Law for Road Protesters
Peter Gray
01795 890162
Free on disk/email/web/floppy

Environmental Action: A Citizen's Guide
ed. Martyn Day.
Expensive but comprehensive book on using the legal system to foil environmental abuse. Order it at your local library.

Fighting Road Schemes
A Friends of the Earth guide

Corporate Watch
Box E, 111 Magdalene Rd, Oxford OX4 1RQ
01865 791391
A magazine of information for action, dishing the dirt on the Killer corps. They also produce
The Corporate Watchers Address Book
Names and addresses of all the top baddies

Free Information Network
FINs are free local news sheets and events listings.You can get an up to date list of FINS from *The Stonehenge Campaign Newsletter*
c/o 99 Torriano Avenue
London NW5 2RX

OTHER THINGS:

A Time To Travel?
£7.99+£1.50 post and packing
Cheques to Alan Dearling, Enabler Publications
3 Russell House, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3DE
A book by and about travellers,
No Boundaries about travellers in Europe
£9.50 + £1.50 p+p from Enabler Publications

Operation Solstice
37 Nightingale Lane, Wanstead London E11
Film about State trashing of travellers at the Battle of the Beanfield

...try reading and watching this lot too.

PROJECTS BY CONTRIBUTORS + CREATIVE ACTIVISTS

I'd Rather Be a Failed Poet Than A Minky Whale
more poems by Hattie. £2 from The Bazaar, 7 Skinner Street, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO 21

Year and a Day Tree Calendar
Beautiful wallchart by Nicky following the lunar months with their Celtic tree names and runes. £3 from Orange Dog Productions, £1 of which goes to reforestation projects.

Tribal Voices
The essential soundtrack to it all. Beautiful and authentic camp fire songs and spoken poetry from Hattie and Nicky. £5 + 50p p+p from 73, Brailsford Road, London SW2 2TB 'Tribal Voices II' and 'The Gathering', a double album also available.

The Doris Dancers
Environmental theatre residencies in urban or rural green spaces, incorporating local Green networking. Very funky. Contact: 0117 9024951

Thespionage put on plays by Paul Light. **Tatting Down** about squatting shambles; **Tick A Teenth**, a homicidal narrative on the perils of drug dealing; **Cut**, an epic Eco thriller on surveillance and media control, and the upcoming **Grief Encounter**, a tale of mistrust, benefit fraud and beer. Extremely good, and worth going to Brighton for. 01273 388079 or 01273 602186

Headmix Collective
have a new CD out, 'Birthrights'. You can see Sarah McLaughlin's photos on the sleeve, and then you can hear her singing and playing inside. My how talented! £8 from 45 Colf Drive, Hollingdean, Brighton, BN1

Millimations
'Animate the Earth' animation workshops for children and adults http://www.brighton.co.uk/millimations

Orange Dog Productions. That's me, doing cartoons. Buy this book by mail order (add £1.50 p+p) or write for details of 'A is for A Frame', Sid Philpott's Dictionary of Site (extremely funny) or 'Cosmic Hitching', collected strips from the Big Issue. Both out later this year, when I've got over doing this one. 7 The Green, Biddestone, Near Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 7DG..

Planet Delirium
Trapeze performers with environmental leanings
0171 681 7484

Glossary of Terms

belay: v. to lower another person on a rope.

bimble: to go for a walk or wander around aimlessly. Like 'amble' but sounds more twee.

blag: persuasive art of acquiring tat.

blat: v. to blat: to travel around the country fast and furiously. n. a blat: a cheap (£50) car used for the puposes of blatting.

carabiner: climbing clip.

ego warrior: Camp fire Alpha Male. "Hey darlin' if you ever get scared in the trees just clip on to me."

kettle watching: supreme lunchoutism.

lock-on: specially constructed lump of concrete used to delay eviction or v. the act of attaching yourself to said lump, which doesn't necessarily involve the use of locks.

lunch out: v. to fail to do something, or n. someone who fails to do anything. Quite a necessary part of life and not the same as 'out to lunch'.

media tart: the one in the camp who courts press attention. Usually the kettle.

scabies: AAARGH!!!

section six: (of the 1977 Criminal Law act) Legal notice declaring squatters rights.

skipping: subsistance living courtesy of Somerfield's supermarket.

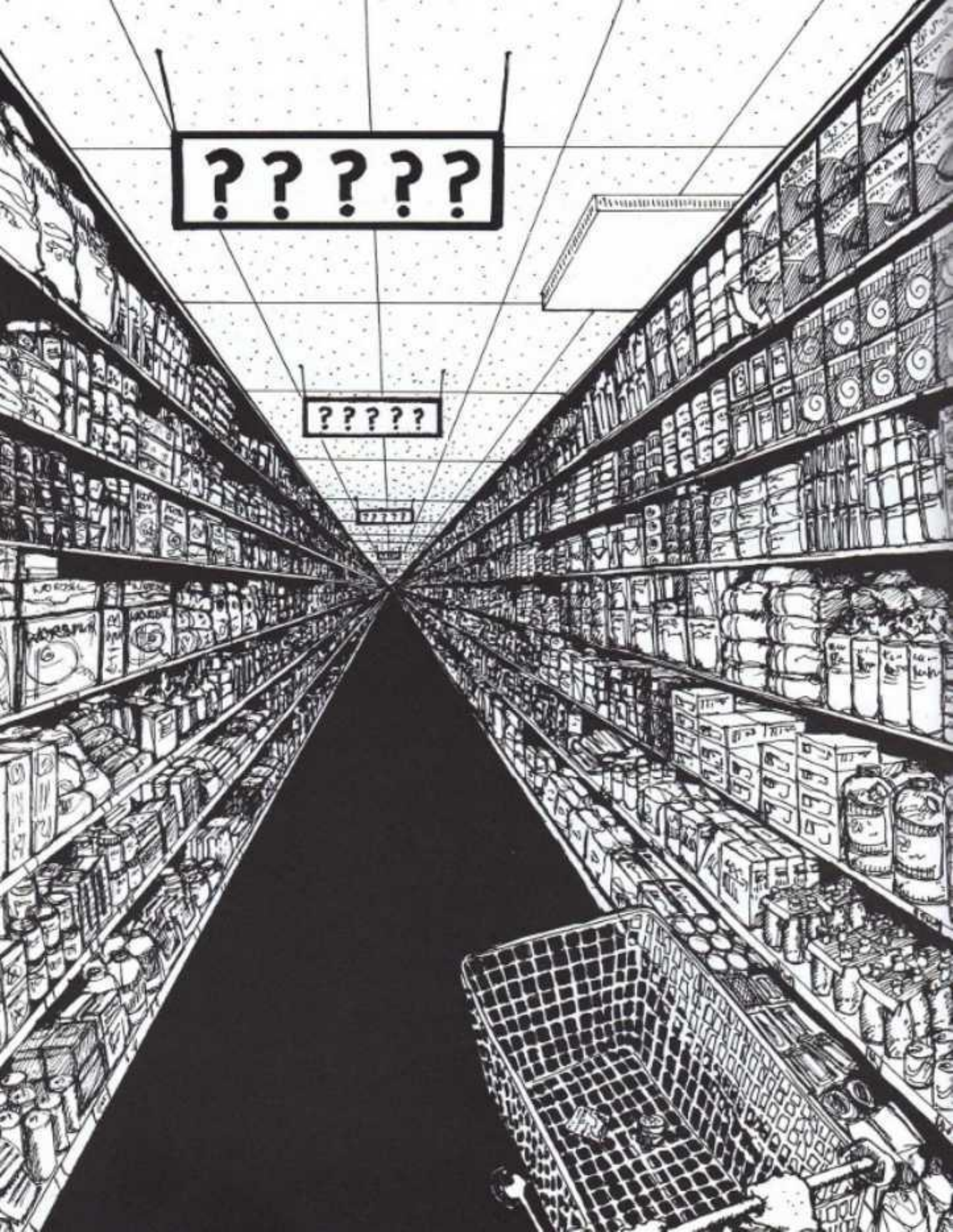
slack as fuck: rallying cry of lunchouts. To have free minds we must have free tea.

tat: hmmm. stuff. n. tat: stuff that you have or stuff that you get or stuff that you might get. v. tatting: the act of aquiring stuff, esp. without paying for it.

twigloo: a prefabricated treehouse made on the ground and then slung between trees. Fun in high winds.

wooding: getting firewood.

yoghurt weaving: 'a misplaced faith in the ability of friendship bracelets to heal the world.' An overused self pisstaking term denigrating hippy shit. When yoghurt weavers grow up , retire to Glastonbury and spawn Steiner educated, rainbow-knitted sproglets, they become 'macrame pushchair makers'.





Look at me
I'm happy
sitting in my square box home
watching my square box T.V.
eating my square box T.V. dinner
Which I brought home
from the box shaped supermarket
In a square box
On a square bus.

I only like flowers
that come in square boxes,
I only like vegetables
packaged and cubed.

I have white formica
wipe clean
wet dreams
About square boxes
fucking in the prison cell
of my home.
What does it mean?

by Hattie.



From the heart of DIY culture comes the ultimate Tree Love story. One woman, one man, one tree, several hundred other men and women, a hundred thousand more trees, rather a lot of dogs and a planet on the brink of environmental collapse...

Mark Thomas: *"Honest, funny, informative and passionate... Copse tells the story you won't hear in the news."*

Steve Bell: *"Kate Evans is one of the most original talents in comics I've seen in a long time."*

Swampy: *"Cool as fuck."*

Jack Straw, Home Secretary: *"No comment."*





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