

Earth First!

Action Update

'If nuclear power is the answer, it must have been a pretty stupid question'

Spring 10

DIRECT ACTION TRIPLE WHAMMY

Monday 26th October turned out to be a black day for coal in the UK. By sheer coincidence, three separate action groups chose the same morning not only to shut down Shipley coal mine and Didcot power station, but also to stop clear cutting at Mainhill Solidarity Camp.

Shipley Shut Down

All work was stopped at UK Coal's

open-cast mine at Shipley, Derbyshire, when 20 activists from Earth First! stormed the site and occupied machinery in all parts of the mine. Six machines were occupied and several were locked-on to. The action lasted from 9.20am until 1.30pm, when eleven people were arrested for aggravated trespass.

Shipley has been the site of a protest camp and previous digger diving actions.

Occupied machinery at Shipley



Didcot Occupied

Earlier that morning at 4.30am twenty protesters had cycled straight past security guards at Didcot coal-fired power station near Oxford. One team locked on to the giant coal conveyors which feed the boilers at the plant, while a second group climbed the inside of the iconic 200m high chimney right to the top. It took the police until evening to cut off everyone from the conveyor belt. The chimney proved an even harder challenge – the occupiers had blockaded themselves in with enough food and water to last several days. They eventually came down after a full 48 hours. All were arrested for aggravated trespass.

The huge coal plant is owned by NPower, which plans to build the first new coal plants in Britain in 30 years, including sites at Tilbury and Hunterston.

Mainhill Blockaded

The same morning at around 7am the access road to the woods used by loggers was blockaded by residents at the Mainhill Solidarity Camp. Work was stopped for over seven hours, with two big barricades and two people locked on. Actions to stop tree felling carried on throughout the night, and Tuesday morning saw another two people locked on to harvesting machinery.

More Mainhill Monkey Wrenching

As we go to press the forced eviction of Mainhill Solidarity Camp has come to an end. Over 70 people resisted the eviction, with 45 arrests and a huge number of defences that kept the National Eviction Team busy for five days. These included a multi-layered 'fort', a double-layered tripod with a prism shaped sky-raft hanging from its apex and lock-ons under the ground and at the tops of the trees. The tunnel team had to work 24/7 to extract the people from inside the tunnel. At the same time digger diving

shut down the nearby Ravenstruther coal terminal for the third time in a year.

This huge show of resistance comes after seven months of intense activity in the area – South Lanarkshire in Scotland has played host to at least 30 different blockades, digger dives and acts of sabotage against machinery on open-cast coal mines. Taken together, all these actions have so far prevented Scottish Coal from turning Mainhill Wood into what would be the fifth open cast coal mine in the area.

A Strategy of Continuous Action

The camp has brought attention to the fact that Scotland bears the brunt of new coal developments in the UK. Unlike a lot of environmental direct action over the last decade which has focused on one-off spectacular mass actions, Mainhill Solidarity is effective because it is targeted and continuous, building momentum over time.

The campaign has also found that different types of actions are necessary to maintain the level of activity. They have not

Timeline of Actions Oct – Jan

14 Oct Occupied sky raft prevented the tree harvester from accessing the wood for eight hours.

20 Oct Tree-felling machinery had fuel lines, wires, gears and fuel tanks destroyed.

31 Oct – 2 Nov Gathering

Drilling rig and other machinery had cables cut, controls damaged, locks glued, windows broken, lights smashed. A harvesting machine was also locked-on to for five hours.

3 Nov Apex Drilling offices near Bridgend sabotaged – cameras disabled, locks glued, windscreens etched with 'No opencast', wires and pipes cut on heavy vehicles, fuel systems contaminated and anti-opencast messages graffitied all over the compound.

10 Nov A harvesting machine was stopped for five hours by one person locked on to it.

28 Nov - 1 Dec Gathering

55 people converged on the camp to build more defences and stop logging. A number of posh cars outside the site owner Lord Home's ancestral mansion had their tyres deflated and windscreens smeared with superglue. Lord Home was believed to have been entertaining his chums for a Sunday's worth of grouse shooting.

7 Dec Drilling rig sabotaged and put out of action for three days.

16 Dec Vehicle of drilling contractors Raeburn had windows smashed, "Out of Mainshill" and "No More Coal" painted on the side, let down tyres and compost buckets emptied over it.

25 Dec Four machines sabotaged at the Broken Cross open cast site, just 5 miles from Mainshill.

Early Jan Poniel Opencast: 13 machines destined for work at Mainshill damaged, including earth movers, dumper trucks and flood light generators.

23 – 24 Jan Pre-eviction gathering

25 Jan Eviction begins.

27 Jan Ravenstruther Coal Terminal shut down for the third time in just over a year, by one activist locking on to a digger with his leg.



Activists on top of 200m chimney stack at Didcot power station

been limited to accountable blockades and lock-ons – which quickly rack up arrests. There has been plenty of digger diving and running away to dive another day, as well as unaccountable night time actions. With the eviction in full swing the activists are already making plans for future actions and maintain that the fight is far from over. The campaign is adopting a new tactic with a

call out to 'Kick out the Contractors'. A resource on their website lists all of the contractors seen at Mainshill for use by groups wanting to take action in solidarity with the camp.

Asked about the future, this is what Mainshill campers have to say: "If coal is to be stopped in the UK, it will require more places like Mainshill Solidarity Camp. The tactic of occupations will only work if government and mining companies consider an occupation and the consequent delay and cost inevitable, so that mines become unfeasible. If good relationships with the communities who stand to be affected by mines are also maintained, then popular support will follow."

Working with the community

A focus of the Mainshill campaign has been the physical defence of a community from the greed of Scottish Coal and aristocratic landowner Lord Home. With the failure of the so-called democratic system which disregarded the strong objections of the community, local people have been very supportive of the camp. The campers would have had a much tougher time surviving this especially brutal Scottish winter (-20 degrees!) had it not been for generous donations from local residents, (including a special delivery from Santa on Christmas day).

One of the strengths of the campaign is the connection of action against heavy

industry and climate change with the people who suffer immediately from its causes. Instead of the carbon reductionism currently being proffered as a solution at the global political table, the campaign at Mainshill seeks to build an alternative of community self-determination and genuinely

participatory democratic processes.

This is no easy task and much has been learnt. There have been tensions concerning the priorities, strategy and workload of the camp. There are discussions over who takes direct action, what type of action, whether the emphasis should be on climate change

or local health, who should be the main target – Scottish Coal or local politicians – and the extent to which we should look to outside authorities for help. This isn't

just an 'activist/local' divide, it's more complicated, as both groups are blurred and contain different opinions. What the campers have learned is as much about communication and differing reference points for appropriate action as any fundamental political differences.

To delve into these issues and learn from others, campers want to link up with other struggles which have had community defence at their heart.

There are plans for organising a 'direct action and communities' type bash to build on experiences for stopping coal in the UK, and any other project where big industry and government get their heads together to attack the environment and health of small communities.

More info and a full round-up of actions at coalactionscotland.noflag.org.uk coalintheuk.org

Snow and Anarchy at Mainshill



Nuclear CON

As we go to press, the so-called government CONSULTATION process on nuclear new build has almost finished and the path to 10 new nuclear power stations looks clear. By February 22nd this year, the public will have lost any chance to have an input into the authorisation of the two new reactor designs – both of which were heavily criticised by the Health and Safety Executive last December.

Built on shaky finance

At the same time, the companies involved may be more vulnerable than they'd like us to think. The government claims that there will be no subsidies, but nuclear reactors have never been built without public money. The French state-owned company EDF is heavily in debt, although

Protesters outside nuclear conference in London, Jan 10



We've got a long way to go in pretty much no time at all

Gearing up for battle?

For a long time now, resistance to nuclear in Britain has been concentrated in the areas around the power stations. Recently, Hinkley has seen demonstrations at the EDF offices, and against the construction of power lines that are tied in to the nuclear new build programme. At the end of January, demonstrations were held outside the National Nuclear New Build Conference to expose nuclear's long history of greenwash and dodgy cover ups. Two days later, the Department of Energy and Climate Change Select Committee meeting on nuclear energy was disrupted by three activists with a banner which read "Local Democracy Dumped."

The No New Nuclear gathering held in London last November made a start at bringing isolated local campaigners together. One punter commented: "I feel like we laid the foundations for a more effective national network of resistance to nuclear, but we've got a long way to go in pretty much no time at all. It feels really crucial that the national climate movement wakes up to the threat of nuclear power

NOW – there's no point in winning at Kingsnorth if we surrender Sizewell and Hinkley Point and all the rest without a struggle. After all, we're tackling exactly the same problem – the same companies promoting dangerous and expensive false solutions to climate change."

save-our-valley.co.uk
stophinkley.org
stopnuclearpower.blogspot.com

The Companies behind new nuclear

- British Energy – Hinkley Point, Sizewell, Hartlepool, Heysham, Bradwell
- RWE – Braystones, Kirksanton
- Horizon – Wylfa, Oldbury
- Scottish and Southern, Iberdrola, GDF – Sellafeld

Choice of reactors

- EPR (European Pressure Reactor)- Areva and EDF
- AP1000 – Eon and RWE
- Horizon remains undecided

Anti-Nuclear Camp

'Nuclear Power is not the Answer to Climate Chaos'
 Camp on the beach at Sizewell A and B nuclear power stations, Suffolk
 23rd – 26th April
 Protest, Workshops, Info Tours, Networking, Planning.

Contact mellcndeast@cnduk.org, tel: 08453370282

COP Out

The official story of Copenhagen has already been told and could have been predicted from the outset. The question raised is how our movement should respond to events like these: ignore them entirely? redouble our efforts against climate criminals at home? or take our chances in the streets outside? We spoke to a few people about how they spent December, and what their priorities are for the future.

AU: *What were you trying to achieve in Copenhagen, and do you think you did?*

Bob 1: If I'm honest, I was hoping there might be a massive uprising to

bring the end of Western civilisation as we know it! But failing that it was outreach – I was trying to expose mainstream people to alternative ways of doing things. That really worked I think – a lot of really unlikely people were talking about system change and losing their faith in leaders to change anything that mattered. The whole summit was so blatant – a load of kings and queens getting together to divide up the world just like they always have.

AU: *Can you tell me why you chose to stay at home?*

Bob 2: Our movement has so few

resources – I save my risks and my money and my energy for the things where I can have a direct impact.

Bob 3: I just didn't want to become part of the pageantry of these international gatherings. I used to want to go and expose them for the bollocks they really are, but now I worry I'd legitimise them instead.

AU: *What do you think is the future of effective climate campaigning?*

Bob 4: For me it's a balancing act. As well as direct action there's working towards the resilience of my own community in the face of catastrophe.

Bob 1: The big actions are good for re-motivating people but in the end we just need rebellion. Everywhere.

Exclusive!

D I G G E R

D

Interview with D Lock, our mystery digger diving activist

Over the past year we've had quite a few reports of digger diving. In this exclusive we find out more about this strange pastime.

Digger diving verb 1 The action of halting machinery with your body to prevent environmental destruction, e.g. on opencast coal mines.

AU: What's digger diving and why do you do it?
The term digger diving was coined in the nineties when hundreds and hundreds of people tried to prevent a massive road building programme. It's when you use your body to stop heavy machinery like diggers or bulldozers. You can stand in front of them, sit on top or lock yourself to them. It's a really effective and empowering bit of direct action – by sitting on a digger you're directly stopping it from ripping up the earth. It delays the work and can cost the company quite a bit of money, depending on how long you manage to stay. The best thing is it only takes a few people, even three people can make an impact. Plus, it only needs a couple of hours of planning and preparation – not endless hours in meetings.

AU: How did you get into digger diving?
I was getting really frustrated with mass actions – they take so much work, and don't actually work in terms of shutting things down because the cops usually get there first. Then a friend who'd done a lot of digger diving asked whether I'd be up for it. A handful of us met up the night before, looked at some maps and worked out what to do. In the morning we jumped into a van and drove to the site. We just climbed over this little fence and there we were right in the middle of the mine. We went straight for the bulldozer nearest to us. A couple of us walked up to it with a big banner so the driver saw us, while the others hung back ready to climb on top as soon as the machine had stopped. There was a lot of macho posturing from the driver in the first few minutes. After that it calmed down and then it was just a question of keeping ourselves and the workers entertained.

AU: How did you feel?
Doing it the first time was pretty scary – walking up to a massive bulldozer and having to trust that the driver won't just run you over. There was a moment when he'd seen us but just kept coming. I think he was trying to see whether he could scare us off. But then he did stop and I couldn't believe how easy it had been after all. Being on top of one of those monsters is amazing, it's a great feeling knowing that this pile of metal has stopped tearing up the ground because you are there. Direct action doesn't get much more direct than that. I've done several digger diving actions since then, and I usually get a "I want to go home!" moment when I first hear the machines rumbling away in the distance, but then by the time I leave I want to come back the next day and the next and the next. There

'I've had workers show me the best place to lock on so they could prolong their tea break.'

aren't many things which make such a difference with so little effort.

AU: Surely this is breaking the law and just lands you in trouble?
Well, a new offence was created in the nineties to deal with exactly this type of action. It's aggravated trespass, which means you're on someone else's land and you're stopping (or intending to stop) them from carrying out a lawful activity, in this case trashing the environment. It's a minor offence, people usually get a fine of £100-200. In Scotland people get charged with Breach of the Peace, with similar fines. Personally, I don't feel I've got much choice – the state will create laws against any type of action that is actually effective, and at least some people have to break these laws if we even want to try to stop the destruction of the planet. Also, it's often possible to get away without arrests, if you have a lookout to tell you when the cops arrive – anywhere between 30 minutes and a couple of hours. Though, of course, often people want to stop work for as long as possible and are up for being taken to court. Sometimes people bring d-locks to attach themselves to machinery which means the cops need specialist cutting teams to get them out, which takes ages. Digger diving teams usually decide in advance how long they'll stay on site.

AU: What's your experience with the workers?

Really mixed. The first time it happens they get really pissed off. The one thing that seems to work in calming them down is explaining to them about Health and Safety laws, which say that as soon as someone enters the 'risk zone' around a machine it has to stop moving and



Blockading dam building in Iceland, summer 07.

R I V I N G

the engine needs to be switched off. If they don't stop work and anyone gets hurt then legally it's their fault. Repeat visits are often easier: I think they feel less threatened when they know what to expect. I take tea and cake to offer to the driver, and try to have a chat – I think they see us as more human with a thermos and chocolate in our bags. It also depends on whether they get paid by the job or by the hour – I've had workers show me the best place to lock on so they could prolong their paid tea break. Last time I walked up to a digger the worker was really keen to tell us his life story – he switched off his engine before we'd even got close and told us about the land his sister lost to a coal mine and the uncle that got killed down the pit, and how he's really into wildlife and is saving up for a smallholding – it's a fucked up world. And sometimes you get workers who do crazy things like starting to drive off while you're standing on their wheel. I only ever go digger diving when I'm feeling on the ball and I've got some mates to look out for me.

AU: It sounds like there's a lot that can go wrong?

There are a few things that I've learnt in the past couple of years. Work usually starts so early that if you arrive much later than 10am they just stop for lunch. Or sometimes I've turned up in heavy rain, and found out they weren't working anyway because the mud was too slippery. Another thing is that often the drivers can't see or hear you at all – their vehicles have a lot of blind spots and make a lot of noise. It helps to wear a yellow vest and carry big painted stop signs, and I always try to approach from the direction the worker is looking in already. I always think very carefully about where I lock on – definitely not the exhaust pipe which would burn my neck! My favourite is to get high up on top of the cabin

'It's a great feeling knowing that this pile of metal has stopped tearing up the ground because you are there.'

Giant excavator brought to a standstill at Shipleigh coal mine, Oct 09

or on the arm of the digger because you're well out of reach when the cops turn up, but there are other options for people who don't have a head for heights. A camera to record any dangerous actions by the workers can be good too – but then I've also seen the workers just getting hold of it and trashing it.

AU: So what are all the kids on the machines wearing this season? What's the latest in digger diving fashion?

Big boots and a high-viz vest are a must. You get really muddy, so wearing your Sunday best is not a good idea. Sitting high up on a digger you get freezing cold, so definitely thermal undies. Woolly scarves and bobble hats are seeing a revival.

Further info

Scottish Activist Legal Project: scalp.noflag.org.uk

Activist Legal Project (England and Wales): activistslegalproject.org.uk

Road Raging – anti roads protest guide: ecoaction.org/rr

Delia Smith's Basic Blockading: geneticsaction.org.uk/resources/delia.pdf

Direct Action Handbook: [networkforclimateaction.org.uk/toolkit/...](http://networkforclimateaction.org.uk/toolkit/)



Struggle Resumes in Valsusa, Italy

The battle against a 33 mile high speed train tunnel threatening to trash a beautiful valley in the Alps has reached a new phase. Despite violent repression, and the imprisonment of some activists, an effective direct action campaign stopped the project four years ago. Now it has come back in the same place, and activists are preparing to brave snow, cops and excavators once again. In the first action this January activists had an unusually easy victory: 100 people surrounded the geographical survey equipment to stop work, and the police didn't even bother to show up. notav.eu

Forest Occupation in Catalonia

Since October a mountainous, forested area in Girona, Catalonia has been successfully occupied to prevent the construction of pylons conducting a new Very High Voltage power line. This is part of a project to connect France, Spain and potentially Africa, as well as supplying power for tourist villages and high speed trains. People have been busy building tree houses, communal

kitchens and defences, with the support of local people and visitors from Barcelona. desdelsboscos.blogspot.com

Sea Shepherd Ship Attacked

This January, in an unprovoked attack captured on film, a Japanese security ship deliberately rammed and caused catastrophic damage to the Sea Shepherd trimaran 'Ady Gil'. The crew of six were rescued by another Sea Shepherd vessel without injury, but eight foot of the bow was ripped off entirely and the boat sank rapidly and is unlikely to be salvageable. A crew member commented: "If they (Japanese Whalers) think that our remaining two ships will retreat from the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in the face of their extremism, they will be mistaken." For the last five years, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has conducted high seas physical opposition to illegal Japanese whaling operations. seashepherd.org

Environmental Activists Killed in Latin America

In December, Dora Alicia

Recinos Sorto, eight months pregnant, became the third victim of a wave of violence against environmental campaigners in the Cabañas Region of El Salvador. Amid protests against the re-opening of a Gold Mine by Vancouver-based 'Pacific Rim' Mining Company, Dora was shot dead, and her two year old son seriously wounded. Her murder came just six days after the fatal shooting of Ramiro Rivera Gomez, Vice President of the Cabañas Environmental Committee. Many other members of the community have received death threats. cispes.org

Global Defence of Mother Earth

October marked the start of the Global "Minga" (Mobilisation in Defence of Mother Earth and the Peoples) called by the IV Continental Summit of Indigenous Peoples. In Columbia, 25,000 people protested for respect for their territory and against harmful government social policies. In other South American countries, there were actions against debt and international finance institutions. Many solidarity actions have taken place in London, Paris,

Spain, Canada and the USA.

Amazon Mega-dam Delayed

The Belo Monte hydroelectric dam, planned for the Xingu river in the Brazilian Amazon, has been delayed following protests by Kayapó Indians, 14 other tribes, local and international organisations. The dam would be the third largest in the world, cost US\$10 billion, bring 200,000 workers into the area, force 20,000 people from their homes and affect the biodiversity of nine million hectares of rainforest. After the protest, key government figures in the Belo Monte case resigned. internationalrivers.org

Lappersfort Forest Occupation

Grown over the ruins of an old ammunition factory, the Lappersfort forest in Belgium stands as a symbol for regrowth and re-wilding. The owners, Suez/Fabricom, want to re-develop the site into factories. A previous eviction notice has been confirmed legal and now, after 16 months of occupation, more people are needed to maintain the site which is on daily eviction alert. lappersfort.freehostia.com

Erecting tree defences in Catalonia



Conference Blockades

In November, activists from 'Climate Alarm!' blocked entrances to a conference centre in Brussels preventing hundreds of corporate lobbyists representing Shell, Arcelor Mittal, BASF and Daimler from attending 'Business Europe'. 25 activists were arrested, with police using pepper spray and excessive force. earthfirst.org

Meanwhile, activists from 'El Clima no esta en Venda' (The Climate is not for Sale)

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Kernow Action Now!
kernowaction@gmail.com

Networks

Coal Action Network
coalaction.net

Genetic Engineering Network
geneticsaction.org.uk
(website out of date)

Network for Climate Action
networkforclimateaction.org.uk

Plane Stupid
planestupid.com

Rising Tide UK
62 Fieldgate Street, London, E1 1ES
risingtide.org.uk
07708 794665

Saving Iceland
savingiceland.org

Support

Activists Legal Project
activistslegalproject.org.uk

Activist Mediation Network
activistmediation.org.uk

Activist Security website
activistsecurity.org

Advisory Service for Squatters
020 3216 0099
squatter.org.uk

Activist Tat Collective
atcoop.org.uk

Activist Trauma Support
activist-trauma.net 07962 406940

Earth Liberation Prisoners
Prisoner support
spiritoffreedom.org.uk

FreeBeagles
Activist legal stuff
freebeagles.org

Indymedia UK
For (non-eco) news & views
indymedia.org.uk

Schnews
Free weekly news sheet and
website. schnews.org.uk

Seeds for Change
Action training. seedsforchange.org.uk

Tripod Training for creative social action
tripodtraining.org

UK Action Medics
actionmedics.org.uk

Protest Camps

Bilston Woods Anti-Bypass Camp
c/o ACE, 17 West Montgomery
Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA
0775 3280009
bilstonglen-abs.org.uk
Occupied since 2002 to
block road building & a new
biotech research facility.

Faslane Peace Camp
Shandon, Nr Rhu, Helens-
burgh, Scotland G84 8NT
01436 820901
Opposing nuclear weapons
since 1982 at Faslane Naval
Base, 30 miles from Glasgow.

Mainshill Solidarity Camp
Nr Douglas, Lanarkshire, SW Scotland
coalactionscotland.noflag.org.uk/
07806926040
Occupied since summer 09,
preventing an open cast coal mine.

Titnore Emergency Action (TEA)
Box 4144, Worthing, West Sussex
07913 534083
eco-action.org/porkbolter/
camp-titnore....
Camp opposing road building, a
Tesco Hypermarket and a housing
/commercial development

Global Contacts

See earthfirst.org.uk for EF!
groups in North America, Mexico,
Australia, Philippines, Nigeria,
Slovakia, Czech Republic, Italy,
Poland, Netherlands, & Belgium.

blockaded the main entrance to the UN's Climate Change Conference in Barcelona and dropped the banner "Without a drastic reduction, there is no solution." The action supported African nations boycotting the talks due to lack of seriousness from rich countries.
elclimanoestaenvenda.wordpress.com

Blasting Stopped on Coal River Mountain USA

This November, blasting

was halted when protesters locked on to a drill rig on Coal River Mountain's Bee Tree mountaintop removal site, West Virginia. The action brings attention to the extreme danger facing residents of the Coal River Valley from blasting near a dam which holds nine billion gallons of toxic coal slurry; a 40-foot wall of sludge could flow through the valley. Elsewhere in the state, protesters locked on to block coal trucks from entering a mine site to highlight the detrimental effects of mountaintop removal mining, including its

lack of economic sustainability. Over 90 activists have been arrested in the past year.
climategroundzero.org

GM Food Protest

Activists chained themselves to the roof of the European Food Standards Authority (EFSA) building in Parma, Italy, to protest against the GM invasion of Europe. EFSA is currently authorizing MON810 maize (Monsanto) and RICE62 (Bayer) for growing throughout the EU.

The lock-on, banner drop and leafleting preceded a national demonstration later in October.
earthfirst.org.uk

ELF Russia

Earth Liberation Front claimed responsibility for October actions in Butovo, Moscow, where an excavator and tractor were torched. Currently, the "Internal Intelligence Bureau" is cutting the forest down to make a road to their infrastructure there.
325.nostate.net

UK Rossport Solidarity Gathering

12 - 14 Feb, Sumac Centre, Nottingham

Food and accommodation provided for donation. Come along to discuss how to support the struggle in Rossport over the next year. Meet people involved and plot how to take on one of the biggest multinationals in the world! Shell's controversial gas pipeline is seeing further delays. In November, the local planning board deferred the decision on the onshore section of the pipeline, as just over half of the route

(5.6km) is considered unacceptable because of its proximity to people's homes. Shell now have until February to design a new route. This is likely to run through the bay which had previously been ruled out on environmental and technical grounds. At the moment it's unclear when construction on the onshore section will start. More offshore work could start in May. Campaigners are getting ready to resist any type of work, so keep your eyes peeled for news.

shelltosea.com
rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com



Architects Targeted over Heathrow

Residents near Heathrow and Plane Stupid activists targeted one of the potential designers of a third runway at the 2009 Architect of the Year Awards. They presented architect group Pascal and Watson with the 'We don't give a shit' award for their long aviation portfolio, and commented that "trying to build a green airport is like trying to polish a turd." planestupid.com

Biomass

In November, climate activists blockaded a biomass plant at Port Talbot, preventing hourly 20-tonne deliveries of woodchip that keep the plant running. The plant is a trial for two much bigger proposed plants, which would require biomass plantations half the size of Wales to supply them. This happened in conjunction with a blockade of a coal generator in the US, an office occupation in Canada and demonstrations in India. climatecampcymru.org

Oak Stood in the Way

In December, villagers in Steep stood underneath the canopy of a 350 year old oak to prevent it from being chopped down, but were forced to move when it became clear that the contractors had no regard for their safety. This tree had stood there since the time of Cromwell, but had to make way for an access road to a new country house built for a fat cat.

Downland Sell-off

The Stop Cissbury Sell-off campaign won an initial victory last December: following major public protest it was agreed that the downland around Cissbury Iron Age fort would be kept for public use. sco.co.uk

Climate Refugees Visit Barclays

In December Plymouth 'climate refugees' D-locked themselves in Barclay's main entrance, and spent three

hours spreading the word to customers about the bank's investments in coal, Tar Sands Oil and the arms trade. plymouth@risingtide.org.uk

sHell Heckled

Shell's annual graduate recruitment event aimed at schmoozing Oxford University students was disrupted by local activists who heckled, switched off displays and audio equipment, gave an alternative speech and chatted to the students.

Hasty Lane Adopt a Resident

Tenants of Hasty Lane will team up with climate activists in an 'Adopt a Resident' scheme, and prepare themselves to throw a spanner in the works if Manchester Airport freight expansion plans go ahead. The houses on Hasty Lane are threatened with demolition to make way for more climate crimes. stopmanchesterairport.blogspot.com



Correction - GM Spuds Overlooked

In the last edition we erroneously reported that no GM trials were grown in the UK in 2009. Leeds University did succeed in growing a test crop of potatoes engineered to be resistant to nematodes, a potato pest. After the same trial had been trashed by anti-GM campaigners in 2008, locals were not told about trial and the site was protected by fencing, CCTV cameras and full-time security guards. Scientists claim the trial was successful and are planning to run another similar trial from 2010 to 2012. Defra denied that it tried to keep people in the dark and said that it publishes details and map references of all GM experiments on its website.

About Earth First!

Earth First! is about direct action to halt the destruction of the Earth. We believe we can make a real difference by doing it ourselves rather than relying on leaders, governments or industry. We're a loose network of people, groups and campaigns coming together for ecological direct action and we believe in non-hierarchical organisation.

The name Earth First! is a banner for anyone who shares a similar philosophy to work under:

In the UK people have been taking direct action using the Earth First! name since the early 90s – stopping road building, the quarrying of coal, rock and peat, freeing our fields of geneti-

cally modified crops, protesting against climate criminals, fighting corporate power and much, much more.

If you believe action speaks louder than words, then Earth First! is for you.

The Earth First! Action Update

brings you a quarterly collection of news and updates on ecological direct action from the UK and beyond. You can pick up copies from your local social centre, or even better: subscribe and get it direct. The next issue will be out in April, so if you've got news to share send us your articles (150 words max.), actionupdate@earthfirst.org.uk, mail to the address below or post straight onto our [website: earthfirst.org.uk](http://website:earthfirst.org.uk)

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