

Radical History Zone @ Bristol Anarchist Bookfair

Pre-Bookfair Event: Friday May 6th 2011 from 7.30pm-9.30pm
Easton Community Centre, Kilburn Rd. Easton, Bristol BS5
'Soccer vs. the State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics'
with Gabriel Kuhn

A former semi-professional football player, Gabriel Kuhn shares his thoughts on the game in his latest book. Besides exploring the history and the politics of the professional game, Kuhn takes a look at radical supporter culture and grassroots football efforts around the world. The book also includes numerous contributions from football activists around the world, not least members of Bristol's very own Easton Cowboys and Girls Sports Club!

If you enjoy discussing free kicks while building barricades, this evening is for you! Introduced by David Goldblatt author of the acclaimed 'The Ball is Round' a global history of football. This event is presented in association with the Easton Cowboys & Cowgirls.

At The Bookfair – 7 May 2011 – 10.30am to 6.30pm

All RHZ meetings take place in the RHZ room on
Level 5 of Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY

11.00am: Street Farming

Speaker: Peter Crump

Peter Crump was a member of Street Farm, a London-based collective of anarchist architects and designers working in the early 1970s. They published Street Farmer, an underground paper that, alongside mutating tower blocks, cosmic tractors and sprouting one-way signs, put forward manifestos for the radical transformation of urban living. They offered a powerful vision of green cities in the control of ordinary people (and ordinary sheep), not capitalist, statist, socialist or any other kind of planners or developers.

In 1972 'Street Farm House' hit international headlines as one of the first structures intentionally constructed as an eco-house. Two members of the group moved to Bristol, where the Street Farm influence can be seen in the construction/design of St Werburgh's City Farm Café. Peter's illustrated talk will be a unique opportunity to hear about the philosophy and exploits of the Street Farmers first hand.

12.00am: A History of Free Festivals: From the Wallies to the Battle of the Beanfield

Speaker: Wally Dean

If you can remember them you just weren't there. Now Wally Dean will help to fill in the gaps. Firm fixtures on the counter-cultural calendar since the 1960s, free festivals had their heyday between the first Glastonbury Festival in 1970 and the police ambush of the Stonehenge Festival convoy at the Battle of the Beanfield in 1985. However the spirit continued and was much revitalised by the early rave scene. Free festivals functioned as autonomous spaces in which to celebrate, resist and experiment – a chance to get together in mini alternative societies.

As Crass fans will know, Wally Hope, the legendary founder of the Stonehenge Festival died in mysterious circumstances in 1975. Dean looks after Wally Hope's ashes and administers the Wally Hope Appreciation Society. He is part of the Festival Eye collective.

1.00pm: Gustav Landauer and the German Revolution of 1918-19

Speaker: Gabriel Kuhn

Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) remains Germany's most influential anarchist. Gabriel Kuhn, editor and translator of the first comprehensive volume of Landauer texts in English, "Revolution and Other Writings", will recall the philosophy and activism of a unique revolutionary who died at the hands of reactionary soldiers in May 1919.

2.00pm: The Sharpness Nuclear Waste Train Blockade

Speaker: Trevor Houghton

The story of a direct action by activists from Bristol, Bath and Stroud in 1980; told by one of those who took part with film footage taken during the action. The blockade is placed in the context of the successful campaign of direct action involving railway workers, seafarers and environmental NGOs that stopped nuclear waste dumping at sea.

3.00pm: Hands off our forest – saving the Forest of Dean

We have just seen a massive U turn by this government as a result of huge ground swell of public opinion against the proposed sell off of the Forestry Commission Estate. In the autumn of 2010, the campaign kicked off in the Forest of Dean with a huge public meeting in Cinderford which was attended by over 500 people and a rally in Speech House attended by 3000 people.

Tory MP Mark Harper was invited to speak at both these events to present his case, but refused. A number of organisations have been working together, uniting people from all political persuasions and utilizing a raft of different protest techniques. Right across the country communities have been organising to resist the sell off of their woodlands and have started to come together and to act in solidarity.

In the Forest, Harper recently gave only 24 hours notice to speak at a small venue in Coleford to introduce the consultation process and to present his proposals to give part of the Forest to a charity and sell the rest off. The meeting was packed inside and out, where about 300 demonstrators chanted slogans all night such as Hands off our Forest and Tunis – Egypt-Forest of Dean. Inside he was ridiculed by speeches from children to old age pensioners. He refused to speak to the people outside which caused great outrage and not surprisingly people were very angry when he tried to sneak out the back with full police protection.

In the Telegraph, Harper accused the Foresters of behaving like a "baying mob." Other papers have described the U turn as a victory by middle England and the Tory Shires. This meeting will look the reality of these events and the politics of how a whole community united around a single issue and won. Includes speakers from the Warren James group and short films of the protests and actions.

4.00pm: Roots of ecological resistance – 20 years of Earth First!

Performers: Otherstory

A puppet show and workshop celebrating 20 years of ecological activism: from the treetops of Newbury, to planting trees on the M11, to the tops of power station chimneys. Using a magically simple puppetry technique - like an animated zine - explore stories of past actions and have a go at creating your own.

5.00pm: The Spanish Civil War - Pro. Preston and George Orwell: The varieties of historical investigation and experience

Speaker: Brian Bamford

A couple of years ago, at a gathering of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, Professor Paul Preston, describing George Orwell's 'Homage to Catalonia' , said: 'It is not a bad book but the trouble is, it is the only book many people read on the Spanish Civil War' or words to that effect.

Pro. Preston suggested that 'Homage to Catalonia' was a book written about the Spanish War from the narrow perspective of someone who had only spent six or seven months involved in the conflict on a quiet front in the North of Spain - Aragon & Catalonia - and, that it left out much which the professional historian could now encompass supported, as he is, by the enriched 'body of scholarship which has been published in Spanish, Catalan, English ... since 1996' (see Preface to Preston's 'The Spanish Civil War' [2006]).

Is a modern history, written in a library by a professional historian such as that of Professor Preston's, to be preferred to a first-hand account of the conflict written almost in the heat of battle, or shortly afterwards? Will not the professional historian and scholar's account be more objective than that written by the former combatant and novelist? Is not the one clearly superior to the other? If not, how do we judge and value these differing contributions?

Brian Bamford is an ethno-methodologist/sociologist, who formerly worked as a maintenance electrician. He is at present Secretary of Tameside Trade Union Council and Secretary of Bury Unite the Union. He helped to edit the Tameside TUC booklet on the 75th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War [3rd Edition], which will be on sale at the Bristol Bookfair.

RHZ Special Event – 5pm in Large Hall on Level 5 at Hamilton House

The Poetry of Heathcote Williams – performed by Roy Hutchins

Heathcote Williams is celebrated for many reasons; as writer, actor, painter, even conjurer. Heathcote's foray into diplomacy came in 1977, when he became Ambassador to Great Britain for a London squat called Frestonia, which declared independence. His epic ecological poems such as Whale Nation and Autogeddon were loved by a readership far beyond the usual poetry-reading circles. He continues to paint, poetise and rant on matters topical and historical.

This is an opportunity to hear Roy Hutchins perform Heathcote's new work with the old anarchic edge. Writer, director, performer and comedian Roy Hutchins has long worked closely with Heathcote, collaborating on several projects over the years.

This event is a warm-up to the national tour of Zanzibar Cats in 2012 – a special treat for Bristol's anarchists and radical historians! It promises: 'an eclectic, entertaining and provocative poetical happening. Roy's incisive delivery perfectly matches the content; lively, audience-focused, it brings the poetry alive with an intuitive understanding and theatrical flourish'.

Post-Bookfair Event: Sunday May 8th 2011 at 1pm

The Hatchet Inn, Frogmore Street, Bristol BS1 5NA

The Bristol Boys

As the perfect après fair, artist Mike Baker will present his 'Bristol Boys' plaque which was recently unveiled outside the Hatchet Inn. At the turn of the 19th Century the Hatchet was the bare knuckle boxing venue in Bristol and produced several renowned champions. Mike is the man behind the Easton Signs Tail and collaborated with BRHG on the Thomas Clarkson plaque on the Seven Stars pub in Thomas Lane, Redcliffe. So, after the rigors of another great Bristol Anarchist Bookfair come and join Mike and BRHG for Sunday lunch and a pint.