

SOMETHING- OLD (QUEEN MOTHER) SOMETHING- NEW (PRINCE HARRY) SOMETHING- BORROWED (THE FALKLANDS) SOMETHING- BLUE (PRINCESS MARGARET'S LIVER)



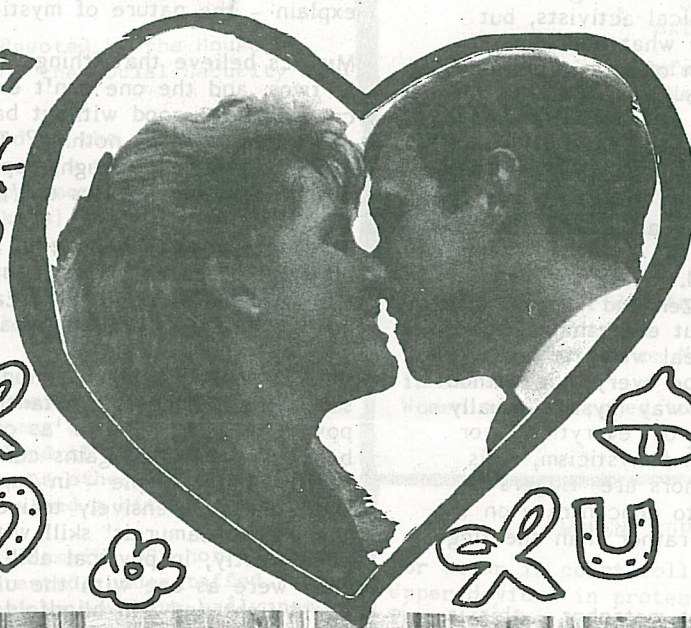
A RIGHT ROYAL RAG

FREE FORTNIGHTLY



By appointment to
Her Majesty The Queen
Suppliers of Objets d'Art

30 JUNE →
13 JULY
1986



the royal wedding.

AROUND THE WORLD
IN PICTURES WITH
THE ROYAL FAMILY ON TOUR

NEXT ISSUE CO-ORDINATOR ? "GOING OUT" MARK BOX 79 ACORN BOOKSHOP
"EVENTS" JOHN 669694



There's an old saying you don't often hear nowadays: "God must love fools or He wouldn't have made so many of us". Look upon this as justification for this article: it's extremely foolish, because in it I'll try and explain some of the basic concepts of mysticism for the benefit of the politically active readership of the Rag. There is common ground for mystics and political activists, but there's also a problem: mystics know what political activists are into, but an explanation of mystic beliefs is usually a load of confusing mumbo-jumbo. So - why?

Well, the first line of the Tao Te Ching clearly(!) says that the course that can be discoursed is not the true Course, meaning that an explanation of it is impossible, and I'll make a lot of mistakes: write and correct me!

OK - let's start with the real world. Mysticism (and I draw mostly from the traditions of Zen and Taoism), holds that the real world is everything, but everything. This means that any description of the real world is bound to be inaccurate - how can you describe everything without leaving vast amounts out? Well, the way mystics usually try to do this is by using metaphors of 'everything', or the 'ultimate'. To start to comprehend mysticism, it is important to realise that the metaphors are 'fingers pointing at the moon'; the trick is to concentrate on the moon (a metaphor for the ultimate) rather than the finger (a metaphor for a metaphor).

Mysticism can evade anything except metaphor - this is what makes it hard to come to grips with. It's like trying to grip water, which is why mystics often compare the ultimate with water. For example, if you see the ultimate as a river, 'objects' (people, things, words, ideas - the paraphernalia of everyday life that non-mystics call reality) can be seen as whirlpools (worldpools) in the current; they seem to have separate existences, but are 'really' just aspects of the water.

An extension of that metaphor can lead the mystic to the conclusion that everything is a part of everything else. There's a Buddhist myth/metaphor that describes this rather well:

"In Indra's heaven there's a latticework of pearls, arranged such that when you look in one you can see in it the reflection of all the others."

Mystics say that everything is arranged along similar lines. This mental model of the real world means that to mystics both objectivity and subjectivity are illusions. But as everything seems to be an illusion, is this helpful? Well, they say, for a start it means it's dangerous to hurt things: ultimately you hurt yourself (as you give, so shall you get - the first law of magick).

How do you get beyond the illusions? There are many techniques, but common to all of them is a lot of work. One method, used in Zen, is the 'koan', a question that has an answer that can't be found by rational means. Mystics say that to comprehend the Great Architect of the Universe, the Tao etc. (the name of the ultimate isn't important) you must realise that rationality (and irrationality) are useless. Here's a classic koan:

Q. What's the sound of one hand clapping?

A. Whatever the answer is (eg for me, now, a clip round the ear for getting the answer wrong).

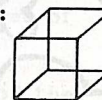
There's another aspect of mysticism that I should try to explain - the nature of mystical 'power'.

Mystics believe that 'things' in everyday reality exist in twos, and the one can't exist without the other - how can you have good without bad, high without low, or everything without nothing? This belief does present a bit of a problem, though; opposites imply a clash, disharmony, and mystics don't see everything like that.

Therefore mystics believe in an ultimate 'power' that harmonises the opposites. Eastern mystics call it chi or Ki; westerners call it Vril, Earthpower, Divine Spirit, magick - there's probably loads of other names as well.

When a mystic achieves enlightenment (illumination, satori etc.), (s)he is constantly 'in touch' with this power, meaning (s)he is 'as one' with the universe. The benefits the mystic gains can be applied to everyday reality. For example - in Japan, about 1500 - 1600 A.D. the Samurai intensively trained in Zen. Mystics say that the master Samurais' skill with a sword lay not only, or even mostly, in physical ability, but in the fact that they were as one with the ultimate. This was why they could fight and win blindfolded against several unenlightened opponents. Note, however, that many mystics would say the Samurai took the left hand path and in any case have no relevance to Thatcher's Britain.

Right. That's enough 'explanation' for now; let's try and lighten things up with a spot of experience: an old illusion. Study the following diagram:



How many cubes can you see? If you can see two, think about how long it takes to change from one to the other: does it take any time at all? Now ask yourself: "What, exactly, changes?"

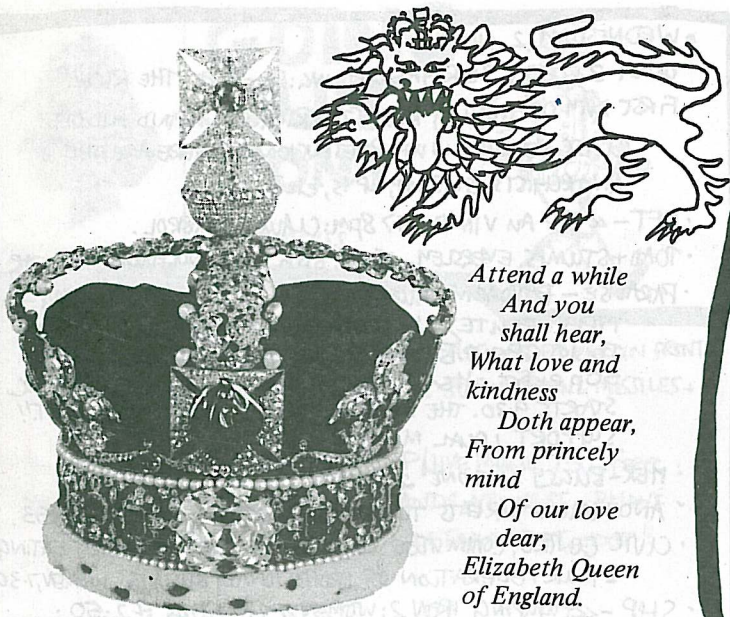
Interesting? Mystics would say that if you can see both cubes at the same time and realise there are none there, you are on your way to enlightenment.

A final note: if you're interested in mysticism, remember that ultimate answers can't be given, only received. Despite this, the work involved makes it tempting to seek out a master, a guru, a Mr Morland. Treat these aids to enlightenment with extreme cynicism. Earthlings don't need to embrace gurus to help them tolerate life: Earthlings need to embrace life to help them tolerate gurus.

With thanks to Tom Robbins, everything else, and lots of love -

Cir Nick

These statements can only be usefully filed under the category of your choice. Is this Situationist?



*Attend a while
And you
shall hear,
What love and
kindness
Doth appear,
From princely
mind
Of our love
dear,
Elizabeth Queen
of England.*

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

On the first of 3 days to be devoted by the House of Lords to the Committee stage of the Social Security Bill two changes have been made.

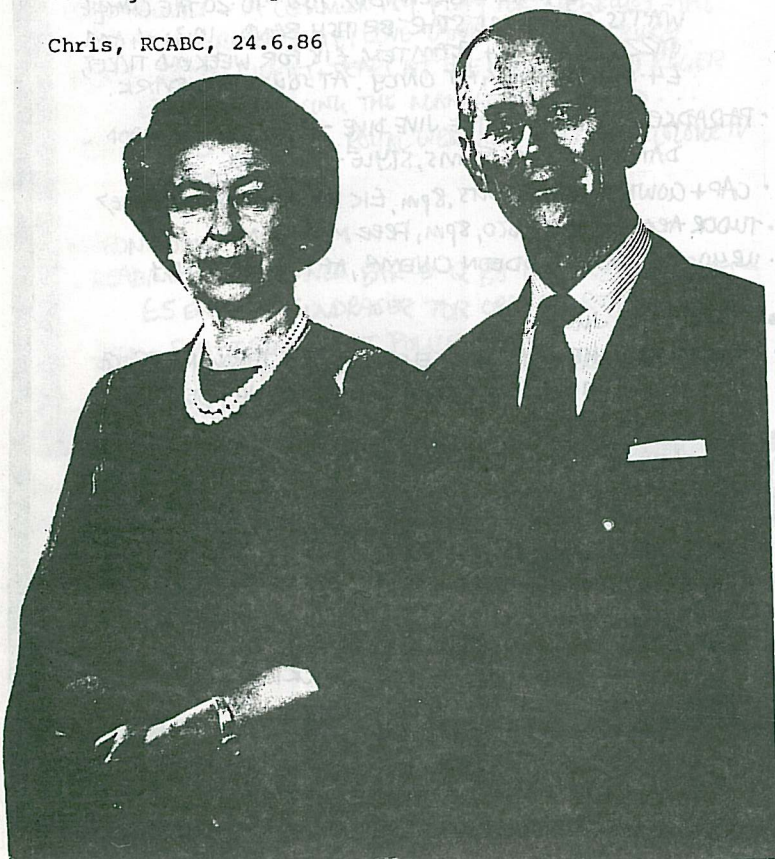
Family Credit will be paid to the mother, not through the main wage-earner's pay packet. (It will replace Family Income Supplement for low-income working households with kids)

householders existing on supplementary benefit and claiming Housing Benefit will not have to start paying at least 20% of their General Rates bills.

Congratulations to everyone who did anything to create the climate of opinion where the House of Lords could make these changes (not one comma changed all the way through the Commons). You helped if you said even one sympathetic/critical thing to one other person. The CBI, and the Tory women also helped a bit on the first one.

Mind you, the rest of the Bill remains 98% horrid, and the overstrained, over-means tested, understaffed, creaking Social Security system we now have badly needs overhauling. About 3 million less unemployed and benefit levels that took most people out of means-testing would help. (for example)

Chris, RCABC, 24.6.86



WOMENS NON-VIOLENT ACTION
NAGASAKI DAY
SAT 9th AUGUST

At 7 research, manufacturing and deployment bases for Nuclear Weapons and Weapons for Mass-destruction at :-
Greenham Common

Welford
Upper Heyford
Alconbury
Burghfield
Aldermaston
& Lakenheath

Women gather Friday August 8th at Greenham Common womens peace camp.

Women take action on NAGASAKI DAY to occupy the 7 installations.

Women come prepared to take non-violent action.

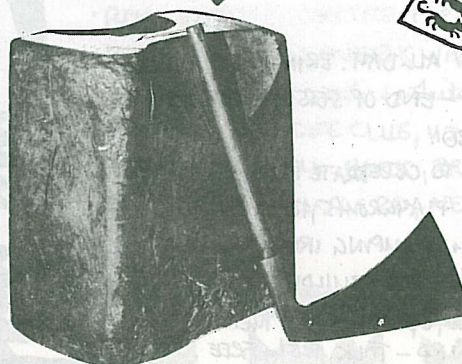
WOMENS SUPPORT PLEASE

For women in court following actions at Welford and Upper Heyford in protest against Libyan bombing. They will be in Newbury court on 10th July at 10.00a.m.

SUMMER NIGHTS

Women, fancy a night in the country? Warm summer nights, fire blazing, good company and pleasant atmosphere, musical sessions under the stars. NIGHTWATCH AT BLUE GATE still plenty of vacancies, also for women drivers who prefer just a brief excursion. To book your place come to the Greenham Support meetings at Reading Womens centre every 2nd Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. Next meeting is on 8th July & as a special treat will be a drinking/eating/dancing session at RED GATE. Bring food, drink, wood to burn. Meet at Womens centre 8.00 p.m. for a lift.

ROYAL WELLINGTON
CLEANER. ↓





SMALL ADVERTS

BASS PLAYER NEEDED FOR NEW AGE ROCK BAND
Tel: 875342 CARO or KEN

RE-POINTING WORK DONE
KEN 875342

GOING OUT



• 'ERE WE GO, 'ERE WE GO... SPECIAL REQUEST TO THE CLASS WAR MASSIVE IN THIS TIME, THE TIME OF NATIONAL-IST FOOTBALL AND THE ROYAL WEDDING.

• MONDAY 30 JUNE:

- RCU - ONGOING CELEBRATION OF BECKETT'S 80TH BIRTHDAY - CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE 9.30-4.30 < 12.30-4.30 FRIDAYS. ONGOING. 596689 FOR DETAILS. DOES IT STAR MARTIN SALTER? GOOD LUCK IN YOUR NEW JOB/MAST.
- PROSPECT PARK - ANTI-ROYAL BANNERMAKING WORKSHOP, 8pm. BRING A BOTTLE: PETROL PROVIDED.
- ROSE + THISTLE - TOLUPE + FLAMES COUNTRY MU-SICK, FREE + A RIFLE.

• TUESDAY 1 JULY:

- RCU - TYRE COLLECTION ALL DAY. BRING YOUR SPARES.
- GREAT HALL, LONDON RD - END OF SESSION CONCERT 7.30 FREE.
- HEX - BUGSY MALONE 7.30.
- PROSPECT PARK - PICNIC TO CELEBRATE PRINCESS DI'S BIRTHDAY < READING, PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUPS, TEL 620517.
- SHIP: PAPER MARBLING + "PUMPING IRON 2: WOMEN" < PG7 7.45, £2.50. WOMEN + BODYBUILDING.
- TUDOR ARMS - CAY DISCO, 8pm, MAINLY MEN.
- STUDIO BISTRO, LONDON RD - FOLK, 8ish, FREE.

• WEDNESDAY 2 JULY

- ONLY 3 WEEKS TO ROYAL WEDDING: RE-TYRE THE RICH!
- FIRST DAY OF HENLEY REGATTA: RICH SCUM AND MIDDLE CLASS VOMEOURS WITH PRETENSIONS. WHERE ARE THE ANARCHISTS, SWP, WP, LPYS, etc?
- RFT - < COP AN VIN > < 157 8pm: CLAUDE CHABROL.
- TODD + STUMPS, EVERLEY - FOLK, 8ish, FREE. NOT FINGER IN 'T' EAR
- PARADISE - PANDAEMONIUM CLUB: PAUL JAMES < SAX, BAG - PIPES + FLUTE > NIGELEATON < HURDY GURDY > - FROM FOLK GROUP BLOWZABELLA. £1/£1.50 BEFORE 10pm, 50p extra after. ALSO SURGERY SOUND SYSTEM. MUSIC STARTS 9.30. THE BEST LIVE MUSIC IN TOWN TONIGHT!! SUPPORT LOCAL MUSICIANS.
- HEX - BUGSY MALONE 2.30/7.30.
- ANONYMOUS THREATS TO HENLEY REGATTA - HENLEY 572153.
- CIVIC CENTRE, COMMITTEE ROOM 1 - TALK ON HEALTHY EATING BY UK FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL/BUSINESS WOMEN, 7.30
- SHIP - < PUMPING IRON 2: WOMEN > < PG7 7.45, £2.50.

• THURSDAY 3 JULY:

- CAP + CROWN, KINGSD - EXCESS < ? > A BAND.
- PARADISE - SOLU/REGGAE SOUND SYSTEMS.
- HENLEY REGATTA DAY 2 - BRING A LUE, MISSILES, WHATEVER YOU LIKE. DETAILS: BRIAN FOWLES < THE MAYOR >.
- FOLK AT THE ROSE, KING ST MAIDENHEAD, 8ish + FREE.
- HEX - BUGSY MALONE - VIOLENCE FOR KIDS.

• FRIDAY 4 JULY

- AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY. HOPEFULLY THE CREW OF THE QEZ WILL CARRY ON STRIKING + SO PREVENT A RABBLE OF RICH U.S. TOURISTS GETTING TO THE LAND OF FREEDOM FOR TODAY'S CELEBRATIONS. SHOULD WE TRY + PROCLAIM OUR INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA??
- HEX - BUGSY MALONE - SPURGE THE RICH.
- DAY 3 OF HENLEY REGATTA: HAVE YOU GOT WARMED UP FOR THE WEEKEND?

- HEXAGON FLYER - TYRE LOBBING PRACTICE < MATERIALS + CUT OUTS OF HOORAYS + ROYALS NEEDED >. 2pm, IN CHURCH HALL IF WET.

- BRACKNELL JAZZ FESTIVAL, A RED STRIPE PRESENTATION < BLESS 'EM FOR CRUCIAL BREW, 2007. 7.30 - 10.30 THE CHARLIE WATTS ORCH: ALL STAR BRITISH BAND. 10.30 - 4AM JAZZ WARRIORS + TEAM TEN. £18 FOR WEEKEND TICKET, £4.50 FOR TONIGHT ONLY. AT SOUTH HILL PARK.

- PARADISE - RETURN OF THE JIVE DIVE - 9.30 - 2AM, £2. GOOD DANCE MUSIC, FILMS, STYLE + FASHION.
- CAP + CROWN - ASTRONAUTS, 8pm, EIC BAND, NOT MOONPEOPLE
- TUDOR ARMS - CAY DISCO, 8pm, FREE MAINLY MEN.
- UB40 PICTURES @ ODEON CINEMA, AFTERNOON ONLY.

• SATURDAY 5 JULY:

- MAIN BRIDGE, HENLEY: PRO - CELEBRITY TYRE THROWING, BRIDGE DEMOLITION, PAINT SCRATCHING. BRING FRIENDS + FALSE NAMES.
- SHIP - JAZZ FESTIVAL: LOADS + LOADS OF PEOPLE INCLUDING OXFORD IMPROVISERS CO-OP, PETE HALL < JAZZ/IMPROVISED FLAMENCO GUITAR > + MAYHEM QUARTET < READING MUSICIANS >. TEL BRACKNELL 484123. PARTLY SPONSORED BY EAST GERMAN EMBASSY!!
- DINTON PASTURES, TURST - MOTH EVENING 10 - MIDNIGHT £1.95 TEL BRACKNELL 429134.
- SLOUGH - TIPPA IRIE, SPLIFF RIFF, BLACK ROOTS. £5.
- PARADISE - NOT FINALISED YET.
- BUGSY MALONE @ HEX 2.30 + 7.30.
- DINTON PASTURES - 7pm - 9pm + 10am - 1pm tomorrow - £6 'DRAGONFLIES AT LARGE' COURSE: BRACKNELL 429134.



GOING OUT CONT.

a Princess



• SUNDAY 6 JULY:

- ROYAL WEDDING STREET PARTY PRACTICE: ASSEMBLE IN FRONT OF READING POLICE STATION, 8.30AM. BRING MISSILES + BAIL MONEY.
- BUTLER, CHATHAM ST - JAZZ/JUMP/LIVE MUSIC, 7.30, free.
- BRACKNELL JAZZ FESTIVAL - 17 BANDS AT LEAST - PHONE BRACKNELL 917 484123 FOR DETAILS. TOOT TOOT!!

• MONDAY 7 JULY:

- SHIP - REVOLUTION: A FILM, ABOUT US WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, SLACED OFF WHEN RELEASED: HOW THE WAR AFFECTS 4 PEOPLE (PRESUMABLY ALL ALIVE) 7.45, £2.50.
- READING - REVOLUTION: AN ATTEMPT: DMS WRITING ROOM, 3pm ish.
- HEX - BLOOD SWEAT + TEARS: «ORDINARY GIRL» WHO GOES TO A SELF DEFENCE CLASS + BECOMES JUDO BLACK BELT. WHAT? 8pm.

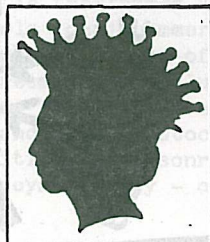
• TUESDAY 8 JULY:

- PARADISE - MARK T + THE BRICKBATS: FOLK/BLUES/JAZZ/ OTHER SORTS OF MUSIC. VERY GOOD. £1/£1.50 BEFORE 10, £1.50/£2 AFTER.
- MAJESTIC, CAVERSHAM RD - HOWARD HUGHES + THE WESTERN APPROACHES, PETE MURPHY, 3 FABULOUS MILLS BROTHERS + JACK RUBIES. £3/£3.50 ON DOOR.
- TUDOR ARMS GAY DISCO 8pm MAINLY MEN.
- STUDIO BISTRO, FOLK 8pm FREE.
- SHIP - REVOLUTION AS YESTERDAY.
- TUBE SCULPTURE 8pm £1: 150 PIPES (2 INCHES TO 15 FEET LONG) PLAYED BY FLAUTIST + DRUMMER! SOUNDS GOOD.
- SPEARGRASS - A COMMUNITY PLAY FOR NEWBURY - THE SHOWGROUND SITE, LOVE LANE, SHAW, NEWBURY.
- MORE BLOOD SWEAT + TEARS AT THE HEX. OBVIOUSLY ROGER EDWARDS IS FACING THE MANAGEMENT BOARD...
- ONLY 15 DAYS TO THE ROYAL WEDDING - RENT YOUR CLOUTY + VIDEO NOW.

• WEDNESDAY 9 JULY:

- READING LIB/ALLIANCE BAR-B-Q BY FORBURY LION, 2pm - £5 ENTRY - FUNDRAISER FOR ORANGE ROYAL BUNTING
- 2am - SHIFT CHANGE AT POLICE STATION.
- SPEARGRASS (COMMUNITY PLAY FOR NEWBURY) AS 8th.
- SHIP - REVOLUTION AGAIN.

Elizabeth the English Queene,
The like of whome was never seene.



a Queen



• THURSDAY 10 JULY:

- RED RAG EDITORIAL - PHONE NO. ON COVER FOR DETAILS.
- CAP + GOWN - UNCLE SAMMY + THE 10 GALLON HATS, 8pm, £1.
- PARADISE - READING SOUND GRAPHICS HI-FI.
- ROSE, KING ST. MAIDENHEAD - FOLK, 8ish, FREE.
- HEX - 2 BANDS IN FOYER, 6.30 pm FREE.
- SPEARGRASS AT NEWBURY (SEE 8th).

• FRIDAY 11 JULY:

- PARADISE - JIVE DIVE & GOOD MUSIC, GOOD FILMS + ONLY £2.77.
- BRACKNELL FOLK FESTIVAL AT SHIP - 10am-4pm. LISTS OF PERFORMERS - details 91 484123.
- HEX FOYER TINEZ TOWN 7.30 FREE.

• SATURDAY 12 JULY:

- BRACKNELL FOLK FESTIVAL CONTD.
- RED RAG PASTEUR - SEE COVER FOR DETAILS
- CAP + GOWN - BEAT BACK BAND, 9ish - SOUL/BLUES BAND
- RCU - READING'S GAY COLLECTIVE DISCO, 9-2am. DETAILS FROM ACORN BOOKSHOP, 17 CHATHAM ST.
- PARADISE - LIVE BANDS, MAYBE ROCKABILLY-ish.
- ANIMAL DAY AT WELLINGTON COUNTRY PARK,
- HEX - BURMA + SUPPORT, 7.30, FREE.
- SPEARGRASS AGAIN IN NEWBURY

• SUNDAY 13 JULY:

- BRACKNELL FOLK FESTIVAL AT SHIP.
- SPEARGRASS (NEWBURY COMMUNITY PLAY) LAST DAY.
- RED RAG FOLDING (DISTRIBUTION, 11am, ACORN DO COME.

COMING SOON:

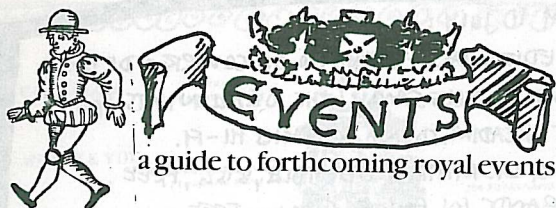
- MORE PANDAEMONIUM IN PARADISE ON THE 15th.
- CIVIC CENTRE, KENNET ROOM - «READING VOLUNTEERS FOR LIBERTY» 7.30: COMMEMORATION OF READING PEOPLE WHO JOINED INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES IN SPAIN, 1936 - 39. TEL RAM 67147. LOOKS A GOODIE.
- HEX - BLACK + WHITE MINSTREL SHOW 21-23: THE PITS. WHAT DO THE HEX THINK THEY'RE PLAYING AT?

- INFO ETC TO RED RAG GOING OUT c/o BOX 79, ACORN BOOKSHOP. NO PHONE MESSAGES ANY MORE, PLEASE.

Love MARK xx

• KEY

- RCU - READING CENTRE FOR UNWAGED, EAST ST. 596639
- HEX - HEXAGON, QUEENS WALK. TEL 591521 To complain about the black + white minstrel show (& others)
- PARADISE - PARADISE CLUB, 42 LONDON ST TEL 576847
- SHIP - SOUTH HILL PARK, BRACKNELL TEL 91 484123
- CAP & GOWN - KINGS RD, NEAR THE TECH. TEL 586006



SUNDAY 29th JUNE

Oxfam Open Day, Shinfield Grange, Cutbush Lane, Shinfield. 2pm - 6pm. 20p kids, 60p big kids & 40p for kids over 65, no dogs.

TUESDAY 1st JULY

Berkshire County Council F.E. Consultative Committee 10.00 Shire Hall, Shinfield Road, Reading. Details 875444 Ex 3344.

Special Picnic in Prospect Park to celebrate Princess Diana's birthday. Organised by Reading Pre-School Playgroup Association. Further details tel: 62051 or 415007 (no comment)

WEDNESDAY 2nd JULY

Conserve Reading on Wednesdays, California Country Park rhododendron controle. Transport see above.

Play Council 7.00pm in Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading.

THURSDAY 3rd JULY

Policy Committee 5.30 in Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Reading.

Henley Royal Regatta - Rich bastards doing Olivia Channon impressions while meathooks perform for the bourgeoisie. Tel: 572153

FRIDAY 4th JULY

Windsor Championship Dog Show!

SATURDAY 5th JULY

Women's Health Fair, Wilson Road Centre, Wilson Road, Reading. (off Oxford Road) 10.00am - 4.00pm Talks - Discussions - Workshops - Creche - Refreshments entry free Details VSC 54123.

Embrace Royal Berks Hospital 2.00pm. An action to support the NHS against cuts, privatisation, low pay, staffing levels.

SUNDAY 6th JULY

A Lark in the Park - New/Co-operative games at 3.00pm outside Palmer Park Adventure Playground, bring yourselves, friends, new ideas & games welcome.

Red Rag Collective Meeting, 5.00pm, 92a London Road, all welcome.

MONDAY 7th JULY

Housing Management Sub-committee, 6.30pm, council chamber, civic offices.

TUESDAY 8th JULY

Greenham meeting/party at Red Gate - meet at Women's Centre 8.00pm for lifts, bring food and drink, women only.

Joint B.A.N.K./ Peace Pledge Union Action - meet for mystery tour visit at 7.30pm Friends Meeting House (off London Street).

Water Ways Group meets 6.30pm, council chamber, civic offices.

WEDNESDAY 9th JULY

Shelter meeting 8.00pm at Reading Centre for the Unemployed, 4/6 East Street, Reading.

THURSDAY 10th JULY The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh give a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

FRIDAY 11th JULY

Planning Committee 2.30pm, council chamber, civic offices, Reading.

SATURDAY 12th JULY

Family Fun Day in Prospect Park. Organised by Reading Borough Council Recreation Department. Starts at 10.00am

SUNDAY 13th JULY

MONDAY 14th JULY

TUESDAY 15th JULY

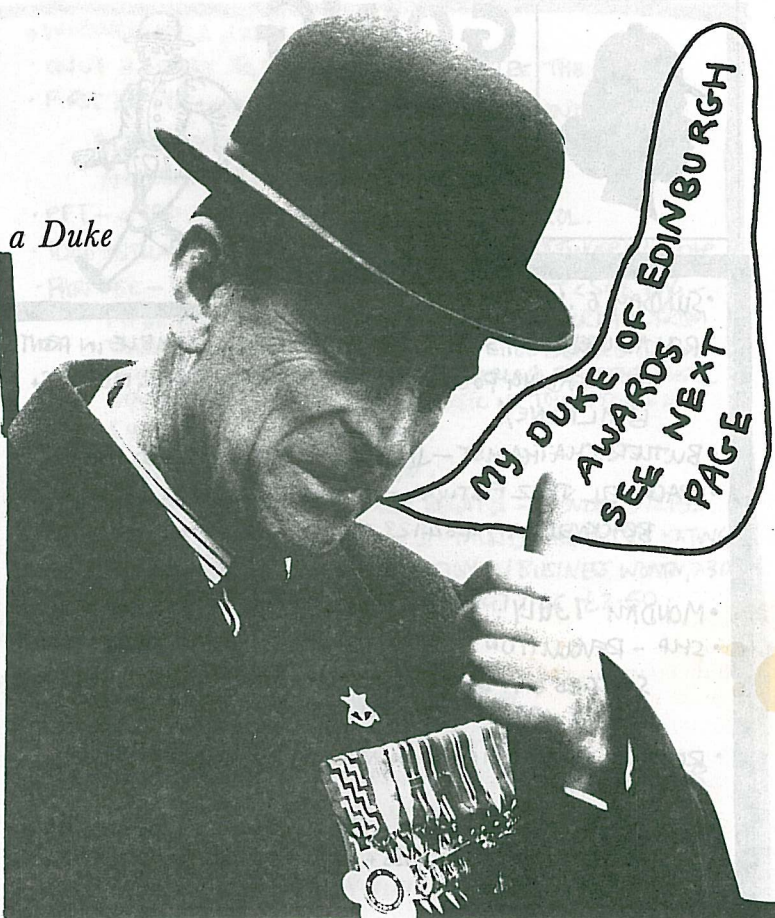
Council Meeting at 6.30pm in Civic Offices.

WEDNESDAY 16th JULY

FRIDAY 18th JULY

Spanish Civil War Celebrations at 7.30pm in Civic Centre - boogie on down with the International Brigade (best thing to happen in Reading for 50 years).

a Duke



LATE EVENTS

TUESDAY 1st JULY at 8.00pm

Meeting of Reading/Nicaragua Solidarity Group.

Venue - T.G.W.U, 36 Kings Road.

Oxford City Councillor speaking on twinning with Nicaraguan towns.

SATURDAY 19th JULY

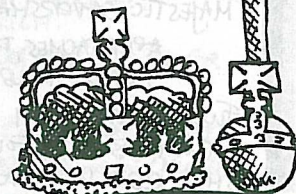
Reading's Gay Swimming

Tickets from Acorn

Saturday July 5th

MIXED LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE MARCH

Starts at Hyde Park Corner 2.00pm



Diana develops her style

"ARE YOU ON THE LEVEL?"



Ronald Reagan is, so is Cecil Parkinson, so are most senior police officers and solicitors. William Whitelaw almost certainly is and Margaret Thatcher definitely isn't. The question, "Are you on the level?" is one of the seemingly innocent questions which, when slipped into a conversation, enables Freemasons to identify each other. Another such question is, "Are you on the square?" In more formal surroundings Freemasons can make use of their special handshakes to silently discover whether or not they are being introduced to a fellow Mason, and if so of what grade.



The Freemasons form the largest and most powerful secret society in Britain today and there are other branches of Freemasonry throughout non-communist Europe and the Americas. They claim great antiquity but Freemasonry became the institution it is today in the nineteenth century. These days well dressed Masons can be seen slipping into their local lodge with little black cases carrying their ceremonial regalia - daggers, emblems and small decorated aprons. The oaths and ceremonies of Freemasonry range from the ludicrous to the deranged. Oaths taken with one trouser leg rolled up or the discreet but obligatory 'willy inspection' (Freemasonry is a strictly male society) give way to oaths delivered with a knife at your throat or voicing acceptance that to break the oath will result in having 'your right hand struck off and slung over your left shoulder, there to wither and decay'. Some ceremonies involve the enactment of mock murder by ritual means. (On an historical note, Jack the Ripper's victims were not randomly cut about, but cut and disembowelled in strict accordance with the Freemasons' 'murder of the apprentices' ritual.)



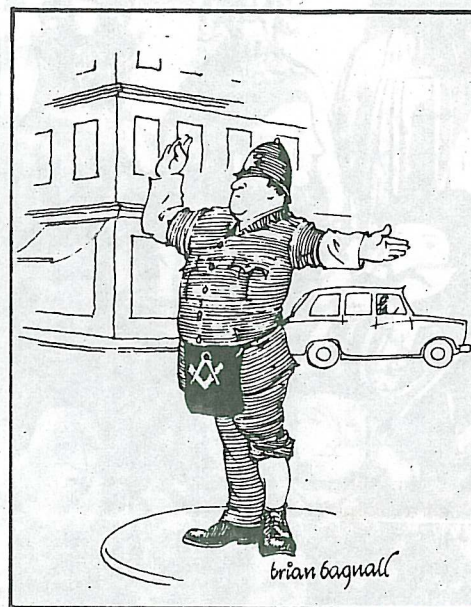
In order to be a Freemason today you need to be male, well off and more than a bit of a pillock. You could 'make yourself known' to a Mason from one of the many lodges and Freemasons halls which dot the Thames Valley. He will then put your name forward and, after an examination of your character and finances, and a somewhat dotty initiation rite, you will join the lodge. You will receive your regalia appropriate to your grade and learn the secret signs, handshakes and words. Words to identify other Masons, and exclude non-Masons - the phrase 'I think we should be cautious' means, to a Mason, that non-Masons are present. There are also ways of incorporating Masonic signs in normal writing to tell someone (e.g. the person marking your exam paper, looking at your application form, etc.) that you are a Mason.

e.g.

Alpha

All this would be quite amusing if it were not for the fact that Freemasonry is a secret society of those who hold power in the world of business, the police, the legal profession (in fact most professions) and local and national government. Freemasonry is an exclusive club of the powerful, the would be powerful and their sycophants. Its influence can be found in places like Reading, but in towns such as Newbury and Wokingham - and in many small villages in the Thames Valley - Freemasons dominate the whole local commercial and civic power structure. Every Lord Mayor of London since the war has been a Freemason - including the only Labour Mayor Lord Mais. There are Freemasons lodges in the Bank of England and the Stock Exchange and the overall head of British Freemasonry is traditionally a member of the royal family - currently the Duke of Kent.

One area of daily life riddled with Freemasonry is the police force. There is a room at New Scotland Yard for lodge meetings and there is probably one in the new Reading police station. A few years ago David Thomas, a retired policeman of thirty-two years experience, lifted the lid on the way Freemasonry works in the police force. He stated that Masons were a minority, "but that minority forms an important and all powerful group, the majority of whom are senior officers of the rank of Inspector, or above. Their influence on the service is incalculable."



There is resentment among some junior officers who are not Masons because Masons seem to get preference when it comes to promotion. A year ago the Police Federation claimed that it had never received one complaint about anyone losing promotion or being victimized for not being a Mason - but was then embarrassed when a number of cops 'went public' with their complaints and revealed that they had already made several official complaints to the Police Federation.

The police involvement in Freemasonry reflects an involvement by the legal profession as a whole. It may not be reassuring to know that, if you find yourself in court, then the magistrate, the cop that nicked you and your defence lawyer are quite likely to be members of the same lodge. It might relieve the boredom to picture them all in their mini-aprons going through rituals that really belong to the world of insecure adolescents.

You are on a safer bet in a pub. If you find yourself being thrown out for tearing up the beer mats or whatever, you could always roll up a trouser leg and incant 'Boaz' (strange and secret oath of the first degree). It might save you - traditionally publicans are keen Freemasons and you can expect nine out of ten pub landlords to be 'on the square'.

A year or so ago someone sent us anonymously a bundle of documents relating to local Freemasons, but it was not something we could use as it stood. It was incomplete and gave no idea of how current the information was. While being aware of the Masons own disinformation system we invite readers to send us all news, scandal, lists and rumours about local Freemasons. Please send to 'On the square', Box 19, Acorn Bookshop.

Zed Feecher

Frances would like to say thankyou to all those who sent cards and gave presents. We in turn would like to wish Frances many happy returns on reaching her 70th birthday and all good health and happiness in the future.

Roy Noble



*Oh she is the heavneliest
Queene
That the world hathe
ever seene.*



THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, THE I.B's...and a bit of Reading history

Fifty years ago Spain suffered a military coup d'etat. The coup was mounted by fascists and right-wing army officers under the leadership of General Franco. Popular resistance to the coup was on a massive scale. The two largest unions, the Anarchist CNT and the Communist UGT, and other political groups, organised their members into armed militias to fight alongside the few army units that remained loyal to the republic.

The U.S. and the European democracies adopted a policy of non-intervention and refused to aid the beleaguered republic. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany poured in aid to Franco in the form of troops, arms and aircraft. While the republic may have been deserted by the western governments they were not deserted by thousands of people from all over the world who volunteered to defend the republic as soldiers, doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers. They were organised into the International Brigades - 'los Internacionales'.

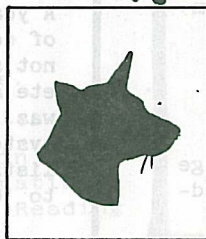
Ten people in Reading volunteered - including the first British woman volunteer in Spain. They joined a long and bitter struggle against the well armed fascist forces advancing from the south. Three of the Reading volunteers were killed in action.

Members of the original Reading contingent of the International Brigade will be guests of honour at a memorial gathering in:

The Kennet Room, Civic Centre,
at 7:30pm on Friday, 18th July.

There will be an exhibition of material about the Spanish Civil War and the Reading International Brigade contingent.

Music, songs & wine ***** Come along!



a Corgi

The corgis go everywhere with her in Britain. Someone is detailed to wipe their paws to protect the royal carpets when they go indoors, a chore the heir to the throne is said to have carried out several times.