

DIARY DATES

Sat September 11th

International Social Forum: "9/11 & The New Imperialism", organised by Cymru Cuba. 1-6pm, plus an evening of Salsa. Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Mold. Conference: £5/£3. Pay in advance or on door. Food £5 and Salsa £8/£5 must be pre-booked. Tickets for Conference & Salsa £10/£7. More info. from David Jones 01745 813402.

Mon September 13th

WPJF Planning Meeting, 6pm, Peace & Justice Centre, 35 Kingsmills Rd, Hightown, Wrexham. WPJF: 0845 330 4505 wrexhamsaw@yahoo.com

Wed September 15th

WPJF letter-writing evening and video screening of "War No More" film. 7pm

Trinity Church, King St, Wrexham.

Come and write a letter to your MP, AM, MEP, the PM, a local or national newspaper. We'll have sample letters for inspiration and plenty of ideas about who to write to and about what - or bring your own along. All welcome.

Sat September 18th

We'll be selling the latest Wrexham Peace & Justice News in the town centre from 10am. Volunteers needed. Phone Genny (0845 330 4505) if you can help.

Sat September 25th

Switch Off Star Wars Demo at Fylingdales, N. Yorks. From noon. This is "**Keep Space for Peace**" Week. More info. and sign the petition at www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk/space

Sun September 26th

Protest at Labour Party Conference, Brighton. World Development Movement. Meet 1pm Madeira Dr. WDM, with Trade Justice Movement, is demanding that "the Government ends global poverty and protects our planet." Allawi, interim prime minister of Iraq, was to be invited to address the Conference, but this idea was abandoned because of fears of major protests.

Sat October 2nd

Menwith Hill USAF base, North Yorkshire, from midday. **'KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE - SPACE ODDITY 2004'** More info. and sign the petition at www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk/space

Thu October 28th

Oswestry Coalition for Peace: One World Week 7.30pm, Memorial Hall, Festival Square, Oswestry. Speaker: Chris Raws: **"Let their faces move you - the plight of asylum seekers."** Collection for One World Week. More info: 01691 650527.

UNACKNOWLEDGED

The cold crusader's effigy
Lies across his tomb,
Next to his wife's cold effigy
At the side of the cold stone room.

The smoothly chiseled figures,
Like paragons carved in stone,
Exhibit chivalrous virtues
As they cover the mouldering bone.

The mason who did the carving
Did they also flag the floor
Which anonymous feet are sculpting
As they tramp in the search for more?

This cold crusader's effigy
Lies across his tomb,
An image of noble duty
At the side of the cold stone room.

Did this little church for the hamlet
Send him so far away
On a quest to repel Mohamet
And defend the Christ of his day?

What would he say about them,
His reasons for going to war?
If his brothers had been Muslim
Would he have seemed so sure?

What unacknowledged actions,
not shown in the sculpted forms,
Belong in full depictions
Of crusades and calls to arms?

Michael Still

ANTI-BUSH CD

Les Barker's poem, *The Civilised World*, (see last issue of WPJN), will be included on a US compilation CD entitled "VOTE IN NOVEMBER: ELECTION 2004 ANTI-THEFT DEVICE". Andrew Calhoun of Waterbug explains the idea:

"VOTE IN NOVEMBER is a provocative, empowering collection of mostly unreleased material, all tracks donated by the artists. In solidarity with the countless families who have suffered from our aggression in the Middle East, what is left of our wilderness, in support of our Gay and Lesbian friends, help us bring down the Bush administration."

The CDs aren't for sale. Waterbug will send you copies of the CD in return for donations. *"All proceeds will go to produce more copies of this CD and distribute them where they can do the most good - in swing states, on college campuses, and through progressive groups around the country. Each order of four copies will allow us to distribute about fifteen copies in this way..."*

Donate online via the web site: www.waterbug.com or send an email to: beatbush@waterbug.com

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT - WREXHAM FANS CHALLENGE THE BOSSES

The posters summed it up: "People before profit - you'll never sell the Racecourse". Mass meetings, a march of 2,000 fans through the town on the opening day of the season and a sustained grassroots campaign has seen the proposed sale of Wrexham's football ground become one of the biggest issues in the area for years.

Some people might wonder why all the hullabaloo about where a football team kicks a ball on a Saturday afternoon. Wouldn't another ground do just as well? That would free up a prime location at Wrexham's "gateway" for commercial development - the kind of cold accounting behind the decision of Alex Hamilton, a Cheshire property developer, to buy the Racecourse with one of his companies and to use another to buy the football club itself.

After using the unpopular Mark Guterman as the club's chairman and fall-guy for two years, Hamilton emerged from the shadows in May this year to announce he was the new boss. A group of dedicated fans had exposed his shady dealings in a fanzine called Dismal Jimmy and he was unable to maintain the pretence that Guterman was actually in charge.

Hamilton's aim is simple - to redevelop the Racecourse for profit. He has admitted having no interest in football and sees the land as an asset, not a ground with a 136-year history. His values start and end with pounds and pence. To maximise the value of the land for a B&Q superstore or yet another luxury housing development, it makes commercial sense to kick out the club and free up the entire site.

By contrast, thousands of fans have made it clear that you cannot put a price on memories, history and a social asset such as the Racecourse and Wrexham Football Club. They also suspect that once the club is moved from the Racecourse it will find itself with no home and will cease to exist. Fans, whether consciously or not, are challenging the right of capitalists such as Hamilton to do as he wishes with his property.

Given the state we live in, this does not mean we can simply commandeer the ground and declare it ours - although it's a fact that the bulk of the money invested in the club (from gate receipts, season tickets, shirt sales and lottery tickets) comes directly from the fans.

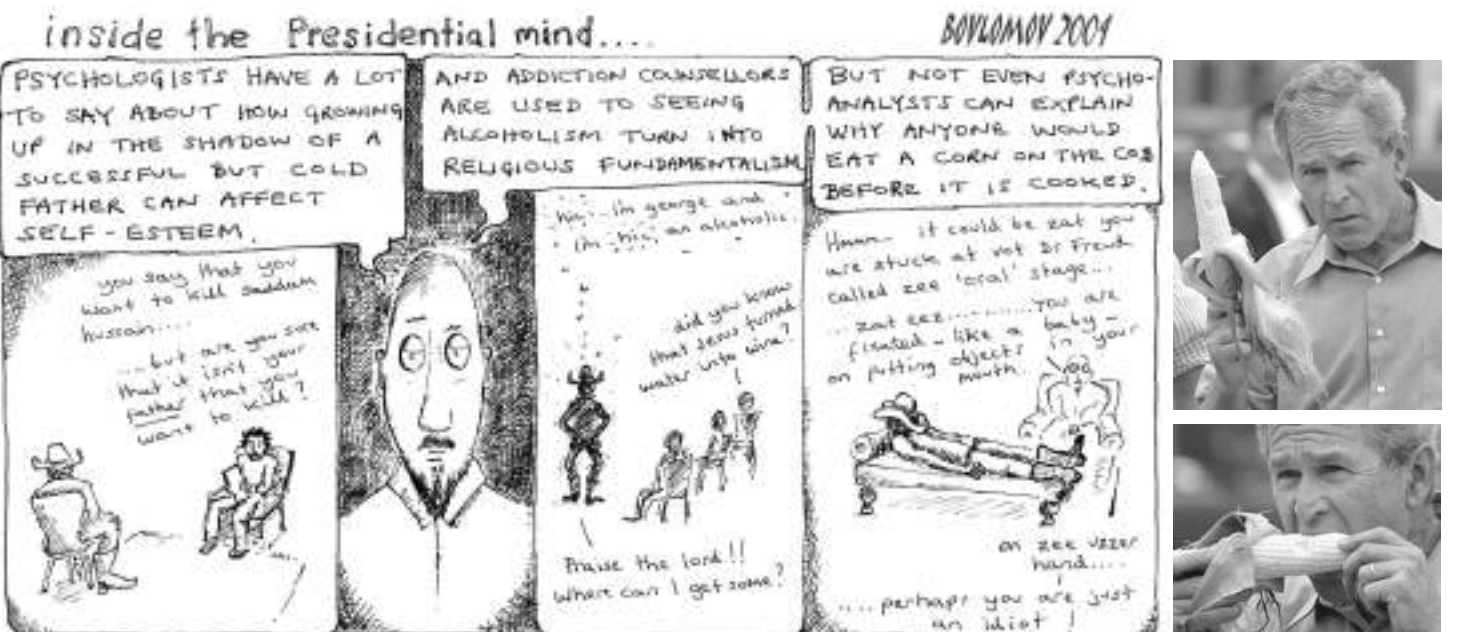
Fans' suspicions have been fuelled by Hamilton and his cronies talking up the financial crisis at the Racecourse to ensure that the council allows the redevelopment to take place. Newspaper reports claim the club has 10 days to pay £1m to the Inland Revenue, it has debts of £2.5m, £5m even £10m! The latest company accounts explicitly state that, unless redevelopment takes place, the club will become insolvent.

What's the alternative? Fans are working on a buy-out based on the experiences of several other league clubs that have faced similar situations. Lower-league clubs without rich sugar daddies to fund them are going to have to turn their backs on trying to ape the Premiership and concentrate on developing young talent at a grassroots level. A buyout would mean fans investing in their club and, in return, having a say in what happens. That, in itself, is a massive step forwards.

The Racecourse, as the top stadium in North Wales, is a massive community asset presently underused - forward-thinking fans are already planning what can be done to make the most of the facilities the club has on offer. There is enough spare land to develop the site while retaining the existing ground to guarantee the financial stability of the club. The stumbling block remains Hamilton's current control of the ground and club and his determination to make a profit from his investment - thought to total around £500,000.

Anybody wanting to support the fans' efforts should contact the Wrexham Supporters' Trust, which is coordinating efforts to take control of the club. It already has 350 members paying in monthly donations - join them by contacting

hpdavies@tiscali.co.uk



August 5: When John Kerry waved to crowds in Iowa with a corn ear in each hand, Bush, not to be outdone, ate one raw.