

ON BEING WATCHED ...!

All about my 'Big Brother'

<http://www.gn.apc.org/tash>

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**"It's not the big battalions that win battles,
it's the best shots"**

Voltaire

Intro ...

"It's not paranoia ...

if they're really after you ...!

In recent years, surveillance techniques have been developed, they say, for the catching of criminals in criminal acts, further, to provide evidence for their prosecution. I think society at large would argue, that that's fair enough. Fingerprint detection, after all, seems to be acceptable to most!

Now, however, these same surveillance techniques are being much used to inform those trying to control `dissent' in this country. It should be pointed out that dissent and protest are not crimes here, yet!

Since CCTV has mushroom across western civilisations' public spaces, (and many of its private ones!), awkward questions are being raised about its purpose and to who's advantage it all operates for.. Is it 'haves', watching the 'have-nots', 'goodies' watching the 'baddies', Corporations spying on each other and their employees for commercial advantage. Or perhaps, 'Vested interest' in powerful positions maintaining the status quo and public order?

Most of this seems to imply that authority reckons itself to be the goodies. But, speaking as someone with concerns , it doesn't look like that from here. Unrepresentative baddies hanging on to their power.

Imagine (an extreme case): a 'Nazi' party in some shape or form, get elected!! (well, it has happened before). It is obvious that these enhanced databases and surveillance techniques on the population would enable such a state, instant repression and targeting of the troublemakers. Not just notes on past criminal conviction, but also intelligence on associates, beliefs, political activity, spending habits, library records, what TV you watch, internet sites visited. These are obviously very powerful technologies, which, like nuclear power, genetic engineering etc, I'm not sure we are grown up enough yet to operate. The prime motive appears to be in trying to keeping the population 'down', rather than operating in their service and the maintenance of their security from crime.

Security Services Act etc ...

Actually, you see, my extreme example of a nazi state is not so wide of the mark.. Michael Howard (bless him!), Home Secretary in last Tory government brought the operation of the Security Services, normally tasked to look into terrorism, security of the state etc. into police operations, without however, equivalent accountability. Much to the annoyance of the police themselves. They felt that their 'turf', was being invaded!

Oh! there is some accountability, a commission to oversee the investigation of complaints about surveillance by these services. Should a complaint to this tribunal be made, an individual would not be told whether or not they have actually been the target of MI5 surveillance. Under current procedure, they are only told if the tribunal considers MI5 to have acted wrongly. In effect, filling in one of the complaints forms, available from most police stations, simply alerts the security services to the fact that the individual suspects they are being watched (or perhaps, therefore, should be!!!).

At that time John Wadham of Liberty pointed out that:

"A little noticed clause in the intelligence Services bill, allows information obtained from bugging and surveillance by MI5 and MI6 to be used in court. This very important amendment demonstrates a crucial change in direction for these services. In future we will see more and more agents giving evidence from behind screens in ordinary criminal trials"

How the hell is it possible to cross question witnesses under these conditions? The jury, and for that matter, the accused, can't see into their eyes. Justice hardly being seen to be done. Further, perhaps, inducing an impression of unquestionable authority to any presiding jury.

The Security Services Act 1996 has re-targeted the work of the security services, with their intelligence gathering capabilities, to peaceful protest. They are to investigate "Serious Crime". Again, fair enough one might think. There are some pretty heavy people out there!, except that serious crime is now severely, 'redefined':

(Section 4) It shall also be the function of the Service to act in support of the activities of police forces and other law enforcement agencies in the prevention and detection of serious crime.

..... the act now provides a definition of serious crime, I'm quoting the relevant section here, since I want you see how it has been deliberately cast so wide to enable the authorities to proceed against any group it may fell like. Not too democratic!.....

(Section 3B) Conduct is within this subsection if it constitutes (or, if it took place in the United Kingdom, would constitute) one or more offences, and either-

- it involves the use of violence,
- results in substantial financial gain, or:
- **IS CONDUCT BY A LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONS IN PURSUIT OF A COMMON PURPOSE.**

How I find this quite scary. Do they mean a football crowd, civil insurrection, a high street full of shoppers, a trade dispute, protest or rave?? With such a definition, they can make it up as they go along!

I thought it particularly scary to discover that MI5 had been handing surveillance information to the McDonalds Corporation. Special Branch's Animal Rights National Index (ARNI) is monitoring any political activism remotely involving animal welfare. The integrity of these information gatherers was again proved questionable during the McLibel trial. As revealed in

court, Special Branch freely offered information on certain protesters to McDonald's, after monitoring protest pickets outside the Corporation's UK headquarters. Really!! hardly a proper use for their activities.

Matters have developed yet further. Under the provisions of the 1996 Police Act, MI5 is now involved in police operations in monitoring the activities of environmental protesters. The National Criminal intelligence Service (NCIS) has been formed to centralise much of their evidence gathering and `oversee' this relationship. Det Supt Brian Drew, of the NCIS, stated:
"These groups are diversifying. They are using the tools that the Internet provides. Interception of these communications is very difficult." (NCIS - Annual Report 97)

The Defence Research Agency is now working on behalf of the police and security agencies to develop equipment to covertly intercept e-mails as they are sent and to track an individuals internet use.

During the arguments, prior to passing of this act, John Alderson. - ex-Chief Constable, Devon and Cornwall Police, cautioned:

"It is fatal to let the secret services into the area of ordinary crime. MI5 are not under the same restraints as the police. They infiltrate organisations, people's job and lives. They operate almost like a cancer, infiltrating and destroying trust and security between people. Howard is putting the building blocks in place for an East German-style Stasi-like force where half the population finishes up spying on the other half. At the moment the acorn of a Stasi has been planted but it is there for future governments to build on. No government in my lifetime has ever given liberty back. it is not in the nature of governments to grant liberty - they are all about power."

For us to have arrived at such a state of affairs, I though it appropriate to review some of the stages leading here.

Some of the story so far ...

To be able to be of independent thought. To publish. To congregate with others to draw attention to an issue of concern were believed by most to be the obvious manifestation of a free society. Personally, I've never believed this crap myself. Free? My life experience, (since I was first hit round the head by a police truncheon at the festival in Windsor Great Park in 1974) is that they are always there, on my case! Especially when I gather with friends.

Not for my criminal activities you understand!

But because I am interested in getting together with others of a similar cast of mind. Then to run experiments in events, lifestyles alternatives and entertainment, that could well contribute to the saving of the planet. To try and make a difference!

Naturally, the "vested interests" both inside and outside of government are perpetually lobbying to move the law about to their best, frequently, commercial advantage. To squash deviance and dissent as it arises, by redefining what's a crime this week.

The use of police in para-military fashion was first tested on a national scale during the miners strike (aside from the Second World War!). The police were somewhat overwhelmed by the unrest in the inner cities during the early 1980's. However, within a couple of years, the sciences of 'field manoeuvres' and surveillance techniques were learned. These were then applied to a wide variety of groups with equal vigour.

Tony Benn drew attention to the existence of the "Public Order Tactical Operation Manual". Drawn up by Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), and approved by the Home Office, the contents of which had been kept secret. He said:

"The manual provides for the training of the police in para-military operations, including instruction in methods of incapacitating demonstrators by the infliction of actual bodily harm, or the use of police horses to canter into crowds and the tactical use of noise to instil fear, all of which are in clear breach of the law". (Hansard 22nd July 85)

ACPO produced this paper after event in Brixton, Bristol and Toxteth, Liverpool in 1981. He made it clear to the Commons, that:

"Through the manual, police were given instructions, descriptions of tactics and manoeuvres on the use of long and short shields which laid them open to charges of assault by the rules as they stood". (Hansard 22nd July 85)

However, during this period, British officers had been seconded to the Royal Hong Kong Police and the South Korean Police. To see how they dealt with disturbance in the street. May I say that this was a severe departure from the way Britain was policed.

With the experience of the miners strike and the attack on travellers on the way to Stonehenge for the annual festival, the 1986 Public Order Act was passed. It is from this time that the state sought to gather information on ever larger numbers of individuals and their activities, thus creating huge databases. The collation of information had much improved. Taken with advances in communication technologies, the police were now able to operate as a national force under the direction of 'ACPO'. An un-elected body, ACPO pressured for each of these pieces of legislation to assist in tackling crime. However, all measures continue to be used to deal with dissent.

The Battle of the Beanfield near Stonehenge, was the watershed for my own community. The year after the miners strike finished in 1985. The violence deliberately orchestrated by the police frightened the blue blazes out of us; and those that may have wished to have associated with us. This of course, resulted in the complete collapse of our economy.

Operation Solstice ...

When ACPO had another meeting in early 1985, it was resolved to obtain a High Court Injunction preventing the annual gathering at Stonehenge. This was the legal 'device' to be used to justify the attack at the "Battle of the Beanfield" on the 1st June in Hampshire. Well it wasn't a battle really.....It was an ambush!

The scenes there were recorded by media, including myself, that had evaded the police blockade. The story was international news. `Dixon of Dock Green' type policing was dead. That which Britain was noted for had now changed to para-military operations against minority groups.

Kim Sabido, a reporter used to visiting the worlds `hot spots', did an emotional piece-to-camera for ITN as he described the worst police violence that he had ever seen.

“What we - the ITN camera crew and myself as a reporter - have seen in the last 30 minutes here in this field has been some of the most brutal police treatment of people that I've witnessed in my entire career as a journalist. The number of people who have been hit by policemen, who have been clubbed whilst holding babies in their arms in coaches around this field, is yet to be counted...There must surely be an enquiry after what has happened today”. (ITN News 1st June 85)

There wasn't.

Now, I'll go into media management a little later, but I mention this case here to show that this has been going on for a while now. I want to point out, that in the civil case we took later, to call the police to some kind of account, sections of the police radio log, given in evidence, were missing and the videotape from the helicopter had also been messed with. Sections missing. No one has any idea how long.

You see surveillance is not impartial. This material, had the batteries not failed, or a tape being changed! would have been very useful in proceeding with our action against the police on a number of points. By keeping the prying eyes of journalism out of the way, many aspects of the story remains told, only by their own, very partial, cameras.

When the item was nationally broadcast on ITN news later that day, Sabido's voice-over had been removed and replaced with a dispassionate narrator. The worst film footage was also edited out. When approached for the footage not shown on the news, ITN claimed it was missing. Sabido said.

“When I got back to ITN during the following week and I went to the library to look at all the rushes, most of what I'd thought wed shot was no longer there,” recalls Sabido. “From what I've seen of what ITN has provided since, it just disappeared, particularly some of the nastier shots.” (Operation Solstice documentary)

Some, but not all, of the missing footage has since surfaced on bootleg tapes and was incorporated into the Operation Solstice documentary shown on Channel Four in 1991.

Public knowledge of the events of that day are still limited by the fact that only a small number of journalists were present in the Beanfield at the time. Most, including the BBC

television crew, had obeyed the police directive to stay behind police lines at the bottom of the hill “for their own safety”.

One of the few journalists to ignore police advice and attend the scene was Nick Davies, Home Affairs correspondent for The Observer. He wrote:

“There was glass breaking, people screaming, black smoke towering out of burning caravans and everywhere there seemed to be people being bashed and flattened and pulled by the hair, men, women and children were led away, shivering, swearing, crying, bleeding, leaving their homes in pieces. Over the years I had seen all kinds of horrible and frightening things and always managed to grin and write it. But as I left the Beanfield, for the first time, I felt sick enough to cry.” (Observer 9th June 85)

Observer photographer Ben Gibson, was then arrested (please see list of media hassled later).

We had felt watched for some time. For a period of many years living on site, every day to be watched through pairs of binoculars, patrol car at the end of the lane taking vehicle reg numbers, 'routine' checks on vehicles always providing the police with the opportunities of conversion, to see what might 'bubble up'! The racket from a helicopter, frequently deployed to watch over people with as few as a couple of vehicles, two goats and a dog!

Because of not being able to trade, people were driven back to claiming the dole, something people had been proud of themselves not to do. Now, however, further monitoring information was gathered via social security offices. The working party report on Itinerant Claimants prepared for the DHSS advised that “in the interests of advance warning and the safety of staff, we recommend better liaison with the police.”

A 1993 internal Benefits Agency bulletin (issue 24/93) headed ‘New Age Travellers’ and marked “not to be released into the public domain”, stated:

“Offices will be aware of the adverse reaction from the media following the treatment of claims from this client group last summer [Castlemorton]. Ministers are concerned that the Benefits Agency and Employment Services take all necessary steps to ensure that claims from this group are scrutinised carefully.”

The bulletin reports that a National Task Force has been set up to “monitor the movements of such groups of Travellers”, now extended to 'environmental protesters' and to “inform relevant district managers of their approach and numbers”. These arrangements are still in force.

In the back of the bulletin is a list of telephone numbers for all the regional police contacts in both the Northern New Age Traveller Co-ordination Unit and the Southern Central Intelligence Unit. (more on this lot, later).

Police operations were dedicated and focused on us for our lifestyles, not our terrorist inclinations!

Operation Nomad ...

Parallel to the crackdown on travellers and those attending the festival at Stonehenge, 'Operation Solstice' was 'cloned' in 1991 by Avon and Somerset Police to deal with a large and regular free festival at Inglestone Common near Bristol. Gathering at the original site was prevented by the 1986 Public Order Act sect 39 etc.... the anti-traveller bit. The police mounted a huge operation on the ground to deal with people approaching the area. Starting with the database developed from their experience of Stonehenge matters, Operation Nomad was initiated.

The police provided for the intensive monitoring of individuals and traveller encampments across all of the South West of England. I and many hundreds of other were searched, photographed and generally hassled.

Latter the following year (in 1992), I was anonymously sent a copy of a document, marked 'restricted' and titled: 'Operation Nomad Bulletin'. Operation Nomad was a surveillance and information gathering exercise looking into the activities of New Age Travellers and now 'raves' such as Castlemorton. In this document, officers are instructed to beware of my activities and that I photograph and tape record police operations.

At this time, I represented the welfare teams - Festival Welfare Services and the Travellers Aid Trust. We set these outfits up to provide health and welfare provision to help support those the state did nothing for. This support, together with my interest in photography to document peoples lifestyle and the opposition to it, resulted in me being mentioned in this police document as "someone to be watched, and handled with care".

Mention is made of my involvement in photographing and the bringing of civil actions after the 'Battle of the Beanfield' incident near Stonehenge in 1985. Further, 'Her Majesty's Dirty Tricks Department' added that they suspected that I was a DRUG DEALER. A device, calculated to inconvenience my work.

I believe that this information was inserted so as to make my work as jobbing photo journalist, more difficult. It was also calculated to undermine my position with FWS and TAT in their liaison with various authorities.

Against this background, I brought an action against the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police in the High Court in Bristol for 'Malicious Falsehood'. I had been granted legal aid (no aid being available for anyone to bring an action for libel). I have recently concluded the case. It did however take six years! (Duncan Campbell had covered the story in Guardian Wednesday 2nd September 98)

So there you have it, police methods of information gathering and surveillance are not infallible in their accuracy! Because of my treatment at the Inglestone event, I had registered a formal complaint and that had been upheld.

So much for my complaint, an apology and being told that the police acted unlawfully. This all seemed a little hollow when discovering this document. All this showed was, that they

had not considered the original complaint at all seriously and that I was now viewed as a troublemaker. I imagine I still am so listed. Perhaps they have opened yet another file. ☺

Operation Snapshot ...

Operation Snapshot, was a further intelligence gathering exercise on Environmental Protesters and Travellers, but now organised on a national basis. Also, the 'Rave Scene' was now included. Designed to establish a database of personal details, names, nicknames, vehicle registration numbers. Undercover operations were carried out. More photographs taken.

This information was used as a backbone for an ongoing intelligence operation begun by the Southern Intelligence Unit (SIU), operated from Devizes in Wiltshire (fancy that! coincidentally, the same base as 'Op. Solstice'). In the minutes of a meeting held at Devizes on March 30th 1993, the objectives of the operation included:

- Looking for a system to prevent Forces such as West Merica (Castlemorton), being initially left bereft of intelligence.
- The development of a system whereby intelligence could be taken into the control room, and the most up-to-date intelligence was to hand.
- To give Commanders immediate access to the most up-to-date intelligence, enabling them to develop the best strategy to combat the illegal activity which accompanied such events.

After a short period the Northern New Age Traveller Co-ordination Unit, designed to cover the north of Britain, was established and operated from Penrith in Cumbria.

The meeting was attended by constabulary representatives from Bedfordshire, Avon and Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Dyfed-Powys, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Gwent, Staffordshire, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, Surrey, Suffolk, West Mercia, West Midlands, Ministry of Defence and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (Hampshire and Essex sent apologies).

Papers that told of this operation included this paragraph:

"Detective Superintendent Fraser described how, if the need arose, an operator would be sent the scene with two lap-top computers. One for input and the other for information contained in the main database. Supt Fraser affirmed that the system could contain over **ONE MILLION RECORDS**".

This, of course, far exceeds the numbers of people that have acquired criminal records from the groups in question. The rest of the capacity is clearly for chit-chat and intelligence, rather than evidence, hence my concern.

The paper requests: "Any information, no matter how small, on NAT's or the Rave scene should be forwarded to the unit immediately". Among information about New Age travellers and ravers are some of the following examples:

- Spiral Tribe, one of the best known rave organisations, are targeted for special attention. The bulletin notes their plans and asks: "Does this mean they are going to be more organised this year? If so, we will have to be alert!!!"
- "Suffolk Police object to all applications for rave parties", one bulletin says. Their officer suggested that: "fire services were useful in producing prohibition notices".
- Surrey constabularies policy is that: "raves will not happen, illegal or otherwise".
- Gloucestershire police reported that an organisation called Fayre Events Limited has applied to Forest of Dean council for a nine-month site for travellers at a farm. "Believe it or not, this may well be granted" the bulletin says!

So this is not just about surveillance then, but serious attempts at manipulating the situation. The document adds:

"The intelligence unit has been seeking a method whereby 'weekenders' could be 'weeded out' from other computer records".

I was amused to read PC Keene delivering a final exhortation at the end of the meeting:

"It's yours, it's new, lets give it a go!".

I wonder how they're getting on?

Liberty has challenged this police monitoring at the European Court of Human Rights. Andrew Puddephatt said:

"To collate information on computers about individuals who have not committed offences and on the mere basis of their choice of lifestyle infringes on their right to privacy and freedom of expression". He added:

"Targeting the whole of the travelling community is beyond the European Conventions' limitations. Just because someone is a 'new age traveller' doesn't mean that they are involved in crime." (Squall 15)

Forward Intelligence Teams ...

Set up by the metropolitan police to monitor growing violence by gangs at football matches, throughout the 1990's. The Euro 96 football championship events meant a testing for four or five years consolidated experience.

They say numbers of 'organised gangs' are travelling across international frontiers. With the previous lack of, and the inadequate sharing of information, resulting in local commanders bemoaning the fact that they were bereft of intelligence to head off or prepare for trouble.

The football season is played out through the wintertime. However, the establishment of this specialist squad, with acquired skills in the surveillance of crowds, maintenance of a database, infiltration and befriending, resulted in a surplus capacity in the summer! Thus, the same squads use same techniques on matters of dissent in the summertime: protest, festivals, raves and direct action at large.

This model of 'organised gangs' (I'm sure that this is how they are viewed!), is mirrored by eco-groups who would say that pollution is not confined by frontiers! and co-ordinate actions accordingly. Last year 'Reclaim the Streets', held street parties as an idea of taking back public space for the public to enjoy. They sprouted up in a number of cities. The issue is of course far beyond road traffic pollution, but the inhumanity of 'globalisation' at large.

In Britain, RTS do's have been occurring in London and many provincial cities at an accelerating pace since the Camden High Street bash in 1995. Parties sprang up and perplexed the authorities in many cities: Berlin, Birmingham, Brisbane, Dublin, Geneva, Lyon, New York (wow!), Paris, Prague, San Francisco, Seattle, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Vancouver. All over the place in fact.

The obvious public support that these events have been attracting, taken together with the influence that they have undoubtedly had on government policies on road building etc, means they they're taken very seriously. Governments, road haulage and building lobbies, security and the vested interests, all felt their authority challenged.

Officers from the FIT raided the RTS offices. The raid followed months of photographic surveillance and the monitoring of their mail and telephones. Their computer and discs were also seized. Not only, of course, to try and get evidence, but also in serious attempt to disrupt the organisation. A number of people later faced incitement and conspiracy charges.

There have recently been a number of incidents that seem to demonstrate the concern the authorities feel for the use of electronic communications. When addressing a seminar on the subject at the Police Staff College at Bramshill, Chief Superintendent Davies, head of the Met Public Order Branch says:

"They (the protesters) are well educated, ingenious, organised, articulate and well informed on environmental matters. They use inventive tactics to achieve their aims. Forces are having to deploy increasingly sophisticated techniques in the policing of environmental protests" (Police Review 21 March 1997).

This has now advanced to forming a combined organisation, The National Public Order Intelligence Unit has now been established. Based in Scotland Yard, it is expected to be headed by Commander Barry Moss, head of Special Branch. In addition to its activities dealing with football hooligans, it will also track 'green' activists and those going to public demonstrations. These "eco-warriors" are becoming increasingly disruptive, he said. The intelligence squad, now built on the foundations of the Forward Intelligence Teams, will use information from Police Special Branch officers, and MI5, it will compile profiles of protesters and organisations considered to be potentially troublesome.

Under the same 'umbrella', it will also include a further three existing police teams. As I have already mentioned, the Southern Intelligence Unit has been monitoring New Age Travellers,

festival-goers and people who occupy land illegally. In the north, a team has been logging details of hunt saboteurs and, of course, the Animal Rights National Index,

Targeted individuals and groups will be listed on the Schengen Information System, the Europe-wide computerised database available to all police, immigration and border officials.

During Britain's Presidency, the EU joint home affairs council, chaired by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and composed of EU interior ministers, agreed without debate on 26 May 1998, on a program of 'joint action with regard to co-operation on law and order and security'. It requires all 15 EU countries to share information on the size, routes, nature and objective and background of all 'sizeable groups which may pose a threat to law and order and security (which) are travelling to another member state in order to participate in events'. Examples of targets, likely to be included are those attending pop concerts, raves, environmental and other demonstrations, sporting events, campaigners against road building, live animal exports, protesters at industrial disputes, hunt saboteurs and far-right groups. The unit will also draw up plans the Chief Constables can introduce to head off potential disorder.

The co-operation on sharing intelligence and surveillance across the EU is now based on a concept of policing, defined as: "Public Order: Conflict Prevention". Now it seems that: **"Conflict may be defined as any act that is contrary to the general public's perception of normality in that it has the potential adversely to affect the status quo,"** Wow!

Assistant Commissioner Anthony Speed of the Metropolitan Police, who chairs the Association of Chief Police Officers' Public Order sub committee said:

"Experience shows that the same people are involved in demonstrations - whether it's disruption of building works and motorways, runways, live animals for export, or people 'reclaiming' the streets. It tends to be the same people who support them and travel around the country. It's about keeping a database on them - identifying the main individuals".

Tony Bunyan said:

"The threat to civil liberties and the right of free assembly is clear." He added:

"This idea of conflict affecting the status quo would be laughable if national and EU officials were not taking it so seriously." (Guardian 21 September 1998).

Further, John Wadham, director of Liberty. Argued that:

"the unit would inevitably spend much of its time monitoring peaceful protest. The problem is, without a right of privacy and right of protest, there will be inadequate controls and regulations." They both argue the right to demonstrate and travel freely was being undermined. (Independent 7 November 98).

Since the wide application of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 in the UK, made life bloody awkward for Travellers to follow their chosen lifestyles, and just live. Additionally, of course, there are people wanting a festival, the free party folks, etc have been travelling to mainland Europe and beyond in search of a party! The culture thrives, my son tells me, in the south of Spain and the Technival events.

Well, they're on to this! The aim is to target known activists in the same way as convicted football hooligans - and use the most modern technology available. Experience shows that people with an interest in one activity, frequently are to be found active in another.

Ch Supt Davies added:

"It is clear to officers policing these events that a number of environmental activists are professional protesters. Some subjects have been seen at protests all over the country and abroad. One protester was spotted at 18 separate protests last year".
(Police Review 21 March 97)

Was that you?

I have heard a number of stories from around the country on folks contact with FIT officers. In exchange for information on fellow 'conspirators', people have been offered 'help' with their outstanding charges, if they informed. I understand that money has been offered. The figure of £50 has been mentioned to me a number of times. (don't seem much, does it?). On one occasion, someone said that when they were offered money, they asked; how much? The officer replied; "tell us what you know, and I'll tell you what it's worth!!."

Environmental Policing ...

There are, of course, a number of units looking into environmental groups activities. The Metropolitan Police are fully aware that London is a focus for many 'actions'. I understand that over the last 6 years, 600 separate policing operations were classified as being concerned with environment groups. London is the base of embassies and multi-national HQ's which attract actions in response to incidents abroad. Intelligence has led them to suppose that environmentalists, concerned about the activities of Shell Oil in Nigeria, would attempt the boarding of ships on the Thames. Further, to use bridges over the river for aerial protest.

Squatting also appears to be within their remit! Michael Burke - of the Thames Division, Metropolitan Police describes the operations against the 'Guinness' squatters in Wandsworth.

"The Special Operations Maritime Team has conducted, or made a significant contribution to a number of overt and covert operations.

During their eviction of large numbers of squatters from an 'eco village' in central London, there were concerns that a number of the squatters would secure an adjacent jetty on the Thames which was joined to the village by a gantry. It was likely that it would be dangerous for the squatters and police officer trying to remove them.

The jetty had already been occupied by the squatters, who had built a small structure equipped to house and feed a number of people for a long period of time, and so potentially extend the police commitment and costs. Under cover of darkness, the 'Spec Ops' Team, conducted surveillance and profiled the area.

During the initial raid, team members boarded the jetty from the water using hook ladders, high access rope skills and distraction, and secured the jetty. The gantry had been destroyed by the squatters, effectively cutting the pier off from the ground. The outcome was that, without injury, the potentially long policing operation was brought to a rapid and effective conclusion.” (Police Review 7 March 1997)

Well done lads.

CCTV and the Mandrake system ...

On their web site, they say that:

"Mandrake is a neural network based product which provides an ability to recognise faces by comparing templates. The system can take into account variations of head orientation, lighting conditions, skin colour, spectacles, make-up and earrings, facial expressions, facial hair and ageing. In a secure access environment, for example, no special skills are needed to compare faces if a face recognition system fails, unlike all other specialist scanning systems. Facial recognition is also the only biometric technique which can be applied covertly. A 'gallery' of images can then be displayed of the 'top ten' by confidence factor. Mandrake has many applications for Law and Order, Access Control, CCTV Monitoring and other security systems".

Apparently, the system indicates a percentage score of how convinced the computer is that the person spotted is the same when compared to the one in the database. The company's man, Bob Turner of Software & Systems International Ltd, said: "You can set it to alert you at different percentage levels depending on outside conditions. For an outdoor camera, 70-75 per cent will trigger threshold".

He didn't say anything about its accuracy when raining!

Patricia Oldcorn of SSI said: "It is important to remember that the system is only as good as the cameras used to pick out the suspects.

"In that sense, the system works like the human eye and the human brain. If a person can't quite see who he is looking at, he will not make a positive identification." (PA News 6 October 98)

The first people to be targeted by Mandrake will be suspected muggers, burglars and shoplifters whose photographs are in police files, but it is believed that the system may also be able to work with e-fit pictures. Liberty is worried about possible breaches of human rights and data protection legislation.

This is all off the testbed now. It is alive, well and operating in Newham High Street in East London since October 98.

Newham has a network of 140 street cameras as well as 11 mobile camera units. Further, the council is to add yet another 89 camera on the surrounding estates. Images are sent to the council's security centre in East Ham where they are compared with a database of target faces supplied by the police. The system can isolate the targets from the crowd of people appearing on the CCTV screen. When a match is made, the computer highlights the target and sounds an alarm. Attention drawn, the operator then decides if the police should be contacted, or indeed, the image in question being piped through to the local division control room.

The authorities reassure the public yet again, if you've nothing to hide, you've nothing to fear. Only convicted criminal will go onto the system they say. However in the same breath say they think it could be very useful in tracking down missing persons. I think with these capabilities, how are we to be sure that this particular Genie can be kept in its bottle! Their word? With a little imagination, it can be marvelled at the potential for abuse of the system. How about the tracking of 'undesirables' of different sorts, crimes and convictions aside. Big Brother just wanting to know.

It is only in the last couple of years that information obtained from a 'videograb', taken of moving faces from a CCTV camera is of practical use for matching. Colour and definition achieved by equipment had improved considerably. However, operating such new technologies, the company agrees that the computer will not always strike a perfect match. A company spokesman said:

"We do expect that we will get a little bit of difference in interpretation because sometimes it will pick up a face at three-quarters angle. We will need to use the human element to check the authenticity of the picture"

Now it is this risk of error that should bother us all. Being lifted off the high street, by a patrol, sent to the scene by some kind of 'identification robot'. Driven to a police station on the other side of the country, only to have another policeman say "That's not him!" on your arrival. God, this sort of thing happens enough as it is!

Such risks of error also greatly concerns, Liberty. Their Campaigns Manager Liz Parrett said:

"The accuracy of facial mapping is very limited. For example, you only need look at a handful of photos of celebrities to see how different the same people look in different photos. The claim that those who have nothing to hide is rubbish. What the police call an 80% success rate is what we would call a one in five chance of a mistake". (Guardian 15th October 98)

She added:

"Of course a balance need to be struck between the need of law enforcement and individuals privacy - our view is that this strikes the wrong balance." (Guardian 15th October 98)

Another 'Mandrake type' System has been established to deal with hooliganism at Watford FC soccer ground and is being piloted by Hertfordshire Police.

Introduced by the same company, Software & Systems International Ltd, the Face Recognition System uses further advances in the technology to rapidly identify known troublemakers in the crowd.

Its built-in camera is designed to allow police in the control room to focus on, and capture, a 'live' image of a suspect. The system then scans a database of stored images of known troublemakers to find a match - at a rate of upwards of 250 images per second.

The blurb says that even if offenders try to disguise their appearance, the system will still identify them, as it is based on recognising facial structure, such as the spacing between the eyes, nose and mouth. It takes into account, and disregards, variations of head orientation, lighting conditions, skin colour, make-up, facial expression, facial hair, spectacles and ageing.

The system is also intended for use in access control for sporting events, the workplace etc. Trials are proceeding apace. In this mode it is designed to authenticate a claimed identity either by entering a PIN or passing a magnetic stripe card through a reader. This causes a specific record to be selected. The image associated with this record can then be compared with the 'live' image in the camera to confirm the identity.

Very surely, a national system, that might be used at airports, stations or public events to 'spot' targets, is developing. The head of research and development at British Telecom, Peter Cochrane, is another who is convinced that:

"within four years there will be a system that will allow police the ability to put a name to any face picked up on any closed circuit TV in the country". (Independent 3rd March 97)

Cameras do not only measure faces of course, Optical Character Recognition imagery describes the letters on a number plate. In their heightened alert to the threat of terrorism, City of London Police have had a system running for a couple of years now, where all traffic entering the City is so recorded. Registered details are then compared with Police National Computer (PNC). The results of this cross-match are available in 4 seconds. Thus, so to aid the tracking of individuals they feel to be of interest. An added bonus for them of course, is that the registration record is also compared to the stolen vehicle index and road fund licensing. (Police Review - 8 September 1995).

Plans to expand such a system are well advanced. Simon Davies, Director of Privacy International says:

"For the next five years, the Home Office will oversee the construction of the world's biggest road and vehicle surveillance system. When completed, it will identify and track the movements of nearly all vehicles in Britain. Thousand of number-plate camera will be installed on motorways, main roads, key junctions and tunnels, as well as all ports and airports nationwide". (Daily Telegraph 10 Sept 98)

With the advance of surveillance installations on this scale, taken together with the exponential coverage of public spaces, many now expected in the normal course of their day. On the bus, in the shopping centre, waiting for a train. But they've not finished yet!

With all the excitement over drug use in nightclubs, the last government supported Barry Leggs Private Members Bill. This is now an act. It provides for the immediate withdrawal of licence and hence, closure of a club, where such activities are discovered. Public acceptance has now passed the stage where, people going out to a club or pub can expect to be on CCTV, and they put up with it! Well, it's normal!

Simon Davies points out that:

"Some cities are so enthusiastic about this technology that they are even demanding that companies install CCTV as a condition of their licence to operate. In Brighton, for example, police require camera as a condition of the granting of a licence for a pub or club"

Miniature surveillance cameras and developments ...

Developments in the further miniaturisation of equipment has recently enabled Gwent police to commission a system where patrolling officers are to carry surveillance cameras attached to their uniforms. The system will operate from early in 1999. (Police Review 11th December 98). The camera, about the size of a 'Gameboy', will use mobile phone communications to transmit pictures of what the officer is seeing at the incident, back to the force control room. Future development anticipate the transmission of sound.

Cameras on buildings and up poles in the high street will be fitted with control devices that will enable officers, with their camera/viewer unit, to be able to call up a particular camera and view its image their in the street, or in their vans. Everything, of course, patched through to HQ for command decisions and recording.

Chief Constable Richard Thomas of Gwent said:

"It is a flexible mobile system that reduces CCTV surveillance costs to a few hundred pounds". (Police Review 11th December 98).

Obviously an enthusiast, Mr Thomas also Chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers project on CCTV.

The main development here, of course, is the falling costs and size of equipment to allow for it's widespread use throughout a force. As early as 1995, the Metropolitan Police were developing equipment for officers filming at public order situations. They say they used this camera system for the first time at the M11 protest and evictions in East London.

The 'Virtual Vision' equipment allows a cameraman to film a demonstration or incident, while remaining behind the shields. Higher Photographic Officer Paul Alford said:

"Our problem has always been that we can't photograph or film through shields. It's a major problem for us, having to step out from behind the shield which puts us in a position of danger". (The Job - July 95)

This equipment then uses a tiny screen which projects the image, directly on to the retina of the eye. This screen is hooked onto a visor worn in the same way as sunglasses. A small wire connects the equipment to a hand held video camera that then can be poked out from behind a shield, or provide a normally unseen view round the corner.

Miniature surveillance cameras applied covertly ...

Undercurrents: the Alternative News Agency, have discovered the police operating such systems, 'in the field', clearly beyond the pilot stage.

On their web-site, they describe having obtained dramatic covert video footage, which was secretly shot by undercover police officers using hidden cameras, at the national demonstration that took place at Hillgrove cat farm, in April '98.

They describe the video saying it shows demonstrators attacking the farm house and tearing down the 10-foot high steel fence, erected around the farm in an attempt to prevent activists from breaking in and liberating the cats that are bred there for vivisection.

Undercurrents say:

"At one point in the video, the infiltrator films another undercover police officer, who's face is hidden with a face-mask, black hat and dark glasses. The officers can be seen talking to each other and then later on in the film they can be heard on the soundtrack, pointing out particular activists to film. To date, six activists have received prison sentences for their part in the protest, and another twenty are still awaiting trial on charges of violent disorder".

Media liason officer for Thames Valley Police, Richard Goodfellow denied any knowledge of the secret video-footage, but said of the policing of Hillgrove: "...we think it is the right thing to do because it goes right to the core of Thames Valley policing, which is keeping law and order".

It is thought that this activity was part of a police operation codenamed 'Style'. It involved a total of 25 separate video-cameras, as well as officers from Scotland Yards Forward Intelligence Team.

Evidence ...

At a number of public order incidents, where there have been a large number of arrests, prisoners have been lined up with their arresting officers and a Polaroid photograph taken of the happy couples. This is to avoid, they say, previous confusions that had existed. It has not been unknown, for the wrong arresting officer to be presented to the court, with the wrong defendant!

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 empowers the police in such circumstances to take photographs, which must be destroyed if the subject is subsequently released without charge. Destruction of any photographs can then be witnessed. (Not sure about the copies though!)

However, the same act also says that: "Force may not be used to take a photograph". PACE: Codes of Practice - Subsection 4(3). However, I have heard of many tales were it has.

The record photography of traveller vehicles and sound system components is now commonplace .

Manipulation of the media ...

I thought it appropriate here, to make a mention of the authorities manipulation of the media to their agenda. You see, if you ask officers why they are photographing, or videoing a situation, they (if they could be bothered!) would say that they are gathering evidence of the scene , to strengthen prosecutions. Further, it provides for evidence should there be complaint about the officers concerned!

Well, why does this situation have to so partial? There is a double standard going on here. I think most readers of this piece will have had the experience to appreciate that when the police overstep the mark, their cameras always seem to have just run out of batteries, pointing the other way, mid-way through tape/film change, deleted/edited etc.

When conducting the recent eviction of the protest camp on the Birmingham Northern Relief Road, the Under Sheriff of Staffordshire called upon the services of the mysterious men-in-black, ex -special forces veterans, who specialise in climbing things and tunnel evictions.

He ordered the screening off of the eviction site at Moneymore Cottages on the route of the proposed Birmingham Northern Relief Road. The move by the Under Sheriff prevents impartial observers including the media from being able to view what methods the authorities were employing during the evictions.

Protestors claim that the last time this happened at Manchester Second Runway people including journalists were subjected to violence. One of the first people to leave one of the

camps at Manchester was a BBC Wales cameraman who complained of being struck with a truncheon. He was seen by millions of TV viewers with blood dripping from his head. Many protesters were repeatedly punched in the head by the men-in-black while lying on the floor attempting to shield themselves.

A protestor Video Tony said:

“I have video evidence that the authorities tied a rope around the ankles of somebody locked on down a tunnel. They then tried to pull this person out in a most brutal way for 45 minutes. I was surprised that these people resorted to such violent methods in evicting peaceful protestors.” It now looks as though similar tactics could be used in Birmingham and this time if the Under Sheriff has his way, the evidence may not be captured on camera. (BNRR Newsletter)

Referring to the media, Ch Supt Davies of the Mets Public Order Branch says:

"Like all forms of modern protest , experience has shown environmentalist to be highly organised and media friendly. It is almost standard now that the media will give protesters camera, both video and still, to record a protester's eye view. This would almost certainly result in a significant propaganda victory for the protesters as they are selective about what they release". (Police Review 21st March 97)

Well, I never! Would you say the positioning of the screens at Birmingham was anything other than 'selective'?

Police are increasingly using various legal `devices' and violence, to remove photographers from the scene of actions were the police feel that they may be portrayed in a less flattering light! Arrest on a spurious 'holding' charge, later to be released without charge, having missed deadlines is a favourite one:

- **Alan Lodge** see the rest of my web-site for details: from Stonehenge, the Battle of the Beanfield resulting in civil case, Reclaim the streets, Operation Nomad and yet another civil case., and bloody onwards ...!
- **Ben Gibson** of the Observer: Arrested for obstruction at the `Battle of the Beanfield' near Stonehenge. Charges later dropped.
- **David Hoffman** freelancer: Frequently arrested (and assaulted) by the Metropolitan Police. Welling east London, Poll tax riots, Dockers/Reclaim the Streets etc), Has been awarded damages against them.
- **John Warburton** freelance on job for Daily Telegraph, working with New Age Travellers in the SW England. Arrested while covering traveller site evictions.
- **Nick Cobbing** freelancer: Arrested and removed from scene while trying to cover the eviction of environmental protesters at proposed site of Manchester Airport. Again at an Animal rights demo, Oxford
- **John Fraser Williams** HTV producer: sustained two broken ribs after being truncheoned while reporting on the Manchester Airport
- **Roddy Mansfield** of `Undercurrents' recently arrested for the sixth time while recording events at a street party by the group `Reclaim the Streets' in Bristol. Again at an Animal rights demo, Oxford

- **Simon Chapman** (photographer) Arrested after covering a protest against genetically modified crops at Totnes , Devon. Deadlines missed, later released without charge.
- **Ben Edwards** (i-Contact Video) Arrested after covering a protest against genetically modified crops at Totnes , Devon. Tapes seized at time, deadlines missed, later released without charge.
- **Ursula Wills Jones** writer and photographer ? details.
- **Paul Smith** photographer protest at proposed site of Manchester Airport. Charges latter dropped.
- **Campbell Thomas** daily mail freelance. Bilderburg meeting, Scotland 1998. charges dropped.
- **Martin Palmer** video journo from portsmouth. Hillgrove Farm, anti-vivsection protest. Tapes seized and returned 6 months later no explanation or charge.

Well, good grief! It seems OK then, for the police to go undercover as demonstrators etc and film activists in action covertly. They then get to use that material in prosecutions and intelligence with their 'spin', as they see fit with little restriction.

However, they appear to find it convenient to think that a photographer covering an action or demonstration where they may feel their work might be critical of police, might in fact be an undercover demonstrator! Police say the media is sometimes a cover for activists. To form this opinion is, of course, a useful ploy .

Press credentials are, not accidentally, but deliberately, being ignored by police. It suits their purposes you see. Without outside prying eyes looking into their activities, they can feel free to be that bit rougher with the citizens protesting on an issue, than they would be if 'eyes' of different persuasions were watching. Precisely, of course, why investigative journalism is supposed to be allowed in a free society. Keeps everyone on their toes. For an example, watch the national news on TV when there is a story concerning, say a human rights demonstration in south-east Asia. Watch the reaction of the police to the presence of a camera while their buddies carry on behind them. The embarrassment is obvious, followed by the inevitable violent assault on the cameraman and the grab for the film! Many of us have seen exactly the same expression through the viewfinder, here.

The NUJ General Secretary John Foster with now be writing to all Chief Constables, asking them to remind all their officers of the working of the Press Card.

David Hoffman, a photographer from the list agrees:

"We really need to argue a case to establish that the business of recording public protest is a proper & necessary part of a democratic society."

Undercurrents say that a video documentary exposing police suppression of the news, here in the UK, will be the debated in the European parliament on October 7th.

The Council of ministers have received the following question in 11 different languages and will officially reply in Strasbourg to the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Patricia McKenna who will officially present the question.

The text of the question is-

On being watched all about my 'Big Brother'

"Is the Council aware that the UK police are mistreating members of the National Union of Journalists, especially freelance members, by, not recognising their Press Cards, arresting them for trespass or obstruction or even under the Harassment Act (intended for preventing stalking), assaulting them, holding them until the passage of their deadlines, preventing them from taking pictures, confiscating their photographs with court orders and erasing their video material, as well as restricting their public access during protests ?

Video-journalist Roddy Mansfield, arrested for forgetting his press card PIN while covering a protest in London HTV producer John Fraser Williams, sustained two broken ribs after being truncheoned while reporting on the Manchester Airport protests Is the Council further aware that while written Police guidelines do exist for relations with the Press, journalists have not been allowed to see them ? Do such activities breach the Treaties, including Amsterdam, in particular the Justice and Home Affairs articles, for which the Council is largely responsible ? With a view to being taken seriously outside the EU on such matters, will the Council instruct the Commission to ensure that journalists can operate freely within the EU before pursuing that issue elsewhere ?"

Press restriction is not the only problem here though. The press photographers and cameramen can, be viewed as less than benevolent to an action in some circumstances, and their work amounts to surveillance. Let me explain.

If the journalist/photographer is from the tabloid media, then I think most concerned in actions would agree that they would not expect to be portrayed favourably. They are , of course, working to their own agenda and are more co-operative with the authorities. The 'qualities' try to proceed with a little more honour and frequently taking trouble to explain the protesters case. Again, within their own agenda.

One of the main objectives of direct action on an issue is to create a media 'stunt'. So we invite ourselves to be photographed. This is the 'hoop' we all jump through to get attention to the issue at hand. It is really sad but'no stunt, no story'.

So, on the whole, concerned photographers like myself have been welcomed, in trying to help explain the circumstances of an action. However, our work can so easily 'turn into surveillance footage. (useful to the enemy?).

In 1990 after the Poll-Tax Riots in Trafalgar Square, police made a number of requests for film from photographers present. The NUJ immediately advised all members not to supply un-published film. Further, that freelancers should either send their film to the NUJ or send abroad, or destroy it. Judge Neil Denison, sitting at the Old Bailey, ordered 25 newspapers and TV companies to hand over material under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). The only ray of hope here, is that the judge did not just 'rubber stamp' these orders, but asked for a high standard of justification. (British Journal of Photography 12 April 90).

Investigating detectives under Det Chief Sup Ramm gathered 70 hours of video and 2,500 pictures of suspects. Operation Carnaby then had 134 officers pour over these. As

a result of 'wanted' requests, publishing some of these in the national press and TV, produced them a further 56 arrests. (Police Review 25 May 90). A few are still wanted. Police compared these photographs against the data held in the previous operations I have discussed. This included visiting traveller sites, squats, and mingling with those gathering for the annual Stonehenge Festival and the Castlemorton rave..

An implication of such High Court Orders is that in a public order situation, some folk would deduce that the work of the photographer, of whatever view, could end up as additional surveillance for the police or evidence against participants in court cases. The consequence has been an increased risk of violence against all cameramen from numbers within a crowd.

Although this is all supposed to be about surveillance, by the inclusion of this section, I'm trying to show there are broader implications than perhaps would be first thought.

Were is all this going

New driving licenses issued will contain a photograph of the holder. The driving license is the closest thing (at the moment!), to the national identity card, with social security bringing up the rear with proposals about cross-referenced information using the national insurance number. They too, may shortly develop a card with photo, to help deal with benefit fraud. Data protection aside, this cross-referencing, taken together with the equipment and techniques I have been discussing, implies some pretty powerful tools for the boys to play with. In due time, photo-identity may be established for nearly all the population.

An important 'convergence' has just occurred. Taken together with the connection, via the internet, of all CCTV cameras in the streets, shops, petrol stations etc across the country. This data-basing of mug shots may enable police to know the whereabouts of an individual by inputting his image onto the computer for comparison. This would of course apply to anyone the police have a photograph of, whether guilty of crime, or not. This possibility is now much advanced after the government has announced that the new driving licence will contain a "standard passport photo with a digital copy held in Swansea". This digital copy would of course be available for transmission and use within this system.

Many of the police operations I have discussed here, have been first practised on minority groups, but in due time, extended to the rest of the population.

On two occasions in 1998 police mounted the biggest ever road-block operations in peace-time Britain. In an attempt, they say, to drive thousands of dangerous vehicles off the road and capture hundreds of criminals, alcohol smugglers, illegal immigrants and benefit cheats.

The one-day operations, code named 'Mermaid', are conducted nationally in conjunction with immigration officials, benefits agency inspectors and customs officers, who will be waiting at the roadside to question suspects. Watch this space, there is more of this come.

Liberty feels such tactics were a "gross invasion of privacy". They said it was looking to bring a legal test case to show that such questioning could be unlawful. Liz Parratt of Liberty, said people could not be compelled to answer questions from other authorities after being stopped by police for road-safety checks. But, she said:

"Most people won't know their what their rights are when they are being questioned and will be far too alarmed or scared to refuse. We would be happy to advise anyone who has been a victim of this abuse of power." (Independent, 12th August 98)

A benefits agency spokeswoman said the tactic was extremely successful:

"The police officer will stop the vehicles and our fraud officers will ask the people for their name, national insurance number and any benefits they are claiming."

Operation Mermaid, which is backed by ACPO, began in 1995 and has mushroomed as more police forces have recognised its effectiveness in trapping dangerous vehicles. This year, all forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take part in the exercise with an unprecedented amount of support from other government agencies.

It is co-ordinated nationally by a West Midlands police traffic intelligence officer, Bob Nockalls, who said the road-blocks should properly be called "road checks". Mr. Nockalls said fears of civil libertarians were unfounded and that Mermaid "will remain a road safety operation". He added:

"People are in no way detained for anything other than road traffic matters. While they are in that check then people like the benefits agency will speak to the occupants. Nobody can make anybody speak to the benefits agency." (Independent, 12th August 98)

Well, who do you believe? Do you know your rights? Do you feel more or less secure? Police argue that the presence of immigration, customs and other officials is essential to the efficiency of the operation. Police officers finding evidence of other criminal activity are obliged to act, and if illegal immigrants or contraband goods are found in a vehicles then other agencies can be quickly called in while police continue with safety checks.

The moral dilemma that remains here, is that the police should be able to investigate crime and have the tools to do so. However, the same techniques are now frequently applied to control dissent on many issues. Information and communication technologies have enabled the exercise of social control. Now, in this country, as in many others, there is cross-referencing of databases held across all government departments.

How much longer before health records are included?

In the extreme case I started with, oppressive governments are quite nosy about the affairs of their population. One manifestation of this, is if a policeman can walk up to you in the street and simply say "Papers!". I loose sleep over this possibility. With these examples, are we really that far away it?

The `ground rules' are really beginning to shift. To give you a further idea of what I mean with respect to accountability. It now seems, as a Home Office spokesman recently stated,

that because data protection and tapping laws were made before the widespread use of the Internet, police are trying to get around the 'problem' of obtaining a warrant by asking the service provider for copies of an individual's e-mails before the information gets to the telephone system, where the law then requires a warrant. E-mails are frequently stored for at least 2 years and can easily be made available for inspection (so mind how you go folks!). It is obvious that the law lags well behind here. I mean, what is the point, of having a warrant procedure to hold authority to some kind of account, if because of modern technologies, they can just casually 'walk around' such obstructions?

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary has announced Britain will seek greater co-operation from Europe on the interception of criminal encrypted messages. Mr Straw said:

"EU ministers should give law enforcement officers the technology to intercept encrypted messages.

We are using 19th century procedures to pursue 21st century criminals".

(Guardian 29 Dec 97)

This announcement follows the consultation paper issued, in March 1997, by the Department of Trade and Industry. It is proposed that copies of encryption keys must be deposited with a state authority.

Personally, I lack trust in their motives. Always have done. I'm just trying to help save a planet.

I'm with Judge Hoffman here:

"Civil disobedience on grounds of conscience is an honourable tradition in this country and those who take part in it may in the end be vindicated by history."

Lord Justice Hoffman
(commented during the Twyford Down appeal)

In conclusion, and after such a weighty opinion;

A quote from a man that has long involved himself in environment action. I was stood next to him while he was being interviewed by a journalist.

**“There’s no need for the police and MI5 to break in
- I’m not ashamed of anything I do.
Tell ‘em to knock on the door,
I’ll get the kettle on.”**

a weathered road protester.

Please: don't let the bastards grind you down.

Alan Lodge (Tash) - Photographer < <http://www.gn.apc.org/tash> >

Web Sites:

Tash's - Festival, Travellin' and Environmental Archives
<http://www.gn.apc.org/tash>

Security Service Act 1996
<http://www.hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts1996/1996035.htm>

Mandrake - Face Recognition
<http://www.ssi-ltd.co.uk/mandrake.htm>

ETHOS News: Electronic facial mapping by police
<http://www.tagish.co.uk/ethos/news/lit1/234a.htm>

Harlequin computer surv. system
<http://www.harlequin.com/>

Police - Information technology
<http://www.pito.org.uk/applications/applications.html>

National Criminal Intelligence Service
<http://www.open.gov.uk/ncis/ncishome.htm>

Military Intelligence 5
<http://www.cc.umist.ac.uk/sk/mi5.html>

Metropolitan Police Public Order Home Page
<http://www.open.gov.uk/police/mps/1hq/co11/1hqpuhom.htm>

An Appraisal of Technologies of Political Control - European Parliament
<http://jya.com/stoa-atpc.htm>

The European Surveillance Union
<http://www.telepolis.de/tp/english/inhalt/te/1667/1.html>

ECHELON: NSA's Global Electronic Interception
<http://www.gn.apc.org/duncan/echelon-dc.htm>

The Campaign against the Menwith Hill US Spy Base
<http://www.gn.apc.org/cndyorks/mhs/mhinfo.htm>

Statewatch Home Page
<http://www.poptel.org.uk/statewatch/>

UK Public CCTV Surveillance Regulation Campaign
<http://www.spy.org.uk>

Privacy International
<http://www.privacy.org/pi>

The 1998 UK Big Brother Awards
<http://www.privacy.org/pi/bigbrother/>

Undercurrents - video Activism:
<http://www.undercurrents.org/>