



THE SAUSAGE FACTORY

A Lecturer's Day

9am. Cycle to university

9-10am. Check my email. Reply to few emails. Make a list of all the things I need to get through today.

10-11am. Health and Safety committee meeting. University bureaucracy... One of the items in the agenda for today is about risk assessment when academics are away from campus. The idea is that every time an academic is away in "university business" we should fill in a risk assessment form, establishing how will we try to avoid any risks, giving details of our location and contact information. This might make sense when you go away to a conference abroad or if you are collecting data relatively risky locations: mountains, rivers, or in an investigation about drug use for example. The Unions have been pushing hard for a proper Health and Safety policy that protects workers from risks. But what this new policy proposes is big brother: every time you are working not on campus you should let your bosses know: if you go to a community conference for half a day, if you go to meet someone at the council for an hour, if you decide to work on the municipal library, if you meet a journalist in a café, if you attend a lecture in another university... you should email beforehand to let the department know where will you will exactly at what time. Why? And this is the crux of the matter... because the university insurance might not cover you while you are away.

10.15-11am. Finish off lecture that I am teaching in 45 mins! I have been working on this lecture for the last couple of days but still needs some finalising. There is some pressure to make the content of our courses in line with "market demand" and if you propose a new Masters programme,

for example, you are advised to provide a business case and do a full market survey but luckily there is still academic freedom so we can use lectures to provide students with tools to think critically. Lecturers are encouraged to put all the lecture materials on the so-called "Virtual Learning Environment". This seems like a good idea but there is a danger that by uploading it becomes property of the university and eventually lecturers can be replaced or inter-exchange to simply deliver content on which they are not experts.

11-12 midday. Lecture. I teach for an hour on my 2nd year course. Even though most people out there think that teaching is our job, in fact this is one of the less rewarded and less highly regarded activities. It is difficult to promote in the university hierarchy on the basis of being a very good teacher. Academic publications and your ability to bring in research money is what mainly counts.

12.15-12.45pm. Grab a sandwich at the Student Union and eat it at my office while I quickly check the news.

12.45-3pm. I finally get some time to work on a paper I want to publish on my latest research. I have yet to decide where I should try to publish it. To me it makes sense to publish in a free online journal where everyone will have access to it. This is the most effective way of transferring my knowledge to the wider public. However, the department encourages us to publish in the top rated journals, i.e. those journals that are cited the most by other academics. Big companies such as Thomson Reuters make business out of counting the times people cite journals and give scores to these journals. These scores are called "impact factors". In Universities these days you are nobody if you don't publish in journals with high impact factors. But what is the real social impact of these

journals? Some cost thousands of dollars to subscribe. So if you are not a student in an elite university you probably cannot read this article, which means that about 90% of the population does not have access. The government puts a lot of money into funding public universities but most of the knowledge is locked up in expensive academic journals or passed on commercial businesses.

4-5pm. Meeting to discuss a research proposal. I am meeting other colleagues to discuss a deadline by a research council for funding. The point is not so much that we want to do a particular research to "solve" a problem but that there is money out there for grabs if we come up with a good idea. If we do and get funded this will give us prestige and status in the department and hopefully will get us out from some teaching... It will also increase the riches of the department and push us up into the international academic rankings, admittedly becoming a more competitive university that can charge more for the product that it offers (when fees are liberalised). No pressure then...

5-6pm. Emails. Answer few students who have queries about the assignments that I have set up. Email my tutees about our next tutorial. Email back colleagues with whom I am putting together a conference. Read and delete emails from the day. Start marking an essay from a tutee. No time, again, to work on some manuscripts I have pending for the online free academic journal that I work for...

6pm. Go home.

6.30-8pm. Dinner and housework.

8-9.30pm. Carry on working on the research paper and finish marking a tutee essay.

10pm. Early night.

Royal Park School

In November last year, a group of Hyde Park and Woodhouse residents decided to occupy the Royal Park School building. They wanted the building to be used as a non-commercial space for the community to come together under one roof.

The building, which is in the centre of Hyde Park, opposite the Royal Park Pub, had been derelict for five years. The school had closed in 2004, against fierce community opposition which had saved it twice before. When it eventually closed, the council promised the building would be turned into a community resource.

Five years on and the building had become dangerous through council neglect. They were paying for security checks on the whole school, but it was easy to enter and had become a place for children and teenagers to skateboard, smoke, and hang out. The building was falling down. It was a less than ideal space for local youths. Lead was taken off the roof in summer 2009 and the council decided it was not “economically viable” to replace. Although the Victorian school was a local landmark it was not listed and seemed set for imminent demolition.

Using squatters’ rights, a small group of local trades-people, students and long-term residents moved into the building in November 2009. Numbers grew rapidly, as people set about carrying out the equivalent of £20,000 worth of repairs in just two weeks. Events for the community, such as art classes, coffee mornings, community meetings, and youth groups were set up. Having a central, uncommercial space meant people from across LS6, no matter their generation, class or race, met and got to know each other.

The Royal Park Community Consortium, the official group who had been lobbying and writing bids for the building since it closed, initially had some reservations about the occupation. However many occupiers soon got involved in helping the Consortium with the campaign and the development of their bid. Local MPs were won over as they realised that people were willing to graft together for the sake of their public spaces, with a clear vision of an



The articles ‘A Lecturer’s Day’ and ‘Royal Park Primary’ were written by friends working with Leeds University and the Royal Park Primary School struggle respectively.

For additional information or for enquiries about the Royal Park Primary School, please visit royalparkschool.org.

The Logic of Occupation!

4.30pm, Saturday 22nd May at The Common Place social centre, Wharf Street, Leeds.

Join Really Open University for talks and discussions, followed by food, music and maybe a couple of really open bottles of beer.

environmentally sustainable, inclusive building for an active community.

In March 2010, the council met to consider the bids and make a decision as to the future of the building. Their decision was between a commercial bid which aimed to turn the building into student flats, or a community-organized space with performance area, social enterprise studios, classrooms for community education and arts, sports area and cafe.

The community rallied twice that week – 200 people met outside the school to protest and later gathered outside the council offices where the decision was to be made. Authorities seemed surprised that with 4000 spare bed spaces in LS6, even students recognised the lack of need for more flats.

The council have postponed their decision until after the general election. They have also decided to charge the community the £3000 court costs for occupying the building. However, the roof of the school has now been sealed. There is a long list of tasks necessary to win council’s approval but the community is hopeful that the school building will be turned into a self-run community centre.

If you would like to get involved with the campaign, the RPCC meet every Tuesday between 7 and 9 at the Burley Lodge Centre.

Demand Nothing!

Throughout history, and all over the world, people have reclaimed space by taking it, occupying it and putting it to use for ends other than those dictated by capitalism... from the Paris and Shanghai Communes to Reclaim the Streets parties, Guerrilla Gardening and autonomous social centres.

Recently we have seen a resurgence of occupations on University campuses across the UK, as well as a large number of University occupations across the US and Europe. In addition to these edu-conflicts, occupation is once again being deployed as a tool within workplace and community struggles, for example the Vestas and Visteon disputes and Lewisham and Glasgow nursery struggles.

At ROU event, The Logic of Occupation – 22 May, The Common Place – speakers from a number of these campaigns will be discussing why they chose to occupy, what they felt it achieved and what possibilities they think occupations open up for social struggles. We will also be talking about the political importance of seizing space and reclaiming it for our own ends. What sort of possibilities do occupations open up for both resistive and affirmative politics? What new connections does reclaimed and occupied space enable?