

## EVENTS

### April

30. Tyne & Wear May Day – March and Rally. Assemble 11am Times Square (Centre for life). March leaves 11.30am for rally at Exhibition Park 12.15.

Bring banners. Fancy dress welcome.

Star and Shadow's Fifth Birthday Party. 8pm. Music. Cake. Cocktails. £5.

Cumberland Arms. Green Festival Preview. 8pm. £8

### May

1. Star and Shadow. Canny Little Library. 3pm.

3. Newcastle Free Education Meeting. Befriend Newcastle Occupation. Or check [newcastlefreeeducationnetwork.tumblr.com](http://newcastlefreeeducationnetwork.tumblr.com) for details.

6. Newbridge Studios Exhibition Opening "White Wilderness". 6-9pm. 8 artists soon to graduate from Newcastle University's Fine art department.

8. Star and Shadow. Canny Little Library and Canny Letter Writing. 3pm.

20. Newcastle University Open Studios. Fine Art Building.

  
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but why would anyone  
want to do that?

[thegreymatternewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:thegreymatternewsletter@gmail.com)  
(get involved!)

# The Grey Matter!







Hello and welcome to this issue of the Grey Matter love from your current editor. We're back after a brief hiatus to be wonderful and independent and hopefully informative again. This issue covers our experiences of the "March for the Alternative", how con-dem policies are beginning their destruction, the environment and even, briefly, the wedding of the year.

## Environment bullshit watch

The climate change act 2008, introduced by the previous government said that we need to reduce our carbon emissions **80%** by 2050. This was widely criticised as being "dangerously unambitious" and not enough to help avert disastrous global warming.

The Higher Education Funding Council has set a target for universities to reduce their emissions by **43%** on 2005/2006 levels by 2020.

Newcastle University management has described this as "achievable but extremely challenging", and has therefore decided to aim for a reduction of a mere **23%**.

Apparently the university had not heeded the urgent message of the local schoolchildren who had taken part in a poster competition as part of a university environmental Public Relations outreach scheme:

Jazmine Crosier, year 8: "If you don't help our world will be destroyed and we will be buried"

Daniel Gilbert, year 8: "Recycle, or die with the planet!"

Unnamed student: "Look at these polar bears... Their homes are melting... Personally it's sickening!... Please help save them. They're so cute!"



The arts generate vastly more revenue for the economy than they cost to fund.

*Why clip the wings of an industry that is soaring? It's a false economy to cut the art.*

## SIDE GALLERY TO RECEIVE NO FUNDING IN THE ARTS COUNCIL'S NATIONAL PORTFOLIO

The Arts Council has axed Side Gallery as a revenue client in its 'National Portfolio'. The reasons for the decision are:

1. The gallery is part of a collective and therefore doesn't have a board;
2. The gallery needs Arts Council funding and therefore isn't sustainable;
3. There are too many galleries dedicated to humanist documentary photography in Side's geographical location.

This flies in the face of the fact that the collective has continued to deliver what is unquestionably the strongest cultural legacy created in the North East over the past 40 years.

Unlike many Arts organisations, its egalitarian collective governance, in place since opening in 1977, has meant Side Gallery has never approached the Arts Council or Northern Arts for a bail-out.

It is the only gallery in the country dedicated to documentary photography.

SIGN THE PETITION. WE LOVE SIDE GALLERY.

<http://www.gopetition.com/petition/44355.html>

A LUTA CONTINUA! / THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

SATURDAY 2 APRIL SATURDAY 28 MAY

## Class War! News from the world of academia

### Lesson 1, Maths

Solve the following problem:

Newcastle College principal Jackie Fisher was given a £60,000 bonus last year, bringing her total pay to £259,722. The CEO of Newcastle College Group was paid £293,764 and the group made a surplus of £6million last year.

Despite having the lowest percentage teaching costs in the country, the college is planning to fire 170 teachers, which amounts to 17% of its teaching staff, in response to a cut in government funding of 10%.

How does this make any sense?

Show your working:

Email [saveourstaff.nelcoll@gmail.com](mailto:saveourstaff.nelcoll@gmail.com)

Befriend [Save Our Staff](#)

### Lesson 2, History

Learn this timeline:

Autumn/Winter 2010: Vince Cable declares that universities will only charge the top £9,000 per year tuition fees in "exceptional circumstances" as the government assures prospective students that most unis will "only" charge around £6,000

15<sup>th</sup> April 2011:  
Northumbria  
University  
announces fees of £8,500

13<sup>th</sup> April 2011: Newcastle University  
management emails all students  
informing them that they will be  
charging £9,000 per year

[newcastlefreeeducationnetwork.tumblr.com](http://newcastlefreeeducationnetwork.tumblr.com)



# TUC DEMO 26.3.11

As we waited outside ULU where the Education and Radical Workers feeder blocs were congregating, there was a clear presence of FIT officers, all, of course, with their trusty cameras on hand. However, as our departure time delayed further the FIT decided to leave to film some dangerous trade unionists eating sandwiches and from then on the atmosphere lightened with singing, chanting and even bagpipes. It was at reaching embankment, and hearing news via text and word of mouth that the front of the march was (apparently) close to Hyde Park already, that the size of the demo sank in. This was far larger than had been anticipated.

With the eventual mobilisation slow and some determined double buggy drivers on the offensive on our heels (this was clearly a family event), we decided to fast track the river stretch of the route. As we did it was easier to appreciate the sheer number of people present, with innumerable banners and flags as well as several walking bands, it was definitely a carnival-esque atmosphere.

We rejoined the march properly with the impressive TUC horse as we wandered towards Trafalgar. As assuring as the march had so far been,

Finally, although it is not my tactic, I think we should think a little more before we say that the black bloc tactics diluted the message. People have called it pointless, however many of those on the Bloc would argue that to march peacefully through London in order to listen to a speech by Ed Milliband, selling you the a moderated version of this cynical and ideological cuts programme with a human face is equally pointless. And who will listen?

Many of us still remember the two million who marched peacefully against Iraq. Were their voices heard? And when our government is impotent in the hands of international finance is there not, in some way, a greater message in attacking the real masterminds of this, the business and banking community rather than their puppet governments.

In history many respected movements have turned to violence in order to get their voices heard. It is often debated, for example, whether Martin Luther King's movement could have won civil rights for African Americans without the parallel pressure of the more militant groups behind Malcolm X. In this way the TUC and Black Bloc are merely two equally vital strategies, which ought to be working together to produce an effect, not against each other, if they want success.

Let me leave you with a quote from an activist so revered in our culture we learn about her in primary school:

"The argument of the broken pane of glass is the most valuable argument in modern politics. There is one thing governments value above human life... private property, and it is through property that we shall strike the enemy."

Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst of the Suffragettes, speaking on 16 February 1911



## LONDON CALLING

### (But Did They Leave a Message?)

By David Manasse

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March at least half a million people took to the streets of London in what was the third biggest protest the capital has ever seen. The TUC marched peacefully, and said their message was clear; that Britain would not just stand by while our public services are destroyed. However the next morning it was not the TUC who dominated the headlines, but instead the press screamed of violence, mostly by the so called Black Bloc, which they claim diluted this message with their actions.

But is this really just a group of violent thugs determined to start riots? And did they really dilute the message? Or is there more to the story of the Black Bloc.

Firstly, we must understand the Black Bloc is not a group or organisation but a largely spontaneous tactic, aimed at evading police surveillance, that has existed for years. It is true that the 26<sup>th</sup> was the largest display of this tactic ever used in the UK, but seeing who is among these people it is not hard to see why. The vast majority of them are now young students, broken in to protesting on the London marches of November and December last year. Therefore they have come prepared to face what they have faced on previous demos; kettling, police brutality, horse charges and arbitrary arrest. And so one can see why these people have turned to more considered, if extreme, tactics in response to those employed by the police. This is just what happens when an elite destroys things the people care about, and beat them up when they complain.

But Secondly, I think we need to think carefully about what we are accusing people of here; they are described as violent, yet the majority of their aggression was aimed at property. We have a word for this and it is vandalism, not violence, which is at the least a lower offence (although less snappy for the tabloids).

Also few mentioned how targeted this was, if one walked down Piccadilly and Oxford Street the next day it was only known tax dodgers and bailed out banks (and the Ritz) which showed evidence of damage. This was not a random thuggish riot, but a targeted process to disadvantage those responsible for this mess. Any violence that was enacted was played out in self defence against aggressive police tactics, which as ever were excessive, indiscriminate and often brutal, such as baton charging over 50 sitting people on the steps of the National gallery in Trafalgar Square, in order to put a cordon round a clock, and one which doesn't even tell the time, which one person was supposedly defacing.

there was a feeling that the promised events of 2.11pm had been something of an anti-climax, thus when we saw a mass of people heading determinately towards the Oxford Street/ Piccadilly Circus area of London we decided to follow.

Naturally the atmosphere with the black bloc was more militant

than it had been with the trade unionists; however the carnival feeling

was very much sustained. As more direct tactics were adopted, little

police presence allowed the group free roam of the sickeningly exclusive streets

of Mayfair, the results of which were to be disproportionately beamed across

the media. For me, the actions of this group were just as symbolic

as the actions of the peaceful occupiers of UK Uncut,

and of those attending the rally at Hyde Park. They may have been interpreted as

unacceptable by many commentators, but they were representative

of the disillusionment felt by all in attendance, Mayfair was simply a 'victim'

of a different style of expression of this shared feeling of injustice.

The demonstration was an extremely encouraging manifestation of public opposition to these unfair and destructive ideological cuts,

and I only hope next time we hear Brendan Barber

echoing the frequent calls made for 'general strike'.



WEDDING

Royal myth: Divinity is bestowed upon us by the Windsors

The truth: Divinity resides in all of us.

When we can accept this we can reclaim Royalty for ourselves.

\*taken from Side's current exhibition.

Cumberland Arms. The Suggestibles. 7.30pm. Off-the-cuff off-the-wall improvised comedy in a two hour joy-ride that's different every time. £9

The Tanners. Actively avoiding the Royal berks. Music. Alcohol.

Leazes Park.