



AND FINALLY...

....the last word from SchNEWS.

The SchNEWS crew have decided to call it a day. We might stick out unexpected one-offs when the mood takes us but this will be the last issue of Brighton's very own 'direct action newsletter'.

It's been twenty years give or take, from humble beginnings in a now legendary squatted Court House to humbler endings in a ramshackle office out the back of an anarchist social centre. The SchNEWS back catalogue is a history of two decades worth of party and protest, from Reclaim the Streets to Reclaim the Power, from anti-globalisation to anti-fracking, from Bogota to Balcombe (via Newbury).

This year we blew the lid off the Infrastructure Bill (and even got a mention in the House of Lords), shone a light on the [privatisation of probation](#), took on [Michael Gove's rewrite of the First World War](#), stood [with Anti-Fascist massive in Tower Hamlets](#), and took aim how the British government [was arming Israel](#) during the bombing of Gaza.

Much as we'd like to say that the time for talking is over and we're about to launch an underground guerrilla war from a network of bunkers along the South Coast the truth is that we're throwing in the towel because of a lack of the people and interest required to keep going.

In many ways the format that SchNEWS originally came out in – a weekly printed A4 sheet - now looks like something [Gerrard Winstanley](#) might have knocked out. In the era of Twitter and Tumblr it seems deliberately archaic.

In a world where anyone can self-publish, and corporate-owned social media platforms are the primary form of public expression, grassroots media faces many challenges. In theory, the fact that anyone can start a blog or website should lead to a more democratic form of journalism. However, while certainly adding to the ferment of debate, these platforms haven't actually strengthened our collective voice as a movement.

FACE-ACHE

Playing the Facebook game demands a huge amount of energy, and the corporate monster is not a level playing field. With complex advertising deals and algorithms determining what you do or don't see, maintaining an impact on social media requires hours and hours per week of social networking. For us, that hasn't been feasible.

The pattern we observe is not people reporting from the front, but an increasing reliance on mainstream sources for actual news, padded out with a series of personal reflections. Rather than having a media that can reach out, we are confined to an internet echo chamber.

The very speed of real-time news has meant that it is only salaried commentators who can keep up. The demand for news this instant leaves activists fighting for social change playing catch-up, while their actions are reported and analysed by corporate media. By the time you're out of the cop shop and in front of a computer, the twitterati have beaten you to it.

Some corporate platforms even look grassroots: take Vice as a pernicious example. They're all over activism, and some of their stuff is good. But the company is part-owned by Murdoch's Fox News, they won't tell you how to get involved in direct action, and they're unlikely to be interested until your campaign is already a big deal.

There is a real dearth of genuine grassroots media in the UK right now. But more than ever we need a genuine radical media – we are faced with a dying planet, mega corporations seizing control under the wing of militarised nation states, and a widening gap between rich and poor. We need to create vibrant alternative news platforms which inform and inspire.

The SchNEWS collective is taking a break before launching back into the radical media world to forge new networks, with a new model and new enthusiasm. Watch this space.

In the meantime thank you to everyone over the years who has participated by donating, writing, distributing, doing the accounts, keeping the office tidy, making tea, mailing out , manning info stalls, film making, fund raising, making us laugh, supplying crap puns, but most of all getting out there and sticking it to the Man.

And always remember “If you’re not pissed off – you’re not paying attention”

In the meantime, for an archive of our all our stories there's always www.schnews.org.uk