

NO M11 LINK CAMPAIGN

Presents

CLAREMONT ROAD



THE FINAL ACT???

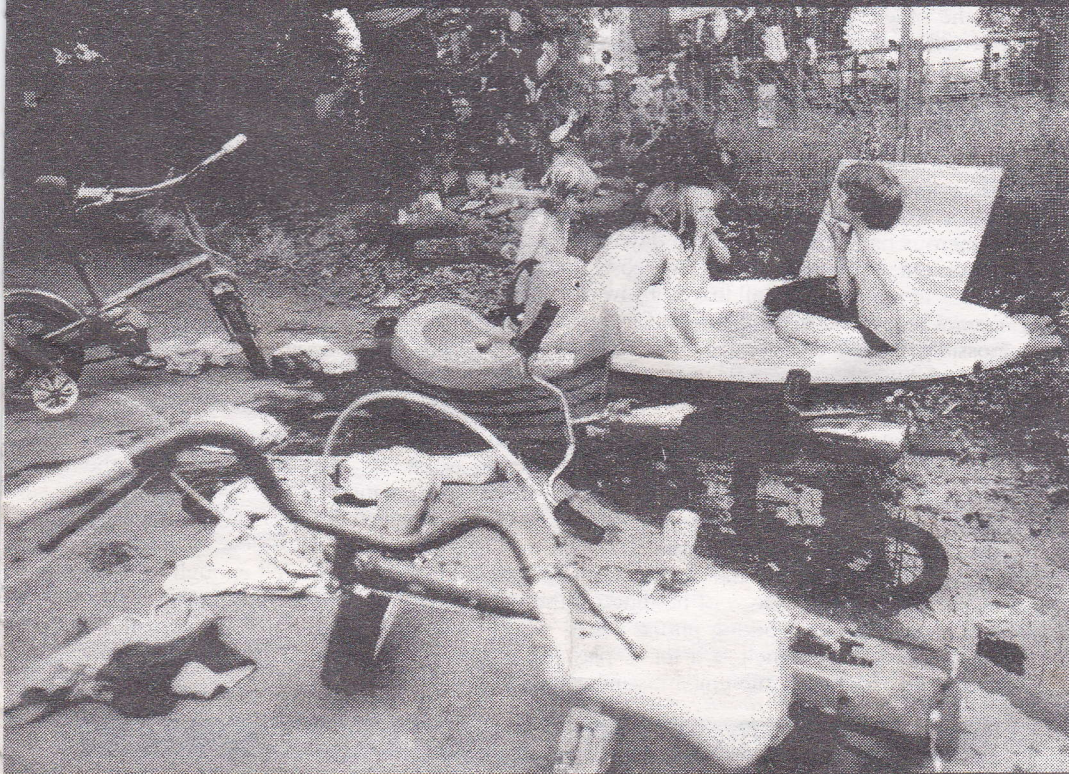
Some guidance notes in anticipation of
The Mother of all Evictions.

When Superman joined the No M11 Link Campaign he took a little time to come to terms with our ideas of non-violence!



Now he's one of the many who has pledged to take part in the peaceful defence of Claremont Road

IF THE M11 LINK ROAD IS BUILT



Children playing in Claremont - Summer 1994

**100,000 CARS WILL PASS
THIS SPOT EVERY DAY**

WHAT IS CLAREMONT ROAD?

Spectacular resistance is perhaps the hallmark of the No M11 Link Campaign. After the Swanstead Sweet Chestnut Tree, last December; Wanstonia in February and a visit to Transport Secretary John MacGregor's rooftop in April, the campaign is now preparing for what may prove to be its biggest event yet. Until recently Claremont Road was an ordinary row of small terraced houses, which just happened to lie in the way of a proposed motorway. Now it has been transformed - virtually all the houses have now been squatted to prevent their demolition; the walls have been painted with colourful murals both inside and outside; the carriageway is blocked to all car traffic by sculptures; there are ingenious barricades and tree-houses, linked by aerial walkways to the rooftops on the other side of the road..... It is at once a community, an artistic statement and a powerful defence against the destructive might of the Department of Transport.

LATEST NEWS UPDATE

You may recently have read in one national newspaper that Claremont Road had been Evicted - no doubt the civil servants were bitterly disappointed to discover that this was not the case! The facts are that on Tuesday, August 2nd, 500 police officers and numerous bailiffs spent a whole day evicting and demolishing just four of the houses on Claremont, in an operation which cost £200,000. A severe blow to the street, but by no means terminal. That still leaves a row of about 25 houses standing solid, some of which cannot legally be evicted for at least a week at the time of writing (August 10th), and possibly a good deal longer. One of these is the home where Dolly Watson has lived since she was born there 93 years ago. Despite her poor sight and limited mobility, Dolly is refusing to leave. Her courage and determination are an inspiration to us all.

However, the frightening lessons of this recent invasion are, firstly, that Claremont Road may now not be taken in a single massive eviction as we had originally anticipated, and secondly that the police are capable of mounting an operation of this size without us getting even so much as a minute's warning, in order to activate the No M11 Phone Tree. On the other hand, even without warning, and with our phone lines illegally cut down by bailiffs at the start of the operation, the phone tree still worked well enough to bring us within spitting distance of holding off the eviction completely that day. With a little more warning - or working phone lines - who knows what might have happened? In short, there is still a hell of a lot to play for - next time if we can hold off the bailiffs completely for a day, the embarrassment could be enormous!

ABOUT THIS INFORMATION PACK

The reason for sending you this pack is to give you some idea of what to expect if there is a big eviction. Although obviously nobody can predict quite what will happen, the guidance notes on "Stopping the Sheriffs" (centre pages) are based on the campaign's past experience of big evictions, and are intended to help you to decide how you can most usefully contribute. We also recommend you that you pay careful to the legal briefing towards the back of this booklet. Nobody should feel under pressure to take any action that places them unwillingly in danger of arrest or injury. The more you know beforehand, the better placed you are to decide for yourself what risks you are or are not prepared to take, and it is important that this should be an informed decision on your part.

So PLEASE take time to read it as soon as possible - you may need to know it if the phone rings tomorrow morning.....

CLAREMONT ROAD - DIRECT POLITICS

In November 1993 when Mick Roberts received his eviction papers he acted in a way that has since served as an inspiration to everyone else on Claremont Road. He tore them up and started barricading his house. The sound of Mick's lone hammer has transformed itself over the last months into the sound of dozens of hammers, saws and paint brushes, as a community has formed and asserted itself. The determination of residents to ignore the intimidation and stay to the last has inspired many to join them. Claremont Road is now one of the most significant obstacles the Department of Transport (DoT) has ever had to face. At Wanstonia it took 700 police officers, 200 security guards and 40 bailiffs to evict us from just three houses. There are over thirty houses on Claremont Road. With enough people there is a real chance of completely preventing the evictions from happening.

A FESTIVAL OF RESISTANCE

Claremont Road is not just about barricades and defences. What initially seemed a handy tactic to delay the roadbuilders has transformed itself into something much, much more. Have you been down Claremont Road yet? If you have time, come and visit us before the siege begins. The only cars you are likely to see here are overgrown with flowers and grass. This is a place blooming with alternatives to slow death by pollution and car-induced social isolation. Normally streets are places where people rush past each other in metal boxes on the way to work. Claremont Road is a communal space where we meet and socialise, make music and hatch plans. It's no utopia, but it is one way things can be when the car no longer rules.

SUMMER OF '94

It is turning out to be a long hot summer for our mighty leaders; the scandal over lethal levels of pollution, a popular rail strike against an unpopular government, and now the prospect of massive opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill - a bill which institutionalises the paranoia and hatred of its makers but which, through the breadth of its attack has unified groups from pickets, travellers and ravers to squatters and road protesters themselves. The protest against the M11 Link and the defence of Claremont Road are already a focal point for these issues. They will be vital in demonstrating our collective dissent in the most powerful way possible.

PEACEFUL PROTEST

The No M11 Link Campaign is fully committed to peaceful direct action and this day will be no exception. Whatever our individual attitudes, non-violence has simply proved to be the most effective way to campaign. We are not involved in a one-off demonstration or confrontation; this is daily struggle in which we are usually outnumbered and outwitted by security guards and often subjected to police bias. The campaign would have ground to a halt within days from exhaustion, arrest and injury if violence had been part of the campaign. Our dispute is with the DoT and its insane transport policies, and not with the police or security guards.

What if I'm attacked? Given that over 2000 people have been involved in direct action here, instances of violence have been rare. Still, police and security guards are not all angels, and there may be circumstances in which physical self defence seems necessary. Yet these are often the moments when non-violence can be most effective. Nothing will unsettle a bully more than your refusal to be intimidated into losing your cool. Keep talking calmly but firmly and call for a camera. If you sense you or someone else losing control, it can be useful to pull yourself or the other person out of the action to calm down. Don't feel you have to stand by if other people are being hurt; if you can intervene peacefully, do so. We are neither passive "fluffies" nor a violent rent-a-mob, we are trying to stop an insane government department from destroying this street using the most powerful force we have - mass peaceful resistance.

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO STOPPING THE SHERIFFS

The following information is about the practicalities of the eviction, and lessons learnt from previous evictions that will hopefully make the day extremely effective.

There are loads of ways of contributing on the day. This is not just about hardened eco-warriors saving the planet - although they will certainly be welcomed. It's about mass opposition to something we all know is totally wrong and which we should all have a part in stopping. So whether you bring your D Locks or your knitting - there's a place for everyone.

We can't predict exactly what will happen on the day. The following are examples of the kind of things that might happen, based largely on our experience of previous big evictions.

Briefings:

If we receive prior warning, you will have time to get here before the evictions start. When people arrive there will be briefings and you can familiarise yourself with the street. However, it is looking increasingly unlikely that we will get a tip off. This means you may well get a phone call after the eviction has started. If you can, (and please try) it is still vital you make it down here, they are relying on the fact that people won't make it without prior warning. It is for us to show them that we can be effective even at short notice. Obviously this scenario is slightly more chaotic and for those of you without experience it may be difficult to arrive at the scene of an eviction and feel you can do anything. Don't worry, Once you've got here your mere presence will be having an effect. Take time to work out what's going on. Try to speak to someone with a white armband, they should be able to help you with any questions. Be a casual observer until you feel comfortable enough to get more involved.

The Street:

A large section of the street is likely to be cordoned off by police. Within a police cordon, people will be moved on fairly quickly. By sitting down and linking arms and legs, the task of moving us will be harder. Locking on to objects on the street with chains or bikelocks will also hold them up. This may sound a little surreal and it is, but it's effective.

The Houses:

Downstairs: Most of the ground floors will be barricaded. During previous evictions' bailiffs tried to sledgehammer their way in using whatever force necessary and then attempted to drag everyone out. We can slow the eviction process down by rebuilding the barricades as the bailiffs advance

If the bailiffs get in, the same obstructive techniques apply as on the street. Once removed, try to get in again! There's almost bound to be a gap in the police cordon somewhere. If not, then big groups of people should be able to walk determinedly through the cordon. Be calm and determined, working together as a group.

Upstairs and the Attics: The stairs have been replaced by ladders that can be pulled up and then the hatches closed. If the bailiffs eventually gain entry, they will still have to carry people down ladders. Wriggling around as they try to carry/drag you can be very effective. Try to remain active, and work to keep the atmosphere peaceful. If they start getting through the floor or attics then get some board and put it in their way. Again, linking arms and legs, especially in a confined space (a corridor, for example) will delay their efforts.

The Roofs:

The air may be thinner but the view over London's great! The DoT will enlist the help of domesticated Aerialsauruses (otherwise known as hydraulic platforms or cherrypickers) in their attempts to remove us. These creaking meccano nightmares hold two bailiffs apiece and work in pairs. If they attempt to pull you off the roof, stay in groups of at least three and hold on tight.

Lock-ons:

One of the most effective delaying tactics is the use of lock-ons. These are tubes embedded in concrete that you stick your arm into then fasten yourself to a bar at the bottom. The bailiffs then have to drill you out. This is for very determined people only.

What to bring:

No one knows how long this will last, so bring food and drink, cameras for safety and memory, any locks and/or chains, you fancy using, suncream if it's hot, musical instruments, banners... If you have a head for heights, and fancy a rooftop protest, remember to wear sensible footwear. Rubber soled trainers are ideal - anyone wearing leather soled shoes on the slippery and unstable roofs will not stay up there long! For those who feel safer below roof level, bear in mind that most of the windows have been blocked so that the interiors of the houses will be dark - bring a torch.

If some of this sounds a bit lunatic.....we want to make it quite clear that you don't have to be a direct action expert to play a part. One of the most important determining factors on the day will be sheer weight of numbers - the more people the more effective. The bureaucrats' blind enthusiasm for development at any price is a symptom of their unhappiness. For us it is important that political action is enjoyable and Claremont day will be no exception. There will be music and dance, and even John Major will be here (larger than life) defending Claremont against the onslaught of his misguided government.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE MEANTIME

Barricading

Willing hands are always welcome on Claremont Road as we continue to add strength to our defences. Although we aren't working 24 hours per day, there is usually somebody around who can suggest something useful you can be doing. Saturdays are a good day to come down and get stuck in - take the opportunity simply to see the place for yourself - it really is quite spectacular!

Donations of nails, rope, tools, timber, locks, cement - in fact pretty much any DIY stuff - are all very gratefully received.

Networking

If you have the energy and time spread the word. Make your own list of people you can call when the time comes: bring your mum, dad, friends, neighbours, Grandma, kids... everyone you can find. Speak to people in your union, at work or school; put notices in places where potential dissenters might gather; leaflet the dole queue... if you need more info get in touch.

Phone Tree:

You may have already been given the phone numbers of four more people to contact. If so please check you still have them - contact the office NOW if you need a reminder.

Given the tense nature of things at Claremont please expect the phone tree to send out a few false alarms but look upon these as training runs and an opportunity to get to know the street.

Originally we thought the street would be evicted in one block, this now looks less likely. What will probably happen will be a series of smaller sneakier evictions rather than a giant last stand. This is a calculated risk on their part and if we mobilise large numbers at short notice our chances of stopping them are greatly enhanced.

...a short history of the Campaign to date.

The direct action campaign began on September 13 1993, on the day the bulldozers were due to start work. A hundred people were waiting to greet them but the contractors actually chickened out and stayed away! We celebrated by reclaiming the first bricked up house on the route, repairing its roof, and hanging out banners.

Contractors Norwest Holst Destruction Unlimited duly arrived the following morning, and protesters spent the first few weeks sitting in trees to prevent them being cut down, locking themselves to machinery with bicycle locks and generally getting in the way of anything that moved. It certainly delayed the contractors, yet didn't seem to be attracting much local support or media attention. All this changed the moment 8 foot hoardings went up around the 250 year old sweet chestnut tree at the heart of George Green in Wanstead. The realisation that this tree was to be cut down for sake of the road propelled many local people into action. At first local children came out at every opportunity to lie on the ground to prevent the hoardings being built. Then on the Saturday following their completion, a planned tree-dressing ceremony turned into a powerful demonstration of community action; 250 local people came out and spontaneously tore the fences down again in front of stunned policemen and security guards. The events that day were to transform the campaign and the lives of many local people.

Campaigners built a tree-house within the branches of the tree and persuaded the courts to recognise it officially as a "dwelling" (thus setting a precedent in British legal history!) In defending this symbol of the commons the campaign had found a powerful focus, one that enabled it to tap into massive support from the local community, perhaps more than at any other moment in the campaign's history. Local people flocked around the camp fire at the foot of the tree, expressing outrage

that they had been misled into believing that the tree would remain untouched. For a whole month protesters occupied the tree-house, all the while preventing work from going ahead.

Eventually on December 7th last year the Department of Transport (DoT) resorted to a £100,000 police operation involving 400 police officers to end the protest. For 9 hours some 300 local residents and campaigners offered peaceful yet determined resistance, in the face of some appalling police violence. That evening, millions of television viewers around the country saw pictures of a bulldozer crushing the tree, with hundreds of ordinary people looking on in agony and anger. Helped by its human protectors, the tree went out screaming, kicking, and shouting clearly to the nation: "trees not roads!". Next came Wanstonia.

On January 13, with the threat of an eviction looming large, the campaign, which was then based in three Edwardian houses in Wanstead, unilaterally declared itself autonomous from the United Kingdom. We were waiting for the U.N. to recognise us when the Independent Free Area of Wanstonia was invaded and destroyed by warmongers from the DoT. The day was yet another magnificently victorious defeat for the campaign. People had been busy for weeks beforehand - building barricades, devising ingenious lock-ons and preparing the phone tree. Over 800 police and bailiffs spent a whole day evicting the three houses; the DoT's bill for the day exceeded £250,000. Over dinner, millions were treated to the sight of protesters being airlifted from houses to which they were clinging by their fingernails.

After the big defence of the chestnut tree and Wanstonia, we were determined to go back onto the offensive. Operation Roadblock was an attempt at making direct action both accessible and effective. It started on March 15 when 50 "Lollipop



Going over the top - campaign style

Ladies" threw pedestrian crossings over an eight foot fence topped with barbed wire and helped 150 pedestrians over. They swarmed the machinery and climbed the 80 foot cranes, bringing work to a stop. Estimated cost to the road builders: £50,000. When police tried to scare four people down from the crane by threatening to do them for criminal damage (they'd interrupted a concrete pouring operation) they underestimated the resolution of the crane sitters, who shouted "you must be joking - look around you, THAT'S criminal damage". The humour and determination of the Lollipop Ladies and the Concrete Four had set the tone for Operation Roadblock. Over the next four weeks 1,200 people stopped the bulldozers. Pensioners being hauled off work sites by embarrassed policemen, and school kids spurring weary campaigners into 'just one more action' are scenes which will never be forgotten.

Meanwhile campaigners had occupied a hidden micro-forest in Leytonstone. They remained there throughout the winter and come spring Leytonstonia's quiet beauty surprised the many who visited. The eviction when it came was brutal - ancient trees were felled and protesters assaulted. What was once an oasis of tranquillity was reduced to a scene of devastation. But within days amongst the fallen trees a new camp was set up and the flame of hope rekindled.

Back at the DoT the faceless bureaucrats were certainly feeling the pressure. But this was through panicky internal memos and sweaty accountants' finance sheets. During daily confrontations with security

guards and police it was sometimes easy for us to forget who the real targets of our protest actually were. "Project 7" sought to redress the balance. At 6.30am on April 26th nine people climbed onto the transport minister's roof and drove a symbolic motorway through his house - a twenty foot painting of a road and a message from Claremont Road. Minister MacGregor choked on his porridge and made some ridiculous comments on democracy. We had a brilliant day and succeeded in taking the struggle directly to those responsible.

Direct action continued; new ways of getting past the army of security guards were devised; the protest gathered and lost momentum; squats were opened and taken back. Artists started painting Claremont, campaigners moved in and the siege began. The story of Dolly Watson started to be heard, to many her treatment came to represent the DoT's callous inhumanity. Born on Claremont Road, Dolly has been living there for all 93 years of her life, and has no intention of moving, despite the DoT's determination to evict her.

We haven't stopped the road yet, but we're making them bleed for every inch of it. The economic damage - which now runs to millions - will be a severe disincentive to anyone contemplating similarly unpopular projects. The political damage has prompted the DoT to shelve a third of its roadbuilding program. And the Labour Party have also recently announced their intention to massively rethink transport policy. Our effectiveness can be measured by the fact that the government is due to bring in repressive new legislation which will criminalise most of our activities. The Criminal Justice Bill will become law this October. There is a fast-growing alliance of people determined to make it unworkable. One of the best things we can do before then is make massive civil disobedience so natural, so obvious and so popular that no one can take it from us.

A year of collective action which has forced major political change, What next? See you at Claremont.

LEGAL BRIEFING

It is unlikely that you will be arrested, but if this does happen it is important to be prepared. Recently the police have been arresting people and then releasing them without charge. This is a convenient way for them to temporarily remove campaigners from the area. This practice probably contravenes European Human Rights legislation, but its use is becoming increasingly common.

- Remember what is said to you at the time of arrest - write it down or tape record it. If at the time of arrest, you are not advised of (i) the fact of your arrest, (ii) the grounds for your arrest, you may have a case for unlawful arrest.
- Call out your name, so that witnesses know who you are. They may be able to provide important information for your defence.
- If arrested it will most likely be for Breach of the Peace, Obstruction or Public Order Section 5. These are very minor offences and are far from being imprisonable.
- Once in custody, you have a right to have someone informed of your arrest and your whereabouts, and to consult a solicitor free of charge before being interviewed. Our solicitor's number is given below.
- The only information you are obliged to give is your name and address. Demand to speak to a solicitor before providing any other information.
- The police are normally obliged to release you once you have been charged, unless (i) they believe you have given them a false name and address, (ii) you have no fixed abode, or (iii) they have grounds for believing that you will cause further injury or damage, or fail to appear in court, or interfere with evidence. If it is discovered that you have provided a false name, this may lead to further prosecution.
- If you've been arrested for a more serious offence such as criminal damage, they may use the legal right to interview you. You are not obliged to say any thing and we strongly advise that you make no comment.
- Write an account of what took place AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTERWARDS. This is not a statement, and you do not have to produce it in court. However, it may be useful evidence, (in which case, the sooner you write it, the better.)
- Ask for a copy of your custody record when you leave the police station.
- Try to contact your witnesses either directly or through the No M11 Link Campaign.

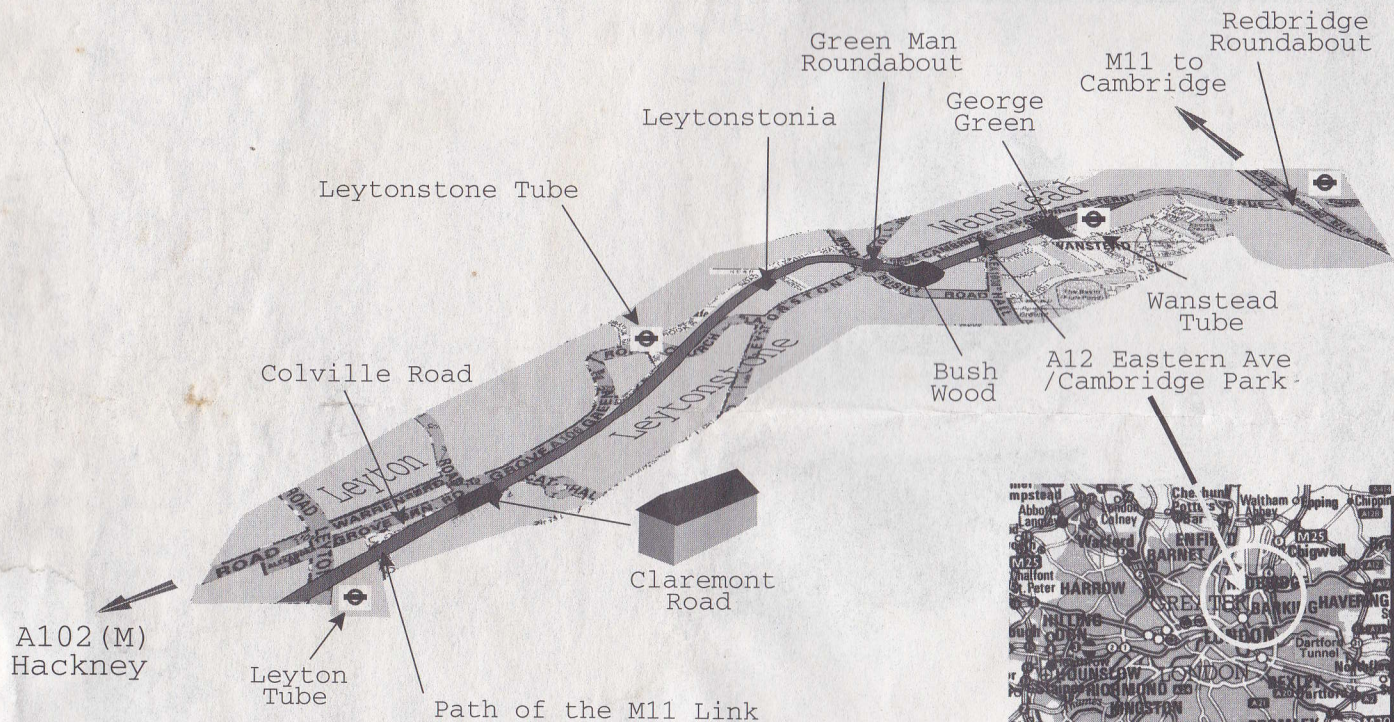
IF YOU WITNESS AN ARREST

- Try to ascertain and remember the name of the person arrested, equally important the number of the arresting officer, the time and circumstances of the arrest. Write yourself an account AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTERWARDS.
- If you witness something like an assault, the same rules as above apply. Remember also to call for a camera!
- Try to make contact with the person arrested either directly, or through the No M11 Link Campaign.

Our Solicitor is Mike Schwarz. He can be reached on 071 278 8131

Bring this number with you when you come.

HOW TO GET HERE



HOW TO GET HERE

Take the Central line to LEYTON tube then check this map.
Alternatively get on the W15 bus from Hackney or Walthamstow.

A SINGLE GESTURE OF DEFIANCE



2.8.94, Campaigners defend Claremont Road

IS WORTH MORE THAN A THOUSAND ANGRY WORDS

No M11 Link Campaign

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