

Indymedia server seized, again

KENT POLICE have seized a computer belonging to alternative news network Indymedia from a facility in Manchester – apparently without showing a warrant. Police went to UK Grid, a company that rented rack-space to house Indymedia's computer and others, on 22 January and persuaded staff to hand over the computer, and left a receipt (pictured below).

Earlier that day a detective sergeant with Kent police had contacted Indymedia to request the removal of personal information about Neil Butterfield, a judge in a trial of “animal rights” activists. Indymedia had already removed the information they were aware of, in line with their privacy policy, and immediately removed an attempt to re-post it. They tell the *Freelance* “We had no time to respond to the police before the server seizure.”

Indymedia understand that Kent police were keen to obtain the “IP address” of the computer or com-

puters from which the personal information was sent as a reader response to a story on the Indymedia “newswire”. It is Indymedia's policy not to record such information about posters.

On 10 February the *Freelance* asked Kent police a series of questions, including: Was a warrant issued? If so, under what legislation? If so, was the warrant shown? ... If no warrant was shown, under what power was the property and the material thereon – including, we understand, “special procedure material” (journalistic material protected under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act) – taken?

The force responded that they could not answer any questions about the case, having on 10 February arrested and bailed a person. The *Freelance* understands that this person is a system administrator at UK Grid, not connected with Indymedia, other than as an employee of its “landlord”:

www.theregister.co.uk reports that computers were seized from his home as well.

22/01/2009 16:57

I, Rob Stokes PSE 52349 from Kent Police have taken possession of (SPECIAL PROCEDURE) Serial number 100 007 181 160. I have been requested to seize this item in response to an enquiry initiated by DCI 6772 Andy Robbins of Kent Police. [redacted] of UK Grid has handed the item to us.

DCI 6772 Andy Robbins
Faversham Police Station
Church Street
Faversham
Kent
01622 653894
07980 770579

[Signature]

Signed
PSE 52349 Rob Stokes
Kent Police



UK GRID

We'll just take this and leave a receipt, thanks...

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Legal help for policing injuries

VIDEOGRAPHER and London Freelance Branch member Jason Parkinson was injured following police action at a Greek Embassy demo in December. Guy Smallman reported to the January Branch meeting that Jason had taken legal advice and was back at work after seeing his doctor, and that the union was becoming much better at following up on more frequent incidents of heavy policing of journalists, such as Guy's own recent encounter with a “cane Sussex Police officer.”

“Problems like this are on the increase, the Union is dedicating more time to sorting this out, getting redress,” says Guy. See www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0701law.html on how to get legal assistance via the NUJ.

Scott Trust/Guardian Media Group bursaries

Eight bursaries, for £5000 worth of postgraduate journalism training each, are available from the Scott Trust (Guardian Media Group). These include work experience with GMG media outlets. Graduates from “diverse social and or/ethnic backgrounds” are particularly encouraged to apply, by **2 March**. See www.gmgplc.co.uk for details.

Student snubbed in Square

STUDENTS FROM a Kingston University film-making course were prevented by police from filming an interview with Barbara Tucker at the protest camp in Parliament Square, where she lives. As the four overseas students set up the cameras they'd borrowed from the university on November 11 last year, the police told them they would need to apply for a license to film in the square. Police then asked the students to leave the square, giving no explanation and quoting no legislation empowering them to do so.

The police did not prevent another Parliament Square protest camp resident, Brian Haw, from filming the altercation.

A High Court judgment gives Brian the right to hold his protest in Parliament Square with up to 20 people, but it does not confer any additional rights on filming there, other than the right we all have to film in a public place. An argument about whether the police had authority to prevent the students filming ended in Barbara Tucker being arrested.

Written permission *may* need to be obtained from the Greater London Authority to “take photographs or any other recordings of visual image” but only if it is “for the purpose of or in connection with a business, trade, profession or employment”. (This *probably* refers to photographing for, say, calendars, or shooting feature films, and not to news coverage.) The students insisted they

were not filming for any commercial purpose, but police still told them they needed a licence. The students returned later that day with a faxed letter from Kingston University, stating that they were filming for their course and not for commercial purposes. There they were told by a policeman that they still couldn't film without a licence and couldn't film people without their permission.

For the moment, police are no longer arresting demonstrators (or journalists filming or photographing them) in Parliament Square under SOCPA, which now seems to be dead (see the report at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0804subm.html). A Crown Prosecution Service summary of a case last June said that “owing to changes in SOCPA legislation the unauthorised demonstration offences cannot be proceeded with.” However, we've heard recent reports of panda-costumed demonstrators being ordered to leave the square by policing quoting SOCPA at them.

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November 12th 2008

To Whom it may concern

I am writing to confirm that the following students;

are registered on the MA film making programme at Kingston University. They are producing a documentary film about London as part of their course work. The work is not for commercial distribution.

The students are using University equipment and all editing will be strictly supervised. They are covered by the University's public liability insurance.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]
DR MICHAEL KENNEDY
Course Director MA film making



Kingston University's letter explaining that their students were filming in Parliament Square as part of their course.

Photo
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www.socpa-movie.blogspot.com