

Criminal Damage



Members have marched with the Liberal Democrat Youth and Students' banner at two major rallies recently – both against the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill*. The first culminated in a rally at Trafalgar Square in May, whilst on 2 July a group of us went to participate in the mass trespass at Twyford Down, together with MP Simon Hughes. The Trafalgar Square rally was led by the freedom-to-rave group Advance Party and the LDYS will be supporting a second mass rally there on Sunday 24 July.

In the House of Commons Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesperson, Robert Maclennan, shamefully supported the attacks on hunt saboteurs (he didn't think they went far enough) but defended the right to silence – possibly partly due to LDYS lobbying – and ridiculed Tory plans to send 12-14 year olds to secure training units at a cost of £150,000 each per annum: "more than it costs to live in the Savoy".

In contrast to feeble opposition by Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs, peers have leapt to the defence of civil liberties and inflicted four defeats on the Government – on cuts in compensation for victims of crime, twice on secure training units, and most recently over repeal of the obligation on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies. These defeats will probably be reversed in the Commons but should now delay Royal Assent for the Bill until October. The Caravan Sites Act 1968

The Criminal Justice Bill has almost completed its passage through Parliament. KIRON REID reports on on progress (left). In spite of the Bill's new constraints on civil protest, NEIL FAWCETT (right) explains how LDYS will campaign this summer. Picture: Kiron Reid and Elizabeth Truss flying the flag at the Twyford Down Rally

TAKE ACTION

which provides for sites for travellers and is now to be repealed was a Private Member's Bill by Liberal MP Eric Lubbock, now Lord Avebury. He was a key player in the all-Party move to defeat the measure, backed by such apparently unlikely groups as the Save the Children Fund and the Church of England's Children Society.

A further welcome reform by the Lords has recognised male rape for the first time in an amendment to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill. The clause accepted by the Government will mean that a man who penetrates another person anally or vaginally without consent will in future face a maximum life sentence (previously, the top sentence was ten years). This follows Bob Maclennan's co-sponsorship of Edwina Currie's push for equal age of consent at 16 (defeated by Labour votes) which Earl Russell in the Lords declared would be the inevitable outcome in the end.

LDYS are launching a major environmental campaign this summer.

The national campaign will focus on the issue of road building and will feature a series of high profile demonstrations all round Britain.

- Youth & Student activists will be joining protesters at road building sites in key locations.
- A national petition calling for government spending to be switched from motorway widening to public transport and cycling is being organised.
- A campaign pack will be produced full of materials and ideas to help local youth and student branches campaign on green issues in their area.

LDYS needs your ideas and experiences now. If you have taken part in a campaign on an environmental issue in your area please write up your experience and send it in – we want the campaign to mirror our branches' successes.

If you want to make sure you receive a copy of the campaign pack send your name and address to the LDYS Office NOW (see inside back cover). Please also write in if you want to be kept informed of up and coming protests. Events in the near future include:

- 27-31 July, Big Green Gathering, ☎ 0722 412457
- 5-7 August, Weekend of actions against the Criminal Justice Bill, Blackburn, ☎ 0772 250558
- 14 August, Bush Wood Summer Bash, M11, ☎ 081 558 2638

Information from: Road Alert! ☎ 0703 237809