

# 'Rancid' and the police state

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A huge brown gash cuts across the Powys countryside outside the window of my weekend cottage near Hay On Wye. (What me? bourgeois?) It's big news in the excellent local paper, The Brecon and Radnor Express. All news is local news, but the excavations for a gas pipeline from the Welsh coast to serve English homes is also a national, if not international issue as we seek to find a solution to the energy crisis. The Express tells me that protestors including various crusty types called Rancid and 'Cath' (a bloke) were carted off by the local Old Bill. A batty-sounding correspondent to the Express letters page said 'we live in a police state I do know this because of the way they act today' (sic – the Express obviously doesn't edit letters for grammar). The front page was full of distressed locals who said the pipeline work had turned streams brown with run-off from the diggers. I've been coming here for 20 years and the rivers are always brown after rain... And the good news, also reported in the Express, is that the pipeline excavations have unearthed a stunningly well-preserved stretch of Roman road near Brecon. Conclusion? An important story has been pretty well told with lots of good angles and the national media should take an interest, too. As for the pipeline. Well I reckon that the landscape will recover within a year or two, the grass grows quickly round here. 'Rancid' and his chums would be better off stopping all those gas-guzzling cars making their way to Glastonbury...

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