



OXFORD CND

NEWSLETTER

September/October 2021



Oxford CND Benefit Concert Oxford Classic Jazz Band



**Nick Gill & the
Oxford Classic
Jazz Band**



**Friends Meeting
House,
43, St. Giles,
Oxford
OX1 3LW**



**Caroline the
Musical Saw
Lady**



Holly, Jazz Vocalist



**Saturday 11th September 2021
7.30pm-10.00pm**



**Doors open 7.00pm
Tickets: £12.00
(£10.00 concessions)
Tel: 01865 248357**



Food! Refreshments!

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Where is the UN?

The short answer to this question is “In Afghanistan, where it has been since 2002” – the effective part of the UN that delivers humanitarian aid against the odds. When the Taliban entered Kabul, there was about 300 international and 3,000 national staff in the country. “The United Nations in Afghanistan reiterate their commitment to stay and deliver aid to millions of people in need in the count...”, said the head of mission, “and the majority of humanitarian personnel are staying to support the humanitarian response in line with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. “The Afghan people “need us more than ever”.

There has been much talk of warnings being ignored in the recent past, but the gravest and most over-looked (as previous warnings of the same kind have been overlooked) was this one from July: A US\$1.3 billion appeal for international aid, launched earlier this year, was less than 40 per cent funded. “Some 18 million Afghans, or half the population, require assistance. A third of the country is malnourished, while half of all children under five are experiencing acute malnutrition.”

The UN’s operations are grouped together under UNAMA, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which was set up by a Security Council resolution in March 2002. Twenty UN aid bodies are grouped together under UNAMA, including UNICEF, the WHO and UN WOMEN. The task they face is immense, and the latest report from UNICEF lays it out fully. Out of a population of 32 million, 55 per cent lives on less than US\$1 a day, and 93% on less than \$2 a day – in “extreme poverty” as it is internationally defined. And over half the population is aged below 18, so children suffer disproportionately.

UNICEF has achieved a great deal within the limits of its budget, and the constraints of instability, with mass campaigns against diarrhoea and polio reaching millions. Yet the negative statistics were already shocking before today: in 2019 a third of all children was out of school, and 50 percent of schools that existed had no access to running water. Maternal mortality was at 638

deaths per 100,000 live births, and newborn mortality was at 37 deaths out of 1,000 live births.

There have always been two sides to the UN – the political and the humanitarian. The 2001 invasion was taken with the political aim of regime change: world states including Russia and China gave what amounted to silent assent to the US determination to remove the Taliban regime on the grounds that it had sheltered Al Qaida.

The questions raised by this – including the legality of the invasion and the failure to take action against the support for terrorism by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia – still need to be discussed. The reality is that once again, as so often before, the humanitarian part of the UN then had to deal with the consequences. So

has a multitude of NGOs outside the UN framework, including OXFAM which has been active since 1991, managing to continue even under the first Taliban regime.

The shortage of funds for Afghan aid is nothing new, and indeed this chronic under-funding helps explain why the whole enterprise has failed. By 2010 the total of US military-related spending had reached \$444 billion, over twelve times the \$35 billion in non-military aid given by the world community, of which only nine per cent had gone into rural development. And if there had been a chance to do more, the invasion of Iraq within two years would fatally divert attention from Afghanistan.

Just a week after the Taliban retook Kabul, the UN agencies are sounding the alarm again. The country is facing “absolute catastrophe”, the director of the World Food Programme there warned the *Observer*. “People have nothing” and food, medical supplies and shelters for refugees have to reach communities in the provinces “before roads are blocked by snow”. This year alone has seen a half million more internally displaced civilians, says UNHCR. And UNICEF speaks of ten million children in need of aid. The tragedy today is as much that of those who stay as of those who leave – indeed it is more. ■

John Gittings



UNAMA

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing – The threat posed by 'Protector' at home and abroad

1 What is Protector? 'Protector' is the name the UK is giving to the latest version of the Reaper drone it is acquiring from the US. The UK currently operates 10 Reaper drones overseas, which are used both for surveillance and armed strikes. Reaper is set to be replaced in the mid-2020s by a fleet of up to 26 Protector drones which will be based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. Protector is significantly more lethal and dangerous than Reaper in terms of its range, weapons, and technical capabilities. Reaper drones are not allowed to fly in the UK for safety reasons, but the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is pushing regulators to allow the new Protector drones to fly in the UK.

2 Why should I be concerned about the UK's armed drones? The growing use of armed drones lowers the threshold for the use of force, transfers the risk of armed combat from soldiers to civilians, and has led to the rise of so-called 'targeted killing'. In short, drones make war more likely. The secrecy surrounding the use of drones and the UK Government's refusal to provide information on its Reaper operations has reduced media coverage and public debate. This helps normalise targeted killing, eroding human rights and international law.

3 Why does the Ministry of Defence want to fly Protector in the UK? The MOD want to fly Protector in the UK for domestic security purposes, training personnel, and to support civil authorities at times of emergency. The MOD is lobbying for Protector to fly freely throughout the UK so it is not limited to 'segregated' airspace – that is, airspace specially set-aside for the purpose. However, there are real safety worries about this proposal.

4 What concerns are there about flying large military drones in UK airspace? In addition to safety, privacy and accountability are key concerns. Drones create risks to other air users and to life and property on the ground. Large drones similar to Protector frequently crash because they rely on constant communication links – which are regularly lost – in addition to problems being caused by mechanical and electrical failure, and bad weather. Military drones also threaten people's privacy and raise ethical concerns because they are used for surveillance and intelligence gathering.

5 How much does Protector cost and what problems does it face? Protector programme



costs have already increased by 40% over the original estimate to £1.14 billion (a cost overrun of £325 million) and will likely increase further. The MOD's senior civil servant has stated that the most significant risk to the Protector programme is likely to be problems recruiting and retaining armed drone operators. US-based manufacturer General Atomics produces Protector for the UK and are set to profit greatly if it is allowed to fly freely in domestic airspace.

6 Why does the MOD want to change airspace around RAF Waddington? The MOD want to change the airspace around RAF Waddington because current air rules would prevent Protector drones flying beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS) of their operators in this area. On-board safety technology for Protector – which would allow BVLOS flights – is being tested and developed but will need to be approved by regulators. There needs to be a proper public debate before Protector is allowed to freely fly in the UK. Local residents must also have their say on whether large military drones should fly above them.

7 What should be done about Protector? We believe that the UK should not acquire large armed drones such as Protector. The MOD should also not be allowed to freely fly such dangerous drones in UK airspace. Armed drones are a threat to global peace and security and are also becoming a danger to people in the UK because of the safety risks they pose. Public polling conducted on behalf of UK Drone Watch revealed that, of those who expressed an opinion, 86% were worried about the safety implications of large BVLOS drone flights in the UK. The Government must be transparent about its procurement, deployment and use of armed drones so that it can be held accountable for its decisions. ■

Drone Wars UK

The only lesson from twenty years in Afghanistan: war solves nothing

As I'm writing this, on Sunday 15th August, Kabul has just fallen to the Taliban. President Ashraf Ghani has fled the country and Taliban fighters have taken over his palace. Harrowing images show people trying to flee from the country. Twenty years after the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the USA, Afghanistan is back in Taliban hands and the country faces a bleak and uncertain future.

The British media and political establishment are in shock at having, at last, to confront the fact that twenty years of war in Afghanistan and the expenditure of unimaginable amounts of 'blood and treasure', as the military like to say, have been a complete and utter failure. The US, UK, and their NATO allies have unequivocally lost the war in Afghanistan.

Many of us in the peace movement can still remember standing together in September 2001 to show our horror at 9-11 attacks and to say no to the impending war on Afghanistan. Our views had considerable support among the public, but were completely ignored by government and the media. "But what would you do instead?" was a common question from pro-war politicians and journalists who could only see one possible course of action to respond to the 9-11 attacks.

The truth is that military action has proved to be an abject failure in Afghanistan – as it has been in Iraq, Syria, and Libya and every other western-led war over recent years. The US has spent well over two trillion dollars fighting in and occupying Afghanistan. Britain's bill is at least £40 billion – that's over £2000 for every tax paying household in the country. The humanitarian cost has been even higher. Over 170,000 lives have been lost in

the fighting and Afghanistan, now little more than a failed state, remains one of the worst performing nations in terms of human development indicators.

One thing we can learn from the tragedy of Afghanistan is that war can never be a 'humanitarian intervention'. Military action only makes things worse, and does not bring democracy – only death. Osama Bin Laden remained at large for ten years after Afghanistan's occupation and the invasion did not succeed in defeating the Al Qa'eda terrorist organisation. The UK's government must realise that it can't intervene in every problem area around the world. Instead of racing to take military action alongside the US, we need to work to strengthen the United Nations and help the UN to solve regional conflicts.

There are no quick fixes to the deep-rooted problems which cause armed conflict. They require patient negotiation, sustained economic aid and long-term trust-building, investment in education and employment.

We need to control the arms trade to starve the flow of weapons into conflict areas. We must cut arms sales, especially to autocratic regimes and others who will pass them on to terrorist groups.

There is the urgent need to address the root causes of global conflict. These include climate change, economic and health disparities between rich and poor parts of the world, and the lack of democracy and lack of respect for human rights which accompany corrupt government.

Much of what governments do in the name of security places ordinary people at greater risk, and does not make them safer. It's time to change this.

There is a saying that if the only tool you have in your tool box is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. When the only tool in the UK government's tool box is military force, it's no wonder our DIY efforts to patch up the globe's problems have been a botch job. The UK and its allies lost the war in Afghanistan. Now it's up to the peace movement to make sure we learn the lessons from this.

• Must watch: Chris Nineham of **Stop the War** talks about the fall of Afghanistan and Britain's foreign policy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70i4uxzblag>

Peter Burt



Nagasaki Day, Peace Plaque, Oxford

Nagasaki Day, Peace Plaque, Bonn Square, Oxford, Monday 9th August 2021 – This marked the 76th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

40 people were at the event (pictured below), from Oxford, Abingdon and Didcot, and which included a vigil, readings, music, poetry and marvellous singing by the Seagreen Singers. ■



NUKEWATCH

Another nuclear warhead convoy travelled northbound through Oxfordshire on the 15th July, tracked, monitored and photographed by Oxford CND nukewatchers.

The photo shows the convoy in heavy traffic on the M40. This is the most deadly cargo on our roads. ■



Greenham Common 40th Anniversary Celebration - Programme

Saturday 4 September

8am: Opening of the Memorial Labyrinth.

Bring words, pictures or mementos of the Greenham Women you have loved and lost and leave them on this specially created eco-labyrinth on the common, created by Sue Hill and Jill Raymond in remembrance of those women who cannot be with us. The memorial labyrinth will remain open until the end of the weekend. We ask you to respect that this space is women only, thank you.

10am-4pm: Exhibition in Greenham Control Tower

1pm-4pm: Decorate the peace fence

Family activity with Newbury knitters and Creative Stitchers.

Living Theatre peace camp

An improvised re-enactment creating the atmosphere of the peace camp its supporters and opponents!

From Greenham to Peace Treaties

Talks and discussion groups with Greenham women on international peace treaties and the current situation globally. Led by Greenham women who lived at camp, took its message abroad and continue to campaign for peace internationally at the highest levels.

1pm-4pm: Bus Tour 1

Tour of Aldermaston and Burghfield

Greenham Common has been returned to nature and the military base is no more, but few of us know that just down the road are the sites where nuclear weapons are made today in the UK. Join Greenham woman Rebecca Johnson and members of Aldermaston women's peace camp for a tour that lifts the lid on some of Britain's best kept nuclear secrets... Places limited, please go to our website for times and to book - www.greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk

Bus Tour 2 - Sue Say: Tales of a teenage tearaway

At 18 Sue quit her job and ran away to Greenham where she lived for several years at the heart of the peace camp, when she wasn't in Holloway prison for her non-violent non-direct actions on the base. On this tour of the 9 mile perimeter of the base, she'll talk you through the different gates and their personalities, the outrageous actions she and her fellow teens undertook, their run-ins with military and police and the various sites of her arrests - which range from the terrifying to the hilarious!

Places limited, please go to our website for times and to book - www.greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk

Cafe open 10am - 4pm both days

Sunday 5 September

Leaving at 11am: The March of the Common People!

Carrying art that has been made for this weekend and singing the songs of the Greenham Songbook, we invite you to join us in a celebratory walk across the common which the Greenham women and the people of Newbury won back for us all! Leaving from the original site of Yellow Gate and going to the Control Tower with banners and music.

10am-4pm: Exhibition in Greenham Control Tower

12 noon: Meet the marchers at the Control Tower

12 noon-4pm: Decorate the peace fence

Family activity with Newbury Knitters and Creative Stitchers.

Living Theatre peace camp

An improvised re-enactment recreating the atmosphere of the Peace Camp- its supporters and opponents.

1pm-3pm: Gateway to Greenham

An afternoon of interactive family activities inspired by the Greenham Peace Camp Gates and hosted by Scary Little Girls, artists and Greenham Women who made the camp their home. Explore the common around the Control Tower to find all the sites. Don't miss dropping in at Red Gate for a sing-along! Joining Orange Gate for cake and bender making! Having your

say at the discussion circle at Yellow Gate! Partying at Bloo Gate! Stencils and spirituality at Green Gate! Finding out what is going on today at the Aldermaston Gate!

4pm-5.30pm: Cabaret on the Common

To finish things off, and reaching all those who can't be there in person via the World Wide Web, a cabaret with music, poetry, readings, games and high-jinks from Greenham Women artists and the next generations of feminist creatives they have inspired.

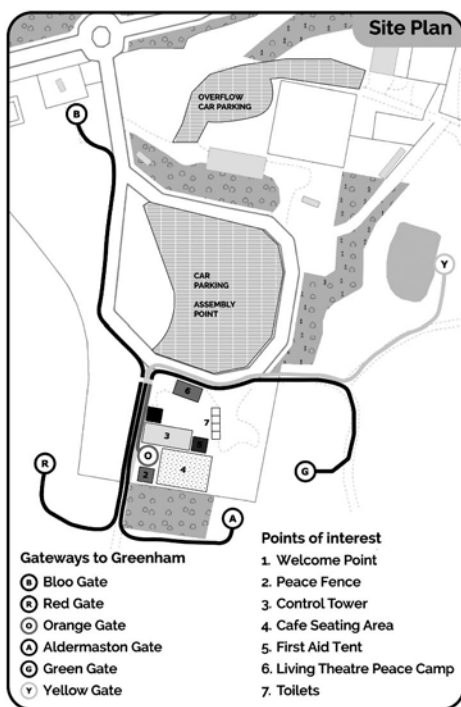
Further 40th Anniversary Events by The Greenham Control Tower

Saturday 21st August: various times from 12 noon, Victoria Park: Family sculpture, booking via Corn Exchange, Newbury.

4th September - 28th November (Wednesday to Sunday)
10am-4pm, Exhibition in Greenham Control Tower

Thursday 9th September, 10am-1pm, The Base, Greenham Business Park: Drawing towards Peace workshops for adults, booking via Corn Exchange.

Thursday 30th September - Friday 1st October, 7.30pm Greenham Control Tower: Bloody Wimmin - script in hand performance of play by Lucy Kirkwood. Booking via Eventbrite.





U.S.A.F. Croughton

(US communication base)

Keep Space for Peace

Saturday 2nd October 2021

12.00 and 5.00pm

12.00 noon – Main Gate – flags & banners

5.00pm – Zoom event – link to follow.

**Paul Mobbs – video / Bruce Gagnon /
Nikki Clark / Seagreen Singers**

This major U.S. communication and intelligence base supports space communications, data links, military drone information, bomber guidance, missile defence, diplomatic communications, and command and control war fighting functions. It will be a key link in the 'chain' controlling US surveillance, armed drone and special forces operations across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

(RAF) USAF Croughton main gate is on the B4031, off the A43, 2 miles North of M40 junction 10, just South of Brackley, Northants.

01865 248357 / oxonpeace@yahoo.co.uk

Oxfordshire Peace Campaign

Diary



MONTHLY ALL YEAR: USAF Croughton main gate Quaker meeting 2-3pm (fourth Saturday of the month). Contact: **Elisabeth Salisbury – 01865 515163.**

September

Wednesday 1st – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – CAAT – 7.30pm.

Saturday 4th – Greenham 40th events. (see Page 6).

Saturday 4th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp events and cocktail party.

Sunday 5th – Greenham 40th – Orange Gate picnic 12 noon.

Friday 10th – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom 4.00pm.

Saturday 11th – Oxford CND benefit concert – (see front page).

Tuesday 21st – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, 8.00pm.

Sunday 26th – AWE Aldermaston 3.00pm & AWE Burghfield 4.00pm.

October

Saturday 2nd – USAF Croughton 12noon and Zoom 5.00pm. (see page 7).

Wednesday 6th – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – 7.30pm.

Saturday 9th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret - 01865 248357.

Saturday 16th – CND conference and AGM.

Tuesday 19th – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, 8.00pm.

Best list of news items, webinars etc:

https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items



Latest News

International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Sunday 26th September

The **Nuke Free Europe** network is coordinating a month of action this September to highlight the presence of nuclear weapons stationed across the continent. Here in the UK, we will be shining a spotlight on the nuclear chain by encouraging action at nuclear sites across the country on Sunday September 26th.

Our area will be at AWE Aldermaston main gate 3.00pm and AWE Burghfield rear gate 4.00pm. Bring banners, flags, posters especially **Nurses not Nukes.**

Membership subscriptions 2021 Please pay your subscription soon!

If you pay your subscription by cheque please can you pay us as soon as possible. Oxford CND needs that money to campaign and send you information and newsletters. We are also very grateful for extra donations.

Subs are very reasonable – £10 or £5 low wage, but are essential for us to continue to campaign. Standing orders can continue as before.

Make cheques for 2021 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.

Oxford CND Newsletter by email

Some members already receive the Oxford CND newsletter only by email. If you would also like to receive it only by email, contact:

oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP
No later than **October 25th 2021**