



OXFORD CND NEWSLETTER

July/August 2019



Oxford CND Benefit Concert Oxford Classic Jazz Band



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



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



Holly, Jazz Vocalist



**Caroline the
Musical Saw
Lady**



**Saturday 7th September 2019
7.30pm-10.00pm**



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



Food! Refreshments!

oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Saving the Planet

It is a sad reflection, argues a prominent environmentalist, that many people would be more concerned “if the Mona Lisa were slashed to piece by a madman” than by “the disappearance of certain animal and plant species”. No, it is not David Attenborough speaking to the Davos assembly in 2019. It is the Secretary-General of the International Union for the Protection of Nature addressing a UNESCO conference on that subject 70 years ago, in August 1949. The world was still struggling to repair the devastation of the Second World War, while simultaneously plunging into a new cold war of equally global dimensions. But the outline if not the detail of the human threat to our environment was already well understood, and spelt out at this conference (the International Technical Conference on the Protection of Nature) and at a parallel one held at the same time – the UN Scientific Conference for the Conservation and Utilization of Resources.

It is often said these days that we have wasted some thirty years since the end of the cold war when the door opened for much more energetic measures to tackle climate change and avert environmental disaster. Or the time frame is pushed further back to 1972 when the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment produced its wide-ranging 26-point Declaration – the last point, we should notice, was that “weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated”. But it is worth going back even further to the 1949 conferences which are now largely forgotten or dismissed in a few lines, (with the notable exception of the journalist and UN historian Linda Melvern whose book *The Ultimate Crime: Who Betrayed the UN and Why*, 1995, still stands on its own). Could the understanding expressed then of the human potential to wreck our own environment have been taken further, and why did this not happen? Was it just too early to grasp the dimensions of the problem – and some aspects of it still lay in the future anyway (the sources of greenhouse gases were fewer and, to give an obvious example, there were no plastic bags!) Was it our propensity to look on the bright side, to insist on human perfectibility and believe that technical solutions can always be found?

Or was it that the need for post-war reconstruction and to tackle the immediate challenges of poverty and under-development took precedence? All three factors were in play, but we should not overlook the wider context of a renewed arms race, the diversion of peaceful technological research into military paths, and the intrusion of cold war politics into the scientific community.

One of the most outspoken voices at both conferences was the US conservationist Henry Fairfield Osborn, Jr, who had just published *Our Plundered Planet* (1948), a fierce critique of humanity’s poor stewardship of the earth’s resources. In that book he had warned that “parts of the earth, once living and productive, have [already] died at the hand of man. Others are now dying”. The greatest danger, he told the UNESCO conference, was that technological progress had blinded human eyes to our “essential dependence upon nature”. The British delegate was also outspoken: If humanity is to survive, he said, it must “live in harmony with the

human principles of ecology. Otherwise the species will die out”. And a UN official, the senior economist Alfred Van Tassel, was a driving force behind the parallel Conservation conference, in which seven hundred international scientists discussed deforestation and its effects on drainage and soil erosion, the problems involved with the control of water pollution, the possibilities of hydro-power and the conservation of marine life, and proposed ways of achieving more sustainable and equitable growth.

Yet Van Tassel soon fell foul of the McCarthyite purge along with many other UN officials accused of usually imaginary connection with communism. UNESCO itself became a target of hostility from the American Right, especially for its statements on peace, race and human rights, and had to proceed with caution. And the 1949 conferences were boycotted by the Soviet bloc – the bloc would also stay away from the 1972 Stockholm conference. The malign doctrines of cold war crippled international cooperation 70 years ago: it must not happen again. ■

John Gittings



Britain not prepared for nuclear convoy accident

A nuclear convoy exercise has exposed serious safety risks, according to a Ministry of Defence report.

The exercise exposed a series of errors that would have resulted in avoidable deaths. The scenario involved a heavy goods vehicle crashing into an armoured truck transporting Trident nuclear warheads.

The MOD report says "The control operator was unfamiliar with the procedures" and numerous communication problems were highlighted. The police force failed to invite the convoy commander to briefings and missed vital technical knowledge.

A breakdown of communication was consolidated by inadequate equipment: "The Police Scotland control room staff reported that it was impossible to understand what was being transmitted from the convoy commander due to him wearing a respirator".

'First responders' were severely endangered in the exercise: they wore paper masks which the report says would not provide protection from radiation emitted by a damaged nuclear warhead.

A failure to inform emergency services of the extent of the risk they faced was attributed to human error, eerily reminiscent of the Chernobyl accident. The convoy's commander stated that the necessary information was contained within an issued pack but attention had not been drawn to it.

The Ministry of Defence said "the purpose of these exercises is to allow all parties, including local authorities and emergency services, to test their response plans and make any necessary changes to guarantee public safety." However, anti-nuclear activists have highlighted that the MoD is failing to learn from mistakes highlighted in previous reports.

The Scottish coordinator of Nukewatch, Jane

Tallents, stated that "the MoD itself realises that a robust test of emergency procedures would always show that the public would be put at risk. Therefore, they have moved to an annual box ticking exercise with the minimum of information being released to the public."

It is about time that these exercises started looking at how the public would be protected from an accident involving such a convoy, particularly on whether the public would have to be evacuated or be sheltered indoors. What advice is given out to local authorities on how emergency planners should prepare the public and what generic information that could go out.

Safety problems plaguing the nuclear bomb convoys that regularly crisscross the country by road have risen to a record high, according to new figures from the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The number of convoy incidents logged by officials in 2017 was 44, by far the most since 2008. It brings the total

number of recorded incidents in the last ten years to 179.

Convoys of twenty or more military vehicles transport nuclear warheads about six times a year between Atomic Weapons Establishment Burghfield nuclear bomb factory in Berkshire and Royal Naval Ammunition Depot Coulport, near the Trident submarine base at Faslane in Scotland.

These nuclear warhead convoys often travel through Oxfordshire, past Didcot, Abingdon, Oxford, Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury. They have been incapable of maintaining secrecy, with videos consistently surfacing on social media. They are the most dangerous cargo on our roads.

The convoys are monitored by local nukewatchers. ■



NUKEWATCH

Nuclear power and military nuclear linked

Energy bills 'used to cross-subsidise nuclear submarines'

Experts say the government should be frank about the inter-dependence of civilian and military nuclear.

Energy bills in the UK are inflated partly because households are subsidising nuclear submarines, MPs have been told. Experts think one government motive for backing civilian nuclear power is to cross-subsidise the defence industry. They say nuclear power is so expensive that it should be scrapped in favour of much cheaper renewable energy. Others argue that nuclear still plays a key role in keeping on the lights, so the military aspect is not significant. But in evidence to MPs on the Business Select Committee, researchers from the University of Sussex said the government should be frank about the inter-dependence of the civilian nuclear programme and the nuclear defence industry. Prof Andy Stirling and Dr Phil Johnstone also spoke at the Oxford Energy Colloquia at Oxford University Centre for the Environment and they presented this work at the end of May. Prof Andy Stirling from Sussex argues that one reason the government is willing to burden householders with the expense of nuclear energy is because it underpins the supply chain and skills base for firms such as Rolls Royce and Babcock that work on nuclear submarines. He said: "It is clear that the costs of maintaining nuclear submarine capabilities are insupportable without parallel consumer-funded civil nuclear infrastructures. The government gave its approval for the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station in 2016.

"The accelerating competitiveness of renewable energy and declining viability of nuclear power are making this continuing dependency increasingly

difficult to conceal."

Rolls Royce, which makes nuclear reactors for nuclear submarines, has been pressing the government to agree a fleet of small modular reactors for power generation in the UK. This civilian technology would be transferable to nuclear submarines. The committee is expected to release the evidence in coming days as it prepares to discuss whether the UK really needs nuclear power for energy security. The debate has taken on greater significance as the true costs of nuclear power have been revealed. It was once forecast that nuclear energy would be too cheap to meter. But it's clear now that bill-payers will give price support to the Hinkley Point C nuclear station at a cost of £92.50 per megawatt hour, compared with £55 for offshore wind. Ministers expect that, before long, wind energy will operate without support. Prof Stirling says the issue of nuclear inter-dependence is addressed openly in the US. In 2017, the former US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz (a nuclear scientist) said: "A strong domestic (nuclear) supply chain is needed to provide for Navy requirements. This has a very strong overlap with commercial nuclear energy."

Prof Stirling told BBC News: "We need this sort of transparency in the UK." But the government faces a Catch-22 situation on this issue. If it continues to decline to admit the inter-dependence of civil and military nuclear, it will stand accused of hiding a self-evident truth. But if it accepts that decisions on nuclear power are influenced with half an eye on manufacturing jobs and nuclear deterrent, it will face resistance from consumer groups unwilling to cross-subsidise submarines. ■

Decommissioned nuclear submarines cost £30m a year

Storing decommissioned submarines is costing Britain £30million a year, a new Public Accounts Committee report says and strongly criticises the MoD for failing to dispose of 20 submarines dating back to 1980. Seven of Britain's decommissioned nuclear submarines have been in storage for longer than they were in service because the MoD had

failed to dispose of them.

However, the report did highlight the opportunity to develop much needed engineering skills in the nuclear sector and called on the MoD and Babcock, the prime contractor, to work with universities to increase the size of the skilled workforce across the country. ■

Poisoning at U.S. Military Bases

A recent article in the Guardian (*"What you need to know about PFAS, the chemicals in pizza boxes and rainwear"*, 23rd May, by Lauren Zanolli) outlined the problems of Per and Poly Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). They are long molecules held together by the strongest chemical bonds ever produced. They repel grease, oil, and fire better than anything else ever developed but they don't degrade.

In the US they have been linked to health problems including miscarriages and other severe



USAF Mildenhall, June 2019.

pregnancy complications. They contaminate human breast milk and sicken breast-feeding babies. PFAS are also thought to contribute to liver damage, kidney cancer, high cholesterol, an increased risk of thyroid disease, along with testicular cancer, micro-penis, and low sperm count in males. Dangerous levels of them are being found in drinking water.

A presentation at the *"Stopp Ramstein 2019"* peace camp and protest, by Pat Elder from World BEYOND War, at the end of June has also shown that these dangerous chemicals are used in fire-fighting foams routinely deployed on NATO bases.

For training purposes, U.S./ NATO forces at airfields create massive, jet fuel fires then extinguish them using these foams. Afterward, the residue is allowed to sink into the ground to pollute the soil, sewers, and groundwater. The US military also uses sprinkler systems in hangars to create foam to coat expensive aircraft. The foam systems can cover a 2-acre hangar with 17 feet of

foam in two minutes.

The EU has set standards for individual PFAS of 0.1 µg/l (micrograms per litre) and for total PFAS of 0.5 µg/l in groundwater and drinking water. Harvard University public health scientists say .001 µg/l of PFAS in our water is potentially hazardous and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set a standard of .07 µg/l in drinking water and groundwater. However, the EPA's measure is only voluntary while the military and industry have contaminated water systems across the U.S.

At Ramstein, groundwater was found to contain 264 µg/l of PFAS – 2,640 times above the EU threshold. The concentration of PFAS in the Glan River, below the confluence of the Mohrbach River 11 kilometers from Ramstein, was 0.35 µg/l of PFOS (Perfluorooctanesulfonate) in 2013. This is 538 times the level the EU says is safe.

For surface waters, a limit value of 0.00065 µg/l entered into force in 2013 as the E.U.'s Environmental Quality Standard (EQS).

If you live near a US military base, especially one where US aircraft are housed, it is strongly recommended that you look into the possible contamination of surface water or groundwater by PFAS – check with your local health and environmental offices. ■

Dave Webb, CND

Nuala Young, Oxford CND, attended the first International Conference against US/ NATO Military Bases in November 2018 in Dublin, and delegates heard reports of similar contaminations (Page 5, Oxford CND newsletter, Jan-Feb 2019). Nuala also remembers a contamination of the River Thames some years ago, said to have resulted from fighting a fire at USAF Fairford.

USAF Welford restocked with munitions

USAF Welford is the second largest ammunition storage in U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa and is between Wantage and Hungerford. It covers 806 acres. It supplies the US Airforce base at Fairford.

Recently, a huge shipment of munitions was off-loaded at Newport docks, and the delivery to

USAF Welford required 71 trucks. The shipment contained a total of 121 containers valued at about \$145 million and 450,000 pounds of net explosive weight. The operation took six days.

What are the targets for these new munitions, and why has this restocking taken place? ■

Obituary – David Paterson

David Paterson, who died recently was a friend and fighter known to all of us in CND and beyond. While there will be obituaries elsewhere, I wish to share my personal memories.

He was sharp, he was fair, he could be aggressive vis-a vis the forces of power and gentle with folk needing help. He always gave space to others to voice their opinions. In St' Michael and All Angels church in New Marston, the church where he made his home, he edited an unusually good parish news-letter covering controversial topics and ending with a simple question: - What do YOU think?

Oxford was very lucky to have someone with a life's experience as an Anglican vicar in Loughborough deciding to dedicate his retirement years to help us in our struggle for peace and justice. Take the demonstration against western bombardment of Libya - he would be there. A meeting on Remembrance Day at the Peace Plaque - he would be there, leading the singing. A Muslim gathering in Summertown after the terrorist attacks in London when candles

were lit for everyone killed - yes, he was there. He was one of the three Davids - (Partridge, Platt and Paterson) with whom, come Advent, I would routinely travel to Aldermaston to witness to the Prince of Peace under the banner of Christian CND. In later years when walking had become a physical struggle, he would raise his voice while singing about the "steps on the road to peace."

David was an unusually unorthodox Christian and a political fighter for a better world. I remember his encounters with other religions, with interfaith dialogue and with people estranged from traditional church-life, who found a home in his "Sea of Faith" network of which he was a Trustee. He was the driving force of the Oxford Council of Faiths, launched in 2008 to promote harmony in the local community. This year's annual Friendship Walk of Faiths from the Synagogue to the Mosque began with a minute's silence in memory of his much-appreciated participation on his motor scooter. Thank you, David. ■

Annette Bygott

Together against Trump



During Donald Trump's UK visit, Oxford had two 'Together Against Trump' gatherings in Carfax, on 3rd and 4th June, and there was a coach to the main London demo on 4th June.

Left: Nigel Day, Oxford CND speaker, Carfax 4th June.

Diary



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

July

Wednesday 3rd – Faringdon Peace Group, Friends Meeting House, Faringdon SN7 8AQ, 7.30pm.

Saturday 6th – 38th Grand Faringdon Peace Fete, Clock House, Coleshill, SN6 7PT on the B4019.

8th-10th – AWE Burghfield blockade 2018 court case, High Wycombe court, Easton St., HP11 1LR 9.30 onwards.

Thursday 11th – OPC meeting, Oxford Town Hall café, 11.00am.

Thursday 11th – Oxford CND meeting, Oxford Town Hall, 6.45pm

12th-13th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret – 01865 248357

Saturday 13th – CND Council meeting.

Tuesday 16th – Abingdon Peace Group meeting, 8.00pm, Northcourt Centre.

19th-21st – Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT), USAF Fairford.

August

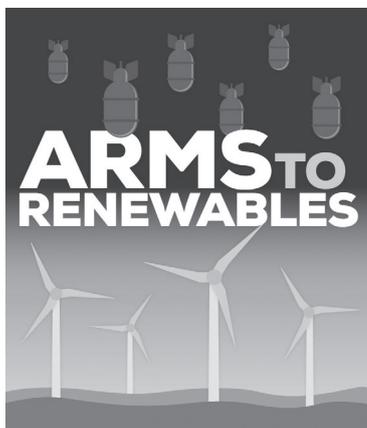
6th & 9th – Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days – date tbc for Peace Plaque, Bonn Square gathering.

Saturday 10th – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret - 01865 248357

Thursday 15th – Oxford CND meeting, Oxford Town Hall, 6.45pm

Saturday 17th – Elder Stubbs Festival – Oxford CND stall.

Abingdon and Faringdon Peace Groups have no August meetings.



Latest News

AWE Burghfield Blockade 2018 Court case

Following the successful blockade of AWE Burghfield in October 2018 and a farcical failure to list the case properly for court in January 2019, proceedings were eventually begun in Reading on 23rd April, but then adjourned once again for various reasons.

Next court date is 8-10th July

**High Wycombe Magistrate's Court
The Law Courts**

**Easton St, High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire HP11 1LR**

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9.30am if you can.**

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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 2019 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@phonecoop.coop

Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP
No later than **Saturday 24th August 2019.**

Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

3 Harpsichord Place, Oxford, OX4 1BX.
01865 248357 or oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop
www.oxfordcnd.org.uk

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd September 2019

Action for Peace

A weekend camp celebrating International Peace Day

Learn from experts on nukes, arms trade, peace building & more.

Saturday night
show in the barn (£6):

Seize the Day
Peggy Seeger
Robb Johnson
Spill the River

Explore action planning
& non-violent direct action.

Free workshops with:

GREENPEACE



NUKEWATCH



nuclear
information
service



Saturday night film:

'War School'

by Pow Productions

Sunday Play:

'Conchies'

(£6/4conc.)

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Plus: affordable veggie & vegan hot food, tea room, big camp fire, games, poetry, woodland walks, etc. For info email: trish@braziers.org.uk

Car parking: £5.
Campervan: £10.
Buses X39 / X40 from Oxford and Reading stop 5 min walk away.

Camping: £20 per person. (concessions: £10)
Children under 13 free entry.
Limited B&B on site: book early if interested.

See our website for full programme & booking form
Booking essential: www.braziers.org.uk