



Making Waves



**Turning the Tide Programme of Quaker Peace & Social Witness
advancing active nonviolence for social change**

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Editorial

Social change work is often described as falling into three broad categories: 1) reformist, involving continual engagement with the power systems and structures to make progressive improvements; 2) revolutionary, which focuses more on pulling down oppressive and unjust systems to relieve those who suffer from them; and 3) building the constructive alternative, creating the new society often within the shell of the existing system.

In many minds Turning the Tide is most associated with the second, revolutionary, approach. This might be because TTT often comes into people's awareness during times of controversy when we work with groups planning arrestable actions; maybe it's because some in the programme intuitively favour that approach; or perhaps there are other reasons.

The truth is that our work encompasses all of these strands. We work with mainstream campaigning and lobbying groups, direct action groups and those such as intentional communities who try to model the society they wish to bring about in the world. And we see that all these approaches are valid and necessary.

Having said that, this *Making Waves* focuses primarily on direct action, which may have taken a further step in its development this past year. We have two accounts from the impressive Climate Camp in the summer, which combined direct action with a clear demonstration of the constructive alternative. Also two accounts from Faslane 365, the innovative year-long action for a nuclear weapons-free world. A summary of a sustained resistance against an arms fair in London. We also include the article Something That Inspired Me This Month And An Action I Took That I Hope Will Inspire Others that began life as a piece of homework from the Turning the Tide year-long course. And not forgetting a review of a CD from Seize the Day, the band that has provided the musical soundtrack for so much of this work in Britain. It's called *The Tide is Turning!*

Steve Whiting, Programme Manager, Turning the Tide

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Camp for climate change action 2007

Matthew Herbert

I can be something of a pessimist when it comes to the social change movement. Like everyone involved in it I must be something of a dreamer or I wouldn't be involved. But I've learnt not to expect too much of 'mass mobilisations' like the Camp for Climate Action.

Whilst working hard, as a facilitator and trainer, to improve it, I often despair of the consensus decision-making process at such gatherings. Similarly I often feel that the nonviolent direct action is a futile exercise in large numbers of activists bouncing off lines of riot cops. So I'm somewhat surprised to find myself thinking positively about this year's Camp. I've tried hard to pull it to pieces and fit it into my neat little stereotypes of well intentioned but flawed activism. But it just won't co-operate.

The following thoughts are just a snapshot. Most of my time was spent either in the action support tent running nonviolent direct action workshops or in the legal support marquee. There are many other people who saw more of the Camp than I did and they may have come away with a different impression. So have a few pinches of salt at hand. But for what it's worth I detected real signs of hope for consensus decision making, for affinity group action, and for diversity within our movement.

Consensus

Yes, the site meetings process still needs work. It certainly wasn't perfected this time round. But compared to the system in place at the 2005 G8 summit in Scotland, it was positively sophisticated. It'll never be easy to get consensus amongst such a large group of diverse activists, but we get closer each time.

On the positive side, there were far more people willing to take on the role of facilitator in the large action planning meetings as well as in the meetings of each of the neighbourhoods the site was divided into. A whole new generation of facilitators is emerging, and we're thinking much more about the support we need to put in place: training for facilitators in advance of the Camp, with follow up 'refresher' workshops on the first day; the

opportunity to co-facilitate with more experienced people etc. In the meetings I attended there was a group of facilitators - not just 1 or 2 co-facilitating but as many as 5 or 6 people involved in planning the meeting, actively facilitating it or playing one of the many supporting roles during meetings. We'd talked about this in 2005 but never successfully implemented it.

There were problems, but mostly they were practical. In the past the stress around consensus at

such events has been more around power dynamics – meetings being forums for the chest beating of alpha males whose definition of consensus is the whole group agreeing with their idea or opinion. This year it was more likely to be a lack of time allocated to decision making meetings, leading to stressed facilitation team and participants unwilling to make important decisions without enough discussion and debate.

There were also tensions around 'emergency' decision making procedures. In theory each neighbourhood would send one spokesperson and a small team of advisors into any crisis meeting. These were envisaged as being called to deal with situations

like imminent eviction from the site by the police. In fact they were used to advise the site media team and for various other non-crisis situations. After 2 or 3 'emergency' meetings had been called in one day some neighbourhoods withdrew in exasperation. Others found themselves unaware emergency meetings had taken place. It's clear there needs to be more work done here but the important thing is that there was a process and it had received some thought in advance. There's no doubt that next time round it will be built on and improved.

Action

There was a real emphasis on forming action affinity groups at this year's Camp. The suggestion was made that this should happen at a Camp neighbourhood level and it did. There was a real sense that everyone that wanted to be in an affinity group had found one. Only a handful of people felt the need to attend the affinity group workshops on offer. It was no surprise that the number of affinity group based actions was also higher.

There were some drawbacks. The site neighbourhoods were organised geographically (London, Oxford, South Coast, Yorkshire etc) and

Photo: Mike Langbridge, <http://www.fotdmike-pics.me.uk>



not along 'affinity' lines. Any given neighbourhood didn't necessarily contain all the people of the same political persuasion, and there was inevitable resistance. But one way or another people worked around the issues and effective groups formed.

The official day of action was 24 hours from noon on Sunday 19th to noon on Monday 20th August. In fact the action started much earlier. From the previous Wednesday there was a continuous stream of far more diverse actions taking place around Heathrow and elsewhere. You can read more at <http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/success.php> but here's a taste of just 48 hours of the action.

Sunday 19th and Monday 20th August

Carbon offset companies are occupied by protesters dressed as red herrings. Fifteen have occupied the offices of Climate Care in Oxford. Ten have leafleted the offices of the Carbon Neutral Company in London. Carbon offsetting is a scheme allowing companies and consumers to pay in order to supposedly neutralize their carbon emissions. 'Carbon offsets are ineffective, based on dubious science and lead people to believe they are helping when they are not - the concept and the practice are a con,' said Sophie Nathan, who is taking part in the Carbon Neutral Company action.

Five protesters are in a concrete lock-on outside Sizewell A and B nuclear power stations. Their banner declares, 'Nuclear power is not the answer to climate chaos.' Twelve protesters have superglued themselves to the entrance at BP headquarters. They are highlighting BP's essential role in the aviation industry. Protester Stanley Owen said 'We cannot sustain infinite growth on a planet with finite resources.' Eighteen protesters occupied the office of the owners of Leeds airport, Bridgepoint Capital, on Warwick Street in London.

In Harmondsworth village a group of 500, consisting of locals as well as climate camp participants, gathered to listen John McDonnell Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington. He told the government that the third runway will not be built:

'Even with the latest, more efficient aircraft, the climate change imperative demands that air travel growth be severely curtailed. The

government can no longer have its cake and eat it. If it's genuinely serious about climate change it must show meaningful leadership to rein in aviation expansion.'

Protesters wore copies of the Tyndall Report on their hands during the mass action, carrying a banner reading, 'We are armed.... only with peer-reviewed science'.

Late on Sunday evening, BA World Cargo depot was blockaded for about four and a half hours by eight protestors locked to each other.

Photo: Gary Austin, Radical Images



Also tactics developed at this year's G8 in Germany were shared and practiced at Heathrow. The main marquee was filled with people practicing 'fist' to 'finger' manoeuvres – a large group of activists approaching 'police' lines before splitting into affinity group based fingers, out manoeuvring the police and then reforming into their fist formation (see articles such as <http://dissentnetzwerk.org/node/3711> for more on this). These are new and exciting tactics that combine the flexibility and support of affinity groups with the numbers of 'mass' actions.

So despite months of warning, despite being outnumbered by the Metropolitan Police, despite police officers being on site 24 hours a day, despite terrorism laws that give the police sweeping powers to stop and search, and despite the widespread abuse of other powers to gather intelligence about the Camp and it's Campers all this action still took place. What's more, so many people were already thinking and talking about next year's Camp.

Maybe I'll have to revise my opinion of mass direct actions once and for all

Creative solutions to climate camp clamp-downs

Kat Barton

When I heard that this year's climate camp was to be held at Heathrow, just 9 miles from my parents' house, I knew that the only way to get there was by bike. My brother, himself a keen cyclist, would be at home that week so it seemed an ideal opportunity to combine a trip to my parents with a couple of days of cycling and climate change workshops with bro.

On the Wednesday morning we set off and were navigating the perimeter road of the airport when we were stopped by police. As 10 or more officers trundled out of two police vans, two officers separated my brother and I and, taking us aside, told us we were being searched under Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). During the course of the search they asked our names and addresses but when I declined to give mine (aware that I was not required to do so unless I was being arrested for committing a crime) I was told that I was being fined £30 for cycling on the pavement. I tried to explain that we had been cycling on the (largely empty) pavement because we were about to turn right and the two lane carriageway was unsafe to use at that point, but of course the motivation for fining me had little to do with cycling contraventions and so my words fell on deaf ears. Aware that what the officers really wanted were my details, I struck a bargain with them whereby the £30 fine would be dropped if I revealed my name and address, which I dutifully did.

Whilst all this was going on, a member of the Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) was trying unsuccessfully to get a picture of my face. As we continued on our way, this time walking our bikes along the pavement both to avoid further confrontation and as a means of taking some time to calm ourselves after our unsettling encounter – said FIT officer suddenly jumped out from behind the wall of the Radisson Hotel. With the words “I told you I'd get you in the end” he took my picture and in an instant was gone again! It was then that the sheer ludicrousness of the situation hit me: a policeman jumping out from behind a wall to get a photo of little old me! I felt angry at the waste of time and resources the whole thing represented and frustrated that the police couldn't seem to see how ridiculous their actions were.

Eventually, we spent an interesting and educational day at the camp participating in various workshops before setting off on our journey home. As we crossed the Bath Road we noticed an extraordinarily large police presence. Apparently a demonstration (which turned out to be a contingent of around 25

heavily-guarded activists and clowns) was about to cross the road. This, it appeared, was cause enough for police to stop traffic in both directions, resulting in long queues of no doubt very angry motorists. Given the unremarkable size of the demonstration, I concluded that the decision to stop the traffic had more to do with portraying climate campers as disruptive than it did with efficient policing.

Then, as we made our way around the perimeter road, we were again stopped by a group of around 15 police officers. This time, not content with merely searching us under PACE but with no grounds on which to fine us for cycling contraventions, we were told we were being detained – to prevent us from causing a breach of the peace! Having already explained that we were on our way home for dinner (and subsequently been accused by one officer of lying) we asked the reason we were suspected of ‘intending to commit an offence’, upon which we were told that it was because we were in possession of bicycle locks! Clearly, the fact we were also in possession of bicycles didn't seem to be of any relevance here, although the irony was certainly not lost on us. By this point, my brother and I were feeling rather harassed, but aware that there was very little we could do, we resolved to stay calm and sit it out. After all, what more could they do?!

After a few minutes, a more senior police officer arrived and informed us we were free to go, but that we were banned from the Heathrow area for the next 24 hours – under some obscure bylaw, the name of which the officer declined to repeat when I asked. If we returned, we were told, we would be arrested. After some fruitless questioning on my part, we continued our way in the rain.

The journey home was spent deep in thought. My brother and I had been shocked by the attitude displayed by the police officers we'd met that day. They seemed to have made up their minds that anyone participating in the climate camp was likely to be a criminal, and should be treated as such. It gave me the impression that when dealing with protests, the concept of ‘innocent until proven guilty’ does not apply. I deduced that the policing of demonstrations was premised upon the idea that activists are troublemakers and the police have a role in promoting this preconceived image. The disparity between how we see ourselves, as essential actors in the democratic system, and how the police regard us, is simply vast! The implications for civil liberties and the future of protest are serious.

The mixture of anger and disbelief that I felt soon turned to a desire to do something. The increasingly restrictive parameters within which we, as activists, must act force us to be more creative about the ways in which we respond. My brother and I had

originally planned to spend two days at the climate camp, so we decided we would do just that. As often happens when I feel frustrated by a particular situation, I had some pretty vivid daydreams on my way home. These revolved around me disguising myself as an airport worker in order to secure my entry to the camp the following day. As I thought about it more I realised that such a tactic could actually serve a dual purpose. I have often admired the Quakers who sit on the trains talking to visitors to the DSEi arms fair and felt that if I was to dress up as an airport worker, I really ought to make the most of it by using it as an opportunity to talk to people who might receive me better as Kat-the-airport-worker than as Kat-the-protester.

The following morning, I spent a good couple of hours trying on various suits of my mums, waxing my legs, painting my toenails, doing my hair and dousing myself in perfume. So keen was I to really get into character that I even filled up my handbag with the kinds of things I felt someone working at the Duty Free shop in Terminal 4 would carry around, including a book (just in case I was arrested!) entitled *The Assertiveness Book For Busy Women*. In addition, as several of my family members had worked for British Airways, I was also able to sport a BA rainmack and the latest copy the staff newspaper *BA News*, complete with its startling headline “Eco-protesters target Heathrow”!

So, on the Thursday morning, I took the bus to the airport. Alighting a short walk away from the camp in the village of Sipson, I met a local resident and, trying out my new identity, I asked him a few questions. I explained that I worked at the airport, asked for directions and inquired as to whether it was ok for me to visit the camp – showing him, for good measure, my copy of the *BA News* which portrayed it as very much an eco-protester-only affair. The man was reassuring: “very peaceful people those protesters” he said “they’re that Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth lot”. Feeling heartened by his response and excited by the fact that my cover had not been blown, I set off in the direction of the camp. At the end of a road, I found a handful of police officers – none of who showed any interest in me – and two climate campers. Again I explained that I worked at the airport and was interested in what was going on at the camp ... and

felt rather guilty when they told me how great they thought it was that I’d taken the time to come and see for myself. When I asked if anyone could go in, they encouraged me to talk to two local women who had just visited the camp and who told me how great it was inside and how there were toilets and food and nice friendly people.

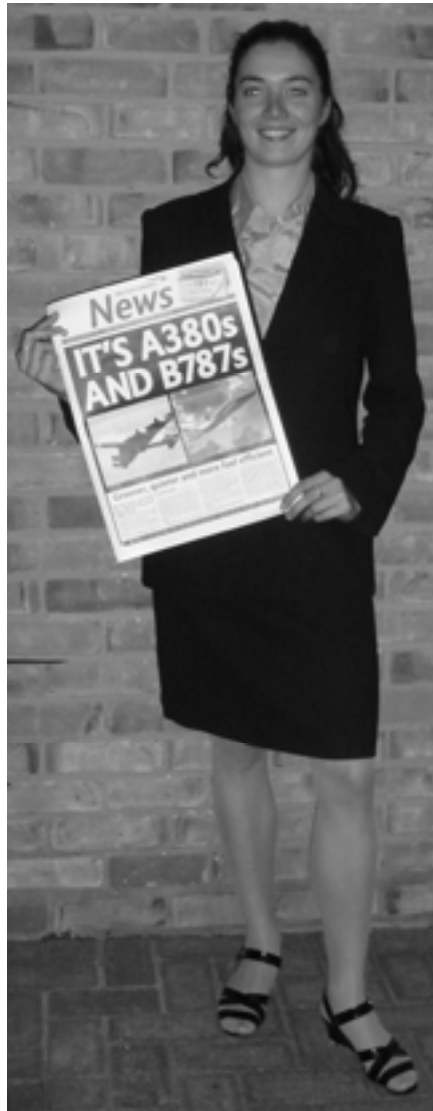


Photo: Rebecca Sims

They all encouraged me to go into the camp, but I had already decided that the best place to find out what people really think is the pub. So, on the pretence of needing a gin & tonic to calm my nerves, I invited the two climate campers for a drink. Inside, we found several locals – mostly men – enjoying an afternoon pint, and quickly struck up a conversation. These local residents were less enthusiastic about the climate campers, regarding them as nice enough, but misguided in their belief that anything at all could be done to challenge BAA. As far as the men were concerned, there was no point in trying to stop the building of the third runway as it would happen anyway; residents had been trying for years and got nowhere. Moreover, when asked how they felt about losing their homes, they showed little concern: BAA, they said, had promised to give them more than the market worth for their property. I realised later that such a guarantee explained why the locals at the camp were so reluctant to participate in actions that directly targeted BAA: they

were dependent on the company for a good price for their homes. We spent a good hour or so chatting to the locals, who all, like ‘me’, worked at the airport. The men seemed intrigued by the fact that I had bothered to come to visit the camp, and I encouraged them to have a look too. We talked about BAA, climate change and the pros and cons of compost loos, and I’ve no doubt that my Kat-the-airport-worker character enabled a more frank and honest conversation than would otherwise have been had.

A couple of gin & tonics later, we left the pub and walked the 300 metres or so to the entrance to the climate camp, my two climate camper friends chivalrously escorting me past the row of police vans and unsuspecting FIT team officers. In contrast

to my experience the previous day, the police hardly even gave me a look and before I knew it I was safely inside the camp. Until this point, of course, my new climate camper friends had no idea that I was one of them, so as soon as we were out of earshot of the police, I explained my rather elaborate ploy and revealed to them my true identity. Although extremely surprised and, I think, a little disappointed that an airport worker had not really come to see things for themselves, they were not annoyed, which had been my concern during the time we spent together.

As we walked through the camp together, I noticed the different way in which people regarded me, dressed as I was in a British Airways rainmack and high heels and sporting a copy of BA News. Whilst some may find deception an unacceptable or uncomfortable tactic, this experience was for me illuminating. It made me realise that we all have preconceived ideas about what people are like, be they police officers or activists. I thought about the need to transcend such stereotypes, to build bridges between people and to find creative means of doing so. In an age in which we find ourselves increasingly restricted, the need to open things up to new possibilities, opportunities and relationships grows ever more urgent.

Some Quakers were at Faslane

Sarah Lasenby

Faslane 365 was a one-year continuous peaceful blockade of the Trident nuclear weapons base at Faslane, which ended with a Big Blockade on 1 October 2007. A wide range of local, national and international groups came to Faslane committed to making visible their vision of a just and peaceful future. The action involved 131 blockading groups over 189 days of presence. There were 1150 arrests and 66 prosecutions.

I can only write about the two groups I facilitated during the year of Faslane 365. The first was the Southern Quakers at the end of Oct 2006 and the second was over the first weekend of Sept 2007.

I started organising in Jan 2006 and slowly the group began to form. When we reached Faslane in October we exceeded all my expectations by having 91 Friends. While some Friends came from their local Meetings in ones and twos, several Meetings had substantial groups who trained and planned together. A wonderful support group was formed for me from the 16 Oxford Friends who participated. Some of them took on special tasks and a great workshop was held for making placards. Alan

Allport had designed a light folding placard system which should be patented. We also benefitted from John Toye's witty ideas, his best probably being "Quakers love whirled peas", to be painted on the recycled blind material we used.

Other substantial groups came from Cambridge, Swindon, Milton Keynes, London, Bristol and the West Midlands. Friends from Horfield brought a very moving puppet of a grandchild in a mack and wellies and many other lovely banners were hung on the fence and carried around the Main Gate.

During the summer, trainings had been held in various parts of the south of England and a number of Friends and Meetings contributed generously to a Quaker Bursary Fund*. Over £2000 was eventually raised and was used to hire three minibuses, rent the school hall and give those on smaller incomes a contribution of £35 each towards the not inconsiderable costs of attending this blockade.

50 people stayed at the magnificent Georgian youth hostel in Glasgow which made a great base. The staff were very encouraging. Food was organised as a group and we strengthened our networks in the dining room in the basement of the hostel. Others made various arrangements including B&Bs. This led to problems when, after 27 arrests, one group of 9 proved to have an average age of 71 - they also had the average number of medical conditions expected from this age group. The police in Clydebank Police Office got so worried that instead of keeping them for the customary 24 hours they were released around midnight, far too late to get back to their B&Bs. The Youth Hostel was quick to offer them their lounge to sleep in. The following morning Margaret Hodson returned to her B&B only to find a man's feet sticking out of her duvet. On asking the landlady, she was told "Oh dear, that must be my father who came home drunk". Margaret replied "What a good thing I was in the police station or he might have got into bed with me".

My aim for this event had always been to ensure that, especially the majority of the group, those who were first timers, should feel safe throughout the event. A number of Friends volunteered to be drivers and a younger Friend helped me with legal support and keeping track of everyone who was arrested. Invaluably one Friend ferried me around in his car for shopping etcetera so I could be almost in two places at once.

On the Thursday night before our first blockade we all met for our planning meeting in Hillhead High School starting with a Quaker Meeting for Worship. What a benefit it was to be with Friends as this centred our evening. After an overview of what we were going to do the next day people moved into the groups they would work with at Faslane, filling roles of legal observers, supporters etcetera and some people planned their arrestable actions.

It rained all the first day at the blockade, though we were cheered by the tea supplied near the Main Gate by the Peace Camp. Friends were marvelously stoical and stuck it out till late in the afternoon when finally some elderly Friends made the police arrest them by just staying put. They said later how they were upheld by the singing which had been going on all day. This was assisted by some Friends from Norwich who had been blockading with other Norfolk people the day before. Two Friends who had not managed to get to a training had come somewhat ill prepared and were noticeably cold and wet but the rest seemed to be fine.

I arranged to take groups in the minibuses to see Coulport Base where the warheads are bunkered. This also gave them a chance to see the whole of the Faslane complex from the other side of the Gairloch. On the Saturday it was less wet and although no more arrests took place we made a significant presence and talked to a different set of police. On both days one of the highlights was the decision to form into a crocodile (no not a conga) and walk round and round the outside of the large roundabout at the mouth of the main gate. This had a big impact and each day I was only asked to suggest that the marchers to cease after the croc had done three circles. Apparently, they can't arrest you for obstruction (breach of the peace in Scotland) if you are moving.

Finally over 50 of us held a Meeting for Worship in Glasgow Friends Meeting House and had a joint meal, three Friends had stayed behind that day to make the very welcome soups, and we did our evaluation. There were so many Friends who felt this had been a very significant experience even if they had not been arrested themselves. Certainly they went home with real feeling of what our so-called deterrent system is about and for some the first time experience of direct action.

When it came to the second blockade I arranged at the beginning of September we were 26 Friends. Some were returnees and some were first timers. This time we saved money by making our base in Landsdown Church of Scotland on the Great Western Rd. They had hosted a number of other F365 groups and gave us a generous free hand. We managed with just one minibus and 4 people chose to be arrested. This was an altogether easier to manage event. We had excellent weather and between us we saw a Trident and a French nuclear sub steaming down the Gairloch with their tugs. They were having a little friendly exercise in the Irish Sea. Again very strong links were made between Friends this time from all parts of the UK.

Since then I have constructed a personal email list of all the Friends on email plus the nquake list so that, as Quakers who have been to Faslane, we can keep in touch. I have continued to send out information about nuke affairs, especially around the vote in March. Many of us would like to continue to

protest against these monstrous weapons of mass destruction but Aldermaston is quite difficult to pop over to on a weekday and only a few Friends have yet made it to a protest at the Atomic Weapons Establishment there. Maybe we need to be more inventive? Any suggestions to Sarah Lasenby sarahlasenby@breathemail.net

* The Quaker Bursary Fund was also used in September 07 in the same way and there is residual seed money for future anti-nuclear direct action by Quakers. These we hope will now concentrate on Aldermaston where the warheads are developed and constructed. The warheads are both Vile and Evil. [The submarines being V class are all given names that start with V.]

For more information on Faslane 365 please see www.faslane365.org. A book, called *Faslane 365 – a year of anti-nuclear blockades*, will soon be available.

Naked protest against Trident

Jesse Schust



Photo: Roy St Pierre, www.roystpierre.com

On 5-6 September 2007, the "Cyclists from Everywhere" blockading group protested for two days in Faslane naval base (home to Britain's submarine based nuclear missile system - Trident). We had looked forward to the blockade for several months, but hadn't managed to find much time for recruiting additional blockaders. Four of us boarded the train from London to Scotland, and it was then that I found out there were only 5 people committed to participate in the 2 days of action.

The size of the group was much smaller than we had envisioned, but we remained in high spirits as we discussed options for blockading. Each of us felt that the group (3 blockaders, 1 legal observer, and 1 photographer) was unlikely to be able to meaningfully blockade the base entrance, so we began to consider alternative means of protest. We were aware that the risk of arrest couldn't be

eliminated, but most of us hoped that if arrested we wouldn't be charged. We needed to think of an action that would have a clear impact, but be unlikely to lead to prosecution if arrested.

The solution came when Simon pointed out "there is one form of protest that links us all together: the World Naked Bike Ride". We had all helped with coordinating this unique ecological protest in London during the past two years, so we were all familiar with the power of nudity to make one's protest more visible. We decided to strip off outside the base and hold our protest signs up while the photographer took photos. An act of simple defiance which would make our opposition to Trident clear in the most non-violent, non-threatening manner. If the police didn't ask us to put our clothes back on, we'd consider further possibilities. Unlike England, nudity can still be considered an offence in Scotland (hence so many arrests of "the naked rambler" in Scotland).

After we arrived in Helensburgh and cycled to the Faslane Peace Camp, we discovered that some exceptional protests had been happening during the night. Several protesters entered the nuclear bases at Faslane and Coulport, including some cyclists who went in with routine traffic. The police were likely to be on a very high level of alert, and on the lookout for cyclists. Throughout the morning of our protest, the police were discreetly following and monitoring us. It would have been very difficult to attempt a blockade since that is exactly what the police were anticipating from us. We did try cycling slowly at the South Gate access road, but a huge number of police quickly intervened to allow base traffic to flow freely.

We decided to do our naked protest after lunch, as the police's vigilance seemed to be decreasing. We finalised the plan, covered our "nude" placards with easily torn off "normal" placards, prepared our clothes and practised stripping off, till we could do it in 4 seconds!

With the help of two Faslane Peace Camp members, who had accompanied us in the morning, we managed our nude protest. They drew the police to the opposite side of the gate simply by crossing the street, and we stripped off our clothes and the covers to our signs. What a sight we were - two women and two men holding signs "Nudes against Nukes" and "Trident Replacement is Naked Aggression!" The police were taken completely by surprise and we had about 20 seconds before they intervened - enough time to pose for some photos and sing our little song: "all we are saying, we're naked for peace, all we are saying, is Trident must cease". Then the police began to approach us and we started putting our clothes back on. When the police reached us, most of us were dressed again, but they'd decided to arrest us so we were each brought into a police van, and our bikes were left in the care of our photographer and new friends from the Peace Camp. In the police van, we were each

able to confirm that we felt good, and were proud of what we'd accomplished in our notably short protest.

At Clydebank police station, we were treated very well. My own experience was most positive. I'd never been arrested before and was somewhat nervous about it. We didn't have handcuffs on at any point, and this made me feel much better. Also, the staff were generally very courteous and thoughtful toward me. I'd been racing around doing loads of things in the lead up to the protest, so being held overnight in a police cell on my own offered me some much needed time for relaxation and reflection. I grew to enjoy the space as if the cell were my own room at a meditation retreat. The room was clean and smelled good. It had a mattress on the floor, a skylight, a high ceiling, and a 7ftx7ft area of open floor. There was a constant drone sound from the air circulation system, which I found particularly interesting and soothing, but Simon reported that its vibrations were unpleasant in other cells. I spent my time singing, drawing, sleeping, chanting, stretching, writing, and thinking. The food was decent, and I had a better night's sleep than I'd had for several days. I was thrilled that I was able to turn my night in police cells into a very therapeutic one. The next day, we were all released and the charges were dropped. When we returned to Faslane, we discovered that our marvellous photographer Roy had managed to get a press release and photos out to the world on the evening of our arrest. The four of us who were arrested (Simon, Kat, Paula, and myself) all felt pleased about the impact of our protest, and look forward to protesting at Faslane in the future.

Towards ending the arms fairs at the Excel Centre and anywhere else

Chris Gwyntopher

Selling arms every two years to buyers from all over the world in a poor borough with a large refugee and migrant population and where several young people have been killed in the streets with knives and guns would seem to be insensitive, indeed obscene.

Local and national opposition to the Defence Systems & Equipment International exhibition (DSEi) has been sustained. The London Borough of Newham has passed a motion against having the arms fair in the Borough but still pays for exhibition space at the Excel Centre. Reed Elsevier has decided to sell the company which organises the arms fairs but not until the end of 2007. They are still advertising DSEi 2009 on the web. The Defence Exports Services Organisation (DESO), the government agency which has helped develop the arms fairs, is to close. A petition signed by 10,000 people for its closure was presented to the Chief

Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Timms, who happens to be one of the Newham MPs. For the arms fair in September Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), East London Against the Arms Fair (ELAAF), Catholic Worker, Disarm DSEi, Space Invaders all took creative and energetic action involving much hard work. There was press coverage of these actions though none were the main story of the day. Local support for anti-arms trade action is higher than it was two years ago and there are new keen activists. This is the assessment of a member of ELAAF who lives in Newham. Another personal assessment by Kat Barton is in Peace News October 2007 (<http://www.peacenews.info/>).

Three particularly creative examples illustrate the kind of action that took place. The evening before the arms fair opened there was a silent candle-lit procession and vigil at the foot of the steps leading up to the Excel Centre. Over 100 people including many locals took part in what participants and some staff felt was a moving act of witness. On the first day a group of self-labeled anarchists bought two tanks and sold one of them in the Excel car park. Two Catholic Worker members poured symbolic blood across the gateway the arms traders were entering early on the first morning. Zelda Jeffers lay on the ground by the gateway as a dead victim of the arms trade. Martin Newell lay "injured" while he read a liturgy based on the beatitudes. That entrance was closed for over half an hour.

These actions focused attention on the evil absurdity of the arms trade. They also spoke to the consciences of at least some of those involved in the arms fair. They and most of the other actions did not disrupt the lives of the local residents going to and from work, taking children to and from school, attending sick friends and relatives. The Saturday before the arms fair one of ELAAF's series of musical protest attracted supporting comments from staff working at the Excel centre. However as they left they saw a notice displayed for all leaving the fair by the Docklands Light Railway proudly announcing that DSEi will be back in 2009.

Overall, considering the resources of the arms corporations ranged against the fairly disparate and under resourced groups opposed to the arms fair, the campaign against DSEi 2007 must be considered as a moderately successful contribution to the longer term campaign to stop the trade in arms. What did strategic planning contribute to this outcome? The brief answer would be not a lot.

The Disarm DSEi attempt to revive its role as an open information and planning forum for all groups involved did not work. The public meeting it organised in Bloomsbury was not well attended and not all relevant groups were represented. This is in part because some of the key actors were no longer living in London and some of the activist, largely anarchist constituency had devoted their time and

energy to other issues, notable the Climate Change Camp, the No Borders Camp at Gatwick and the Smash EDO campaign in Brighton. It may also be because Disarm DSEi decided this time to actually initiate actions itself and not just be an umbrella group. This made it difficult for those who had not been happy with tactics at 2005 DSEi that disrupted the lives of local people not involved in the arms trade to participate. Several local people had asked ELAAF members to tell our mates to stop obstructing roads and railways. If such actions were initiated directly by Disarm DSEi we could not reply that it was just an umbrella group and each action group was autonomous. There was little disruption of local travel routes during DSEi 2007.

The lower turn out of people from outside the area may in part be due to the success of the CAAT lobbying which persuaded Reed Elsevier to "exit the defence exhibitions sector." (Reed Elsevier 2 June 2007) See CAAT Magazine Aug/Sept 2007 or www.caat.org.uk/caatnews/CAATnews2o3.pdf. Some potential activists may have thought that this success meant 2007 was the last arms fair planned for Excel. This is clearly not the case as, before it has sold its "defence" exhibitions business Reed Exhibitions is advertising DSEi 2009.

CAAT gave considerable support to the local group ELAAF and did its own strategic planning. It supported the vigil on 10 September and organised a march on Tuesday 11 September the first day of the arms fair. This was followed by the laying of a wreath to the victims of the arms fair on the Victoria Dock, an initiative of ELAAF. This was fairly well attended for a mid weekday event. CAAT's strategic thinking is well illustrated by the campaign to get Reed Elsevier to divest from arms dealing. This included building up a constituency which had some leverage over Reed's decisions. These were the writers and editors of its publications, other professionals and celebrities and shareholders challenged at its AGMs. The main tactical tools were letter writing, disinvestment, picketing and a regular vigil at Reed Elsevier's headquarters in Richmond and questions at their AGM. All was non violent and mostly avoided demonising the individuals working for Reed.

ELAAF's strategy has been to try to build up and maintain local opposition to the arms fairs with leafleting, marches and lobbying Newham Council. It has held several musical protests at the Excel Centre since the 2005 fair designed to persuade visitors to stop attending and sympathetic exhibitors to stop using the Excel centre while arms continue to be sold there.

Members of ELAAF have maintained their musical presence at the Excel Centre and their leafleting of people even when told by Excel security to desist. Gwyn Gwyntopher, ELAAF supporter, was arrested, handcuffed and dragged across the concrete for simply standing by the gate where arms traders go

in with a notice on her back reading "Remember the victims of the arms fair". Their aim is communication not confrontation but they will assert their right to communicate.

There have been four DSEi arms fairs at the Excel centre and five in east London. The first was at Canary Wharf. It is probable that the objections of the affluent residents and workers at the Canary Wharf private complex helped get it moved to the large new Excel Centre bordered by the deprived working class ethnically mixed residential areas of Canning Town and Custom House. The Newham docklands has been suffering gentrification over the last seven years so it may be that with more local work in, for example, Britannia Village a largely dormitory development just South of the Excel centre and Becton and older but still relatively new development to the East will lead to similar opposition.

CAAT will continue to campaign against DSEi, ELAAF are planning to continue their musical protests, Disarm DSEi will continue its resistance. More people know why and fewer people have been alienated than at DSEi 2005.

Something that inspired me this month, and an action I have taken which I hope will inspire others.

Helen Dymond

There was a book in the good old 1960's or 70's, a hip guide for American students swanning around in their gap year, called *Europe on Five Dollars a Day*. It was clever, inflation-busting, quaintly alternative. A new book, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade* by Miles Litvinoff and John Madeley (Pluto Press, www.plutobooks.com) tells me that half a century later, "throughout the developing world people are working in poor countries for less than a dollar a day to make goods such as clothes and toys for the Western world".

They are forced into it by the rock bottom prices agreed by the world markets for the kind of crops their climates and soils will allow them to grow. With the international agreement on coffee collapsing in 1989, many farmers saw prices fall below the cost of production. The impact on societies was and continues to be disastrous: "social unrest, robberies, suicides, debt, children withdrawn from school by their parents; in Colombia and Haiti growers turning in desperation to illegal drugs cultivation. In Nicaragua, thousands of coffee workers held a *March of the Hungry* to the capital in mid-2003, during which fourteen of the marchers are said to have died of starvation". Equally devastating in its

effects, the world banana market worth £5 billion is dominated by a cartel consisting of a mere five companies.



But *50 Reasons* doesn't set out to scold. It invites us to celebrate the burgeoning of the Fair Trade (FT) movement, to join a damn good party that is going on and is here to stay. It's this positive energy that makes the book inspiring. It is meticulously researched and packed full of useful information about what Fair Trade is, how it helps producers to a fair and stable income, where to find FT products. But perhaps its greatest achievement is that it gives a small cast of farmers a published voice, lets them speak for themselves.

It provides just the global context we need to make sense of what is happening in our own locality, and has prompted me to conduct a small, totally unscientific survey of my two local superstores: Sainsbury's at Ladbrooke Grove and at Willesden, to explore Sainsbury's claim that it supports Fair Trade. I also wanted to answer some more uncomfortable questions closer to home: why don't I, the barely-reconstructed housewife, buy more than a few FT products? Is it because of my ignorance of the range on offer? A suspicion that they will be more expensive than non-FT? Or it is due to lack of visibility, a failed opportunity to highlight the products like the sweets which are always in your face at the checkout counter? I am told Sainsbury's recently had a *Fair Trade Fortnight* but none of my neighbours seem to have noticed it.

Not that I am advocating supermarket shopping, given the environmental impact of import air-miles, excess packaging and general swamping of small producers. But the plain fact is that the vast majority of shoppers use supermarkets, so there should be some attempt to understand what is going on there. Paradoxically a much wider range of FT goods can be found there than in the average small retailer, and those who already patronise specialist FT shops/farmers' markets need no conversion. Having obtained printouts of what FT goods are offered in these two stores, I made some comparisons between them, checked prices against the Online Shopping list and came up with some surprising findings. I give just a sample here.

50 Reasons tells me that there are now over 2,000

FT certified products on the market, but Sainsbury's Online Shopping lists only 68, so the first question is why so few? And apart from cleaning cloths at Willesden, none of the non-food items are listed. There seems no consistent buying policy either: Willesden carries only 27 items, of which 13 are not listed at Ladbrooke Grove, while Ladbrooke Grove carries 30, of which 18 are not available at Willesden. This seems fairly chaotic, but the most glaring omission is that, having been assured by the Customer Care Service that "all Sainsbury's bananas are Fair Trade", FT bananas are not listed at all at Ladbrooke Grove! The person I spoke to at Head Office about this sounded genuinely shocked.

The majority of products are beverages, coffees, teas and wines. At Ladbrooke Grove fresh fruit FT products are grapes, pineapples and mangoes, whereas Willesden, a store with a significantly smaller clientele, manages to sell all those plus oranges and bananas. Ladbrooke Grove Sainsbury's, a significant shopping mecca in this part of London, has a Coffee Shop which sells FT chocolate muffins and chocolate brownies, so why aren't these available on the shelves?

The biggest surprise is the prices. There is a perception that FT goods are likely to be more expensive, as organic products are, although the big stores can afford to and sometimes do subsidise them. Many FT items turn out to be the same, or cheaper than, non-FT. Fairtrade teabags 250g cost £1.19, whereas Sainsbury's Green Blend teabags 250g cost £1.95; Billington's Golden Granulated sugar 500g sell for 89p, Tate & Lyle Granulated for a whopping £3.85; a pack of 5 Sainsbury's FT oranges are £1.59, while a pack of 5 non-FT oranges are £1.75.

What to do with these admittedly random statistics? I plan to send a report to Sainsbury's outlining my findings and suggesting that the Buying Policy is reviewed and hopefully improved. The range of goods offered could be greatly extended, and promoted as not only socially responsible but better value. And I have a plan to do a small promotion of my own: namely, I am thinking of a pre-Christmas social gathering of our Neighbourhood Watch Group to which everyone will be invited to bring only FT consumables, a sort of Pudding Party with bevies, chocolate mousse and exotic fruit salad, nuts for those that can eat them, freshly baked biscuits and some small inexpensive FT gifts for Santa's Sack and prizes for games. It's a small step, as social movements go, but in this neck of the woods I am reasonably sure it's a first.

CD review

The Tide is Turning, Seize the Day

Hugh Warwick



At last, a new album from the UK's premiere political musicians.

Rhetoric is great – you can sound like you are the truest believer of any cause without leaving the comfort of your desk or recording studio. Politicians and musicians are falling over themselves in the race to be the greenest and most dedicated. But they need not bother as the high ground has long been occupied by the political musicians of Seize the Day.

I first met Theo Simon, one half of the heart of the band, at Twyford Down in 1992. Sitting around a campfire after a day spent bothering the diggers that were destroying the countryside; Theo pulled out a small drum and began to sing. Fires at protest camps are magnets for performers but none have ever made such an impact as that performance.

We continued to collide at protests. I managed to record him singing a superb song about motorways outside the Tarmac HQ and get it broadcast on Radio 4. At Newbury he started to perform with his perfect partner – Shannon Smy. And from those beginnings sprung Seize the Day. Shannon was perfect – not just because of their love for each other, but because she was another performer who was willing to do more than just sing about the exploits of others.

They have been involved in nonviolent direct action ever since: pulling up GM crops, blockading Esso, at the WTO protest in Seattle, supporting Palestinians in Bethlehem, marching with farmers in India and the USA and continuing to write the most intelligent music about each issue. If I had ever had a teacher who could so readily combine content with enjoyment, I might have made something of myself! They can get a tent full of people to dance with joy



About Turning the Tide

Turning the Tide aims to advance the understanding and practice of active nonviolence and its use for positive social change, using the experience of contemporary and previous nonviolence movements.

Turning the Tide provides

- Public introductory interactive workshops exploring active nonviolence;
- Consultancies, or tailor-made workshops, for groups. These can cover campaign strategy, empowerment, building strong groups, group process and preparing for nonviolent action;
- Providing materials. TTT has an award winning video, *Nonviolence for a Change*, a journal *Making Waves*, a website www.turning-the-tide.org and a nonviolence resource library.

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at the same time as they absorb the profound nature of the lyrics.

And now a new album is out. *The Tide is Turning* has a strong climate change theme running through the songs. But they also touch on the Israel/Palestine conflict, Guantanamo Bay and, for me the stand-out track, *Rosa's Song*, which manages to capture the entire history of the planet as love song to their beautiful daughter.

There will be many fans who have met the band at festivals and protests who will have already got hold of this album – it has taken some time in coming (but well worth the wait). What I want to see is other people getting to listen to it. Musically they have gone from strength to strength. The rest of the band, who I should apologise to for neglecting woefully in this review, are superb. Their song writing is witty, intelligent, moving and powerful. So even if you think that this style of music might not be your bag, I urge you to give this a go. This music is as far removed from the green rhetoric of be-suited politicians as you could conceive. These people really do live the lives they sing about. They are the most honest, sometimes painfully so, commentators on the world. This album is active nonviolence captured in song.

You can buy the cd through the band's website: www.seizetheday.org

Views expressed in *Making Waves* and any leaflets enclosed are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by Turning the Tide, Quaker Peace & Social Witness or Britain Yearly Meeting.

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