

# FARINGDON PEACE GROUP NEWSLETTER-SPRING 2005

[www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk](http://www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk)

## GRAND PEACE FETE, 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY, 2-5PM. CLOCK HOUSE, COLESHILL

If you always enjoy a wonderful day out at our Fete, going round the stalls, having tea in the courtyard, enjoying the live music etc. then maybe you could consider doing all those things again this year but ALSO helping out on a stall or with teas for just an hour or so during the afternoon. We will be missing a few regular helpers this year and would be very grateful for any time that you can give. Please see p4 of this newsletter, or phone Jennie (710-308) or Sjoerd (241707).

## MONTH FOR PEACE – OCTOBER 2005

Make sure you have these dates in your diary – more to follow!

- ? **LAUNCH** on Sat. 8<sup>th</sup> October in Corn Exchange 2 ish–7 ish with speakers including John McDonnell, Bruce Kent and Tony Benn. Also music, activities and exhibitions finishing with a L.O.A.F. supper (Local, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairtrade)
- ? **DISPLAYS/EXHIBITIONS** in Tourist Office, Library and mobile exhibition for elsewhere
- ? **OTHER GROUPS** meeting in October are encouraged to follow the “peace” theme e.g. U3A have invited Malcolm Harper, ex-chair of United Nations Association. Madd May Fest are hoping to get the poet, Les Barker.
- ? **ARTWORK** – Aim to produce a small banner/collage/hanging
- ? **AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATION** chronicling our 25 year history to show at various events. John Cottis has made a great start on this.
- ? **ART EXHIBITION FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN**
- ? **POSTCARD** with arty front and details of all events on the back to be as widely distributed as possible
- ? **BARN DANCE** on 29<sup>th</sup> October to end celebrations

Any offers of help, ideas, photos etc. to me, Karen (details below) in the first instance and I will pass them on.



## MARCH MEETING – A discussion with all four Prospective Parliamentary Candidates on the theme of “WAR AND PEACE”

The Candidates so far, all of whom came to the meeting, are Andrew Crawford (Liberal Democrat), Adam Twine (Green Party and long-term Peace Group member!), Ed Vaizey (Conservative) and Mark MacDonald (Labour). They answered questions on Civil Liberties in Britain, Iraq, British Nuclear Policy and Palestine/Israel.

While most candidates welcomed the Human Rights legislation brought in by this government, they all felt that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (in its unamended form) was a step too far in the balance between liberty and the protection of the individual. They also felt that the Government was over-emphasising the terrorist threat as an excuse for being authoritarian.

To the concern of many Peace Group members, all candidates except Adam Twine ( who has been actively involved in campaigning against it), admitted ignorance regarding the development of new nuclear weapons at Aldermaston in contravention of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. All agreed they would find out more – anyone prepared to follow up whoever is elected? The Greens would abolish all nuclear weapons while the Conservatives would keep them. The Labour and Lib.Dem candidates felt that now the Cold War is over, we should start to move towards British and global disarmament. The hypocrisy of our position, possessing and developing nuclear weapons while denying them to other countries, was discussed alongside poverty and inequality of wealth and resources as a cause of resentment and conflict in the world.

The invasion of Iraq was opposed by all candidates except Ed Vaizey. The Green Party would pull all troops out of Iraq now, while the other parties felt that they must stay at least until the security situation

improves. Candidates were worried to varying extents about rumours of a planned US attack on Iran or Syria in June but thought it would probably not happen and was very unlikely to get British support.

Ed Vaizey surprised many both on the panel and in the audience by his strong support for Israel, which he feels is unfairly treated in the British media. Like the other candidates, he felt slightly more hopeful of a lasting peace agreement between Israel and Palestine under the new Palestinian leadership. Other candidates welcomed concessions by Israel as far as they went, but were critical of what the Palestinians were being asked to accept in return.

Mark MacDonald and Andrew Crawford in particular were challenged on expressing views which sometimes disagreed with those of their party, which they would represent if elected. Both defended their right, even duty, to use their individual responsibility and not just tow the party line. Ed Vaizey, (perhaps in the light of Robert Jackson MP's recent defection to the Labour Party!), was keen to stress that if elected, he should and would vote with his party in parliament. Adam Twine criticised the electoral system which gives us the choice of so few individuals and parties to vote for and only every five years.

The meeting ended with agreement about young people's disillusionment with politicians and parties but not with politics itself, especially when the issue is one they feel strongly about. They are probably more involved than ever in big issues such as world poverty, justice and peace and the environment but choose to make a difference in ways other than through the ballot box.

Candidates stayed on afterwards for informal discussions over Fairtrade tea and coffee. (Only worth mentioning as the meeting took place during Fairtrade Fortnight - our drinks are always fairly traded.)

#### **APRIL MEETING – Father Gerry McFlynn “PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND”**

Father Gerry McFlynn, a priest for 32 years and Vice-Chair of Pax Christi (Catholic Church's Justice and Peace Group), spoke to the Faringdon Peace Group in April about healing and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Although for the past 11 years his work with Irish prisoners has kept him in this country, he was brought up in Belfast and looked

after his first Parish there in the mid-seventies when the violence was at its height and every family was affected in some way.

Despite 35 years of conflict, his message was one of hope. He believes people have had enough, are no longer prepared to put up with violence and that new generations are able to look at past problems in a different way. Since the Good Friday Agreement, which addressed many of the grievances of the Nationalists, he feels there is no going back to the levels of violence seen in the past. He welcomed the recent statement by Sinn Fein that the IRA should move away from violence and expected to see more positive changes after the Election. But Gerry McFlynn emphasised that even with a political agreement acceptable to all sides, the process of healing and reconciliation is essential to overcome past enmities, heal memories and change people's mind-sets. This could take as long as two generations to succeed.

He warned against using words such as healing, reconciliation, forgiveness and peace too lightly, as each is a process requiring great courage and commitment. "Peace" means very different things depending on whose point of view you see it from. "Forgive and forget" is not appropriate advice, as those who are best at forgiving are those who do not forget and who know the price of forgiveness. He said that throughout the Troubles small groups have always come together to work for peace and understanding between communities and that dialogue between those who fundamentally and radically disagree with each other must continue. It is important that all groups are listened to and none is marginalised. He was encouraged by the way that Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party are already working together in Councils and Local Government throughout Northern Ireland. Gerry McFlynn concluded that events in Northern Ireland may still be too close and raw for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission such as has been successful in Central and South America and South Africa, but that the killings, injuries and hurt on all sides must be dealt with and a line drawn under them. In his optimistic view of human nature, he is very hopeful that people in the end will always tend towards reconciliation and opening their minds, rather than closing them.

#### **BRISTOL CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE GROUP**

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Marcus and Kath attended the launch of this new group with a day of lectures, workshops and discussions on arms trade issues. They also discussed ways to influence local arms companies,

such as BAE Systems, and government policy on selling weapons overseas.

> Anna Stavrianakis, the group's spokeswoman, said: "The uncontrolled flow of weapons around the globe exacts an appalling toll in human misery, which can only be ended by breaking the stranglehold of arms on government export control policy. We in Bristol CAAT will be playing a lively and active part in this campaign, making sure that local arms companies are held to account for their role in this lethal trade."

For more information contact:

Bristol CAAT at Anna.Stavrianakis @Bristol.ac.uk

Bristol CAAT's website at

<http://www.bristolcaat.org.uk>

### **RAF BRIZE NORTON PEACE CAMP – 21<sup>st</sup>. to 25<sup>th</sup>. April**

With daily vigils, stalls, leafletting and workshops. Bring own tent, bedding etc. vegan food provided but any extras welcome.

### **PEACE AND MILITARY VETERANS DEMO – 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 12.00, Carterton**

This information may come too late to take part, but it is worth reminding ourselves of the essential role played in the occupation of Iraq by this the largest RAF base in the country. Troops are flown to and from Iraq from here, some arriving back in coffins. Part of the aim of the camp and demo is to reach out to the military personnel and people of nearby Carterton and enter into dialogue with them. We know that many ordinary people and soldiers have deep misgivings about the occupation. Marcus has an excellent video about this action. As we are the closest Peace Group to the base, we should have a presence there.

For more information contact:

[Nabataat@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Nabataat@yahoo.co.uk), Tel: 0117-9466885 or mobile: 07711-214-168

[www.fairfordpeacewatch.com/brizenortonpeacecamp.html](http://www.fairfordpeacewatch.com/brizenortonpeacecamp.html)

Phone Jennie:01367-710-308 or Karen 01367-241707 for local details

### **BLACKABY PAPERS NO.5 – “SCIENCE AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?” by Joseph Rotblat**

This is the fifth in a series of occasional papers on defence and disarmament issues published in memory of Frank Blackaby by Abolition 2000. It is hoped that it will help to promote public awareness

of the nuclear weapons problem in the lead up to the key 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty in New York in May. Please contact me if you would like to borrow it

### **LEVELLERS' DAY**

The 31<sup>st</sup> annual Levellers' Day will take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> May from 10 till 5 in Warwick Hall Garden in Burford. There will be speeches, debate, procession, ceremony and music to commemorate the three Leveller soldiers who were executed on Cromwell's orders in Burford Churchyard in May 1649. Bring banners. Stalls and vegetarian refreshments all day. For more information go to:

[www.levellers.org.uk](http://www.levellers.org.uk), [levellers@btinternet.com](mailto:levellers@btinternet.com) or Tel: 01865-249336

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**WEDS. 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY** – Monthly meeting to discuss Grand Peace Fete and Month for Peace

**SAT. 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY** - Levellers Day, Burford (see above)

**WEDS. 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE** – Monthly meeting, Sjoerd to tell us about “Make Poverty History”, the theme of the Fete.

**SAT. 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY** – GRAND PEACE FETE, Clock House, Coleshill 2-5pm. Please see attached sheet.

**2<sup>ND</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY** – G8 Summit, Gleneagles, Scotland. Protests include: 2<sup>nd</sup> – Make Poverty History Demo in Edinburgh; 4<sup>th</sup> – Big Blockade at Faslane; 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> “G8 Alternatives” 3 day music festival and alternative summit near Gleneagles

**WEDS. 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY** – Monthly meeting. Margaret Jones has been invited.

**AUGUST 6<sup>th</sup> /9<sup>th</sup>.** – 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki

**SAT.8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER** – Launch of “MONTH FOR PEACE”

**Sat. 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER** – End of the above with Barn Dance

More information or articles for next newsletter to: Karen Vogt, 7, Leamington Drive, Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 7JZ Tel: 01367-241707

[Karen\\_vogt@lineone.net](mailto:Karen_vogt@lineone.net)

Newsletter Archives:

[www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk](http://www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk)

Faringdon Peace Group

## GRAND PEACE FETE 2005

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July – 2pm-5pm

Clock House, Coleshill: on the Faringdon to Highworth B4019 road

**Can you help??** We need **YOU** – but we also need **LOTS OF GOODIES** for all the stalls:

<b>CAKES</b>	For Produce Stall as well as for TEAS...
<b>PLANTS</b>	Indoor, outdoor, ornamental, vegetable, flowering, fruiting, unusual...
<b>PRODUCE</b>	jam, marmalade, pickles, quiches, pizzas, cakes
<b>BOOKS</b>	hardback, paperback
<b>WHITE ELEPHANT &amp; BRIC-A-BRAC</b>	Clean & in reasonable condition – <b>NO JUMBLE!</b>
<b>RAFFLE</b>	Chocolates, gifts, ALCOHOL, hampers, vouchers...
<b>TOMBOLA GIFTS</b>	New or good 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand; bottles of anything from shampoo to salad cream, alcoholic especially welcome! Tins & packets of food; ornaments, wine, chocolates....  `Prizes' from mail order firms or special offers from petrol companies are VERY useful!

**PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL NOT BE A JUMBLE STALL THIS YEAR.** We are again hoping to have a **separate tombola for children**, so any good second hand /new small toys or ornaments would be very welcome! For the past two years, the children's tombola has been very popular!

So – **PLEASE START COLLECTING NOW!** Hopefully, you WILL be able to come to the Fete – in which case simply bring all your collected items with you on the day. However, for TOMBOLA gifts it's very useful to receive them beforehand so that they can have tickets put on them. Get them to Jennie Chesterton (01367-710308) in plenty of time if at all possible.

And anything for the Fete CAN also be dropped off beforehand at Karen/Sjoerd's – 7 Leamington Drive, Faringdon. (phone 241707 first to check that we're in) - OR – if you prefer we can come & collect.

**ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED! PLEASE PHONE OR EMAIL ASAP IF YOU CAN COME AND BE A HELPER ON THE DAY!  
MANY THANKS!**