



ACTION AWE – NEWSLETTER NO. 2 – MAY 2013

News from Action AWE: inspiring actions, and invitation to free training

Please send feedback or ideas to info@actionawe.org

LEAFLETS FOR YOUR EVENTS

Groups busy organising their action may have no time to devise their own leaflets, so we have designed and printed two that you can download from our website. We also have several thousand printed that you can have sent to you or which you can collect in Reading.

The leaflet for workers at AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield can be found at <http://actionawe.org/leaflet-to-hand-to-awe-workers/>. It is an open letter to people who work at the AWE sites and begins:- *"Talented people deserve useful jobs. We want to halt the production of nuclear weapons, but we are not here to threaten you or your jobs. All jobs entail challenges, choices and compromises. We are asking you to choose for the future not the past, to choose for your families, life and peace."* It continues by specifying the work that will need to be done to disarm our nuclear weapons safely.

The leaflet for people in the towns around the AWE sites (Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke) can be found at <http://actionawe.org/leaflet-for-events-in-towns/>. It starts out by saying:- "Look Out for ACTION AWE! Over the coming months you may see an increase in visitors to this town, coming to talk about the nearby nuclear weapons factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield, and the Government plan to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system with new nuclear weapons. They'll be bringing their message in a variety of colourful, poetic and creative ways, and they'll be hoping to encourage you not only to join in the events but more importantly not to vote at the next general election for any candidate who supports Trident Replacement." It continues by giving our main messages and contact details and urging people to get involved.

For copies of the leaflets, window posters, t-shirts and also to borrow the Action AWE banners please contact Helen on localinformationActionAWE@gmail.com or ring her on 0845-4588-367

LEGAL SUPPORT TRAINING DAY on 19th May in Reading

Support for those taking action is often crucial to the success of an action and the well-being of activists. There will be a free training on Sunday May 19th in Reading. Contact Angie at info@actionawe.org or ring her on 0845-4588-362 to book your place. This short training aims to help individuals and members of affinity groups to provide "legal support" for an action. You don't have to be a lawyer, "legal support" is more about knowing which parts of the law can help you to help activists who are arrested, stopped and searched, or hurt by the police. Two experienced activists will be giving a 5 hour training from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. which will be delivered mainly through group work, and will cover:- an introduction to legal support; legal observing; basic rights – arrest; detention and release; stop and search; complaints against the police; practicalities; and running a legal support system.

KNIGHTON KNIT-IN ON 30th MARCH



Around 30 people gathered at the Clock Tower in Knighton, Powys, to start their peace scarf knitting. They aim to knit a length that will surround the clock tower several times and to join in the 7 mile Wool Not Weapons event in 2014. They need to do a great deal of knitting and will be holding another knit-in on Saturday 4th May at 10.30 a.m.

See <http://actionawe.org/mid-wales-journal/>

For a great short video with Jaine at Aldermaston explaining Wool Against Weapons see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdAYa6rDBCc>

To order t-shirts so your message shows clearly and yet leaves your hands free then see <http://actionawe.org/action-awe-t-shirts/>

CND ACTION ON 1st APRIL

As part of their contribution to the Action AWE Campaign CND organised one of their traditional Easter events at AWE Aldermaston - a 'Stop Fooling with Nuclear Weapons' demonstration on 1st April.

Over a thousand people gathered at the gates with messages to scrap the Trident nuclear weapons system and cancel its replacement. Speakers included Green Party Leader Natalie Bennett; Jeremy Corbyn MP; fashion designer Katharine Hamnett, CND General Secretary Kate Hudson and Vice-President Bruce Kent; and founding members of CND Walter Wolfgang and Pat Arrowsmith. One special moment was a short and beautiful speech by the 107 year old Hetty Bower, a lifelong peace activist who told the crowd why she was there: 'In one word: peace.'

For more info see <http://actionawe.org/april-1st-2013-protest-stop-fooling-with-nuclear-weapons/> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOjG4l4HZ08>



10th APRIL

A team of 9 people closed Tadley gate at AWE Aldermaston during the evening end of work on Wednesday 10th April. They were from Reading, Oxford, Northants and Hampshire. The team, dressed in white suits, held a large ActionAWE banner in front of the gate, and also lay 'dead' in front of the banner on the roadway as the workers began to leave.



They blocked the gate for 40 minutes, and the traffic had to be diverted to other gates on the site. MOD police tried to persuade the campaigners to clear the gate, but to no avail. Eventually the MOD police shut the gate and even put a 'Police Slow' sign by the roundabout. The group had a legal observer / photographer who took many pictures. There were no arrests. The group decided to do this as part of the year-long action against Aldermaston AWE -

ActionAWE (Action Atomic Weapons ERADICATION) to stop Trident replacement, and would urge other groups to plan their own events at Aldermaston AWE.

A video of their action is at: <http://youtu.be/PdpPlq1mjBc>

Singing Trident Out – 20th April

Political choirs came together on Saturday 20 April in Newbury in glorious sunshine to Sing Trident Out! The singers were from choirs in Wales, Reading, Oxford and London as well as some individuals not in a regular singing group. We were singing from a song book compiled for these events by Penny Stone, available on the Action AWE website at <http://actionawe.org/songbook/>

As we sang to Newbury shoppers our impact was evident. Many people took leaflets and some people made nasty comments like 'at least we know where to aim the missiles' - meaning at us! We hit a nerve! We need to go back there again.

After lunch we moved to Falcon Gate at AWE Aldermaston singing as we went. Outside the gate we continued singing and keeping the policy busy.

We aim to continue these singing protests throughout the Action AWE Campaign. So please come and join us at our next singing protest event on the 15 June!



Keep your eye on the Action AWE site for more details and you can also contact us through the choirs email at info@redandgreenchoir.org.uk and info@raised-voices.org.uk Or you can ring Leslie on 07952 616 352 or Morag on 07772 019717.



Early Morning AWE – 9th April

The very idea of a nuclear weapons-owning democracy is terrible in the extreme - a mass consent to commit mass murder (or how else would deterrence work?)

It is of course not so conscious a consent. The Government is trapped in 'political necessities' and the people are unaware, unconsciously or wilfully. What is there to see? Destructive potential so vast that it can only be understood by numbers is impossible to visualise. It's just a big weapon isn't it? We need it for security don't we?

So, for those who have chosen to be aware, where do we start? Obviously we need to tell the Government, tell the people, make them see what is happening and what really can be done about it, give them hope that could overcome their universally suppressed fears. Anti-nuclear weapons campaigners know how hard this is. Governments and public opinion are something we chip away at. These are quite elusive things and neither is based at Aldermaston or Burghfield. So why do we go there?

We go because there is an instinctive and real need to confront the evil where it lies. No amount of writing and talking elsewhere can substitute for facing these five miles of wire, behind which five thousand highly technical creative people work to engineer a new Armageddon. We go there to be seen and sometimes even when there is nobody there to see us. The event on Easter Monday, observed by minimal media and a few kindly police, was hugely successful - an affirmation, a rally, a physical prayer, an outpouring of the human spirit confronting a mindless capability for destruction.

And what about the people who put themselves behind this wire every day? Certainly we have a message for them. We ask them to think, to think outside the conventional oversimplified deterrence wisdom. To think it through in a historical, global and moral context. We would like to create for them the intellectual and moral climate where they are free to do this and to act on their conclusions.

It is quite hard to think rationally if it might cost you your job. And we know from experience that what is even harder than putting your job on the line is to be different. It takes intellectual and moral courage to openly 'question the mission'. But, in principle, AWE staff should be free to do the same as we do. They have colleagues and family to talk it over with. They have MPs and newspapers to write to. They have a right, like anyone else, to protest against government policy. Unless their management see fit to deny them these rights, it should not even jeopardise their jobs, because we have come to a point where the global dismantling of the nuclear threat to the world will require a huge investment of equivalent skills and engineering facilities. If the UK takes a lead on this, grasping the necessary outcomes of a nuclear weapons treaty, there will be work for many years.

The idea for the current Early Morning Aldermaston pickets probably started three years ago on 15th February 2010 when we blockaded all the gates at Aldermaston starting at 7.00 a.m.! That is the time to be there if you want to meet staff arriving. On that occasion we were there all night for a Christian CND vigil at Tadley Gate. We were quite happy to stand there with our lanterns and symbols of all faiths, defended by the police against local hooligans (though not against the cold); but around 5.30 a.m., when it should have been really quiet, things began to happen. One car, then another, then hundreds, pouring through the gate to get to work ahead of our blockade. You have to admire this, but it was so frustrating. I did not even have my usual "WMD" placard, as thousands of people drove past in the morning darkness. However, I resolved to come back.

Now I find there are many people coming back, at all sorts of times. Several of us, with the benefit of similar experiences, come back about once a month for this early shift. It still seems like the most appropriate time because the workers are at that moment placing themselves 'inside the wire', where they will help to maintain and enhance our genocidal weapons.



They will not stop to take a leaflet - you get a bit of eye contact if you are lucky - but they cannot help but read the simple, polite, strong messages on our placards. And they come in their thousands. To get 600 cars an hour through Home Office Gate without clogging up the local country roads is quite an achievement in traffic management. And this happens every morning. We intend to continue to play our occasional part in this drama. Our next appearance will be around 7.00 a.m. on 21st May. If we are well organised then one car-load of demonstrators can get the message to about a thousand staff. We must never let these people forget what they are doing.

Contact martin@nuclearmorality.com for details about which gates we will go to.