

REGIONAL NEWS



HALLOWEEN ACTION

The Greenham Common Hallowe'en Gathering, organised mostly by members of Green CND, took place between October 29 and November 1. Over 100 people camped for the weekend and nearly 300 attended on Sunday, although the police were carrying out a deliberate policy of discouraging people from arriving.

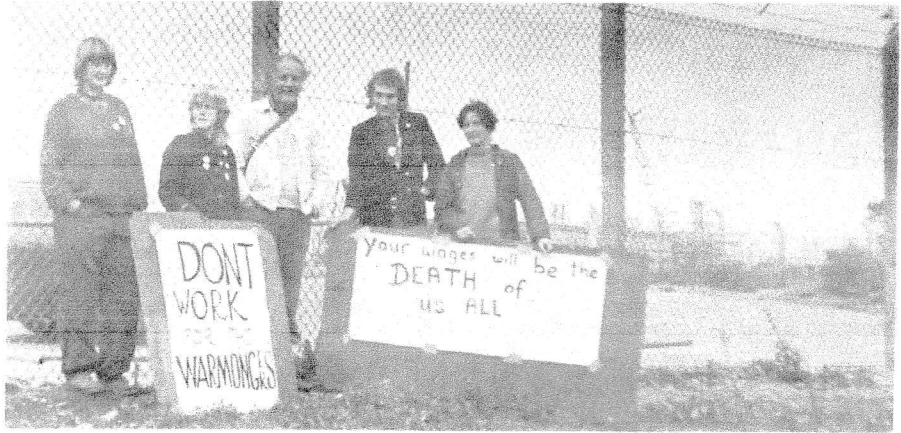
The event was held near the works entrance to the missile base, on disused land not owned by Newbury District Council. Organisers had previously given a pledge not to camp on council-owned common land over the weekend. This was to avoid a confrontation with the council (who had been very upset by the Cosmic Counter-Cruise Carnival in July), and to emphasise the Gathering's opposition to cruise missiles and not the civil authorities.

Support was expressed for the Women's Peace Camp, which still continues at the base's main gate; the emphasis of the gathering was on Non-Violent Direct political Action, in the belief that extraordinary measures are needed to meet the present extraordinary situation.

The weekend included much discussion as to how the campaign could be made more effective. In particular, there was a workshop concerning Tarmac Construction Co, the main contractors at the base. Some research has already been done by members of Newbury Campaign Against Cruise Missiles, but it quickly became clear that the greatest need was for more information.

Numerous companies and union members are or will be working at Greenham, many with subsidiaries and branches around the country. There may be many opportunities to hinder NATO's plans to site new American missiles at Greenham next year, by persuading key individuals and organisations. (For more information, see 'Peace News' 2180, or contact John Harvey, NCAACM, PO Box 29, Newbury, Berks).

Just after dusk on the Saturday, a group assembled around a campfire to discuss what they were there for. The



Picketers outside the works entrance to Greenham Common on Monday November 1. Site traffic was diverted to avoid this appalling threat.

Photo: Bruce Garrard

discussion quickly came round to ways was the security-consciousness of stopping the deployment of cruise the MoD police that they kept the missiles, so we had a 'brainstorm': construction gates firmly locked, 39 suggestions went on the list, from so that ballast lorries had an extra the small to the grand, from the most mile or two added to their run from serious suggestions for direct actionsthe quarry to the site.

against the base, to the most silly, like taking a cruise missile into the Queen's bedroom.

The one weekend when base security was alert seemed a bad time to enter the site or block the gate, and the shops were shut so we couldn't get any superglue for the locks. Confronted with the situation of being right on the spot, the need for thorough advance planning was brought home to everyone interested in that type of direct action.

But at 7 am on the Monday morning a few stalwarts did picket the gate, only to find that traffic had been re-routed via the main gate. Such

The Gathering was also a celebration however, a confirmation of life in contrast to the death symbolised by the missile base. The weather stayed dry, and people enjoyed themselves, with music and theatre on the Sunday evening.

On Sunday afternoon, 60 people from the Gathering had walked around the perimeter fence, noting the huge extent of the construction work. They planted tulip bulbs in the shape of a large peace symbol. The flowers will appear next summer; as will demonstrators in much larger numbers if the cruise programme is not stopped.

RAF YEOVILTON

Anyone who went to the Glastonbury CND festival will have been aware of a great deal of RAF activity, which is based on RAF Yeovilton. Yeovilton is being used as a testing station, and recently their have been two unreported air crashes: apparently the pilot's controls were accidentally knocked causing ejection. In both cases

nuclear weapons are reported to have been spilled, though no news of this reached the press.

Also recently, there was a full red alert resulting in aircraft being in the air, armed, and ready to go. This was caused by a failure in a safety cable: it had been gnawed through by a mouse.