



# OXFORD CND

## NEWSLETTER

July/August 2021



## A ruling allowing the Ministry of Defence to keep nuclear safety problems secret has been condemned as a threat to democracy, with 'devastating' accident risks

Annual reports by the MoD's internal watchdog, the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR), were published for 10 years under Freedom of Information law, but ceased in 2017.

The MoD's decision to stop publishing DNSR reports was appealed to the First Tier Tribunal on information rights by researcher and campaigner, Peter Burt. Hearings were held in London in December 2019, but the verdict was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. The ruling, which has now been made available, dismissed his appeal and endorsed the MoD arguments for secrecy. Key parts of the tribunal proceedings were conducted in private, with Burt banned from taking part.

The ruling was attacked by Rob Forsyth, a nuclear submarine commander with the Royal Navy in the 1970s who now opposes Trident. "The tribunal's decision flies in the face of government accountability. UK MoD is becoming ever more secretive and, under the cloak of national security, is now not willing even to acknowledge or be accountable publicly for any nuclear incidents – despite the potentially devastating effect that an accident might have on the civilian population."

Peter Burt, who made the appeal, was worried by the verdict. "It allows the Ministry of Defence to get away with concealing the risks posed by its nuclear programme to the public," he said. He was backed by the Nuclear Information Service, which monitors nuclear weapons. "This is an undemocratic and ill-considered decision, which only serves to prevent the public being informed about the MoD's mistakes," warned the group's director, David Cullen. "The only people being kept in the dark here are the public, who have a right to know whether the billions spent on the nuclear weapon programme have resulted in a basic level of safety being achieved."

In November 2019 The Ferret reported that the UK's civil nuclear watchdog, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), had privately told the MoD that it disagreed with the decision to stop publishing the nuclear safety reports. There was "a difference in approach" between the two bodies, ONR said.

**Rob Edwards**, *The National* 4th July 2021

Full article – <https://www.thenational.scot/news/19418166.finding-allowing-mod-keep-safety-risks-secret-condemned-threat-democracy/>

**Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

---

# Soft Rains

Does the consumption of fictional disaster help people to deal with actual disaster? There is some evidence, both anecdotal and scientific, that this sort of 'exposure therapy' may work – certainly disaster movies have become even more popular during the pandemic. Along the same lines, the pandemic has led me to discover two neglected classics. The first is Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* published in 1826 – far less well-known than *Frankenstein* – which can fairly be claimed as the world's first dystopian novel with its plot based on a global pandemic. And the other is H G Wells' *The Shape of Things to Come*, published in 1933, which imagines a future when the world's population is cut in half by a deadly pandemic virus that had a zoonotic origin – a book far less well-known than *The War of the Worlds* (and to be honest, not so well written).

Of course, most, probably all, of those reading this *Newsletter* will have on their minds from time to time, maybe quite often, the apprehension of a different sort of disaster which has not yet hit us but yet (like the pandemic till it appeared) very well could. This is the threat of a nuclear weapons catastrophe, whether caused by accident or design, which could have a global impact on an even greater scale than the current pandemic. Perhaps the *Radio 4 Extra* planners had current disaster on their mind when, a few weeks ago, they scheduled a repeat of a dramatised version of Ray Bradbury's short story *There Will Come Soft Rains*. This was a double revelation for me: I had never quite read to the end of his *Martian Chronicles* (1950), where this is the last story but one, nor was I aware of the work of the American poet Sara Teasdale (1884-1993) whose poem gives Bradbury's story its title and its central theme.

Bradbury's tale is set in a Californian town that has been devastated by a nuclear war which apparently had overwhelmed the world. He wrote it soon after the Soviet Union had tested its first A-bomb and the US had announced that it was

starting development of the H-bomb, and his story was a far-sighted prediction of something we would all come to fear. I won't spoil it for readers by saying anything about the plot, which is as simple as it is chilling. Interviewed thirty years later for the *Christian Science Monitor*, Bradbury was asked if there was one work that reflected the essence of his fiction, and he named this story.

The dramatised BBC version is brilliantly done, produced by the broadcaster and writer Nesta Pain, and with music composed and conducted by Antony Hopkins (some may remember his regular music programmes *Talking About Music*). And I

notice with interest that it was first broadcast on 12 September 1962, a time when US-Soviet relations were worsening again and causing alarm -- just one month before the Cuba missile crisis burst upon us, and prescient timing indeed.

Sara Teasdale published her poem *There Will Come Soft Rains* (later she sub-titled it *War Time*) in 1918

just after the German Spring Offensive on the Western Front. It was one of six poems that she would group together in a volume published in 1920, all of which relate to the war and its human

devastation: as she wrote in one of them, 'Men dies by millions now, because God blunders'. Again, I won't describe *There Will Come Soft Rains* in detail, for those who have not read it, but one can easily see why Bradbury should have chosen it, after a second world war and under the threat of a third, for his own dystopian exercise.

In his 1980 interview, Bradbury said that his story was a metaphor for the sadness of the world at the time, and that 'we were more afraid back then than we are now'. Perhaps, he suggested, the relationship between the three major powers (China was already coming on the scene) would allow the world to maintain an 'uneasy peace' for quite a few years: that was his hope anyhow. We may hope too, and meanwhile we may quieten our fears by reading about them. ■

**John Gittings**



---

# New Trident D5LE2 Missile Planned for Introduction in 2039

The admiral in charge of developing and sustaining the U.S. Navy's strategic weapons said the service needs to have the new Trident D5LE2 ballistic missile ready to deploy in fiscal 2039 on the ninth hull of the US Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine.

The current D5LE missile inventory will be maintained and provide the necessary operational support to sustain the current US Ohio-class submarines through their service lives. This is being accomplished through an update to all subsystems. All the life-extension efforts remain on track and the current program will support the deployment of all existing warheads.

During the time of transition, W93 [warhead]/ Mark 7 [re-entry body] will be introduced to rebalance the stockpile of W76 and W88 warheads.



The admiral said that as the U.S. project officer for the Polaris Sales Agreement, he will continue to support the U.K. sovereign deterrent for today's Vanguard-class submarines and their successor, the Dreadnought class.

For decades, U.S. policy has recognized that the independent nuclear deterrent adds to global stability, and under the 1958

mutual defence agreement and 1962 Polaris Sales Agreement, the United States has provided assistance and material consistent with international law to the U.K. deterrent program. Without this assistance, the cost and schedule risk to maintain the U.K.'s independent deterrent would rise significantly, thus creating additional challenges for the U.K. in sustaining its nuclear contribution to NATO alongside the U.S. ■

---

## The UK's new nuclear strategy is illegal

The UK government's decision to increase the size of its nuclear arsenal ends three decades of gradual reductions. This provocative action is at odds with the decision by Presidents Biden and Putin to continue bilateral nuclear reductions and risks starting a new nuclear arms race.

Following this unexpected and unwelcome announcement, CND commissioned a Legal Opinion authored by renowned experts Professor Christine Chinkin and Dr Louise Arimatsu. Their findings show a clear breach of Article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In summary, the legal opinion CND has acquired. *The announcement by the UK government of the*

*increase in nuclear warheads and its modernisation of its weapons system constitutes a breach of the NPT article VI; The UK would be in breach of international law were it to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a state party to the NPT solely on the basis of a material breach of the latter's non-proliferation obligations.*

*The UK would be in breach of international law were it to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons in self-defence solely on the grounds that the future threat of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological capabilities or emerging technologies, could have comparable impact to nuclear weapons. ■*



# NUKEWATCH

The latest nuclear warhead convoy travelled north from AWE Aldermaston to Coulport over two days, 29th and 30th June. It returned south to AWE Aldermaston over two days, 1st and 2nd July. It was tracked and monitored by nukewatchers, and is the most-deadly cargo on our roads. Attached is a photo of an Oxford CND nukewatcher with peace flag beside the southbound convoy on the A34 near Oxford on Friday 2nd July. ■



Above: Southbound nuclear warhead convoy, A34 Oxford 4.25pm Friday 2nd July 2021.

## Peace Plaque in Bonn Square

**Monday 9th August, 2.00pm**

**Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing remembered**

**'Not Once, but Twice – Never Again'**

Each August the anniversary of the dropping of the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is commemorated across the world. This year, on the 76th anniversary, peace activists from Didcot and Oxford will come together to remember and to call on the UK Government to sign up to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Hiroshima Day, Friday 6th August, will be marked with a gathering for reflection beside Ladygrove Lake in Didcot, while Nagasaki Day will be commemorated in Bonn Square, Oxford on Monday 9th August.

To physically link these two events, we plan to undertake a Peace Walk from Didcot to Oxford along the Thames Path during Sunday 8th and Monday 9th August.

Along the way we will give out leaflets and speak to people we meet. **If you would be interested in taking part in the walk (for all or just part of the route) or joining us at one of the events, please do get in touch.**

**Marie Walsh**

Tel: **07999 090484**

email: **longmarch@riseup.net**



**2021 marks the 40th anniversary of the start of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, the largest women-led activist movement since suffrage**

These women took on the establishment and defended the future of the planet by protesting against the placement of nuclear missiles at RAF Greenham Common

To celebrate the legendary Greenham Women who walked from Cardiff to Newbury, we are re-tracing their steps

## JOIN US!

**Start: Thursday 26th August 2021, Cardiff City Hall**  
**End: Friday 3rd September, Greenham Common**  
**Cycle: Start Thursday 2nd, End Friday 3rd September**

Stopping for rest, refreshment & rallying along the way  
You can join us for all or some of the walk, followed by  
a weekend of activities on the Common

Go to <https://greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk/march-2021/>  
for route details

Email [hello@greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk](mailto:hello@greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk) with any  
questions



## **ALDERMASTON WOMEN'S PEACE CAMP**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**A weekend of women's peace camps celebrations**

AWPC's September camp will be moved to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> to join in with the Greenham Peace Camp's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary events (<https://www.facebook.com/ScaryLittleGirls/>).

**Join us outside AWE Aldermaston for:**

**Guided tours of Aldermaston and Burghfield nuclear weapons bases**



**Activism Craft workshops**



**Talks on nuclear weapons and resistance**

**PLUS!!**

**Saturday night party to celebrate 36 years of  
AWPC's presence outside AWE Aldermaston  
Wine, Song, Music – Party starts at 7pm**

– Bring a tent and sleeping bag – Some refreshments provided throughout the weekend - Accessible toilets near the Camp –

**ALSO!**

**Join AWPC and Greenham Women for 'Weaving the Web(inars)' – Online March of Ideas between 27 August and 2 Sept 2021 ([info@acronym.org.uk](mailto:info@acronym.org.uk))**

**Organized by Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, Paices Hill RG7 4WP, outside AWE Aldermaston**

AWPC camps are held on the second weekend of each month. For more information please phone 07852 293386

# **Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp**

## **Join us!**

---

# Oxford CND Benefit Concert

## Oxford Classic Jazz Band

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



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



**Caroline  
The Musical Saw Lady**

**Saturday 11th September 2021**

**7.30pm-10.00pm**

**Doors open 7.00pm**

**Tickets: £12.00**

**(£10.00 concessions)**

**Tel: 01865 248357**

**Food! Refreshments!**

**[oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop](mailto:oxfordcnd@phoncoop.coop)**





# Diary

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

## July

**Wednesday 7th** – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – Oldham Peace group – 7.30pm.

**Thursday 8th** – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom – 2.00pm.

**Saturday 10th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp 1.00pm – Margaret – 01865 248357.

**Saturday 10th** – CND Council Zoommeeting.

**Tuesday 20th** – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, Activism from Greenham to today – 8.00pm.

## August

**Wednesday 4th** – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting – 7.30pm.

**Saturday 7th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret - 01865 248357

**Sunday 8th** – Didcot marchers start to Oxford for Nagasaki Day, 9th August.

**Monday 9th** – Peace Plaque, Bonn Square Hiroshima / Nagasaki meet – 2.00pm.

**TBC** – Oxfordshire Peace Campaign Zoom meeting.

**Thursday 26th** – Start Cardiff Greenham Women Everywhere march to Greenham, 3rd September.

### Best list of news items, webinars etc:

[https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news\\_items](https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items)



### Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:  
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP  
No later than **August 23rd 2021**

## Latest News

### Military Pollution Excluded from Climate Agreements

As a result of final-hour demands made by the U.S. government during negotiation of the 1997 Kyoto treaty, military greenhouse gas emissions were exempted from climate negotiations. That tradition has continued. The 2015 Paris Agreement left cutting military greenhouse gas emissions to the discretion of individual nations.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, obliges signatories to publish annual greenhouse gas emissions, but military emissions reporting is voluntary and often not included.

NATO has acknowledged the problem but not created any specific requirements to address it.

There is no reasonable basis for this gaping loophole. War and war preparations are major greenhouse gas emitters. All greenhouse gas emissions need to be included in mandatory greenhouse gas emission reduction standards. There must be no more exception for military pollution.

### Membership subscriptions 2021 Please pay your subscription soon!

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 2021 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**

### Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

3 Harpsichord Place, Oxford, OX4 1BX.

01865 248357 or [oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop](mailto:oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop)

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