



# STOP THE WAR COALITION



## MILTON KEYNES STOP THE WAR! GROUP

### Newsletter April 2003

Since the coalition forces invaded Iraq, some who were initially against the war have decided that, as 'our troops' are now in action, we must support them. We say that the best way to support the troops is to bring them home safely! Our Government has involved them in an illegal and immoral war, which has claimed almost 1000 civilian lives at time of writing (8/4/03) and untold numbers maimed. The consequence of halting the humanitarian feeding programme to 16 million Iraqi's four weeks ago has yet to be felt.

Meanwhile the US administration blatantly hands out lucrative reconstruction contracts to its top political funders, and continues to ignore other repressive regimes that are 'friendly' to the West. Far from making the world a safer place, this war will have strengthened the resolve of fundamentalist terrorist organisations and provided them with countless new recruits.

The Milton Keynes Stop the War group is committed to continual protest and action against this war, and the inevitable wars that will follow as the US tries to impose its might around the globe. Below are report-backs on some of the events that have happened in MK in the last month.

#### **Anti-war Demonstration and rally, Saturday 22 March, Milton Keynes city centre**

By David Broadhurst

We began at noon outside McDonald's by the Milton Keynes shopping centre. A friendly policeman asked who our steward was and what we intended to do. We thought that we ought to discuss this first. It was decided that we should share our feelings first and then march.

The floor was open to whomsoever wished to use the megaphone, with no political orchestration whatsoever. I was impressed by the simplicity, moderation, and also the sadness of the way that several people spoke, quite simply, for themselves. A recurrent theme was "Not in My Name".



Brain White, my MP, attended in order to observe. He made himself available to discuss the issues with his constituents (in one memorable case with a young man who was not yet 18). I shall long remember a mother asking Brian how she was supposed to explain this war to her young daughter.

Our march was both peaceful and effective, aided by samba drummers from Wolverton. As agreed with the police, we made no attempt to enter the shopping centre, but marched half way round it. Then, a bit like a previous Duke of York, all the way back. No one was threatened by it; many noticed; some were puzzled. At the turn-around point, I counted 171 or so marchers, from toddlers in pushchairs to those in wheelchairs, plus a dog!

On our return to McDonald's, we resolved to continue in appropriate opposition to a dishonestly justified war. I thank those fellow citizens who enabled me to fulfil my civic duty.

*Peaceful demonstrations have continued in MK every Saturday since the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Come and join us!*

## Fairford Peace Camp

By Chris Coppock



Having just spent eight nights here I feel I need to share the experience. I was searched eight times (in mostly friendly way) by five different police forces, threatened with arrest for making raised-finger at hovering Blackhawk helicopter, saw truckloads of bombs, uncovered, shameless, in broad daylight, trundled down the runway, and cruise missiles fastened

under wings. Saw eight B52s take off on the first big raid, then singles every few hours after. Now firewood and even sleeping bags are banned, and one person was stopped for carrying a toothbrush -the ultimate terrorist weapon!

Anyone wants to visit--call me to arrange a lift--MK607630. Or why not write the camp to express your support? Getting mail (i.e. being a bona fide address) is a useful way to legitimise the camp's continued existence. Peacewatch, Gate 10, USAF Fairford, Near Dunfield, Gloucestershire. If you have internet access, you can keep updated by going to [www.gwi.org.uk](http://www.gwi.org.uk)

## Wolverton for Peace - Candlelight Circle

The Square, Wolverton, 7pm-7.45pm every Sunday for the duration of the war.

By Simon Buckingham Shum

This is simply a chance for the people of Wolverton to stand in silence together in thought and prayer. We remember those who are killing, and being killed, in Iraq. The candles remind us of the light of hope for peace and justice that will not be snuffed out. The silence gives us space to confront our own reactions to the horror, lies and chaos of what is unfolding.

Open to all ages, from every culture and creed. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Humanists, whomever or whatever you have faith in. You are welcome whether you are dead against the war, or believe it is necessary. You are of course also welcome to join us if you're outside Wolverton!

This idea was inspired by the power of the first vigil when 50 people gathered on Sunday 16 March, as part of the Global Vigil for Peace, in which over 6400 vigils rippled across the globe in 129 countries at 7pm local time. Please pass on the word to friends and networks.

## CMK Peace Vigil

70-80 people attended the Peace Vigil at the CMK Rail Station on the evening war broke out in Iraq. A 'Die in' was performed, impromptu speeches made, and a minute's silence held.

A vigil is held every Monday between 5:30 & 6:30 pm at the station, and every evening at 7pm at the Peace Pagoda, Willen Lake

(Thanks to MK Greens for the Photo)



If you are on email, then please contact us so we may pass information on activities to you quickly.

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