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## FAIRFORD PEACEWATCH AT THE BIG GREEN GATHERING

Gay, Genny and Tim, together with friends and children, went to the Big Green Gathering last month to help out with the Fairford Peacewatch stall. The festival was held on a large site in the Mendip Hills near Cheddar. One ticket was funded by WPJF to help with our expenses. Thanks for your support.

We arrived at the BGG on Thursday lunchtime to find the site already wet and a bit muddy, but at least it wasn't raining, so we pitched our tents and located the Fairford stall. Unfortunately, that night it poured continuously and blew a gale. The next morning we found every path transformed into a sea of mud, and the Fairford stall (two garden gazebos) flattened. So our first job was to rebuild it, which we did in proper Peace Camp style using benders, tarps and anything else that looked useful. The resulting stall was much stronger than the gazebos, and the occasional trickle of rain down the back of our necks only added to the traditional appeal. It continued wet and murky most of Friday, by which time parts of the site were knee deep in mud and several small lakes had appeared. The good news was that Saturday and Sunday were fine, hot summer days; everything slowly dried out and smiles returned.

So, what did we achieve? We thought it was very worthwhile going to BGG and especially working on the stall for several reasons, in no special order:

1. Meeting some of the other Fairford Peacewatch campers who we had not met on our visits to the camp, (due to bail restrictions in some cases); also reuniting with old friends.
2. Meeting and talking with the many interesting visitors to the stall and finding out about the other great Peace activities taking place around the country.
3. Going to workshops and discussions about the Peace Movement. The main themes were:
  - a. Recognition of all that was achieved in the last year.
  - b. Sharing plans and networking.
  - c. Debating the relative merits of nvda, demos, writing to MsP, etc., and generally agreeing that there is a place for all types of campaigning.
  - d. Dissatisfaction with the Stop The War Coalition, which seems to think only of big marches in London when there are much more exciting things happening around the country. There are moves to create



a more democratic, less London-centric network- which will not be dominated by a political party for its own ends.

We found the whole festival an inspiring reminder that there are lots of good people in the world. If all these people can work together for change, then we can create a real, peaceful, positive alternative to the corporate world of profit, corruption and conflict.

Fairford Peacewatch [www.fairfordpeacewatch.com](http://www.fairfordpeacewatch.com) has been set up by some of the Peace Campers to co-ordinate future activity and provide information about events at the base. There is no permanent camp at Fairford at the moment, as the B-52s and other US Bombers have returned home for now. If Bush and Bliar have another war and the bombers return, the Camp will be re-established. There have been "special events" at the base since the Gate 10 Camp was dismantled, for example "Independence from America" Day on July 4 and protests at the recent RIAT air tattoo. The next planned event is to celebrate Halloween with a few creative "Trick or Treat" actions. We're up for it, anyone else?

### LIBERTY REPORT - POLICING AT FAIRFORD

The policing at Fairford during the recent war is the subject of a report by the civil liberties / human rights organisation, Liberty. The report has been summarised by Alex Williamson in the August edition of Nonviolent Action and we reproduce the article here in full:

**Police use of anti-terrorism laws against peace protesters during the invasion of Iraq breached the European Convention on Human Rights, according to the Liberty Report *Casualty of War - 8 weeks of counter-terrorism in rural England.***