

PaxCat Project Newsletter

Issue 3, June 2010

“Bringing Peace Archives to Life”



The PaxCat Project ended in May. This final newsletter brings together news about the collections uncovered during the later stages of the project. Find out more by using the Archives Hub, the PaxCat blog and our new PaxCat Gallery on Flickr. PaxCat postcards featuring the nuclear disarmament symbol shown on the left are available on request from Special Collections.

COME MARCH WITH US!

The core collections covered by the project are those which tell the story of the radical wing of the early nuclear disarmament movement in Britain.

Archives of Operation Gandhi (later the Non Violent Resistance Group), the emergency committee behind Harold Steele’s Christmas Island protest, the Aldermaston March Committee, the Direct Action Committee, the World Peace Brigade, the San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace, the Committee Against Tax for Nuclear Arms and the Committee of 100 have been discovered and described.

Spanning the early 1950s to the late 1960s, these unique sources document the ideas and the actions of those who were outside the political mainstream, developing new methods of campaigning against the threat of nuclear war.

Their methods were not always well received at the time (not everyone appreciated a ‘poisoned milk’ leaflet appearing on their daily pint). But when the nuclear disarmament movement



revived in the early 1980s and peace camps spread across the country, it was to non violent direct action that campaigners turned. These archives make clear the historical connections and set each generation of campaigners in context.

INSIDE THE BOX



Over the past year, each of the archives has revealed its hidden gems. These photographs on the left have a historical significance and visual appeal that make them the stars of the PaxCat Project. They were found amongst the papers of Hugh Brock.

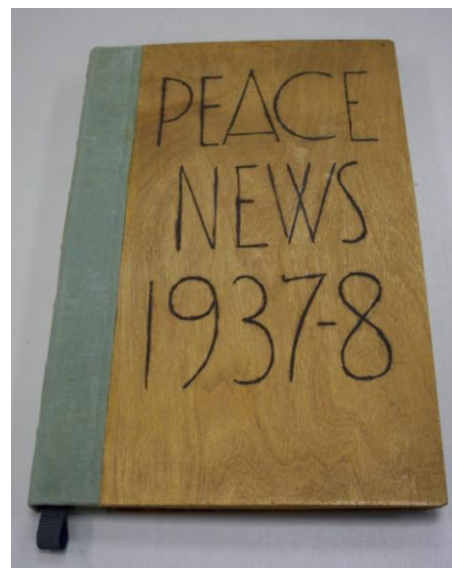
This was the first Aldermaston March, in April 1952, which few people have heard of and even fewer took part in. The Atomic Weapons Research Establishment was still under construction. Organised by Operation Gandhi, a small group hired a minibus, walked to the site bearing placards and handed out pacifist leaflets. The idea of targeting sites of nuclear weapons research, production and

storage began here. Hugh Brock returned to protest at Aldermaston in 1958. This time there were between 5000-10,000 other people with him.

PEACE NEWS

By far the largest and most complex archive dealt with during the project was the Peace News archive. Some back issues of the newspaper were found, such as this unusual bound volume on the right. But in themselves these are not archives...

The archive contains a mixture of minutes, annual reports and accounts, correspondence, subject files covering organisations, countries, individuals and topics of interest to Peace New, and hundreds of photographs collected from various sources for possible publication in Peace News. The photographs are a wonderful source for studying the post-war world peace movement, and also for related campaigns about apartheid, nuclear power, black civil rights and women's rights.



EMBRACE THE BASE

Peace camping took off in a big way in the early 1980s, with the most radical and iconic of these camps taking root



at Greenham Common in summer 1981. Sarah Meyer, a peace activist who lived at the Women's Peace Camp from late 1982 onwards, has created an archive full of colour, striking images, songs and radical ideas expressed in leaflets, newsletters, personal letters and photographs. Life at the camps involved frequent harassment, arrests and evictions, and in these circumstances we are lucky to have surviving archives at all. Sarah Meyer's papers complement archives held at the Women's Library and Glamorgan Record Office, as well as recorded interviews with women activists held by the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive and West Yorkshire Archives Service in Halifax.

FIND OUT MORE ON THE ARCHIVES HUB



The catalogues created during the project have been published on the Archives Hub, an online gateway to the archives held by UK universities and colleges. This can be found at:

<http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/>

Detailed catalogues are available for the following archives:

- papers of Barbara Bruce, mainly relating to India in the 1940s;
- archives of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, 1957-61;
- papers on the American-European March for Peace, 1960-61;
- papers of Hugh Brock, editor of Peace News from 1955 to 1964;
- archives of Peace News;
- papers of Mary Ringsleben and Derry Hannam relating to the Committee of 100, 1960-68;
- papers of David Markham relating to tax refusal, early 1960s;
- papers of Margaret Gardiner relating to a peace advertising campaign, 1962;
- research papers of Richard Taylor, author of *Against the bomb* (1988);
- papers of Michael Randle, including about his prosecution for his role in the George Blake escape;
- papers of Sarah Meyer relating to Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, 1982-85.

These were the most important and complex covered by the project. We have also published overviews of the content of many simpler collections which did not

need such detailed work. These include archives of local peace groups such as Bradford Peace Action Group and West Yorkshire European Nuclear Disarmament Group, and papers of peace activists such as Ian and Jennifer Hartley, and Tim Wallis, who all took part in Molesworth peace camp.

PAXCAT GALLERY ON FLICKR

To view selected images from the collections, go to the newly created online gallery at: <http://www.tinyurl.com/paxcatexhib>

The PaxCat Project Gallery
Thumbnails | Detail | Comments

THE COMMONWEAL COLLECTION
PEACE | SPIRITUALITY | SOCIAL CHANGE | INDEPENDENT | ENVIRONMENT | ALTERNATIVE SPONS | LOCATION | HUMAN RIGHTS

Bringing peace archives to life
Images from the collections catalogued during the PaxCat Project
May 2009 - May 2010
Funded by the National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives

Special Collections, JB Priestley Library,
University of Bradford
www.bradford.ac.uk/library/special/index.php

Catalogues are published on the Archives Hub at www.archiveshub.ac.uk

36 photos | 406 views | [Add a comment?](#)

PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

The project was officially launched on 26 April with a reception in the Richmond Building at the University of Bradford. Colleagues, friends and supporters were treated to a delicious cake iced with the nuclear disarmament symbol and a preview of the online gallery.



CONTACT US

Special Collections, J.B. Priestley Library, University of Bradford. BD7 1DP.
Tel: +44 (0) 1274 235256, Fax: +44 (0) 1274 233398
E-mail: specialcollections@bradford.ac.uk
Web site: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/library/special>

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