

publicity he hoped. But having made his point he maintained a dignified silence on the matter thereafter.

By 1971 he was approaching his 65th birthday and indicated to the Police Committee that he wished to retire. Appointed CMG in 1953, CVO in 1962, knight bachelor in 1965 and KBE in 1971, he had pursued a remarkable career which led him from Portsmouth, through a war-torn Europe to London, the Middle and Far East, Africa and back home to The City.

Sir Arthur Young died in retirement on 20th January 1979 at the age of 71 and his ashes were scattered at Beachy Head. What he would make of the present world of 'mission statements', centrally imposed 'targets' and the amount of paperwork necessary to dispose of relatively minor matters, one can only speculate. But, having laid the foundation for a modern City of London Police over half a century ago, he would be well pleased with the way his force has adapted to the changing world of policing in the three decades since his passing.

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THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT

Tony Dodson

It was the height of the cold war, spy planes were taking daily excursions over eastern Europe and many were being flown from USAF Alconbury in Cambridgeshire together with fighter bombers that were being made ready for combat. Nuclear weapons were the norm, and it was anticipated that many military locations would be targeted so it was decided that nuclear weapons in the form of Cruise Missiles should be moved around the country so they could not be targeted. These Cruise Missiles needed to be stored and maintained somewhere, regardless of being conveyed around the Country. There were two locations in England where the stores were to be based. One was Greenham Common, and the other was RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire-both seemed ideal locations as a storage area for Cruise Missiles. Everyone knows about what went on at Greenham Common but very few people know about the activities at RAF Molesworth which is close to USAF Alconbury, but not close enough if Alconbury was put out of action. Yet it could be supplied and supported from Alconbury. It was also close to many road links, North, South, East and West.

The Campaign begins

Word got out what was being planned and there was a determined campaign to stop Cruise Missiles being installed at either locations. An anti-nuclear campaign was organised at Greenham Common and Molesworth took a back seat. The missiles were due to be installed in concrete underground bunkers at both Molesworth and

Greenham Common.

In the early days the campaign at Molesworth received a lot of public support and finance but later this all dried up when things got more violent. The media covered the activities that surrounded Greenham Common but very few media people covered the activities that surrounded Molesworth.

Molesworth, near to the border of Northamptonshire but firmly in Cambridgeshire, was originally a RAF bomber base in use in the Second World War. At that time and prior to reorganised county boundaries it was located in Huntingdonshire. After the war it was designated an auxiliary airbase to be used if ever the runways were out of commission at nearby USAF Alconbury, a location where thousands of US Air Force personnel lived and worked. It was therefore necessary to maintain a skeleton staff of rescue and fire service with other aircraft maintenance personnel at Molesworth. The airfield was at that time an unfenced semi-derelict grassy area with one large concrete runway surrounded by abandoned hangars with several access points.

It was also used by the general public for off-road activities. As can be imagined, planning permission would be necessary to turn this base into a suitable area to house Cruise Missiles.

The Anti-Nuclear movement initially decided to stop any building taking place by a maintaining a presence on the airfield. The plan was good but it became impractical when it was undertaken. New Age Gypsies (The Peace

Convoy) also took up residence at various locations. This group was less peaceful than the regular Anti-Nuclear campaigners. There was a disagreement between the two factions culminating in Public Order offences being committed and arrests being made. These offences had no links with the Anti-Nuclear campaigners whose initial objectives had been peaceful. Finally, everyone was removed, and a fence put around the perimeter.

A 'Peace Camp' was established and a 'Peace Chapel' built, partly of stone near to the main entrance. The protesters then also encamped, mainly in old caravans outside the fence around the area. In the early days the camp was visited by Bruce Kent, and many other well known people.

Planning permission was eventually gained for the construction of the bunkers and building started at Molesworth. A new road was built from the main entrance to the A14. With helicopters to ferry the personnel into the base it seemed that nothing could stop the protest.

While all this was going on there were convoys of missile-carrying vehicles and their escorts moving from Molesworth to various parts of the country. With these convoys went the anti-nuclear demonstrators, so the locations of these convoys could not be kept secret. During this period, everything was being monitored by the local police and the Ministry of Defence Police, who were at this time undertaking a low profile.

From peaceful protest to Criminal Damage

The protests at this time were mainly peaceful and no police action was being taken even when the wire fence was being cut in front of police officers. The protesters took the view that any court proceedings would be good publicity for the Anti-Nuclear Movement and invited the police to arrest them but whilst they monitored these activities the police took no action. As this strategy did not work attention turned to USAF Alconbury. The protesters then discovered that Molesworth was due to be administered and supplied from Alconbury and they decided to build another 'Peace Camp' near to there. The camp was set up near to the junction of the A1 and A14 at a location close to the western perimeter fence. This junction was to be extensively modified to enable better access to the base. At the beginning the demonstrations were relatively peaceful. Things then moved on from peaceful protest to trespassing and then to criminal damage.

The Air Base at Alconbury was protected by a high wire fence topped with razor wire and this was now cut on a regular basis. Access was being gained by the campaigners to this highly sensitive area and white paint used to daub anti nuclear slogans; even aircraft parked on the runway aprons were being targeted. More dangerously the landing lights were being damaged. The lights stood many feet off the ground and were of two

differing types; included were some expensive strobe lights. On Monday 18th June 1984 it was discovered that a total of 16 of these strobe lights had had their lenses broken and the glass in 51 of the other landing lights had been smashed putting them all out of action and costing many thousands of pounds to replace. This glass was of the strengthened variety similar to vehicle windscreens and it was deduced that the force needed to smash these would have had to be of extreme force. Fragments of projectiles about the size of a marbles had been found inside the lights. The probability was that a high powered catapult had been used to cause the damage, it would be effective and silent. Things had now moved on from acceptable protest to criminal damage and danger to life, something had to be done and urgently. The occupants of the 'Peace Camp' were the obvious suspects and regardless of public opinion, police obtained a search warrant which they quickly executed. The occupants of the camp were all arrested and the motley collection of tents and 'benders' were searched. Marbles and the catapults were found together with some spent ammunition.

Nearby was a pile of pebbles, these tied in with the stones the Ministry of Defence police had found inside the broken landing lights. Along with wire cutters white paint was also found that matched the samples taken from daubing found inside the camps, both at Molesworth and Alconbury. A camp diary was found-contributed to by all the occupants and listing daily events which included many of the proceedings being investigated. Good evidence that had to be linked to individuals. This was with great effort achieved and was ultimately successful in attaining five convictions.

Retribution

The seven original suspects were all brought before Northampton Crown Court. The charge read

'On diverse days between 1st April and 21st June 1964 you conspired with... (named others) and other persons unknown, to commit Criminal Damage to military installations at Alconbury and Molesworth'.

The main defence put up by the seven defendants was that the British police were acting as political pawns and were influenced by the Office of Special Investigation (OSI) at USAF Alconbury, who had jurisdiction inside the perimeter fence but not outside the Airbase. This was actually correct but these powers were overlapped by the Ministry of Defence Police who could pursue enquiries both inside and outside the base, but were short in numbers.

The suspects were given bail with the condition that they did not go near the Bases at Molesworth or Alconbury. After a four week trial, Phillip Hudson (21), Sybilla Snake (24), Roger Oakley (21), Paul Rudolph (25) and Paul Briggs (19) were all found guilty but dealt with sympathetically. All five were given suspended

prison sentences and community service orders.

During the trial the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) led by Monsignor Bruce Kent gave support to the whole issue. Later a number of police officers were commended for the way they fairly and delicately dealt with the investigation.

Who won at the end of the day? The protesters lost the case but their campaign eventually succeeded. A lot of lessons were learned by all parties and the idea of Cruise

Missiles was shelved. The best nuclear deterrent was thought to be in the form of Polaris submarines, which were a little more anonymous than Cruise Missiles, and were difficult to protest against and to locate. The idea of deploying nuclear Cruise Missiles from Molesworth has become redundant now that the Cold War has finished. USAF Alconbury has since been decommissioned, and spy planes no longer fly from there.