

## Peace Camps and wire cutters

When the USAF returned to Sculthorpe in 1967 one of their tasks was to refurbish the munitions site primarily for the expected Flintlock exercises. There were some reports of 'bombs' being seen travelling across the county in hired civilian trucks. At the time Sculthorpe was repairing drop tanks for the F100s at Lakenheath. An uninformed casual observer could mistake these for bombs.

The CND organisation were convinced that Cruise Missiles were being kept at Sculthorpe so, along with other MoD sites frequent Peace Camps were set up by the perimeter fence. On the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic attack on Hiroshima in Japan Mgr Bruce Kent, the general Secretary of CND paid a visit to the camp and made symbolic cut in the fence to the Police found cause to arrest him. It is of interest to note that the Police were there to guard him as a high Profile public figure!

In November of 1983 and through until April 1984 other camps were set up and on Palm Sunday 1984 two campers broke through the fence and held a prayer vigil on the grass beside the runway. A month later there was a solitary vigil by a well-known Norfolk activist. After that the MoD police ceased to look at the camps as Peace Camps they were taken over by activists who had one aim - to distribute leaflets to the Americans who lived on the base to do this they needed to cross a potential live runway with all the safety implications. There was a mass trespass in September 1984 when 9 activists got onto the base. An incursion of 60 activists was planned for March 1985 but car breakdowns and illness reduced this somewhat but there was still plenty of work for Fakenham Court until April when activities seem to die down. In September Lord Peter Melchett, a local landowner and Lady Olga Maitland were both prosecuted for criminal damage for cutting the fence during what they called Operation Snowball.

In the years that followed the munitions site was used for Flintlock and Coronet exercises as well as temporary deployments by the RAF and USAF. The Cruise missile went to Greenham Common and Molesworth where the CND concentrated their efforts.