

Stonehenge '87

Paul

Autumn 1987

The London walk had arrived before us and were already celebrating. We settled in, ate, then joined in. A conference took place and we arranged the next day's plans, then we had a party in defiance of the newly elected government and the MoDs on the top of the hill. That night slipped through to the morning, for me, with . no sleep. More people were constantly arriving for the advertised picnic—luckily we had other plans, the authorities had already slapped an injunction on the pre-arranged site. The walkers set off along the ridge bordering the plain, a footpath through MoD territory, while the vehicles followed the valley road. The MoD on the hill were still trying to rationalise our unscheduled movements when, a couple of miles long the road we decided on a lunch break. The Mods agreed to half an hour. We took 48'. This was a camp for the people — loud enough to bring the Legionaire himself and a few cameras. Although there seemed to be confusion over our legal right to camp on the verges of this rut, the authorities decided to act on a 'guilty until proved innocent policy' and blocked the entrance from the road. That didn't last long though. We went down and asked them to leave as they didn't have a legal leg to stand on. The gates were opened.

It took two days before they implemented the 'you have no rights' Public Order Act. The two counts on which they issued an eviction and dispersal order on us were 'disrupting the normal life of the people'; I think this was brought on by a shopping spree at a local shop which, with the more important issues of the day at stake, I thought was badly thought up. The second count was damage — we had cut one section of barbed wire to allow access to a field for the band on Saturday and repaired it before we left.

On Monday morning a lot of the group dispersed and the chase went on. I rejoined the mobile festival at Collingbourne Woods. The press had really started to take an interest although the reasons for this were rather dubious — a Spanish journalist was asked whether people in Spain were interested in what was going on. He replied, "Yes, if you get trashed."

That site lasted a few days and was a good location — plenty of space and lots of wood easily available. The numbers were swelling and organisation was minimal, although a few got together to ponder over the map.

The next site was decided on — Devils Ditch.

On Friday morning the majority of the group descended on masse on Ludgeshall for breakfast. Various groups formed and headed off sporadically in different directions. We took various footpaths in a fairly direct route to the Ditch and our movements were monitored along the way, although there was no trouble in taking the site — which was a major advance on our way to the Stones. That night and the following day was a festival. Our numbers swelled to over 800 and the atmosphere was electric. It was the Solstice weekend and we didn't have far to go.

The close family-like relationship that had been strong amongst the walkers was fading as newcomers arrived for various different reasons. But when, on the afternoon before Solstice it was officially announced that we were banned from the Stones and surrounding area, we were all as one — we were going to the Stones. A site meeting was held which didn't decide on anything definite and we dispersed to discuss strategies. Then a message came through of a change of heart on the part of the authorities — that providing various conditions were adhered to we were to be 'allowed ' to the Stones for the sunrise. The conditions for our visit were that we all gathered on foot at the roadside at midnight without singing or playing musical instruments and we were to be escorted by an entire legion of civil servants. This news brought elation to the camp; 8 miles or 80, it wouldn't have mattered, it seemed we had won. Although not a total victory, it was a symbolic one. We had made it despite all the regulations and conditions, imposed over the previous two years. We had had a festival along the way and were at the Stones for the Solstice. There had been no arrests as far as I know, and it was a magnificent sunrise.

Where did it all end? We got there. Why? Had the masons in control got the message? Did Queen Boadicea hear our call? Had Mararet gained enlightenment? Or was it something more mundane, like a hush-hush on the Public Order Act or an attempt to alienate the Convoy?

Find out next year.

Paul

The Library of Unconventional Lives

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Green Anarchist #17. <thesparrowsnest.org.uk/collections/public_archive/16089.pdf>

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