

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 18

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£1

Lest We Forget – the other victims of war

November is the month for remembering those who died in wars. Such remembering tends to be nationalistic; the British remember the British dead, the Germans remember the German dead. And of course, losses of family and friends are remembered no matter what your nationality.

The media determine very much the extent to which the public is made aware of wars, and which wars. In the UK we hear a lot about the war in Afghanistan and of the continuing violence in Iraq. This is to be expected, given the British involvement in both these countries and the regrettable deaths of British soldiers. But what about the soldiers of other nations? What about other wars - those where your country, your relatives and friends are not involved?



Congo –armed for war

Isn't there a common humanity to be reported and remembered? Examples of some of the other tragic wars now on-going that do not get much coverage include:

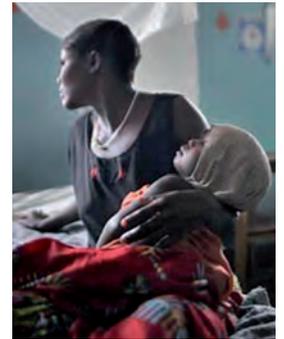
Civil war in Somalia, estimated deaths 300,000 - 400,000 since 1991

Mexico Drug War, estimated deaths 28,000 since 2006

Insurgencies in Kashmir & Jammu, estimated deaths 60,000 since 1989

Chaotic wars in the Congo, estimated deaths 5,400,000 since 1998

The Congo figure comes from the International Rescue Committee and has been corroborated by others, but also challenged. The Human Security Report Project of Canada puts the number under 3,000,000 – so that's alright then? Much depends on *how* the numbers are measured. Many of these deaths are not from the combat itself, but are the *results* of combat, such as malnutrition and disease. Such deaths must surely be remembered too; and accurate figures will always be difficult as a consequence. But we should not allow ourselves to be blinded by numbers or get into fruitless arguments about them. Statistics do not suffer; nor do they bleed, starve, nor become widows or orphans.



Congo – mother and child

Remembering should go beyond nationalism and militarism to a common humanity. And shouldn't the acknowledgement of war dead go beyond remembering? Should we not be educating ourselves that ultimately humans are one family? Genetically, there is little difference between one human 'race' and another; it is so small that the concept of 'race' becomes meaningless. Modern science tells us humans are one species. *We* make the divisions between us, and the mistake of war is repeated over and over. Often wisdom is ahead of science. G. K. Chesterton didn't need modern science to tell him all humans are related to each other. In his notebook, somewhere between 1894 and 1899, he wrote:

*Once I had a friend,
'Dear me,' I said 'he was made for me.'
But now I find more and more friends
Who seem to have been made for me
And more and yet more made for me.
Is it possible we were all made for each other all over the world?*

Brian Heale

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Dolls campaign for peace!

You may have noticed an addition to our website – Peacenik Patty. A cut-out doll with clothes, she can be found in Toys for Peace, under Free Downloads in our Resources section. Her winter wardrobe will appear soon, together with a sheet with the clothes done in outline, so that children can colour them in (and how about making Patty another placard?) Send us photos of your completed dolls in their hand-coloured clothes and we will display them on the website.

And our Chair Sue Gilmurray is a talented knitter as well as singer. She has designed 'peace' sweaters for dolls and the knitting patterns are also in Toys for Peace. Here are Ken and Barbie modelling their MAW sweaters. Get knitting, and send us photos of the results!



All MAW members, please note! Unless you are a life member or joined after March this year, your membership subscription is due in November. And if you are not a member, why not join us?

Movement for the Abolition of War

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Editorial

Again and again we have heard military commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan talking about the need to 'win hearts and minds', yet the insurgents carry on resisting and killing our forces. But how can you win the hearts and minds of people using the same soldiers you have sent into battle against them, soldiers whose own hearts and minds are already damaged by war?

In August the BBC aired *The Wounded Platoon* as part of their *This World* series. It was advertised as painting 'a harrowing picture of the brutalising effects of war, and what multiple tours, 'leadership failures' and post traumatic stress are doing to a generation of American soldiers.' You can say that again. Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq 17 US soldiers based at Fort Carson, Colorado – many from the same battalion and three from a single platoon – have been charged or convicted in 14 murders, attempted murders and manslaughters. The film followed the platoon as the soldiers told their story, using some of the film they shot while fighting in Iraq (15 out of the 42-strong platoon left the army after only one tour in Iraq).



The Wounded Platoon

The platoon sergeant, who served as a role model for these muddled young men, was blown up in front of their eyes. One soldier, Kenny, was deeply affected, so much so that when he returned to Fort Carson he became a cocaine addict within two weeks. He was diagnosed by an army medic, but received no treatment for a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His colonel was questioned about Kenny's cocaine addiction and non-treatment for PTSD. His reply was, "He chose to use cocaine. We don't want men like that in the army." There was no recognition that what was wrong was the way these men were trained and led, and that what they were expected to do in combat could be responsible for their mental breakdown. And as one therapist succinctly put it, "PTSD is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. War is abnormal."

At Fort Carson Kenny got involved in crime, was due in court and going to be dismissed from the army. But the 2007 'surge' was being organised, and the army was running out of soldiers.

So Kenny was sent back to Iraq, the only treatment for his PTSD being several different strong antidepressants and sleeping pills. It is clear, from film shot in Iraq by one of the platoon, that Kenny and others like him were as much unbalanced by their medication as their underlying mental problems.

Is it surprising that killing and torture reign when the Army relies on medication to keep its soldiers standing? Consider the most commonly used sleeping pill, Ambient. According to one ex-soldier "everyone was on Ambient." The maker's instructions say Ambient 'should not be used in hazardous occupations.' Yet, according to the film, after the 2007 'surge' in Iraq, more than 20,000 US soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan were on antidepressants and sleeping pills. That's to be expected when it is admitted that around 30,000 US soldiers suffer from PTSD. What is very worrying is that, before the invasion of Iraq, *no* US soldier on psychiatric drugs was allowed to serve in combat zones. But, as the Army's vice chief of staff, General Peter Chiarelli said, "It's a supply and demand problem."

More than half of the platoon said they suffered from psychological problems after Iraq. Kenny, along with another from his platoon, is now in prison. Some of the soldiers have admitted to shooting Iraqi civilians (they were 'keeping scores') but none have been charged. And the number of Fort Carson soldiers failing drug tests rose by 3000% in the first three years of the Iraq war.

You may think the situation at Fort Carson a one-off. Sadly not. Recently US TODAY reported on a mounting crisis in mental health care at Fort Hood, Texas. Fort Hood, where an Army psychiatrist killed 13 soldiers and wounded 30 last November, is the largest of the US Army bases, responsible for 40,000 soldiers and their families, or 10% of the total force. One in four of those soldiers have received counselling for mental health problems in the last year. That's 10,000 soldiers with their hearts and minds messed up, many of them being sent back to combat zones. Fort Hood counsellors see more than 4000 patients a month. Last year they diagnosed 2,445 cases of PTSD, compared to 310 in 2004. Each month around 585 soldiers are sent to private clinics (15 a month in 2004) because the base can't cope with the numbers. I'm beginning to see why the poor Army psychiatrist lost the plot. And of course, this doesn't include all those soldiers (possibly another one in every four) who don't report their problems because of the stigma attached. General Chiarelli's view is that far more soldiers suffer mental health issues than the Army anticipated. "I don't think we fully understand the total effect of nine years of continuous conflict on a force this size," he said. I would have thought that obvious. The effect is that it is killing hearts and minds.

For the cost to the United Kingdom, please see page 8. *The Wounded Platoon*, director Dan Edge, is available from Amazon UK. *Thousands strain Fort Hood's mental health system*, US TODAY, 23/08/10

"PTSD is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. War is abnormal."

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Our Aims and Goals

To spread the belief that the abolition of war is both desirable and possible
To raise awareness of the alternatives to war for resolving national and international disputes
To develop materials and strategies to educate us all from school children to those in government

Chair's Report

Those of us with an interest in issues of war and peace have had our own reasons for concern as we have watched the nature of our new coalition government begin to emerge. As the Liberal Democrats have been the most opposed to war of the three main political parties, we cling to the hope that they will influence government policy on getting troops out of Afghanistan, and on the future of Britain's nuclear deterrent. It often seems that the LibDem viewpoint has been totally submerged; but the current passion for spending cuts at least raises the hope that the replacement of Trident may be delayed, or even abandoned, if only for the ignoble reason of economy.

MAW members have been active in various ways during the summer. Bruce Kent, Tony Kempster and I were all at the Greenbelt Festival in Cheltenham in August (see page 10). Bruce made his impassioned and witty plea for a change in Britain's militaristic culture to an audience of many hundreds in and around the Grandstand building; Tony chaired a lively debate on the proper role of chaplains in the armed forces (shouldn't they be encouraging troops to disobey orders); and I – well, I was knitting dolls' clothes. Inspired by the cut-out doll Peacenik Patty (see our website), I thought it would be fun if we could dress Barbie and Ken as peace activists, and perhaps even subvert the odd Action Man.



Sue and interested customers at Greenbelt

September 21st, UN Peace Day, was a suitable occasion for the unveiling in Oxford of a peace plaque (see page 10), set into the wall of Bonn Square in the middle of a popular shopping precinct, honouring all those who rejected violence and sought the way of peace. Bearing the word for peace in English, Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit, it was largely the fruit of David Partridge's hard work.

Sad News from Wales

Lisbeth Rowlands Hughes (a dedicated hander-out of Abolish War) told the Editor that people in Wales are mourning the loss of one of their shining lights – Hugh Richards, who died on August 27th. He was the most knowledgeable and influential of anti-nuclear campaigners, his informed contribution reaching both local and national groups, as well as the Welsh Assembly and the UK energy policy.

He leaves this legacy – he was one of those dedicated souls that persuaded all Welsh local authorities to declare themselves 'nuclear-free zones'. He will be sorely missed.

City dignitaries, Muslim and Christian representatives, dancers and singers, including myself, all played a part, before Bruce Kent unveiled the plaque.

Two days later I was on my way to Oslo to represent MAW at the International Peace Bureau's conference to celebrate the centenary of IPB's Nobel Peace Prize. It was fascinating and often inspiring to hear from delegates from five continents, as they reported on their work and hopes under the title *A climate for peace*. I helped lead a workshop on peace music, and presented a new song for the conference, joining concern for the environment with a call for people to work together.

"The climate for life is one we must choose, United we win, divided we lose. We learned to compete; now we must combine, So reach out your hand; I'll meet it with mine."

Sue Gilmurray



Dublin - Eason book shop, ready for Tony Blair's book signing session

The publication of Tony Blair's memoirs *A Journey* at the beginning of September has rekindled the anger of millions over the invasion of Iraq. Blair maintains his steadfast refusal to express remorse over the war, and his donation of the book's profits to a charity for injured soldiers has not, it seems, changed many people's opinion of him. Thousands joined the Facebook group: 'Subversively move Tony Blair's memoirs to the Crime section in bookshops.' On November 14th we shall be invited to take a fresh look at the issue when Professor Philippe Sands gives the Remembrance Sunday lecture, *War and Law: Iraq's legacy, Chilcot's challenges* (see page 6). It's a chance to compare our own thoughts and feelings with the legal situation, elucidated by one who knows more about it than most. I hope the Cinema will be packed, and that many will also manage to come to MAW's AGM in the morning.

Sue Gilmurray

Update.

Following the Editorial in the last issue, I had a lot of feedback from readers, almost all of it very positive, with people wanting more information and web links so that they could investigate the attack on the Mavi Marmara for themselves. Since then the BBC Panorama programme about the incident, *Death in the Med*, attracted a wave of protest because of what was seen as one-sided reporting. But we now have the OHCHR report on their investigation into the attack. It makes for sobering reading, confirming that at least one of those killed was shot from an Israeli helicopter. And, at the time of writing, a Gaza aid boat sailing from Cyprus and manned entirely by Jews had been boarded by Israeli forces.

Editor

War is for real



Tyneham as it was

During WWII several communities were broken up, the occupants forcibly rehoused in order to provide training areas for the Army. Tyneham in Dorset is a well known example. A tightly knit and isolated village in a stunningly beautiful setting, it stands in ruins.



Imber as it is

Imber, a similar rural community in the centre of Salisbury Plain suffered the same fate. There the original houses were pulled down and fake houses built for soldiers to hone urban battle skills on. The inhabitants were promised that they could return once the war was over. Promises were broken, and on Salisbury Plain the tanks reign supreme.

In Wales the military needed a large area for artillery practice so Mynydd Epynt was purchased. Until 1940 the area was home to a community of farmers and their families. To create the training area 54 homes had to be vacated and 219 people were obliged to go, leaving behind a primary school, a church, and the Drovers Arms inn.



Cilieni church and 'graveyard'

Cold War planners thought we'd end up fighting the Russians in Germany, so to acclimatise the soldiers a fake German town was built, complete with a fake church with



Targeting mosques at Bellerby

fake gravestones. Now known as Cilieni, by the time it was finished at a cost of £7 million, the Cold War was over.

Last year, Abolish War featured a fake Afghan village that had been built at the Stanford Training Area, in Norfolk. Costing £14m, it was to help train soldiers due to fight in Afghanistan. This however, is just the latest installation. The area began life in 1942 as a fake German village to prepare soldiers for fighting the Nazis. It has also posed as Northern Ireland and Bosnia. But the most tasteless and insensitive fake installation appeared when seven replica mosques were erected on a firing range at Bellerby, North Yorkshire, again to prepare soldiers for Afghanistan. There was understandable fury from the Muslim community when the news broke in April this year, and the targets were hastily dismantled.

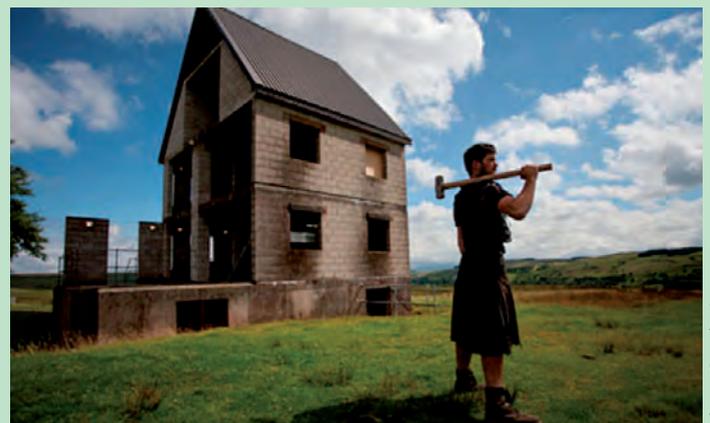
All this displays an unthinking arrogance in the attitude of the people in charge towards the land, the communities and the people that live in them. And this arrogance must surely affect how our military see the genuine places they are sent to fight in. But we never learn. In 480 BC the mighty empire of Persia invaded the city states of Greece, and the huge invading force led by the Persian king Xerxes was decisively beaten by the outnumbered Greeks in the battle of Salamis. In the play *The Persians* written shortly afterwards by Aeschylus, we see the effect the news of the defeat had on the Persian Court, the disbelief and then the despair.



(photo: Telegraph)

*Sian Thomas in *The Persians* at Cilieni*

Back to Cilieni. In August the National Theatre of Wales put on a new adaptation of *The Persians*, and quite brilliantly, they performed it among the buildings of Cilieni, the audiences being driven there through the training area. The choice of setting was inspired and attracted rave reviews (see *The Persians*, National Theatre of Wales, review, by Charles Spencer, Telegraph 13/08/10). But it also put across two lessons we have yet to learn – that war is real, not a play; and that sending 'invincible' invading armies into other countries never brings the expected victory. Instead it can bring humiliating defeat at the hands of small desperate people defending their homes.

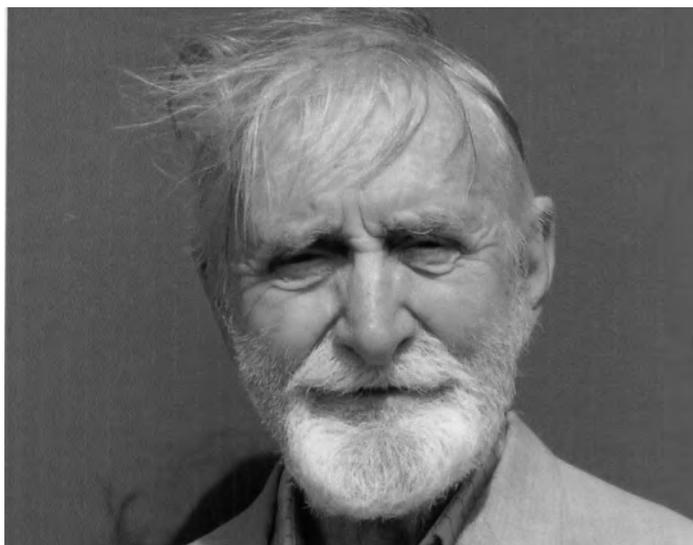


(photo: Guardian)

Cilieni - Rhys Rusbatch as Xerxes

Derek Longmire 24th May 1928 - 12th August 2010

In August the MAW Committee received some sad news: a valued, trusted and loved colleague, Derek Longmire, died. Abolish War readers will know him for his occasional *Cumbrian Diary* articles. A man of many parts and with a total commitment to peace, he will be greatly missed by all of us who have had the privilege of working with him.



Derek Longmire

His daughter Rachael (also a member of MAW) wrote:

His death has taken us all by surprise. It has been sudden and unexpected. He was an engaged and loving Dad. Phone calls and visits were regular and frequent. He would involve us in aspects of his life that were important to him: his faith, his work with MAW, the Local History Society, the Labour Party and, with Judith, tracing Longmire family genealogy. He took sincere interest in what was important in his children's lives and the ideas that we were exploring. If we disagreed or diverged in our opinions, which happened, he never judged or condemned. He moved gracefully into adult relationships with us all, quietly advising, and offering his thoughts, but never dictating or imposing.

He was born and grew up in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and raised Catholic by his mother. His first job, working for the Inland Revenue, did not fulfill him, and after several years he decided on a vocation to the priesthood. He attended Osterley Park making friends there he was to keep all his life, and later St Edmunds in Ware, where he met Bruce. After deciding that a vocation was not for him he left St Edmunds and embarked on family life with his wife Jean. The early part of family life was spent in Berkshire where he worked first as an Industrial chemist moving later into Work Study. Five years later, after the death of Jean from cancer and with four young children to support, he met and married Judith to whom he has been married for 37 years.

In 1979 he moved to Norfolk to live the good life running a smallholding and undertaking carpentry and joinery. He was very active in CND during these years, on one occasion joining the 'Snowball Protestors' by snipping the fence at a military nuclear air base in East Anglia for which he spent several days in Norwich Gaol.

Derek Longmire, a friend for fifty years, died in August aged 82 as a result of a fall when he was repairing his roof. He was a man everyone loved – cheerful, open hearted, kindly and inspiring. A builder, carpenter, musician, singer, historian and family man, he was also much into practical peace making as well. Probably his last outing in his camper van away from his beloved Kendal was with Judith his wife to Swanwick. There he ran the MAW stall at the National Justice and Peace Network Conference. Active in Pax Christi and CND, he even spent a few days in one of Her Majesty's cells during the Snowball campaign. He will be much missed.

Bruce Kent

In 1992 retirement in Kendal beckoned. He had a passion for singing, and in Kendal he found a home in the K Shoes Male Voice Choir. He was active in the Local History Society and it was a particular joy for him to have his work on the Seven Kendal Martyrs published. He made trips away from home in his Romahome, visiting his children and six grandchildren. Since his death, we have come to understand just how important he is, was, to so many people. He was very popular, with a wide circle of friends, and always fun to be with. The kind and loving messages of support that Judith has received, speak of the high regard in which he was held. One of his friends wrote, 'He will leave a gap but we are all the better for having known him'. We couldn't agree more.

Rachael Longmire-Hunt

Derek's last contribution to Abolish War, sent to the Editor just a few days before he died.

On 16th to 18th July The National Justice and Peace Network Conference took place at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. The subject was 'Our Daily Bread - Food Security, People and Planet'. There were 349 participants and a very full programme indeed.

Seven high-powered keynote speakers - academics, authors, researchers, activists - spoke on ethical and sustainable food production, agricultural biodiversity, support for indigenous farming and local marketing. All the sessions which I was able to attend were very informative and thought-provoking.

Throughout the weekend a Just Fair was held in the large Sports Hall next to the Conference Hall. Over thirty organisations had stalls there with everything from fairly-traded food and handicrafts to books and the literature of 'fellow travellers'. The MAW stall was between the Iona Community and Pax Christi. There were two or three slots in the very crowded programme when the conference attendees were encouraged to browse around the Fair, but otherwise the Sports Hall was deserted.



Stalls in the Sports Hall

We chatted to a large number of people and distributed some of the free literature, but sales of the priced literature were disappointing. With twenty nine other stalls, there was a great deal of competition at this Fair and I suspect that many were somewhat overwhelmed by this - especially on top of all the highly stimulating conference sessions. The times they had free to visit the Fair were quite restricted and they were probably more in need of some light relief than tracts on yet more worthy causes. However, we kept the MAW flag flying and for us it was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

The National Justice and Peace Network are to be congratulated on their organisation of such a high quality conference on such an important and current issue.

Derek Longmire

MAW Annual General Meeting

11:15am – 1:00pm

Remembrance Sunday 14th November
Imperial War Museum, London SE1 6HZ
Presentation of this year's
Arthur Hewlett Peace Award
Election of members to the committee.

There are some vacancies this year. If you think you'd like to be involved in helping us to: run MAW, set up projects, promote our message or publicise our events, please phone 01908 511948 to find out more.

This is your chance to help us make a difference!

**Plans for the Strategy Day –
bring your ideas along**

A WORLD WITHOUT WAR - a MAW Strategy Day

St. Mellitus Church Hall, Tollington Park, London N4 3AG
Saturday 5th February 2011
10:30am – 4:30pm

MAW needs your vision! And we need YOUR answers to the questions below.

If we believe that war can be abolished, then we should be able to envision all the things that need to be put in place to make it possible. If we can see these things, and how they will be achieved, then we can map our way ahead. So:

What do we mean by war?

MAW's aim is to abolish war. Can we define 'war' in a way that will be easily understood and *accepted* by the man or woman on the street, without getting the reaction 'That's impossible'?

Nobel Peace Prize Exhibition

6th Dec 2010 to 10th Dec 2010

Wood Green Central Library, London N22 6XD
London members of MAW have arranged for the Bradford Peace Museum exhibition of about 40 Nobel winners to be on display in the Library. The Mayor of Haringey will officially open the event at 10:30am on Tuesday 7th December.
An opportunity for schools and other groups to learn more about Nobel and his aims.

IRAQ
INQUIRY



Movement for the Abolition of War
presents:

The 2010 Remembrance Day Lecture War & Law Iraq's Legacy, Chilcot's Challenges with Philippe Sands QC

Imperial War Museum, London, SE1 6HZ
Sunday November 14, 2010
at 2:00 pm

Professor of Law UCL, Philippe Sands will address the legal issues and lessons learned in relation to the Iraq War, including the role of the former Prime Minister Tony Blair and the former Attorney General Lord Goldsmith.

This event is FREE, but to guarantee a seat, please register your name by phoning 01908 511948, or use the Contact button on www.abolishwar.org.uk, heading your email 'Remembrance Lecture'.



What will a world without war look like, and how do we reach it?

If we can envision a world without war, we can identify what needs to go and what needs to be put in its place to create that world.

Now what do we do?

Identifying what needs to be done, what steps can MAW take. How can MAW best play its part in abolishing war?

We need your ideas! Come to the AGM and tell us what you want to see included and discussed in the day.

Even if you can't come, you can still consider the questions. Please send any thoughts and ideas you would like to be included in the programme to the Editor (contact details on page 2).

The day is open to everyone interested in abolishing war and is free (donations will be welcome)

The Human Cost of War

A revised version of the quilts and arpilleras exhibition MAW staged in London last year.
4th November to 31st December 2010
Tower Museum, Union Hall Place, Derry, Northern Ireland. BT48 6LU

For info: see www.cainulst.ac.uk/quilts

And next year's Peace History Conference is on 13th and 14th of May at the Imperial War Museum

A Culture of Peace

A Climate of Peace

The Nobel Centenary Conference of the International Peace Bureau, Oslo, 23-26 September

MAW is a member organisation of IPB and was well represented at the conference. Bruce Kent (former IPB president), Sue Gilmurray and I attended. Catherine Roberts, co-ordinator of the Imperial War Museum's *Build the truce* project also came as our guest in recognition of the close working relationship we have with the museum, and she spoke in the session on peace education. Sue Gilmurray wrote a song *A climate of peace* especially for the conference (see Page 3).

Federico Mayor, former UNESCO Director-General and creator of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace gave the opening address, emphasising the importance of the global civil sector for making improvements in human security. He said that with the many advances in mass media communication and the internet, most must be aware that the massive global expenditure on armaments is robbing the poor of a decent life in many countries.



Fredrico Mayor addressing the conference

“Having eyes to see is not enough,” he said. “We must have hearts that feel, and a global conscience which leads us beyond silence to civil action. We should also celebrate those who risk their lives to bring aid to war zones, resist genocide and protect women’s rights. These are all aspects of peacemaking, as is living personal lives which bring peace to our local communities, our schools and workplaces.”

IPB’s Sean MacBride Prize was awarded to Binalakshmi Nepnam, activist, writer and author. Bina is the co-founder of the Control Arms Foundation of India (see www.cafi-online.org). She also set up the Manipur Women Gun Survivors’ Network in her home



Bina receiving the prize from IPB President Tomas Magnusson

state of Manipur to help women and children affected by gun violence. She spoke several times during the conference about the plight of women in North East India.

Other sessions included the following topics: IPB’s *Disarmament for Development* project; women and peace with particular reference to UNSC Resolution 1325; and the role of NATO in Europe and elsewhere.

A statement was agreed by the IPB Council reaffirming the original vision of the Nobel Peace Prize and its importance to the pressing needs of today’s

world. IPB recommitted its worldwide network of 320 member organisations to breaking the vicious cycle of militarism and the waste of resources.

Tony Kempster

Introducing Dr David Adams, whose work is very relevant to MAW’s thinking and aims.

A Professor of Psychology, he went to UNESCO to develop the Culture of Peace Programme as a supplement and alternative to military peacekeeping operations. He retired in 2001, having been the Director of the Unit for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, the year being 2000, when a global movement for a culture of peace was initiated by the United Nations. This developed into the Decade of the Culture of Peace, and Dr Adams played a key role in developing the idea. The Decade is almost over, and war is still taking its toll. As a University professor (Wesleyan and Yale), he specialised on the brain mechanisms of aggressive behaviour, the evolution of war, and the psychology of peace activists, something that must surely concern all of those working to abolish war.



Dr David Adams

His writings are all available on line at his website www.culture-of-peace.info and are well worth exploring, particularly if you want to set up debates about war and peace. He has another website – www.culture-of-peace-game.org – which allows you to play an on-line game exploring the steps of how we get from a culture of war to one of peace. Once you are familiar with that, you can get into dialogue with other players. It’s lot of fun with a very serious purpose.

And to help readers think about our Strategy Day (see page 6), start with this. If, to wage war, you need: an enemy, armaments, a society in which people follow orders, a belief that power can be maintained through violence, and control of information (secrecy and propaganda), what five things do *we* need to create a world without war?

The 2010 Mystery Walk - Changing Culture

On Sunday 19th Sept the 5th annual MAW Children’s Mystery walk took place in London. Though the event was squeezed for numbers by the Pope, the Battle of Britain and the Historic Buildings Open day about 40 people came, of whom just under 20 were primary school age children. They were seen off by this year’s imitation Sherlock Holmes with pipe and magnifying glass.



Follow these clues!

With passports and clue booklets the children started off in Tavistock Square with Gandhi and the Conscientious Objectors Stone. On their journey they passed the Anne Frank memorial in Covent Garden, the Edith Cavell statue near Trafalgar Square and the Victim’s Stone outside Westminster Abbey. The walk ended at the section of the Berlin Wall outside the Imperial War Museum. Inside the Museum, staff taught them how to fold Japanese Peace Cranes. Does *your* city have a Peace Mystery Walk?

Costs and Damages

As usual, I bemoan the fact that we cannot get detailed information about the mental damage to UK Forces, but following a Freedom of Information request by the Independent, the Ministry of Defence revealed these figures: £2.3m has been paid in compensation to British troops suffering from PTSD after serving in Iraq. This is on top of £6.1m in compensation for the 179 servicemen killed and the hundreds injured since the invasion. When one adds payments to the families of those killed and continuing payments to dependents the cost so far is nearly £32 million.

The country can expect to pay out even more when the claims from Afghanistan are dealt with. Up till September we have lost more service personnel there (297 killed in action or died from wounds as opposed to 136 in Iraq), and more have been seriously injured (443 as opposed to 122 in Iraq). How many of these ongoing and rising costs of war will be borne by other Ministry budgets, while the MoD hangs on to aircraft carriers, Eurofighters and, of course, Trident,



Overheating in Iraq

now that it may have to pay for its expensive political toy, after years of having hidden it in the Treasury's budget?

But the sums looked even worse in *How the MoD Wastes Our Billions* (Dispatches, Channel 4, 20/09/10). One hopes this was compulsory viewing for all MoD staff, but would it change their wasteful ways? I doubt it.

With a total budget of £42 billion a year, we are

struggling to pay for and equip just 10,000 soldiers in the field.

Wounded soldiers in Afghanistan died because the Army didn't have the right helicopters, but here the MoD spent £2.4 million a year on 'pop star' helicopters, flying senior military and Mod officials around the country. Following the fuss about the helicopter shortage, this perk was axed, to complaints from the current Chief of Defence Staff, Sir Jock Stirrup. Vast sums are spent on subsidised housing (with servants no less), although Sir Richard Dannatt maintained it was vital that an inflated number of top heavy staff should be looked after this way. Of Army staff in the MoD, 496 are of brigadier and above ranks. What do they all do?

Bernard Gray's 2009 report on MoD spending said up to £2.5 billion a year was wasted on buying the wrong equipment. The procurement of weapons and equipment is a major area of waste, much of it coming in over budget, defective and late. It takes a total of 20,000 staff at the procurement centre at Abbey Wood to manage this shopping spree. Tell that to a soldier whose body armour had its heat-dispersing panels installed back to front, so that instead of keeping him cool in an Iraq summer, it made him hotter still.

If we have any chance of getting out of Afghanistan and of getting rid of Trident, it could be because of the MoD's incompetence in creating this black financial hole, although I can offer another reason why NATO forces might quit Afghanistan – logistics. Apart from weapons, ammunition, communication gear and some spare parts, which go in by air, all military supplies, including food



Fuel convoy in flames

and fuel, go in by road, through narrow mountain passes... and get attacked or stolen by the Taliban (*Taliban Could Defeat NATO in 30 Days: Logistics is the Achilles heel of Western forces*, Matthew Nasuti). Two years ago they blew up all our boys' Christmas turkeys. According to Matthew Nasuti, "The West has adopted a 'prayer strategy' for Afghanistan; officials are praying that their supply lines will not be cut."

War is an expensive game, and I sometimes wonder if anyone engaged in the military machine can do the sums that matter.

And what of the damage to the people we wage war on, and the land they live in? Any modern military activity causes environmental damage, whether it's toxic residues from the manufacture of weapons, or the result of using those weapons. In July Defence Secretary Liam Fox stated that we had dropped '1.9 metric tonnes of deleted uranium ammunition' in Iraq and repeated the anodyne 'DU has not been shown to have, and indeed is very unlikely to have, any significant impact on the local population or on veterans', despite evidence produced over the years of increased cancers around Basra and elsewhere, while Fallujah suffers grievously from genetic damage to children.

In April and May this year Kabul Press produced reports of the environmental damage in Afghanistan caused by the dumping of toxic and other waste by the US. And in September Prof. Marc Herold published a detailed report on the poverty our war has brought to post-Taliban Afghanistan. The country might, he said, "be characterized as having a paucity of toilets and an excess of corruption". Toxic waste, genetic damage, poverty – so much for 'bringing democracy'.

Editor



Woman begging in Kabul

Of course, not all soldiers let their hearts be damaged by war (see Editorial). Alyssa Peterson from Flagstaff, Arizona, served with 311th Military Intelligence and was one of the first female soldiers to die in Iraq. She was a valuable Arabic-speaking interrogator assigned to the prison at the US air base in Tal Afar. Official records said she died from a 'non-hostile weapons discharge.' An accident? Reporter Kevin Elston decided to dig deeper into the official story. A Freedom of Information request disclosed that she had committed suicide after refusing to be party to torture techniques being used during interrogations. Army spokespersons for her unit refused to describe the techniques Alyssa objected to, and say all records of those techniques have now been destroyed. One can only imagine what Alyssa, a religious and 'deeply empathetic' person, saw that made her life unbearable.

(The U.S. Soldier Who Committed Suicide After She Refused To Take Part in Torture, Greg Mitchell)

Images of War

The Unremembered Victims of War



Congo – refugees on the move



Congo – mother and child



Congo – bodies and refugees



Kashmir – transporting the dead



Kashmir – file and forget



Kashmir – mourning women

Out & About Peace Campaigning



Photo Oxford Mail

Plaque unveiled to promote peace

On 21st September Bruce Kent unveiled a plaque to promote the message of peace in Oxford. The plaque, by the New Road Baptist Church in Bonn Square, reads: 'Peace – to honour those who seek another path in place of violence and war', and the inscription includes the word 'peace' in Arabic, Sanskrit and Hebrew. David Partridge maps the long path from idea to unveiling.

Bruce Kent unveiling the plaque

The Whispering Rock

It may just be a dream, but I have discovered that stones and rocks really do talk. Or at least they send out whispered messages.

The Oxford Peace Plaque is a case in point. First envisaged seven years ago, unveiled in the city centre on the UN International Day of Peace, the plaque's linguistic development has been considerable. Some of the early versions included a reference to 'those from ANY FAITH OR NONE'. A larger than life MAW member knocked that one on the head at an AGM by making the telling point that whereas her 'faith' had faded rather, her 'convictions' certainly had not.

As important in terms of linguistic growth and development, the early texts came dangerously close to suggesting that only those with cast-iron conscientious objections to all military actions had any rightful place in the pantheon of progressive peace-making. I remember standing at the city centre's Carfax corner whilst the then Lord Lieutenant of the County warned me in no uncertain terms that any suggestion of excluding all but the out-and-out pacifist position would not go down well with the general public. A more charming and gentle former military person it would be hard to meet - hence my agreement to accept his slap on the wrist without demur.



Photo - Sandy Bharat

David Partridge and Hoggat Ramzy

Seven years in peace-making - like a week in politics - is a long time. The words on our plaques and banners change, mostly for the good. It would have been unheard of at the start of the invasion of Iraq, but now the inclusion of Arabic, Sanskrit and Hebrew words for PEACE comes as a natural adjunct to the changed presence in our constituency. No longer just the same old collection of predominantly white activists, but now a

much subtler group - still hard to define - of seekers listening to the whispers on the wind. And the message from the stones and rocks needs to be heard in the search for another path.

David Partridge

Greenbelt Festival

Some 20,000 people came to the Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival at Cheltenham racecourse in August and many of them heard the MAW message. Bruce Kent inspired an audience packed into the grandstand with '*A Christian challenge to Britain's war culture*'. He argued that Britain's approach to international issues such as global warming and terrorism has been confrontational and self-serving, and he explored how a commitment to peacemaking and justice can lead us towards alternative and more equitable solutions.

Our chair Sue Gilmurray performed some of her songs in the Peace Zone session on peace and reconciliation and also showcased a new line in knitwear sweaters for dolls (see front page). Children were enthralled and knitting patterns were taken home.

And I chaired a debate on the role of military chaplains. '*Christian warriors: to challenge or to minister*' attracted a full house in the Sovereign Lounge. Symon Hill, a Quaker activist and writer, and associate-director of the Ekklesia think tank made the case for challenge and Mike Elliot, senior chaplain at RAF Cottesmore, the case for ministering. Questions from the floor were demanding for both speakers. The event was recorded and a transcript will be available on the MAW website in due course.

Tony Kempster

Give Peace a Dance

Bridgwater Peace Group (winners of last year's Arthur Hewlett Peace Award) staged this all day Peace Event with two aims – to have fun and to link Peace Activism to the way peace is built from community – people getting on together. There was so much to enjoy for those who participated in the afternoon session. Ray Davies, a fantastic example of commitment to peace, spoke of his childhood in Wales in the 30's, working down the pit before he was 14, and leading a strike of pit lads; and how this led to rowing into the Devonport Dockyard with Margaret Jones to do harm to nuclear submarines there! Always being prepared to act for what he believes in, Ray was an inspiration. George Goodenough told us through personal experiences in the Army how he came more and more to see humanity where he was supposed to see enemies – strip away nation, religion, tribe and politics to find us sharing the same hopes and fears. We sang together with Bridgwater Choir Voice of the People learning improbably complex rounds and harmonies in no time at all, a lesson in community and a tribute to Yvette Staelens the choir's leader. Leon Rosselson, a performer for over 50 years, satirised the civil defence messages from the 60's and 80's, and sang anti war songs as well as peace songs. A wonderful afternoon. The evening was pure hedonism as dance band The Skabro along with the Red Shadow sound system filled the dance floor.

Phil Parratt



Clare Isaacs, Dave Chappell, Ray Davies, Wendy Davies and Phil Parratt giving peace a dance

Events Diary - from Network for Peace

13 October

BRIGHTON. Smash EDO Mass Demo smashedo@riseup.net

LONDON. East London Against Arms Fairs: Musical Protest – Cancel The Arms Fairs. 2pm -5pm outside the Western entrance to Excel Exhibition Centre

24 October WORLDWIDE. United Nations Day.

29 – 31 October COVENTRY. A festival of Christian Peacemaking at Coventry Cathedral.

30 October LONDON. Zero Carbon by 2030, Friends House, Euston Road, London. Climate Forum 1- 7.00 pm.

Climate Concert 7 - 9.00 pm . Contact - info@campaigncc.org

1 November DEVONPORT. Devonport Blockade.

www.tridentploughshares.org

4 - 5 November MANCHESTER. Civic visit of the Mayor of Nagasaki to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities.

6 November LONDON. CAAT National Gathering, Conway Hall Book now. www.caat.org.uk

11 November COUNTRYWIDE. Remembrance Day.

14 November LONDON, Imperial War Museum, MAW AGM 11.00am-1.00pm. MAW's Remembrance Day Lecture 2.00pm. (see page 6)

29 November LONDON. Demo: Afghanistan: Time to Go. Called by Stop the War, CND and British Muslim Initiative.

24 November LONDON. Musicians Against Nuclear Arms (MANA) Concert for Peace at St. James's Church, 197 Piccadilly LONDON W1 Info: 020 8455 1030.

1 December WORLDWIDE. Prisoners for Peace Day

4 December WORLDWIDE. International Demonstrations on Climate Change. Coincides with the United Nations Talks on climate change in Cancun, Mexico. www.globalclimatecampaign.org

6 – 10 December LONDON. Nobel Peace Prize Exhibition (see page 6).

10 December WORLDWIDE. Human Rights Day.

27 January WORLDWIDE. Holocaust Memorial Day

5 February LONDON. MAW Strategy Day (see page 6)

26 February OXFORD. Network for Peace AGM.

13 – 14 May LONDON. MAW Peace History Conference, Imperial War Museum See www.abolishwar.org.uk

And three more books for you to read:

Cry Havoc!

Beverley Nichols, Jonathan Cape 1933

You will probably have to get *Cry Havoc!* from a library but it is well worth the effort. It had such an impact at its time that it had 12 reprints between 1933 and 1936. Beverley Nichols meant it as the loudest possible warning bell about what would happen if there was no control of armaments, no support in practical terms for the League of Nations and no attempt to make education for peace, not war, a primary aim in schools and universities. His warning bell was not heard.

The parallels today are all too obvious, except that the calamity awaiting us in this nuclear weapon age is more dreadful than even Nichols could imagine. The style is at times quaint and very 1930s but the content is powerful. *Cry Havoc!* will be on the agenda for the next peace history conference (see page 6).

Franz Jagerstatter, Christian and Martyr

Pax Christi 2010

The Franz Jagerstatter story is an astonishing one. There are many kinds of bravery but this solitary refusal to take part in a war which Franz judged to be wicked, or to take an unconditional oath to any leader and certainly not Hitler must rank with the

bravest. A married man with a loving wife and three little girls he had every reason to compromise. But despite almost no outside support he would not. That refusal cost him his life. He was beheaded in Brandenburg Prison on 9th August 1943. This book, full of photographs, is ideal for school use especially when questions of conscience are being discussed.

The Nobel Peace Prize: What Nobel really wanted

Fredrik Heffermehl, Praeger (USA) 2010

This book has only just arrived, but it is right up our MAW street. Norwegian lawyer Heffermehl clearly and convincingly demonstrates that almost from the beginning, but especially in post World War II years, the executor's of Nobel's will, signed in 1895, failed to observe its terms. Instead they have many times stretched the word 'peace' to cover whatever they thought it ought to mean. Indeed membership of the Nobel Committee has now become a party-political appointment. Some awards have been well intentioned (Al Gore's for environmental work). Others (Henry Kissinger's, Barack Obama's) have been made for purely political reasons. Gandhi never made it. Nobel, much influenced by Baroness von Suttner, wanted a demilitarised world and to honour and encourage those he called the Champions of Peace. The terms of his will are quite specific. Perhaps you can persuade your library to buy a copy!

Bruce Kent

Why should you join MAW!

Our aim: to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution, not more conflict. We have the tools, the skills and the laws that we need. We also need you. We work through education and dialogue, both nationally and in our own local communities; ordinary people taking action to realise our goal - **THE ABOLITION OF WAR.**

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Reviews

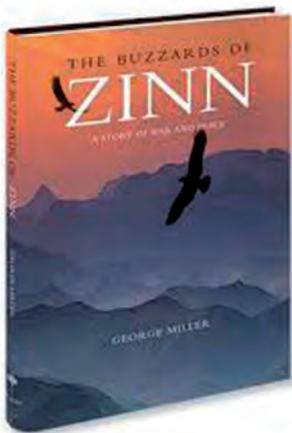
The Buzzards of Zinn: a story of war and peace

George Miller, Medlar Press, 2010

Jason Brockhurst is an intrepid British explorer. When he catches a glimpse of the mysterious city of Zinn, he has to try to get there – and when he does his life is soon in danger.

In some respects this book resembles an old-fashioned adventure story for boys. The exploration of mountains and caverns, the hair-breadth escapes from death, the thrill of primitive flying machines, the relentless enemy and the strong male bonding between Jason and his friend, Scottie: these might prompt thoughts of Buchan, Haggard or W E Johns. Other elements, though, are of the present; strong female characters; concern for young people and the world their elders bequeath to them; and awareness of the natural environment. This is not a pacifist sermon. Jason's rejection of war as policy, his conviction that injustice must be resisted, but with the minimum of violence, only emerges late in the book. Nor is it merely an adventure yarn. There are pauses to explain the science and engineering, or to reflect on the history and philosophy, which pertain to the story and give it substance.

George Miller has produced a rich fantasy tale, but also one which sheds thought-provoking light on the real world.

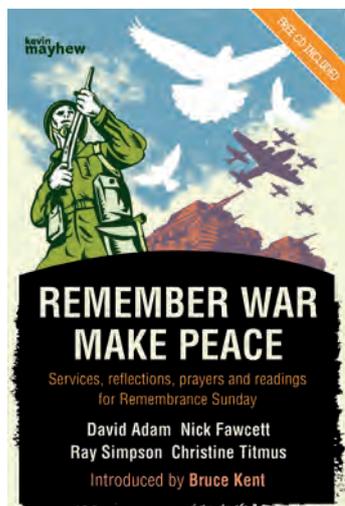


Sue Gilmurray

Remember War Make Peace: services, reflections, prayers and readings for Remembrance Sunday (with free CD)

David Adam, Nick Fawcett, Ray Simpson, Christine Titmus. Kevin Mayhew 2010

“Who is the slayer, who the victim? Speak.” Sophocles, 3rd Century BC. Remembrance Sunday is the time when the words we speak take on a particular power and significance. This collection was devised not as a substitute for traditional Remembrance Sunday commemorations but to make them *more* resonant, more open to the reality of war and its costs.



These reflections are offered only as suggestions. Some passages are a bit too earnest and wordy for my taste but the variety on offer serves the overall aim: to help individuals and communities to bring their thoughts and prayers to bear upon their own particular losses as they gather round War Memorials across the land, bearing witness to what the WWI poet Wilfred Owen called the Pity of War. Owen was not alone in unmasking the ‘old lie’ of glory and honour. As a veteran of the same conflict put it, “War’s stupid. Nobody wins”.

True then. True in Sophocles’ time, but never more so perhaps than today when the slaughter is totally indiscriminate and on a scale unknown in previous ages, when we are being challenged as never before to build a global culture in which non-violent settlement of disputes is the norm rather than a Utopian dream. Which is of course very precisely what MAW was set up to do. This book should help us all say, ‘Never again, for their sake’.

Sue Dowell

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 18

Autumn 2010

The Strange Death of David Kelly
Norman Baker, Methuen, 2007

Following Andrew Gilligan's report on the ‘sexed up’ evidence used in the ‘dodgy’ dossier, the furore in the media, the sacking of Gilligan by the BBC and the leaking of his source's name, there was both shock and outrage when that source, Dr David Kelly, was found dead in July 2003. This led to the Hutton Inquiry, at which Lord Hutton took it upon himself to announce that Kelly had committed suicide, and that the evidence should not be made public for 70 years.

Considering that the present Attorney General has asked to review the medical documents relating to Dr Kelly's death, and that some doctors have asked the High Court for a ruling that would bring about an inquest, it is perhaps time to reacquaint ourselves with the facts.

Conspiracy theorists aside, many knowledgeable people have doubted the suicide verdict, particularly from the medical point of view. Norman Baker, the MP for Lewes, also had his doubts, and this book is the result of a year's research. He presents the facts surrounding Dr Kelly's death clearly and precisely, day by day, raising questions that should have been covered by Hutton. Although the conclusion of the book is a trifle ‘cloak and dagger’, the facts, as laid out Norman Baker, point to a very strange death indeed.

Editor

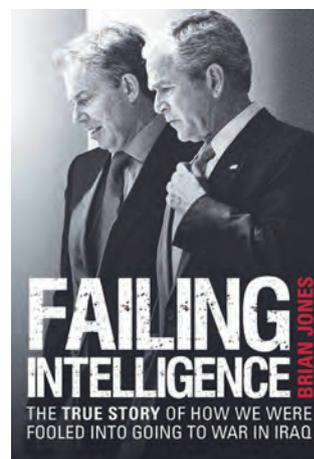
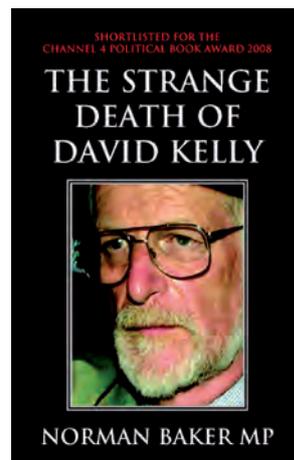
Failing Intelligence: The true story of how we were fooled into going to war in Iraq

Brian Jones, Biteback, 2010

With Iraq, dodgy dossiers and David Kelly in mind, this book is a must-read. Brian Jones was an intelligence official (he retired in 2003), and this is the story from the inside, making use of his personal knowledge of the system, the process that led us to Iraq, and his involvement in that process. With specialist expertise he analyses the evidence given at the Hutton, Butler and Chilcot inquiries, statements by politicians, and he makes use of the many documents that have been leaked since 2003. All point towards the fact that the intelligence was knowingly skewed, used selectively to make a case for an unnecessary war.

More than that, he demonstrates how Tony Blair used the inquiries to cover up his own culpability. Well, we've always known that Britain's MPs were duped into voting for the invasion. And those of us who have campaigned on this issue have watched Blair try again and again to justify what he did. But this book, taking us through that time, month by month, is just what we need. It's long, detailed and densely written, but it has all the facts on the intelligence issue in one place. And it is a fascinating read.

Editor



All reviews for books and films (no more than 250 words) will be considered for inclusion.

MAW news please!

You want to read about events that are not all London-based. We want to hear from members around the country, and we want your actions to inspire others. So if you have organised events/actions, or are planning some, and would like to have them reported in the newsletter, then send your news to the editor (see page 2 for contact details)

