

ABOLISH WAR

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It's that time of year again. A time for remembering, for looking back over the year and counting what we have lost. And each time it comes around, there are more people to add to the list of those who should be remembered, wherever they died and whatever war caused their death. We got out of Iraq, but we created so much damage, both physical and political, that people are still dying there in gruesome circumstances. We are still fighting in Afghanistan, and regardless of the optimistic noises coming from the generals, there is no end in sight. And as members of NATO we are bombing and therefore killing people in Libya. The UN Resolution that authorised a no-fly zone quickly became an excuse for NATO to fight on the side of the 'rebels' in what has become a protracted and bloody civil war. It is difficult to see this as a humanitarian intervention, nor is it upholding the 'responsibility to protect'. One way or another, the killing, and thus the remembering, goes on.

What can we do about it? Christine Titmus has some ideas:

As Remembrance Sunday once again approaches, let's search our imaginations for ways to invite new thinking. Each of us can do something, however small, to challenge and stir the culture of resignation and passivity that tends to prevail during the official

'Remembrance Season'. The poem A Veteran's Lament from MAW's own book of resources, Remembrance for Today, should offend no-one and could be printed on a poster and carried to your own local war memorial ceremony. Or take a copy to your local school and offer it for use to stimulate discussion. If you attend a church why not suggest a reading or song from this book to be used during the service? A letter to your local press, a poster in an appropriate public space, even wearing a red and white poppy together can provoke useful discussion with the person in the bus queue. Why not get some friends to help you make a wreath or floral arrangement of both poppies, to take to your local ceremony or display somewhere? Phone in or email a TV or radio station to stimulate debate – what is the best way to honour their memory? Make a simple poster by finding an image of injured service personnel and adding the words: We can all be heroes by working for a world without war.

Whatever you do, do something, anything that moves people beyond their comfort zone and makes them rethink what Remembrance Day could and should mean!

Christine Titmus



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*The better side of the
40 Commando Royal Marines' tour in
Sangin Province, Afghanistan.*

'If the 21 members of Combined Force Sangin 40 Commando Royal Marines, who died over the last six months, could speak to us now they would of course say many things: they would ask us to look after their grieving loved ones, they would ask us to look after their colleagues injured in body, mind or spirit, but they might also say: do everything you can to create a world where I would never have had to go to war; do everything you can to ensure that no one else has to endure the suffering that my loved ones are now enduring.' These words come from a Remembrance Day sermon delivered in Taunton last year by a forces chaplain (Norton Manor Camp outside Taunton is the home of 40 Commando Royal Marines). Fine words, you might think, butter no parsnips, but this particular chaplain, having served in Afghanistan and seen his friends die or be wounded and also observed their violence towards the 'enemy', is taking action to create peace and reconciliation between British and Afghan people. To read what he is doing, turn to page 10.

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

11 Venetia Road London N4 1EJ www.abolishwar.org.uk

Editorial

It is not enough to cry 'Abolish War!' Most people, if asked to think about it, would agree that war is not a good thing, better not fought, or only 'in the last resort' and so on. Even soldiers, once they have experienced the reality of war, know that it doesn't achieve anything, despite the spin put on it by visiting politicians desperate to convince the voters back home that we 'did the right thing' by waging war.

But our leaders never truly address the damage war does – the devastated earth with its soil and water poisoned, towns and villages reduced to rubble, millions killed and horribly wounded and orphans everywhere. And yet another generation of young people 'sacrificing' themselves and filling up the cemeteries in flag-draped coffins provided, of course, there's enough of their bodies left to bring home to grieving families. And in the last ten years it seems the politicians have been only too eager to rush off to the next war while still fighting the last.

But just suppose we *can* abolish war, how much thought do we peace campaigners really give to what we would put in its place? Because something has to go in its place, and it is also not enough to cry 'We want peace!' And if we don't have something ready and waiting to fill that gap then humanity being what it is, the gap left by removing something bad is quite likely to be swiftly filled by something else as bad. For ask yourself this: if we abolish war tomorrow, what are we going to do with all the soldiers and all the weapons we have created?

We can campaign against war using all the facts and information we find in newsletters like this. We can keep insisting that our politicians and armed forces obey international law. We can write to our MPs and the papers, go to meetings and all that. We can march, protest, sit down and stand in the way. But how much actual *peace* does that create and how much does it change the world? We need to ask ourselves a very simple and fiendishly difficult question:

What do we mean by 'peace'? If we want it to replace war, we *must* know what it is we want. We must sit down and plan the

society we want to bring about, both global and domestic; we must plan how we can share this world, not just with each other, but with all the other forms of life that call this planet home. We must plan how we will educate and build for the future, how to care for not just the children but the whole earth. We have to do this if we are to survive in any meaningful way. But we must do more than plan.

Sitting round tables and discussing things is fine, but too often we're in talking shops that don't deliver. Going to conferences and hearing inspiring talks is fine, but only if we go home and do something, and not just 'do something for peace' but actually physically create some peace. Because having a vision of what a peaceful world would be like is also not enough. If we can plan what society we want in place of war, then we must start building that society. Step by step, for each action we take to get rid of war, we must create some part of what we want to sit in its place.

We need to build our future now. Start small. Look around your community and ask yourself, not what changes *would* you make, but what changes *can* you make to help create a fair, inclusive and peaceful community. Then think big. Our nation, and beyond that, the global commons are simply larger communities, but they share the same dynamics, the same potential for petty arguments and conflict, the same mix of self-interest and compassion for others. If we can build peace in our communities, we can build peace in the world.

We must never leave a gap that can be filled with some other form of violence. We must have something ready, physically ready, to fill the gap – not a cosy woolly idea of peace, nothing vague, no proposals that need to be discussed, but something real, positive and concrete, something that has already been created on a small scale somewhere in the world and proven to work. When we have managed to stop or prevent a war, and the politicians and arms manufacturers arrive on our doorstep, telling us they only want to 'protect' us, we should be able to say, 'No. *This* is how we want to live, and how we will live. No further discussion or consultation needed.'

And may all our towns spoiled by enemy hands be peopled by their former citizens again. May they work the fertile fields, and may countless thousands of sheep fatten in pastures and go bleating over the plain, and may cattle coming home in herds warn the late traveler to hurry on his way.

And may the fallow ground be ploughed at seed-time when the cicada sings overhead in the treetops, watching the shepherds in the sun. And may spiders spin their slender webs over battle-weapons, and the battle-cry be heard no more.

From *Idylls* by Theocritus
(Translation by Bariss Mills)

Contact the Editor: Lesley Docksey, 1 Court Farm Cottages, Buckland Newton, Dorset DT2 7BT 01300 345109 Lesley.Docksey@abolishwar.org.uk

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

Chair's Report

In previous Chair's reports I have commented on current events and MAW's activities, and have included a line or two from a song written for MAW. This autumn it's different. The summer months have seen meetings and planning, but no MAW events; and this is my final report before standing down as Chair. As I reflect on the last two years, there are lines from past songs that seem relevant all over again.

'The soldiers, by and large, were decent men, but that's a disadvantage in a war.'

I wrote *Disadvantage* in 2003, after reading one of Robert Fisk's early reports from Iraq. The occupying US troops in Fallujah were trying in some places to make friends with the population and giving candy to the children, while a few streets away their comrades had lost their self-control, and were cursing, bullying and threatening. Their mission to 'win hearts and minds' amid a culture and people of which they had no understanding was proving incompatible with their training to be fighters and killers. In the days that followed Fallujah was to be the scene of atrocious and repeated bloodshed and destruction.



The bad side of war: British abuse of detainees

This September it was finally made explicit in Sir William Gage's report that eight years ago British soldiers were guilty of beating and kicking to death Baha Mousa, an innocent Iraqi civilian who had been arrested in Basra. The argument raged afresh about the extent to which such conduct was encouraged by those in charge until it was unequivocally identified as criminal, when the 'a few bad apples' argument was deployed. As peace campaigner Lindis Percy pointed out in a letter to the Guardian (12/09/11): "Surely it is an impossible task for the young and probably traumatised soldiers, who are trained to 'kill, kill, kill' the actual or perceived enemy, to be then expected to look after the same enemy."

I applaud the way MAW consistently concentrates its opposition to war upon the culture that promotes and sanitises war, not upon demonising soldiers. There is growing recognition that, in the guise of a noble cause, they are being asked to do the unethical or the impossible. One of the loyal citizens of Wootton Bassett, well known for paying their respects at the repatriation of dead British soldiers, said firmly in a TV interview, "I am 100% behind our troops – and 100% against the war."

'You leaders and you fighters, when will you comprehend that any fool can break things – a wise man learns to mend?'

I wrote *A vulnerable man* about Norman Kember who was held hostage in Iraq while on a peace building mission. Many people seem to think that all you need to do is kill the bad guys to bring about peace and harmony. In fact, no side in a conflict is



The sad side of war: coffins in Wootton Bassett

composed of pure good or evil, but of human beings, and at some stage the violence has to give way to the painstaking building of conditions for peace.

There has been recognition of this in recent months, as attempts are made to negotiate with the Taliban in Afghanistan, to end the fighting in Libya, to support the movements for democracy in several Arab countries and, with varying degrees of sincerity, to work towards a just settlement in Palestine.

This too has been a consistent message of MAW in its lectures and Peace History Conferences. I am glad that the speaker in MAW's Remembrance Sunday Lecture this year, Sir Richard Jolly, is not simply going to be inveighing against the evils of war (See p.5). Sir Richard knows more than most about what would alleviate the poverty, malnutrition and ill health that cripple millions of lives to this day, and in doing so would lessen the likelihood of future wars. The Global Day of Action on Military Spending last March (see the last issue) trumpeted the fact that the Millennium Development Goals could be met using just 20% of the money currently devoted to the military. It's not hard to see how that could be the kindest cut of all.

'The tide turns, and peace can start to grow.'

MAW does more than protest against military violence – it speaks out about past and present initiatives for peace. News does get out about such initiatives, but it is not considered by the media to be big news. Violence makes big news because it is exciting. Peace, all too often, is assumed to mean that nothing is happening. In fact, of course, peace means that life can happen: work, love, families, friendship, creativity, achievement, enjoyment. I believe that disillusionment with war is spreading, but MAW still needs to spread the news of peace whenever we get the chance.

Please use every chance you get. Perhaps you might stand, or nominate someone, for MAW's Executive. Come, if you can, to the AGM and lecture on Remembrance Sunday. There is a need for people at Remembrance events to point out that the fallen who are being honoured did not die because they wanted to, or because they thought war was desirable. They thought they were fighting for peace. It is possible to honour them by outlawing war as a legitimate means of settling disputes, and as we promote this view the tide, although more slowly than we would like, is turning.

Sue Gilmurray

MAW in the future: there will be no Peace History Conference at the Imperial War Museum next year. Instead we are hoping to arrange a one-day conference at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester. Please get in touch if you think you can help.

However, the IWM has been such a wonderful supporter of our activities, that we may consider a one day event there in place of the Peace History Conference.

And we are looking at how we can be involved in the various peace events that will take place around the Olympics. Again – let us know if you'd like to be involved or contribute in any way.

The Peace News Summer Camp

The first issue of Peace News was distributed on 6 June 1936, just over 75 years ago. Since then it has had a variety of affiliations, homes, editors and preoccupations, but its core purpose has remained the same: to serve those who work for peace and justice. Circulation reached a high point just before WWII, when we put out 35,000 copies a week. Even during the war, however, when we relied on volunteers to print and distribute the paper, PN had a circulation of 20,000. Today, in the age of the internet, Peace News faces new challenges and new opportunities, committed to promoting nonviolent revolution.



Campers being shown round the Crabapple Community

The third Peace News Summer Camp in late July (not long after our 75th birthday party) was the best yet. Over 120 people gathered at the lovely Crabapple Community near Shrewsbury for five days of discussion, debate, tripod-climbing, singing, compost-toilet-making, marquee-erecting, collective childcare and brilliant entertainment from some of the most talented and committed performers on the circuit.



Theo and Shannon of Seize the Day entertaining the campers

Of course, the core of the camp was the workshops. There was a joint workshop by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) and Chris Cole of Fig Tree on the East London arms fair in September (DSEi) and the use of military drones. There was a mixed-gender discussion on feminism alongside a men's meeting on masculinity and militarism. We had sessions on Using Indymedia, Peace Activities in Wales and Frontline Nonviolence: Action in Palestine. Alongside workshops on nonviolent direct action, and green economics and car culture, we had Revolutions in Egypt and Beyond by Alex Nunns, co-editor of Tweets from Tahrir (available from PN), and a presentation by Greg Muttitt, author of the recently-published *Fuel on the Fire: Lessons from Iraq on Oil and Occupation*.

Community Organising

In amongst all of this, the camp organisers had decided to lay stress on a theme: community organising for radical social change, with workshops involving the whole camp. We thought



Mil talking about Noam Chomsky

that as the anti-cuts movement gathers momentum, and peace activists join forces with others struggling for jobs and services, there needed to be greater understanding of what is involved in community organising, how it differs from much of what we call 'activism', and its importance in making lasting political change. So as well as the unionising casual workers talk (from Ewa Jasiewicz, union organiser and Gaza flotilla activist), we had workshops by long-time community activist and anarchist Dave Morris (of McLibel fame); by John Stewart, key organiser in the successful campaign to stop the third runway at Heathrow; and by Adrian Arbib, involved in the roads protests in the 1990s and more recently. We also had sessions by anti-cuts network UKUncut and a group called Stop Kettling Our Kids.



Some of the Peace Campers

Peace News staff ran sessions. Promotions worker Gabriel Carlyle ran Afghanistan: The Activists' Pub Quiz, available on the PN website (luckily the team with a PN co-editor in it won, otherwise I would never have heard the end of it.) Co-editor Emily Johns talked about her political-magical art and I ran workshops on Chomsky's Politics, al-Qa'eda and Uprooting War. Uprooting War was based on the paper I wrote for the MAW Strategy Day in February (see the Views section on the MAW website).

We have a lot of feedback from campgoers. Here's a sample: "This was a wonderful holiday for me and a chance to really be myself and to work out what things are valuable in my own life"; "Peace News walks the talk. Thoroughly enjoyed it"; "valuable information, possibly changed my life on so many levels, can't wait till next year"; "a chance to take risks in a 'safe' environment"; "very open and participatory"; "quiet, calm, respectful, trusting"; "People were very friendly and helpful to a new person"; "Camp well organised without too many rules – just essentials".

Milan Rai co-editor of Peace News.

All photos by Roy St Pierre

Next year's Peace News Summer Camp will be from 26-30 July. And why not subscribe to Peace News? It costs £13 for a year's issues posted to your home. You can do it online at www.peacenews.info/ or send your details and cheque (made out to Peace News) to Peace News, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DY

Calling All Members!

The MAW AGM will be held at the Imperial War Museum on Remembrance Sunday, 13 November.

It will start at 11:15 am (after the short Remembrance service held in the Museum's entrance hall). We will be electing a new chair, vice-chair and members of the executive committee.

You can nominate people for these posts. If you would like to do so please send your nomination to our committee secretary:

Hilary Evans, MAW committee secretary, 39 Spencer Road, Twickenham TW2 5TZ; 0208 898 4850; eevans298@btinternet.com.

You should also send her a signed statement from the candidate saying that he/she is willing to stand. The closing date for nominations is 4 November.

Please come and take part in this important vote. We shall also be presenting this year's Arthur Hewlett Award. Don't wait for the next issue of Abolish War to find out who's won. And don't miss the Lecture in the afternoon – see below.

And here is something else you can help with: fund raising.

All organisations like MAW are being hit by the current financial climate, and we are looking at ways of both conserving our dwindling resources and raising money to help us carry on our work.

Do you have any good ideas for fundraising events, large or small, that we could make use of? Please - let us know!

Following the MAW Strategy Day and our questionnaire, we still need your input.

Here are the top five suggestions that came out of the Strategy Day discussions:

- *Making better use of our membership*
- *Making greater use of special days (Armed Forces, UN Peace, Remembrance)*
- *Publicising more facts about war and peace*
- *Making use of social networking*
- *Increasing our work with schools*

Each of these is important, but we can't do it all at once. Which do you think is **the most important** for us to concentrate on?

Let the editor know or email MAW via our website.

And here, from MAW committee member David Partridge, is a thought-provoking idea - can removing popular delusions about war and at the same time looking at the alternatives, help us to abolish war:

Wars Without End?

A recent New Statesman devoted its main theme to the last 10 years of war by way of a special issue marking 9/11.

In the final paragraph of his article *Perpetual Warfare* (no hint of any question mark), head reviewer John Gray argues that the west has sold its soul down the river during the wars of the last decade, with every indication of little or nothing learnt to prevent future wars of all kinds continuing ad infinitum.

Sooner or later, the cost of maintaining the west's illusions will become prohibitive. Countries whose economies are floundering cannot for long sustain vast, costly and ineffective military-industrial complexes. To be sure, the retreat of western power will not usher in any age of peace. War will not cease, if only because conflicts over natural resources are certain to increase.

Nothing particularly novel or trail-blazing there, perhaps. If nothing else, the last decade's predictable patterns of conflict have left the west jaundiced and anything but ready to face an already exhausted looking decade with a lively and inventive spring in its step. Weary old gunboat solutions seem indefinitely to be the only thing on offer.

So, where in the world is MAW? For most of the time, it has to be admitted, abolishing war can be the fastest changer of subject at any social occasion up and down the land.

Is Gray right - perpetual war until the clock strikes midnight, and our time as a global community is up? And clapped-out military and political leadership, all dressed up and nowhere to go, except for its delusional madness over the west's dutiful but highly dubious role as peace-mongers in chief. The thought of perpetual war may leave us deflated, but what about rehashing MAW's vision of the world?

No way can war be taken out of the equation. Yet no way do we hand in any pacifist pass card either. Abolition of war and conflict remains the dream, will always. But, without so much as a tweak of an acronym, with one bound we are in new terrain altogether. Wait for it:

The Movement for the Abolition of War should, must become **The Movement for the Alternative to War**. It's so simple. From day one no western or world leader can get away with the 'delusion' that every non-military path has been explored, it's time to bring on the gunboats.

In Gray's words " ...the curtain is about to fall on the absurd and gruesome spectacle of the past decade, when the west waged unceasing war to avoid confronting its true position in the world".

Abolishers unite! Alternativists unite! So, let's get down to the real business of de-delusioning, wherever it manifests itself.

David Partridge

The 2011 Remembrance Day Lecture

2 pm Sunday 13 November

Sir Richard Jolly

*Honorary Professor, Institute for Development Studies,
University of Sussex. Former Assistant
Secretary General of the United Nations, Special Advisor to
the UN Development Programme and
Deputy Director, UNICEF*

Development and Disarmament: the kindest cut of all

**The Cinema, Imperial War Museum
Lambeth Road, London SE1**
Free admission. Donations welcome

Coming to a Sky Over You

Armed drones (or UAVs: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) were first used in late 2001, by the US in Afghanistan. One has to wonder if the rush into Afghanistan after bin Laden was regarded by some as the ideal opportunity to test their new toys, and it is hard to believe that in less than 10 years they have become the weapon of choice. They are now dictating how future wars will be fought. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) believes they will 'deliver a genuine revolution in military affairs'.

That revolution is happening in and because of a climate of enormous and escalating government debt. Most states that follow the militaristic path have paupered their citizens in their desire to go to war and to supply themselves with more and more weapons with which to fight those wars. Vast sums have been wasted on wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, none of which, remember, had attacked us or were any physical threat to us. And the cost doesn't stop there.

Iraq and Afghanistan have produced a horrendous toll in dead and wounded soldiers, with many of the latter requiring expensive lifetime care and pensions. That no accounting is offered for the dead and wounded on the other side is to our shame. And 'putting boots on the ground' costs a fortune, transporting personnel, weapons, machines and all of the support required to maintain their presence in a foreign country.

The Pentagon and the MoD must have seen the development of armed drones as the answer to a warmonger's prayer. With war and its costs becoming evermore unpopular with citizens coping with their own rising bills, the possibility of fighting war without leaving home is hard to resist. And drones represent huge savings. They are cheaper to manufacture, cheaper to keep in the air (there are plans to have drones that can stay airborne for five years), and cheaper to operate. According to the American *Air Force Times* it takes more than a year and \$2.6 million to train a fighter pilot. It takes 20 weeks and \$135,000 to train a UAV pilot, a projected saving of \$1.5 billion.

So it comes as no surprise that Britain is now fully engaged with both cuts in defence spending and developing armed drones. As well as cancelling various contracts and plans, the British Army will be reduced from a total of 196,150 personnel in 2006 to just over half that amount now, and no more than 82,000 in 2020. At the same time, more drones are on order (we currently use the US-made Reaper and Predator drones), although if the MoD decides on the BAE Systems Mantis model, we can be assured they will come in over budget and delivered late - and probably not work very well. From having our drone pilots (39 Squadron) operating from Creech, Nevada and practicing on Israeli drones flying over Gaza, another squadron will operate from RAF Waddington near Lincoln, prompting the setting up of a peace camp at the base's gates (*see below*).



Afghans inspect a damaged house after a drone crash in Jalalabad, 21/08/11

And in Wales, to the outrage of many peace campaigners who had been cheered by the news that the proposed military academy at St Athan was being scrapped, the Civil Aviation Authority has just granted permission for both the West Wales Airport in Aberporth and a 500-square mile airspace to be dedicated to unmanned aircraft. The Welsh government hopes the drone

airport and airspace will draw commercial firms who are currently banned from testing their aircraft in the United States except in restricted military airspace. But general aviation pilots can still fly through the region, as well as Royal Air Force pilots who conduct training missions nearby. Given how many small private planes and helicopters also fill our skies,



The BAE Sy

this makes for a very crowded airspace. And why should the US, with so much more land than us, ban drones from flying outside restricted airspace? Armed or not, just how safe are drones?

Drone crashes are not widely reported, but Chris Cole of Drone Wars UK has been monitoring the situation. His database now has details of nearly 80 *large* drone crashes since 2007 (the crashes of smaller drones are too numerous to mention). In his words, 'it is important for the public and decision makers to be aware how unreliable drones are and how often they simply fall out of the sky.' Yet the military are pretty insouciant about these crashes. In August a drone crashed into a cargo plane in East Afghanistan which, according to the Wall Street Journal, resulted in a US military spokesman saying, "We were in complete control up until the collision." Well... quite. No civil air company would get away with that sort of safety record.

Another major issue is the legality of these weapons. They are used for 'targeted assassinations'. That in itself has no legal justification. They are meant to be battlefield weapons, but they appear to be almost exclusively used against 'terrorists' and 'insurgents', neither of which can be called armed forces in the strict meaning of the term. The US is building more drone bases, covering the Middle East and Africa, Somali piracy as well as terrorists being the targets. Piracy is hardly an act of war. The killing of al Qaeda's man al Awlaki in the Yemen at the end of September was by a drone from one of these new secret bases. As Professor Mary O'Connell made very clear in her statement to Congress in 2010, terrorist acts are *criminal* acts and therefore must be dealt with by law enforcement agencies, not the military. She also made it clear that as the only country America was fighting a war in was Afghanistan, that was the only country they could legally use drones in. So much for the targeted killings in Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya and the Yemen

There are already legal difficulties about who takes responsibility for the result of an armed drone strike, particularly as the operators are usually thousands of miles away from their targets. How can those operators accurately decide what is a target when they are so far removed from the field of conflict? When you are targeting a domestic dwelling, how can you be absolutely certain it is the right one? Should you even be targeting a domestic dwelling? Most of us would say not.

Their users insist they are accurate in their targeting, yet there are no complete records of how many and who they have killed, and no matter how many Taliban commanders or insurgents they are supposed to have killed, the civilian death toll in Pakistan has been appalling. As the Oxford Research Group report *Drone Attacks, International Law, and the Recording of*

Civilian Casualties of Armed Conflict says, under humanitarian law, all casualties should be recorded, identified and given a proper burial. How can that be done if you are fighting your war from half a world away? And developments will allow one operator to run up to five drones at a time. That will not make for accuracy. Nor will drones – also in the pipeline – that



systems Mantis drone

are independent of individual human control.

And finally – presidential hopeful Rick Perry, who as the Governor of Texas has overseen the execution of 235 people in the last 11 years, has been demanding that Reaper drones should be deployed

on the US/Mexico border as part of the ‘war against drugs’. Reaper drones, mind you, not small surveillance drones. Will Mexico turn into another Pakistan, with its air space violated and innocent people being killed as the US targets drug runners instead of terrorists?

We must stop the UK from investing in such weapons of terror.

Editor

Peace camp in Lincoln starts up to oppose death by remote control



DOMINIC LINLEY

Helen John and supporter outside RAF Waddington

Earlier this year the Ministry of Defence announced that a new squadron (Squadron 13) of “Reaper” drone pilots is to be formed at RAF Waddington, near Lincoln. The drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, are launched from bases near conflict zones and are then controlled remotely by pilots from command centres like the one to be set up at RAF Waddington (currently they operate from Creech in Nevada).

From this Lincolnshire base surrounded on the one side by cabbage fields, and the other by a quiet suburb, pilots will soon play the role of judge, jury and executioner as they watch on screen video footage and control drones using joysticks in a manner disturbingly similar to a computer game. Games of life and death played out thousands of miles from the conflict itself. As Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur and Hina Shmasi, New York University point out “Young military personnel raised on a diet of video games now kill people remotely using joysticks... Far removed from the human

consequences of their actions, how will this generation of fighters value the right to life?”

The military would like you to believe that these drones are advanced and highly accurate machines and yet they are notoriously responsible for high levels of number of civilian casualties. The use of US drones in Pakistan has been particularly controversial, sparking local protests and diplomatic tensions.

The UK government have repeatedly refused to officially reveal details of casualties attributable to drones, even though this is a requirement under international law according to the Oxford Research Group. The Ministry of Defence has however confirmed that 4 Afghan civilians were killed in a Reaper drone strike in Helmand province last March.

Increasingly seen as the weapon of the future by the military, both the US and UK are investing heavily. The UK plan to double their number of Reaper drones by 2013 at the cost of £135 million.



DOMINIC LINLEY

Protesting against drone at the Arms Fair

Drones featured heavily at this years DSEi Arms Fair in London where rival firms touted for business from military delegates and arms traders from around the world. Interestingly an anti-drones protest which took place outside the headquarters of General Atomics during the arms fair was subject to a great deal of surveillance from the police including the use of both police photographers and a helicopter.

Back in Lincoln Peace Activist Helen John has set up a weekly presence outside RAF Waddington to oppose the use of drones. Helen, previously involved with setting up peace camps at Greenham and Menwith Hill, and an active member of CND, said “I feel deeply ashamed that in the 21st century we are bringing in a new generation of murderous Nazi technology to blight the future. Killing and maiming others for oil, while our ‘pilots’ sit at their computer consoles, thousands of miles away. Murder by remote control. Whatever next? I have been speaking to many people in the area who are genuinely shocked about what is going to be carried out here”

Helen is calling for anyone concerned about the impact of drones to join her to support the weekly vigils outside RAF Waddington and to help set up a long term peace camp.

If you would like further information or to pledge your support contact Helen on 01535 603 240

Dominic Linley Yorkshire CND

Remembering two men dedicated to peace

Harry Holmes

Harry lived to the ripe old age of 91. Anthropologist, naturalist, Foreign Office mandarin, opera and music buff, humanist, wordsmith, walker, reader, peacemaker – all these and more were part of Harry's varied life. The Foreign Office took him to places far and wide: Paris, Innsbruck, Hanover; Iran, New York, Sao Paolo, Rawalpindi and finally London from where he took early retirement.



Harry Holmes

In June 1945 he married Vera, his life companion. And it was together they made a dedicated peace pair. Their house in Hawkley became a kind of Mecca for the local Peace Council. The best summary of Harry's political philosophy can be found in one of his capacious footnotes: 'One of the most distressing things about the Westminster establishment is their refusal to acknowledge guilt about Iraq – no compassion, no regrets, no remorse, after all the horror and chaos of our aggression. They simply harden their hearts and talk about something else... How CAN we civilise them?'

David Partridge

In 1983 I took part with hundreds of others in the Star Walks from seven points in Britain to arrive at Greenham Common to mark the anniversary of the dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to protest against the siting of cruise missiles. On the way we camped overnight in people's gardens, fields and church halls. Arriving in Hawkley into Churchfield's wonderful lawned and treed garden after a very hot and dusty day was wonderful. Harry and Vera welcomed us with cold drinks and cakes. That evening and on many subsequent occasions Harry engaged in deep and thought-provoking discussion with all and sundry – challenging our views, making us see contradictions and possible developments.

A few years later Harry asked if we'd like to join him and Vera at a garden party gathering of interesting people. Everyone brought a dish of food to share and a gift to be sold for CND funds. Nearly thirty people came and chatted, ate and bought from the stall. About halfway through the afternoon Harry had us all making a circle of chairs and he analysed the current peace situation inviting comments. A very lively debate followed while Harry listened and occasionally steered the discussion towards sharper perceptions. That day led to what developed into Peace Days offering an opportunity to step back away from campaigning and look more deeply into issues. As the numbers attending grew, the event was transferred to the Sustainability Centre at East Meon with the organisation undertaken by South East Hants Peace Council. Over the years speakers dealing with a range of peace issues were invited to offer a focus to the discussions. Harry wanted to come to this year's Peace Day but his poor health prevented it. The last time I saw him he urged me to carry on whatever and I will.

Vida Henning

Brian Haw

Knowing Brian: a personal tribute

More and more I find I am asking myself, 'What would Brian think about it? The 'it' of course being anything from the recent sadistic bombing of Libya by NATO, to the continuing death toll in Afghanistan or the UK riots in August.

Brian may have died on June 18th but as far as I am concerned,

each time I visit Parliament Square I know his spirit survives there and continues to imbue his followers with the strength and purpose to carry on. The police, the judiciary and, of course, the media are still doing their utmost to sanitise the Square, and Brian's long-time helper Barbara Tucker has just been sent to Holloway Prison for 9 weeks – this just after the riots! Protesting against infanticide and genocide is on a par with looting in our New World Order.

I can hear Brian caustically chastising me for even thinking it could be otherwise: "Same old, same old; little vipers become bigger vipers." This last is a reference to his historic march from Parliament Square to the Oxford Union in 2008 to debate the motion that 'This House would under no circumstance fight for Queen and Country'. The motion was defeated and on his return he growled sadly to me, "It's not their fault. The little vipers have never been encouraged to see the world in any other way. We have to pray for them as much as their victims."

'Love, Peace, and Stop Killing Kids' was Brian's message – not exactly revolutionary except possibly to ethnocentric genocidaires. I first met Brian in Parliament Square in either 2000 or 2001. I was there to protest the use of depleted uranium in Iraq, Kosovo and later, in Afghanistan. I had read a fair amount on the subject, but in spite of numerous letters to my MP I had been fobbed off with lies from our Ministry of Death claiming DU was totally harmless, this despite evidence to the contrary. Finally, after 10 years, Defence Secretary Liam Fox has been forced to admit the truth about the dangers of DU. However, in the dystopian world in which we all now live he is perfectly happy to carry on using it! But I remember quite clearly that when I first saw Brian with his photos and banners, I thought, "Oh good, I'm not alone. I'm not alone." We both knew instantly where we stood and that position never altered. Furthermore, I cannot remember having anything that could be described as a disagreement with Brian, save on rare occasions when discussing tactics.

I loved him for his stubborn acceptance of the smears and violence to which he was subjected, his ability to fight back against all who dared to pretend he was, of all things, a traitor! Are the millions who marched also traitors, or was their treason the fact that they went home for tea?



He didn't go home for tea

Brian stayed and stayed and stayed. A friend who saw a photo of him said she thought he had the face of an angel, and I can only concur. Parliament Square may have lost its angel, but it will never lose his message of Peace and Love for All.

Michael Culver

Editor's note: Just after Michael wrote this tribute, we heard that the police had moved in and cleared Brian's peace camp, removing not only Brian's tent, placards etc., but also Barbara Tucker's tent. Whether she will get her property returned to her when she gets out of prison is anybody's guess.

On a more positive note, some MPs have called for a permanent memorial to Brian. It would be a grand thing to have a memorial to Brian and the peace he so determinedly campaigned for, in Parliament Square. It would serve as a salutary reminder Parliament not to vote for war. If you want to support this, then contact your MPs and persuade them to add their names to Early Day Motion (EDM) 1945. Let's see if we can't achieve a lasting memorial to peace, and one of her champions, Brian Haw.

Images of War

This September saw the 10th anniversary of 9/11
10 years of death, grief, ruined lives
and countries, and the spreading cancer
of the 'war on terror'

But war is terror.



The Twin Towers under attack



Ground Zero



Afghanistan in ruins



Baghdad - 'Shock and awe'



Fighters in Yemen



Somalia - drone strike on al Qaeda

STOP!

10 years of terror is enough
It's time for peace

Peace Initiative

Peace Building – On All Fronts

At the end of September, attending a meeting of the South Somerset Peace Group, I met a man with a vision. Andrew Rawding, an Armed Forces chaplain, spoke with passion about an organisation he has helped to found – PARFAN: Peace and Reconciliation for Afghanistan. Growing out of his experiences with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan, it aims to forge links of mutual friendship between Britain and Afghanistan; to build appreciation of each other's culture; and to support the bereaved and injured in both countries through shared dialogue and meeting together. Andrew explains how he arrived at this initiative for building peace:

Why PARFAN?

When I got back to Taunton last October after six months of service in Afghanistan with the Royal Marines I was faced with the question: 'What was the point of all that?' Before the deployment I had been exploring: 'what will be the point of all this?' During the deployment I had been wondering: 'what is the point of all this?' And now I was home. Fourteen Royal Marines had lost their lives. Seven other soldiers from British Army regiments and the United States Marine Corps had also been killed in our area of operations. A close colleague had lost three limbs. Other marines were now struggling with life changing injuries. I had also witnessed the deaths and injuries of Afghan soldiers, policemen and civilians, including children. What had been the point?

In addition, as chaplain, or 'Padre', to the Royal Marine unit, I was confronted with the grief of bereaved families, the guilt of Royal Marines and families, and the grievances of those who were struggling with what they had experienced during their mission. I wasn't content with the political view of what we might have achieved. I needed to find some meaning and control for myself and explore the possibility of 'life out of death' or 'light out of darkness', which stands at the heart of my Christian faith. I also felt that the churches and 'Christians' in Taunton could or should have a different response to our return from Afghanistan, which was not just flag waving and fund raising but more distinctively in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ, i.e. not just 'to love your neighbour', but 'to love your enemy' too. I had seen the dehumanizing effect of the war in Afghanistan on the Royal Marines, and how it had affected their view of people from Afghanistan, and I had also seen that there seemed to be nothing more for the bereaved relatives beyond memorials and names etched in stone. Could there be any possibility of some form of peace in and around all of this? And was there any possibility of reconciliation, which might bring positive transformation to people's memories and experiences?

Out of my reflections and talks with a civilian friend, Christopher Mitchell-Heggs, who has a passion for peace in Afghanistan, emerged PARFAN. PARFAN is an organisation with humble beginnings, committed to the people of Afghanistan and all those who have been affected by the war and violence there. PARFAN is about the possibility of creating new positive stories and narratives in relation to Afghanistan, which make connections at the level of a shared humanity.

Andrew Rawding

Facts: Taunton has a long history of military links with Afghanistan, from the 1st Afghan War (1839-42) to the present day with 40 Commando Royal Marines being based just outside Taunton. PARFAN aims to create links that are not just military ones. It has the support of Taunton's Bishop, MP and Mayor. It has links with Crisis Action and the British Afghan Women's Society (who will be giving a presentation at PARFAN's first event in Taunton on 22 October). Many people in the UK and Afghanistan have been

injured, traumatised, bereaved and lost livelihoods because of the conflict there. PARFAN believes that by coming together through mutual understanding and facing the violence that took place, people will find a way to build peace and rebuild their lives. PARFAN is supported entirely by voluntary donations. If you would like to donate, support PARFAN in any other way or want more information, please email parfan@live.co.uk or contact the Editor.

A More Local Peace Initiative: Islington & Haringey Peace Walk



Peace walkers ready to set out

Over 80 people, toddlers, teenagers and pensioners alike joined in a three hour peace walk from St. Mellitus Church, Tollington Park, on the sunny afternoon of Saturday 25th June. Catherine West, leader of Islington Council, Jean-Roger Kaseki, other Councillors and Police representatives all joined in.

The start was at the small peace garden and war memorial outside St. Mellitus and the first stop was in Cornwallis Park. In that park there is a memorial to Martin Dinnegan murdered aged 14 four years ago this weekend – another young victim of knife crime. We gathered around his memorial to think of him and his too-short young life. His parents, Jim and Lorraine Dinnegan, and many of his family and young friends were on the walk.

The next stop was Elthorne Park and the Philip Noel Baker peace garden. Lord Noel Baker was a Quaker and a tireless campaigner for good relations between countries and an end to the arms race. Winner of the Nobel peace prize, he was also an Olympic silver medallist (1920 for 1500m) and believed in sport as a road to peace.



No culture of violence here!

Then we moved on to the peace park created and recently opened outside Holy Trinity Church on Granville Road - just over the border into Haringey. Joanna Bornat of Stroud Green Residents Association explained that it commemorates local people killed in 1944 by a flying bomb. Father Patrick Henderson and local residents gave us a warm welcome as well as tea.

Why this walk? It was a call for an end to violence, personal, local and international, and a commitment by everyone to building peace between individuals, communities and nations.

We could make a start by opposing the TV culture of violence which daily pours out from our screens on news and drama. Many young people now see it as a normal part of life.

Valerie Flessati

Events Diary - from Network for Peace

11 November COUNTRYWIDE. Armistice Day.

13 November MAW AGM and Remembrance Day Lecture at the Imperial War Museum. See page 5

18 – 20 November CALSTOCK. Trident Ploughshares Annual Gathering. Info: Michal on 01822 832815

19 November BIRMINGHAM. Celebrating John Bright MP, a Quaker peace activist – study day at the Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG), Edmund St, Birmingham. £10 including refreshments. Info: janet@kingfamily110.org.uk

29 November WORLDWIDE. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

1 December EVERYWHERE. Prisoners for Peace Day

3 December LLANDUDNO. Public meeting at St John's Methodist Church Hall, Mostyn St Llandudno. Dave Webb, Chair of CND UK and Jill Gough, Secretary of Wales CND. Drone development and testing and the threat they pose to peace. Conwy Peace Group. chris_joney@hotmail.com

10 December WORLDWIDE. Human Rights Day

27 January 2012 EVERYWHERE. Holocaust Memorial Day

8 March EVERYWHERE. International Women's Day

LONDON. 1st Sunday of every month – Walk in Peace. Info: 02087550353

HUDDERSFIELD. Turning the Tide in collaboration with Huddersfield Quakers are hosting a series of workshops called 'Nonviolence for a Change.' For info: www.turning-the-tide.org or call 020 7663 1061

Faringdon Peace Fete 2011

Faringdon Peace Group, winners of last year's Arthur Hewlett Award, have glorious Summer weather booked for the first Saturday of June in perpetuity – or so it seems, and this year was no exception. Put several hundred peace-lovers in a spectacular National Trust-owned garden, add in music from local musicians and songs from our very own Chair Sue Gilmurray, toss in home-made veggie curries, cream teas and ice-cream, leaven with donkey-rides and children's games (I never tire of hurling bowling balls to see who can knock down Pershing, Trident and the rest of the missile systems), sprinkle with words of wisdom from Bruce, and you have the recipe for an afternoon guaranteed to restore flagging campaigners' spirits. Sales at the MAW stall were slow until Bruce knocked everything down to half-price, when they leapt off the stall. A great day, and congratulations to all the Faringdon folk who work so hard to make it a success year after year.

Sally Reynolds

MAW MOVIES

MAW now has four more films as well as our own War No More which is for sale on our resources list. The four are all short, 15 minute or less, colour cartoons, with sound – plenty of it – but no speech. They were made in Czechoslovakia between 1959 and 1982 at a time when Europe was still divided and the Czechs were our 'enemies'. All are about different aspects of the Abolition of War. All make their points wonderfully well with a touches of humour. The four are:

The Red Stain This is a Czech classic. It is a gentle 1962 story about a little boy whose father is killed by those guarding a new military base. All his father tried to do was to pin a notice saying 'peace' on the fence of the base. Whose base it is we are not told, but the red stain of the father's blood cannot be removed. It spreads and spreads until the base and the missiles inside it are lost in a field of waving red flowers. An optimistic tale of courage and perseverance.

Attention A prize winning, partly humorous Czech film made in 1959 which is not at all out of date. It tells the story of human



violence starting with two hungry cave men fighting. It moves on, weapon by weapon, until the age of nuclear bombs. Total destruction is the final result. Then, after time goes by, two more cave men emerge. Will they start the cycle of violence again? Will they think again? Attention!

Boom A Czech/United Nations 1979 cartoon. This is not unlike Attention and in the same style. The focus here is on the nuclear arms race, not on weapons generally. Two not unpleasant political rulers from opposing sides nearly come to a peace agreement to halt a nuclear arms race. But they are urged by their scientists and military men to push on with weapon after weapon. They seem surprised when other countries follow suit. A simple accident leads to total disaster.

The Big If This is a powerful Czech Disarmament/Development film made in 1982 which shows very clearly how the world could meet the challenges of hunger and sickness if only we redirected the vast sums spent on our global military to better uses. All those involved in anti poverty, peace and development movements should see it.

These films are ideal as starters for a discussion at home, in a local group or in schools. All four are now on one DVD, and can be borrowed from MAW at no cost except for postage – though a donation would be very welcome. **Rapid return requested.** Write to MAW Movies at the MAW address for a copy, enclosing an A5 padded stamped (36p) envelope.

Combat Stress, the charity that helps veterans with mental health problems, uses art as a therapy. Art helps veterans to express what's going on inside their heads when often they



can't put it into words. Having seen an exhibition of work produced by veterans working with Combat Stress, I know how powerful, heartbreaking and illuminating the art can be for those of us who haven't experienced the terrors and cruelty of war.

BBC's Culture Show is featuring the work of Combat Stress in an hour-long special programme. It will be on BBC2 sometime around Armistice Day. Look out for it.

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

Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds: a Medical Odyssey from Vietnam to Afghanistan

Ronald Glasser M.D. History Publishing Company 2011

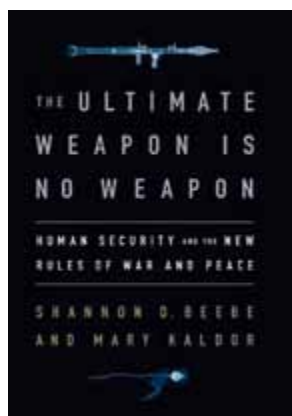
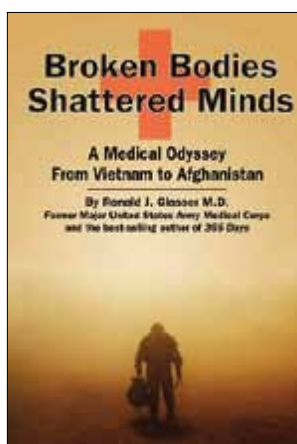
To persuade people with military connections why we need to get rid of war, use this book about how modern warfare damages soldiers. Ronald Glasser started his medical career in the US Army Medical Corps in Vietnam. His book about that war, *365 Days*, was a best seller. This book brings us up to date, its message being that modern medicine hides the true damage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from the public. Where the death toll in Vietnam was enormous, many of the soldiers who would have died then now survive, but horrifically wounded. The facts are shocking.

For each American soldier who died in Vietnam, three wounded survived. For Iraq and Afghanistan those figures are sixty survivors for every one dead. There are over 300,000 wounded, 250,000 diagnosed with PTSD, and over 300,000 with traumatic brain and nervous system injuries. The majority come from the roadside bombs which, for a soldier on foot, typically blow off both legs and one arm (the other arm is shielded by the body). The blast wave also injures the brain.

Something else that is hidden from the American public: a full 20% of the US forces are women. They may not drive the tanks, but they become involved in all other forms of combat, die or get injured. Yet there is no media coverage showing these women in combat.

Glasser's style is clear and easy to read *but* – it is written solely from the Army point of view. The damage done to others by US military action is not mentioned apart from half a sentence on orphans. That the US will always fight wars is never questioned. A chapter on the merits of which guns and bullets the soldiers should use argues that it is better to be able to kill the enemy before one gets injured. Only at the end of that chapter does another half sentence posit the idea that maybe it is better not to go to war, when the terrible damage Glasser is recording surely makes that obvious.

Lesley Docksey



The Ultimate Weapon is No Weapon: Human Security and the new rules of war and peace

Shannon D. Beebe and Mary Kaldor, Public Affairs Books

A renowned peace advocate and a career military officer find common ground in a concept that redefines what security means and what security forces should do. Many of you will remember our recommendation of the Barcelona Report, convened by Mary and officially titled A Human Security Doctrine for Europe. This book takes those ideas deeper and further, fully embracing a

revolutionary, world-wide approach to how we deal with violent conflict. Prevention is key. Tackling the conditions that lead to violence is at the heart of this new concept. But where violent upheavals are already underway, the focus must be on how to dampen down this existing violence, rather than how to 'win'. Do delve into this groundbreaking book, a first-rate manual for those of us faced with the question "but HOW?" when we state war should be abolished.

Christine Titmus

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 20

Autumn 2011

The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism

Naomi Klein, Metropolitan Books 2008

Given the world's financial situation, costly wars and uprisings driven by poverty and injustice, I revisited this book by Naomi Klein. The 'Shock Doctrine' referred to is Milton Friedman's neo-liberal economics, which has been applied to poor countries by the IMF, World Bank, the US Federal Reserve, since the 1970s. Most campaigners know the link between poverty, injustice, globalisation and war. The Shock Doctrine is globalisation at its worst, and it is simple: slash public spending to the minimum and bring in the euphemistically called 'structural adjustment'. While needed financial stability measures are brought in, this is the only aspect of restructuring that people initially see. The other side of the restructuring is obfuscated – the country's riches and resources rapidly sold off, opening them to 'free-trade'; i.e. foreign corporations are free to come in and help themselves. Such conditions are always attached as an extreme price for the stabilising policies.

The first shock experiment was applied to Chile under Pinochet. But the pattern is always the same. The economic measures are deliberately sudden and ruthless, with promises that in the long term things will get better. This ignores the people who suffer at the time, always the poor – and it rarely gets better, except for the powerful few. Suicide, poverty and unemployment increase dramatically. Protesters are beaten, tortured, shot or 'disappear'.

Such measures have been repeated in Brazil, Argentina, Iraq, Russia and other countries. In Iraq, the Shock Doctrine was directly behind the 2003 invasion and violent aftermath, with the US claiming it was bringing democracy to the people - while Paul Bremer was cancelling elections. The literal de-structuring (bombing) of Iraq was followed by restructuring of buildings and an economy totally owned by USA companies. For this, the invaders did not need the IMF.

By any standards this is a brilliant book; written with passion yet comprehensively documented. Read it.

Brian Heale



Challenges of Militarism
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 2010

This excellent 24 page colourful pamphlet in perfect English, studded with good photos and illustrations, gets a 5 star rating from me. It is a very useful tool for anyone who is anxious for help in arguing the case for the abolition of war. The content includes, amongst other things, sections on Militarism and Gender (no surprise), Investments in War, Military Expenditure, Nuclear Weapons, International

Negotiations and even the peaceful uses of ex-military property. The bibliography and website suggestions are Nordic oriented but there is no reason why we Brits should not, once in a while, take a look over the British peace movement fence. Produced by the Swedish branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Friendship, it is available from the WILPF London office at:

52-54 Featherstone Street, EC1Y 1BRT (please send a stamped 2nd class 36p self-addressed A5 envelope). Alternatively, it is available to download from the Resources section of WILPF's website, www.ukwilpf.org.

Bruce Kent

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)

