

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 21

Spring 2012

£1

The Apostle of Peace

Henry Richard 1812–1888

“A bayonet has no aptitude for the discovery of truth; gunpowder has no quality of moral discrimination; a Krupp gun or a torpedo has no particular relation to righteousness. All that these can do, if you use them to the day of doom, is to decide, not who is right, but who is the strongest, the most skilful, the most wealthy, the most pertinacious.”

Henry Richard

200 years ago saw the birth of one of our best campaigners for peace – something worth celebrating! Henry Richard was an important and effective figure in several spheres in the nineteenth century and many groups and organisations in London today



The Henry Richard Memorial, Tregaron

have good reason to remember and honour his life and achievements. Born in Tregaron on 3 April 1812, he came to London in 1830 to train for the Congregational ministry and stayed for the rest of his life. It is difficult to do justice to such a multi-faceted man in a short summary. He was:

- The energetic minister at Marlborough Chapel, Old Kent Road from 1835 to 1850, building up the membership and prosperity of a hitherto struggling chapel. Much later, in 1877, he would be elected Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

- The champion of improved educational opportunities for ordinary working people through, amongst other things, the establishment of Sunday Schools for adults and children in Old Kent Road and the British School at Oakley Place, close involvement in the foundation of the Congregational Board of Education, and the active promotion of higher education in Wales (culminating in his appointment as first Vice-President of University College Cardiff in 1883).



Richard's grave, Abney Park Cemetery

- The ‘interpreter’ between England and Wales seeking to highlight and improve conditions of hardship and poverty in Wales and to set right biased English reporting such as that of the Rebecca riots in Wales in the early 1840s and the insulting conclusions of the 1847 Report of the Government Commission of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales.
- **The Apostle of Peace** - as this lifelong and indefatigable peace campaigner became internationally known, leaving Marlborough Chapel in 1850 to take up a full-time appointment as Secretary of the London Peace Society (officially The Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace). He organised a series of international peace congresses calling for a system of arbitration as a method of solving disputes between nations, for non-intervention and a mutual reduction of armaments and for improved international communication, and was probably the leading nineteenth century advocate of some form of league of nations underpinned by an effective body of international law. “The foremost among [his] countrymen in the crusade against war; ...the guide and support of all men of peace throughout Europe” – Frederic Passy, President of the French Peace Society, 1885.
- The MP – Richard was elected in 1868 to represent the Merthyr Tydfil constituency, remaining as such for 20 years until his death. So diligent was he in pursuing and promoting in Parliament matters of importance not only to his own constituency but to the whole of Wales that he was often referred to as *The Member for Wales*. In addition he was now able to extend his peace campaigning into parliament, most

(continued on page 10)

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	2
Chair's Report	3
Art for Heroes	4
Remembrance Lecture	5
Remembering Warhorses	6
Trees for Peace	7
The Peace Award	8
Images of War	9
Pinker's Peace	10
Events	11
Reviews	12

As you will see (Chair's report page 3) MAW is undertaking a fundraising and membership drive. If this newsletter has been mailed to you, you will find a membership leaflet inside. *Use it.* Use it to get one more person to join with us in our efforts to abolish war, to change an outmoded culture of war into a culture of peace. Education, dialogue, mediation – all these will prevent war. Pass the newsletter on, pointing out the membership details on page 11. MAW needs more people like you!

All MAW members - please note our new telephone number below

Movement for the Abolition of War

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Editorial

Babies of Mass Destruction: the propaganda of war.

How do they persuade us, the little people, that we must wage war? How do the leaders justify it? And how many of us, each and every time, fall for their propaganda, persuading us how hateful, how disgusting, how inhuman the chosen 'enemy' is, and how we must do the 'right' thing by waging war.

Let's begin with babies. Babies are always used to make us, the 'good' people, feel superior to 'them', the other side. Christianity used the story of Herod killing the first born to persuade followers how evil Herod was. But how many know that, for example, the same accusation was levelled at King Arthur at a time when this powerful British myth was making people rebellious and call to mind the legend that Arthur would rise again and lead his people to freedom?

The stories of the killing and sacrifice of Christian babies and children were responsible for the massacre of Jews across Europe, in England most notably in York in 1190. If it isn't children it is the rape of women or the violation of both women's and men's bodies. Among the many reported versions of Pope Urban's speech at Clermont, stirring Europe to go on the first Crusade, fight the infidels and seize back Jerusalem from their grasp, he called them 'that vile race', a race so alien to God it had 'reduced the people to the sword, rapine and fire', even though both Jews and Christians had been living peaceably alongside Muslims in Jerusalem for 400 years. Gruesomely, in one version he claims that the Muslims had 'circumcised the Christians and spread their blood on the altars and in the fonts'.

The stories don't change. They just get updated. Today babies in hospital incubators are killed.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait Iraqi soldiers were accused, on no evidence, of throwing babies out of incubators prior to the first Gulf War. Last August the Syrian Government (now called the 'Assad regime', another example of mind-changing language) was accused of killing incubator babies by cutting off the electricity. That story lasted a day before people pointed out that the 'supporting evidence' in the form of photos owed more to Photoshop than the truth. But – and this is regardless of Syria's recorded abuse of its population – there is plenty of other propaganda being circulated by the West in its attempt to bring Assad down. In her recent article *US, UK Targeting Syria: Revisiting 1957 Attack Plans?* Felicity Arbuthnot showed how the West's current strident calls for action over Syria are closely modelled on Eisenhower's and Macmillan's plans for propaganda and action against Syria in 1957. Same old, same old ...and it always ends in blood.

**In war, truth is the
first casualty.**

Aeschylus

525 BC – 456 BC

Which brings us to the ongoing tales about Iran, for years accused (and found innocent) of trying to create nuclear weapons (see Scott Peterson, *Imminent Iran Nuclear Threat? A timeline of warning since 1979*). The West first accused Iran when their favourite Shah was in power. Since then, almost every year, we have been told they will have weapons next month, next year, in the next 10 years or, of course, never. Hit by sanctions, Iran can't import the technology it needs to refine its own oil. It needs, and has a right to nuclear power, and there is evidence to show that really is all Iran wants.

More than once US intelligence has confirmed that Iran is *not* developing nuclear weapons, and last November's report from the IAEA, saying everything the West wanted to hear, was shown by several researchers to have based its conclusions on old and manipulated evidence (see Stephen Lendman, *Fabricated IAEA Report On Iran Released*). As I write, at Iran's invitation, the IAEA is visiting Iranian nuclear facilities. And already, echoing Iraq, we are told that they are being refused entry to one of the 'secret' sites. Yes, some of the facilities are underground, but it is known where they are. The real danger is not Iran, but that Israel might attempt to destroy (according to Michael Clarke of the Royal United Services Institute) some 30 of Iran's nuclear facilities. Have our belligerent leaders given no thought to the cloud of radiation that could envelop us all? Radiation knows no borders, and the radiation from Fukushima, now affecting much of the USA, would be small in comparison. And of course, no one mentions the nuclear weapons held by Israel – or Pakistan – or India. Nor do they mention the 44 American bases sitting close to Iran's borders. Who is threatening who? Has the world forgotten Iraq? Colin Powell's infamous speech to the UN? The forged yellowcake uranium documents? The non-existent 'weapons of mass destruction' that couldn't be found because they were buried, or moved (surprise, surprise) to Syria? The 'mobile chemical laboratory' that turned out to be an aerial photo of an old lorry with roll-up canvas sides? But then, did *you* ever question the information that supported NATO's intervention in Libya? Latest polls show that 70% of Americans believe that Iran already *has* nuclear weapons, and the missiles to deliver them to the US. 45 minutes, anyone?

It makes you wonder who wrote the original stories, millennia ago, to justify attacking innocent people. And I wonder how long our leaders can peddle this rubbish, repeating the same old lies, the same old denials of fact, thinking no one will notice. And are we all really as stupid as they believe us to be? God help us if we are.

Part of MAW's aim is to help eradicate the language of war. This includes ending the use of propaganda. So, if you hear something you've heard before, tell the media you know this is propaganda. Every time our prime ministers, presidents, MPs and senators go on and on about Iran's 'nuclear ambitions', send them a message. Two words will do: "Remember Iraq?" And if you read a story in the mainstream press about Iran's 'regime' killing babies by disconnecting incubators, then an attack on Iran could be just around the corner.

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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

This is our first Abolish War since the AGM back in November. So much has happened since then, both in terms of global events and regarding MAW. The rest of the newsletter touches on the former more than adequately, so I will instead set my focus on the latter.

First, my thanks should go once again to Sir Richard Jolly for such an insightful and informative Remembrance Day lecture on disarmament and development (see page 5). It is not often that the two are set out beside one another in such a fashion, and certainly gave everyone present something to think about.

At the AGM, I set out my plans for how we are going to transform MAW and make the most of the potential we have as an organisation. For those of you who couldn't make it, broadly it involves a restructuring of the organisation and its operations into subcommittees, with various new procedures and processes in place. To you, now, this may not mean much. I understand that. It doesn't sound terribly exciting, does it? But I hope that in coming weeks and months you'll start to see the greater efficiency and greater achievements that come as a result of it.

I'm sure you're interested in what MAW is currently working on. First, as society becomes increasingly dependent on the internet as a means of gathering information and interacting with one another, I think our website and social media strategy need to reflect this. In the coming months, the website (at www.abolishwar.org.uk) will be having a complete overhaul. If any

members have any comments on functions they would like to see included as part of this, please do let us know. I also hope to have greater engagement with social media channels, like Facebook and Twitter, and will be looking into this soon.

Secondly, for various reasons our film about climate change and conflict went back to the drawing board, with the resulting plans looking extremely promising. I think that it's an important issue and one that isn't raised often enough, either in terms of the way that climate change could drive conflict or vice versa (or, indeed, both). We'll keep you updated as things move forward.

Finally, I leave you with a question on membership. You may have noticed recently that we had a membership drive, chasing up late payments and generally getting our books in order. Thank you to everyone that responded. Your support is, of course, greatly appreciated. As an organisation growth is important. Do you, perhaps, have any friends, family or colleagues that might consider joining us in our work? If so, please do let them know about us. Perhaps you could pass on this copy of Abolish War to someone you think might want to join MAW. I hope that MAW will still be here and working on important issues for many years to come, getting its message out to as many people as it can. The best way to ensure that is to increase our membership numbers and use the additional finances to sustain our work (including some more exciting events and projects on the way!). If you can help, please do.

Will Pritchard

Forthcoming Events

Henry Richard Celebration

Date: 1st Apr 2012

Time: 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Location: Abney Park Cemetery (*Church Street entrance*)
Stoke Newington, London N16 0LH

Details: On the bicentenary of his birth, come and celebrate the life and work of this remarkable Welshman. Short ceremony at the grave followed by refreshments and an opportunity to visit this interesting non-denominational garden cemetery and local nature reserve. The 73 bus from Victoria, Oxford Circus, Euston Station, Kings Cross, and Angel Islington passes the cemetery.

For more directions see www.abney-park.org.uk

MAW Fundraising Concert

Violin & Piano Recital

with

Vladimir Choi (*violin*)

& Richard Black (*piano*)

Hinde Street Methodist Church
LONDON W1U 2QJ

Thursday 19 July 7:00pm

Tickets: £15 (£8 concessions) available on the door
but pre-booking/advance payment appreciated

Send cheques (payable to Movement for the
Abolition of War), enclosing an SAE to:
Ruth Underwood, 2 St John's Grove London N19 5RW
(Tel: 020 7272 8500)

If you are in Wales you will surely be celebrating the bicentenary of one of Wales' greatest peace advocates –

Henry Richard.

You can go to the Peace Fair at Tregaron 21 April. But if you are elsewhere in the country, what will you be doing to remember him?

This year's Peace History Conference is moving to Manchester!

2012 Peace History Conference, 10 November

People's History Museum, Manchester.

Details soon on www.abolishwar.org.uk

But we will still have a presence at **London's Imperial War Museum.**

In partnership with INLAP we are hoping to arrange a **1 day conference on War & Law**

To take place in the early summer

Details will be on our website.

Art for Heroes?

The BBC 2 Culture Show Special, *Art for Heroes*, was shown on last year's Armistice Day. Focussing on the work that Combat Stress does to help veterans cope with post traumatic stress through art therapy, it demonstrated all too clearly the damage that war experiences create in the human mind.



Invisible Wounds – the Combat Stress exhibition of veterans' art

Combat Stress says it takes on average 13 years before veterans seek help, thirteen years of flashbacks, nightmares, drink, drugs, violence and living with the thought that you are going mad. They also say that, because of the actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, their case load has gone up 70% in the last 5 years. Currently treating 4500 veterans and with a huge waiting list, they are looking with some trepidation at the coming 'tidal wave' of people with war-related mental problems.

It is intensely difficult for novices to break the barrier of putting pencil or brush to paper - 'I can't draw!' is the common response. But the men seen here broke through, became absorbed in the process and through it learnt what was going on deep in their minds – and somehow found a way of living with and dealing with the horrific memories of what they had experienced. The art they produced, some awful and bloody, some gentle and showing that even soldiers dream of peace, was both powerful and painful.

Were the men featured heroes in the accepted 'wearing a poppy, ceremony at the Cenotaph' sense? That depends on your attitude to fighting wars. They had chosen a military life but, witnessing some of the pain, horror and violence they kept revisiting as a result of their military experience, I doubt they would have made that choice had they known what was in store for them. Victims they are most certainly are of our politicians' and our culture's love of war, an addiction that costs money, lives and most of all minds. And it surely took courage to allow their



National Veterans Art Museum:
American veteran's sculpture, inspired by a victim of the Iraq War

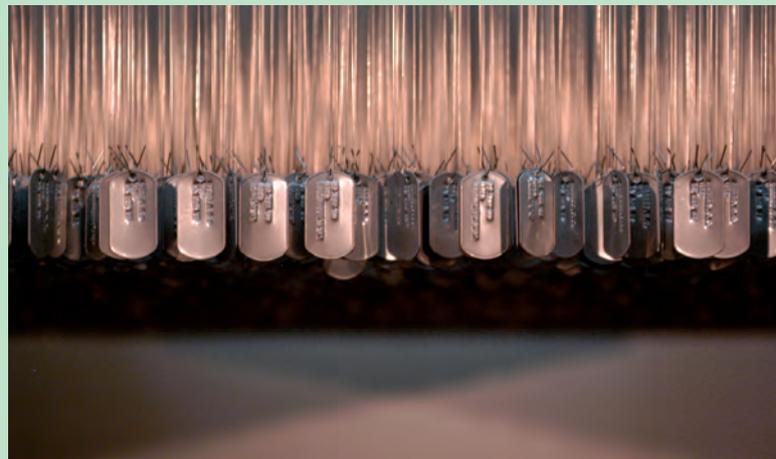
weakness, the insanity of war infecting their minds, to show itself on television and in *Invisible Wounds*, an exhibition of their work put on by Combat Stress.

In 1996 the National Veterans Art Museum opened in Chicago. Initially meant to house art by Vietnam veterans, it is constantly showing new exhibits from veterans of America's more recent military adventures. Here too damaged screaming minds are on display as artists explore the question 'Why – why do we go to war and do what we do?' Most veterans can only talk about their war experiences to other veterans feeling, probably rightly, that other people would not understand the mayhem and lust of battle that led to them killing innocent children or old men, or



Detail from *The Demise of Cornwall* by Steve Woods

give them a sympathetic hearing. The art they produce has a double purpose. It explains their terrors, guilt and fear both to themselves – and to others where words will not do. Would having such a museum in Britain help? Perhaps, perhaps not, but at least some MPs are proposing a £1 million fund for war veterans' mental health.



National Veterans Art Museum: *Above and Beyond* – a 10 x 40 foot work comprised of more than 58,000 dog tags, representing all the American service men and women who died in the Vietnam War

For why should charities like Combat Stress be necessary? It is the *government's* responsibility. The public should not have to pay twice. Our taxes should be dealing with the damage we have already caused by waging war, providing help for these people. And we most certainly should not be funding the next illegal military action. Because that is the real question, one that programmes like these *never ever* ask – why should we be fighting wars anyway?

Note: BAE Systems, responsible for so much stress among the Armed Forces with its expensive, late and poor quality products (the SA80 assault rifle, easily clogged with sand, and the AS90 self-propelled gun which could only be driven at night because its air filters melted in the heat come to mind) is a supporter of Combat Stress.

The Remembrance Day Lecture

The 2011 Remembrance Day Lecture was given by Professor Sir Richard Jolly (Sir Richard was an Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, holding positions in UNICEF and UNDP). With the title *Disarmament & Development: the kindest cut of all*, his lecture had three messages:

- We spend far too much on arms and the military
- We spend far too little on development
- The benefits to be gained by shifting our budgets from the first to the second

Quoting Barbara Ward, Sir Richard made the point that, where disarmament is concerned, the average citizen simply doesn't believe it is possible. If we wish to convince people we need to be able to give them some concrete examples of disarmament, starting with the fact that there are currently 21 nations who by choice do not maintain armies.

He used Costa Rica as an example of such a country. Since 1948, after a brief civil war and wanting to avoid anyone being able to use the army to stage a take-over, the army was abolished and the constitution rewritten to prevent Costa Rica from having one. It has greatly benefited from having no military expenditure – being able to spend more on education, health, research and development than any of its Central American neighbours for starters. And its bio-diversity and natural environment has blossomed, making it a popular place to visit.

As an aside, he related an enchanting story of a time when he was in Costa Rica and the police were on strike. Most countries in those circumstances would call out the army. Having none, Costa Rica did the next best thing – they called out the boy scouts to help direct the traffic – and provided boxes for them to stand on so that they could be seen above the cars.

His second example of disarmament was that which took place at the end of the Cold War. Although neither the West nor the Soviet Union got rid of their military machines, the world as a whole benefited economically and military spending was dramatically reduced to the extent that the USA was able to pay

off its entire national debt – a lesson it should revisit, considering its current massive debt, bases all over the world and endless military 'interventions'. His third example was Europe. The European Union has existed for long enough that most of us have forgotten the centuries of warfare between European countries. There are none that have not at some point been both our enemies and our allies. But now it is inconceivable to most citizens that we should fight each other. Unfortunately, we all still have armies, and far too often governments feel they have to find wars for their armies to fight. The last few years have seen an increase in conflicts and a huge increase in global military spending, now exceeding \$1.5 trillion.

But then Sir Richard came up with something both unexpected and positive: many developing countries *reduced* their military spending during the 1990s and have maintained that reduction. In contrast, too many developing countries are run by the military. Another possible cause for optimism is the global financial crisis. Given the levels of debt and the 'austerity measures' being implemented, the public are beginning to see the benefit of *not* going to war, of *not* having an expensive military machine.

What can we do to encourage a move towards development through disarmament? Of the options that Sir Richard put forward, there was one that specifically applies to peace campaigners. Most people don't see the need for disarmament because they simply don't know how much money goes towards war. It is up to us to educate them, to help them to see that, of all the cuts our governments are asking us to make, the kindest one of all is disarmament.

(You can read Sir Richard's lecture on our website, under Events)



Costa Rican stamp showing a boy scout directing traffic

Wimbledon – a Remembrance Sunday 'first'

Inspired by Christine Titmus's article in the last *Abolish War*, the Merton Branch of the United Nations Association/UNA and Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition/CND worked closely



Mabel & Edwin Cluer laying the wreath

together on this action for Remembrance Sunday. We hoped to have the consent of the local branch of the Royal British Legion and the Mayor's office for us to lay a wreath of red and white poppies as part of the official ceremony. And we agreed that a request in UNA's name was more likely to win agreement. The British Legion said they'd accept a wreath

with some white poppies provided it was predominantly red, but the Mayor's office – having consulted their legal team – said it could not be part of the official ceremony.

So with the goodwill of the British Legion, we had our own ceremony after the official one. Mabel Cluer (who celebrated her 100th birthday last year) and her son Edwin laid the wreath and a copy of the UN Charter was left with it. A local actress, Zulema Dene, read the preamble to the Charter and Alison (as the Merton UNA branch Secretary) read *The Veteran's Lament*, recommended by Christine and downloaded from the MAW website.

We're going to follow this up. The British Legion told us that a wreath with a UN logo could be ordered from their factory (and that it would be officially acceptable). But we're going to see if UNA will support a call for wreaths to officially include white poppies, with their particular history and significance.

Alison Williams and Joanna Bazley

Editor's note: The Mayor's legal team said that as an authority they could not comply with the display of any insignia or advertising on poppy wreaths. The standard poppies in wreaths are just red in colour and thus have no political or organisational representation; such representation is inappropriate for any remembrance service. I think the legal team rather missed the fact that the red poppies used every year in remembrance services are made (and sold) solely by an organisation called the British Legion.

But well done, Merton and Wimbledon! Another success in getting white poppies seen as part of Remembrance – a small positive advance towards a culture of peace.

Remembering the Forgotten Warhorses

The Purple Poppy of Remembrance, launched in 2006 by Animal Aid, commemorates the millions of animals who died in two world wars and who continue to suffer and die as a result of conflict. These animals are not heroes. They are among the countless human and non-human victims of war, yet who remain largely undocumented and unremembered. In 2006, 1000 poppies were sold. Last year sales reached 30,000.

As the success of the novel, play and now the film of *Warhorse* continues it is timely to remember that, in the first few weeks of 1914, 200,000 horses were shipped to the Western Front. To maintain this number, the military needed around 15,000 more horses each month. In WWI alone, an estimated eight million horses, mules and donkeys died. After the war ended, thousands were left behind overseas, sold off to hard labour, or abandoned, some having had their tendons slashed so they would be of no use to 'the enemy'.



WWI horses hauling ammunition through the mud

Official records of the injury, death and abandonment of military animals are hard to find. However there are numerous eyewitness accounts. The following account from the ww2talk.com website relates an incident from Dunkirk, May 1940 and illustrates how horses were perceived as machines: "Just before we moved off a French Cavalry regiment filed into the Chateau grounds at Wulveringham to water and feed their horses, we thought. They led them round to the back of the Chateau from where we heard a crackling noise at intervals and soon men began to return dismounted. They were shooting their horses in batches. This could be thought consistent since we were to destroy our vehicles before entering the perimeter, but a cavalryman's horse was one of his weapons, there was still fighting to be done and all personal weapons were to be taken into the perimeter."



Bomb-sniffer dogs on patrol in Afghanistan

Throughout history many kinds of animals have been used by military forces. An estimated 5000 working dogs were taken by US forces to Vietnam for mine, ambush and booby trap detection. Of those that didn't die, it is believed only around 200 were returned home. When troops withdrew and the dogs became 'surplus military equipment' they were euthanized, handed over to the South Vietnamese or abandoned.

Military use of animals extends well beyond conflict zones. The Animal Aid archive reveals that, in 1946 near Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific, 4000 animals, including sheep and goats, were set adrift in a small boat. An atomic blast was detonated above them so as to gauge the effects of such an attack. All were either killed or badly burned. The military referred to the test as 'The Atomic Ark'. The use of animals as military tools now extends to dolphins and sea lions who endure long flights in water-filled sleeves to war zones across the world. The dolphins are controlled through food deprivation. When searching for mines, they are fitted with 'Anti-Foraging Devices' – pieces of Velcro wrapped around their snouts preventing them from opening their mouths and catching fish. Only if they return to base will they be able to eat.

Animal suffering runs parallel to the evolution of grotesque forms of modern weapon design. In the UK alone, an estimated 20,000 animals, including sheep, goats, mice, rats, guinea pigs, monkeys, dogs and cats, are killed each year in arms, biological and chemical weapons experiments.

In 2011, Quaker Concern for Animals joined with Animal Aid's peaceful purple poppy campaign by producing and distributing information leaflets. On Remembrance Sunday we gathered with many others in wearing purple poppies and laying wreaths at war memorials. Thousands of poppies were sold through schools, vets, health food and charity shops. The purple poppy campaign received coverage in Quaker publications and local media. In Eastbourne, which has a large community of ex-service women and men, a focused campaign was supported by the town council, MP Stephen Lloyd, the Eastbourne Ex-Services Association, Sainsburys, and the Kit Wilson Trust. People purchased nearly 2000 purple poppies before supplies ran out and a wreath of poppies was laid at the official remembrance service where the emphasis was on peace. The simple act of wearing of a purple poppy and the laying of just a single purple wreath amongst a swathe of red is a very powerful gesture of peace and compassion in the culture of war and remembrance. Poppies can be purchased direct from Animal Aid: www.animalaid.org.uk. All profits are ploughed back into the campaign and in raising awareness of experiments on animals including those developing weapons.

Ann Johnson (Quaker Concern for Animals)



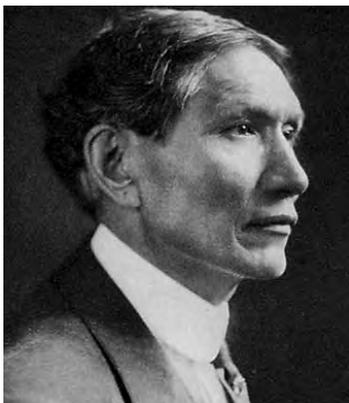
In ruins – Misrata, Libya

A simple trawl through the last year's news will show that, despite Steven Pinker's theory (see p. 10), many people live in dangerous times. Western interference continues to destabilise the Middle East and Eastern Asia. Iraq is still a violent unstable country after our 'intervention'. Afghanistan is ongoing. Libya, another intervention, is awash with weapons and militants. Who knows what will have happened in Syria by the time you read this, and it's

anybody's guess whether the warmongers will get their way and attack Iran. Somalia, Sudan, Niger, Congo – in many African countries conflicts keep boiling over and much of the fighting is with weapons manufactured in the West. And *all* wars bring riches to a few and poverty and ruined homes to many. Social violence is raising its head too. The London riots were not an isolated case. All across the world poverty and social injustice hits hard; the very visible difference between the wealthy 1% and the poor 99% is causing anger and hatred and could so easily tip people over into bloody revolution. And all this – war, poverty, greed and out of control globalisation – causes damage to the earth we live on, depend on. Climate change will add fuel to the fire. Yes, we need to stop fighting wars. But if we want peace, we need to address the other ills too, before they become the causes of future wars. As Brian Heale demonstrates, there's more than one path to peace.

Planting Trees for Beauty, Sustainability and Peace

“Whenever, in the course of the daily hunt, the red hunter comes upon a scene that is strikingly beautiful or sublime – a black thundercloud with a rainbow's glowing arch above the mountain, a white waterfall in the heart of a green gorge; a vast prairie tinged with the blood-red of sunset – he pauses for an instant in the attitude of worship. He sees no need for setting apart one day in seven as a holy day, since to him all days are God's.”



Dr Charles Eastman

Charles Eastman's words, spoken in 1911, are far more eloquent in describing the Earth's natural beauty than I could ever hope to achieve. That is because Eastman, a qualified medical doctor (Boston University) and practitioner, was a Santee Dakota, born in 1858 in a buffalo-hide tipi in Minnesota. His native name was Ohiye S'a. He spent his childhood and early manhood living very close to nature, and lived

through a unique part of history, the very rapid transformation of vast North America from hunter-gatherer villages and nomadic life into urbanisation with huge cities and large-scale industrialisation. Eastman wrote extensively of these changes, and it is clear from this that he considered the Santee way of life to be far superior to the 'white' people's 'civilisation'.

Unfortunately, love alone of the Earth's beauty does not save it from destruction. There is a need to act – act to **protect** what remains of the Earth's natural beauty, act to **recover**, to **re-instate** as much as possible. Of course, people cannot live just on scenery and fresh air. People rely on 12 inches or so of top-soil for their existence. A healthy soil, clean water and a biodiversity of plants produces food, fuel, and shelter essential for life. We must stop destroying this – or we too will be destroyed.

Some organisations and individuals do exceptional things towards enhancing the environment, often at great risk to themselves. They sometimes sacrifice their lives. Chico Mendes, for example, was murdered defending the indigenous way of life in the Brazilian rainforest.

Such activities rarely get into the mainstream media, and the UN is very poor at publicising the good work it does, **or indeed, making itself less remote from ordinary people.**

Sometimes it takes a death to hear of the good work. Africa's first woman Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathi, died last

November, and some of her astonishing life achievements actually got into some press and internet reports.

Wangari co-founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, initially to re-invigorate rural ecosystems to enable the poor to grow their own food. From this local economies were developed. Tree planting was the main method employed by the GBM. This took on a momentum of its own. Soon there was a target to plant a billion trees – and quickly achieved. From when this started in the 1970s to when Wangari died, 14 billion trees had been planted in Kenya alone. After the Daniel Moy dictatorship fell, Wangari became part of the Kenyan government as Asst. Environment Director, and later became involved with the United Nations Environment Programme. (While all this was going on, she also found time to become a professor). UNEP took up the tree planting initiative to set its own



Wangari Maathi

worldwide targets across all countries. The number 14 seemed to take on a symbolic meaning. UNEP set world targets of 14 billion trees actual planted and 14 billion pledged for future planting. Anybody can plant/pledge and get it counted into UNEP's 14 billion trees target. I have 133 trees registered. (I've actually planted more, but have lost count of the number over the years). UNEP is in the process of handing this project over to a *youth-led* organisation based in Germany, Plant-for-the-Planet-Foundation.

Other remarkable actions to establish sustainable green economies are being attempted in countries with long histories of violence. Rwanda is a wonderful example. Last year, Rwanda, with UNEP, launched its *Forest Landscape Restoration Initiatives* aiming to reverse the degradation of the county's soil, water, land and forests. They set a target of planting 68 million trees in one year, 2011-12. Yes, 68 million! This goes hand in hand with UNEP ready to help Rwanda with wider environmental initiatives and to implement post-conflict assessments and recommendations. It is plainly obvious that such projects go a long way to preventing a recurrence of the horrific violence in 1990s Rwanda. **Could it be that Rwanda is on its way to abolishing war in its country?** If so, shouldn't MAW be learning from what is going on there?

“Do one country at a time,” said Richard Jolly in his Remembrance Day lecture. Perhaps here is an opportunity to do exactly that.

Any MAW member who has planted tree/trees, no matter what kind, can register this in the 14 billion target through the UNEP website. Type into the 'search' slot “Billion Tree Campaign” and the instructions are then very easy to follow. Or it can be registered on the Plant-for-the-Planet website. Do it. Be part of it. While you are at it, have a look at 'Disasters & Conflicts' on the UNEP website, to see how other environmental actions are bringing peace in other countries.

Environment and Peace go together like fish and chips, like Morecambe and Wise, and like flu in February. You rarely have one without the other. Let's build on it. And finally:

“To me, nature is sacred; trees are my temples and forests are my cathedrals.” Mikhail Gorbachev (President, Green Cross International.)

Nature is sacred to me, too.

Brian Heale

The AGM

MAW's Annual General Meeting took place at the Imperial War Museum on Remembrance Sunday. Sue Gilmurray, stepping down as Chair, delivered a report of our activities during the past year, illustrated with slides. She also paid tribute to our Vice President Susannah York, who sadly died earlier in the year. Both she and Tony Kempster who stepped down from the Committee, received a gift and our thanks for their work on behalf of MAW.

MAW's Treasurer gave a report on the accounts, and all agreed that more emphasis must be placed on fundraising, so that we can continue to put on events and undertake projects.

Elections were held for the posts of Chair, Vice chair and committee members (for a full list of committee members, please see our website under About Us). Will Pritchard was elected as MAW's new Chair, and in his first address at the AGM he outlined his proposed structural changes to MAW's management system.



Wrexham celebrating the International Day of Peace

The 2011 Arthur Hewlett Peace Award

This is the third year this award has been made to a local peace group which has done exceptional work with limited resources.

This year's winner was the Wrexham Peace & Justice Forum (WPJF).

No representative of WPJF was able to travel down to London for the presentation at the AGM, but Brian Heale gave some examples of the varied and imaginative campaigning activities of this group, using their limited resources and members.



Demonstrators outside Wrexham Magistrates Court

To celebrate the 2011 International Day of Peace (21 September), they held a full day of events including a church service, a peace picnic and an exhibition in the local library. One of their members, Judith Sambrook, is being prosecuted as a 'conscientious census refuser' (like many others, she objected to Lockheed Martin processing the data), and naturally there were demonstrators outside at her first court appearance on – would you believe it – Remembrance Day.

Now – **who would you nominate?** Anyone can nominate a local peace group for this award. The group must be small, independent, address all peace issues (not, for instance, devoted solely to nuclear arms or arms control), and be active in promoting a wider public knowledge of peace issues using limited resources. If you know of a group that fits the bill, please send your nomination and any information about the group to the Editor (contact details p.2)

And a message from the 2010 winners, Faringdon Peace Group:

Faringdon Peace Group has had a quieter year this year, without a big public meeting for which we are well known, such as we have had in the past for the General Election or Civil Liberties. Our monthly meetings and annual Peace Fete have been our main activities. Speaker meetings have covered a wide range of subjects: Western Sahara, Iran, UK/USA special relationship, Climate Change, Jesus and Non-Violence, Conflict in the Congo and the effect of the death of Bin Laden on the power balance in Middle East. Our 30th annual 'Grand Peace Fete' was a great success as always, with the beautiful setting and perfect weather contributing greatly to the wonderful atmosphere which makes the fete so special. Our old friend Bruce Kent opened the fete with a few words of wisdom.

Thoughts and discussions about how to spend the Arthur Hewlett Award prize money are ongoing. We want to make sure we spend it wisely on something that will be a real aid to our campaigning and/or further the cause of peace in Faringdon and the surrounding area. We are very grateful to MAW for the award.



Amanda's statuette of Brian

Brian Haw –

In the last issue MAW member Michael Culver wrote about Brian Haw. Michael's wife Amanda has created this lovely bronze statuette of Brian, and they want to see a life-size version in Parliament Square as a permanent memorial to one of our most dedicated and persistent peace campaigners. If you think you would like to support this project in any way, get in touch with the Editor.

(contact details p.2)

Images of War

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

What is it about war that enables a soldier to do something kind and gentle

one minute, and vicious and uncaring the next? How can the same person risk his life to save a life, then turn round, take part in an orgy of killing and celebrate the destruction of life?

Anja Niedringhaus, AP



FALLUJAH, IRAQ 2004

Kisses for a little girl in Fallujah. 30/10/2004 – while US forces are preparing for an assault on the rebel stronghold of Fallujah, a Marine of the 1st Division kisses a local child before joining a foot patrol outside the city. Days later American forces attacked Fallujah for the second time, leaving piles of bodies in the streets and houses, and the city in ruins. As happened in the Vietnam War, Fallujah was destroyed in order to 'save' it.



AFGHANISTAN 2010

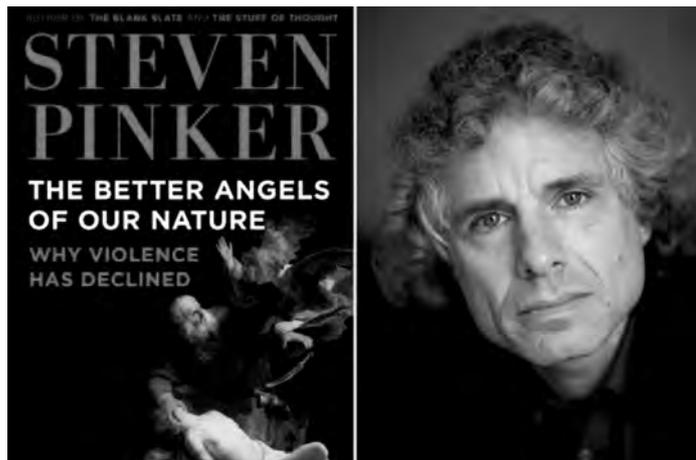
American soldiers don't spend all their time in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban. When a village in the Laghman Valley was suddenly engulfed in a flash flood that almost destroyed the village, they waded through flood waters 3-6 feet deep to carry children to safety.

But, also in Afghanistan, 'on safari' US Special Forces in Kunar Province in Eastern Afghanistan celebrated the killing of one of very few Asiatic lions left in the wild in Afghanistan. The Asian lion is the model for the heraldic lion and is extremely rare outside a small area in Western India. For some of us, just to see one would be a cause for celebration.



Source: Dr. Mohammed Daud Miraki

Pinker's Peace: just a beautiful dream?



Is human aggression capable of transmogrification? (OED: I transform, especially in a magical or surprising manner.)

MAW members, naturally enough, are in the business of optimistic transformation whenever they spy something moving in the jungle of global affairs. But not without appreciating the diverse approaches involved.

A recent interview in the Observer with Harvard University's Professor Steven Pinker (author of *The Better Angels of our Nature: the Historical Decline of Violence and its Causes*) came as a useful reminder that not all purveyors of peace could possibly agree about their particular routes forward. Pinker's laissez faire stance is based on the somewhat startling premise – didn't we realise it? – of finding ourselves 'living in the most peaceful era in our species' existence'. (But many would say that throughout history, there has *always* been more peace than war.)

From which he further deduces that irreducible peace is just around the corner. Hang on, I thought on a fifth re-read of the Pinkerite analysis. What about the continuing wars? Is it really time for the activist's boots to go back under the stairs? As for the global atrocities from the past – well, the past is the past. And, with one more heave-ho or two, even those annoying little demons can be suitably put out of harm's way.

A friend went to hear the much-billed Pinker lecture and came out pretty star-struck. "His research was very impressive." For someone so critically aware, a surprising verdict. My slight quibble is that I can't accept his take on Peace. As for his claim that violence is on the downward trend, well, it takes plenty more transmogrification to believe it. We may have outlawed torture, slavery, child abuse, violence in the home – oh yes – and war, but people all over the world still suffer from that violence.

Your cue, William Golding. Not normally associated with all things bright and beautiful concerning a future vision, his darkness feels somehow much healthier than Pinker's Mission Nearly Accomplished style.

Ten years after World War Two Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies*, the story of a planeload of boys stranded on a seemingly hopeless journey of survival (not unlike Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, with its air of hopelessness). But some would claim Golding's *The Inheritors* to be even better than *Flies*, amidst the spate of other dark stories.

Let me get Professor Steven Pinker's gospel straight. Never mind all the struggling efforts of the global activists. Why on earth have we been wasting our time? Apart from the odd military mopping-up operation, all we have to do is sit back, keep our 'inner demons' under control and continue to bask in the sunny

uplands of our 'better angels. Then all will be well. It strikes me that Professor Pinker is travelling dangerously close to accepting without a trace of unease the prevailing laissez faire of western war syndromes.

I find that Golding's writings encourage me to look beyond the Pinkeresque horizon. Like MAW, I know there is still work to be done.

David Partridge

The War Prayer

Along with other prominent Americans, Mark Twain wrote and spoke against the US war on the Philippines (1899–1902). He was so upset at the reports of the brutality of the US soldiers and the mass killings they were responsible for that he wrote a brutally honest anti-war story called *The War Prayer*. In it, as a congregation prays for their soldiers going to fight overseas, they are made to face all the unspoken messages behind their simple words. The story was submitted to Harper's Bazaar (Twain was contracted to them) for publication, but was rejected as 'not quite suited to a woman's magazine.' Twain wrote to his friend Dan Beard, 'I don't think the prayer will be published in my time. None but the dead are permitted to tell the truth.' *The War Prayer* remained unpublished until 1923.

This is the Prayer itself, with all the hidden words made visible – you can see why Harper's thought it 'unsuitable'!

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle – be Thou near them! With them – in spirit – we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown

the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander

unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it – for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen."

You can read the whole story here:

<http://www.midwinter.com/lurk/making/warprayer.html>

continued from Front page

notably in 1873 when his resolution for 'a mutual and simultaneous reduction in European armaments' was passed, albeit in a slightly watered down version, and six years later his call for parliamentary consent prior to going to war was only narrowly defeated.

For about 20 years before his death Henry Richard and his wife attended what is now Kensington United Reformed Church, Allen Street, where he was a close friend of the minister the Revd Dr Alexander Raleigh. Henry Richard died in 1888 and was buried in Abney Park Cemetery, very close to Dr Raleigh's grave as he had requested.

The 200th birthday of this remarkable Welshman will be celebrated at Abney Park Cemetery on Sunday 1 April at 2.30pm (see page 3)

Hilary Evans

Events Diary - from Network for Peace

1 April BRISTOL. Drone conference "Future Wars", Arc Bar Cafe, Broad St, central Bristol. Contact: 0783 7001518

1 April LONDON. Henry Richard celebration, Abney Park Cemetery, see page 3.

3 April SALISBURY. "The nuclear industry and the health of the planet" with Dr. Frank Boulton, Chair of Medact. 7:30pm, Quaker Meeting House, 51 Wilton Road, Salisbury

17 April WORLDWIDE. Global Day of Action on Military Spending.

21 April, TREGARON. Peace Fair celebrating the bicentenary of Henry Richard.

2 May UK. Challenge arms company BAE at its AGM. More info: research@caat.org.uk

5 May LONDON. Network for Peace AGM, Friends House, Euston Road. Speaker: Maya Evans on her trip to Afghanistan

15 May WORLDWIDE. International Conscientious Objector's Day

19 May WIMBLEDON. Fete of the Earth, in aid of CND. Community Centre, St Georges Road, SW19

4 June WORLDWIDE. International Day for Children as Victims of War

8 June Sheffield. Peace in the Park Festival, The Ponderosa, Sheffield.

9 June FASLANE NAVAL BASE The start of 30 days of Actions at Faslane

4 July MENWITH HILL. Annual 'Independence FROM America' day.

19 July LONDON. Concert organised by MAW. See page 3 OXFORD, every Thursday, 1:15pm, 'Stillness in the city', Peace House, 19 Paradise Street.

LONDON, every 1st Sunday of the month. Walk in Peace, 11am, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

10 November MANCHESTER.

2012 MAW Peace History Conference
People's History Museum, Manchester. Details soon on www.abolishwar.org.uk

Peace Trails through London

Expecting any visitors this Olympic summer? The usual London tourist experience includes cavalry in red uniforms, underground war offices, an ancient castle where prisoners were tortured, at least one cathedral full of military flag, and innumerable statues honouring bravery in battle.

But *Peace Trails through London* offers a different view – of a London seen through 'peace eyes'. With this new booklet visitors and residents alike will discover some of the people and places associated with national and international peacemaking.

What is there to see? Statues, trees, inscriptions, buildings, monuments, gardens, murals, graves, stained glass, paintings, churches and pagodas, illustrating a broad concept of peace. Medieval heroes like the Burghers of Calais, and more recent ones like Edith Cavell... inventors, journalists, nurses, politicians, admirals (because peacemaking is not just for pacifists), campaigners for women's rights and against slavery... humanists, Buddhists, Jews, Quakers, and more, are all on the London Peace Trail.

The Central London trail has 10 stops, starting at Gandhi's statue in Tavistock Square, and including Red Lion Square, Trafalgar Square, Whitehall, Westminster, Victoria Tower Gardens, across the river to the Imperial War Museum, before ending at the Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park.

The City peace trail has 7 stops, starting on Victoria Embankment, and taking you to Postman's Park near St Paul's Cathedral, to Smithfield, Quaker Gardens, Bishopsgate, and Fenchurch Street near the Tower.

Valerie Flessati



This is an expanded version of the 1998 *A Peace Trail Through London*. Maps and photos are included. Available end of April from: MAW, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ

Price: £2 plus 60p postage (p&p: for 2 copies add £1; 5 copies add £2)

'Compassion can rise above politics in the face of human need.' Joyce Pearce OBE

One of the distressing results of war is the number of refugees and displaced people it creates, people torn from destroyed homes, fleeing violence and, more often than not, living in poverty. Some time ago Abolish War featured an article by Ailsa Moore on the Ockenden Venture, set up by three remarkable women to help people like this. From small beginnings this has now become Ockenden International and is much admired for its work. Ailsa also told our readers about the community play they were going to stage. What she didn't tell us was that in 2005, to commemorate Joyce Pearce, one of the founders of the Ockenden Venture, she was instrumental in getting a lovely statue called *Protecting the Child* installed in Woking Park, along with a specially designed seat, creating a much needed peaceful corner. If you visit Woking, seek it out.



Protecting the Child
by Tonderai Mashaya,
Zimbabwe

And Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford has recently established the *Joyce Pearce Fellowship*, a Junior Research Fellowship in Refugee Studies and Forced Migration. Joyce herself studied at Lady Margaret Hall in the 1930s. So from small beginnings, Joyce's work will go on inspiring compassion in others.

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

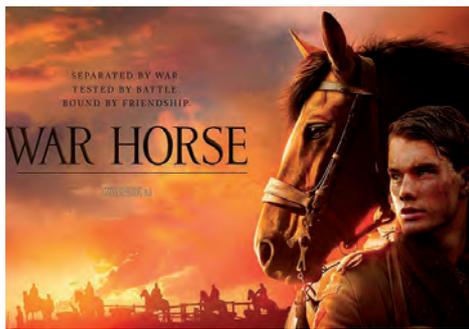
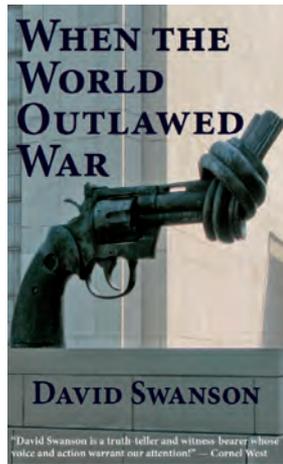
When the World Outlawed War

David Swanson 2011

'It has become a well-kept secret that war is illegal...' So starts Swanson's book *When the World Outlawed War*, a clear, simply written but detailed description of how the Kellogg-Briand Pact came into being. So much hard work went into achieving it, and following the story laid out by Swanson, we can learn much about how desperate the ordinary people were for peace after WWI, and the many peace organisations that lobbied politicians into supporting the Pact. What is sad is that Levinson, the man who from the first worked to outlaw war, should not be included in the name of the Pact; that Kellogg got the glory and picked up the Nobel Prize. The Pact created a law that for the first time made war illegal. It was originally signed in 1928 by only 15 states, but in the years that followed, many more supported it. And, a point which Swanson stresses, it is *still* law, even if it only outlawed war between the signatories. In fact the Pact is stronger than the UN Charter in its prohibition of *all* war. Needless to say, by the 1940s most of the signatories were at war with each other, the Pact forgotten.

How many times do we have to outlaw this barbaric practice before politicians take notice? As campaigners against war, we need to be able to inform people of war's illegality. This book will help.

Lesley Docksey



From our youngest reviewer
War Horse

Director
Steven Spielberg

War Horse, a very moving successful film, play and book by Michael Morpurgo. It is a story about a horse that survived world

war 1, the name of the horse is Joey he was beloved by many people but mainly his true owner Albert. Albert's father bought Joey to work on his farm, and in the first part of the film Joey learns to pull a plough but he eventually sold the horse to the British army. Joey was passed on from

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 21

Spring 2012

the British to the Germans then back to Albert who was now fighting in the war.

Joey's rider got shot in his first cavalry charge and lots of horses got shot down beside him which shows how brutal war is and that horses should not go to war. Eventually Joey got tangled up in the wires of No Man's Land. The experience of watching the film was exciting but very sad. The noise of the chaos made me feel what it must be like. One moment of peace the next war!

Joey survives but it is not really a happy ending because we have seen so many people and animals being killed. BUT WAR IS NEVER THE ANSWER!!!!

Patrick Alwyn (aged 9)

The Deaths of Others

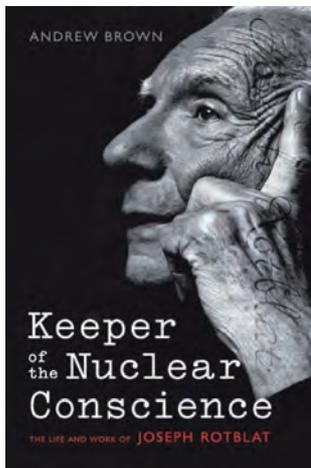
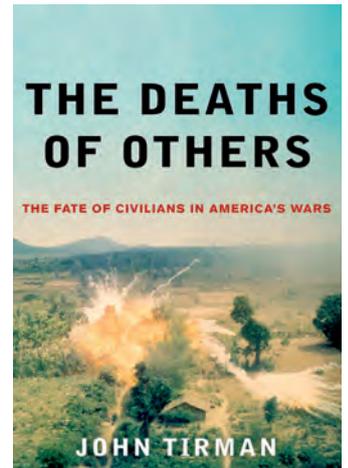
John Tirman, Oxford University Press, 2011

This book, written by an American, and addressed to Americans, asks a highly uncomfortable question: why do Americans care so little for all the civilians they have killed in every war they fight? And before we all get into America-bashing, we should remember that *all* countries with an imperial past have also been guilty, though without justifying their behaviour in a way that allows for massive 'righteous' killing.

Tirman demonstrates how the American myth of 'conquering the Frontier', civilising the savage and bringing 'freedom' was born, and moulded into a belief in a grand manifest destiny. Sadly, as in the case of the Native Americans, civilising the savage meant killing him. With a brief look at the Philippines War, he examines in detail three wars, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. The death toll is horrendous- anything between 1 and 3 million, mostly civilians, died in each, mostly unrecorded because "we don't do body counts".

Tirman's approach gives a comprehensive historical background, the politics and interests at play that result each time in apparently uncaring slaughter. This is not a comfortable read – how can you really comprehend that in one day, 23,000 gallons of napalm were dumped on Pyongyang? But it is a must-read for campaigners against war and all the appalling damage that entails.

Lesley Docksey



A Special Offer for MAW members!

The Oxford Research Group is publishing two books of real interest to us, and they are available at a reduced price.

The first is *The Keeper of the Nuclear Conscience: The life and work of Joseph Rotblat*. This comprehensive biography of MAW's first President is written by Andrew Brown, who had exclusive access to Rotblat's papers.

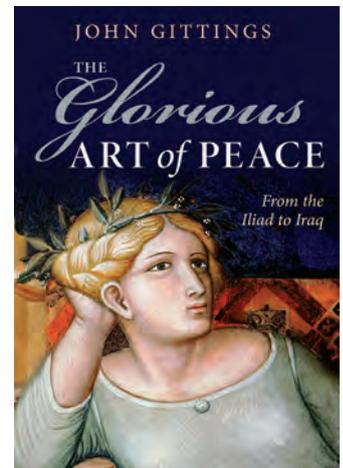
The second is *The Glorious Art of Peace: From the Iliad to Iraq*, by John Gittings, a history of the arts of peace, showing how peace has always been an important part of human thought.

Buy these books at a special price from the Oxford Research Group:
www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk

Use the following code for the discount (there is a place for the Promotional Code when you click 'Add to Basket'): ATRFLY7

You can also find more details on this offer (with direct links to the correct ORG web page) on www.abolishwar.org.uk

Both books will be reviewed in the next Abolish War.



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)

