

# ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter of the Movement for the Abolition of War Issue 27, Spring 2014

## Author to deliver message of peace

MAW is delighted to announce that award-winning author Michael Morpurgo (pictured) will deliver our annual Remembrance Day lecture this year.

Michael, author of the best-selling book *War Horse* has already voiced concerns over the tone of many of this year's WW1 centenary events.

Writing in the *Guardian* newspaper in January he said: "If people gave their todays for our tomorrows then, I am sure, after all they went through and died for, they would wish to see us doing all we can to create a world of peace and goodwill, a world that one day will turn its back on war for good."

"During these next four years of commemoration we should read the poems, stories, history and diaries and visit the cemeteries, German cemeteries as well as ours - they were sons and brothers and lovers and husbands and fathers too."

"There should be no flag waving, unless it be the lowering of the flags of all the nations who lost their sons, unless it be to celebrate the peace we now share together, unless it be to reaffirm again our determination to guard our freedom, but, as far as humanly possible, to do it in peace. And when we sing the anthems, let them be anthems of peace and reconciliation."

● Are you, or do you know, a young person (18-25) who would like to attend *Peace Event Sarajevo 2014*?

<http://www.peaceeventsarajevo2014.eu>. MAW is offering a bursary for travel and accommodation in the Event's International Youth Camp in June. If you are interested, email [martin.aitken@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:martin.aitken@tiscali.co.uk) ASAP.



No flag-waving: Michael Morpurgo

Photo: Richard Cannon

The Remembrance Day Lecture will be held on Sunday, November 9 at the Imperial War Museum in south London. It is likely to start at 3pm and entrance is free, although donations to MAW's work are welcome. Put the date in your diaries now for what is sure to be an enlightening afternoon.

Will Pritchard, chair of MAW, said: "We are delighted that Michael Morpurgo accepted our invitation to speak at this key event in a key year."

## WWI objectors to be honoured

Conscientious Objectors of World War One will be honoured on May 15.

Descendants of First World War COs will be among those taking part in this year's International Conscientious Objectors' Day commemoration in London. Some of these family members are daughters and sons of men who endured repeated imprisonment for their anti-war beliefs, or worked with Friends Ambulance and War Relief services.

They will read out the names, bring photographs and lay flowers in honour of their CO relatives.

The annual CO ceremony will take place at 12 noon on Thursday, 15 May at the CO stone in Tavistock Square, London WC1 and all are welcome.

## Day of action on military spending

The Global Day of Action on Military Expenditure (GDAMS) - an initiative of the International Peace Bureau - will take place on Monday, April 14. The aim of this day is to contrast the vast amount spent annually (\$1.7 trillion) on war and military defence, with the lack of funds for education, clean water, health, housing and food production.

**Take action:** Contact your local Oxfam, Christian Aid CAFOD or similar to start a discussion about how we can persuade our government - and others - to change priorities. Contact CAAT or the IPB in Geneva, for more details: [www.ipb.org](http://www.ipb.org)

Bookmark our website: [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/abolishwar](http://www.facebook.com/abolishwar)

For an electronic version of this newsletter email Gillian Hurle, [gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk) and forward it to your contacts.





## GOD, I'M SO DAMNED SICK OF PEACEKEEPING:

Paul Rigby, illustrator and cartoonist who died in 2006 saw active service in WW2 with the Australian RAF.

His subsequent career as a political cartoonist spanned 30 years and he won many awards for his drawings and his caustic wit. For the most part he remained neutral and



politically detached but just occasionally he would produce something more

serious and hard-hitting. A few years ago on a trip to Western Australia, I visited

the Gallery dedicated to Rigby's work. I met his widow, who told me that although her husband was never a "peace activist," he knew a lot about war, much of it from first-hand experience - and hated it. She wanted me to have a copy of this powerful and moving cartoon as an example of his "more serious side."

**Heather Speight**

## Diary Dates

● March 8, (Saturday), Stroud Green Library, London N4, 3pm. "We will NOT fight - conscientious objection in Hornsey during the 1914-18 war." A free talk by historian Jennifer Bell. More details on 0208 489 8776

● March 8 (Saturday), Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG, 11am-12.30pm. "What is democracy?" - a debate with David Babbs, executive director of 38 degrees and Jonathan Lord, MP. Part of the Woking Debates series organised by Woking Action for Peace. Details on 01483 768 228.

● March 18 (Tuesday), Haverford West and March 19 (Wednesday), Swansea - evening meetings with Bruce Kent on 'The case for scrapping Trident.'

● April 5 (Saturday), Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG, 11am-12.30pm. "Do weapons keep us safe?" - a debate with Kate Hudson (CND) and Carl Thomson (local Tory councillor). Details: 01483 768228.

● April 14 (Monday), Global Day of Action on Military Expenditure (GDAMS). <http://demilitarize.org>

● May 15 (Thursday), 12 noon, Tavistock Square, London - ceremony for International CO Day.

● May 17 (Saturday), Hexham, Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati will be taking part in a debate on "The witness of the WW1 COs and the ways in which that war might have been avoided."

● October 11 (Saturday), Imperial War Museum - MAW Peace History Conference. Speakers confirmed so far include Cyril Pearce and John Gittings.

## New statue for Alfred - and Ada - on the way

Fundraising is well under way to replace the statue of one of the most active and eloquent opponents of WW1.

Alfred Salter, Christian socialist and lifelong pacifist, chose to pursue medicine as a GP in the slums of Bermondsey and then was Labour MP for the borough for more than 20 years until his death in 1945.

His much-loved statue, by the Thames, showed him gesturing towards his only child, Joyce, who died of scarlet fever at the age of eight. Entitled "Dr Salter's Dream," it was stolen in 2011.

A group of local activists are working to put Dr Salter back on his bench - joined this time by his wife Ada. Unaccountably omitted before, she was a major figure in her own right: the first woman councillor in London (1909), London's first woman mayor and the first woman Labour mayor in the British Isles (1922). Together they were the driving force behind the Independent Labour Party in Bermondsey.

They inspired a borough revolution that, among much else, established a solarium to combat tuberculosis, set up infant welfare centres, opened a rest home for mothers in the countryside and built housing on the garden-city principle. When war broke out in 1914 Alfred Salter caused a major

stir with his article "Faith of a Pacifist." In this he answered the call to arms with the words: "Look! Christ in khaki, out in France thrusting his bayonet into the body of a German workman. See! The Son of God with a machine gun, ambushing a column of German infantry. Hark! The Man of Sorrows in a cavalry charge... No! No! That picture is an impossible one - and we all know it." All this can be read in *Bermondsey Story* by Fenner Brockway, himself a notable war-resister.

With existing matched-funding from Southwark Council the appeal is just £15,000 short of its £100,000 target.

**Take action:** To donate, visit [www.salterstatues.co.uk](http://www.salterstatues.co.uk).



Photo: Alan Gerrard



# Songs for all to sing in anniversary year

MAW Committee member Sue Gilmurray is busy recruiting choirs to help our 'Songs for 2014' project - offering people the chance to sing peace songs from a choice of 14.

The songs include *Moonshine*, with words by MAW vice-president Martin Bell and music by Sue; *Mothers, Daughters, Wives*, for female voices, by Australian songwriter Judy Small; and *Foolish Notion* by US songwriter Holly Near, asking "Why do we kill people to show that killing people is wrong?"

There is one arrangement for a

female choir and one for a male choir as well as two more for mixed voices. One of these will be an arrangement of the Tommy Sands song, *Music of Healing*, which was the title track for MAW's first CD in 2003.



The Oxford-based Sea Green Singers - pictured below - are already busy rehearsing one of the songs.

Sue says: "Some of the songs express anti-war protest, others are simply pro-peace - and it would be wonderful if people could sing them over the course of this important year."

You can listen to audio extracts at <https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014>

and Sue can be contacted for more details at [suegilmurray@icloud.com](mailto:suegilmurray@icloud.com)

You can also read more about the project on the MAW website -

[www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk).

## Remember them with new MAW booklet

A revised and updated edition of MAW's Remembrance booklet - a collection of reflections, prayers, songs and readings - will be published this year.

The new edition, called *We Will Remember Them* aims to reflect the new challenges faced over the eight years since the publication of the first book.

MAW committee member Sue Dowell said: "We want to help people cut through the confusing mass of information we are being offered at the moment. We think the best way to do that is to simply listen to what those in the trenches said and wrote at the time of conflict."

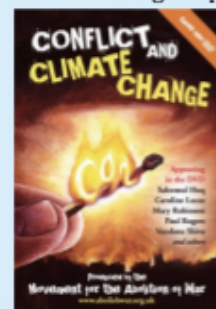
● For those readers who have access to the internet, MAW is happy to recommend this video about moving the world beyond war - after you have watched it, share it with your friends!

<http://worldbeyondwar.org>

## Climate DVD doing well

The MAW DVD 'Conflict and Climate Change' is selling well and is particularly suitable for use by schools although it is also finding an audience among churches, libraries, environmental groups and others.

The DVD includes interviews with climate change experts such as



Stuart Parkinson, Green MP  
Caroline Lucas and the Professor of Peace Studies Paul Rogers.  
To buy copies of the DVD

and associated booklet either visit the MAW website at

[www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk) or see [www.kevinmayhew.com](http://www.kevinmayhew.com)

## Abolish War

*Abolish War* will be published next on June 1 - send your news to [helenriley@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:helenriley@abolishwar.org.uk)

## Book review: The History of Peace. ACF Beales (Bell and sons 1931).

This book has wonderful detail about Henry Richard MP and the successful arbitration vote won in the House of Commons on July 8, 1873.

The campaign started in the summer of 1871. The Social Science Association in London set up a committee to examine "whether some General Scheme of International Arbitration or Conciliation cannot be usefully recommended for adoption." The report was published in July and Henry Richard gave notice of a motion to be presented to the House.

Lectures and meetings in support were already in full swing, for example, 12 agents of the British Peace Society toured Britain speaking to 420 audiences in 1871.

Two Arbitration Societies were launched in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Three religious bodies - Baptist,

Quaker and Congregational - recommended the Arbitration cause at all their meetings in 1872.

Newspapers were approached and more than 11,000 articles were printed. There were 75 meetings a month and 1,163 local petitions.

When the motion was finally debated in July 1873 Richard's paper, the *Herald of Peace* had its doubts about success. "What we have most to apprehend. (from members of Parliament) is not so much hostility as indifference. The only way to remedy this is to galvanise members and to awaken their sympathies by proving that the subject is one which is near to the heart of a large body of their constituents."

But when Richard called for a vote he won by a majority of ten.

So the first seeds of the International Court of Justice were sown. What effort and commitment!

Bruce Kent

## Research to focus on impact of war

Children across the globe will join in researching and sharing their family and local history during WW1 – to help build a picture of the huge impact on all sections of society.

The 'My family in WW1' will help teachers and students research the impact of WW1 with children focusing on the impact on their own family histories or on local families.

Once the research is underway schools will be linked across the nations to bring to life the war years and a daily 'time-line' will be published on a special website with blog and twitter feeds reflecting the research. Project organiser John Baruch (pictured) says: "WW1 had a bigger impact on the thinking of a generation than any other event in the past 1,000 years with only the Black Death and the bombing of Hiroshima coming close."

Take action: Contact John Baruch to get involved in the project:

[john@cyber.brad.ac.uk/](mailto:john@cyber.brad.ac.uk/)

[john@telescope.bradford.ac.uk](mailto:john@telescope.bradford.ac.uk)



## Education and partnership are key ideas at Verdun gathering

MAW committee member Gill Hurle reports from the International Peace Seminar in Verdun.

One hundred years after the start of World War One, peace movement representatives from Germany, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands met in the once ravaged landscape of Verdun to discuss what lessons we can learn.

A substantial pacifist movement was active throughout Europe before WWI, supported by all sections of society. But this movement fell silent once war began.

What drove the impetus for war? German speakers emphasised that Germany wanted war in order to enlarge its empire, having come late to the game.

Since the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, Germany had become one nation with a powerful military. Jingoistic cartoons demonised the French and Russians and, in October 1914, a Cultural Manifesto was signed by 93 German intellectuals supporting war, the notable exception being Albert Einstein.

The imperial powers (Austro-Hungary, France, Britain and Russia) were linked into opposing treaties, and one assassination triggered a disaster

fuelled by military-industrial might. And today? China vies for power in Asia, popular media demonise Islam and the EU, as a partner of NATO, is engaging in armed deployments overseas.

What can be done to avoid the mistakes made a century ago? Key ideas that emerged at the Seminar included:

- Education is vital - we must strive to get peace education into schools.

- Disarmament should be linked with sustainable economic development. Critics claim that jobs are at stake - but decommissioning is a viable new industry.

- Promotion of the initiative for a right to peace and support for women's anti-war campaigns.

- More investment in peace - the UN peace budget is just 1% of the world's military budget.

- Open up the debate about EU external intervention, NATO and nuclear deterrence.

The Verdun Seminar was instructive and carried a powerful overall message - we can be more effective by working with peace colleagues in Europe.

Detailed conference notes can be found at [www.1914-2014.eu](http://www.1914-2014.eu)

### The Movement for the Abolition of War – join us, or renew your membership

We 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. Working through education and dialogue, nationally and locally, we have the tools, skills and laws that we need, but we also need you - ordinary people can help us realise our goal, the abolition of war.

MAW members and affiliated groups: unless you are a life member, or joined after March 2013, your membership subscription for 2014 is now due.

Send completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, LONDON N4 1EJ

#### Membership application / renewal

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Tel no. ....

Email .....

#### Type of membership (please tick):

Life £100 ☐ Individual £15 ☐ Unwaged £5 ☐

Household (2 or more at same address) £20 ☐ Group or organisation £25 ☐

I enclose: Membership £ .....

Donation £ .....

Total £ .....

Please make cheque payable to Movement for the Abolition of War  
OR Please send me a standing order form ☐