

18 songs for 2018 – let's sing for peace

MAW's collection of peace songs for choirs, which began as 14 songs for 2014, has grown - now the 18th song for 2018 completes the collection. *Vera* is the story of one woman. It begins with World War One but the final verse is a challenge for us in the present. Vera is Vera Brittain, author of *Testament of Youth* and mother of politician Shirley Williams (who gave the MAW Lecture some years ago). She was an intelligent, privileged young woman, who was appalled when her fiancé, her brother and several friends were all killed in the war. A nurse and a successful writer, she devoted her life to opposing warfare.

In this year, the centenary of the Armistice, and centenary of suffrage, I hope that *Vera* will be taken up and sung by choirs and singing groups, along with others from the collection.

http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/download_s.html#music

Sue Gilmurray

Make a note of this

The Musicians for Peace & Disarmament's next concert is on Thursday, 22 February, 7.30pm, at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, 3 Pilgrim's Place, London NW3 1NG. Emma Kirkby DBE and members of Dowland Works will present an evening of pieces for voices, lute and viola da gamba. MAW vice-president Martin Bell OBE, will speak. Tickets, £20 and £15 (concs) via www.mpdconcerts.org

For electronic versions of this newsletter email Gillian Hurle, gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

The next edition of *Abolish War* will be out on May 1, 2018.



Adele flies the flag (above). MAW committee members John Hills (left), Heather Speight (middle) and Hilary Evans (right).

Flying the flag for peace: MAW committee members, friends - and young relatives - joined others at the annual UN peace service at Canterbury Cathedral. The UN Peace Service represents an affirmation of the fundamental values and principles set out in the UN's Charter and highlights the need to combat xenophobia and narrow national self-interest.



MAW members urged to make their mark in 2018

As we move into 2018 it seems a fitting time to look back at some of MAW's achievements and look forward to the centenary ahead, marking the end of the First World War. This newsletter highlights some activities of MAW members, young and old, across a range of events and meetings. We have continued to work in partnership with other organisations with similar aims and we will build on this work this year. MAW's chair, Tim Devereux, says: "Now, we would like to hear from members about local plans for events and ways to mark the significant anniversary of 2018. It's a good time to take stock and, day to day, to try to live up to the UN's aim of "practising tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

Bruce takes on role of MAW President

At our November AGM, Bruce Kent was unanimously confirmed as our new president. Our vice-presidents are Christine Blower, Colin Archer and Martin Bell.

The following officers and executive members were returned unopposed:
 Chair: Tim Devereux
 Vice-chair: Rebecca Garnault

Treasurer: John Dowbekin
 Secretary: Sally Reynolds
 Executive members: Hilary Evans, Sue Gilmurray, Jen Harrison, John Hills, Gill Hurlle, Ella Johnson, Hannah Larn, Maddy Ridgley, Khem Rogaly and Heather Speight.

Relive the lecture



Trade Union boss Philip Jennings's remarkable Remembrance Day lecture and Q&A session at the IWM is now available to watch, for those who couldn't get there to hear him themselves, via a link from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/> Philip is pictured with Tim Devereux, MAW chair. Watch this space for details of the 2018 lecture.



Stitch-up: When the fantastic Exeter Peace Shop needed a new display after taking down its Christmas items, MAW committee member Sue Gilmurray volunteered a selection of tiny sweaters designed some years ago. The patterns are available free on the MAW website - www.abolishwar.org.uk under Resources/ Downloads/ Toys.

Sign here! Let's rally behind the campaign for a weapons ban treaty

In September, the United Nations' nuclear weapons ban treaty opened for signature. States from across the world have stepped forward to sign up to prohibit nuclear weapons - over 50 on current count. This is a giant step forward on the road towards global abolition. The treaty follows decades of grassroots campaigning across the world. But as other countries make that commitment, will Britain make the most of this crucial opportunity for peace? At the moment things aren't looking too positive. When the ban treaty was negotiated, our government boycotted the process, despite claiming that it plays a full and active role in the UN's disarmament discussions. As the first round of talks got underway the UK Ambassador chose to stand shoulder to shoulder with the US Ambassador as she

denounced the efforts to bring about a nuclear-free world. Successive UK governments have stated their support for multilateral nuclear disarmament, but they have failed to take action to match the rhetoric. Our job now is to put pressure on the government to back it - rather than its current position, which is that Britain will never support it! We are delighted that the Treaty has been agreed by the UN - it's the fulfillment of so much work over decades, but the Treaty itself is just the first step. In 2016, the UK parliament voted to give the £205bn project to replace Trident the green light. Cancelling Trident replacement is key to Britain signing the Treaty. Let's work together to make it happen!

Kate Hudson
 General Secretary, CND



Celebrating the CO project launch in Haringey

Walk, talk and interact – helping to bring the story of Conscientious Objection to life

The Haringey First World War Peace Forum - local people who have researched the lives of men who resisted conscription in various ways during the First World War - has gained a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) award of £9,900 for their project *Conscientious Objection Remembered*.

The grant will be spent on a programme of activities and events from now until May 2019. A key feature of the work will see the installation of a commemorative plaque outside the Salisbury pub on busy Green Lanes in the London borough, marking the spot where anti-war protests took place. Additionally, an interactive sculpture has been commissioned and there will also be workshops, walks and creative activities.

Amongst the 350 Haringey COs - more than anywhere else in the UK - there were no less than 23 sets of brothers. COs were Socialists, Quakers, Christadelphians, Plymouth

Brethren, Jews, Methodists, Catholics and others who professed no religion. The youngest was 17 and the oldest was 43. They were clerks, professional men, students, printers, post office workers, transport workers, teachers, butchers, piano workers, shop workers, engineers, carpenters and joiners - people from all walks of life. With the help of a professional sculptor and collaborating with the Haringey charity, Generation Exchange, plus local historians, archivists and teachers, people of all ages will be able to find out about Haringey's COs, gathering and recording information, photographs and documents, engaging with an interactive sculpture in Bruce Castle, taking part in workshops, joining walks and making posters. Stuart Holey, Head of HLF London, said: "The impact of the First World War was far-reaching, touching and shaping every corner of the UK and beyond."

■ *This Evil Thing*, an acclaimed play by Michael Mears, inspired by First World War Conscientious Objection, will be performed at 7pm on 22 February, at St Augustine's Church, Mattison Road, London N4 1BG, as part of the Haringey First World War Peace Forum's Heritage Lottery Funded project. No need to book - just come along. (A collection on the night will be taken to cover expenses). Visit: <https://michaelmears.org/about/> .

UN and drone guidelines

As an increasing number of countries and non-state actors deploy military drones, pressure increases on the United Nations to establish norms and international laws on their use.

The 16th Annual International Law Lecture will be held in association with the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at SOAS University of London and the Bar Council of England and Wales on Thursday, 22 February, 6.30pm, at the Brunei Lecture Theatre, School of Oriental & African Studies Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. Entry is free but you must register via Eventbrite.

Yes Minister!

Wouldn't it be great if there were a Minister responsible for putting peacebuilding front and centre of British foreign policy?

Conscience appealed for donations to fund an academic report on what a Minister for Peace would do and how the post might be funded.

MAW made a £100 donation and members are encouraged to add to this via

<http://www.conscienceonline.org.uk/>

Finding new ways to challenge rising militarisation of society

MAW Youth held a joint Conference in the autumn with Amnesty in Liverpool on the *Creeping Militarisation of our Society*.

Expert David Gee spoke about the current government's "war project" to recruit new soldiers, but pointed out fewer than half the soldiers who had served in Afghanistan would recommend anyone else to join the army. Rhianna of Forces Watch spoke about the importance of a memorable message with the example: "Draught beer not children". Till Geiger, a volunteer for QPSW, along with Barbara Hardcastle of Merseyside Peace Network, also made valuable



contributions, as did Wayne Sharrocks, a Quaker peaceworker involved with addressing the militarisation of society.

■ **Why has the UK government recently increased contact between the military and civil society?**

Maddy Ridgley, MAW committee member and a recent graduate

from SOAS with a degree in International Relations, presented her dissertation at the MAW AGM. In it, she noted the 2010 government initiative to increase Armed Forces' contact with children including cadet forces in state schools, "troops to teachers", the Armed Forces Learning resource, and Armed Forces Day. She questioned if this initiative was aimed at boosting recruitment, bolstering nationalism or improving the popularity of armed forces for political ends? Maddy concluded it is for recruitment, as there is a recruitment crisis and a deficit in personnel in the armed forces. Privatisation of military functions has adversely affected retention, encouraging a more individualistic idea of working as a soldier. Non-outsourced roles are mostly in combat roles with a negative effect on stress and on family life - the biggest reason for leaving the army.

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.

To join MAW or renew your membership, complete this form or download the membership and standing order forms from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/join.html>.

Send the completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 308 Walton Road, KT8 2HY

Membership application / renewal

Name:

Address:

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..... Postcode

Tel no.

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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

Take action – order a pack
A Forces Watch pack
Take action on militarism is available online or as a paper copy via <https://www.forceswatch.net/takeaction/>
The pack - developed as joint project with Quaker Peace & Social Witness - includes information about different areas in which everyday militarism has increased in recent years and is accompanied by case studies which show ways to challenge the moves.

Membership subscriptions: If you received this newsletter by post the label on the envelope shows your membership status: the date to which you are paid up, eg 2018; 'Life', if you are a life member; 'SO' if you pay by standing order or 'Comp' if you receive a complimentary copy.

To join or renew your membership complete the form in this newsletter or download the forms from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/join.html>. If you would like to receive email notification of the newsletter availability, instead of a hard copy, please email gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

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