1914: a time to remember and take action for peace

MAW members and people in other organisations have already started gathering information and ideas for commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of WW1 in August 2014 and throughout next year. As an example, MAW is planning to offer a series of “songs for peace” for use by choirs across the country - more details to follow. Football matches, echoing the ones that took place on Christmas Day 1914 are already one way of marking the war and there are plans for more. The Peace History Conference will be held in London in 2014. We are also encouraging members to arrange and take part in local events across the UK. MAW vice-chair Lesley Docksey says: “Everyone knows how dreadful trench warfare was, but it hasn’t stopped modern warfare from being just as horrendous. We need to look to the future - what must we do NOW to ensure peace. There is no point to history unless we learn how not to repeat it. “There is no contradiction between remembering the dead (all dead) but pointing out that the world has moved on and that there are more civilised ways of resolving conflict available to us now, if we are willing to use them.” Get in touch with MAW if you are planning an event next year. Contact Lesley Docksey, via: Lesley.Docksey@abolishwar.org.uk

Scrap Trident tour hits the road

Starting at AWE Aldermaston on Monday, April 1, from 12 - 2pm, Bruce Kent, (pictured) vice-president of both the Movement for the Abolition of War and of CND, will lead a protest and launch a tour of towns and cities under the CND banner. He is urging people to fight the £100 billion cost of replacing Trident nuclear missile submarines at a time when deep cuts are being made to public services. Bruce says: “We oppose the disgraceful squandering of public money which has everything to do with national pride and nothing to do with national security.” A petition will also be launched to encourage the Labour Party to see that this decision would greatly improve the prospects for global nuclear weapon elimination - and be a vote-winner. For further information see: www.cnduk.org

Look for tour dates:
Bruce Kent

Remembrance Sunday (which falls on November 10 this year) and similar events across November are a good time to get civic leaders, the clergy and more to see that there are other ways to mark Remembrance than just via nostalgic patriotism. MAW has experience in this area and some useful materials. We are looking for a volunteer or two willing to help co-ordinate alternative remembrance activities this year. Any offers? Email bruce.kent@abolishwar.org.uk for more information.
**Dates for your diary**

March 23, Faslane - Christian
demonstration against Trident.
Speakers include Bruce Kent of MAW.

April 1, 12 noon, Aldermaston Atomic
Weapons Establishment - Mass
demonstration to mark the start of
CND's month-long 'Scrap Trident'
nationwide tour. (see p1)

April 15, 5-6.30pm, House of Commons
- Global Day of Action on Military
Spending (GDAMS), with speakers
including Caroline Lucas MP and
supported by many organisations
including MAW, Action AWE, CAAT,
CND, Pax Christi, Scientists for Global
Responsibility, Trident Ploughshares
and War on Want. (See p3)

May 6, Chesterfield, Trades Union
March with speakers including Bruce
Kent (vice-president of MAW).

May 23, 7.30pm, MANA Concert -
Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, St
James' Piccadilly, London (see
http://www.mana.org.uk )

The Network for Peace website has a
comprehensive events guide. See:
http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk

**Putting pen to paper**

MAW members are urged to take action
for peace by writing to their local paper
or MP and expressing their concerns
over particular issues.
(You can find your MP at
www.theyworkforyou.com)

Here are three dates that would
lend themselves to a letter-writing
campaign:
April 15: Global Day of Action on
Military Spending (see p3)
May 15: Conscientious Objectors Day
(see p3).
June 4: International Day for Children
as Victims of War

**Medics report on nuclear threat**

A new report. *The Delusional Thinking Behind a Policy of ‘Nuclear
Deterrence’* has been published by Medact, the UK affiliate of the
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).
The report says more holistic thinking - taking the views and situations
of others into account is urgently needed - and urges political leaders to
begin negotiations towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Individuals are encouraged to promote peace by making the point in
discussions / campaigns about cuts that £97bn could be saved over
the next 30 years if we stopped threatening others on the basis of a
policy of nuclear deterrence. For more details see www.medact.org

**How Women in Black sell
the message of peace**

SHoppers and tourists in
Edinburgh city centre get the
chance to take a break from the
Saturday lunchtime rush and think
about the effects of war - thanks to
a dedicated group of protesters.

For more than 11 years the Women
in Black have held banners and
placards in busy Princes Street
to show solidarity with the
victims of conflict and against the
futility of war and its destruction of
human rights.

The women stand for an hour on
Saturdays dressed in black and
offering leaflets highlighting
conflicts involving the UK and
other countries. The latest focuses
on the use of drones and
government-backed targeted
killings.

People of all ages and nationalities
stop to comment or ask questions,
often telling the women about their
own experiences of protests and
campaigns across the world.
Many take photos or join the line to
be photographed with the women.

“We are a network of women from
very different backgrounds and
beliefs,” say Women in Black
participants Rosie Hopkins and
Janet Powney.

“Some of us have been making
peace protests for more than 40
years. We take our banners to
protests against war all over the
country and even to Israel and
the West Bank.

“But the core of our activity is to be
together for an hour a week to
stand for peace. The vigil continues
and the message remains that
we bear silent witness to the
futility of war and its destruction of
human rights.”
Paying tribute to courage and conscience in action

“How can we make sure that the courage of those men and women who first campaigned to prevent the outbreak of the First World War, who then resisted the jingoism and who, as conscientious objectors, later refused conscription, is given proper attention during the First World War centenary commemorations?”

This question is exercising many people who fear that the anniversary will be used to promote militarism. Information is crucial, because peace history is still so unknown to many people.

A briefing, Opposing World War One: Courage and Conscience, is aimed at helping to fill the gap.

It outlines conscientious objection and peace activism in the First World War and has been jointly prepared by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi, the Peace Pledge Union, the Quaker Peace and Social Witness and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

Some of the stories of WW1 peace activists are dramatic and powerful. They include the intrepid determination of 1,200 spirited women from 12 countries who overcame multiple obstacles to gather in The Hague in 1915 as war raged.

Between them, they drew up 20 proposals for stopping the war by a negotiated peace - and took these personally to world leaders.

The briefing also details the death-defying courage of conscientious objectors, such as the group imprisoned in Richmond Castle,

The Conscientious Objectors’ Memorial Plaque records the names of 70 of the 81 British COs known to have died as a result of ill-treatment as resisters to the First World War. It was carved by Dorothy Stevens in 1923 and can be seen at the PPU office in London.

(photo: PPU)

Yorkshire, who believed they were going to be executed and scratched heart-rending messages on their cell walls, still visible today.

This free resource will be downloadable on the websites of contributing organisations.

We hope it might attract journalists, programme-makers, event and exhibition organisers, to examine this overlooked aspect of our British heritage that deserves to be uncovered and honoured.

Valerie Flessati

A new look for the Abolish War newsletter

We have moved from a magazine format to a four-page newsletter version of Abolish War, which will be produced four times a year.

The next edition will be out on June 1 and we would like to hear from you - send your news to helen.riley@abolishwar.org.uk

Disarmament for Development event

To mark the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, the Movement for the Abolition of War will host a public meeting - ‘Disarmament and Development’ - on April 15 in the House of Commons Committee Room from 5-6.30pm.

Speakers include Caroline Lucas MP, John Hilary of War on Want and Kate Hudson of CND.

The short Pax Christi film on alternative uses for the vast sums involved will also be shown. More details from the MAW website at www.abolishwar.org.uk/

For the GDAMS statement which has been signed by MAW see demilitarize.org.uk/call-to-action

From local to global

A very successful Peace History Conference was held in Manchester in November titled ‘From Local to Global - the North’s role in peace and co-operation’.

The annual conference aims to increase understanding of past peace movements to help inform the present and the future.

The conference - which was a sell-out - at the People’s History Museum featured a wide range of influential speakers. It included presentations on Enid Stacey and Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, the “forgotten women against war” and another on the Women’s Co-operative Guild.

Walk this way?

The Annual Children’s History Mystery Walk along the London Peace Trail, a MAW activity for several years, is a great way of getting children interested in peace work.

One parent said after the last event: “It was such fun and full of interesting information. We are looking forward to next year.”

If you are a member of MAW, how about taking over arrangements for the walk this year?

Lots of information and materials are available. Email bruce.kent@abolishwar.org.uk to find out more.
Winning ways in Wrexham at three-day peace festival

The Wrexham Peace & Justice Forum is a past winner of the Arthur Hewlett Peace Award and used the money it received from MAW to good effect. The group have always celebrated World Peace Day on 21 September, but last year they put on Three Days for Peace - a hugely successful event - see www.indymedia.org.uk for more details and pictures.

On Thursday 20 September, the group visited St Christopher’s School, Wrexham, with nine other schools attending - 300 children in total. Children took part in activities including a collaborative art project ‘Hands Up for Peace’ with a pledge for peace, discussing conflict resolution in their own lives, writing and performing their own poetry, sharing food and playing co-operative games.

On the following two days public activities included stalls, music, poetry readings, food sharing and more children’s events. If that wasn’t enough, there were live music events every evening. MAW committee member Sue Gilmurray attended and sang some of her peace songs. Wrexham peace activists deserve another award for such a wonderful effort!

MAW Membership Form

Please print

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No

Email

Please tick

Type of membership required

Individual

Life £100

Organisation/group

£25 per annum

I enclose:
a membership fee of £
a donation of £
a total of £

How did you hear about us?

Please make cheques payable to: Movement for the Abolition of War

Send your completed form(s) and cheque to:

Movement for the Abolition of War

11 Venetia Road

LONDON N4 1EJ

Movement for the Abolition of War

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For the credit of: Movement for the Abolition of War

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[please tick one]

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upon receipt of this mandate with effect from ___________ (give date) until further notice in writing.

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The Movement to Abolish War - Join Us!

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.

We have the tools, skills and laws that we need. We also need you. We work through education and dialogue, nationally and locally.

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 2012, your membership subscription was due in November 2012. Abolish War is published by the Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ.