Challenging the culture of war

We are delighted to announce that this year’s MAW Remembrance Day Lecture will be given by social justice campaigner Alastair McIntosh. His lecture will be entitled *The Nonviolence Challenge – Changing the Culture of War* and will take place at 3pm on Sunday, November 10, at the Imperial War Museum in south London ([http://www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)). It will follow the MAW AGM. Alastair McIntosh is a well-known Quaker, campaigner for social justice and the environment, the author of *Soil & Soul* and other books. He is a strong advocate of non-violent action and has also worked extensively with the military. In an illustrated presentation on the failures of war to ensure true security, Alastair will examine the rise of nonviolence as a credible alternative. Entry to the lecture is free and everyone is welcome. See below for details of MAW’s AGM.

MAW AGM notice

**Sunday, 10 November - Imperial War Museum, London, SE1 6HZ**

**1 - 2:30 pm in the Lecture Room.** Including: chair’s report, election of committee members and open discussion forum. Details of who will be standing in the elections will be available on the MAW website from mid-October - [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

If you would like to nominate someone to stand on the committee (nominees must be MAW members) or if you cannot come but have any suggestions or concerns that you would like to be raised at the AGM, contact us by October 10 via the website or in writing, to 11 Venetia Rd, London N4 1EJ.

A climate for peace in the classroom

A ground-breaking DVD on climate change produced by MAW will be launched nationally on October 2. "Conflict and Climate Change" is aimed at older school or college students, and will also prove a valuable as a resource for teachers and adult groups. It includes an information booklet. It will also be useful for promoting debate for those who want to discuss the increased risk of world conflict brought about by climate change. Scientists, campaigners and peace activists will take part in the launch at the head office of the National Union of Teachers in London. The DVD includes interviews with climate change expert Stuart Parkinson, environmental activist Vandana Shiva, Green MP Caroline Lucas, Professor of Peace Studies Paul Rogers and others. For copies of the DVD, visit [www.kevinmayhew.com](http://www.kevinmayhew.com)

Photo: Murdo MacLeod

Alastair McIntosh: an inspirational speaker and campaigner

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)

To receive an electronic version of this newsletter please email Gillian Hurle at: gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk
**Diary Dates**

- **September 20-21**, Peace History Conference, at the Friends Meeting House, central Manchester. Details from gmdcdn@gn.apc.org

- **September 21**, International Day of Peace. [internationaldayofpeace.org](http://internationaldayofpeace.org)

- **October 2**, International Day of Non-violence (Gandhi’s birthday). [http://tinyurl.com/2fe2wx](http://tinyurl.com/2fe2wx)

- **October 5-12**, Drones Week of Action. [dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com](http://dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com)

- **October 19**, 10am - 5.30pm, Friends Meeting House, London. A Forces Watch Networking event - *Militarisation in Everyday Life*. Tel 020 7837 2822, email owen@forceswatch.net

- **October 27, 6.30pm**, The Quire, Canterbury Cathedral - Annual UN service for peace. [http://www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)


- **November 10, 1pm**, The Imperial War Museum: MAW AGM, followed at 3pm by the Remembrance Day Lecture. [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

- **November 13**, Cardiff. Bruce Kent to lay flowers at the conscientious objectors’ stone at the Temple of Peace, followed by a public meeting at 7pm. [www.Attfield@cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.Attfield@cardiff.ac.uk)

- **Monday 2 December**, Concert at Christ Church, Oxford – start of the Fellowship of Reconciliation Centenary. [www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk)

---

### Abolish War newsletter

The next edition of *Abolish War* will be out on December 5 - send your news to helen.riley@abolishwar.org.uk

---

### On the history trail in Cambridge and Brum

Two new city peace trails for Birmingham and Cambridge have joined those already published for London, Bradford, Coventry, Leeds and Manchester.

The *Birmingham City Centre Peace Trail* features St Thomas’ Peace Garden, significant buildings and artworks. There are monuments to Joseph Sturge, Quaker corn-merchant and a founder of the Peace Society, and Joseph Priestley, pioneer of Unitarianism.

In some ways this Trail reflects our cultural difficulty in describing “peace” and creating monuments that honour peace in its own right: several of the sites are actually war memorials of one sort or another.

Many peace and philanthropic initiatives are, of course, responses to war and these are evident in the *Cambridge Peace Trail* too. An outstanding example is the plaque commemorating Eglantyne Jebb, whose experience in the First World War led her to found Save the Children. Famous students of Cambridge colleges include Thomas Clarkson (St John’s) reminding us that opposing slavery was the central issue for many 19th century reformers (including Sturge). The Trail introduces an interesting variety of peacemakers, taking us right back to Erasmus (Queen’s College).

Both trails let visitors know where today’s activists demonstrate, hold ceremonies and continue the peacemaking tradition.

---

### Durham’s jaw-jaw success

A spot of nonviolent conflict resolution took place at the Durham Miners Gala - Help for Heroes was opposite the Peace Action Durham stall where we were promoting MAW (as well as CAAT, CND and PPU). At first, we eyed each other warily - but a few hours and conversations later, we held a whip round for Help for heroes and Sgt Dave Bell had written: “War Doesn’t Work” on a paper peace dove. We agreed that the best way to honour the sacrifice of those who suffer in war is to move beyond “remembering” and instead put more emphasis, effort and resources into trying to prevent war. Everyone went home happy and we hope to develop the connection!

Valerie Flessati

---

**Durham’s jaw-jaw success**

A spot of nonviolent conflict resolution took place at the Durham Miners Gala - Help for Heroes was opposite the Peace Action Durham stall where we were promoting MAW (as well as CAAT, CND and PPU). At first, we eyed each other warily - but a few hours and conversations later, we held a whip round for Help for heroes and Sgt Dave Bell had written: “War Doesn’t Work” on a paper peace dove. We agreed that the best way to honour the sacrifice of those who suffer in war is to move beyond “remembering” and instead put more emphasis, effort and resources into trying to prevent war. Everyone went home happy and we hope to develop the connection!

Heather Speight
MAW members make plea for peace to the Ministry

A small MAW delegation visited the Ministry of Culture in summer to meet the co-ordinators of the 2014 Centenary Programme and discuss how we might contribute. It was an interesting if slightly surreal experience, with more than a hint of ‘Yes Minister’ about it - a senior civil servant and her assistant were present to argue their corner and redirect us elsewhere!

We tried to get across to the Ministry our message that the 2014 centenary commemoration of the start of WW1 provides an ideal opportunity to highlight the essence of the message “Never Again” - and that the very best way to honour the sacrifice of all those who suffered and died is to put major effort and resources into finding alternatives to war.

Later, in a follow-up letter, the assistant co-ordinator assured us that our “pitch” was completely understood and the sincerity behind its message also completely recognised. However, he added that what we were proposing did not fit within the Government’s own Programme! Nevertheless he hoped our ideas could be accommodated by the other Programme Partners, co-ordinated respectively by the Imperial War Museum and the Institute of Education.

Of course, we know that a Government that enthusiastically promotes the Arms Trade is unlikely to allow a hint of “Never Again” in any commemoration of the WW1 centenary. At least we were given a helpful list of contacts and links, which we are pursuing and we will keep MAW members informed of progress.

Heather Speight

Can you help us sing for peace in 2014?

MAW’s Songs for 2014 project - a collection of anti-militaristic songs arranged for choral singing - is gathering pace. After a second recording session, more songs have been added to those already available on the MAW website (www.abolishwar.org.uk). There are now seven songs for which you can see the words and music scores and also hear audio extracts on Soundcloud: https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014

As well as MAW committee member Sue Gilmurray, other songwriters have offered material including Judy Small, Tommy Sands and Jim Boyes. Their new songs will include a song 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.

All those interested in choral singing are encouraged to make the most of this resource and let MAW know how you make use of it. If you belong to a choir and would like more information contact suegilmurray@icloud.com

Putting pen to paper to oppose Trident

MAW backs CND’s ‘Cut Trident not services’ campaign. Our vice-president Bruce Kent has written a general letter which can be adapted to local circumstances. MAW members are encouraged to copy the letter - which is printed below - and send it to their local papers in response to any stories about local cuts to help spread the anti-Trident message.

Dear Editor

It is time for some common sense when it comes to public money. It seems that we are to be hit with yet more ‘financial cuts’. All this to save a few millions pounds - yet at the same time our Government is actively planning to spend about £100,000,000,000 on building and running another fleet of nuclear missile submarines so that this country remains nuclear-armed for another 40 or 50 years. This massive expenditure actually makes us more insecure rather than more secure. Other countries will certainly want to follow our example. The number of nuclear weapon accidents, about which we are told almost nothing, will increase.

It will do nothing to help us deal with the threats which we actually do face which range from terrorism to global warming. What we ought to be doing, but refuse to do, is to begin negotiations aimed at the elimination of all nuclear weapons everywhere. That’s what most of the countries of the world want. That is our legal obligation. Let’s spend the money, if we have it, on the real needs of the people of this country and build a world where real peace does not mean endless threats of mass murder.

Concord flies high

Concord Media - which makes films for peace education - is currently offering the DVD of ‘Attention,’ a prize-winning Czech film for £16 (plus postage and VAT). Details from www.concordmedia.org.uk
Red poppies or white - and a chance to talk

It's a problem for some peace campaigners - which colour poppy to wear? White, obviously, for peace; but how to talk about it with military people who often see it as very challenging. Is it disrespectful not to wear the red? Should we wear both together? What kind of message does it give? A problem perhaps, but it can also open doors.

One November, I was on a train to Dorset after a day spent at the Imperial War Museum where MAW had held its Remembrance Lecture in the Museum's cinema. Later, I sat in the train reading the notes I had made. As is usual for me on Remembrance Day, I wore both a red and a white poppy. I realised that I was being observed by a man sitting a few seats away. Something about his manner and the way he was dressed told me he was an ex-soldier and that he had been at the Cenotaph Remembrance service. Suddenly he got up, walked down to where I was sitting and said: “Do you mind if I ask - what is the meaning of the white poppy?”

He had never seen one before so I gave him a little of its history and its hope for peace.

I said: "My personal reason for wearing both poppies together is that the red poppy helps me to remember all the military personnel who've died in war, regardless of which side they fought on.

“I wear the white in remembrance of all the civilians who have died because of war.”

He nodded and then said: “That sounds good to me!”

Then he added: “Do you mind if I show you something?”

He sat down opposite me and very carefully, almost tenderly, took a roll of material out of his pocket and held it while he told me about himself. He was a veteran and had taken part with his friends in the march to the Cenotaph. Each year he carried with him what he had taken out of his pocket.

Slowly he unrolled the material. Three combat service medals lay there. I could see that he had served in Northern Ireland, the Balkans and the Falklands.

Then he unrolled the material a little more. Three more medals were exposed. “My father’s,” he said. He touched each one lightly as he named them - WW2, Korea, Malaya.

He unrolled the last of the material. More medals, but much more worn than the others, the most recent from WW1, the oldest from the 2nd Boer War. They were his grandfather’s.

I was looking at and talking about more than 100 years of family history; a long history of service but also of war, violence, fear and pain. No wonder, when I told him about the white poppy his reaction was: “Sounds good to me!”

Lesley Docksey

---

Abolish War is published by the Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ.