Focus is on four projects in 2014

MAW has announced plans for four main projects for 2014 - the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

They are a Peace History Conference, the Remembrance Day Lecture, a choir project and promotion of our new DVD on climate change and conflict.

Following the success of the Peace History Conference held in Manchester in September - another sell-out success with wonderful talks and lively discussion sessions - the 2014 Peace History Conference will be held in London. Put Saturday, October 11 in your diary and the venue will be the Imperial War Museum.

Committee member Sue Gilmurray is leading our 'Songs for 2014' project - offering choirs and musicians 14 peace songs.

These 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?"

Listen to audio extracts on Soundcloud https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014

Sue says: "While some of the songs express anti-war protest and might be deemed politically controversial, others are simply pro-peace and it would be great if they could find a place in mainstream events." Sue can be contacted at suegilmurray@icloud.com

The MAW DVD 'Conflict and Climate Change' has already been officially launched and the aim for 2014 is to get it watched by as many people as possible. MAW vice-president Bruce Kent says: "We need to get it into schools, churches, libraries, environmental groups, trade union centres, pensioners' associations and

more for discussion and action."

See a YouTube clip of the DVD at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u3EGSi68x4&feature=youtu.be

Our fourth project will be the Remembrance Day Lecture in November at the Imperial War Museum with a special speaker to be announced in the new year.

Thanks! In relation to the DVD, Bruce adds: "Thank you many times over. Without the help of members we would not have been able to pay for the DVD, now getting such a good reception. If any donor would like a free copy let me know. My lists are in a muddle (what's new?) so don't hesitate to ask."

Challenging the 'inevitable' war

Readers may know that in 1898 Czar Nicholas II sent a message to all the rulers of the day asking them to come to a meeting to discuss ending the arms race which was already underway.

A meeting took place in The Hague in 1899. (Read all about it in Barbara Tuchman's The Guns of August, published in 1962). But that meeting of Government representatives achieved very little. The Kaiser sent a rude message and we British sent Admiral Fisher, a war horse who wanted an even bigger fleet.

It was, nevertheless, a great moment of opportunity which people well understood. For example, in a Congregational Church in Finsbury Park, London, 1,000 people from all over Islington came to discuss the Czar’s proposals on April 12, 1899.

MAW vice-president Bruce Kent is building up a picture of the popular feeling which expressed itself in many meetings in different parts of the country; public opinion which was ignored - and the slide towards 1914 started.

Bruce says: "Please find out what went on in your area and let me know. In all the sentiment about World War One - and there will be lots more to come in 2014 - hardly is it mentioned that the First World War, like so many others before and since, was not inevitable."

Please send information to bruce.kent@abolishwar.org.uk

Well read: Christine Blower, General Secretary of the NUT and MAW vice-president, at the launch of the climate change DVD and booklet
Role of the UN and the ‘scourge of war’

MAW is calling for a renewed focus on the work of the United Nations. Vice-President Bruce Kent says: “The Abolition of War is not a new idea - in fact it is the primary aim of the United Nations Charter signed in June 1945. “However, most people know more about the Highway Code than they do about that Charter. Making the UN work as it was meant to work ought surely to be a MAW priority if we want to build a world of peace based on justice and law.”

MAW has copies of the "Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations" printed on card - including the iconic message: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". Copies of the poster are available from Sally Reynolds, 1 Thesiger Road, Abingdon, OX14 2DY at 50p each. Email sallyreynolds@btinternet.com for more details or see the 'resources' section of our website www.abolishwar.org.uk

Take action: MAW members are encouraged to ask their local schools and libraries or other public buildings to display copies of the poster.

There is also another opportunity to get involved with the UN. Bruce adds: “UNA Members and UN-minded people, please pick up your pens - or mouse. A 154-page elegant brochure on Global Development Goals from the United Nations Association UK has just been published with generous coverage of some major companies, including the mining multinational Anglo American.

But guess what is missing? Not one mention of our global annual military expenditure of over $1.7 trillion. The cost of civil wars, in billions, is mentioned, but not the arms sales which fuel so many wars. Funding global development goals? A dodle if we could spend a generous slice of this massive global sum on food, water, renewable energy and sensible development.

“Why do NGOs, like the UNA and so many other development organisations, avoid mentioning it? Please ask them.” (www.un.org)

● Reform Proposals for a Democratic United Nations. Send a 69p SAE, six and a half four and a half inches, to MAW, c/o 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ for a free copy of this booklet produced by Swedish UNA and the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation.
Recruitment plea over 16-year-old soldiers

MAW is among the organisations sponsoring a petition calling on the UK government to stop its policy of allowing 15-year-olds to apply and 16- and 17-year-olds to be recruited into the armed forces. The recruitment and targeting of young people and vulnerable groups has been criticised by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. What better way to commit our country to peace during the commemoration of World War One than to remember the hundreds of thousands who died from the UK alone, including boy soldiers such as Rifleman VJ Strudwick - whose grave is pictured above - and who was killed in war at the age of just 15.

MAW member Valerie Flessati says: “The UK is the only country in Europe - and the only one among the permanent members of the UN Security Council - to recruit 16-year-olds into its armed forces. It’s time to end this policy.”

Take action: Sign the petition at http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petition/stop-recruitment-of-16-year-olds-into-the-uk-armed-forces

Joining forces with Veterans for Peace

MAW is hoping to forge closer links with the UK branch of Veterans For Peace - former members of the Armed Forces who campaign for peace and to increase public awareness of the true costs of war. Veterans for Peace has recently issued the following Statement of Purpose: “We, having dutifully served our nation, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end, we will work with others:

● Toward increasing public awareness of the costs of war
● To restrain our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
● To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
● To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
● To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organisation that is democratic and open, with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

For more information, see http://veteransforpeace.org.uk

MAW team in place for key 2014 events

Will Pritchard, pictured, was re-elected as MAW chair at our recent AGM. Sally Reynolds is expected to be confirmed as vice-chair at our December meeting. The AGM paid tribute to the work of retiring vice-chair Lesley Docksey and retiring treasurer Andy Cheatle. The AGM was followed by the annual MAW Remembrance Day Lecture and a full house gathered to hear an inspirational talk from social justice and environmental campaigner Alastair McIntosh. Anyone who missed the meeting can still get a good flavour of the talk here: http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2010-McIntosh-Nonviolence-UK-Defence-Academy-web.pdf

● The Global Day of Action on Military Expenditure (GDAMS) - an initiative of the IPB - will take place worldwide on Monday, April 14, 2014. GDAMS offers a chance to work together with the world development and anti-poverty agencies.

Take action: A UK event is planned for London but MAW members are encouraged to set up events around the country. Let us know what you are planning.

A peaceful sound...

Stuart Ribble, a campaigner from the North-East, would like to alert MAW members to the ‘Bell of Peace’ in Italy. He says: “I visited Rovereto (a small town about 15 minutes south of Trento by train), home to the ‘biggest ringing bell in the world’ - cast from melted weapons of the First World War.” The bell is rung “every evening in the hope that Man, in memory of the Fallen of every war and every nation in the world, may find the path that leads to Peace.” See http://www.fondazioneoperacamera.it/
Spreading the word - Joseph Rotblat’s inspirational story

MAW member Brian Heale is using his local networks to spread the word about the inspirational life of Joseph Rotblat (pictured), our first President and Nobel Peace Prize winner for his efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Brian says: “Joseph Rotblat was an inspirational man and, in my opinion, should be much more widely-known. I decided to do something about this and started by offering a talk in Huntingdon Library entitled ‘The Life and Work of Joseph Rotblat’. “In the weeks leading up to the talk, the electronic screen above the door to the library showed an image of Jo smiling down on people as they entered. Posters on the walls had photographs of Jo and a summary of some of his accomplishments. Leaflets were available at the reception desk while upstairs, Jo’s smiling face was on yet another electronic screen. “On the day, attendance was excellent and my talk covered the main episodes of Jo’s very full life. Much detail had to be omitted, but the main themes came through - the poverty his family suffered in WW1, Jo’s rise from working as an electrician to nuclear physicist, the tragic separation from his wife, the nuclear deterrent, his resignation from the Manhattan Project, re-aligning his career to medical physics and his role in the Pugwash Conferences. “The talk was very well received and was followed by Q&As and a lively discussion - including the morality, or lack of it, of the £100 billion Britain intends to spend on updating Trident.” Following this initial success, Brian is now due to deliver his talk at a men’s club in Huntingdon and his details have been passed to other libraries in the area with view to repeating the talk elsewhere. Take action: MAW can help with materials for talks / exhibitions etc - get in touch if you want to emulate Brian and spread the word!

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. | .......................... |
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Type of membership (please tick):

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- Group or organisation £25

I enclose: Membership £ ........
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Please make cheque payable to Movement for the Abolition of War
OR Please send me a standing order form

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

Book Review

War No More. The Case for Abolition by David Swanson
If you think abolishing war is a pipedream, get your hands on this book and read it now! David Swanson is a US author and activist who was press secretary in Dennis Kucinich’s 2004 presidential campaign. In this extraordinary book, published recently, he lays out clearly the arguments that “War can be ended, War should be ended, War is not going to end on its own, We have to end war”. All the forces in the world are not so powerful as an idea whose time has come. The first step in abolishing war will be to recognise that it is possible; that wars happen because of cultural acceptance and can be avoided by cultural rejection. He calls for “a movement for the elimination of war in its entirety. We need education, organisation, and activism.” Download the book as a pdf, kindle or audiobook for $2 from http://davidswanson.org/warnomore or order a copy by sending a cheque for £5, made out to MAW, to 1 Thesiger Rd, Abingdon OX14 2DY. You will not be disappointed.

Sally Reynolds