
WPJF PUBLIC MEETING: OWEN HARDWICKE ON MAW

This public meeting was the third and final event in our successful Autumn programme. Owen Hardwicke, founder of Wrexham Peace & Justice Centre, gave a thought-provoking talk to an attentive audience at Wrexham Quaker Meeting House on the subject of the Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW).

Owen's talk was part of MAW's Remembrance Day programme, which each year marks the Armistice with dialogue and lectures about the causes and future of war. Owen began the meeting by playing an excerpt from Elgar's Enigma Variations, the music that is played at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. We sat quietly while the music was playing and reflected on the meaning of Remembrance Day, in Owen's words, *"to honour those sent to war and all victims of war."*

Owen talked about the history and aims of the Movement for the Abolition of War, including the development of alternatives to war.

MAW's objective is *"to build a civil society movement for the abolition of war by challenging popular thinking about the acceptability of war and by raising awareness of constructive alternatives."* MAW wants *"the same standard of ethics to be employed in international relations as are already customary within the boundaries of Nation States"*

and seeks *"an end to the custom whereby Governments respond to aggression by suspending the ordinary laws of murder, and citizens legitimise this custom by unthinkingly accepting that there is no 'alternative'."*

Owen also quoted many eminent thinkers on the subject of war and possible alternatives to warfare, for example:

"Just as wars begin in the minds of men, so peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each one of us."
UNESCO, Seville statement on violence, 1989.

"War seldom, if ever, settles anything. More frequently than not, it leads to fresh wars."
Field Marshall Sir William Robertson, 1929.

The profit from the sale of White Peace Poppies in Wrexham plus the proceeds of a collection at the meeting allowed WPJF to make a donation of over £50 to MAW.

THE MOVEMENT FOR THE ABOLITION OF WAR

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