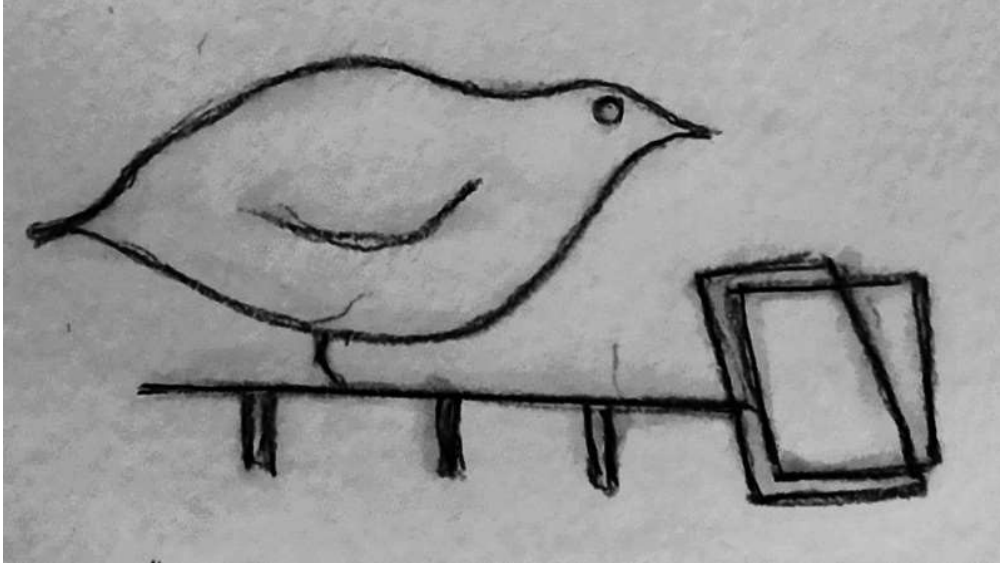


THE PEACE PAPERS

DR JOE OSMOND



Waiting Bird © Joe Osmond 2018

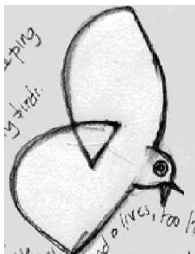
The Peace Papers

This pack made up of a series of reflective articles by Dr Joe Osmond, considering the role of peace in our lives and thinking about practical ways of talking about and working towards a peaceful future. Designed to be dipped into it is free to download. Where did all this start?

Starting Point

As a writer and activist I am occasionally invited to perform my work. This is normally an exciting and enjoyable way to stand up and be counted. The audience is often on my side and it's something, as a member of Equity the Actor's Union, I have been doing for 50 years. But recently, for whatever reason, I've come across more entrenched views that have made me think about how I need to challenge, debate and work towards ensuring that Peace is not something that can be taken for granted.

So, I begin with an account of an encounter on 24th October 2018:



Peace and white poppies are a volatile combination. I struggle at this time of year to maintain a Zen approach to life when challenged to explain the significance of the white poppy. Completing a gig at the Quaker Meeting House (Amery Hill Residents Association October 2018) I was confronted by a militaristic man who maintained that “White Peace Poppies are disgusting.” He caught me off guard. I was in the middle of a performance talking about peace and reconciliation and his remark surprised me. I thought such entrenched attitudes had died out. Needless to say I considered a reply. Quietly remarking that by wearing a white poppy Quakers and Peacemakers: Remember all victims of war – Stand up for Peace – Challenge militarism (<http://www.ppu.org.uk/>) I added that it's what many people believed in. He huffed, puffed and muttered some more as others talked of peace and the need to maintain a conciliatory approach to peace and the past. To me he represented a bullying military attitude that should not go unchallenged but confrontation requires strength and a firm belief in what you believe in.

To write about it is one thing but when faced with bigotry is a different thing entirely. So, how do you react?

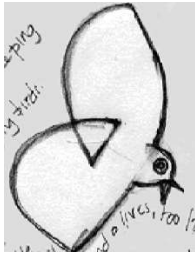
Things to think about:

How do you think about peace?

List ways you share the peace process

How do you ensure that peace is the only answer?

These may be rhetorical questions. These may be too difficult to consider at the moment. Don't worry because part of ensuring peace remains at the forefront of all our lives is to think – share – consider new ways of approaching peace.



Walking for Peace

We all choose our own way of putting our views across. If feeling sociable I will walk/talk and stand up or sit down for Peace. I am not a silent vigil protester or a handing out leaflets sort of a guy. Occasionally I will lead Peace Walks and try to promote the need to recognise that Alton's Quakers were an important part of the Peace Movement and were imprisoned for their beliefs as religious dissenters or conscientious objectors.

So, I walk for Peace... The need to remember is one thing and sharing, without nostalgia is another. The temptation to glorify the past is stronger than ever. Committed to peace and ensuring that all people and their cultures are equal is increasingly difficult. I wrote the following statement when planning a series of peace walks.

Peace Walks

I have taken to providing *Peace Walks*. A community activity primarily designed to save the past from itself –from disappearing beneath the debris of the 21st century. As I've said, I am not a joiner – anything I do is an independent activity but it relies on others taking part. This is my dilemma – I rarely join in but I need others to help me create and share my view of life. A performer for over 50 years, I need an audience – the adrenalin of laughter drives me on while I stand up to be counted through word and sound.

I am not as I seem to others. I am still – a quiet, shy man who likes to talk but only on my own terms. Others remember things that I've forgotten. On a recent walk, someone commented that he remembered me as always going somewhere and that I was rarely still. This is true. My parents were incomers and I have never felt that my roots are driven firmly into the chalk. This is the migrants lament – never accepted or accepting that I belong in one place rather than another I continue moving. This is a badge of convenience– a passport that can be manipulated and moulded as you wish. I am able to stop as long as I know there is a chance that I will be able to move on when I wish. Life as a pausing place – a safe harbour to pause and reflect on the past, while keeping an eye on the future. [Osmond, Alton's Dissenters 2018.]

Mrs Wiseman's favourite expression - "But what can you do?"

Small actions make a difference and it doesn't matter where the idea comes from – call it cherry-picking or pick and mix if you must – but there are things that can be done. From fund-raising to food banks it is possible to work towards a better world. I like this idea:

There is a Jewish custom that requires that charity is given if it is requested and some believers always carry change so that they are ready to give. Since giving is a mitzvah, it doesn't just help others—it lifts you up as well - a charity box in the work place and/or at home can also serve this purpose.

[<http://www.chabad.org>]

Peaceful Walking

I walk to be still. This seems odd – how can you be still if you’re walking? It isn’t as strange as it appears. To walk is to meditate without interruption. There’s no need to talk – just be. To some, it is simple - to others, an act of courage. We are so used to company, stillness can prove difficult. Even more challenging is the concept that you may walk alone, without a dog. A dog can provide you with an excuse but there’s nothing to stop you walking alone. It depends on you. If walking is a means to be sociable then join up with others and talk your way through the landscape. But no one says that you cannot walk alone. This winter In SW Crete I noticed a man who walked in contemplation. Hands behind the back, head down against the wind he paced out his steps – a daily routine that he maintained without acknowledgement. It gave him an aura of calmness – a practice that may have begun as a prisoner exercising or as a priest encircling the monastery. The point is that he was meditating and no one thought him odd.

Being Still comes in many forms. It is a badge of convenience– a passport that can be manipulated and moulded as you wish. *Being Still* as a pausing place – a safe harbour when the world becomes too big to dream and part of this stillness can be walking – a routine that gives you permission to think.

Slow Walking

The art of walking slowly – the way the foot falls – the motion emphasised – each step taking time, a meditative protest ensuring that the lorries and cars know that you cannot be moved on. Until yesterday (3rd September 2018) no one had said that it was illegal -the art of walking slowly now criminalised by a judge.



This is madness. To misquote Grave’s butterfly: no one knows better than I the art of walking slowly. The internet throws up other weaknesses including walking slowly as an early indicator of dementia – as if there weren’t enough restrictions in place already even the act of walking slowly is an indication of something that some would consider sinister. What ever happened to walking as meditation?
04.09.2018.

What difference does it make?

You need to find what works best for you. For many, meditation may take place on the move. A long walk across the hills is just one way that I find stillness each day. I can think clearly and engage with tall skies and birds. One example of the benefits of walking is given next:

The Soul of Walking: Jonathan Wittenberg and Simon Keyes shared experiences of long-distance walking as a spiritual activity at an event hosted by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace.

(*The Soul of Walking* 11th May, 2011 <https://www.stethelburgas.org/>)



There's more to walking than as a physical activity. As Paul Evans writes:

The walk changes the walker...The act of walking is a performance...it stirs up the past and brings it in to the present. (Evans, *Field Notes from the Edge*, Ebury, London, 2017 p5)

I like Paul's way of thinking. Writing of walking he continues:

I tread on the unseen impressions that ghosts leave behind. They tread on mine. (Evans, *Ibid*)

The walker as a philosopher: a shaman, a muse, a silent witness to all that has happened and is about to occur. There are others to read. Completing the excellent *The Last London* (Iain Sinclair, OneWorld, London 2017) I was struck again by the importance of stillness, of walking and observing. It is almost impossible to quote Sinclair and perhaps it's better left unsaid. As the jazz musician David Liebman said 'Buy the book - buy the book.' (Liebman, Leeds 2010)



Even when moving these are the best moments to be still – the sound of the page shuffling from top to bottom, the way the words softly speak as I read .The simple act of walking is not enough; walker as quiet observer – walker as naturalist – walker as a quiet presence in the landscape.

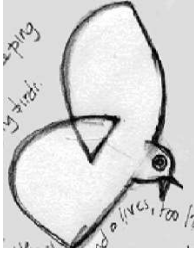
This morning we headed for the hill. The trees clearly seen as this was a winter walk between days of heavy fog. It was good to be out. The birds seemed to enjoy this gap in the Atlantic weather. A heron, becalmed on a pile of straw feeding on worms, a buzzard perched on a fence post always just moving away as we neared, a song thrush singing while wren and goldfinch, robin, rook and gull floated between shadows.

Walker © Joe Osmond 2018

It's easy to forget that there are days like this. 8 days before leaving for Crete the sky as open as it is blue, the memory of fog still floating between Holybourne's distant hills. 10.01.2018



Pheasant © Joe Osmond 2018



Peace is about how you live your life. We may not always have a choice but when peace is found, it is worth cherishing. I wrote the following when asked about my father – a man of peace and principle.

A Peaceful Voice

My father: William Hugh, known as Will, Bill or Len, didn't like medals. The ones he had stayed wrapped in waxed paper in a box, in a draw. The others never applied for, never came. He never wore the ones he had; never mentioned them or the blood he saw. A stretcher bearer and medical orderly for six years, he was a pacifist caught up in the Aegean Sea, a casualty of war.

The proudest moment, years later, was to be awarded the Order of St John – a Serving Brother in recognition of a life spent working with the St John's Ambulance. I have his medal, its citation and a picture of his investiture – wrapped in a box and kept in the glass cabinet that sits between front door and fire among the debris of 21st century life.

He never took part in the Remembrance Sunday parade or stood silently in the freezing November air. He preferred not to wear his medals or to listen to the military rhetoric of church or soldier. He only said that for many, the war was the best part of their lives – he didn't agree.

On reflection, he was a pacifist – a quiet man who brought himself back from the war to bring his family up in peace. He smoked too much, played the accordion and mandolin and died much too young. My father was a pacifist and never needed medals to prove what he had done.

He is why I return again and again to Crete. He is why I have always been a pacifist – a peace poet who has never thought that war is the answer. He is why I no longer smoke but enjoy ouzo and raki, retsina and the deep warmth of the Cretan people. I know what the war ending meant to him. I have photographs of him sitting in the sun – on the rocks near Chania – I see him every time I return – I hear his songbook being played each time I catch the sound of an accordion. I feel closer to him now 35 years after his death than ever. [Osmond, Alton's Dissenters, 2018, -43-44]

We choose to remember – we make a choice as to how we want to keep the peace. I often think about my father and grandfather who were both damaged by war. My grandfather bore his scars for the rest of his life. I rediscovered this poem written in 2011.

Anniversary Waltz

04.07.2011

My grandfather woke rearranged
95 years ago today,
The Somme, not as bright as the 4th of July,
the sky not as blue, his eyes momentarily blinded,
the son of a Shoreditch fishmonger
stripped to the bone,
half filleted, rib torn from rib, lung from lung,
missing presumed dead, a deep worn sigh
of long days to come.

JoeSnowPoet

Finding Peace

G looks much better. The last time we met she was about to leave her house in the UK and relocate again for Spain. Always a traveller and fluent in Spanish the climate, culture and custom seem to suit her. She's found a Studio in one of the White Villages in the mountains and overlooks Gibraltar. Idyllic – she is painting again and the materials previously stored in Portugal have been returned. She looks well, lighter, less depressed. Before she left England, she gave me a copy of *The Way of Zen* by Alan Watts (1957). It was falling apart and out of order but I decided NOT to put it back together but read it as it is. It works for me and there's something about this new way of reading that seems to make sense.

We all find peace in different ways. For G, she is better away from the stuffiness of England and is free to travel. I've often thought of her as a migratory bird – someone who seeks the light while others are wrapped in shadow.

We all have reasons for travelling and this feeling of claustrophobia is often caused by how we function. Families hold on to grudges. Time passes slowly between generations. Forgotten feuds resurface or are hidden until suddenly remembered. "Without talking, there is no peace." I remind myself that this is one of two mantras that I try to keep but I'm no better than the next person and when it comes to jealousy or envy or my family are threatened I react accordingly.

But what can you do? My grandmother, Florence Bilby, gave this phrase to my mother, Mrs Wiseman, which she used to explain away her pain, anguish or frustration with the world for the rest of her life. It is better if you picture her with her arms slightly bent at the elbows with palms outstretched, shoulders hunched. Memories are made of this. Good thoughts rather than antagonistic actions. Accepting her fate was one thing, feeling happy with her condition was another. I wish I could provide an answer. I can't solve everyone's problems. Some seem insurmountable, others trivial but of equal importance to the person who is suffering. It may work if you can offer a solution just one step at a time. The smallest issues may be the route to larger solutions.

At these times, I remember, recall and sometimes share how it makes me feel. On guard and not wishing to offend I rarely stand out – stand up for what I believe is true – that war is not the answer. The Poppy Wearers crow each year – their patriotic duty worn proudly but for me I choose to remember differently. I came across this phrase that helps to explain how I feel:

When we create space, we begin both to understand our own reactions and to consider another's perspective and pain. We have greater presence, compassion and care.

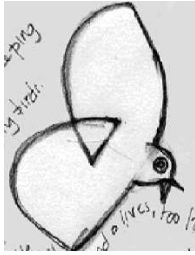
[*The Undefended Heart*, Ray Buckner, 18.12.18]

Yes, it's all about giving space to our feelings and the feelings of others. It is an ongoing process. The phrase "we begin" carries weight and illustrates that it isn't always easy to accept difference.

Thinking

Take time to talk but also take time to reflect on what is said

Create opportunities to share and acknowledge others – their strength, thought and prejudice are reflected in their actions and reactions



Quakers in a Wider World: 1. "Peace is a slow laborious process – less than one small step at a time but a step towards peace, nevertheless." 2. "Without talking, there is no peace." [Dr Joe Osmond Alton's Peacemakers 2017]

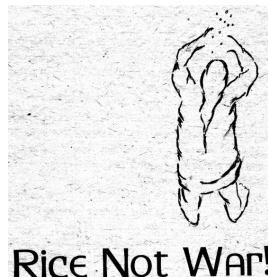
The Quakers have always travelled. In the 17th century, the travelling preachers networked throughout the British Isles. We imagine travelling between places was difficult but Quakers spread their message through print, preaching and perserverance. Some things never change. This continues in the 21st century. Alton's Quakers have attended Peace Conferences in Europe and sustained links with the smallest Quaker communities in Eastern Europe. Cathy Butler, of Alton Meeting, has developed and maintained these links providing valuable outreach work that has benefited all aspects of Quaker life. Her work proposing: 'A novel form of Regional Meeting embracing Friends and Attenders across a wide area of Europe' reflects many years attending worship groups in Brno, Budapest, Prague and Vienna. (Read Cathy's article: *Brno Gathering – an emerging Regional Meeting* in The Friend 23rd June 2017)

These links are important and I am reminded of two mantras that have influenced my approach to peace: 1. "Peace is a slow laborious process – less than one small step at a time but a step towards peace, nevertheless." 2. "Without talking, there is no peace." (*Oasis of Peace*: JHub -London 30.03.2017) The work continues. As Melanie Butlin commented after attending The Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Spring Conference in 2014:

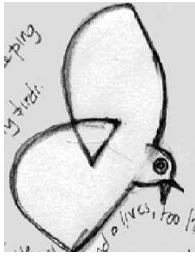
The breadth of work that QPSW is involved in at any one time is amazing. The Peace programme includes: Peace and Disarmament; Peace Education; the placement of Peace-workers; Turning the Tide – training in non-violent direct action; East African Peace-building; Nagaland conciliation and Ecumenical Accompaniers in Palestine/Israel. (Peace and QPSW –Spring Conference, 28th-30th March 2014)

Other conferences and gatherings attended by local Quakers have included "Working for Peace in the Middle East: What can Quakers do?"(Brussels, October 2010 – Melanie Butlin and Eleanor van der Hoest), The Virtual Peace Forum – Melanie Butlin (Vienna April 2011 Peace Matters),

These are rarely just "talking shops" and Alton's Quakers continue to be involved in practical action. From boycotting Israeli goods to Anti Nuclear demonstrations to Against the War in Iraq and Don't Bomb Syria protests, actions speak louder than words. 'In the face of International warmongering, it is possible for likeminded individuals to come together and find alternative ways of finding peaceful solutions.'(Melanie Butlin – Virtual Peace Forum Vienna April 2011) With so many demonstrations, so many wars, so many reasons to protest, illustration is often the answer. Words are lost in the debate – images are stronger and travel between borders and across languages.



Joe Bilby Posters for 15th February 2003/2007 Peace Marches



Practical Non-Violent Action

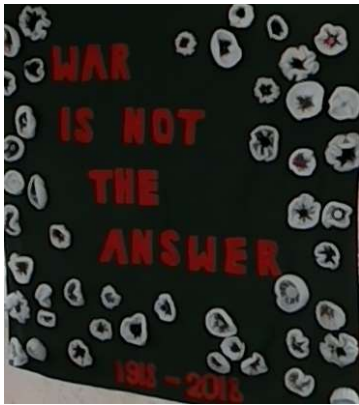
The difficulty is not to confront through aggression but to promote peace through non violent action. Easier said, than done but it a small presence is better than no presence at all. It is a continuous process but necessary if you want to make a difference. What follows are some practical ideas drawn from positive experience in a small community that has a history of peaceful protest. It may not be the answer in all situations but better than no answer at all.

Outreach - Maintaining Peace



Alton's Quaker Peace Group is a quiet step towards maintaining peace and prompting discussion. Recently they decided to have a stall at a pre-Christmas event. It led to all sorts of discussions with visitors, many who had lost touch with the peace process or the local Quaker Meeting. It proved successful and included a small game that asked the question "Quaker or Not?" featuring common perceptions or mis-conceptions about companies founded by Quakers. With FREE chocolate supplied by Fry's (Quaker -yes) and lots of comments about companies including Quaker Oats (Quaker - no) it was interactive and different. A white poppies banner was hung at the back of the stall that prompted several young children to agree "that war

is not the answer"



Alongside this there were free leaflets, copies of Dr Joe Osmond's *Peacemakers* and *Dissenters* on sale and even some Quaker Jam made by a member of the Alton Meeting.

It was one way to remind people of the need for peace and to show that this group are an important part of the community. With *Peace Walks* planned throughout 2019 it was another way to promote what the Quaker Peace Group is doing.



Digital Futures - Outreach; Many opportunities arise as a result of involvement in other projects. The need to find new ways of talking to wider communities is essential. In 2018, an invitation to present *The Migrant's Lament* at Digital Futures (Dr Joe Osmond, V&A/EVA, London) combined new forms of technology with other work including peace poems and integrating sound with abstract animation.



Beautiful Word Birds: A small collection of Peace Poems and illustrations, published by Bee & Thistle Press in September 2018. Accompanied by readings and performances with 50% of sales going to local charities, *Beautiful Word Birds* is another example of ensuring that peace is talked about. Trying to think differently about how poetry is presented, *A Beautiful Word Birds walk* will take place in the spring of 2019. Featuring poems, unusual bird facts and histories it is designed to help start discussions about aspects of local history – what have been forgotten and/or ignored and the importance of talking as a means to

an end. In other words, communication is essential if communities are to co-exist peacefully.

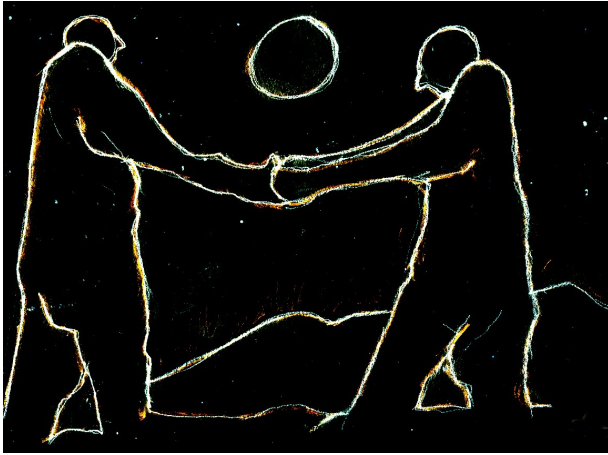
Check Lists:

- Establish Talking Places – Places where people feel safe to talk
- Discover innovative ways of promoting peace
- Promote events that keep peace at the forefront of community life. Ideally these should be non-confrontational but sometimes things have to be said and done to raise the importance of maintaining a peaceful life

There are so many organisations that have sprung up over the years committed to a Peaceful Future. These groups are often directed towards taking positive action. They are not “Talking Shops” but believers in making lives better through music (Musicians without Borders -) supporting refugees (Lighthouse Relief) and through improved Health Care (MSF: Medecins Sans Frontieres)

- War Divides – Music Connects: Peace building through Music
Find out more about how this works by visiting
<https://www.musicianswithoutborders.org>
- You don't have to be a doctor to help: Find out more about how this works by visiting: <https://www.msf.org.uk>
- One Man or One Woman can make a difference: Find out more about how this works by visiting: <https://www.lighthouse relief.org/>

There are so many different ways you can make a difference. These Peace Papers are just one way of emphasising the need to maintain the peace through positive action.



The Stone Men Diaries

Occasionally visual images work better than any number of words. This image: *Stone Men at Peace* created on 1st September 2018 was from a series of illustrations that were created as part of a project promoting peace. The concept was that even the most intransigent of people were capable of finding peaceful solutions.

© Joe Osmond 2018

This is a reoccurring theme in my work. It is always better to talk than to let rumour, fear of “losing face” or just lack of understanding stifle a relationship.

“Peace can be made only by those who are peaceful,
and love can be shown only by those who love.”
[Alan Watts; *The Book on the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* Jonathan Cape Ltd 1969]

Want to know more about Alan Watts? Go to: <http://www.alanwatts.org/>

So why bother? The commitment to Peace and Reconciliation is a life long commitment. For some, it's what they do on Sundays or high days and holidays but for others it's about living their lives peacefully. St Ethelburga's is just one example:



78 BISHOPSGATE LONDON UK EC2N 4AG

St Ethelburga's is a maker of peace-makers. It inspires and equips people from all backgrounds to become peace-builders in their own communities and lives.

St Ethelburga's

- Works for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers by building relationships across differences and by training young people to become allies to displaced people
- Supports Christian leaders to turn churches into hubs of reconciliation expertise for their local communities

St Ethelburga's does this and much more besides. Want to know more? Go to: <https://stethelburgas.org/>

If we aim to live our lives peacefully, is it still possible in an increasingly violent world? Some cities, recognising the need for meditative places have established parks designed for peace. Here are two examples, you may, of course know of more!

Dublin Peace Park

Located in Nicholas Street across from Christchurch Cathedral, this small park was dedicated to the yearning for Peace in Ireland and was officially opened in 1988. Designed as a sunken garden to reduce traffic noise at this busy junction, the main features include a bronze "Tree of Life", a pool/fountain and fine natural stonework of Calp and Liscannor.

The Peace Maze

Castlewellan Forest park's 'Peace Maze' was commissioned in 1998 and in 2000 and 2001 over 4000 school children and 1000 people attended community planting days to plant the maze's 6000 yew trees.

The design for the maze was conceived by Beverley Lear of Lear Associates who used the best ideas from thousands of children's designs that were submitted at the time.

Upon solving the maze there is a bell to ring at the centre. This bell is considered to be one of the most frequently rung bells in Ireland, with over half a million rings every year.

<http://www.castlewellancastle.org/forestpark.html>

Things to Do

Follow up on the website information given in this article.

Find out if there is Peace Park near you. Visit if possible.

If not – why not develop a community based project to establish one?



Crossing the Line © Joe Osmond 2011

Peace is a 5 Letter Word

There is no other way to say it. There is no other way to confront it. There is no other way to make sure that peace is maintained than by living each day peacefully. This is not as easy as it sounds. We are confronted by challenges wherever we live and bigotry seems obligatory to some people. They thrive on confrontation – on being the angry man or woman in the room and proud of it. For whatever reason, they want to talk down, over or even through any seemingly logical voicing of an alternative argument.

I began these Peace Papers with an example of being interrupted – heckled by a member of the audience intent of expressing his opinion. I've thought about that incident several times since but as Mrs. Wiseman used to say, *I shouldn't dwell on it*. After all, taking a positive view of his interruption has led to this. It's a fact that although Peace is simply a five letter word, its existence challenges the view held by many that in order for there to be peace we must have a militaristic deterrent to ensure that we can live in peace.

This is where...

Bertrand Russell challenged the methods of the fledgling CND, with the founding of the Committee of 100, which started non-violent direct action as a means of protest, which was unpopular with some of the CND leadership. In February 1961, 4,000 protesters sat down outside the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall. In September, 1,300 were arrested in Trafalgar Square and 350 at Holy Loch in Scotland where the US Polaris nuclear missile were based.

The authorities began to arrest and imprison the organisers. In September 1961, at the age of 89, Russell was jailed for seven days after taking part in an anti nuclear demonstration in London, for 'breach of peace'. The magistrate offered to exempt him from jail if he pledged himself to "good behaviour", to which Russell replied: "No, I won't." [<http://peaceandjustice.org.uk/>]

Russell's reply is still heard today, especially in the work of singer songwriters, Billy Bragg [<http://www.billybragg.co.uk>] and Maggie Holland. Stalwarts of the anti-war movement, these are among many who have made a decision not to be quiet.

Peace continues to be the focus for many, remembering that one person can make a difference. Alton born songwriter and musician, Maggie Holland has composed many peace orientated songs including "A Place Called England" and "Perfumes of Arabia". For more details see: <http://www.maggieholland.co.uk/>
[*Dr Joe Osmond Alton's Peacemakers 2017*]

And poets... Words are good for making people think, respond and help to change there view of the world. One of the best was Adrian Mitchell.

Michael Rosen is another poet has who has a lifetime commitment to "Telling us like it is". His collection "*Listening to a Pogrom on the Radio*" [Smokestack Books, Ripon, 2017] contains many amazing poems.

Pause for Thought

This is a term I use a lot, especially when I'm performing. Another one is: If only walls could talk. I used to broadcast on the radio and when I needed a quick break, I used a musical break to give me time to think or to 'draw breath'. So, this is a pause for thought:

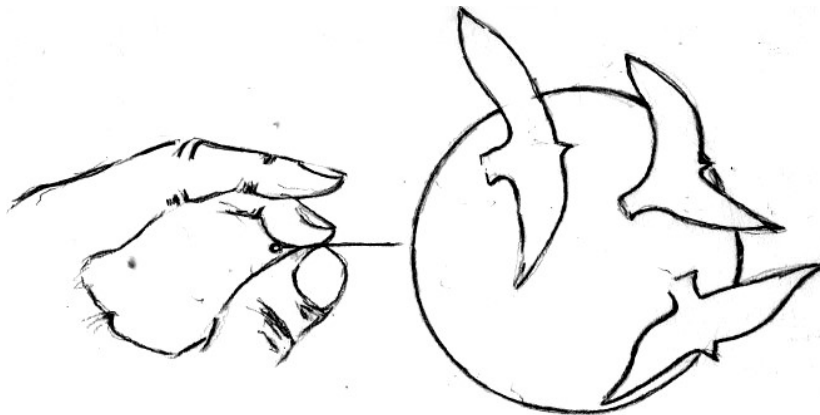
Things to do:

Check out the websites included in this pack

Follow up on the work of poets including Adrian Mitchell and Michael Rosen

Share you Peace with each other by:

Not taking peace for granted



Birdsong for Prisoners © Joe Osmond 2011

I composed and performed *Birdsong for Prisoners* in 2011. It explores the ways in which we interpret sound, recalling memories of chords and phrases that trigger new stories and challenge our perception of a world where sound is only available with accompanying still and moving images. But what does a prisoner hear? Whether their status is political, criminal or one of conscience they are still capable of listening and responding to sound. It may be a remembered fragment of chords, a rerun of events or a bird singing beyond the wire but they still hear and individually interpret what is heard. Read the full article at: <https://joesnowpoet.weebly.com/>

Silence, stillness and peace are recurring themes in my work. Without stillness or the ability to reflect on what has been said or done, peace is very difficult to achieve. It is not just about talking but listening and responding to what has happened in the past so that we can influence the future.

Nurturing Peace

I am trying to find alternative ways of maintaining my approach to peace. This is not easy. Tired and cold, the days stretch out long before the sun has risen – long after the sun has set. There isn't enough time to ensure that peace stays at the forefront of everything we do. To create stillness you have to maintain and nurture peace. It is not enough to say that I live a peaceful life. It is not enough to stand up and be counted occasionally. It is an ongoing process. One that will not stop at a moments notice or pause while some conflict or another is solved through violence. It is difficult, extremely challenging, to create and continue to maintain an approach to peace without upsetting or upstaging someone. The dreams of many revolve around power and this power is exercised through threats and confrontational action. I am drawn to thinking about Amos Oz; the Israeli writer who died on 28th December 2018 aged 79. I have read many of his books and place him beside a number of writers that include Seamus Heaney, John Berger and Haruki Murakami as intellectuals who I will always read. I remember devouring their books and wait impatiently for another publication. This is not an easy wait and often as not, not an easy read. I find peace in their words – they force me to be still and read without worrying that I should be completing any number of practical tasks. But I am not a practical man. Given the opportunity I will avoid completing the necessities of life, especially if there is a new edition waiting to be read. But this is no way to live a life. I need to manage wood – season and dry logs – split and create kindling – if I want to be still in front of a long fire and wait for spring. 10.01.2019

Things to think about:

Talk about alternative ways to nurture peace

Create spaces where it feels safe to talk

Think about the writers, poets or musicians that inspire you

Things to Do:

Nurture peace through action

Establish a community website providing information about peaceful activities



The Author: Dr Joe Osmond aka JoeSnowPoet has written extensively about Peace. **Dr Joe Osmond** is a writer, poet, artist, animator, musician and peacemaker engaging with disability groups to make the creative arts accessible to all. This work has included creating interactive learning strategies for Arabic teachers in Kuwait and working with the visually and hearing impaired on a number of EU Projects. He has written extensively on Emotional Intelligence and is committed to making the arts accessible to all. He is proud to be a member of Equity, the actor's Union. His recent Pocket Histories include: *Alton's Dissenters* (2018) *Alton's Peacemakers* (2017) *Zen and the Art of Ageing Mindfully* (2016) <https://joesnowpoet.weebly.com/> *Hear Joe read his Peace Poems on Sound Cloud as joesnowpoet* His latest book is a collection of poetry: *Beautiful Word Birds* (2018)