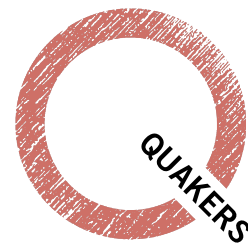




Educate and disarm



Quaker Peace & Social Witness Peace & Disarmament and Peace Education programmes

Issue 5

Autumn 2016

Where now with Trident?

Tim Wallis on the grounds for optimism, page 8



A great bunch of Quaker activists to be gathered

After two successful gatherings in London, the 2016 Quaker Activist Gathering will take place in York on 3 December.

It's a free event for Quakers who are active in social change, or who would like to be. It's a day for meeting each other, sharing skills and learning new ones, to help us become more effective in our witness and work for change.

If you can, try to bring someone else from your local or area meeting, or who shares your interest in an issue, so you can work together afterwards.

The event runs 10am–4.30pm, 3 December, 2016, Friargate Meeting House, York.

For more information, and to register, visit www.quaker.org.uk/activist-event.



Peace education with EAPPI: book a speaker

Speakers from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) can offer talks and workshops tailored for young people in schools and youth groups. The Peace Education programme is also keen to try out new activities to engage young people with questions of peace and human rights, complementing the

eyewitness experience of the network of Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) in the UK and Ireland. This will help develop a resource pack to be released in 2017.

Contact Ellis if you'd like to arrange a session in your meeting, a local school or youth group: ellisb@quaker.org.uk.



An EA working in a school in London. Photo: BYM. Cover photo: Royal Navy, crown copyright.

Conscience peace tax update

Friends throughout Britain Yearly Meeting have for many years been actively supporting the efforts of the campaigning organisation Conscience to obtain the legal right of conscientious objection to military taxation. This effort reached a new milestone on 19 July this year when Ruth Cadbury MP tabled a Ten-Minute Rule Bill to that effect and it rather surprisingly passed its first hurdle in the House of Commons, unopposed.

The Taxes for Peace Bill is scheduled for a second reading on 2 December, although there is no guarantee that it will actually be debated. In fact, it is at number ten on the list of Private Members' Bills to be heard that day, and usually there is only time for the first one or two to be debated.

Nevertheless, having got this far in the process is no small achievement and represents something of a breakthrough in a campaign that has been going for more than 37 years. Eleven MPs are supporting the Bill, and even the remote possibility of it being debated makes this a good moment for Friends to write to their MPs to encourage support for the Bill.

Regardless of what happens to this particular Bill, Friends will continue to campaign for the legal right to divert military taxes to peaceful purposes until that right has been recognised by parliament. If it is wrong to kill, it is wrong to pay for others to kill on our behalf. More information about the Taxes for Peace Bill is available on Conscience's website at www.conscienceonline.org.uk.

UN: do more conflict resolution education

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which Quakers and many others worked hard to develop, set new standards for all countries. Like every other state, the United Kingdom is reviewed periodically by the UN to see how much progress is being made towards reaching those standards; this happened again in 2016.

Organisations from civil society can offer evidence, so at QPSW we put together a submission on behalf of Quakers in Britain entitled "Militarisation or peace education?". With help from the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), we highlighted Friends' concerns, including the increasing militarisation in schools and poor government support for peace and human rights education.

The Convention makes clear that not only is education a right (article 28), but that it should be directed towards "the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin" (article 29).

Education for peace, however, is an area in which the UK government is not only inconsistent, but one which is undermined by the militarisation of education (see www.unseenmarch.org.uk).

Following the review, the Committee recommended more human rights education and training in conflict resolution skills, a responsibility we intend to push the government to deliver on.

One shortcoming of the Convention is that it

only banned military recruitment under the age of 15 (article 38), not 18.

"QUNO staff pursued a plea for the age of 18 to be the international standard on the floor of the General Assembly till the very last minute", remembers Marigold Bentley, now Assistant General Secretary of QPSW. "Their tenacity was so impressive."

Instead, under-18s are only protected if countries adopt an 'Optional Protocol'. The UK never has, and the struggle against under-age recruitment continues through the work of organisations like ForcesWatch and Child Soldiers International.

The Committee noted that "safeguards for voluntary recruitment were insufficient, particularly in light of the very low literacy of the majority of under-18 recruits", highlighting the government's failure.



You can read our whole submission at:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/peace-education-or-militarisation--quakers-in-britain-submission-to-uncrc-regarding-uk>.

The Committee's conclusions are here:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/teatbodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/GBR/CO/5&Lang=En

Peacemaking in schools

The 'Learning Through Peace: Developing Whole School Values and Outstanding SMSC' conference for primary schools

On the eve of Armed Forces Day, 24 June, Quakers in Britain hosted the national conference of the Peaceful Schools Movement. Over 80 people attended, including head teachers, school governors, learning mentors, religious education coordinators and children from two Beacon Peaceful Primary Schools. Beacon Peaceful Schools have demonstrated a commitment to developing peace at four levels: pupils' inner peace, inter-personal peace, building a peaceful school community and engaging with wider peace issues. Teachers and pupils from Beacon Peaceful Schools from across Britain inspired participants through workshops and panel discussions to take further steps to build a culture of peace in their schools and apply for Peaceful Schools Awards.

Pali Nahal, the head teacher of a Beacon Peaceful School in the West Midlands, described how only a few years ago Blackheath Primary experienced underachievement across the school and serious challenges regarding behaviour. By putting the well-being of children and staff at the heart of everything the school does, Blackheath has been transformed. Children have received peer mediation/buddying training and all staff have mentors. Every classroom has a chill-out zone and any child with particular emotional or behavioural issues can choose a space in the school (where they can be seen) that is their 'chill-out' space. They keep their own peace bag there, stocked with things that help them feel calm. The physical environment of Blackheath is creative and stimulating. The corridor for Nursery and Reception, known as Explorers, has been transformed into a rainforest, with interactive activities, sights and sounds. The week begins with a meditative assembly and yoga is practised across

the school. Children spend five minutes at the end of lunchtime doing relaxing activities, which has greatly improved afternoon lessons. "Once children are feeling peaceful there are far fewer barriers to learning and attainment improves", Pali Nahal explained.

The conference explored a wide range of other ways to build a more peaceful school, from developing harmonious relationships with parents and carers and stronger relationships with the wider community, to restorative approaches, interfaith tolerance and embedding a values-based culture.

A panel of teachers and children was asked what being part of a peaceful school means to them. Sue Webb, an educational consultant and a former head teacher of The Downley School in Buckinghamshire, said it's "a school where relationships are deep and authentic ... an environment where the mental wellbeing of the whole school community is of central importance."

The West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project co-organised the conference and led us through part of a 'peacemakers' session. We experienced the 'magic carpet', which involves children affirming each other, and we were also introduced to *Learning for Peace: A guide to developing outstanding SMSC in your primary school*. Throughout the conference teachers said how well SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) fits with developing peaceful schools, and how useful this resource will be for supporting this process.

To find out more about the Peaceful Schools Movement see www.peacefulschools.org.uk.

Learn about educating for peace

- To share learning from the successful Quaker-led Mid Wales Peaceful Schools Project, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre is hosting a three-day course from 25–27 October 2017. This will also draw on the experience of the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Programme.
- Prior to the face-to-face course, an online Introduction to Peace Education will be offered by Quaker Peace & Social Witness during September and October 2017.
- Enquiries and booking for these courses are through Woodbrooke from November 2016.

Stop arming Saudi!

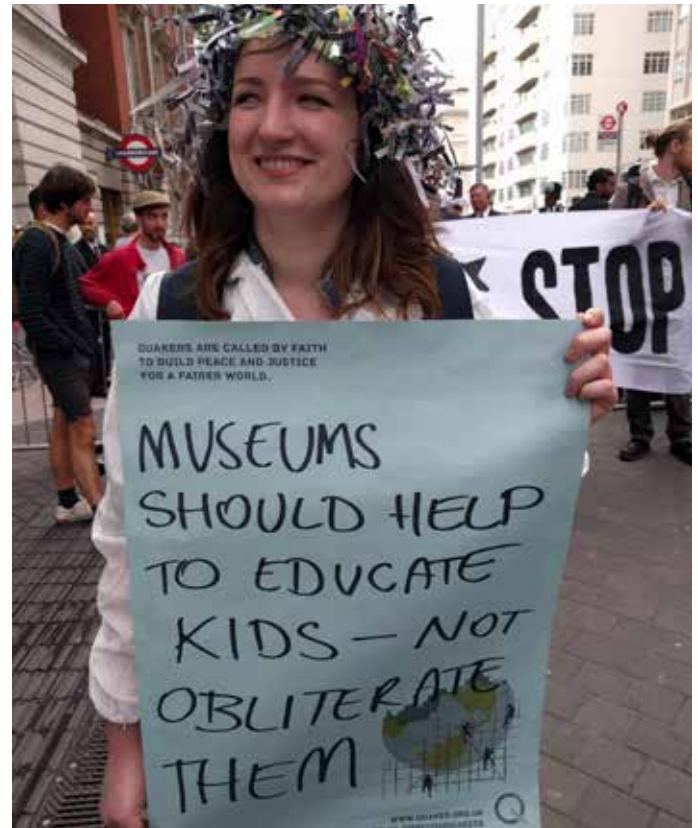
The arms trade is viewed by Quakers as furthering bloody conflict and making war more likely. Therefore, recent UK sales of British-made munitions to Saudi Arabia in the light of violent conflict in Syria and Yemen have caused a fresh wave of alarm. Given that Meeting for Sufferings has received a number of minutes from area meetings about this, we thought it worth letting Friends know what has been happening and what action they can take.

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) has launched a new lead campaign on this very issue. Their petition is a useful place to start if Friends want to take action (www.caat.org.uk). Friends will be heartened that CAAT, an organisation largely founded by Quakers, is still working close to core concerns.

If you are called to do more, get in touch. The world's largest arms fair is due back in London in September 2017 and the opposition to it needs to be substantial. QPSW staff will be hosting several trainings for nonviolent direct action and organising meetings in London – but there are plans for these to happen across the nation so keep an eye out for one near you (www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk).

It has been a joy to see Quakers of all ages constantly taking action to oppose the arms trade. In June a group of Friends from across Britain joined others from all over Europe outside the

Eurosatory arms fair in Paris. In July QPSW hosted the European Network Against the Arms Trade at Friends House. Productive meetings led to action as Quakers joined activists from across Europe to protest against the Science Museum hosting the official reception of the Farnborough arms fair.



Top: A Friend at the Science Museum. Below: Outside the Eurosatory arms fair in Paris. Photos: BYM.

Peace & human rights week at Chestnut Grove Academy

Peace and human rights can sometimes be marginalised topics in schools, but Chestnut Grove Academy in South London spent the last week of its summer term off-timetable exploring those themes from many angles. Students welcomed the opportunity to choose which workshops they'd like to attend. There was a rich range of topics and activities, from nuclear weapons and origami peace cranes to conscientious objection, Palestine and Israel (thanks to volunteers from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme, Palestine and Israel), Football Beyond Borders, Médecins Sans Frontières, the right to healthcare, songs that changed the world and cheerleading as a form of protest!

"A fabulous week" was how one year-6 student described it. Originally from Afghanistan, he particular enjoyed the 'Fly a Kite for Peace' session and the chance to share his knowledge and experience of life in Afghanistan. His RE teacher,

Jenna Robertson, said "The way Fly Kites is planned is brilliant. It's so well balanced with deep learning but also lots of fun. It was great that our students were able to use their political voices and be part of something so active and so important".

Students went on trips to Parliament, explored black history in Brixton, practised their right to rest and leisure on the South Downs, and experienced the London Peace Trail that starts at Friends House.

QPSW's Peace Education Programme supported the school with the planning and modelled workshops that teachers could reproduce. QPSW will be using this experience to develop resources for other schools to do their own peace/human rights week and are collaborating with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to offer an online 'Introduction to Peace Education' course in September 2017. Email enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk for details.



Chestnut Grove pupils enjoying their peace education with Izzy Cartwright (right). Photos: BYM.



"It's been a fantastic experience for everyone. We can easily take our human rights for granted but this week our children have got a real understanding of how fragile they are, both in other countries and also here, where even basic rights such as shelter are not experienced by everyone. It's been a really creative, fun week with learning at its core."

Mr Kingsley, head teacher at Chestnut Grove

Where now with Trident?

On 18 July, 2016, parliament voted, by 472 votes to 117, to replace the current Vanguard Class submarines with four Successor submarines. This marked the official end of a ten-year debate about the future of Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system, which began in 2006 when the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, went to parliament with a proposal to maintain the UK's dependence on nuclear weapons well into the second half of this century.

The vote was hugely disappointing for all those who have been campaigning for the last several years to convince parliament not to renew Trident. It was of course poignant for those who have been campaigning all their lives to rid the world of nuclear weapons: some Friends have been at this since the early 1950s. But no one who has been campaigning for that long is going to give up now just because of a single vote in parliament!

Even for those who do not have such a long history of campaigning against nuclear weapons, there are some good grounds for optimism right now. Parliament has voted to renew the Trident system, but that does not necessarily mean that it is going to happen. Nor does it necessarily mean that the UK will not get rid of its nuclear weapons in the near future.

The decision to move ahead with a Trident replacement was made in the wake of the EU referendum result, with no analysis of how the latter might affect the cost of the former. Two days after the vote, the chair of the National Audit Office said that Trident, along with several other very large capital projects, may have to be put 'on ice' until the decision to leave the EU has been fully costed. With the price tag for Trident continuing to skyrocket, the government could well decide they cannot afford it.

The Trident replacement programme is also beset by a number of technical and managerial problems that mean it cannot go ahead as originally scheduled in any case. The UK programme is heavily dependent on the US one, which is behind schedule and cannot be put back on track until after the US elections. There are unresolved technical issues and difficulties finding suitably qualified engineers to fix them. New developments in underwater drones, for instance, are making Trident increasingly vulnerable to attack, even in the expanses of the Atlantic Ocean. If the US can afford a Trident replacement, it may not be technically viable to proceed with it in the short to medium term.

Meanwhile in Scotland, where Trident is based and where MPs voted against renewal by a majority

of 58 to one, there are renewed calls for a second referendum on independence. Since Scotland also voted (unlike England and Wales) to remain in the EU, the combination of these two decisions – directly affecting the people of Scotland while going against what the people of Scotland voted for – may yet prove to be what leads to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Constitutionally, this could prove a major stumbling block to moving ahead with Trident renewal, especially since there is no viable port in England to which Trident could realistically be relocated from its present base in Faslane.

Internationally, the British decision to replace Trident has further displeased many other countries. Many are still waiting for the UK to fulfil its legal obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and dispose of its nuclear weapons. The International Court of Justice has yet to hear the case brought against the UK by the Marshall Islands, and may decide that the UK is, in fact, in breach of its international obligations by continuing with its Trident programme. Even if the Court eventually rules in favour of the UK, in the meantime the Marshall Islands could take out an injunction to suspend any spending on Trident renewal while the Court decides whether or not Britain is in breach of international law.

Whatever happens at the International Court of Justice, it seems inevitable that within the next few years a new international treaty will be signed that will ban the development, financing, testing, production, stockpiling, deployment and transfer of all nuclear weapons. Even though states such as the US have still not signed the Landmines Treaty, they have been forced to accept that public opinion and international law do not allow them to use the landmines they have. The same could apply to the UK and to Trident once this new treaty arrives.



Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, campaigning in Trafalgar Square. Photo: Michael Preston/Creative19.

On 19 August, just one month after the Westminster parliament voted to renew Trident, in Geneva the UN open-ended working group on multilateral nuclear disarmament voted overwhelmingly to propose that negotiations be started in 2017 for a nuclear ban treaty. Sixty-eight countries voted in favour and another 40 or so have officially endorsed the proposal, meaning that when it goes before the UN General Assembly later this year, it already has a majority of the UN's 195 member countries supporting it.

Both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats are reviewing their official positions on Trident, despite the July vote in parliament. There is now a clear majority of Labour Party members opposed to Trident, even if this is not reflected in the make-up of the parliamentary party. It is certainly possible that all the major political parties, apart from the Conservatives and UKIP, will soon have policies opposed to the continued possession of nuclear weaponry. It is too soon to predict what might happen at the next General Election, but it is not impossible that a party or coalition of parties will come to power in 2020 committed to cancelling Trident.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons, and the unveiled threat to actually use them, are a scourge on the conscience of humanity. As Quakers, we “utterly deny” these weapons “for any end or under any pretense whatsoever”. BYM will continue to work with CND and a coalition of other organisations that together organised the national demonstration against Trident in February and the mass lobby of Parliament in July.

There is a new petition available from the CND website, www.cnduk.org/campaigns/no-to-trident/scrap-trident-petition, calling on the government to scrap Trident and support the international ban treaty. Friends are urged to collect signatures for this, to continue writing to your MP and to your local newspaper, to hold vigils and public meetings and to take part in whatever other creative action you can do to draw attention to the evil that is represented by Trident.

On behalf of QPSW, Tim Wallis is continuing to run workshops for meetings on how to have more productive Trident conversations with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. His book, *The truth about trident* is available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop. Other resources, including posters, badges, postcards, flyers, briefings and a FAQ on nuclear weapons, are available at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/nuclear-disarmament.



Quakers campaigned hard in 2016 but there are still grounds for optimism. Photos: BYM.



Mid-Wales Peaceful Schools Project

How do you spread peace and conflict resolution education? It isn't easy, but Quakers continue to help reach more schools and young people. Izzy and Ellis were recently in Newtown helping one of the latest such projects. Mid-Wales Area Meeting has been pursuing peace education as a concern for three years.

The concern of Mid-Wales Area Meeting began in response to government proposals to commemorate World War I, and broadened to include concerns about child soldiers, increasing militarisation in education, the glorification of violence in the media and entertainment (violent video games, etc.), and a culture of hostility and bullying in schools and wider society. With support from QPSW's Peace Education Programme, and a local organisation, Resolve Cymru, the group began by sourcing grants from various Quaker trusts to pay Resolve facilitators to run programmes in primary schools, where a volunteer would work alongside them and develop their own skills and confidence.

The volunteers then began to facilitate the programmes themselves, with support and training from the programme coordinator Helen Porter. Under the heading of the Mid-Wales Peaceful Schools Project, a network of volunteers now delivers a six-week programme in schools in Powys, Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Shropshire.

The programmes explore issues of conflict and anger, cooperation, empathy and self-esteem, refugees and human rights. Much of the work is done with circle time and small groups. There is a mixture of talking, sharing, exercises and games, and quiet periods and mindful breathing give pupils support in handling their own stresses; stories are used to focus attention on particular issues. Helen explains that "This is a very minor input into the school week but we know from feedback that the work extends into other parts of the school, both because teachers pick up on some of the exercises and because the children refer back to it." Feedback has been fantastic and demand for the programme continues to grow.

In July, Izzy and Ellis offered a two-day 'Train the Trainer' scheme in peer mediation for 20 of the volunteers. Schools who complete the basic programme may then be offered peer mediation training if there is genuine school commitment to the process. The group contained confident facilitators who are well-placed to take peer mediation into schools, having built up the foundation of trust and good practice.

This project complements a range of successful activities that Quakers and others support around Britain, as the map opposite shows. Quakers like Hilary Cremin, Edward Sellman and Belinda Hopkins have also contributed to the research and literature that underpins conflict resolution and restorative approaches. Quakers' willingness to act locally is crucial to making change happen in education.

When schools invest in conflict resolution education, the benefits are clear: children and young people develop life skills, staff save time and resources, and conflict is resolved more fairly and consistently.

There are barriers too, however. One challenge is reaching a whole school. Success depends on everyone – staff, pupils, parents – and even in a primary school, that's a lot of people. That means time, resources and commitment.

Teachers are generally not trained in conflict resolution or restorative approaches. Behaviourist practices persist in many schools, systems of reward and punishment that perhaps 'keep the peace', but which give young people no responsibility for building it. The process can be difficult because the education sector is big and complicated; every context is different. Sometimes that means the door is open, sometimes it means you can't even find it.

Yet Quakers are showing that these challenges can be overcome. Lots of teachers are ready to champion restorative approaches, and spread the ideas when they move schools. Schools are often positive about new opportunities. The easiest part is involving the children and young people: their thirst for justice and peace is what makes peace education both possible and a pleasure.

To find out more about this project contact helenporter@phonecoop.coop.



Volunteers from the Mid-Wales Peaceful Schools Project, with Ellis Brooks. Image: Isabel Cartwright/BYM.

Putting conflict resolution education on the map

A highly successful training workshop on Conflict Resolution Skills for Primary Schools was held at **Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre**, which has a close relationship with Friends and offers conflict resolution skills for primary schools as well as sessions in schools on cooperation, anger management and communication. The workshop covered essential components for working in conflict management adapted for work with children in primary schools.

See peaceandjustice.org.uk.

The **Newcastle Conflict Resolution Network** is funded by the Rowntree Trust and Newcastle Quaker Meeting. Among other projects, the network offers emotional learning for primary schools, involving parents and carers. See www.newcastlecrn.org.uk.

Sheffield Quakers continue to play a key role in **CRESST**, founded using a Quaker legacy in 2003. CRESST offers conflict resolution training in primary and secondary schools in South Yorkshire.

See www.cresst.org.uk and [@_CRESST](https://twitter.com/_CRESST).

Peacemakers, also known as the **West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project**, has been a project of Central England Area Meeting since the 1980s, now offering a rich whole school approach and the new Learning for Peace resource.

See www.peacemakers.org.uk and [@WMQPEP](https://twitter.com/WMQPEP).

East Cheshire Quakers have been offering balance to the increasing military involvement in a local high school. Now, Friends are looking at ways to build on the relationship with the school, offering peace education to students.

Having adopted peace education as a concern in 2013, **Mid-Wales Area Meeting** is now delivering a rich Peaceful Schools Project in primary schools through a network of volunteers. Contact helenporter@phonecoop.coop.

From 1981, the **Kingston Quaker Peace Education Project**, developed by the late Sue Bowers, has pioneered conflict resolution education against local opposition. Today, the Quaker-founded Leap Confronting Conflict is a national leader in conflict resolution, offering training and support to 11 to 25-year-olds.

See www.leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk and [@leap_cc](https://twitter.com/leap_cc).

Also, Quakers from Hammersmith Meeting are volunteering in schools to offer peer mediation training.

Edward Sellman, based at the University of Nottingham, provides training to pupils and staff in conflict resolution, peer mediation, mindfulness and humanistic behaviour management. Contact: edward.sellman@nottingham.ac.uk.

Here are a few examples of what Quakers are doing to bring conflict resolution to young people. We'd love to hear more. Contact ellisb@quaker.org.uk.



Taking action on militarism

QPSW's Sam Walton has been delivering workshops on What you can do about militarism in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester and London. Mairi Campbell-Jack, BYM's Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, set up the two in Scotland, where there is much more room for engagement with government than in England. Manchester Quakers were also keen to keep up their tradition of opposing militarism.

Militarism exists in so many forms across all parts of our society. What is inspirational about meeting Friends active in resisting it from across Britain is the diversity, resilience and creativity of our efforts. That is why early next year QPSW will be pulling together experiences of Quakers into a guide to taking action.

If you'd like to share your stories you can email samw@quaker.org.uk. If you can't wait, there are some great examples up already at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories.



Sam Walton with Friends in Edinburgh. Photo: BYM.

Featured story of witness: My daughter's conscientious objection

A Quaker parent, and school governor, received a letter asking for parental consent for their daughter to visit the local army HQ. Her daughter decided she had a conscientious objection to the trip and didn't want to go. They wrote a letter to the school, making it clear that this was an objection on the grounds of conscience, and asked for alternative activities. The school encouraged the daughter to go on the military base visit.

"I have spoken to teachers in other areas, such as London, who have said that these kinds of visits to the armed forces wouldn't be tolerated", said the parent, "not least because they have children from conflict areas for whom it could be frightening. Yet in an economically deprived area like ours, it's sold to us as a positive and healthy option that we're meant to accept without questioning."

"My own father was a member of the armed forces. He always described them as the 'poor man's university', but I'm shocked that the armed forces are allowed to target areas of deprivation in this way."

Find out what the parent did, and how the local meeting and QPSW supported her at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/challenging-militarism-a-10-year-old-s-conscientious-objection.

Can you share a story of your witness for peace? Contact ellisb@quaker.org.uk.

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Join the Peace Education Cluster. This Quaker Life Network cluster is for Friends with a special interest in peace education and offers news, updates and resources. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork.

Visit us online at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace.

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Educate and disarm was jointly written by the Peace Education and Peace & Disarmament programmes at Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.