

Action

THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER



May 2017

Forthcoming Brighton & Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

Group meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton

May 4th
Campaign Meeting
And group AGM
All welcome

June 1st
Group meeting with Guest speakers
Jack and Haider
Continuing their story of detention
without charge and house arrest

Monthly Collection
15th April
Contact Madeline
01273 508620
madeline@peasgood.plus.com

Monthly Stall
May 27th
Sydney Street
Contact Celia 01273 593833
11am to 1pm

Hope not Hate
17th June
Event details to be confirmed
Hove Lawns

Brighton Pride
5th August
Stall and Parade
Details to follow

Write for Rights 2017
2nd December
10am to 4pm
Friends Meeting House
Ship St, Brighton

Amnesty—Our Story

Amnesty International is a movement of ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Our purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.

In October 1960 a young barrister got on the London Underground, opened his paper and read a short article about a couple of students in Portugal who had been imprisoned for seven years after raising their glasses in a toast to freedom.



The barrister, Peter Benenson, wrote a newspaper appeal called 'the forgotten prisoner'. There was such a tremendous response that within 6 months an international movement had developed with an emphasis on the protection of human rights.

The movement, Amnesty International, has since expanded from campaigning for Prisoners of conscience to include other human rights abuses such as torture, disappearances and the death penalty.

Now, over 50 years and a Nobel Peace Prize later, we continue to campaign for justice where ever it has been denied. We protect people, defending their right to freedom, to truth, and to dignity. We do this by investigating and exposing abuses where they happen. By galvanising our global movement of seven million people to intervene where individuals are at risk and by educating future generations so that one day the dream of human rights for all becomes a reality.

Amnesty AGM 2017

If there are any Amnesty supporters out there who have not had the experience of going to an AGM I would really recommend it. Peter and I attended this year's AGM in Nottingham a couple of weeks ago and came back full of ideas for the year ahead.

The Weekend started with a moving opening talk by Brendan Cox, the husband of the murdered mp Jo Cox. Brendan spoke of the rise of fascism and how absurd it is when we find ourselves celebrating that fascists come second in national elections rather than first. He spoke of the need to unite in the face of terrorism and not to let Britain be divided. He also encouraged us to commemorate the first anniversary of Jo's death by getting together in our communities to celebrate what we have in common. The Great Get Together will be on the weekend of 17th /18th June and Brighton and Hove Amnesty are planning to join an event on Hove Lawns on the 17th June.

It was a packed programme on both days with a review of the year from Kate Allen and keynote panel Against Hate. As well as the debates and voting in the business meeting this year there was the option to attend a choice of workshops. Peter learnt about the forthcoming campaign on Palm oil and the ongoing campaign on Human rights in the UK while I went to the Refugee 'I welcome' workshop and learnt about the new campaign to defend human rights defenders.



Crisis and Tactical Campaigns

Palm Oil

This workshop split into two sections to brainstorm actions we could take. One half went with Trump and his impact. I went to the Palm Oil group. Palm oil pervades our food, hygiene and beauty products. It is grown in tropical regions of the world, typically cleared jungle.

Greenpeace and other such groups are tackling the environmental issues. AI is going to focus on the Human Rights impact. These include the use of child and forced labour in countries such as Indonesia. In a group of about 12 we threw ideas around about how to campaign against this. In the short period of time available we didn't come up with anything specific but rather a set of headline ideas which went forward to AIUK as ideas.

Human Rights in the UK

This was largely information based. While the current government has postponed repealing the Human Rights Act until after Brexit they are seriously considering complete withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights. Given that this was largely developed by UK lawyers under a conservative government led by Winston Churchill, this is hard to comprehend.

AIUK will be focussing on what the Human Rights Act has done for UK citizens. We will not be engaging the right wing media on their ground of citing (frequently incorrectly) ways in which the Act has helped terrorists and Hate preachers.

I Welcome

This workshop on our current refugee campaign focussed on the successes we have had working with other organisations such as Sanctuary by Sea to lobby the government and local council and to welcome refugees to our communities.

We spent time discussing how we could use 'The Great Get Together' to welcome refugees.

Also at the conference one student group in London displayed an enormous pair of yellow fluffy arms with the words "I welcome refugees" on them. These were used on the embankment where people stopped to take selfies with the arms before signing the petition. Needless to say we have signed up to borrow the arms for the Brighton group.

Human Rights Defenders

This will be our new priority campaign being launched in the middle of May.

It follows a global trend of legislation targeting activists and NGOs, increased surveillance of NGOs and travel and visa restrictions for activists.

A Human rights defender can be any person who takes forward Human Rights work by peaceful means and can include a wide range of people eg student leaders, teachers, lawyers, journalists, environmental activists and women's rights campaigners.

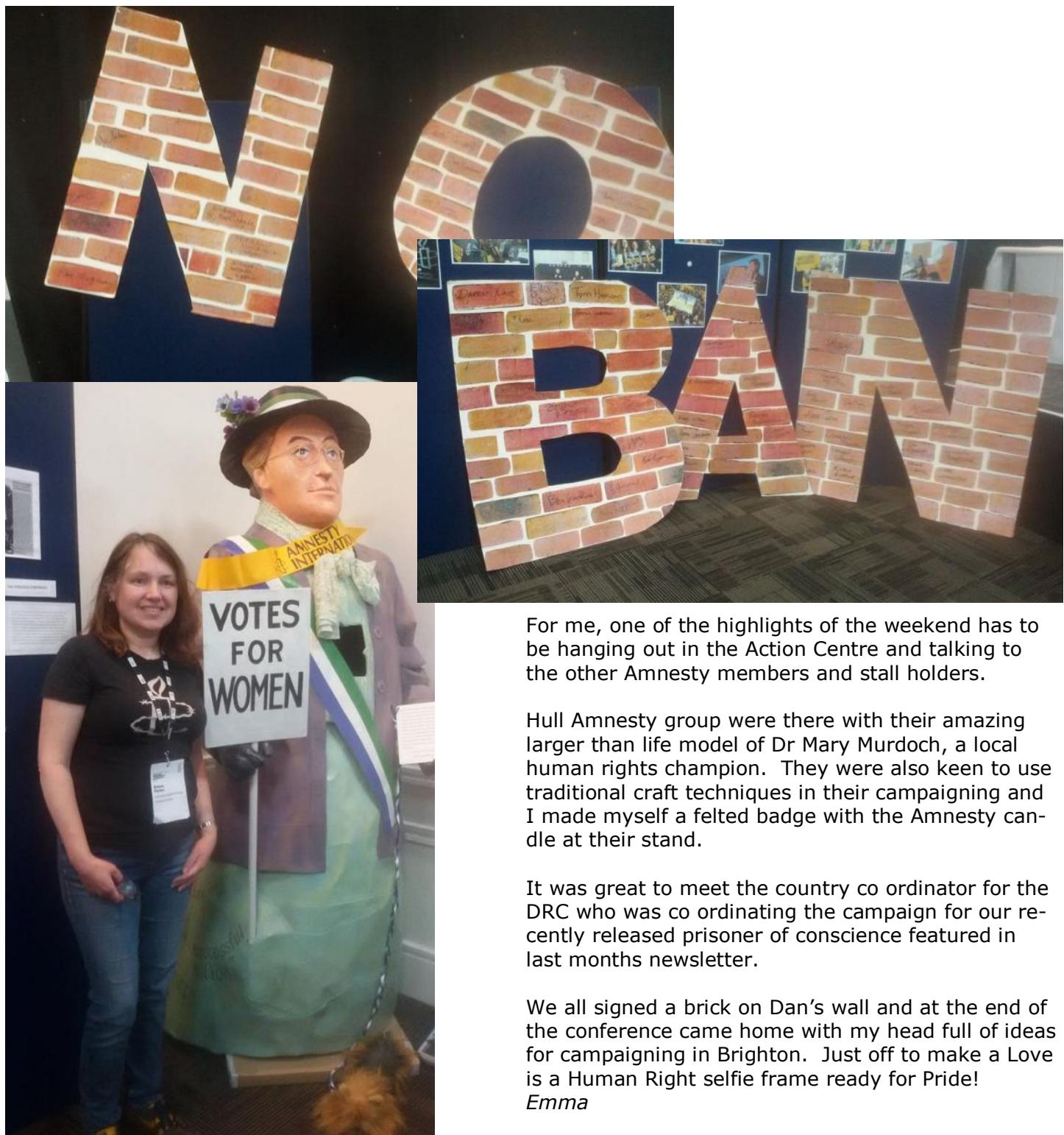
The campaign will focus on four main themes

Physical attacks, killings, violence and disappearances

Misuse of and regressive law

Women's rights defenders

Surveillance of Human Rights Defenders (on and offline)



For me, one of the highlights of the weekend has to be hanging out in the Action Centre and talking to the other Amnesty members and stall holders.

Hull Amnesty group were there with their amazing larger than life model of Dr Mary Murdoch, a local human rights champion. They were also keen to use traditional craft techniques in their campaigning and I made myself a felted badge with the Amnesty candle at their stand.

It was great to meet the country co ordinator for the DRC who was co ordinating the campaign for our recently released prisoner of conscience featured in last months newsletter.

We all signed a brick on Dan's wall and at the end of the conference came home with my head full of ideas for campaigning in Brighton. Just off to make a Love is a Human Right selfie frame ready for Pride!

Emma

April Stall Report

JAILED FOR CHAMPIONING POLITICAL REFORM.

Date Saturday 8th April

Time 11am - 12pm

Location Outside Amnesty Bookshop, Sydney Street, Brighton

Weather Warm and spring - like

Activists Celia and Jill

Campaign TRAN HUYNH DUY THUC - Author from Vietnam

He was arrested in 2009 and charged with attempting to overthrow the state when all he did was to co - author a book on political reform. He was tortured but refused to confess and was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment. He went on a hunger strike in protest at the lack of rule of law in Vietnam and he has been denied full access to his family.

Jill

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Refugees welcome campaign co ordinator— TBC

Guest speaker co ordinator—Caroline

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www.amnesty.org.uk local group – www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton

Follow us on twitter @AmnestyBrighton

See our photos on Flickr— <http://www.flickr.com/groups/amnestybrighton/pool>

Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre - Tel: 0207 0331500

