

## Women in Black UK Newsletter, Spring 2023

Greetings and welcome to our latest newsletter. Little did we expect at the start of 2022 that we would be facing a new and protracted war. While maintaining a broader focus on militarism, the arms trade, Palestine & Israel and more, a number of our groups have - from time to time - focused on this war and all the issues and concerns it raises. Good to read that there have also been celebrations and a more concerted effort to share our story and messages on social media. This encouraging round-up of news is testimony to the resilience and commitment of Women in Black members around the UK and beyond.

### From Bradford Women in Black.

Since the last newsletter in May 2022 Bradford WIB have continued to hold monthly vigils on the 1st Thursday of the month, and continue to receive positive comments from the public.. As well as our banners protesting against all wars and militarism and in favour of peace we have had banners and leaflets on specific issues. These have included solidarity with Yemen, women in Iran, the Hazara community in Afghanistan, sending asylum seekers to Rwanda and remembering Hiroshima. On 11th November we stood in silence to remember all those killed and affected by war and gave out free white poppies. In September we took part in welcoming six cyclists from the Bike for Peace group from Norway who are campaigning for a world without nuclear weapons. We have taken part in protests supporting the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign. Some members joined the CND protests at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk in May and November against the proposals to bring US nuclear bombs to the UK.

*The group meet on the 1st Thursday of each month between 4.30-5.30 in the centre of Bradford, junction of Bank St and Hustlergate.*

- **Contact:** Joyce Robertshaw, [Joycerobertshaw@gmail.com](mailto:Joycerobertshaw@gmail.com)

*F: @womeninblackbradford T: womeninblack\_bradford*

### From Cambridge Women in Black.

Our vigils are always well received in our city centre. We get photographed and people take leaflets that explain who we are. It is particularly heartening to see young children with their parents (mostly mums) stop to read our placards. The parent then explains to the child what our messages mean. Members of the public approach us and when they realise we don't speak they take a leaflet and thank us for raising the issue.

*The group meet from 12pm to 1pm outside the Guildhall in Cambridge Market Square each first Saturday of the month. Please wear black and join us!*

- **Contact:** Zareen Taj, [tajzareenok@gmail.com](mailto:tajzareenok@gmail.com)

### From Edinburgh Women in Black.

Despite having lost a number of stalwarts in the past few years, due to ill health or age, we have managed to keep the vigils going. A few new people have joined, but we are eager for more, and we welcome both those who can only stand for 15 minutes or so with us, or can join for the full hour. The response from the public is generally positive.

*The group meet for weekly vigils on Saturdays between 1-2 pm at the East end of Princes Street opposite the Balmoral Hotel.*

**Contact:** Jan Benvie, [jbenvie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jbenvie@yahoo.co.uk) <https://www.facebook.com/womeninblackedinburgh/>

### From Women in Black Leeds.

Leeds Women in Black hold silent vigils twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays, 12.30-1.30pm, in Dortmund Square in Leeds City Centre. There are usually around 7-12 women displaying our two large banners "Free Palestine" and "End the Occupation". We also hand out our A5 leaflet to passers-by, providing basic information about the situation in Palestine/Israel. (See attached leaflet). In recent months it feels like there has been more interest and awareness from passers-by and people quite often take a photograph of us that we hope they will share on social media. We update our Facebook page every fortnight with a photograph and brief comment about the vigil. Last autumn some of us got together to celebrate Leeds Women in Black's third birthday

**Contact:** [leedswomeninblack@gmail.com](mailto:leedswomeninblack@gmail.com) and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/womeninblackleeds/>

### **From Women in Black London.**

We have been able to meet every Wednesday, with numbers ranging between 5 and 14 women. We have noticed that weather and dark nights make interaction with the public more difficult. We are always encouraged when people stop to chat or sign a petition and being in central London we attract many overseas visitors. At the start of the war in Ukraine we held our vigil in St Martin's Place, while the Ukrainian community held rallies in nearby Trafalgar Square. Our presence, with its more questioning and inclusive messages did create some in-depth conversations. The themes we have covered in our vigils and hand-out leaflets include:

Ukraine and Russia, Arms sales to Saudi Arabia , Refugee Women and War, Justice for Palestinians, Violence of war and conflict and women, Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, Global Military Spending, Remembrance and War and Christmas Peace.

A new resource created this year is our QR code which links to more information about WiB London on the international website. We now use this on our leaflets and several of our placards carry the code. We have actually seen people scan the code on their mobiles!

*The group meet weekly to vigil on Wednesdays, 6-7pm, around the statue of Edith Cavell (St Martin's Place).*

- **Contact:** Liz Khan [lizkhan29@googlemail.com](mailto:lizkhan29@googlemail.com) <http://london.womeninblack.org>  
T: @wib\_london F: @womeninblack.london

### **Oxford Women in Black.**

The Oxford WiB weekly vigils continue as often as we can manage them. We are to have a meeting in the near future to decide the best way of ensuring we have a sustainable presence in Oxford. We will let you know of developments. Meanwhile, it might be best if anyone interested in Oxford WiB's vigil contacts Carol by email so that we can confirm that other sisters will be there.

*Martyrs' Memorial in St Giles' in central Oxford. Wear black if possible, but come anyway!*

- **Contact:** Carol Stavris, [carolstavris@gmail.com](mailto:carolstavris@gmail.com)

**Women in Black Portsmouth.** There are now only two women who can regularly vigil in Portsmouth but, with the continuing need to witness to peace, we have tried to keep going, supported by women joining virtually.

*The group meet on the first Saturday of the month between 11 am and 12 noon, facing the naval base.*

- **Contact:** sarah coote, [slcoote@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:slcoote@yahoo.co.uk)

## Coming soon...A History of Women in Black

Many of you will know and remember Cynthia Cockburn who was a London' WIB who died in 2019. She wrote a number of books. The last book she undertook was about the Women in Black movement throughout the world and many of you contributed to her work. Cynthia died before completing the work but she left it in Sue Finch's hands to complete the last few chapters and it is now with publishers and hopefully ready for release by the end of April.

Each chapter focuses on and makes links between WiBs in different countries

1. Israel/Palestine,
2. USA, Italy and former Yugoslavia,
3. UK
4. Spain and Belgium
5. India and South Africa
6. South and Central America
7. Armenia

*Liz Khan, WiB London*

## Women in Black in Europe

Since last May, Women in Black groups in Belgrade, Bologna, Leuven, Madrid, Rome and Toledo have held vigils to oppose the war in Ukraine, the option of Conscientious Objection and ways in which this conflict is affecting women and girls. A new group has formed in Finland.

Belgrade

<https://zeneucnom.org/en/>

Leuven

<https://www.facebook.com/wib.leuven>

Bologna

<https://www.facebook.com/Donne-in-nero-Bologna-792657614114366/>

Madrid

<https://mujeresdenegromadrid.blogspot.com/?m=1>

Finland

Contact: Leena Eräsaari,  
leena.erasaari@gmail.com

Toledo

<https://www.facebook.com/mujeresdenegrotledo/>

## Women in Black International

Our international website provides a listing for every Women in Black vigil, enabling women in each country to find out in which towns or cities groups are located, when and where vigils are held and who to contact for more information. Whether you are a new group or a long-established one please check your entry and let us know if the details are correct, need updating or whether your entry should be deleted. Please send the information to Sian Jones:

[wibinfo@gn.apc.org](mailto:wibinfo@gn.apc.org)

<http://womeninblack.org/vigils-around-the-world/europa/united-kingdom/>

---

Feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends and fellow peace activists. Please send your news, photos and comments about this Newsletter to [wibinfo@gn.apc.org](mailto:wibinfo@gn.apc.org)

To unsubscribe from this list, please email: [womeninblackuk-news-unsubscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:womeninblackuk-news-unsubscribe@lists.riseup.net)