

## Speaking to interfaith groups in the UK Midlands

Patricia Earle  
August 6, 2016



“In July, I had the opportunity, and the pleasure, of speaking to 2 different Interfaith Groups in the Midlands: the Wellingborough Interfaith Group and the Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Group. I was invited, separately, by two very good friends I have known for many years, both of whom recently became Chairs of their respective groups.

One was a former Lord Mayor of Wellingborough, whom I met in India (!) back in 2003 when receiving an award from the Indian Government for the Interfaith Children's Home project, which members and branches of WFWP have generously supported for a number of years. The other was a lady Christian minister who attended several of the Women's Peace Meeting many years ago, but who then became influenced by negativity from another lady and took a distance from me. I met her again at an interfaith event at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital a little while ago, and she was so happy to see me, saying that she had retired from ministry, and was no longer accountable to her church hierarchy, and would I like to come and give a presentation about our women's peace activities to her Interfaith Group. I was so delighted to be able to renew our friendship.



Both occasions were really wonderful, meeting so many devoted and dedicated people of different faiths, all working together for the benefit of their cities and religious communities, in spite of so much 'darkness' in our very difficult world. I felt I could convey quite a lot to them, bringing some hope, ideas and inspiration.

In Wellingborough, I had a good conversation with the current Lord Mayor's wife, who was accompanying her husband to the meeting. She was such a lovely person, and it reminded me how many good people there are in public life, leading quite sacrificial lives, and investing a lot of their time and energy in all kinds of different ways, raising money for charity, etc.



In Stratford, I was very moved when a senior figure in the Anglican church asked me several questions about my work, after my presentation. He was interested to know what motivates me to do peace work, and how I manage to keep going in spite of encountering personal difficulties, and against the backdrop of so much negative and difficult news each day, creating fear and tension between our different communities. The kind of questions he asked could only come from someone who is deeply concerned for peace, and genuinely searching for solutions and a way forward in our troubled times.

I feel that our peace activities have value in and of themselves, but it is also very encouraging when we can share them with others who are working with similar aims and objectives, learning from one another and empowering each other in goodness. It's also very refreshing to be able to share freely about the WFWP and all our work for peace with people of other faiths."

Patricia Earle  
WFWP Birmingham/UK

