

# The message is getting through

THE candle float on the river, by the clock tower on Fisherton Street on August 6 has become, you may think, just an annual event of the city.

But not so. Its real and serious meaning has gradually been getting through to people: that it commemorates the obliteration of hundreds of thousands of civilians at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, in what may be a war crime, committed by our side.

And it also keeps us in mind of the very real danger to us, here and now, that these weapons of mass destruction still exist in the hands of governments, our own and other.

So we reflect that if those rulers, anywhere, were ever to use any of those weapons, then they may probably all get used, and humanity will have extinguished itself. Quite a thought to remember at this quiet event.

The turn-out to witness this year's candle float was larger, because awareness has grown.

Not as much larger as I expected to appear after the opportune release of the Oppenheimer film about the engineer who invented the atom bomb.

I wrongly thought that the half-closure of Silver Street was in official expectation of our event; however, the Mayor of Salisbury came to us, speaking of peace - and the extra significance of that was, that Salisbury City Council recently signed up to the international movement of Mayors



Salisbury candle float 2023 Image: Public

for Peace (hundreds of mayors round the world).

This new global connection brought our event the special personal support of the Mayor of Hiroshima, and also

the gift to us by the children of two schools in that city, who made - and sent from the other side of the world - their own candle floats for our event.

These commemorations may be

only gestures, but they speak clearly of people's growing determination to achieve peace in this restless world.

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