

# **Northern Friends Peace Board**



Work in 2008

## Introduction

In our 95<sup>th</sup> Year we continued our work to promote and support peace action, learning and reflection amongst Friends in the North of Britain. As an evolving community of Friends we have been inspired by many people over the years and it is a privilege to be able to be involved in work that seeks to bring people together to do just that. 2008 was no exception and we offer this report as an account of some of the year's highlights.

As well as a written record, we finished the year with a video document from one of our major events of the past few years. A development plan being drafted anticipates further use of digital technology in taking our concerns to a wider audience, whilst keeping at the heart of our work the relationships and networks between and beyond our membership.

As the year drew to a close, we were saddened by the loss of Jessie Baston, a former NFPB member and also in her 10<sup>th</sup> decade. Her continued commitment to peace concerns exemplified the long-term vision that has sustained Northern Friends Peace Board over the years. We are pleased to include part of a minute from our November meeting, that took place on the same day as a memorial Meeting for Worship for Jessie.

The close of the year also brought with it great economic uncertainty. Our commitment remains undiminished in spite of this; we have affirmed and have heard reaffirmed throughout the year that there is another way. Thank you to all of those who have continued to support our work in developing and promoting this.

*Mary Alice Mansell*

*Ann Bettys*      Clerks

## Events

Our calendar of four Board meetings a year took us in 2008 to Leeds, Newcastle, Perth and Nottingham. We were joined by local Friends at all of these meetings, hearing speakers and working together to learn and to plan our work. We organised a second major conference on Building Peace – Tackling Racism, taking place in Huddersfield in March and attracting nearly 90 participants. We ran *Speaking our Peace* workshops in Lincoln and Frandley Meeting Houses.



*A workshop at the conference on Building Peace - Tackling Racism, which took place in Huddersfield*

## People

These people have spoken at our meetings and events (listed in alphabetical order):

- Kat Barton, of Quaker Peace and Social Witness, talked at our meeting in Nottingham on working with decision-makers on disarmament concerns
- Members of the Nottingham *City of Sanctuary* group described their concerns and experiences.

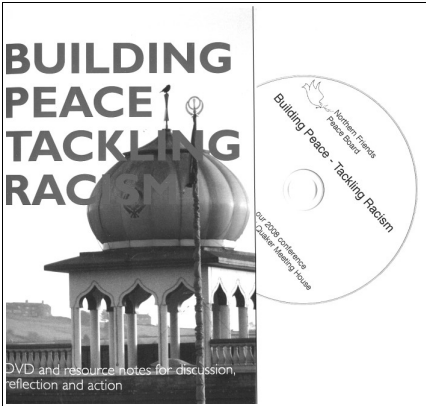
- Leah Elcock, of Bolton Racial Equality Council, spoke at our conference on *Building Peace – tackling Racism* conference in Huddersfield
- Kevin Franz, General Secretary of *Quaker Peace and Social Witness*, spoke at our meeting in Perth
- Philip Lewis of the Department of Peace Studies in Bradford, gave a talk on Islam in Britain at our conference on Building Peace – Tackling Racism.
- Lindis Percy, of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, talked to us in Leeds about her work and witness.
- Douglas Rennie of Newcastle Quaker Meeting, introduced the work of the Newcastle Conflict Resolution Network that they have established.
- Andrée Ryan gave a powerful presentation in Newcastle based on her experiences working as one of the team for the programme for *Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel*.
- Dave Webb, of Yorkshire CND, gave an informative talk about the US Missile Defence plans, when we met in Leeds.

## **Other activities**

### *Building a culture of Peace*

Our Peace Faith and Race project group worked intensively during the early part of the year in preparation for the spring conference.

Subsequent work was focused chiefly on the production of a DVD and study notes based on that conference, working with Matt Robson on the filming and editing and with Karima Ellis on booklet design.



*The DVD and booklet on 'Building Peace – Tackling Racism'*

Philip Austin, the Board's Co-ordinator, joined the Executive of the Bolton Interfaith Council, whose activities will help inform our work on this area of concern.

We made time at two of our Board meeting during the year to consider how Friends and others can support asylum seekers in Britain and advocate for change in this area. We have kept in touch with a range of organisations and individuals active in this field, including the *City of Sanctuary* network, the Quaker Refugee and Asylum Network and other locally-based initiatives.

We were in touch with the United Religions Initiative (UK) during the year, hearing about their proposals for establishing an interfaith Peace Centre on the outskirts of Bolton.

### *Young People*

Members of the Board had a further meeting to consider possible ways forward for working with young people, following a presentation of initial proposals at our February Board meeting. This work did not progress very much during the year, due to changes in personal circumstances amongst several key member of the group. We made

some initial plans for a possible peace walk and did some preparatory work for a collection of web-resources about young people and peace and for contributing to the 2009 Britain YM Yearly Meeting Gathering. The Co-ordinator also worked with other members of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations in evaluating the network's 2008 contribution to the Greenbelt music and arts festival.

### *Speaking our Peace*

We continued to offer *Peace Learning Days* and *Speaking our Peace* workshops to Friends and Meetings. We ran two workshops during the year, in Frandley and Lincoln, and had undertaken preparatory work for further events in early 2009. Our Co-ordinator gave a talk to the final meeting of Lancashire & Cheshire General Meeting (along with Paul Rogers of the the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies), which drew on many of the resources and ideas that have been included in this programme's activities.

### *Challenging Militarism*

We addressed the issue of US Missile Defence and its related bases in Yorkshire, when Dave Webb and Lindis Percy spoke at our Board meeting in Leeds. We have stayed in touch with members of the *Missile Defence Working Group*, sharing information and analysis, although the group has not undertaken any significant activity during the year. Board members regularly attended Meetings for Worship at Fylingdales, Menwith Hill and Faslane bases, with several Friends using the opportunity after our Perth NFPB meeting to attend the latter in September.

In the autumn we invited Board members and other Friends to contribute their thoughts and concerns, in order to help us shape our future work that has been included under the *Challenging Militarism* heading. Some possible new directions emerged from this –

particularly the issue of how the military seeks to promote itself amongst young people – but these had not been translated into a work programme by the end of the year.



*NFPB members and others at one of the regular Meetings for Worship at Menwith Hill US base in Yorkshire*

### *Communications and networking*

The main means we use for keeping in touch with Friends and other interested organisations and individuals have continued to be:

- *The Peace Board*, our own newsletter, and other mailings for specific events.
- Our website at: <http://nfpb.gn.apc.org> - regularly updated throughout the year.
- Additional web resources using blog and social networking sites, and email distribution of news and information.

This year we also worked with Matt Robson in producing a DVD from our conference on *Building Peace – Tackling Racism* (as mentioned above), which we hope will be a valuable tool for Friends and others

to use in stimulating discussion and action on the concerns addressed.

We maintained links with other peace organisations both informally and more formally through bodies such as the International Peace Bureau, the Network of Christian Peace Organisations and the European Quaker Peace & Service Consultation. We also continued with cross-representation with Quaker Peace & Social Witness' Peace Campaigning and Networking (PeCaN) group.

### *Governance and Finance*

Our formal trustees report is included towards the end of this account of the year, along with the financial statements for the period covered. We were enormously encouraged by Friends' continued support for our work and very grateful for the additional income that arose from interest on funds received as legacies in recent years. We had not invested these in the stock-market when the financial crisis developed over the autumn and felt it prudent to leave the bulk of these in our main savings account at the Ecology Building Society, whilst moving some to other savings accounts to ensure none are unnecessarily exposed to future financial downturns or difficulties.

Our trustees, the Executive committee, did further work on the ideas emerging at their residential meeting the previous autumn, and consulted NFPB members with drafts of what will be a Development Plan for the coming four years' work, leading to our centenary in 2013. The main strands of this focus on:

- Relationships with Friends
- Communication
- Sustainability



- Building Common Cause.

Board members considered the Long Term Framework as it was being developed by Britain Yearly Meeting. It was clear that the ways of working and concerns identified in that framework overlap significantly with our own. We looked forward to future collaboration with Friends on this basis.

The Board also spent some at its meetings considering how links between NFPB members in wider regions might help the individuals concerned in their roles as Representatives, and Northern Friends Peace Board in initiating and managing some initiatives at a regional level from time to time.

Staff and Trustees undertook further training during the year, on financial management and on working with the media. Our Co-ordinator, Philip Austin, also undertook a course in the autumn on Peace Leadership, an initiative of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

## **Northern Friends Peace Board**

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### **Report of the Executive for the period 1st January - 31st December 2008**

The Executive submit their report and the accounts for the period 1st January - 31st December 2008. The Executive confirm that the accounts comply with current statutory requirements and the charity's constitution.

#### ***Principle Activities***

The principal activity of the Board is the advancement, within its areas of operation, of the religious principles of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) through the education and training of members of the public in matters of justice, peace and the integrity of creation with special reference to the testimony against the occasion of all wars, through the provision of resources,

organised courses and programmes. This arises from our original mandate: "To advise and encourage Friends in the north, and through them their fellow citizens, in the active promotion of peace in its height and breadth".

The Board maintains an office in Bolton and a Scottish postal address. Its constitution is governed by the Law of Scotland. The area of operation of the Board is primarily that covered by the Area Meetings (previously known as Monthly Meetings) of Britain Yearly Meeting in Scotland, North Wales and Northern England. The Board employs a full-time Co-ordinator, and a part time Administrative Assistant.

## Structure, governance and management

Procedures of the Board and its committees follow the general counsel on church affairs set out in Quaker Faith and Practice. Its trustees form the Executive committee and its work is guided by the meetings of all Board members, including representatives of Northern Area Meetings and co-opted members. The full Board and its Executive each meet four times per calendar year and its various sub-groups meet at different times, reporting to the Board and to the Executive.

The law requires the Executive to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources of the year and the application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Executive are required to:

1. select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
2. make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
3. state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements,
4. prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Executive are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with applicable accounting standards. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

During the period covered, Mary Alice Mansell served as Clerk to the Board, Ann Bettys as Clerk to the Executive, and Tim Carlisle as Treasurer.

Other Executive members during the period were: Sarah Alldred, Robin Bowles, Peter Cheer, Janet Fenton, Jenny Foot, Frances Morgan and Suzanne Wilson. Ann Bettys and Suzanne Wilson served as joint Assistant Clerks to the Board and attended meetings of the Executive in this capacity. Friends are appointed to the Executive both from the membership of the Board and from amongst Northern Friends as co-opted members. We committed resources and time to continuing induction and training of staff and committee members.

The Executive committee met four times during the period covered.

Philip Austin and Steven Waling, Co-ordinator and Administrative Assistant respectively undertook the finance-related administrative work from the Board's office and Philip Austin continued his co-ordinating role in relation to all other areas of the work of the Board and Executive.

The Board maintains effective and regular working links with Quaker Peace and Social Witness, with cross-representation of staff on its Peace Campaigning and Networking Group reinforcing this positive complementary working relationship.

### ***Objectives for the period***

1. Developing the involvement of all NFPB members in our work and activities and the Board as a worshipping community
2. Reaching a wider audience of Quakers and non-Quakers through our work.
3. Making further steps in developing work with young people.
4. Further strengthening the capacity of the trustees to undertake their responsibilities.

5. Supporting the development of the office as an appropriate and safe working environment for our employees.

6. Supporting our Co-ordinator in undertaking training opportunities

### ***Significant activities***

1. Four meetings of our members took place, in Northern England and in Scotland, with speakers including Lindis Percy and Dave Webb on the issue of US Missile Defence, Douglas Rennie on the Newcastle Conflict Resolution Network, Kevin Franz from Quaker Peace & Social Witness and speakers involved supporting asylum seekers in Nottingham. We also devoted time to considering future work in the area of Challenging Militarism, the programme of Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel, sustainable security and our future development plan.

2. The Speaking our Peace project work ran a number of small events with Friends in their Meetings. The weblog continued to be maintained throughout the year.

3. We ran a second very successful conference on 'Building Peace – Tackling Racism', which took place in Huddersfield in March, attracting many participants and very positive feedback. This also led to further work with a video producer and to the production of a DVD relating to the event.

4. We were represented at meetings of Britain Yearly Meeting, European Quaker Peace & Service Consultation and the Network of Christian Peace Organisations among others and continued our involvement with Scotland's for Peace.

5. Support was given to individual Friends and groups of Friends for a range of peace initiatives.

6. We set up a survey of Friends on the issue of Challenging Militarism.

7. We provided input to a range of other

Quaker events, including a display at Britain Yearly Meeting and a talk to the final meeting of Lancashire and Cheshire General Meeting.

### ***Financial Review and Results***

Our income from Quakers over the period was again somewhat reduced, affected partly by the financial crisis that affected the global economy in the autumn. We did benefit from the interest earned by funds deposited with the Ecology Building Society and as a result our deficit for the year was substantially less than it might otherwise have been. Our expenditure was very slightly less than budgeted, with less having been spent on professional fees and on subscriptions than anticipated. Project-related expenditure travel costs were slightly higher than anticipated. The project work is ongoing and existing funds will be sufficient to meet the needs of these projects. We received no further income from legacies this year and no significant computer equipment was purchased during the year

### ***Financial Policies***

#### ***Risk assessment***

In order to avoid running at a deficit we continued to exercise caution in our spending during the year. We have decided to invest the bulk of our funds so that we can benefit from a long-term stream of income from these investments and in order to protect trustees against a potential liability arising from pensions' legislation. We remain committed to avoiding such a liability crystallising. We have undertaken an assessment of other risks and implemented procedures to manage and minimise these. In view of the financial crisis, we decided to spread our reserves to a number of financial institutions and not make other forms of investment at this stage.

### *Reserves Policy*

In March 2001 Trustees agreed that we should endeavour to hold in our reserves the equivalent of four months' running costs, based on the period of notice required for the termination of our Co-ordinator's employment and any winding up costs associated with that. Our current reserves exceed this margin, largely as a result of the unexpected receipt since of legacies. We expect to continue to draw on this additional source of finance to develop project work when necessary but need to retain sufficient funds to meet the potential liability pertaining to the Pensions Trust.

### **Future Plans**

- 1.Continued training and development of the Executive committee as an effective team..
- 2.Implementing further activities of the Peace, Faith and Race and Speaking our

Peace project groups.

3.Strengthening links with Young Friends and with those Area Meetings that are currently less involved in our work.

4.Developing work with young people by building on proposals developed in the preceding two years.

5.Publishing our Development Plan and using this effectively in both planning and implementation of our work and in communications with funders and supporters.

6.Implementation of sound investment policies for our additional funds.

7.Exploring the possibilities of using new communications media more effectively in meeting our objectives.

8.Building Trustee expertise in the range of required functions.

By Order of The Executive

*Ann Bettys, Clerk to the Executive 2008*

### Northern Friends Peace Board Members during 2008

#### **Area Meeting**

#### **Representative/s**

Brighouse West Yorkshire	Ann Bettys
Central & North Lancashire	Jenny Foot, Keith Hargreaves (dep)
Central Yorkshire	Suzanne Wilson, Geoff Fielding (dep)
Craven & Keighley	Ken R Smith
East Cheshire	Phoebe Spence, Tim Carlisle (Treas)
East Scotland	Andrée Ryan, Peter Cheer (dep)
Hardshaw and Man	West Cynthia Derelli
Kendal & Sedbergh	Barbara Tonge, Steve Timson (dep)
Leeds	Pauline Leonard
Lincolnshire	(Vacant)
Manchester & Warrington	Sarah Alldred, Alan Pinch (dep)
North Cumbria	Martyn Dyer Smith
North of Scotland	David James
Northumbria	Elizabeth Pallister
North Wales	Margaret Clarke, Rory Kearns,
Notts and Derby	Melanie Thomas (dep)
Pendle Hill	Barry Mills, Keith Dewhurst (dep)

Pickering and Hull	Peter Grayley
Sheffield & Balby	Frances Morgan, Jill Burt (dep)
South East Scotland	Geoffrey Carnall, Janet Fenton
Swarthmore	Penelope Lowden, Don Hay
Tees Valley	Kitty Grove-Stephensen, Beryl Myers
Wensleydale & Swaledale	Robin West
West Cumbria	Michael Evans / Johanna Alberti
West Scotland	Kieran McQuaid, Douglas Shaw (dep)
Wirral and Chester	Shirley Johnson
York	Cathy Holman

**Co-opted members :**

Robin Bowles, Maria Brown, Anni Rainbow, Brenda Rigby, Caroline Westgate, Mary Alice Mansell

**Young Friends General Meeting** Hilary Topp, Chris Hanning

**Quaker Peace & Social Witness** Kat Barton

**Honorary Members** Mary Bradbury

**Board Treasurer** Tim Carlisle

**Board Co-ordinator** Philip Austin

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2008

	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>	618
<b>Current assets</b>	
Stock	1,226
Debtors	66
Cash at bank and in hand	220,543
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due in less than one year</b>	-1,163
<b>Net Current assets</b>	£220,672.00
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<u>£221,290</u>
<b>Reserves</b>	
Unrestricted Funds	
Designated funds	86,566
General Funds	133,319
Total Unrestricted funds	219,885
Restricted funds	1405
	<u>£221,290.00</u>

Statement of financial activities and income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2008

	2008 £	2007 £
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Donations - Individuals	2,093	2,348
- Legacies	66	35
- Meetings	30,384	25,805
- Trust Funds	4,019	3,784
Investment income	8,097	8,657
Workshop fees and sales	738	957
Other sundry income	855	1,464
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>46,252</b>	<b>43,050</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>		
Salaries	33,657	32,789
Rent, heat and light	1,536	2,245
Staff & committee development	480	236
Stationery, postage, telephone & office	3,083	3,650
Representatives' travel	1,102	1,237
Insurance	225	212
Depreciation	155	193
Cost of publications	2,851	515
Examination and accountancy	1,108	1,140
Sundry	813	934
Representations and networking	95	411
Board expenses	1,667	1,545
<b>Total Resources expended</b>	<b>46,772</b>	<b>45,107</b>
<b>Net incoming / (outgoing) resources for the period</b>	<b>(520)</b>	<b>(2,057)</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(520)</b>	<b>(2,057)</b>
Funds at 31 December 2007	221,810	223,867
<b>Funds at 31 December 2008</b>	<b>£221,290</b>	<b>£221,810</b>

## Jessie Baston

### *Minute from Northern Friends Peace Board, meeting in Nottingham in November 2008*



Staunch, committed, feisty, intrepid, passionate, indomitable, uncompromising in her active promotion of peace and justice. These

are just some of the words that have been used by Board members in remembering our Friend, Jessie Baston, a long-standing member of the Board, who died on 8 October 2008.

Jessie came to the Board in 1976 as a representative of Balby Monthly Meeting. At her death last month, aged 91, Jessie was still a member of the Board, having been made a life member in the 1990s. During that long period she served the Board in many ways, not least as chairman for a period in the 1980s when the Board was at the peak of its East-West work. She was a willing advocate for all the Board's activities, always ready to speak to meetings and groups in the cause of peace and reconciliation. When the

Board began a process of change in the way it worked and the range of its peace work in the mid 1980s, Jessie wholeheartedly embraced the new structure.

To look at, she was a conventional middle-aged woman, grey hair, tweed skirt and jumper, handbag and sensible shoes, but with Jessie it was a big mistake to go by the externals. She was a thorough-going radical with a fearless attitude that went back a very long way. As a young teacher during WW2, she had registered as a conscientious objector and as a result was thrown out of her digs by her landlady. She also volunteered to trial medical drugs during that war. By the 1980s she was taking an active part in both the Snowball Campaign and the Peace Tax Campaign, suffering distraint of her goods as a result of the latter. She never gave up her struggle for a more peaceful world. Her home was the venue for countless peace-group meetings long after she could have been forgiven for putting her feet up.

Many of us have one particular abiding and treasured memory of

Jessie, which epitomises the Jessie we knew. The Board met in Edinburgh on a Saturday in June in the mid-1980s, at the height of the Reagan / Thatcher / Cruise missile era, on a day which by chance coincided with the arrival in the city of a big Peace March. The Mound had been set up with a platform and a huge array of PA equipment, ready for a rally to greet the marchers. In a break in the Board's business we trooped out to take part in this gathering. When we arrived, music was playing at ear-bleeding levels and ferocious-looking young people with studs in their faces were gyrating to it. Jessie had been given a slot on the speakers' list. Someone turned off the racket and Jessie got up on the platform. She looked such

a tiny figure, very straight-backed, unremarkable and very ordinary in her grey belted mac, carrying her handbag, dwarfed by the giant PA system and the serried ranks of banners behind her. Speaking from her heart, without notes, she delivered a very extraordinary, passionate and uncompromising speech against war, explaining about the Quaker Peace Testimony and how we were all in this struggle together. Straight away she connected with the motley crew below. They listened with rapt attention and applauded enthusiastically.

If ever anyone faithfully lived out the Board's mandate to advise and encourage peace in all its height and breadth, Jessie Baston did.