

Northern Friends Peace Board



Our work in 2007

Annual Report

Northern Friends Peace Board Annual Report 2007

Introduction from Clerks

Northern Friends Peace Board has continued to work in a variety of ways towards addressing its 1913 founding minute, asking us to 'advise and encourage Friends in the North ...and through them their fellow citizens generally, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth.'

The Executive, as Trustees, were very pleased for the extended time we were able to have in the autumn with a weekend Meeting. This enabled us to consider at greater depth matters which affect the working of the Board and to look ahead to how we would like it to be in 2013, its 100th Anniversary. We recognise that we need to face those issues that can lead to unrest, violence and war whilst actively giving positive expression to peaceful alternatives.

The pattern of our work included our four representative Board meetings a year and our continuing project work on the themes of 'Speaking our Peace' and 'Peace Faith and Race'. Through the events and activities undertaken we sought to provide opportunities for Friends and others to explore concerns in depth and to support one another in speaking out. We also developed initial proposals for developing ways to encourage participation by young people in acting on these concerns.

We thank individuals and Meetings for their personal and financial support. Income from Friends was lower than in recent years, though we were significantly helped by interest from an invested legacy. The need for our work has not diminished, however, and we look forward to continuing support from Friends.

We wish to place on record our indebtedness to Philip Austin, for his hard work as Co-ordinator. Without his skills in co-ordinating the work of Northern Friends Peace Board and in making links with other Quaker and peace organisations we would not be able to feel we are part of a wider peace movement. His creative and thoughtful approach benefits us all. We also thank Steven Waling, Office Assistant, and all those who have given support in many different ways.

We commend this report to you and hope that you will be inspired to continue the work to make the world a more peaceful and just place in which to live.

In peace and friendship

Frances Morgan – Clerk to the Executive

Mary Alice Mansell – Clerk to the Board



Frances Morgan, who finished her three-year service as Clerk to the NFPB Executive Committee at the end of 2007

Board meetings

Briefly: *Four meetings a year for representatives from Monthly / Area meetings to guide our work, to consider current peace concerns and to learn, with local Friends and other visitors.*

Scarborough, Birkenhead, Edinburgh and Lancaster were the venues for our main meetings during the year. Representatives from nearly all our Monthly Meetings (known as Area Meetings by the end of the year) attended these gatherings, joined and hosted by Friends and Attenders from the localities. We valued meeting and exploring our concerns with Friends in different parts of the North in this way, often with the help of invited speakers.

At our meetings throughout the year, we gave space for Northern Friends to talk about their peace concerns and actions and for consideration of key peace challenges at the time. These included:

- the proposed replacement of the Trident Nuclear Weapons system and the range of actions in which Friends were involved during the year, ranging from the Faslane 365 blockades to letter-writing and lobbying
- US Missile Defence and acts of witness at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales and Yorkshire
- raising concerns with politicians in the Scottish and Westminster parliaments
- support for asylum seekers
- the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
- discussion of future UK defence policy
- the activities of Scotland's for Peace
- the situation in the Middle East, including the ongoing and devastating consequences of the invasion of Iraq and the possibility of military action against Iran

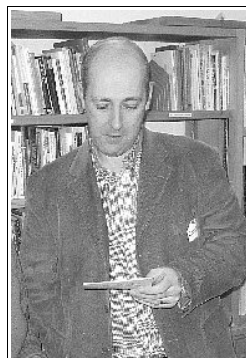
Our February meeting in Scarborough had as a key focus a

consideration of possible work with young people. We invited four Friends to introduce this item and also valued hearing a range of perspectives from a particularly well attended meeting.

In Birkenhead in June we reflected on two areas of concern: that of civil liberties, following on from its inclusion on the agenda at Britain Yearly Meeting the previous month, and the broad theme of alternative, non-military responses to terrorism and other perceived threats to our world.

In September we were pleased to be joined at our meeting by Mark Ballard, of Edinburgh Meeting and a former Member of the Scottish Parliament. He presented us with some challenging and stimulating thoughts on the nature and varied needs of the audience with whom we are trying to communicate our concerns. Martha Beale of the Fellowship of Reconciliation also contributed to this meeting, joining NFPB member Hilary Topp in providing an insight into the nature work with young people, through their respective professional experiences.

At our final meeting of the year in Lancaster we welcomed Feargal Cochrane, director of the Richardson Institute for Peace Studies at the University of Lancaster. From his experience of peace work and research in Northern Ireland, he gave a stimulating overview of the ways in which 'civil society' (ie. non-governmental actors) can make a positive difference to transforming conflict in communities. Friends also spent time at this meeting exploring the future direction of the Board, informed by a recently-held weekend meeting of our trustees.



Feargal Cochrane

Project Work

Peace, Faith and Race

Briefly: *Conferences for Quakers and others to develop a deeper understanding about peace-building in divided communities, in collaboration and dialogue with others*

The project group set up in the autumn of 2006 was particularly busy this year, with the first of its three planned conferences taking place in Bolton in March. The group was able to meet relatively frequently, due to the time availability and the relative proximity of its members (between Bolton and Sheffield).



The conference itself, on 12 March, attracted about 50 participants and a range of speakers and group-contributors. We were very pleased to be able to include in all capacities a significant number of non-Quakers as well as Quakers, and drew people from a wide geographical area. A short report of the day is included as an appendix of this Annual Report.

The project group continued its work after the Bolton conference, undertaking a detailed evaluation of the event and using this to help in planning a second conference, to take place in Huddersfield in March 2008. We ran an interest group on the themes from the conference at Britain Yearly Meeting in May and continued to build a range of contacts, from professional community workers to concerned individuals supporting asylum seekers and anti-racism campaigns.

Speaking our Peace

Briefly: *Work to support people in learning about and thinking through current peace concerns, and in finding appropriate and relevant ways of speaking out and taking action.*

Most of this group's activity was in the second half of the year. We ran one of our workshops at Britain Yearly Meeting's Summer Gathering in Stirling, which provided a framework for Friends to explore their personal journeys to peace action and to consider the ways in which speaking out on peace concerns can be help or hindered. We ran a successful short workshop for teenagers in Lancashire and Cheshire General Meeting in September, being joined on that occasion by Mkoko Boseka, a Friend from the Congo. We also ran a one-day 'peace learning day' on Sustainable Security for Friends in South Manchester, joined by David Gee, formerly of Quaker Peace and Social Witness and Paul Milling, a Friend from Swarthmoor Monthly Meeting. A leaflet publicising the opportunities for Meetings to host further events like these was circulated in the autumn.

Missile Defence

Briefly: *Work to bring to the attention of decision-makers and the general public the Quaker concern that the US Missile Defence system, with its bases in the north of England, is an unnecessary and destabilising response to international security fears.*

We have continued to keep this area of concern under close scrutiny, whilst not having any specific project work during 2007. Our Co-ordinator, Philip Austin, was able in April to join a multi-agency delegation to meet with government officials to discuss the UK's possible involvement in the US Missile Defence system. He maintained contacts with this group throughout the year, playing a key role in monitoring news coverage and in assessing possible future collaborative work.

Following the UK government's announcement in late July that Menwith Hill was formally to be confirmed as a base contributing to the US system, the Board corresponded with the government to express its concern about this development and about the lack of democratic scrutiny

We have provided information to our Members and other Friends about the Meetings for Worship at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales and have been encouraged that a good number have continued to support these acts of worship and witness

Networking and support

Briefly: Promoting awareness amongst Northern Friends of the range of opportunities for peace action; and amongst other groups of Northern Friends' peace concerns and activities.

Through our communications activities – from our periodic newsletter, to mailings to our members, our website and presence at other events – we seek to develop and maintain a relevant flow of information and to build good working relationships with others. Amongst those with whom we worked during 2007 are:

- Friends involved in the Faslane 365 witness
- Friends at Britain Yearly Meeting and at the Quaker Summer Gathering.
- Westmorland General Meeting's 'Preparing for Peace' project
- QPSW Peace and Disarmament programme
- Week of Prayer for World Peace
- European Quaker Peace & Service Consultation
- Network for Peace
- Network of Christian Peace Organisations
- Bolton Friends' 'Seeking Asylum – Finding Destitution' group

We also responded to a range of requests for information and support throughout the year and continued to sell a range of peace materials, from envelope re-use labels to banner kits. In response to a request from one Quaker meeting, we converted our VHS video 'Visions of Peace' to DVD format and supplied copies to Friends in this country and abroad.

Trustees – our Executive Committee

Briefly: *The committee's work is to oversee the resources and work of the Board, evaluating it and planning for the future.*



*Standing, from left: Ann Bettys, Tim Carlisle, Philip Austin (Co-ordinator), Mary Alice Mansell, Frances Morgan, Suzanne Wilson, Jenny Foot
Seated: Janet Fenton, Peter Cheer, Sarah Alldred*

Our Executive committee membership changed in the course of the year, losing Wilma Firth and gaining Sarah Alldred. Other members were: Tim Carlisle (Treasurer), Peter Cheer, Janet Fenton, Jenny Foot, Mary Alice Mansell (Clerk to the Board) and Frances Morgan (Clerk to the Executive). Ann Bettys and Suzanne Wilson served as Assistant Clerks to the Board and attended Executive committee meetings during the year.

We are grateful for the support that Friends have given us in so many

ways – from hosting our meetings to funding the core of our activities. We were concerned to note a decline in the levels of financial support from Quaker meetings during the year. We do have financial security as a result of the legacies received in recent years, but hope in the longer term that these additional funds can be used to enhance our work rather than to make up shortfalls in funding from other sources.

The committee agreed an ethical investment policy and began the process of seeking professional advice on this matter. They agreed to invest the bulk of the substantial part of the Board's funds (increased during 2006 as a result of an unexpected legacy) in order to generate a regular additional stream of income, whilst making other funds available for more project work more immediately.

The committee held a residential weekend meeting in October, which considered in depth the range of trustee responsibilities, from the mechanics of how to improve communications amongst members to forward-looking thinking towards the Board's centenary in 2013. A key area that we hope to build on from the year's work is concerned with young people; both how to include more younger Friends in our work and how to support children and young people in their peace witness. Following consideration of this earlier in the year a small group met in early December to develop some specific work proposals, to be discussed by the Board in 2008.

Other issues that the Executive identified as areas for future development include:

- how to make effective and appropriate use of new (and traditional) information and communication technologies.
- raising the profile of Quakers and of Quaker peace concerns amongst the wider public and looking for more opportunities for collaborative working.
- developing ways of working that draw on the skills and concerns of our members, whilst not adding an unduly large additional set of burdens and responsibilities to already-overloaded Quakers

Northern Friends Peace Board

Members during 2007

(NB: We have used the Monthly Meeting names, even though a number of these became changed their names and most became Area Meetings in the course of 2007. We shall use the new names in our report of our activities in 2008)

Monthly Meeting	Representative/s
Balby	Frances Morgan, Jill Burt (dep)
Brighouse	Ann Bettys
Carlisle and Holme	Martyn Dyer Smith
Cheshire	Phoebe Spence, Tim Carlisle (Treas)
Darlington	Kitty Grove Stephensen, Beryl Myers
East Scotland	Peter Cheer, Andree Ryan
Guisborough	(Vacant)
Hardshaw East	Sarah Alldred, Alan Pinch (dep)
Hardshaw West	Cynthia Derelli
Kendal & Sedbergh	Barbara Tonge, Steve Timson (dep)
Lancaster	Jenny Foot, Keith Hargreaves (dep)
Leeds	Una Parker, Pauline Leonard (dep)
Lincolnshire	Alan Parker
Marsden	Barry Mills, Keith Dewhurst (dep)
Northumbria	Elizabeth Pallister
North of Scotland	(Vacant)
North Wales	Margaret Clarked, Rory Kearns,
Notts and Derby	Melanie Thomas (dep)
Pardshaw	Michael Evans
Pickering and Hull	John Beardmore
Pontefract	Suzanne Wilson
Wensleydale & Swaledale	Jenny White
Settle	Ken R Smith
South East Scotland	Geoffrey Carnall, Janet Fenton
Swarthmore	Penelope Lowden, Don Hay
West Scotland	Kieran McQuaid
Wirral and Chester	Shirley Johnson
York	Rachel Sewell

Co-opted members :

Robin Bowles, Maria Brown, Wilma Firth (until April), Anni Rainbow, Brenda Rigby, Caroline Westgate, Mary Alice Mansell

Young Friends General Meeting Hilary Topp, Chris Hanning

Quaker Peace & Social Witness David Gee/Kat Barton

Honorary Members Mary Bradbury

Board Treasurer Tim Carlisle

Board Co-ordinator **Philip Austin**

Tackling Racism, Building Peace

Report of Bolton Conference March 10th 2007

55 people attended the conference at Bolton Meeting House, of these 31 were Quakers. This was quite significant because the conference involved many different people working to challenge racism in many different fields.

Andy Sykes was first of the two morning speakers. He had been British National Party (BNP) organiser for the Bradford area but had a change of heart after he was asked to attack a community fun day. He told the local TUC about the planned attack, and was put in touch with the BBC. As a result, Andy helped produce an undercover BBC documentary about the BNP leadership. He told us about the dangers of the BNP, how they encourage young people to join the party, how they are presenting a more respectable image in order to gather votes. He also pointed out that the biggest ever find of terrorist arms and explosives was last year in Lancashire - in the possession of white racists.

The other morning speaker was Sofia Maskin who works for Bradford Museums to bring people of different cultures and races together. This was a good balance to Andy's disturbing description of the violent far right. Sofia, a Muslim woman, talked about, and showed pictures

of, community arts and history work with people of many faiths and cultures, often working together in harmony, discovering shared experiences, likes and dislikes.

In the afternoon there were five 'Issue Groups' discussing education, local and international politics, asylum seekers and refugees, and interfaith work. Some of these were very lively and participants wanted more time to explore the issues presented.

Following this a panel of five speakers, chaired by Ian McHugh, addressed questions. The panel reflected a wide range and depth of knowledge and experience, and comprised Mike Luft, Maqs Hussain, Helen McHugh, Naveed Idrees, a Deputy Head Teacher in Bradford, Elisabeth Bailey.

The event was unusual in that brought together Quakers, Muslims, and people of other and no faiths. Although there was little talk of Quakerism, the way the day was conducted effectively reflected and demonstrated a distinctly inclusive and calm approach that was a result of our Quaker experience in meetings. Feedback from the day was very positive, many people commented that it was useful to meet people working in different ways but with the same aim- to tackle racism.

Northern Friends Peace Board

Income and Expenditure 2007 & 2006

	2007	2006
	£	£
<i>Incoming resources</i>		
Donations		
Individuals	2,348	2,532
Legacies	35	147,934
Meetings	25,805	28,746
Trusts and grants	3,784	4,584
Investment income	8,657	4,286
Workshop/event fees and sales	957	305
Sundry	1,464	1,502
Total Incoming	43,050	189,889
 Resources Expended		
Salaries	32,789	31,211
Rent, Heat and Light	2,245	1,860
Staff & Committee development	236	799
Stationery, post, phone and office	3,650	3,685
Representatives' travel	1,237	992
Insurance	212	212
Depreciation	193	543
Cost of Publications	515	119
Examination and Accountancy	1,140	1,750
Sundry	934	174
Representation and Networking	411	215
Board expenses	1,545	1,342
Total resources expended	45,107	42,902
 Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the period	 (2,057)	 146,987

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007

	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets		772
Current assets		
Stock	1,068	
Debtors	635	
Cash at bank and in hand	221,964	

	223,667	
Creditors: amount falling due in less than one year	(2,629)	
Net current assets		221,038
Total assets less current liabilities		£221,810
Reserves		
Unrestricted funds		
Designated Funds	85,341	
General Funds	136,634	
Total Unrestricted funds		219,975
Restricted funds		1,835

		£221,810

Full accounts and the trustees report are available from the NFPB office, contact details on the back page

Postscript

2007 felt like a year of new opportunities and openings for many of us involved in the Board's work, in spite of the undiminished – in many ways increasing – challenges to peace in the world. Members who joined during 2006 and 2007 have begun to take on more key roles within our governance structures and our project work, whilst we continue to benefit from the longer-term knowledge of Friends who we have co-opted back onto the Board after they have completed their service as MM Representatives.

Our work remains rooted in the life of Friends in Britain, and in the North in particular, but is always outward and forward looking. We look towards a raised profile of the Quaker peace voice, to a way of working that supports and includes people of all generations and to a passionate commitment to promoting real and necessary alternatives to war and its causes that will need to be at the core of the Quaker peace testimony in coming years.



Northern Friends Peace Board

Victoria Hall, Knowsley St, Bolton BL1 2AS

01204 382330 nfpb@gn.apc.org

www.nfpb.gn.apc.org

Charity No: SCO 24632