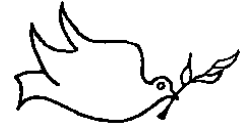


The Peace Board



Peace news and views for, from and about Quakers in the North of Britain
Issue no: 22 Spring 2007

Learning from one another

We were delighted to have so many Friends and Attenders from the locality with us when NFPB met in Scarborough in February. During the day, we got to learn of their activities and concerns and they about ours.

Young People

The major item for consideration at the meeting was peace and young people. The news agenda outside our meeting set the challenging context in which to explore how we might support young people in living peaceful lives. We were very aware, for instance, of the recent spate of teenage killings in south London, and of the UNESCO report that gave a damning verdict on the quality of life faced by young people in British society.

We heard from Friends who have worked with young people in various ways, from some young people (not enough, as our meeting clashed with Young Friends General Meeting) and began a consideration of what Northern Friends Peace Board's particular contribution might be. The discussion was just a first stage in a process of discernment, but it seemed clear that this is a strand of concern for NFPB members and other Northern Friends. We need to find the most effective use of our resources, of people, networks and of finances.

While we were in Scarborough we also gave further consideration to the proposed renewal of Trident, heard about developments relating to the US Missile Defence system and received reports from our two currently-active project groups.

Peace, Faith and Race

One of these groups ran an event in early March on Tackling Racism: Building Peace in Bolton. A well-attended event, being a day of listening, meeting, speaking and making connections. This was the first of three annual events in different parts of the North.

The range of speakers, participants and workshop leaders during the course of the day brought great richness. They included: Friends and friends of different faiths and no particular faith, anti-racism

campaigners, asylum seekers and supporters, youth workers and teachers, interfaith councils, diversity professionals and an ex member of the British National Party.



Elizabeth Coleman of Eccles Meeting and Bayo Omioyola of Liverpool Meeting in a workshop on asylum seekers (photo: Rob Phillips)

Whilst many groups involved in this spread of work find it relatively easy to build networks on a local level, opportunities for making contact over a wider area are less numerous. The issue-based workshops during the afternoon of this conference gave space for such linking up. Northern Friends Peace Board's regional networking meant that we had been able to attract people from across the whole of the North West of England and West Yorkshire.

As a project group, we were exhausted by the end of the day, but delighted to see so many people departing with a sense of encouragement for their continuing work and witness. We shall start planning next year's event soon - watch this space.

See the back page for details of the rest of our meetings in 2007. Would your Meeting like to host us in 2008 / 2009? Get in touch if you are interested (see contact information on the back)

Remembering John Hamilton

In our last newsletter we reported briefly the news of the death of John Hamilton, our longest serving member. In February Northern Friends Peace Board minuted:

We have heard with sadness of the death in December of one of our longest-serving members, John Hamilton of Liverpool Meeting and Hardshaw West Monthly Meeting. John had been ill with cancer for many months.

John was a reserved, private and self-effacing man with a twinkle in his eye and a sharp political mind. Members of NFPB might have served for some time on the Board before having any inkling that he had held a high profile public position as Leader of Liverpool City Council.

Despite all his other responsibilities and difficulties, John was a regular and faithful member of the NFPB, representing his Monthly Meeting, and seemed to be able to get anywhere in the Board's region by train without fuss. He arrived at our meetings, wearing his trilby, a cheerful smile and clutching a bag of British Rail sandwiches.

John was NFPB Chair (in those days the Board was Chaired, not Clerked) from 1980-3 and played an active part in a number of areas of our work and in our meetings.

John believed passionately in the Quaker Peace Testimony and was particularly engaged by the East-West reconciliation work, which at that time was so important against the background of the Cold War and the arms race. His knowledge of the recent, and not so recent history of the politics of Central and Eastern Europe was encyclopaedic and he had a gift for sharing this.

John read widely; he sought to understand and communicate wider political and international trends and the human consequences of violence and conflict. NFPB's remit is to advise on peace in its height and breadth and John was particularly skilled at helping us in just that.

Long before Iraq was in anyone's consciousness, it was John Hamilton who alerted the Board to

its geo-political significance and warned of the potential for conflict in that part of the world.

When the Board underwent great changes, developing a less directly politically active role to concentrate more on supporting its constituent meetings in their Peace Witness, and becoming a more truly Quaker body, with Clerks, John was one of the 'old guard' who kept faith with the Board and supported it in its new and unfamiliar endeavours.

John was proud of Liverpool and realistic about it. He delighted in introducing visitors to the architectural heritage of his city. In his professional life as a teacher he must have inspired many students with his enthusiasm.



Several Members of Northern Friends Peace Board joined local Friends and many others at a civic memorial service for John in early March. In the splendour of Liverpool's St George's Hall, tributes were given by Joe Anderson, current leader of the Labour Party in Liverpool, by Jane Kennedy, John's constituency MP, a journalist from the Liverpool Echo and by Philip Austin, Northern Friends Peace Board's co-ordinator.

The photograph above is of a display put together for the event, illustrating John's contribution to civic affairs in Liverpool.

Janet Bloomfield

As we go to press, we have heard of the death of Janet Bloomfield, Quaker, long-time peace and disarmament worker, writer, speaker and friend to many. We extend deepest sympathies to all her family and friends. Janet gave so much and will be sorely missed.

Binning the Bomb and blockading the base

On 24 February, while several thousand gathered in London to call for 'No Trident Replacement', a smaller – but equally passionate – gathering in Glasgow marked the conclusion of the week-long Bin the Bomb roadshow under the auspices of Scotland's for Peace.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of March an impressive number of Quakers (mostly from Leeds and other parts of Yorkshire) were at Faslane for the third Quaker contribution to Faslane 365. Their yellow brollies (with the 'Quakers Say No Trident' message spelt out) must have kept out some of the vertical rain, but all reports suggest that the weather was far from Friendly. Another Quaker blockade may be taking place over 24-25 May. If you would like to be part of that contact sarahlasenby@breathemail.net.

If you still don't know about Faslane 365, look at: www.faslane365.org

Peace by Peace – doing it ecumenically

The Fellowship of Reconciliation in England has a couple of new resources available. Following its first 'Peacemaker Briefing' on Iran and nuclear weapons issue, it has published a briefing on West Papua. It has also produced a new newsletter - **Peace by Peace** - intended for a wider distribution as a way of engaging people in thinking about and acting for peace. Copies of both are available from their website at:

<http://www.for.org.uk/resources>

or by post from:

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, England, St. James Church Centre, Beauchamp Lane, Oxford OX4 3LF

t: 01865 748796 e: office@for.org.uk



Scottish Centre for Nonviolence to close...

In their own words:...

This is to let you know that the members present at the AGM on 13th March 2007 agreed (without dissent) that the Scottish Centre for Nonviolence should close by the middle of May.

Training

Much of the original task of the Centre, in the field of nonviolent education and training, is now being fulfilled by others, including some in the mainstream. For example in Scotland this is available through networks such as the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on a Culture of Peace, the Scottish Mediation Network Education Initiative Group and Scotland's for Peace. Also nonviolent training is being provided, free of charge, by Turning the Tide, a London based Quaker organisation and the Action Trainers, a loose co-operative of trainers who share their skills with other radicals. Thus the main object, expressed in our constitution as "to advance the education of the public about violence reduction", has been achieved and no longer requires our specific input.

The focus of our work during the past year has been to explore whether organisations, working for peace and non-violence in Scotland, could share resources and expertise, and so increase the collective effectiveness of peace building in Scotland. This culminated in a gathering of representatives from eleven such organisations in November 2006. Unfortunately

the response in the follow-up period to this meeting has been disappointing and we feel there is no advantage in continuing with this initiative.

Of course the job of promoting nonviolence is far from over. But we have to recognise that a new generation of activists organises differently and we need to concentrate our energy and skills on working with them, rather than perpetuating organisations which are no longer effective. Our personal commitment to nonviolence in Scotland continues undiminished and we are sure you as supporters will continue to be active. We need to be open to change, and letting go of something precious can allow space for the growth of new ideas and the creative initiatives, so much needed in these difficult times for our world.

On Sunday 10th June 2007 the Scottish Centre for Nonviolence invites you to a Farewell Party at 1pm in The Annexe. This will be a bring and share event, food, music, poetry. I hope that this "laying down" will enable us to share our stories of the Centre and its origins, to acknowledge what has been less good or disappointing and above all to celebrate the many achievements of the work and all the wonderful people who have contributed. In the end isn't social change all about people and commitment and love?

So come and share a bit of love for our Place, our People, our Country and our Visions. Love, Peace and Good Wishes

Mary Alice Mansell Liz Law
Convenor

16 March 2007

(contact 01786 824730 nonviolence@callnetuk.com)

Phone Co-op

Northern Friends Peace Board continues to benefit from people signing up to The Phone Co-op through our affinity scheme. This generates about £1,000 per year towards our work and we are hugely grateful to all those Friends and others supporting us in this way. To find out more about the range of tariffs and services available, contact the NFPB Office (see address on the back page) or visit <http://nfpb.gn.apc.org/co-op.htm>

thePhoneCo-op
your voice counts

Financial Support from Meetings

For the second year running, the guideline figure for Monthly Meetings' financial contributions to fund the work of Northern Friends Peace Board is £6.50 per member. Thank you for all the support during 2006.

We are also pleased to receive contributions from individuals, from Meeting collections and from other fund-raising initiatives. If you would like to make a donation by Gift Aid or set up a standing order, contact the NFPB Office.

Peace Museum progress

A major step forward has been taken by the Peace Museum, based in Bradford. In November they signed a formal agreement with Leeds Metropolitan University. As they say in their newsletter "In practical terms it means that we should have permanent and quality museum premises, with an opening time around mid-2009. ... the museum will be totally transformed from the present limited situation ... very challenging and exciting."

At the same time, they have opened a new exhibition, at the invitation and housed in the Royal Armouries in Leeds, entitled "Farewell to Arms", looking at how some arms have been turned into art, others banned and at efforts to ban others. The permanent exhibition is free to view during the normal opening hours of the Armouries.

For information about this, about the travelling exhibitions available from the Peace Museum and about ways in which you could support the museum contact them at: Jacob's Well, Manchester Road, Bradford, BD1 5RW 01274 434009 peacemuseum@bradford.gov.uk

Opportunities for meeting and learning

NFPB has set up a *Speaking our Peace* project group, which is offering two different types of event for Friends and Meetings. Arising from a recognition that Friends can find it difficult to speak out or take a stand on peace concerns, these events aim to provide learning spaces as a pit-stop on the way to further action.

Speaking our Peace days will be experiential in nature (more like workshops), looking at the personal skills and approaches involved.

Peace Learning Days, meanwhile, will be more analytical and issue based (more like seminars).

Contact the NFPB office (see below) if you would like to host one of these in your Meeting. We do hope, by the way, that they will be open to non-Quaker friends as well as Members and Attenders of Meetings.

NFPB Meetings in 2007

Friends and Attenders are welcome to join us at our meetings. The next three meetings will be as follows:

- ✉ **23rd June - Birkenhead Meeting House**
- ✉ **23rd September - Edinburgh Meeting House**
- ✉ **17th November - Lancaster Meeting House**

Contact the us for more details.

The Peace Board is a newsletter of
Northern Friends Peace Board.

It is sent free to Northern Quaker Meetings and others. If you would like additional copies for your group or yourself, please get in touch. A donation to cover extra postage would help, but is not essential.

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Please send any news, views, letters, reviews etc. to the above address.