

**Edinburgh**  
**Peace and Justice Centre**  
**Annual Report**  
**2011-12**  
**A Year of Change**  
**at the Peace and Justice Centre**

In January 2011 it was felt that it was time to merge the Peace and Justice Resource Centre and the Peace and Justice Education Centre into one organisation with charitable status. Current members of the Management Committees of both the Education and the Resource Centres, together with some former members, formed a Review Group which worked until June to achieve the changes. A revised set of Aims and Objectives, which carry forward the broad vision of the past 30 years, was drafted. The new Centre is committed to serving the whole of Scotland. The feeling was that no other organisation exists to do this. To do justice to that ambition however will require a significant expansion of our capacity.

A new Constitution incorporating the Aims and Objectives was drafted and a Business Plan, linked directly to the Objectives, was developed. These were submitted to OSCR. The actual mechanism of change was that the Education Centre, already a charity, applied to OSCR to change its name to the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, adopting the new constitution. Approval was granted and finally, at an Extraordinary General Meeting the establishment of the new Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre was ratified. At an International Peace Day event on September 21<sup>st</sup> 2011, marking the birthday of the Centre we were glad to celebrate that the 31 year old Resource Centre had become the new Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre. The Business Plan has since formed the basis of the Centre's work. Copies of the new Constitution and Business Plan are available upon request.

The Centre was extremely grateful to John Phillips who acted as Treasurer during the transition period. A search was conducted and we are fortunate that the current Treasurer Susan Robertson applied. She adds considerable strength to the Management Committee. Her appointment was in keeping with the Business Plan which calls for identifying areas of responsibility and finding new Management Committee members with the requisite skills. After many years of service to the Centre our Secretary Geoffrey Carnall is retiring and Judy Russell has agreed to take on that responsibility. The Management Committee and everyone involved with the Centre are deeply grateful to Geoffrey for his years of devoted service.

**Staff, Volunteers, Interns, Management**

A further change came when Janet Fenton, who had served as our Coordinator since 2005, resigned at the end of April 2011. Janet is continuing her work for peace and disarmament with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, whose Scottish branch she did so much to revive. The Centre is greatly indebted to her for making its work much better known, in particular through its contacts with the Scottish Parliament. In collaboration with Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute and Angie Zelter of Trident Ploughshares she organised a major conference in Edinburgh on the legal status of nuclear weapons. The former Vice President of the International Court of Justice, Christopher Weeramantry, was the principal speaker. The proceedings were published in *Trident and International Law. Scotland's Obligations* and launched at the Scottish Parliament in February 2011. Janet also initiated the triumphant re-enactment of the 1909 Women's Suffrage procession in

Edinburgh. Beside this high-profile work Janet fostered the day-to-day activities of the Centre energetically, and was most helpful to the interns who came to us from the University of Bilbao and elsewhere in making the best use of their time in Edinburgh.

From the beginning of the year, Douglas Shaw, our Administrative Assistant carried on working 10 hours per week. Hannah Walters, as an intern, working 30 hours per week was invaluable through the summer and Festival period. She has continued as a volunteer working on the newsletter. Annabel Abram contributed many hours, producing the Diary of Events, organising mailouts of the newsletter and much more. Pat Bryden, a stalwart of the centre for many years, continued caring for the Library, keeping the Centre open Thursdays and Fridays and keeping us in touch with Palestinian concerns. Geoffrey Carnall who, in addition to writing Appeals monthly and fulfilling the role of Secretary, opened the Centre on Saturdays. Ray Rennie continued to undertake the routine banking and payment business of the Centre, as he has done for many years. And Euan Marr helped weekly with tasks like recycling and repairs.

The Management Committee felt however that there was a need to appoint an interim Manager and Brian Larkin, who had been serving on the Committee for two years, agreed to take on the task. For some time the financial picture was rather tenuous as it has been at times in the past. But a generous anonymous donation made it possible to confirm Brian Larkin's appointment as Coordinator for six months from March 1st. We also confirmed Douglas Shaw's payment as Administrative Assistant for a shorter period.

An assurance from St John' confirmed that our tenancy can continue until the end of 2013 when all the terrace tenants will need to find temporary accommodation while refurbishments are carried out.

## **Carrying out the Business Plan**

### **Administrative Review**

In keeping with the Business Plan staffing structure has been reviewed and roles and responsibilities of paid staff, and volunteers clarified. A review of the administrative processes of the Centre was carried out as well. Records of membership have been thoroughly checked and clear procedures for tracking renewals and sending out reminders have been established with good results.

### ***Peace and Justice News***

Over the past six months an editorial team has been assembled and has worked to make substantial changes to the production, format and content of *Peace and Justice News*. We now use Google Docs for remote proofreading, making it easier for volunteers to contribute to the work. The newsletter is divided into clear sections: Editorial, Centre News, Features, News from Around the Movements, Book Reviews and Reflections. Carrying out the Centre's Objectives to promote our values recent editions have been themed Nonviolence and Human Rights. We anticipate future editions focusing on conflict resolution, alternatives to war and sustainability. Recent issues are available in pdf format on our website.

Varsha Gyawali, from Nepal, a founding Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution and Human Security in Delhi and Sara Usher, an American doing a Masters in International Relations at Edinburgh University both joined the Centre as volunteers over the past half year. Together with Hannah Walters and the Coordinator and Administrative Assistant they make up the editorial team.

Graphic artist Angus Doyle provides the eye-catching cover. The team contributes many of the articles but also invites contributions from our partners. Natasha Goryanin assists with mailouts.

### **Speakers Series**

In keeping with our aims the Centre launched a Series of monthly talks on nonviolence, human rights and alternatives to war. These talks have proved very popular, drawing as many as 40 people per evening. They are reported in *Peace and Justice News* and on our website, making the series available to those unable to attend. Copies of the syllabus available upon request.

### **Website**

Our website is now requiring to be upgraded and plans are under way to build a new website. Following consultation with volunteers, Management Committee and an IT consultant, the new site is to include a Calendar of Events, a Take Action function for letter writing and demonstrations, dedicated space for reports of talks, indexed pages for the current and back issues of the newsletter; and, in keeping with our objectives, a searchable Directory of peace, justice, human rights and environmental groups in Scotland. Funding has been sought for these upgrades with money already allocated to begin moving forward. Edna Rodriguez has contributed to planning the design.

### **Advocacy**

#### **Nuclear Disarmament**

As part of its advocacy work on nuclear disarmament the Centre contributed to a submission to the Scottish Government and participated in a meeting with Bruce Crawford, Minister for Parliamentary Business, in December 2010. A Follow up on that meeting with a smaller number of civil society groups took place in October 2011. Our Coordinator gave input to the content presented by Trident Ploughshares on the illegality of Trident which formed the core of that discussion. In cooperation with Trident Ploughshares the Centre is currently organising our contacts to pressure the SNP to reject any change to party policy which currently precludes membership of a future independent Scotland in NATO.

### **Partnerships**

The Centre collaborated with the One World Shop and hosted a talk by Ugandan Fairtrade Coffee Grower Jennipher Wettakka as part of Fairtrade Fortnight; and, with Word Power Books organized a talk by Commander Rob Green, Royal Navy [Ret'd] with Dr Kate Dewes. Rob Green spoke about his books *Security Without Nuclear Deterrence* and *A Thorn in Their Side: The Hilda Murrell Murder*. Kate Dewes spoke about her work with the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

The Centre is glad to take part in St John's Festival of Spirituality and Peace this year offering two events of differing character. The first, a conversation between Fr. John Dear, SJ and Kathy Galloway: *The Spirituality and Practice of Peace*. Kathy is Head of Christian Aid in Scotland, former leader of the Iona Community, and a patron of the Centre. John Dear is an internationally known voice for peace. A Jesuit priest, retreat leader, and author of 25 books, John was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Our second contribution to FoSP will be a community singing workshop led by our own Penny Stone, a vibrant singer and song leader.

The Centre continues to act as the East Coast Centre for Scotland for Peace. We play an active role in its regular planning meetings. This year we helped shape and publicise conferences at the Scottish Parliament on Afghanistan, nuclear disarmament and Human Security as an alternative approach to Defence.

We also participated in the launch of the Edinburgh Peace Initiative as a founding member. The Edinburgh Peace Initiative promotes Edinburgh as a City of Peace and endorses activities that foster peacebuilding. We continued to promote the campaigns and advocacy work of a host of organisations within our network through weekly email action alerts, in our newsletter, and by carrying leaflets and petitions in the Centre. And we continued our partnership with Skills Path who facilitate volunteer opportunities for disabled people.

## **Other Activities**

### **Exhibitions and Events at the Centre**

This year we mounted exhibitions on Palestine, International Womens Day, Amnesty International and Political prisoners. We put on a "High Cost of Armaments" exhibit using Campaign Against the Arms Trade materials, had a stall during the Festival organised by artist David Gray, an International Peace Day event with Peace Prayers in several languages, a Palestinian Brunch raising funds for the San Ghan'ny singing group to go to Palestine, and a Christmas singing event with Protest in Harmony Choir. And Management Committee member Penny Stone organised a fundraising song night in support of the Centre, part of the Radical Voices series.

### **Supporting International Peacemaking**

*Peace and Justice News* carried extensive reports on the participation of Nobel Peace Prize nominee Angie Zelter in the resistance to a new naval base on Jeju Island, South Korea. It also ran updates on the imprisoned *Disarm Now Ploughshares* activists in the US with whom our Coordinator has strong ties. When Brian travelled to the US in October he supported the witness of disarmament activists from Jonah House, Nukewatch and the Catholic Worker at the plant where the plutonium pits for US nuclear weapons are produced. Maintaining that connection the Centre organised letter writing to imprisoned US disarmament activists as part of War Resisters International Peace Prisoners Day.

## **Resources**

The Centre continues to provide resources to groups and individuals including a library, periodicals, meeting and exhibition space and mailbox facility. These resources continue to be in demand. About 25 groups are regular Centre Users.

## **New Publicity Materials**

This year the Centre produced a beautiful new post card and A-Board, and an attractive membership leaflet outlining the work we do and the resources we offer to groups and individuals who support our aims. Euan Marr and Liam Gilchrist are working on a new hanging sign to be ready for the summer season in a few weeks. The card and leaflet are available from the centre.

## **Funding**

Following a period of financial uncertainty a generous (anonymous) donation made it possible to appoint a Coordinator while applying for further funding from various sources including the Pump House Trust. Regular monthly donations and subscriptions from members continue to cover general overhead and newsletter costs. Such regular income is invaluable in ensuring that the Centre can continue its work and hence with this meeting, the Peace and Justice Centre is launching a membership appeal. We are asking members to consider making a regular monthly contribution of whatever they can, starting from £2 per month if they do not already do so. We are also looking for new members. We therefore urge current members to take away leaflets, place them in strategic places, and speak to friends who might consider joining.

### **Management Committee**

Chair: Arthur Chapman

Secretary: Judy Russell

Treasurer: Susan Robertson

Annabel Abram

Elisabeth Carnall

Geoffrey Carnall

Marjorie Farquaharson

Phil Lucas

Penny Stone

**Coordinator: Brian Larkin**

Administrative Assistant:

Douglas Shaw