

Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre Annual Report

Management Committee
Chair: Arthur Chapman
Secretary: Judy Russell
Treasurer: Susan Robertson
Geoffrey Carnall (emeritus)
Phil Lucas
Michael Elm

Coordinator: Brian Larkin



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Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre

Annual Report 2012-13



The mission of the Centre is to be a visible presence for the promotion of its values of nonviolence, human rights, alternatives to war, conflict resolution and ecological responsibility in Scotland.

Following the amalgamation of the Peace and Justice Resource Centre and the Peace and Justice Education Centre into one organisation with charitable status 2012-13 has seen the aims, objectives and Business Plan carried out. We have continued to do so from our base in the Epicentre at St John's after moving out during the month of September and back in again. An assurance from St John's 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. Some aspects of the work had to be sacrificed for the time being as we now occupy one third of the space. But other aspects have continued and been strengthened.

The new arrangement has meant the loss of the comfortable homey feeling of the old P&J. We were sad to see the Library go into storage, but we continue to hope that it will emerge. We are no longer able to offer meeting and exhibition space to groups. But we remain open to the public and continue to offer peace merchandise for sale and free leaflets on a wide variety of campaigning issues. And the core work of the centre continues with the monthly rhythm of production of *Peace and Justice News*, our popular Speakers Series and our involvement in national and international campaigning for peace and disarmament.



The Centre is committed to serving the whole of Scotland. To do justice to that ambition it was recognised would require a significant expansion of our capacity. We have endeavoured to do that through our involvement with the Scrap Trident coalition and Abolition 2000.

and author of 25 books, John was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Our second contribution was a community singing workshop led by our own Penny Stone, a vibrant singer and song leader.

Supporting International Peacemaking

Working with Scottish CND and Scotland's for Peace we helped with the organisation of the AGM of Abolition 2000 the international nuclear disarmament network or more than 2000 NGOs campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons thus fulfilling the objective to work at a national as well as local level.

Other Activities

Exhibitions and Events at the Centre

During the Festival in August the Centre mounted an exhibition on Hiroshima and a sale of Japanese Watercolours by Koumi Nishamura. We also exhibited photos from peacetime Afghanistan and Iran by local photographer Alik Sapountzi.

Funding

Generous Donations were received this year from the Pump House Trust, Schiehallion, St Andrews and St George's West Church, Edinburgh. 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 at this time of year we are making an annual membership appeal. Members are asked to consider making a regular monthly contribution of whatever they can, starting from £2 per month if they do not already do so.

Volunteers.

As founding members of the Edinburgh Peace Initiative a network of 30 local organisations we contributed to the organisation of its first international symposium on Peacebuilding. The Edinburgh Peace Initiative promotes Edinburgh as a City of Peace and endorses activities that foster peacebuilding.

The Centre continued to work with Scotlands for Peace contributing this year to the organisation of an event on the Oransiation for Security and Cooperation in Europe at Scottish Parliament. And we played a central role in organising both the No To NATO and Scrap Trident Coalitions.



Along with Jane Tallents of Trident Ploughshares our Coordinator acted as facilitator of the Steering Group of the Scrap Trident coalition, a diverse grouping including left political parties, Scottish CND, Trident Ploughshares, Scottish WILPF, Faslane Peace Camp, Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Quakers, Scottish Greens, the Radical Independence Campaign and Stop the War. With Scottish WILPF the Centre obtained statements of support from 28MSPs including Alec Salmond and 3 government Ministers and with the offices of MSPs Marco Biagi and Patrick Harvie organised a photo call of MSPs for Scrap Trident, but continued to lobby against involvement with NATO for a future Scotland.

We contributed to the Festival of Spirituality and Peace this year offering two events. 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,

After many years of service to the Centre both as a member of the Management Committee and as Coordinator both Elisabeth Carnall and Marjorie Farquharson stepped down from the Management Committee this year as did Penny Stone. Penny was an active volunteer for some years as well as serving on the Committee. Everyone involved with the Centre are deeply grateful to all three of them for their years of devoted service. The Centre is extremely grateful to Susan Robertson for her work as Treasurer. However she now wishes to move on and so we are looking for a new Treasurer. In keeping with the identified goal of involving more young people in the Centre Michael Elm was recruited to join the Management Committee.

Staff, Volunteers, Interns, Management



The Paid staff were reduced to a half time Coordinator due to financial restraints, though Douglas Shaw, previously a paid Administrative Assistant continues as a volunteer. Two interns, worked with us over the summer.

We have enjoyed a full complement of very capable volunteers working in a variety of ways. Some volunteers open the Centre on a daily basis while others work entirely remotely on Peace and Justice News, the website, social media, and video production for our new YouTube channel.

Peace and Justice News

We continued to produce *Peace and Justice News* in the new format. Editions this year have been themed on Nonviolence, Democracy and Civil Society, Human Rights, War on Terror,

Afghanistan, Arms Trade, Women and Violence, Nuclear Weapons, and other topics. Recent issues are available in pdf format on our website. The editors are Helen Harris (Lead Editor), Douglas Shaw and Brian Larkin. Graphic artist Angus Doyle provides the eye-catching cover. Jill McClenning with mailouts.

Speakers Series

In keeping with our aims the Centre continued its Series of Speakers on nonviolence, human rights and alternatives to war. They are reported in *Peace and Justice News* and on our website. This year speakers included: Dr Omar Shabhan of the pal-Think Institue in Gaza, Nobel Peace Prize Nominee John Dear and Kathy Galloway on the Spirituality and Practice of Peace in a Time of War, US Quaker activist, founder of Movement for Change and Nonviolence Trainer George Lakey and Mil Rai and Emily Johns, editors of *Peace News* who gave a report from the US-UK Peace Delegation to Iran, and Susan Clarkson. Susan travelled to Afghanistan with Voices for Creative Nonviolence UK and gave a moving update on the work of the Afghan Peace Volunteers (AYPV).

Website



Following a consultation with Volunteers, Management Committee and consultants a volunteer website developer created the new website at no cost. The website includes a Calendar of Events, Reports on our Speakers Series, *Peace and Justice News*, Action Alerts, information about the Centre and its people and other Resources.

Social Media

In keeping with a decision to take steps to attract more young people to the Centre we established a new Peace and Justice Centre Facebook LIKE Page, established a Twitter account and set up a YouTube channel. Kara Brown is creating a Facebook manual for volunteers. The Peace and Justice Centre launched its new YouTube channel: [Edinburgh PandJ](#) with a video of the Two Million Friends for Afghanistan Candlelit Vigil in collaboration with students at Edinburgh College of Art.

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

We have been very active in a number of collaborative initiatives at city, national and international level.

In collaboration with Scottish WILPF the Centre organised the Two Million Friends for Afghanistan Candlelit Vigil. This was in response to an international callout from the Afghan Peace