



Seeking the Spirit, at work in the world

Annual review of Quaker work in 2008



In 2008, we made a difference

For 350 years, the Quaker vision has inspired Friends to build the world as it should be – peaceful, just, whole.

Across Britain, Quakers are active: sustaining our church, exploring and speaking out about our faith, and caring for others. Our long-standing concerns have not changed: seeking to answer that of God in everyone; nonviolence; social inclusion. Today, we are looking to grow further as a faith community, to deepen our spiritual roots, and to respond to emerging problems, such as climate change and the effects of globalisation. As we do so, we come to understand our faith and values in new ways, and our commitment deepens.

“True godliness don’t turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it.”

William Penn, 1682

In 2008, led by the values which inspired those who came before us, we made a difference.

Quakers have always sought to be aware of the spirit of God at work, in the activities of daily life and in the meetings for worship which are at the heart of our shared spirituality and our shared witness. Today, Friends carry this message to the world through a wide range of work at local level. Britain Yearly Meeting, the central body of the Religious Society of Friends, supports this work and carries out further projects which require a national focus.

This annual review presents just some of the work Britain Yearly Meeting did with and on behalf of Friends in 2008. We can't hope to cover everything that we did – our concerns are varied, and work goes on locally, nationally and internationally in many areas. But we seek to show how Quaker values translate into action by looking at some of the rich variety of work in our care.

In 2008, we made a difference.
Here's how.



Nurturing our community

4



Our local and area meetings are at the heart of our work as a Religious Society. Worshipping groups of Quakers, from Penzance to Shetland, are called to live adventurously and seek the leadings of the Spirit in all they do. With this spiritual energy, Quakers are busy: engaging with their communities, joining national campaigns, caring for one another.

Britain Yearly Meeting supports these activities with a range of materials for Friends, as well as opportunities to meet and co-operate. We help Friends to explore the faith and practice of Quakerism, to take local action for peace and justice, to raise funds and manage their church affairs, and to use local media to present the Quaker way to the public with confidence. Quakers place great value on including children in meetings and enabling them to explore their own spirituality. So we provide training to Friends who work with young people, and ideas and resources to help build safe, inclusive communities for young and old alike.

Running a church can involve a burden of administration, which we seek to ease by providing advice, materials and policies to local meetings. For instance, we advise meetings

on employment issues, and provide policies for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

We also support local witness. Our area meetings – building on the long-standing Quaker concern for the treatment of prisoners – appoint Friends to work with chaplaincies at 110 UK prisons. Once appointed, each Quaker prison minister is supported by Britain Yearly Meeting with materials, networking and an annual conference.

Through the way we do our work, and through the services we offer, we give practical support to the life and witness of our meetings.

“I really can't thank [my Quaker prison minister] enough, she comes into the prison every Wednesday and has done for years. She spends time on the wings in the afternoons and then leads the meeting in the evening. ... She is very popular and highly thought of by many, and so supportive of all, religious or not.”

A life prisoner

In 2008:

- we published guidance about safeguarding children and provided a Safeguarding Team to support best practice in Quaker meetings.
- we launched www.yqspace.org.uk, a website for young people to learn more about Quakerism.
- we produced twelve editions of *Journeys in the Spirit*, our popular resource pack for working with children and young people.
- we arranged for a Quaker presence on demonstrations for nuclear disarmament and public vigils remembering the start of the Iraq war.
- we welcomed 40 Quaker prison ministers to a support conference at Friends House.
- more than a hundred Friends joined the new Quaker Life Network for sharing expertise and ideas between Quaker meetings.

Connectors and catalysts for peace

6



Emerging at a time of conflict in 17th-century England, the Quaker movement sought peace. Our historic commitment to reconciliation drives what we do today.

Quakers have been called upon to play a quiet role in areas afflicted by violent conflict, assisting and encouraging peacemakers to find local solutions. Across south Asia, we continue to support networking and communication among peace activists in several countries, helping them share ideas and inspiration, and foster strong relationships and a growing movement for peace and justice across the region.

In Serbia, Bosnia–Herzegovina and Croatia, Dealing with the Past is a unique programme helping young people to speak openly about the traumatic difficulties of the past, working together for a better future. The programme was started in 2002 and ran for six productive years. Friends are now exploring how to support the region's peacemakers in the future.

And our Peacemaker scheme gave eight people the chance to work with peace organisations in the UK and overseas in 2008.

The scheme serves to boost the capacity of the peace movement, develop the next generation of peaceworkers, and help them fulfil their potential – and make a difference.

Our history as a peace church inspires us to act: today, we are connectors and catalysts for peace.

“The involvement of British Quakers [in the former Yugoslavia] began as soon as the first ceasefire was proclaimed... Quakers saw a need to meet people who had opposed the armed conflict and to offer help and support in the form of education to work with internally displaced people, conscientious objectors and people wanting to learn more about transforming conflict through nonviolent means. Our contacts with Quakers will certainly continue because of the deep understanding and many friendships that were developed.”

Goran Bubalo, Goran Bozicevic and Zorica Trifunovic, outgoing QPSW representatives in Bosnia–Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

In 2008:

- in northern Uganda, with our continued close support and mentoring, we assisted Empowering Hands, a women’s kidnap survivor group, to become a stable and effective community organisation.
- we brought Truth in Translation, a South African performance group that encourages dialogue among divided communities, to new audiences in Serbia and Bosnia–Herzegovina.
- we listened to people from Uganda and Bangladesh to research the effects of climate change on global insecurity.
- we placed four new peaceworkers with peace organisations in Britain, two in Burundi, and two at the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva.

Standing with marginalised people

8 Persecuted for their beliefs and resistance to war, early Friends upheld the equality of all people. We seek to respond to that of God in every person. We work to protect and uphold those who, all too often, are otherwise unheard.

Quakers implement the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel on behalf of the World Council of Churches. We recruit and train ecumenical accompaniers (EAs) to travel to Israel–Palestine for twelve- or eighteen-week placements. There, they offer a protective, nonviolent presence to Palestinians who are living under occupation, and they stand in solidarity with Israeli peace groups.

During each placement, the EAs live alongside local people. They support local communities and peace groups and report on human rights violations, and when they return home they raise awareness of the conflict as experienced by the people who face it every day.

Meanwhile, this same commitment to uphold people who suffer also drives our work in a very different environment: at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in peaceful Geneva.

There, Quaker House is open to diplomats as a confidential space to discuss difficult issues off the record. In 2008, for instance, we held meetings on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and our work on this issue goes on. This creates new opportunities to overcome political obstacles that affect the world's most marginalised people.

“The children of the village are not afraid of the settlers when they [the ecumenical accompaniers] are here.”

Mayor of Yanoun, West Bank

In 2008, ecumenical accompaniers:

- delivered 213 presentations about the issues faced by people living in Israel–Palestine.
- held 28 meetings with national and global decision-makers in the UK, Ireland and Israel–Palestine.
- gave 21 broadcast interviews and had 60 articles published in the press.

In 2008, QUNO Geneva:

- worked with two like-minded organisations to set up the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, which strengthens collaborative peacebuilding work with the United Nations.
- delivered a programme of meetings and seminars to support poorer countries in their negotiations at the World Trade Organisation.
- produced publications on women in prison, the Human Rights Council, and future steps in disarmament – all valued and now widely used by UN diplomats and others.



Sharing our inheritance

10



The Society we have inherited from our forebears is anchored in their vivid writings and their inspiring witness to the Light. We have a lively history that encourages us; we want to make it available to others.

Quakers have been instrumental in social movements to abolish slavery, reform prisons and prevent war. Quakers work with local people in zones of conflict to relieve suffering and find ways forward in peace. Quakers also helped to evacuate thousands of Jewish and other children from Nazi persecution. Much work went on – and continues – in quiet ways.

In 2008, we commemorated the Kindertransport, the rescue of almost ten thousand children from Nazi Europe, in which Quakers were instrumental. One hundred and eleven people, including evacuees and families that sheltered them, attended a dignified and moving event on 1 December, seventy years since the first train left Berlin.

Our eventful history is recorded in the Library at Friends House. In 2008, a comprehensive cataloguing project opened up more of our amazing collection to the world of scholarship.

The project matched thousands of our oldest titles to an online database of early printed English-language material hosted by the British Library, and identified more than a thousand items held nowhere else in the world. The next phase of this work will catalogue documents relating to our history as a peace church, bringing more Quaker writing to the wider world.

We also seek to speak up about our living faith and our concerns. We answer requests for information about Quakerism. We communicate Quaker ideas and perspectives by responding to issues in the media, and by overseeing Quaker Week each autumn, when we support outreach initiatives by local meetings and work to raise the profile of the Quaker way.

“I found the enquirer’s pack a wonderfully helpful and inspiring introduction to the Quakers... I really feel that Quakers have so much to offer the multitudes like me who often feel alone and at sea on our spiritual journey. I feel at last there is somewhere I can ask questions and ‘be’, unjudged but supported.”

A recipient of our enquirer’s pack during 2008

In 2008:

- we completed our pre-1801 cataloguing project, making 7,400 items accessible online and identifying more than 1,000 items held uniquely in our library.
- we commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Kindertransport and produced an online gallery at www.quaker.org.uk/kinder
- we mounted three exhibitions about Quakers and China, Quaker printing, and the Kindertransport.
- 36 people and meetings supported our BeFriend a Book scheme, contributing to the conservation of our library’s treasured stock.
- we sent out 2,762 packs of information about Quakerism in response to requests from enquirers.
- we made the *Advices and Queries* booklet available free of charge to encourage wide distribution.
- we published frequent media releases about Quaker work and issues in the national media, from the arrest of human rights protesters off Diego Garcia to the fifth anniversary of the Iraq invasion.

Strengthening our spiritual roots

- 12 Many areas of Quaker work require a national or global focus, and this is the work in the care of Britain Yearly Meeting. But it is local Quakers who discern priorities and give vital service in time and financial resources.

Britain Yearly Meeting serves Quakers by listening to the needs and shared interests of the Society, ensuring that these are reflected and supported in its work, and by leading on issues of common concern.

In 2008, we listened to Friends throughout Britain and drew together our priorities for the next six years in one document, *A framework for action*. The *framework* challenges us to find new ways of expressing our faith commitments in the world, of nurturing and responding to that of God within.

We are heartened to belong to ecumenical, interfaith and campaigning networks. By playing our part in these wider initiatives, we build up our effectiveness, learn from others, and make our own spiritual understanding and work more widely known.

“The consequences for my meeting of holding our workshop have been: more volunteers to run the children’s work; more socials for both the children and parents; ... more interest in the larger Quaker family and what Friends House has to offer to support us; interest in the Yearly Meeting.”

Feedback from a Friend in Yorkshire on a bespoke training workshop titled ‘Being with children – exploring Quaker values in children’s work and parenting’.

In 2008:

- we held our first conference for university and college chaplains in November as part of a new programme of support for Quaker chaplains.
- we developed a new interfaith strategy and established a new Quaker network focused on interfaith and interchurch work.
- we hosted a youth work conference and 21 other training events for people in local meetings who work with children and young people.
- we arranged Junior Yearly Meeting for 170 teenagers to meet and develop their faith together and provided a programme of events at Britain Yearly Meeting for over 100 young people.
- we ran our second Quaker Week, producing new outreach materials for local meetings and a dedicated website attracting over 7,000 visits.



Thank you

14 We are grateful to the following people whose legacies we received during 2008.

Frederick Adams
Alan Barlow
Norah Braithwaite
Clarice Coates
Pauline Condon
Doris Creighton
Anne Davies
Margaret Dunkley
Dietlind Ebbinghaus
Glenys Edwards
Norman Gibbins
Anne Harris
Ruth Harwood
Michael Hastilow
Sheila Jones
Dorothy M Leamon
Frank Leamon
Phyllis Lee
Ursula Leonard
Inge Matthews
Sylvain and Sibylle Minault, in memory of Robert O Menell
Dilys Morris-Matthew
Lorna Paulin

Helen Richardson
John Roberts
Phyllida Roberts
Michael H Rowntree
Charles Ryder
Enid Sainsbury
Frank Scotford
Margaret Simpson
John Spence
Sylvia Stagg
Norman Stevens
Duc van Vessem
Lorna Vincent
Joyce Wallis
Ruth Warner
Margaret Waugh
Raymond Wilde

The following trusts supported Quaker work in 2008. We are very grateful to them and to all our supporters.

1970 Trust
Armitage Burt Trust
Auld Kirk Charitable Trust
Aurelius Charitable Trust

William P Bancroft Charitable Trust
Bunney Reckitt Trust
HT & LB Cadbury Trust
CAFOD
Church of Scotland
Hilda & Alice Clark Charitable Settlement
JA Clark Charitable Trust
George & Mary Crosfield Charitable Trust
John Cutforth Charitable Trust
Dundee Friends Property Trust
ECCR
Edith Ellis Charitable Trust
Essex Community Foundation
Fitzer Lacy Trust
Friends Provident Life Office
Futurebuilders England
Guardian Mission Trust
Hermon Trust
Hillcote Trust
HM Prison Service
Bryan Lancaster's Trust
Mactaggart Third Fund
Methodist Church
Ministry of Justice
Oakdale Trust
Pilgrim Trust

Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation
Pollock Memorial Missionary Trust
SH & EC Priestman Trust
Quaker Hulpfonds
Albert Reckitt Charitable Trust
Sir James Reckitt Charity
G & H Roberts Community Trust
E Robson Charitable Trust
Rowan Charitable Trust
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Richard & Mary Rowntree Trust
W F Southall Trust
Herbert Stanton Trust
CB & HH Taylor Trust
Thames Valley Police
Trócaire
United Nations Association Trust
United Reformed Church
Westward Trust
William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
Yorkshire GM Educational Grant
and seven anonymous trusts.

We are also very grateful for the continuing generous support of Alfred and Isabel Bader.

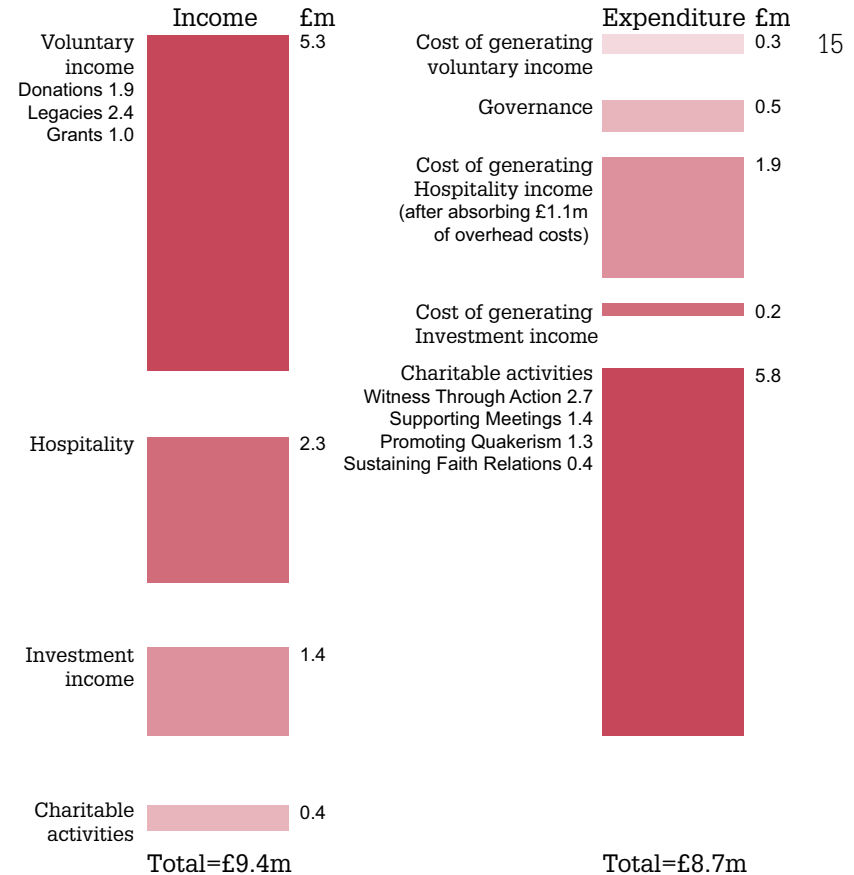
Funded with your support

Our work is not funding-driven – we prioritise it in line with our Quaker values and what our committees, made up of Friends from around the country, have discerned. However, all our programmes of work need to be resourced if they are to succeed. We plan our budget ahead, and we rely on donations from our members and supporters to balance it and ensure that the work can go on. This is where your help is needed: without your support, the scope of our work in future years would be greatly reduced.

We need to grow and invest in new programmes and activities coming forward from meetings in response to *A framework for action*.

You can also support us in other ways. If you would like to serve on one of the committees which discern this work, please ask the clerk of your meeting for a form or contact John Durston, at johnd@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1121.

2008 Financial summary



For full figures, please see our Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts, online at www.quaker.org.uk/trustees, or from Quaker Communications.

A net operating surplus of £0.7 million was achieved in 2008.

Together, we can make a difference

Please support Quaker work. You can:

- donate online, securely and easily, through our website at www.quaker.org.uk/donate
- send a cheque, payable to “Britain Yearly Meeting”, to the address below
- find out about regular giving by contacting Andrew McVicar at the address below or email andrewm@quaker.org.uk
- sign a Gift Aid declaration to increase the value of your donations at no extra cost to you – find out more by writing to us, sending an email to andrewm@quaker.org.uk, or visiting www.quaker.org.uk/donate
- make a gift in your will. A booklet about legacy giving is available – to receive a free copy, or find out more in confidence, contact Paul Peros, Legacies Officer, at the address below or paulp@quaker.org.uk

Learn more:

To find out more about Quakers, our work, and all the different ways in which you can support us and get involved, visit www.quaker.org.uk.

Email us at fundraisingteam@quaker.org.uk or write to us with any questions, queries or feedback.



Britain Yearly Meeting
Friends House
173 Euston Road
London NW1 2JB

Registered charity number 1127633

www.quaker.org.uk