

THE COMMONWEAL COLLECTION

Registered Charity No: 1053157

Annual Report, July 2007 to June 2008

The Commonweal Trust is constituted by Deed of Trust dated September 1963 and is a registered charity (No 1053157). The Trust Deed provides for the establishment of a library known as The Commonweal Collection. Its address is c/o J.B. Priestley Library, University of Bradford, Bradford, W. Yorkshire BD7 1DP.

A body of trustees oversees the maintenance and development of the Collection. The membership of this body as at 30th June 2008 was:

**Christina Arber
Heather Blakey
Ellie Clement
Michael Randle
Brenda Thomson
Nigel Young**

The Commonweal Collection was established to provide a specialist resource concerned with issues relating to nonviolent social change, conflict transformation, and the promotion of peace and justice. The library is open to the public and houses amongst its resources books, journals, pamphlets, videos, and archival material. The aim of the Collection, as detailed in its mission statement, is to 'provide literature, resources and other support for those who share its vision of the good society'.

Since 1974 the Collection has been housed within the library of the University of Bradford. Under the agreement between the trustees and the university, the Collection is on permanent loan to the university whilst the university provides various infrastructure support services. The relationship with the university has worked well over many years and the trustees are grateful for the support provided, particularly by the staff of the university library.

Overview of the Year

The trustees met three times on September 29th 2007 for the AGM, on December 1st 2007 and on 8th April 2008.

Winds of change have blown through Commonweal this year sweeping five trustees away in their wake. Although in most cases this was part of a natural process of laying down a burden carried for many years, it has left us catching our breath somewhat. We do profoundly thank our departing trustees Nigel Young, Bob Overy, Andrew Rigby, John Horton and Sally Fildes Moss for their generous and vital contributions to Commonweal over the years.

On the plus side a health and safety concern has proved to have a silver lining for the library and we hope that erstwhile trustees will continue to make their expertise available to Commonweal through taking on a 'consultant' role.

With the departure of Grace Maina our Workgroup Coordinator - to whom we offer many thanks, and with a newly downsized trustee body, it has seemed sensible to shift to a more hands-one role for the trustees rather than what had become an unsustainable level of employee management. So we are now holding quarterly workdays to deal with book donations with the attendance of a core of trustees plus volunteers who respond to the workday publicity.

As a result of the first of these workdays, carried out jointly with JB Priestley Library staff, the main Commonweal room now has a completely new, more spacious layout. The pamphlets have all been moved of the top shelves thus rectifying a health and safety concern. Because of changing student behaviour throughout the university which had resulted in vandalism incidents in the Commonweal main seating area, this has now been removed freeing up more space for shelving, although some comfortable seating remains

dotted around. People encountering this 'new look' in the Collection have commented favourably on the impression of much greater light, space and freedom to move around, including for wheel chair users.

This re-organisation in the main room is the first part of a projected two-stage process which will see the back room opened up so that most of our journals will be accessible to users, rather than simply the current issues as is the case at present. This should be completed by the end of next summer.

We were also sorry to say goodbye to Ian Mc Alpine after his having worked with total dedication for Commonweal for many years, and we sincerely thank him for all his labours on Commonweal's behalf. We are hoping to have the list of all our journals which Ian completed transferred soon onto the JB Priestley Library (JBP Library) computer catalogue.

Following on John Horton's retirement as the Peace Studies librarian we feel very fortunate that Caro Baker who now fills this role has shown an equal interest in and helpfulness towards Commonweal. We thank Peter Ketley for chairing the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) sympathetically and being willing to afford JBP Library assistance to Commonweal on various matters, and to everyone-else who attends the JCC, - thereby helping to facilitate the smooth development of the JBP Library - Commonweal relationship.

As always we owe Alison Cullingford a big debt of gratitude for her energetic and skillful management and development of the Commonweal archives and also of course to John Brooker her assistant. A PaxCat Project Board has been created to raise funds for the Commonweal archives. If successful this will enable these archives to be more thoroughly indexed and catalogued. A "Collection Development Policy for the Commonweal Archives" is in process of being agreed. With Alison and John's assistance Commonweal's Gandhi pictures have been more sturdily re-framed and re-hung after some incidents of vandalism last year. Alison has also overseen the negotiation of the use of Commonweal's Nuclear Disarmament symbol original drawings in two books on the symbol and the peace movement.

Treehouse continues to care for, lend out and develop the books on long loan from Commonweal. All the nonviolence resources have been sorted and clearly labelled. There have been some additional donations of material, and ownership stickers are being created for all holdings. The Centre is creating its own collection development policy focussing on practical activist and campaigning resources. Although there is now no paid worker for the Children's Library (also part of Commonweal's holdings) regular story sessions are being held at Treehouse and other community venues, and it has been publicised through BCB radio and the Bradford Telegraph and Argus.

Friends of Commonweal continue to make a vital contribution to Commonweal's funds and we are always seeking ways to widen this much appreciated circle of donors. Commonweal's income is at a healthy level sufficient to underpin its present activities and to be managed by our currently smaller group of Trustees.

A big 'Thank you' to all our trustees and volunteers this year. We fervently hope that through our efforts as trustees Commonweal will continue to develop and grow in excellence as the much loved, well-used resource it is at present, - for students, researchers, Treehouse readers, people in the peace movement and the general public at large.