

COs will present a more radical and nuanced view of conscientious objection.

Our highlighting the activities of conscientious objectors together with examining and promoting the work of unarmed peacekeeping is the intellectual and ideological heart of our anti war work in its various forms.

Our **income** saw a slight dip in 2008 but PRET our associated charity saw an increase in donations, which reflected members and friends directing their donations to educational work. PRET's valuable support is important for the development of our educational resources. We are grateful for the continued generous support from members and supporters.

After many productive years of raising some £25,000 for our work the **750 Prize Draw Club** had to close at the end of 2008 as no one was able to take on the work needed to man-

Income & Expenditure 2008 (with 2007 comparison)

	2008	2007
INCOME		
Subscriptions	9,295	10,070
Sales publications	4,282	5,773
Sales poppies	19,651	19,788
Donations/Appeal	6,863	22,770
Prize Draw	1,800	1,823
Grants	8,080	10,500
Legacies	5,500	8,756
PRET Services	1,910	1,530
Other Income	4,492	3,359
TOTAL INCOME	61,873	84,369
EXPENDITURE		
CAMPAIGNING/EDUCATION		
Promotion/Publications	2,515	2,353
Peace Matters	1,293	2,144
White Poppy Campaign	7,703	10,127
Postage	3,660	4,591
Conferences/Travel	244	961
Affiliations	400	400
CO Project	1,206	3,375
Salaries	53,665	51,348
TOTAL Campaigning/Education	68,705	75,299
BACKUP		
PeaceWorks _ premises	8,644	6,611
PeaceWorks _ office expenses	6,350	7,943
Legal/Professional	635	623
Other expenditure	938	605
TOTAL backup	18,548	15,782
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	87,253	91,081
Surplus/(deficit)	(25,380)	(6,712)
Bank/savings account @31.12.08	£9,292	

age it. Much thanks to John and Ann for starting the club and Jennifer for managing it in recent years. A variety of economies and ways of working have been made including a small cut in staff hours. The PPU continues to operate on a shoestring and perhaps more than ever needs your generous support.

The **Peace Research and Education Trust** received many generous donations during the year and has been able to help fund more PPU work, including an exhibition about conscientious objection and the launch of the CO Resource Centre. PRET also made grants for the production of an updated **Remembering War** education resource, and for sorting and cataloguing the photographic archive.

Staff: Annie Bebington, Jan Melichar

Special thanks to all who have helped during the year: Albert, Anja, Bill, Edward, Hilary, Heather, Florence, Jennifer, John, Lucy, Margaret. Many thanks too to the many white poppy distributors around the country.

Affiliation and support: Abolition 2000, Campaign Against Arms Trade, Liberty, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Network for Peace, Peace Education Network, UK Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Landmine Action, War Resisters' International.

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shared values

The terrorism threat level is currently 'severe', which means that attacks are considered highly likely but not imminent. This is an estimate that most people in any pub up and down the country could make. It means precisely nothing. The government's new counter-terrorist strategy is almost as unhelpful but in many respects more concerning. Increasingly in recent years the government has been stepping up its bellicose rhetoric side by side with a futile pursuit of military 'solutions' in Iraq and Afghanistan; it is hard not to wonder if its counter-terrorist agenda is in some way designed to contribute to a state of unease which makes most people accept more or less reluctantly increasingly authoritarian policies to fight the 'war on terror' even if the term has been dropped. There is no certain route to prevent people perpetrating acts of violence. British armed forces have close to 200,000 personnel and in Britain some 55,000 people are employed in making weapons, which are widely used to 'terrorise' villagers and wedding parties in Afghanistan. A few



Anyone want to help fundraise for similar advertisements?

'War is a crime against humanity. I renounce war, and am therefore determined not to support any kind of war. I am also determined to work for the removal of all causes of war.'

'violent extremists' pale into insignificance.

The soft centre of the new approach outlined by the Home Secretary is called, mysteriously, 'Contest 2'. Its aim is to challenge 'extremist' views, which cannot be prosecuted but which question 'our shared values' and threaten social cohesion. Given that it is not only a few

Muslim proto terrorists that may have a problem with Jacqui Smith's 'shared values' this 'official' targeting of people who do not agree with the state's view of the world could become problematic. Pacifists who have no truck with the mythic 'military covenant', who want to disband the military and the state to disarm, make a strong and fundamental (extremist?) challenge to 'our shared values' for example.

Underlying much of the PPU's work is a challenge to the values that give justification for and esteem to state sponsored killing. A lot of this is done through our **website** and a high proportion of it is in the form of study/teaching documents. The website also generates a lot of enquiries, mostly from students asking for additional information or clarification. We attach particular importance to such exchange; it tells us that serious use is being made of the material we publish, it tells us something about pupils/teachers concerns and it enables us to engage in dialogue with students and teachers. The website continues to be our main outlet for published material as paper publishing and promotion is prohibitively expensive. There are however some exceptions to this; our popular **Remembering War** has been revised and updated and will be available in advance of this year's Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day 2008 was marked

by an increased number of outlets selling **white poppies**, though some 75% of sales came through our web site. New **posters** challenging some of the British Legion's propaganda were published and several more will be available in 2009. These full colour posters can be downloaded and printed; they are also available from the office. Interest in white poppies has been growing steadily in Canada despite the Canadian Legion's legal threats and a wreath of white poppies was laid at the war memorial in Ottawa in 2008. This year white poppies will bloom on Anzac Day in New Zealand.

Another publication that has been in preparation for some time and will appear in this **anniversary year** is a history of the PPU. We expect this will be of interest to members and supporters alike. On a more modest scale our 'briefings documents' series is slowly expanding and sketching out the wider 'meaning' of pacifism. These help introduce people to pacifist thinking in short, simple essays.

The rising cost of postage is hampering our outreach work. To tackle this we have regrettably decided to cut the number of issues of **Peace Matters** and replace them with a smaller newsheet; for a similar outlay we can thus reach close to 2000 more supporters. From the comments and questionnaires received this move has members' clear support.

The creeping militarization in Britain in recent years has been a growing concern. In 2007 we held a conference on non-military security, in 2008 we had a conference on non-violent engagement in conflict situations, a theme we continue to develop through **Peace Matters** and more widely later in the year online. In 2009 we return to look at militarism at our conference in May with supplement-



Laying a wreath of white poppies at the Ottawa war memorial.

tary material in **Peace Matters** and online. This work links with the white poppy project, which challenges the 'popular' high regard for armed men and women. Despite scarce resources we are developing a balanced programme, which constructively challenges the rise of authoritarian militaristic tendencies in Britain.

The **Conscientious Objectors Resource Centre**, which is supported by the Peace Research and Education Trust, was officially opened in May; this was also the occasion when visitors could view a major new exhibition on conscientious objection and we were pleased to be joined by two of the oldest British Second World War COs. Students, authors and researchers continue to make use of our archives and the current interest in family history brings many people to us trying to find information about their relatives. When in London be sure to visit the Centre. We are also pleased to receive documents, diaries and photographs relating to conscientious objection. In some quarters conscientious objection has become the 'respectable' face of war resistance as a recent TV documentary suggested. Wider exposure of COs' struggle is good but the media's tendency to personalise and sentimentalise means that the central core of many objectors' purpose is blunted. The **DVD** that we are working on based on recent interviews with Second World War



One of a series of new A3 posters



Open Day at the Conscientious Objectors Resource Centre.

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