

Annual Report August 2013



This year's campaigning has been mostly concerned with the IF campaign to coincide with the meeting this year of the G8 in Northern Ireland. We heard the first details when Val Barron of Christian Aid came to our January meeting.

However, much of the rest of the year has been concerned with our usual events and continued campaigning. The One World Week service was held in St. Hilda's and David Golding spoke and showed pictures from his recent visit to Africa. Traidcraft Came to Hartlepool as usual in November and sales were very good.

Fairtrade Fortnight was marked by a 2 day stall in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre and for the first time we were given a shop window to promote fair trade. This was used to show the "sculptures" made from fair trade packaging and there were samples of fair trade goods available in shops.

The main themes for letter writing and lobbying were tax avoidance and working conditions particularly for garment workers in countries such as Bangladesh. It seems many of the stores who sell clothing are not too keen to be pressed on details of how involved they are in monitoring working conditions of those who produce their merchandise.

In February Chris and Richard Eddowes represented the group at a reception held in Westminster to mark the 15 years of campaigning by the Jubilee Debt Campaign and celebrating the \$120 billion of debt which has been cancelled.



Rev John Durrell visited our open meeting and spoke about his experiences on a visit to Palestine. Also in March the group held a Big Brew coffee morning which was attended by Iain Wright M.P. He was lobbied about the possible inclusion in the Budget of the 0.7% for Aid which had been promised previously. He was also allowed to hold the IF Budget Box and imagine he was Chancellor!

In April NE-Cap held the first of what is hoped to be annual lectures at Newcastle University. This was given by Glenys Kinnock on the theme of "Beyond the Millennium Goals" and was attended by quite a number of Members. We also had a good turn out at the Headland for the Bite Back tour supported by Christian Aid, which had songs from Gareth Davies Jones and video clips. This was part of the IF campaign awareness events.

The big event for the IF campaign was the rally in Hyde Park the week before the G8 met in Northern Ireland. It coincided with the Hunger Summit held by David Cameron. About 3,500 went to Methodist Central Hall for a service in the morning. This even overflowed the overflow venues. Then an estimated 45,000 people walked to Hyde Park for the Rally which was addressed by several celebrities and leaders.

This was far fewer than were at Edinburgh at the previous G8 meeting but it appears to have been very successful in achieving its aims. This is something which the group will be watching carefully in the coming months.

Photos: The Big Brew Event and Lynn Fletcher dressed in her much admired tee shirt



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Meetings: Second Monday of the month 8pm St. George's United Reformed Church, York Rd.

All welcome Website: www.hartlepoolpeaceandjustice.co.uk