



May
2015

Scottish Friend



"Get thee up into the high mountain"

MP

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Please send material for next Scottish Friend by 3 October to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website and can be emailed to you at the same time as it goes to the printer. If you would like an email copy instead of a paper one, please email scotfriends@gmail.com, to let Marion Sharkey (our new administrator) know. You are strongly encouraged to do this, in view of escalating postage costs - and of course you get the photographs in colour, as an incentive!

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.



General Meeting for Scotland - Aberdeen - 6 June 2015

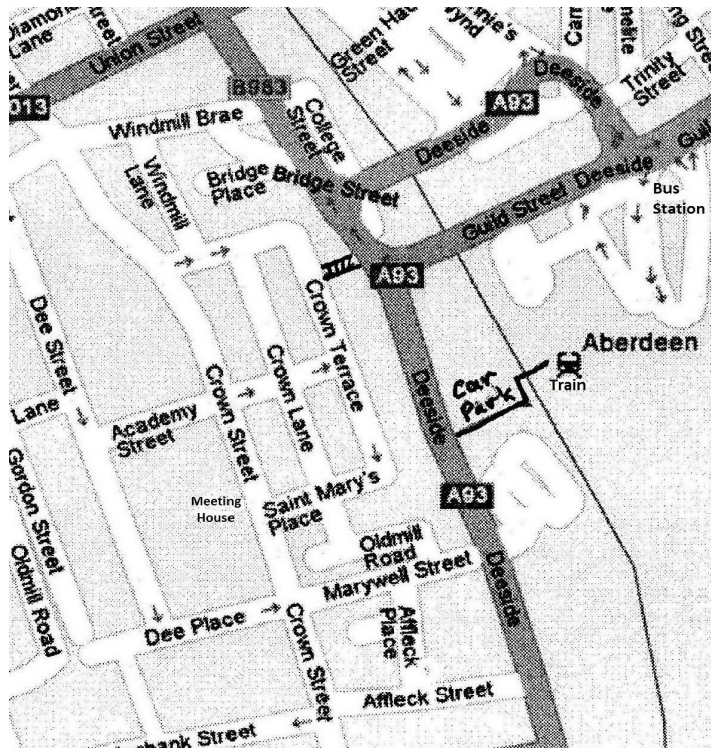
Maintaining the coherence of the Society by attending General Meeting is both a duty and a pleasure. Scottish Friends need to consider Scottish issues together, and also to meet informally Friends from other Meetings, learning of their differences and similarities, problems and successes,

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How to get to Aberdeen Meeting House from the station.

Go over the footbridge and through the multi-storey car park. Turn left and cross at the traffic lights to go up Affleck Street, then right at Crown Street.

To avoid all steps go outside the station and left along Guild Street, then right up Bridge Street, left at Union Street, left again at Crown Street. The Meeting House is on the right by the motor bike shop.



Meeting for Sufferings 28th March 2015

Jane Pearn - Kelso Meeting

This was not an easy meeting at times: there were some difficult matters to consider. Continuing Meeting for Sufferings' original purpose we recorded the imprisonment of our Friend Sylvia Boyes for non-payment of fines relating to a protest against the Defence and Security International (DSEI) arms fair in 2013. At other points during the day, our attention was drawn to suffering across the world, and in our own country.

Q-CAT is the Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture. Juliet Morton and Jane Paxton spoke about the widespread use of torture. They reminded us that although there are other active campaigning groups such as Amnesty and Freedom from Torture, what makes Q-CAT different and specifically Quaker, is the concern not only for the victims but for the perpetrators and the society that permits this to happen. John Donne's words could be adapted - each person's torture diminishes us as a community of human beings. Moving ministry from the floor reminded us that while Q-CAT focuses its energies on political use of torture, there are those who regardless of its 'purpose' wish to break bodies and spirits, and it is also perpetrated within families and on our own doorstep. This concern is currently carried on behalf of Yearly Meeting by two Area Meetings in England and one in Wales. I hope that we in Scotland will wish to become more engaged with Q-CAT's work.

The Quaker Asylum and Refugee network (QUARN) seeks to change systems and to inform Friends of the issues and help them to speak out. The first focus of their work was on child detention, and later the issue of indefinite detention. The apparent intention of the government is to 'starve people out' by making them destitute. Many Friends rose to speak of what they and their Meetings were doing to alleviate the hardship faced by local refugees and asylum seekers.

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We heard too about the efforts of Friends to extend the hand of friendship to our Muslim neighbours, at a time when the political discourse and much media reporting misrepresent the fundamental principles of Islam. The proportion of Muslims in England and Wales is about 4.8% of the population; across Scotland it is 1%, but in Glasgow, 5%.

We were updated as far as was practicable on the continuing employment dispute at Friends House. On a more positive note, Jennifer Barraclough, Clerk of BYM Trustees, spoke of the feeling that the relationship between the two bodies was moving in a positive direction, from a period of mutual uncertainties to confident exploration. Peter Ullathorne, BYM treasurer, reported that our finances were in good order, and that contributions have stabilised after a dip. Our divestment from fossil fuels has been welcomed by other bodies across the world, some of which may follow our lead in due course.

The Long-term Framework group received over 300 submissions: their feeling so far is that the focus is on how we do things as much as on what we do. They spoke of the challenge of having a strategic plan while remaining spirit-led. One Friend suggested that 'what we will do is follow where we are led'. Another recognised the need to be responsive to the leadings of the spirit and also of the value of shared goals in building community. We were reminded that there were different ways of 'being active in the world' - some more obvious than others, but not more valuable. The group is committed to brevity and clarity in articulating our way ahead.

This meeting marked the end of the triennium, and so for many Friends it was their last as Sufferings representatives: some spoke of their sadness at leaving, but also of their appreciation at the way we had worked together.

A Scottish Peace Corps?

Jane Pearn

Last November SE Scotland Area Meeting held a day when we considered 'The Future of Scotland'. It was interesting and stimulating. There was hope, and laughter, and the freedom to imagine. Much of what was said about economic and environmental matters was in line with other concerned groups, whether faith-based or not: the content of our flipcharts was very similar to the sheets displayed on the walls of my local church hall. It seems to me that we must work with other churches and groups, pooling our time, money and energies, to have the greatest effect.

But there was one area where Friends might have a distinctive message. I heard at least three mentions of a kind of 'Peace Corps'. We may understand warfare as contrary to the spirit of god, but we also need to appreciate - and respect - what may motivate people to join the military. Let's not just disapprove, or patronise them as unenlightened. In William Penn's words, 'Help us not to despise or oppose what we do not understand'. Young people do not generally join the armed forces because they actively want to kill their fellow humans - and those who reveal such tendencies aren't encouraged to enlist. We could acknowledge what drives them: the desire to serve; to feel valued by society; to learn a trade or skills; to belong to a group; to show courage and leadership; to broaden horizons; to test oneself in situations of hardship not found at home. These are all honourable motives. How can we as a society make best use of them? What could we offer instead, to channel these aims? 'Instead' is an important word. It suggests there is another way: it's positive.

In 2013 the Ministry of Defence planned to shut 83 of its 156 army recruitment offices in a bid to cut costs, Scotland losing the highest proportion with over 70 per cent of its offices closing down. We might view this as good news - but the potential recruits are still

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there, with the same motivations. Across the UK the Army Cadet Force has 46,000 cadets (aged 12-18) and 8,500 adult volunteers.

It offers 'action and adventure, fun and friendship... combining military and community activities... helping them prepare for success in their chosen path in life, whatever that might turn out to be.' Rather than dismissing it outright, can we take the good in this model and extend it?

A Scottish 'Peace and Service Corps' could coordinate and support emergency services in a crisis, provide medical aid and community care, build civil infrastructure within and beyond our shores. It could provide the mediators and the engineers - bridge-builders in every sense. With a backbone of career regulars, it might offer a year's experience for every school-leaver who wanted. Such an experience might be attractive to future employers. Whether volunteers or paid, I doubt that its members would return home brutalised, traumatised and unfit for civilian life in the way that so many ex-military personnel are.

I see no reason why this idea should not have broad public appeal and cross-party support at Holyrood. I believe Scotland's world standing would be enhanced and it could still fit with Defence and Foreign Affairs being matters reserved to the UK government.

The recent stories about medics volunteering to work with Ebola sufferers shows that it is possible to demonstrate courage without being prepared to take life. The public response has been hugely positive: I believe there is a hunger for stories like this. Peace Corps members and their stories could offer a different kind of role model for the young, whose options are largely limited to media celebrities, sportspeople and the military. It could provide another narrative, an alternative to militarism. And the same attributes that motivate young people to join the armed forces would be well used and celebrated. It could truly be a Force for Good.

Experiment with light

Margaret Roy - Lanark Meeting

You may have heard of this. There are introductory workshops usually at Glenthorne, Swarthmoor Hall or Woodbrooke. If you have come across it in your Meeting, you may find it is a 'closed group'. So what are 'Light Groups'?

While researching George Fox, Rex Ambler realised the Early Quakers had very particular experiences of the Divine. When he reconstructed this, he set up a series of 'meditations' using Fox's words.

The first 'meditations', using Fox's words, encourage the participant to wait on the Light that will show the nature of darkness. The Early Quakers waited on the Light that would guide them, speaking through their conscience. They had a concept of progressing towards the Light, towards perfection. At the time they were severely criticised, that this was arrogance and blasphemy. (Hence James Nayler was branded with a B.) In today's world of self-help and psychotherapy, it seems natural to be open to transformation. Guided by the Light we can gain deeper understanding of self and of our world. But, how, oh how, do you find the Light? And discern that it is not simply Ego?

Experiments with Light exercises take various forms: working on self, on groups we belong to, and using the exercise to gain understanding of the world's problems. It is a learning process of discovering the Light and developing our relationship to it. We do this using Quaker traditions of worshipful silence, waiting till 'the spirit moves us' to go on to the next step. There are usually seven steps. You can listen to someone guiding you through them on CD, or download from the website, or like our group each member can read out a section as the spirit moves them on to the next part.

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After the 'meditation', we listen to anyone who wants to share their experience. Like ministry in Meeting, there is no judgement or discussion at this point. Some groups are 'closed' as some of the sharing may be very deep so a person may feel vulnerable.

Our group is not closed. We trust in the Light and our Quaker tradition of holding each other in Love. It is not a large group. There are a few who keep the continuity but we encourage others to drop in and we have quite a few regulars who drop in and out. It happens after the Wednesday mid-week Meeting and lunch. We hope we can provide a quiet place of support and deepening Quaker process. We hope that new members can use us to deepen their understanding of the Quaker way, so we are a valuable part of the Meeting. When we work on the world, I like to think that, as well as deepening understanding and learning from each other through the sharing, we hold others, issues or problems in the Light which I believe can be a deep healing prayer. It also clarifies our intent if we are moved to action; thus the process also deepens our understanding of discernment.

The meditations, CDs and introductory talk are all available from the website. You can participate on your own or if you want to work in a group raise it with your elders. There is a facilitator, Ann Banks who can support you. annbanks101@gmail.com

Stand in the Light and you will shine.

Experiment comes from the same root as experience.

Errata and Amendments to 2015 Book of Members and Attenders

Individual Friends

Corrections:			
Butler, Marianne	Kelso LM	post code	TD15 1TN
Ronald and Meg Murray	Central Fife LM	landline	01592 263 213
Collins-Walden, Sila	Inverness LM	email	silartist@btinternet.com
Ellis-Jenkins, Jenni	Angus LM	address	109 Welfare Cresc., Newbiggin by the Sea, Northumberland, NE64 6SA
McRobie, Dave	Nairn LM	address & phone	The Bothy, Balnagarth, Forres IV36 2SG (01309-358 038)
Mandeville, Robert	Milngavie LM	mobile	07932 088 718
Naumann, Matthew	P'bello & M'burgh	landline	0131-669 2648
Robertson, Wade	Kelso LM	email	wadewk@gmail.com
Patrick, Hilary	Central Edinburgh	email	hilaryjpatrick@gmail.com
Omissions:			
Robson, Gerry Catriona	Nairn LM		'Roselea', Lethen Road, Auldearn, Nairn IV12 5TL (01667-451 483) gerryrobson1@googlemail.com catrionamaryhope@gmail.com

Local Meetings

Angus	correspondence to clerk	Elisabeth Wilson (01356-622 708)
Elgin	Elgin Meeting has been laid down	
Kelso	new correspondent:	Marianne Butler mariannebutlerma@yahoo.co.uk
Nairn	new correspondent:	Dave McRobie (01309-358 038)
Portobello & Musselburgh	new location	1st Sunday as per book 2nd and 4th Sundays: St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place, Portobello EH15 1AZ
Westray & Papa Westray	new convener:	Lydia Harris (01857-677 551)

AM and GM Appointments and Roles

Corrections:

East of Scotland AM Membership clerk is Robin Waterston,
not Buša Cochrane-Muir

North of Scotland AM Penny Selbie is Registering Officer, not Deputy RO
General Meeting ACTS Members Meeting
Representative Friend:- Alison Burnley
Assemblies/meetings of other churches)
Representative Friend:-Pamala McDougall

Omissions:

General Meeting Scottish Committee of the World Day of Prayer
Representative:- Margaret Roy

Report of March General Meeting

Bronwen Currie - Islay and Jura Meeting

Friends gathered in St Andrews in March feeling rather sombre following the recent deaths of a number of well-known and well-loved Friends who had given much service to the Society. So we abandoned our usual practice of a reading during worship, and instead joined in the silence to remember and pay tribute to these Friends - and of course the partners and families left behind.

The morning's agenda looked extensive, but with some expert clerking we got through it, giving due time and consideration to every item (except the report from Meeting for Sufferings, for which we were referred to the latest copy of *Scottish Friend*), by lunchtime. The first substantial item was the report from the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group which consisted mainly of our opportunity to meet Mairi Campbell-Jack, our new Parliamentary Engagement Officer. It was a delight to have Mairi (and her small daughter) with us, and Mairi was able to explain and answer our questions about her four current priorities of Militarisation (with a particular focus on schools), Trident, the forthcoming General Election, and Social and Economic Justice. One question put before us was whether General Meeting should formally affiliate to Scottish CND, and the sense of the Meeting was very clearly that we should.

John Phillips presented the Meeting with the Annual Trustees' Report, prepared for OSCR, and also the Accounts for 2014, which had already been approved by Trustees, giving us a very clear explanation of General Meeting's financial commitments and position. We then turned to a consideration of the Outreach and Communications Function Group and whether it is still fulfilled a - well - function. We were reminded that in the past a number of very useful enquirers' weekends had been held, but it was not clear that the current geographically-spread group was the best entity

either for organising such events (for which we agreed there is a need, but which for ease of access are best held in the central belt) or for keeping a watching brief on our web presence. It was decided to ask West and South East AMs, with their large concentration of city-based Friends, to consider whether either of both of them could arrange such events, and if such considerations prove fruitful the Outreach and Communications FG is likely to be laid down.

The morning ended with short announcements: of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network's input to the Government's plans to replace Cornton Vale prison, and their subsequent cancellation of those plans, of the the first same-sex Quaker marriage between Tony Gross and Mark Bitel in Edinburgh in February, and of the forthcoming retirement of the current GM Administrator, who was thanked for her work.

Following lunch, we moved to a session led by Madeleine Harding and Adwoa Bittle which looked at the many challenges facing today's children and teenagers and their families, compared to those faced by us several decades ago. A somewhat dark picture emerged of the potential for bullying via text and social media, and the near-impossibility of protecting children from easily-accessed pornography on the internet. No-one had any solutions to these issues, but we were reminded of the support that can be offered by other adults within our Meetings, and particularly of the value of longer-term residential events where children and young people can enjoy being part of a larger group, where deeper relationships can be built, and where there is time and space to talk and share difficulties. It is at these events too - particularly the family weekends, link weekends and Summer Shindig, where our young people find the non-judgmental peer support and Ffriendship which can sustain them through adolescence and into adulthood. We were also reminded of the vital need for open communication. Lastly we were reminded what a joy our young people are, and that most of them survive these years and enter adulthood unscathed.

The picture is not always dark.

More about Ministry**Margaret Peacock - Milngavie Meeting**

I grew up in Bentham Meeting in Yorkshire - a small market town. In those days we didn't talk about ministry much. If we did, then "ministering" as a verb would refer to looking after people, as Martha did during Jesus' visit.

After Meeting we might have said:

"Edward Hutchinson 'spoke about' his sheep", or "Wilfrid Allott 'spoke about' Bible history". Twenty years later, I cringed when I heard Friends say "ministered about", when they meant "spoke about". Friends seem to have shifted the primary meaning of ministry to speaking in Meeting for Worship - which may or may not be ministering to someone's needs. They have forgotten that speaking in Meeting is only one kind of ministry - vocal ministry - usually complemented by silent ministry. But there also exist pastoral ministry, spiritual ministry, practical ministry, et cetera - in fact everything that church ministers do.

That list would be as long as our QFP lists of overseers' plus elders' duties - plus the sermons! The late Alastair Heron - a very weighty Friend - tried to remind Friends of the total meaning of ministry, but failed.



When I was wondering whether to accept an invitation to become an elder, the late Kathleen Laurie introduced me to Unity Church's list of ministers' duties - a rather different kind of list from QFP. These days it is accessible on the internet!

<http://www.websyte.com/unity/bozeman/PRAYER.HTM>

What does it mean to be a minister?

It means to make yourself small so that others may feel large.

It means to make yourself a servant so that others may feel their mastery.

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It means to give so that those who lack may receive.

It means to love so that those who feel unloved may have someone who never rejects them, someone with whom they can always identify.

It means to hold out your help to those who ask and deserve help - and also to those who do not ask or deserve it.

It means always to be there when you are needed, yet never to press yourself on another when you are not wanted.

It means to stay at peace so that those who are contentious will have someone to whom they can turn to stabilize themselves.

It means to keep a cheerful outlook so that those who are easily cast down may have someone to lift them up.

It means to keep faith and to keep on keeping faith even when you yourself find little reason for believing, so that those who have no faith can find the courage to live.

It means not merely to live a life of prayer, but to turn your prayers into life - more life for you, more life for those to whom you minister.

It means to be God-centered and human-hearted, to involve yourself in humanity, and to keep your vision on divinity - and so draw forth in all around you the human form divine.

It means to share in the great moments of life - in birth and sickness and marriage and death - and at all these times, whether of crisis or of celebration, to bring comfort and blessing and, above all, a sense of a Presence that sometimes we cannot see and of a Meaning that often we overlook.

That is what it means to be a minister of God and a minister to humanity.

James Dillet Freeman

Life as GM Interfaith Scotland Representative Barbara Potter - Milngavie Meeting

When I was approached for this role I asked how many meetings each year there would be, and was told that there were three. And yes, there are three dialogue meetings - and then there are the others.

In early December I was invited with other Interfaith Scotland representatives to take part in a weekend conversation with members of other faiths and Humanists. This was the second year this weekend had been held, and was part of a grass roots conversation between people of faith and no faith. Part of what we discussed was how we mark rites of passage, in particular death and funerals. With the increasing cost of funerals, and the issues around the restrictions on benefits to assist with the costs that I had been researching, it was interesting to hear how we all could come together on this as an issue. The Humanists explained that their celebrants would share a draft for the whole service with the family in advance, so that they could add anything, and feel comfortable with the arrangements. There were other faith groups who commented that this was a good idea as they had particular prayers or ceremonies that those not familiar with their faith would not be familiar with.

January has Holocaust Memorial Day, which the Scottish Government has asked Interfaith Scotland to organise. This year we had a national memorial in Ayr town hall, with an exhibition of the build up to the holocaust drawing on the memories of the Jewish community. In the presentation we heard from two genocide survivors, one a German Jewish child, who had been at a transit camp for children which had been dressed up for propaganda purposes, and she had sung in a musical. Pupils from Ayr High School performed a chorus from this. The second was a young man from Bosnia who had escaped the genocide at Srebrenica, though he had lost his father and twin brother in the 8-day night march through hostile territory to escape.

These guests as survivors spent about a week in Scotland, engaged

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in a programme of education in schools and with church and community groups. Interfaith Scotland members had met them before the ceremony, where we had heard their stories, and had a chance to discuss their significance and how to prevent future genocide.

In April members of Interfaith Scotland were invited by the Humanists who were organising the Scottish hearing at Glasgow University for the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life hearings. Look at the website www.corab.org.uk - these were big questions that we were being asked to respond to. However, both those of faith, and the Humanists were happy to meet in private and talk to the three Commissioners hearing the session.

Someone commented on who was not there, members of the Orange Order, the Sikhs (it was a festival) only one Muslim, and the commissioners said that they were aware of hard-to-reach groups and were making efforts to contact them. We spent time trying to paint a picture of Scotland in its present cultural diversity for the Commissioners. There was the issue of conflict at the sectarian divide, which one of the Catholics said was group antisocial behaviour, dressed up as being to do with religion: few attending were likely to be currently active church members. Someone explained that the council banning Christmas decorations in its offices was not about banning Christmas, so much as stopping the display of blue and green decorations in different offices, as historically they had recruited from different parts of the community.

We had a well attended dialogue meeting in Stirling to talk about the Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life where another Commissioner came to lead us through just one of the questions with its supplementaries. Here we were seated at four round tables, each with a facilitator to take notes to feed back to the Commissioner. At my table there were three members of the Shia community in Scotland, which they were at pains to point out was independent of the Shia community in England. As always each table

dealt with the issues that were important to them from the supplementary questions, and none dealt with all of them.

At the end Maureen Sier, the director of Interfaith Scotland, expressed how difficult it was to know how to schedule these kind of discussions; we always leave the meetings with more we might have said.

I am grateful to *General Meeting for Scotland* for asking me to serve in such an interesting role, meeting people from across the communities of Scotland, and from many of the faiths. If anyone would like more information about any of this then please contact me, or ask me to come and speak to your meeting. If I have piqued your interest you can read the IF newsletter at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/newsletters/>



Welcome to Marion Sharkey

Bronwen Currie

As you may have heard by now, I have retired from my post as *General Meeting Administrator*, and by the time you are reading this the new Administrator, Marion Sharkey, will be in post. In fact, in fact if you are reading this in hard copy it will have been Marion who put it in the envelope and posted it to you. Marion is a member of Dundee Meeting, and is currently also the administrator of Dundee Friends Property Trust

I just want to thank Friends for the support and Ffriendship I have received over the 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ years I have been in the post, and to welcome Marion. I am sure she will do a fantastic job and I hope she will get as much enjoyment from it as I have done. Please keep sending her those lovely appreciative emails!

You can contact Marion at the same email address - scotfriends@gmail.com

Marion introduces herself

I have only very recently been appointed as *GM* Administrator and will be taking over from Bronwen Currie. This feels quite a daunting task - Bronwen's work is so well recognised and I will have something to live up to. I hope you can all be patient while I settle into this post and learn what I need to do.

I trained in Edinburgh as an Occupational Therapist and subsequently worked for the NHS for 25 years. I now live in Dundee with my son Peter who is heading off to Edinburgh in the autumn to study engineering.

I come from a long standing Quaker Family and am a Member of East of Scotland Area Meeting and attend Dundee Local Meeting. Over the years I have held a variety of posts for DLM and am currently their Treasurer.

Another position that I hold is as a Trustee to Dundee Friends' Property Trust. I am also employed (part-time) as Administrator to the Dundee Friends' Property Trust. This post gives support to the Trust and to LM Clerk and LM Treasurer (myself). I am kept busy looking after the running of the building with 2014 being an exceptional year with major repair and refurbishment works to the roof and external façade. 2014 also saw the conversion of an office floor into a residential flat. We also had to deal with leaks and burst pipes - 2015 is so far much quieter.

I am sure my new position will be very different. I am very much looking forward to getting started and learning a lot more about General Meeting and Quaker work throughout Scotland.

General Meeting for Scotland

6th June 2015 at 11 am in Aberdeen

"Traditionally, little encouragement has been given to young people to take responsibility for resolving conflicts, to look for 'win-win' solutions. Yet the way in which young people learn to respond to conflict will have a pervasive effect both on the quality of their personal lives and on the prospects for society as a whole."

Sue Bowers and Tom Leimdorfer. QFP 24.54

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our gathering in June will start with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00 am. Our main afternoon session will be devoted to our concern about growing military influence in our schools, the information being fed to our young people and what we can do about it. It will be led by the Parliamentary Function Group; our Parliamentary Liaison Officer; and a representative from Forces Watch.

Among the items of business in our morning session will be to note the appointment of Marion Sharkey as our new General Meeting Administrator, to consider further the future of our Outreach Function Group, to receive reports back from those who attended Yearly Meeting, and to consider reports from some of our Function Groups.

I do hope you will be able to join us in Aberdeen for what promises to be an important and informative session.

Martin Burnell, Clerk