



February
2016

Scottish Friend



White bracket fungus

MP

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Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 1st April to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk. I shall be unable to negotiate the date. *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 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, Edinburgh 14-15 Nov 2015

<3>

Margaret Boland, Dunblane Meeting

I attend General Meeting for both the business and the chance to meet old friends and make new ones. This time as an Area Meeting rep I agreed to write the report for the *Scottish Friend*. Being newly recovered from a virulent cold I was a bit apprehensive as I was lacking in energy.

As one gets older, there are more old friends around and with us in Dunblane there is a diaspora around Scotland so I am afraid that this time I seemed to meet up with and stay with old friends rather than make new ones.

45 of us, from Orkney to Kelso, met in the morning to meet in worship for business. We recorded one new member and one death since our last meeting. Then we were delighted to hear of the very successful family weekend held in the Pitlochry Youth Hostel.

The longest item was the consideration of the budget for 2016. Our Treasurer, John Phillips, took us through it carefully and thoughtfully. We agreed last year to make a deficit budget for three years as we drew down from our ample reserves, to part fund our new Parliamentary Engagement Officer and limit the quota asked from Area Meetings.

John had listed on the second page of his paper, the list of organisations we donate or subscribe to. The list has increased over the years and we will have an afternoon session at a future GM to consider our donations and affiliations following advice from a meeting of AM treasurers with GM treasurer and advice from Trustees on the aims and objectives of the bodies concerned. The treasurer is following the policy that a group must have a Quaker involved in the management and be in accord with Quaker values and action.

<4> In the meantime we will withhold our subscription to two groups on the recommendation of our reps and wait until the future discussion before considering requests to join or affiliate with two other groups.

It was good to have this discussion in support of our Treasurer. We appoint office bearers but it is our duty to support them and decide policy.

Two groups have asked for Quaker involvement - The Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre and a Scottish Churches Steering Group to co-ordinate the response of churches to the refugee crisis. We asked our Nominations Committee to find the names of two people to be involved. A group had brought a name forward for the convener of the Nominations Committee and we agreed to Alyson Buchan serving for another triennium.

After lunch, the theme was 'Death and Dying' and the facilitators were Patsy Wilson and Anne Hosking. We were all involved in groups of 4 or 5 in exercises to look at grief and loss and reactions - what helped, what didn't.

We were introduced into the existence of Death Cafes where people can come together to talk about issues around death. On balance it did not really work for me. It did not tackle the concerns that I have, namely Life after Death - or not - and how to achieve a Good Death - should assisted suicide be available.

The session was in two parts separated by an extended tea break and only about 20 people returned after tea.

A superb supper was supplied by the caterers but alas a number of people who had signed up did not partake. This meant that GM had nevertheless paid. Should at least a minimum charge have been made for our meals?

No-one wished to stay for the film but instead went <5> home with their hosts. This challenges the idea of a residential meeting when B&B is in separate households.

Sunday morning, the business session began at 9.30 and there were only 14 to hear the report of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group which had been held over from the overrunning Saturday morning. This was a great pity as it is a group responsible for interaction with the Scottish parliament. They have 4 priority work areas:

Militarisation in Schools and wider society e.g. the military influence on Remembrance day events. A white poppy was sent to all MSPs

A resource for the Scottish parliamentary election has been produced in draft and will be available in the New Year.

Work on opposing Trident renewal is progressing and a letter was sent to all MSPs and 11 responses were received.

The fourth priority has been latent till now and it is a wide ranging one - Economic Justice/ Sustainability/ Peace.

In the discussion afterwards Elizabeth Allen the convener was enthusiastically thanked for all the work tackled but warned against over stretching themselves with latest priority.

Elizabeth asked us for support in engaging in a meeting being organised in the parliament at the end of January around the centenary of the Military Service Act. Money would be needed to arrange tea and biscuits for those invited and the treasurer said 'Go for it! Invite as many MSPs as possible!'

It was so disappointing that so few people heard this wonderful report. Elizabeth spoke from a printed report previously given to Trustees and I suggest that this paper should have been sent out in advance and Elizabeth could have then spent her time enhancing it

<6> and engaging with questions and comments.

The question of papers in advance was also raised on the Saturday when there were strong requests for the budget paper to be sent in advance in future.

After the closing minute, The Clerk spoke of his concern about the right holding of a residential meeting. I indeed has the idea of a residential meeting lost appeal? Numbers in the late Saturday session and the Sunday suggest that we need to look seriously about the right holding of GM.



Dates for Faslane Meeting for Worship in 2016

All starting at 11-00 am

20 March

24 April

22 May

19 June

25 September

13 November

Setting off from Edinburgh at 8-30 am

You need something to sit on and something that deals with the weather - from rain to midges. Some of us have bin bags to keep our feet dry. You also need something to eat before the journey home.

Contact Alison Burnley

Tel - 0131 229 4481

JOHN WIGHAM (ENJOYMENT) TRUST

<7>

Hilary Davies, on behalf of JW(E)T Trustees

For many years we have been in the happy situation of having a modest legacy to disburse. John Wigham directed that grants should be made "to deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures of life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life".

Funds have been distributed over the past 11 years. At their October 2015 Committee Meeting the Trustees were aware that there had been a very small number of applications in 2015. This is perplexing as so many people are living in difficult financial times as a result of austerity. We are making every effort to increase the take up of Trust funds. We would value your help in this endeavour.

We welcome applications from Quakers and non-Quakers resident anywhere in Scotland, for grants large or small. £500 will normally be the maximum. Applicants may obtain an application form and further information from : Audrey Sinton, Tel: 0131 661 6051
66/4 Willowbrae Road, Edinburgh, EH8 7HA,
Email: audrey_sinton@hotmail.co.uk

The completed form should be passed to a Quaker of long standing who is well known to their meeting, who will countersign it and forward it to the address above, to arrive by March 31st or September 30th. However, the Trustees will endeavour to respond to applications and communicate decisions as soon as possible between meetings. This will be particularly so if an applicant has a pressing need for an early decision.

Four enthusiastic testimonies follow, demonstrating a wide variety of needs and interests.

<8> The Amazing Thai Herbal Compress Massage

From the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust grant I was able to go to a weekend course of Thai Herbal Compress massage held by the Nillipul Centre in Dundee. The course did go ahead although I was the only participant.

This was in June. In this weekend I observed my tutor giving a massage, I received a massage and I gave a massage. It was very new to me to work with the herbs. They are packed in parcels of thin cloth and then steamed to be used on the body as warm as possible. There are about 15 different herbs used e.g. gingerroot, turmericroot, lemongrass, tamarindleaf, and citronella grass stems. The compresses are used directly on the skin in 6 different techniques mainly on the meridians. As a Shiatsu practitioner this was not too difficult for me, although it was more involved than I thought it would be.

The smell of the herbs is amazing.

Through the grant, I could buy a starter kit which is a particular size steamer and a number of different sizes of compresses. I used 200grs compresses on the back and 50 grs for the face.

After the course I invited 5 friends to try the massage for a number of sessions. I enjoyed very much the preparations for the massage, to warm the compresses, to slowly start to smell the herbs. It is very energizing to give a Thai herbal massage. The different ways of how to handle the compress, the warmth and the smell, the effect on the skin was a new and lovely experience to me. At the same time this was very beneficial to my friends: Through the pressure, warmth and smell, the chronic headaches disappeared, cramps in legs were not so severe, and it was emotionally supportive. These were all reactions after the sessions.

I hope this has given you an idea of how the grant money was spent and enjoyed.

Thank you for widening my world,

Anneke Kraakman."

Om

SCOTTISH YOUTH THEATRE SUMMER SCHOOL

<9>

Rosa Cameron

I was given the grant to help me to attend the Scottish Youth Theatre Summer School course for 2 weeks. The course focused mainly on drama but also on aspects of dance and other areas of stage craft required for stage performance.

Unfortunately I was in hospital this year between April and the middle of August and was unable to take up my place at the Scottish Youth Theatre Summer School however I was offered a replacement place on S.Y.T's October school.

During these 2 weeks I learnt how to build a show from scratch and to work with people I never thought I'd work with, for example make-up artists who taught us how to create special effects and dancers who taught us routines which were physically very challenging but felt really good for me. Although I had done the summer course before, I found this one to be a very different learning experience - partly because I was working in a mainly younger group of people (rather than with my own age group) and this situation I felt I could share my own experiences with them.

In all I really enjoyed it and the experience has helped me get back on my feet after being ill for a long time. I found it very beneficial and met people whom I just clicked with instantly. Many thanks to the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust because without your support I would not have been able to undertake the course.

AN AUTOMATIC SOUP MAKER.

Terry O'Boyle

I was 'introduced' to soup makers by one of my helpers and was delighted by the award from the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust, which enabled me to purchase this expensive machine.

I was amazed by it. Ingredients need only to be peeled (if required!) and put in the container. The machine chops them, cooks your soup AND turns itself off when the soup is ready. I cannot praise it enough.

<10> I have very poor sight and arthritis in my hands, and peeling and chopping vegetables is now out of the question. With minimal input from my helpers, I can enjoy a wide variety of delicious healthy soups; minestrone, leek and potato, lentil, - - -. Soups can be chunky or blended. I have also used it to make chutney and curry.

All in all, it's a magnificent piece of equipment and has made the world of difference to me. I use it every other day, as I like to eat my soup fresh. Thank you.

CYCLING MY WAY TO FREEDOM.

Dora Jackson

The grant was awarded to me to buy accessories so I could get a bike that I was given into a state where it could be used. As a L'Arche assistant I get paid a volunteer's allowance, so bus fares become quite expensive, and as I only have limited free time it isn't possible to walk everywhere. The idea was that having a bike would give me more freedom.

Unfortunately I didn't manage to use the bike as much as I would have liked as, due to how physically, mentally and emotionally tiring my work in L'Arche is, I generally spent my time off resting, and most of the time I didn't have the energy to cycle. Also, as I am not a particularly confident cyclist, I spent most of my time cycling around parks and cycle paths, as I didn't feel confident enough to cycle on the main roads. It has been lovely, however, having the bike as it has meant I can go out with it if I want to and have enough energy.

As I am leaving L'Arche and Edinburgh at the end of this month, I am leaving the bike for one of the assistants in our newest house (opened at the start of the year), as they don't have one, and the assistant would like to learn to cycle. I hope that she, and the other assistants in that house, will get as much pleasure (and more) out of the bike as I did.

Annual meeting of church leaders/representatives
25th November 2015 at the Scottish Parliament

Refugees, climate justice and welfare reforms were discussed. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon listened and responded to concerns from the churches in ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) with ACTS General Secretary Matthew Ross and Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer Chloe Clemmons who had organised the event, in support.



We said the churches advocate that a greater number of refugees should be welcomed, particularly in Scotland. The First Minister was asked if more information could be made available to the churches as to where the refugees will be housed so that immediate help could be offered locally. We were reminded that locations have been withheld for security reasons but this will be investigated further as, although this is a devolved issue, a Refugee Co-ordinator has recently been appointed by the Church of Scotland and dissemination of information throughout the church communities would be eased.

The meeting was timely owing to the Paris Conference on climate change starting on 30th November and Nicola Sturgeon will be speaking at the Sustainable Innovation Forum. She posed with the

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Eco- Congregation baton which was to be taken to Paris by a group of young people with hopes and expectations for the conference from Scotland.

How can concerns regarding welfare reform issues be tackled in less than an hour, especially the implications of new powers coming to Scotland? We did manage to support retaining the Human Rights Act and talked about issues around food banks, but time ran out so we could not cover the extra topic of palliative care for which I had prepared.

We did agree that this had been a well conducted and valuable exchange and maintained closer contact between church and state. We finished the meeting with prayer for the First Minister and all politicians.

Perhaps my most significant contribution on behalf of Friends was the gift of a copy of *Advices and Queries* to Nicola Sturgeon with carefully underlined passages relating our topics to its relevant content. I hope she has time to read it.

“What is morally wrong cannot be politically right” (from Yearly Meeting 1822, QF&P 23-26)

Pamala McDougall.

Four Friends were asked to talk about experiences of Conscientious Objection at the Central Library in Edinburgh on Wednesday 28th October 2015. This was part of a series of commemorative events, arranged by the library, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War and local Quakers responded to the request to highlight the role of Conscientious Objectors in both world wars.



Nan Stewart, David Turner, Phil Lucas and Elizabeth Allen.

Phil Lucas introduced the topic with background information and said that Quakers have been very active in opposing war, including the interventions in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. The panel then spoke about their personal experiences. Nan, aged an amazing 97, spoke of her and her husband Alfred's life in Dundee during the war years, joining up with other COs and working in Forestry in Angus. David, now aged 91, recalled appearing at a tribunal when his application failed on political, not religious grounds, and fled to the Highlands to avoid being sent to Barlinnie prison. He stayed in safe houses through the Peace Pledge Union and worked for a time at the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel. He became a Quaker later and has spent a lifetime as a Pacifist upholding his views and working for peace.

<14> Elizabeth spoke of her Grandfather John Searson from Rutherglen, who was a librarian and an active member of the Independent Labour Party. He had argued that he did not think it right that for workers in one nation to kill another. He was dismissed from his job and sent to Dalmarnock power station to shovel coal. His experiences have affected Elizabeth all her life and followed his example in her peace work with Quakers.

In the audience were pupils from St Aloysius school, Edinburgh, who diligently took notes for their project on COs, and others who had come out of interest. I went because I had read about it in the newspaper and wanted to support the panel. Edinburgh City Council is considering a petition to have a memorial for COs in the city. Schools in Edinburgh and other interested parties are asked to have input and make suggestions for the memorial.



The Scottish Churches House Legacy Reserve aims to enable Scotland's churches and Christian organisations to resource new ways of ecumenical working. Between 1960 and 2011, the former Scottish Churches House in Dunblane was a centre for ecumenical encounter, sharing, challenge and development – the Legacy Reserve aims to continue this ethos. Applications are invited for the funding of projects; completed application forms must be submitted no later than 5th January or 5th August in any year. Property schemes (such as repairs or purchase) are not eligible. Further details and application forms are available from:

General Secretary, Action of Churches Together in Scotland,
Jubilee House, Forthside Way, STIRLING, FK8 1QZ.
Telephone 01259 216980.

Email: matthewross@acts-scotland.org

Event at the Scottish Parliament to mark 100 years since the Military Service Act <15>

Joyce Taylor - St. Andrews Meeting

This event, organised by Mairi Campbell- Jack the Scottish Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer on behalf of Quakers in Scotland, was hosted by Patrick Harvie MSP. In his opening welcome he reflected upon the fact that conscription still exists in places round the world.

Trevor Royle author and historian, began the speeches with an historical view of events leading to the Military Service Act which included 4 exemptions: ill-health, vital occupations, domestic hardship and finally those opposed to war on the grounds of conscience. This was a remarkable and important principle but the terms of the clause were never defined and so it was left to Tribunals with no guidance to decide this for themselves. Often this came down to asking questions such as "what would you do if a German attacked your mother?" He cited an example from one tribunal where the young man before them was asked his age. 18 he replied, only to be told that at 18 he wasn't old enough to have a conscience. COs had to be tough in mind and body and Trevor concluded with the view that "If you are looking for heroes of the First World War, you need look no further than the 16-17,000 who were conscientious objectors"

Lesley Orr, author, feminist theologian and development officer for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, spoke of the challenge to war coming from within the labour and socialist movement at the centre of which was the Independent Labour Party. They saw war as serving capitalist interests and firmly against the interests of an international brotherhood of workers. Although the ILP was at the centre, the anti-war movement was made up of a network of other groups including Quakers. Lesley reminded us of the importance of women in opposition to the war – something often ignored in reports at the time. Some suffragettes were vocal in their opposition to war, seeing themselves and their families drawn into a conflict <16> in which they had no electoral say. The militant suffragette

Helen Crawford along with Agnes Dollan set up the Women's Peace Crusade. The creation of the highly successful No Conscription Fellowship run by Fenner Brockway was in fact the idea of his wife Lilla. COs believed that Tribunals would provide a platform for their views in what was a propaganda war but in practice they were made up of local worthies, always included a representative of the military and were often inherently prejudiced. Conscientious Objectors were "maligned and misunderstood as cowards, shirkers deviants and in one case described as "woman's hearts in men's bodies"!

Three Quakers, David Turner who was a CO in the 2nd World War, Joyce Taylor and Elizabeth Allen whose grandfathers had been COs in the 1st World War shared their personal stories of the impact this had on their families. We heard that making a stand against war came at considerable cost to the families at the time but the effect of this witness had led to all three speakers embracing Quakerism and peace activism. David reminded us that conscientious objection didn't end with the end of conscription. His continued protest against nuclear weapons, against Trident and the increasing militarisation of civil society was he said "objection sustained"

A project on conscientious objection has been part of a course for 3rd year pupils at St Thomas Aquinas High School. Three of them, Kirstie, India and Rose came along to tell us about what they had learned. It was striking to hear their note of incredulity that people were arrested and imprisoned for their beliefs. "What good would that do?" asked one. They hoped that the story of COs can inspire people to stand up for their beliefs and be respected.

About 50 people came to the event including representatives of various peace organisations; other churches; the Scottish Commemorations Panel; MSPs; and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk from Friends House. Brian Larkin from the Peace and Justice Centre ended the evening with a proposal to have a memorial to COs in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh so that in the landscape of other war memorials those who stood up for their convictions

and freedom of conscience would also be commemorated.

If you want to know more there is a book published by Common Weal: Objectors and Resisters: Opposition to Conscription and War in Scotland 1914-18 by Robert Duncan



Joyce wrote that COs had to be tough in mind and body. For example, I am reprinting part of my father Robert Forrester's diary.

MP

Wandsworth Prison

As the massive gates swung open to admit our lorry, the famous quotation from Dante occurred to me: "abandon hope ye who enter here." But I little thought what the next ten minutes would bring forth. The gates are closed behind us and barred, and only then those in front, equally large, opened. We pass through, descend from the motor, and are ranged in line by the escort just outside the prison building. Here we catch our first glimpse of the broad arrow - a party of prisoners in the khaki-yellow prison uniform, with their grotesque little caps, pass by through the grounds. But our observations are cut short by the arrival of a very important looking officer, red-faced, booted and spurred.

"What are these, sergeant?"

"Conscientious objectors, sir!"

"Oh, conscientious objectors are they. I'll soon deal with them."

(Very significantly and with an oath)

In single file we pass through into the prison. I am at the head of the file, and as I cross the threshold a noon-commissioned officer yells in my ear "Get a move on, will you, you devil"

"Don't worry" I answered "we'll get there sometime."

"Oh will yer, I'll pay you for that presently."

<18> Halfway up the "Hall" I am stopped, and roughly ordered to take off my tunic and empty the kit-bag which had been sent with me in the lorry. I realise it quickly now: this is a military prison, and these are military officers.

"No" I answered, "I shall obey no military orders, for I am not a soldier."

The N.C.O. swears and fetches the Commandant who is standing near (the Officer we had met in the grounds)

"What, damn you, you refuse to obey my orders"

"I answer in the spur of the moment "Sir, I must obey the orders of my God"

"D— your God, you will obey me. You have the King's uniform on."

"Only because it was forced on"

(to N.C.O.s) "Here, run him off to the "special room"

Before the words were out of his mouth I was seized by the neck from behind with a choking grip and shaken till my bones rattled.

I was then dragged by the neck along the floor of the passage while N.C.O.s punched and kicked me time after time, with each other vying to get as many blows in as possible. They repeatedly banged my head on the concrete floor and against projecting parts of the walls. I was at last thrown down violently in a little tiny cell, then propped on my feet in a dazed condition and ordered to take off my boots.

I refused, and was suddenly given a blow behind the ear by one Sergeant Leach, which raised such a swelling that it was noticed by H. and A. Jones when I met them about a week later. This was the signal for a fresh attack by the N.C.O.s present who kicked and punched until they were tired of it, then removed my boots, braces, and everything except shirt and trousers, and left me bruised and bleeding on the floor. In a few minutes they returned accompanied by the Commandant. I was seated on the wooden platform raised a few inches from the floor which serves for sleeping.

"How dare you sit down in the presence of your commanding officer?" shouted the Commandant, accompanying the

words with a savage kick on the shin. Then once again I was subjected to bruising at the hands of the N.C.O.s who always accompanied their chief. This time they forced my head during the process back over the end of the low platform, nearly choking me. "Now are you going to obey my orders." said the Commandant at last. "Never" I answered. "You may injure my body, but you cannot touch my soul." I continued: "and those men that you have set upon me - do they and you glory to call yourselves Englishmen? No Germans could be more brutal."

Never in my experience have I felt the presence of Christ so near as when I confronted this circle of angry faces. All that I said I cannot remember, but sure as his promise it was given to me in that hour what I should speak, and I spoke boldly and without fear. He was to me a living present reality, far more real than the men who were torturing me.

"Give him three days close confinement on bread and water to begin with" said the Commandant as he left the cell. "Then we'll put you in the strait jacket" added one of the N.C.O.s as he slammed the door.

Left alone with the four whitewashed walls (for there was no window; only a barred skylight of fluted glass) there came the inevitable reaction of feeling. I marvelled that such things could be in civilised England. Here in the midst of London was I shut away in the power of men who were more like devils, and this in accordance with the law. If ever I get out of this place, I inwardly resolved, I will devote all my powers to stopping this infamy.

After a very long time, as it seems, I hear a slight sound outside the cell door, and looking up notice an eye applied to the judas-spy-hole in the middle. I am apprehensive of some new devilry, thinking everyone in this place to be devoid of humanity.

The eye continuing to stare, I break the spell by saying "Hullo!" "Hullo! What have they been doing to you, mate?"

<20> "O knocking me about!"

"The - - - " the epithet he applied to the authorities in general is unprintable. "Never mind, stick it mate!"

The little shutter drops suddenly and the soldier/prisoner for such it is, goes about his tasks of cleaning with vigour. He has I imagine heard a footstep. No-one can tell how this little word of sympathy cheered me.



QUAKER UMBRELLAS



Daphne Wassermann (Glasgow Meeting) has ordered a batch of these striking umbrellas - huge golf umbrellas, ideal for keeping the rain off during Meeting for Worship at Faslane and other wet occupations. These are available price £20 from Daphne.

Phone or email for further details.

0141 357 0396 or
daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com.

RAIN

The Dee, the Don, the Deveron
are like the Irrawaddy, post-monsoon,
sullen as lead.

The Ythan emulates the Brahmaputra
and Abergeldie Castle teeters on the edge.

The Lune and Eden burst their banks
and Appleby-in-Westmorland
is engulfed once more.

In the Space Station, Major Tim Peake
tweets images of floods in Northern England.

I lie awake at 4 am
listening to cloud bursts
dumping their loads
into the canal
which threatens to overflow.

Bedraggled blue tits, robins, yellowhammers,
huddle together on twigs like birdbaths,
drookit doocots,
underneath umbrella leaves,
blinking teardrops from their eyes.

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Hydrants explode, the Water of Leith
is I guazu, a flash flood in the Siq,
the Colorado River in spate.
Silverknowes is Innisfree Lake,
Peebles and Hawick are islands.

Burial plots of loved ones
at Ravelston and Liberton
are now artesian wells,
sodden as Flodden. Their floating bones
complain of rheumatism.

Perhaps this flood will quench and quell
the flames of Raqqa? I close the window
and return to bed, hunkering down
beneath the duvet, thinking of Lear,
roofs, walls and unaccommodated man.

Norman Bissett, Edinburgh

Dear Friends,

Please respond to the following questions by email to adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk or post to Adwoa Bittle, 4 Burnside Park, Pitcairngreen, Perth, PH1 3BF

As you may be aware there is a group of Friends looking into the question of whether BYM is ready to take the decision as to whether the time is right to revise our Book of Discipline.

This decision will not be made by YM in session for at least 2 years but we feel it is important that as many people in our Yearly Meeting engage with the current book so that we can be sure where we are at and where we want to go.

One of the pieces of work set up by this group is the reading Faith and Practice timetable that many groups and individuals across Britain are engaging in. We are interested in who is doing what. So if you could email a few sentences to describe your group that would be helpful. If you are not part of this yet it's not too late. It's easy to start and starting is better than not! There is information on the BYM website and your meeting should have leaflets. If you can't find what you need please contact me (see above) for more details.

The other few sentences we are looking for is your reaction to the following list. The list is one of some "issues" that were highlighted in a consultation with AM's regarding what was missing from the current book. We would like to know which of the following you feel strongly about and why.

1. New Technology and the use of e-communication in various capacities: minutes, records, membership records, on-line worship – ethics of every day use of it
2. Canterbury minute 36: Environment/sustainability/finance: ethics of everyday
3. Membership

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4. The link between prayer, insight and action, transformative nature of Quaker worship, Experiment with Light, Advices and Queries for Meetings
5. Peace testimony in time of terrorism, our response, drones, witness at bases, conflict within meetings and ongoing disunity
6. Family, parenting, safeguarding, changing patterns of family life, spiritual aspects of same sex marriage, being a single Quaker in a family, genetic engineering, surrogate motherhood
7. Outreach and material to explain what Quakers feel about God
8. Inclusivity and its theological foundations, including all-age worship, disability, multiculturalism, Quakers worldwide, interfaith
9. Doing admin in different ways especially for smaller meetings (eg appt of attenders to important offices). Spiritual implications of appointing/having trustees
10. Death from point of view of person dying, green burial grounds, ministry of healing
11. Internet gambling, the lottery
12. Add a chapter of pieces from a) the Quietist period b) the last 20-25 years

The no.1 point we had was the Theism/non-theism issue. I have taken it from the above list as we could see it needed consideration and we are working on a conference on the topic.

The last topic we need feedback on is the use of the Church Government sections of QFP. We are currently working on a questionnaire that will come to you. Please look out for it! Thank you so much if you can find time for this. There will be an opportunity to put your thoughts on post-its at March GM in St. Andrews so if you would rather wait until then that's fine.

With very best wishes,
Adwoa Bittle

Meeting for Sufferings at Friends House, 6 February 2016 <25>
Jane Pearn, Kelso Meeting

During our opening worship, we heard part of the epistle from the recent FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation) World Plenary Meeting, held in Peru. It hosted Friends from 37 countries, and it was salutary to be reminded that Quakerism takes different forms, and sometimes may use what to us is unfamiliar language, but that there is more that unites us.

We considered a matter that QPSW (Quaker Peace and Social Witness) had brought to us for a wider sounding. 'Citizens UK' has asked that we as a Yearly Meeting join other organisations in a scheme to support refugees through private sponsorship. This idea – that community groups or individuals would agree to provide total support for someone during their first 12 months in Britain – is at a very early stage: there is no scheme set up at present although the UK government has signalled in general terms that it is open to the idea. Contributions at first were broadly positive, with the caveat of needing to know more detail. There was moving ministry from a Friend telling of her mother's personal experience of such sponsorship, and also contributions from those with practical experience in this field. However, we also heard significant reservations.

- * What exactly is Citizens UK, and are there risks in the Quaker name being associated with it?
- * There is already a two-tier system for accepting refugees – would this not make it a three-tier system?
- * What about destitute asylum seekers already in this country?
- * Would this take away support and money from the existing refugee support organisations?
- * We should be doing what we do best, and have most experience in – looking at the causes of war and promoting alternatives.

There was no question at all that we desire to do more – but was this

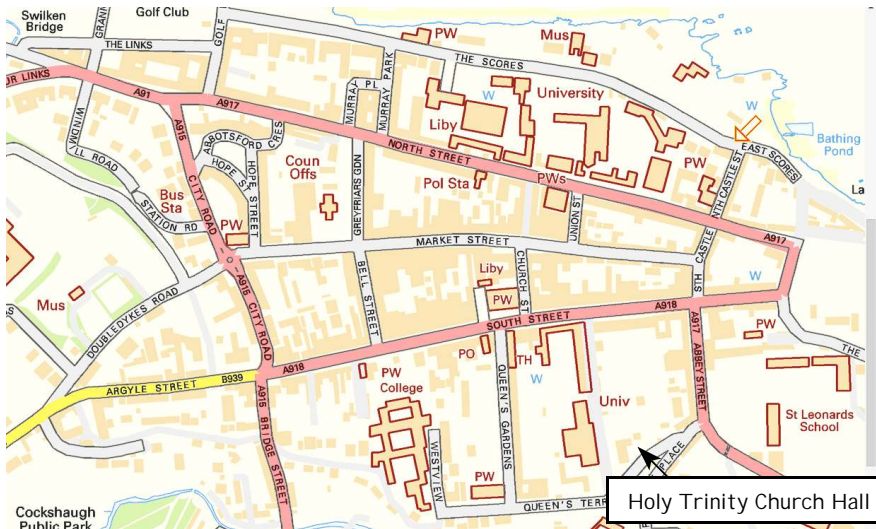
<26> the best route? We weren't being asked to make a decision, but I hope that we gave QPSW food for thought, and wish them well as they grapple with this.

We heard that Yearly Meeting in 2016 will continue its theme of 'Living out our Faith in the World', with a focus on equality. We will also consider how we test and lay down concerns and share stories of following our leadings in both adventurous and more ordinary ways. We were reminded that this year we are asked to register our intention to be there: this is to help with planning and logistics, saving waste of food and paper, while making sure that we all have what we need.

Mind the Gap was an exercise in comparing the vision expressed in Our Faith in the Future to the state of our own Area Meetings, and looking at ways in which we might bridge the gap. We worked in 'regional' groups, which entailed Scotland joining with Wales - an arrangement that clearly makes sense if you're English! Themes in our group were discipline, commitment and how we test concerns. We agreed that understanding and living by Quaker discipline should not be understood as adhering to rigid rules, but involved listening to the inward guide, and listening to each other, to what is spoken and unspoken.

The sustainability group brought us the good news that many meetings have risen to the challenge of making their buildings and their lives more low-carbon, and that the commitment to sustainability is becoming increasingly embedded in all that we do.

The less good news is that only about half of Area Meetings have appointed someone to attend the Sustainability Gathering on 18-20th March. They assure us this will be an opportunity to talk through issues like Fair trade versus locally produced food; and for individuals and meetings that feel that they have reached a plateau in what they can do, to be re-inspired and energised. Is your Area Meeting sending someone?



General Meeting for Scotland Map of St. Andrews

Directions - Coming into St Andrews on the A91 from Cupar, continue straight along North Street. At the end, turn right onto South Street and follow signs for A917 turning left at the roundabout onto Abbey Street. Take the first right into Greenside Place, immediately forking right into Queen's Terrace. The church hall is on the right.

There is plenty of parking space in the forecourt.

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General Meeting for Scotland

5th March 2016 at 11 am in the Holy Trinity Church Hall,
Queen's Terrace, St Andrews KY16 9QF

I ask for daily bread, but not for wealth, lest I forget the poor. I ask for strength, but not for power, lest I despise the meek. I ask for wisdom, but not for learning, lest I scorn the simple. I ask for a clean name, but not for fame, lest I condemn the lowly. I ask for peace of mind, but not for idle hours, lest I fail to harken to the call of duty."

I nazo Nitobe, 1909 QFP 20.01

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our gathering in March will start with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00 am. Our afternoon session will provide the opportunity for an extended period of worship together, as an alternative to a formal speaker. This will follow a discussion of General Meeting's approach to participation in other organisations through representation and financial contribution.

During the morning business session, we will receive the annual accounts, hear from the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group and our Meeting for Sufferings Representative, and consider whether we should review the nature and purpose of General Meeting and in particular the holding of Residential General Meetings. There will also be reports on meetings with the First Minister and on a proposed ACTS visit to Brussels, as well as more routine business

General Meeting is an opportunity to meet Friends from throughout Scotland and to strengthen our Quaker community. I do hope you will be able to join us in St Andrews.

Martin Burnell, Clerk