

TAYSIDE QUAKER

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Happy Birthday St Andrews!

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Closing date for the next edition is 14th April 2014
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I'm sorry for the late publication of TQ. This was due to a computer problem.
I would find it very helpful if someone felt they could co-edit TQ with me, preferably someone with technical knowledge and understanding.

East Scotland Area Meeting: Scottish charity number SC0020698
All opinions in Tayside Quaker are those of the individual writers and not necessarily of The Religious Society of Friends.

East of Scotland Area Meeting February 2014

Dear Friends

At the November Area Meeting in Perth Friends again came from far and wide to gather together.

The next Area Meeting will take place in **Dundee on Saturday 8 February** at 11am with refreshments available from 10.30am. Friends are encouraged to attend.

We have arranged a speaker in the afternoon, Phil Lucas, from East Scotland AM to tell us about the work of General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group.

In addition Dundee Local Meeting will report on how the truth is prospering in their meeting and a Dundee Friend will present their story as the latest contribution to this new feature at ESAM meetings.

Attendees are very welcome but it is helpful to know in advance of those who hope to be present, so that we can welcome them at the start of the meeting. Please contact Busa Cochrane-Muir on 01333 360438 or lekjom@lesliebank.eclipse.co.uk

Now that Area Meeting minutes are being placed on-line at **www.quakerscotland.org.uk** Search for a meeting and click on "**East.**" It is hoped that Friends will take advantage of this new open access. Minutes will continue to be circulated to all LM Clerks, Elders and Overseers.

In friendship,
Busa Cochrane-Muir (Co-Clerk)

East of Scotland Area Meeting : 3.11.13, Perth

Twenty two Friends gathered for a meeting with news of how the truth prospers in Perth, for a personal journey with Helen Nicholson and after the business of the day a comprehensive account of the history of the British Committee of Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA).

Helen Nicholson shared recollections of her life. How religion and spirituality have been intertwined throughout. Helen spoke about the defining of love and how this has influenced how she perceived other peoples needs and her response. Quaker life came from her mother and was influential in forming her integrity and values. A transcript has been attached to the minutes.

Alistair Milner had been prevented from attending the latest **Meeting for Sufferings** and a report prepared by the General Meeting representative was read out. Issues covered included the work of the Friends Housing Trust; the proposal to extend the boycott on settlement goods, which was not accepted; the withdrawal of investments from fossil fuel companies, upon which BYM Trustees have now acted and with work related to benefit cuts to which Local Meetings and individuals are responding.

In keeping with previous ESAM, Alyson Buchan spoke of the life of Perth Meeting. This gave Friends an idea of the Meeting's truly wide geographic area and ways in which members recognised the need to embrace MfW throughout the area and how this has achieved great strength and support. Next year Perth LM will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary and outreach activities are being planned.

The ongoing consultation on whether it is time to revise the current book of discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting – Quaker Faith & Practice. It was not possible to read out comments received due to the lack of time. However Friends were encouraged to send in their comments from LMs and as individuals direct to BYM by the end of November.

A report from Quaker Life Representative Council by Meri Goad (Deputy Representative) and Barbara Davey (a member of Quaker

Life Central Committee) included discussions concerning membership and the revised Chapter 11 of Quaker Faith & Practice.

Forthcoming conferences were highlighted including the QPSW Spring Conference 28-30 March 2014.

The day concluded with a warm welcome extended to Angelas Sansam, York Area Meeting and a member of the British Committee of Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) who painted a rich account of the history of QCEA since its formation in 1979 and its current activities.

The full minutes have been sent to LM Clerks, all Elders and Overseers and can be accessed on the Quaker in Scotland website or on request from LM Clerks.

In friendship
Busa Cochrane-Muir

My story- Helen Nicholson

The first title I was given was 'My spiritual Journey' and I'm afraid I reacted, and now I see that it's 'My story' and that is easier because I felt that the spiritual side to my life was not separate from other aspects.

I was fortunate, I feel, to be born in a country where everyone had a religion and I spent 8 or 9 of my first 10 years in that country. I can recollect on occasions the call to prayer floating down from a minaret - so different from the present clangour in some places where it is electronic - or I might come upon a gardener when I was playing outside saying his prayers in a far corner. There didn't seem to be a separation between ordinary everyday life and religious life. My parents thought it important to understand and practice their Christianity. Perhaps this became clearer because of surrounding religions. I probably knew Bible stories and hymns before I knew fairy tales and nursery rhymes, and these were most enjoyable.

I realised later as an adult how much our family life was influenced by our mother's early contact with Quakers and looking back there was a pursuit of truth and integrity, peace, simplicity and equality without much in the way of explanation or discussion. There was no church-going in my earliest years but we had prayers and Bible reading and hymns in the morning and personal prayers at night and later I went to two entirely different Sunday schools. One was taken by Anglican nuns who lighted candles (which was not Presbyterian) and the other taken by a large lady with a hat who was very evangelical and we had a wonderful time. We put our Bibles under our arms and when she was shouted "shun" we all pulled out our Bibles, held them up in the air and shouted: "The sword and spirit is the word of God"! When we got home, our parents would quietly modify some of the things she had taught us – for instance that every word in the Bible was true – but singing choruses was wonderful. Later on, I was fortunate enough to hear wonderful children's sermons from a Church of Scotland minister, who was famed for his sermons for children and I was also given a book of these sermons.

Then the time came when I settled in Edinburgh and attended our local Church of Scotland. At that Church our parents appreciated erudite sermons. I mostly, I think, enjoyed the singing of hymns. Came the war and evacuation and we walked to the village church on Sundays and one sermon I recollect was on an African proverb that went: 'When the rabbit was offered beans he produced the basket'. That stuck in my mind.

We had school prayers every evening and some of us said our own private prayers at night in the dormitory but by this stage I was no longer surprised and disconcerted at the large number of my schoolmates for whom religion was something quite impossible and who looked on belief and religious practice with a kind of supercilious disregard.

Later on, as a student, I joined the SCM (Student Christian Movement) and went to some talks and conferences which I found pleasurable and profitable. Really, all through my life, religion and spirituality were intertwined.

Once qualified and working there wasn't really much attention in my life to saying prayers at night. It was rather good to get into bed quickly and hope I wouldn't be called too often. I occasionally found a local church on Sundays but that didn't work very well because the sort of thing that happened was I got there and found a small

company of eight or ten people having harvest thanksgiving – this was an unfamiliar Anglican system - or I found myself caught up in a huge congregation where there was some local authority having a formal service.

Then there came the day when I had a permanent job in Dundee. I became involved with Friends, went to Meeting for Worship, and became a member of the Society.

Now that all sounds rather mechanical and some of it a bit perfunctory but in my life I can't claim that I've ever had any 'the road to Damascus' experiences. I haven't ever been good at elucidating problems such as 'If God is omnipotent and kind, why is there cruelty in the world?' It is interesting when people talk about it but it is not something that I personally am very good at coming to conclusions about.

I think probably the biblical words of Jesus 'Love God and thy neighbour as thyself' would be a theme for me, but how much do I love myself? And how do I define love? The most useful definition of love that I have found is 'to love a person is to perceive their needs and be able to meet them'. Now those last words come back to me - what kind of person am I and what kind of person am I growing to be? When I was in my 40's I went to a full-time psychotherapy course in the professorial psychiatric unit in Aberdeen for a year. I think that is probably the time when I began to have some self understanding and my way of approaching other people changed more than at any other stage in my life. Formal religion didn't come into that at all but perceiving other people's needs in a different way and responding - I hoped - in a better way, did come into it. So I came back to Meeting and went on working and enjoying the company of children. Then, very late in life, I got married and retired and had very happy and peaceful times.

So where does the spiritual come into all this? Well for me it is not those transcendental experiences. They don't come my way. It's really the ordinary and everyday things that embody the spiritual in my life. I know that we do need words and thoughtful discussion to disentangle problems. I'm glad when I can hear people discussing these and I know that there are people who have enlightening experiences and it's been of benefit to meet these people, but for me it is the ordinary everyday things that embody the spiritual and the spiritual is something I cannot really define - for me, I feel it is just there as part of my ordinary life.

News from Local Meetings

Dundee Meeting

On Saturday March 1st, 2014 Dundee will be hosting a workshop called “**Storytelling as theological reflection – using the Godly Play approach**” hosted by Chris Nickolay from the Quaker Life children and young people’s team. This is a workshop for people working with children/young people or parents who want to look at new creative ways to help children explore their spirituality. Godly Play is a format which has been developed to explore Quaker and Biblical Stories with a non-directive approach. It is very good for all ages and therefore very useful for All Age Worship.

What excites me about this approach is that it provides an opportunity for individuals to explore their own spirituality with their own interpretation of the stories. It also provides space for art, reading, journaling and reflection. From what I have heard, this is an extremely effective approach for young people and teenagers, a time when most organizations begin to see the attendance of this group dropping .

The workshop will run from 10:30 to 4:30 with a shared lunch. The cost of the day is £5 per person but please let me know if you need assistance. I am hoping to provide childcare as well but obviously need some advance notice of the number of children attending.

Donna Morgan

Tel: 01382 775545 email: morganphin@talktalk.net

Volunteers needed for Saturday March 1 to work with children

We are looking for volunteers who enjoy working with children and would like to assist the parents in our Area. We need volunteers for the Godly Play workshop running on Sat. March 1st, 2014 from 10:30 to 4:30 (lunch will be provided). We have a lovely room for the children in Dundee and I am happy to help plan activities and crafts and purchase anything that is needed. Outings to the MacManus Gallery or the Science Centre are also possibilities. If you are interested, please contact Donna Morgan, Tel: 01382 775545 or email: morganphin@talktalk.net

Dear Friends,

I have volunteered to take over responsibility for the monthly Wednesday Meetings for Worship in the Chaplaincy at Dundee University, held from 1.15 to 1.45 p.m. with tea & coffee afterwards.

We are in need of people to do the **door-keeping and teas** (not an onerous job!). The dates until the summer are:

February 12th

March 12th

April 16th

May 21st

June 11th

Please will you let me know if you can help out. I shall be away for the March date but Marion has kindly offered to do that day, but I shall be away also in May.

I am keeping the rota here at home so please respond me directly.
Thank you.

In friendship,
Sheila Phillips



Perth Meeting

Plans for our **outreach event** in September are progressing. We have booked photographs of the Quaker Tapestry which will be shown in the AK Bell Library in Perth, together with the Scottish panel which was in Scottish Churches House. We also hope to create our own Perth tapestry panel. We are holding a tapestry day on Sunday 2 March from 10.00 to 4.00 in the Subud centre in Perth when we will learn about the tapestry and how to do the stitching. All are welcome; please contact Adwoa Bittle for more information. We are also collating information about the history of Quakers in Perth for a display board.

With encouragement from Seonag Robertson, Friends in Perth have begun knitting their contribution towards the **Peace Scarf** which will run the length of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh before being taken to join a seven-mile scarf from Aldermaston and Burghfield. Further details can be found at <http://www.woolagainstweapons.co.uk/> .

Helen Nicolson has moved from Pitlochry to Perth and we are pleased that she is able to join us more often for Meeting for Worship. Peter Cheer is also on the move; we look forward to welcoming him back in Perth after his time with VSO in Ethiopia where he has been training and mentoring IT support teams with the Addis Ababa HIV and Aids Prevention Committee and the Ethiopian Midwives Association.

Johanna Babbs has started her own decorating business. She can be contacted on 01738 580 152, 07939627632 or info@fairmaiddecorator.co.uk if you would like to know more.

Felicity Bryers

Angus Meeting

What can we do with what we've got? Steps on our Meeting's journey
Angus Meeting met on 9th November 2013 at Borrowfield Community Centre to take part in a Woodbrooke on the Road study day. We were led by Helen Rowlands, Head of Education at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Helen is a life

long Friend with a wealth of experience in education and Quaker service. The topic for the study day is extremely relevant for Angus Meeting, as with a predominately elderly membership and fewer members in a position to take on the various roles, we are struggling to sustain our Meeting.

Advices and Queries 26 reads "Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities.

Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires...". We hoped that the day would help us progress in our life as a worshipping community and be practical, enjoyable and sustaining.

The day started with a few minutes of silence then Helen asked us to introduce ourselves and to say one thing that we were grateful for. The offerings ranged from gratitude for simple acts of kindness, to giving thanks for the people who have supported us on our spiritual journey. We remembered Friends no longer with us and it was clear how much our Meeting valued their memory.

Helen then asked us to describe the history of the Meeting, how did we get to this place; starting with the phrases, 'once upon a time' or 'but then.. .' or 'before that. . .'

Gradually we began to piece together the Meeting's history. Meetings all have their own history and we still have Friends who remember the beginnings of Angus Meeting. We described how we grew out of Dundee Meeting, initially meeting in Friends' homes, mainly in Forfar, Montrose and Edzell, before renting accommodation in Montrose. We remembered events such as our Quaker exhibition in Arbroath and happy times such as our summer gatherings at Wagglies

in Glenesk. Helen then asked us to visualise where we would like our Meeting to be in five years

time. We were asked to illustrate by means of drawings or collages what our dreams

for the future were. Our simple illustrations showed recurring themes; we simply hoped to be 'still here' and beyond that we hoped to grow, to be joined by young people, to support each other, to have fun and to engage in the wider community, but central to it all was our need to continue to worship together. We were asked to consider our gifts and resources and Helen read a modern transcript of Romans 12; the reading started:

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you; Take your everyday, ordinary life your sleeping, eating, going to work, and walking around life and place it before God as an offering.... " Helen then challenged us to consider what are the

basics, what do we really need to facilitate a Quaker Meeting? We discussed the practicalities involved with the organisation of holding a Quaker Meeting and Helen reminded us of the need to find roles for those in the Meeting rather than people for the roles and how we all have a responsibility for clerkship and oversight, in its widest sense. Helen described various models of eldership and oversight, including one of a circle of names whereby Friends are paired to support one another. We noted that Angus Meeting has had many changes recently and has already reduced the number of tasks, however while there is a need for some stability, Helen encouraged us to 'regroup' and not to be afraid to rethink the different roles. Helen gave us plenty to think about and in spite of our present difficulties, I feel the day will help us to develop and sustain our Meeting. We ended as we had begun by Helen asking us to reflect on those things we were grateful. For me it was the memory of going with my mother-in-law, Mollie and my young son, Joe, to my first Quaker meeting in Edinburgh, over 30 years ago. The following day we heard the sad news that our dear Friend, Jenny Benvie, had died. I was reminded of the many gifts that she had brought to our Meeting, her warmth, her commitment to service and her contagious sense of fun. We have many gifts and resources within our Meeting and for that I am truly grateful. We would like to thank Helen Rowland for her excellent presentation and guidance; Pamala McDougall for organising the day; Elisabeth Wilson for providing hospitality to Helen and to the caterers for providing a very good lunch.

Pam Apted

(Editor's note: Sorry about the layout of this article; it was sent as an RTF file, which we were unable to reformat properly.)

St Andrews

Saturday 28th September already seems quite awhile ago, but not forgotten as this was our day of celebrating the first **50 years of St Andrews Quaker Meeting**. What a full day it was, starting at the Meeting House to meet again Friends who had moved to other Meetings, from Area Meeting and from farther afield, returning to St Andrews for the occasion.

There were past activities, involvement with burning issues of the time and plenty of photographs which captured many events: Quakers for Peace at the outbreak of the Iraq invasion, letters to and from prisoners of conscience, PASTA (Peace Action St Andrews) and now QASTA (Quaker Action St Andrews) and photographs of shared picnics, a younger Pam and Ursula among the many faces to identify; images of the happy times such as weddings and much more.

We transferred mid morning to Hope Park Church Hall where Joyce Taylor opened the meeting by reading from Quaker F & P 10.03 "... It is our search for God's way that has drawn us together..." Leading nicely into four separate recollections of how the Meeting started at St Andrews, through the years until the present day. (A more detailed account can be found under a separate title in this issue.) The special collection for the day was for STEPS (St Andrews Education for Palestinian Students), a local charity to which the Meeting is closely committed. The morning closed with M f W.

After a most enjoyable buffet lunch which allowed time to recall some personal memories and generally take pleasure in talking to Friends old and new, we returned to the Meeting House to further look at the archive material on display, collected and safely kept over the years. During 50 years the Meeting has met in seven different buildings, although someone did mention a short stay in an eighth, seemingly emphasizing that it is people gathering, meeting together that are the Meeting and not the buildings in which they meet.

Knitters in our meeting are busy at the start of the "**Wool against weapons**" project. The aim of the project is a peaceful statement against the UK government's intention to spend £80bn on renewing Trident. With the help of knitters across the UK, to knit, or crochet, a gigantic pink scarf that will stretch between the Women's Peace Camp at Aldermaston and the nuclear weapons site 7 miles away at

Burghfield, a distance that will need at least 1100 meter length pieces. The date for this great unravelling is Saturday 9th August 2014 coinciding with Nagasaki Day. But, before the scarf travels south to Aldermaston, it is hoped that the Scottish section would first stretch as far as possible down the Royal Mile. After the final great joining together, a task and a half in itself, the sections will be washed and sown together to make blankets for local hospices, refugee camps and war torn zones = everything recycled to bring warmth and comfort to many.

Already Friends have met twice together for a “knit-in” and to socialise at the same time, but since the finished sections must measure 100cm x 60cm in any shade of pink, knitting must continue at home between these enjoyable gatherings. If you would like to join in either knitting or giving support please contact Joyce Taylor. Take a look at www.woolagainstweapons.co.uk to see all shades of pink and further helpful hints

Friends, having first read or listened to Gerald Hewitson giving this Swarthmore lecture on CD, met to discuss his book “Journey into Life” at the home of Pam Brunt and Robin Waterston.

“The Philosopher's Pupil” by Iris Murdoch maybe the next title for reading and discussion but as yet no date has been arranged and so is still to be decided.

50 years: St Andrews Meeting from the beginning

When Christine Davis came to St Andrews as a student the nearest Meeting House was at Dundee. In the 1960's, before the Tay road bridge had been built, Dundee was difficult to get to especially on Sundays when there were no trains, or buses to the ferry crossing. Christine remembered going by car with Robin, Tony and Pam at the time of the Cuban missile crisis half expecting a nuclear Armageddon. All the aircraft at Leuchars were lined up on the tarmac, fully armed and ready to go.

Not fully satisfied with attending, sitting in the university chapel listening to visiting preachers, "I found I lacked the taste or the theological passion required for sermons and I missed the quiet waiting of the still meeting." Instead of attending the Remembrance Day service in 1963 Christine went across to Dundee. Over lunch Stanley Johnson asked why she was at Dundee again; why hadn't she started a Meeting in St Andrews? Clearly this challenge met its mark.

After advertising in the Citizen the first Meeting took place on 17th November 1963 in the university Hebdomadars Room. (I had to look in Chamber's to understand what was to me a foreign word! "In Scottish universities a senior member appointed weekly for the supervision of student discipline.") This room is now the main Porter's Lodge close by St Salvatore's clock tower. Margot Waterston and her sons came so to Will Vaughan, then RE teacher at Madras College, Norah Hughes and a few more, enough to encourage a meeting every week at least during term time. St Andrews Quaker Meeting was born.

In the summer of 1964 Jonathan and Emily Dale arrived at St Andrews and stayed for 20 years. Jonathan spoke of the enormous influence the Meeting had for him and asked - What was it about the Meeting that gave it such a powerful influence? There was a sense of a close-knit community, meeting for discussion and later Midweek Meeting every week. It also helped that the Meeting was on the whole, young and lively. Perhaps too, it was new with no set ways. A good deal was invented and very open to new light, taking to All Age

Worship as an example and having occasional sung ministry. When Nan Stewart came back from Quaker Home Service (now Quaker Life) with the latest ideas to share, the experimental approach was the generally ready response, an attempt to get away from the pure rationality of a discussion group. Jonathan remembers Nan had everyone on the floor pretending to be various jungle creatures!

The Meeting constantly socialised much aided by four families with children of a similar age. Inge and Douglas Nelson often provided hospitality at their Wormit home and this in turn helped the Meeting to keep many of the students it attracted.

The Meeting was an active part of BYM, Ralph Marshall and Mary Collier were Meeting for Suffering representatives bringing back news. Minutes were sent to M f S on poverty and in the late 1970s or early 1980s, made a contribution to the whole strand of Quaker work on this issue. Friends were very involved with a whole range of issues to do with gender and sexuality and were also involved with work on sexual relations. St Andrews was largely clear of sexist language in ministry much earlier than most other Quaker Meetings. There was a difficult and protracted discussion on whether or not to let Rose Lane to a campaigning homosexual organisation. A number of Friends had slowly to let go of prejudices. A more fruitful decision was the setting up of Peace Action St Andrews, as a community organisation.

When the Midweek Group studied the works of John Woolman, for Jonathan it was a revelation and with the ministry in Meeting at the time, played a considerable role that eventually led to his resignation from his post in the university French department and a move away from "our beloved Meeting."

Ellen Colingsworth found a warm welcome at St Andrews Meeting despite the odd premises at West Port. She had taught at a Quaker school in the USA for 17 years before taking on the responsibility for Young people in the 1990s and was pleased to share some of their own recollections.

Several remembered that writing to prisoners of conscience had a significant impact on them; Ellen spoke the words of young people directly to the meeting.

From Davey Lennon Heitler, "I remember finding it really exciting when we got replies back... Hearing how we could make someone else feel less alone, even if I didn't fully understand how horrible their situation truly was, afforded me some perspective on my own privileges."

Alex Cole Hamilton recalled, "It was through writing to a prisoner of conscience in the Middle East called Selahatin in a young peoples' Meeting in Howard Place, that I first learned the power of direct action and the ability to influence change... The values I developed in St Andrews Meeting have led me to a career of trying to change things, through both the political system and through the voluntary sector where I have worked for social justice for children over the past 10 years."

Davey again, "I remember listening eagerly every time Alf (Stewart) spoke as everything he said seemed like a window onto a whole world of experience far more ancient and wise than my own!"

Another teenager, Helen Smith recalled, "One of the most unusual and interesting experiences that the Quaker youth group opened up to me was the opportunity to delve into other religions... Leslie Stevenson was the driving force behind exposing us to other forms of religious practice by taking us to join in with a number of religious ceremonies... I recall after leaving the Dundee Mosque a sense of amazement that people could believe such different things to me... Now, my religion is nature... I don't think I could have come to this without being exposed to other peoples' religion and ways of life."

Ellen remembered that sometimes there was an uneasy balance between the 'needs' of the teenagers and the Meeting. Projects could not be contained and complaints about untidiness were voiced. They felt ownership to a sofa they loved to curl up in and were stunned when it disappeared, replaced by an 'improved' version. This tension was resolved - a large pin board that covered one wall created and devoted to teenagers' projects.

Friendships were strengthened and eventually one wedding! Sonya Stevenson and Phil Potter. The spirit within the Meeting was nurtured

in so many ways and opened doors to the wider world beyond.

Buša Cochrane-Muir started attending the Meeting 5 years ago and gave insight into her personal journey. Initially coming to Meeting was expedient, a simple matter of car sharing as the bus service was much reduced on Sundays. She remembered being told she had lost her adventurous spirit and of feeling trapped in a place of spiritual stagnation. Coming to Meeting for the first time had been a life changing event with a feeling of arrival and oneness, of peace and wanting to join in.

Learning more about Quakers, attending an Enquirer's weekend at Swarthmore, workshops at Woodbrooke; attending two QPSW conferences was her defining moment, "I began to recapture my adventurous spirit." Buša had joined Friends from Angus, Perth and Dundee on the 1652 Pilgrimage and become involved in activities in St Andrews. These moments had been special and, "have been my building blocks." In February 2012 she was accepted into Membership.

How does St Andrews Meeting prosper today?

Naming some of the things that help to keep the Meeting vibrant.

- Workshops: Kindlers, Testimonies, Mindfulness and Self Care.
- Discussion groups book discussions mostly.
- Sharing our stories: Nan Stewart, Michael Gilderdale, Gillian Swanson and Caroline Wilson, now Whitehorn after her very recent marriage to Don, gave her story of Quakers in Spain.
- Experiment with Light was formed after a workshop at Dundee with Friends from Aberdeen and Dundee also attending.
- Singing in the Spirit once a month before M f W.
- Sharing the story of how our Meeting prospers with Alistair Fuller and Meg Hall from Quaker Life, making us look more closely at

our Meeting.

- QASTA reformed from PASTA. Two meetings held at the Meeting House with our MP Menzies Campbell; listened to Maureen Jack about her EAPPI experiences in Israel and Palestine. And of course letter writing to representatives in government.

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The Meeting and its activities is a continuing process, changing, adapting and nurturing that add to the richness of the Meeting as a whole.

Finally a quotation from Advices and Queries No 27.

"Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?"

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014

YMG – just another Quaker abbreviation, or a fantastic event bringing together Friends, friends and families from around Britain for a week of joyful communion at a beautiful venue at the height of summer? Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2014 promises to deliver just that. The University of Bath, set on Claverton Down, which sits on the south-east hilltop edge of the city, provides the setting for our event, along with superb accommodation and the newly commissioned Chancellors Building for our younger gatherers' activities. A luxury big top and a tented village of marquees and covered walkways will be home for our Quaker business and our special times for getting to know one another as we grow in community and spiritual learning.

There's much more than Quaker business at YMG, as those of who have been before will well know. Every waking moment is filled with opportunities for everyone: exploring the array of interests that make us such an eclectic group, learning about what we do in the world, and exploring spirituality through art and practical activities. Music, painting, gardening, being entertained and just relaxing are all part of the itinerary. And of course, we will be developing our understanding of what it means to be a Quaker today, a theme running through the previous two Yearly Meetings and culminating at Bath.

Inclusivity has been a major factor in all the planning. Families will find a full programme for children of all ages, from babies to Junior Meeting for 16-17 year olds who will be sharing the campus and some of the time with us. For the slightly older age group Woodbrooke will be running sessions from a new programme for young adult friends throughout the week. And for those of us at the other end of the age range, needing a bit of help with mobility, or maybe sensory enhancement, we hope to have learnt from previous events and facilities should be tip-top. The site has been chosen for ease of access to both accommodation and the events venue, with a flat walk between the two. For those of you who come alone there will be opportunities meet others, and for those of you who like the quieter moments there's no need to join in everything! Wednesday will be very special in that local Friends have been busy for a long time putting together a most varied programme of activities – an

'away-day' for those who want to get off campus and enjoy a local attraction or place of special interest, or maybe just a trip to somewhere nice.

Cost is always a major consideration and every effort has been made to provide for every purse. Accommodation ranges from full-board to self-catering, with en-suite or shared bathrooms. For campers there is a field some ten minutes walk away, with toilets and hot-showers planned. And for those whose purse is rather light, there are a number of ways of getting help. All area meetings should be making provision for Friends who want to come but need support, for transport and accommodation – do speak to your local overseer. Bursary support is an important part of ensuring this is truly a gathering for all, and we should all encourage one another to consider this option. Friend – is there anyone you know who could use a little help, and just needs a gentle prod?

What happens now? Come along and view our website <http://groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG/>. YMG sweatshirts and t-shirts are now available (click on the website's shop tab). Have a look at the faces of the committee and our clerks, and those who have already logged in. See the pictures of the university, and what our village will look like. Watch our YMG film. Check the options for age ranges and for accommodations, and join in the discussion. And keep your eyes open for the booking forms – online versions will be up and running in December, and paper versions sent to local meetings. And don't forget to tell all your F/friends!

Elders' Retreat: November 2013

Ten participants from the Local Meetings in East Scotland Area Meeting met up with some anticipation and, in my case at least, a little trepidation, to find out what the Elders' Retreat would involve. We were met and welcomed by Aileen and Jerry, the very warm and friendly hosts at Boswell House in Montrose. Everyone was made to feel at home and we met Michael Hennessey, our facilitator for the weekend, over the evening meal.

Between 7.30pm on Friday evening and 11am on Sunday morning, we shared seven sessions as well as a Business Meeting, working together in a variety of ways. During the weekend, participants considered different aspects of their responsibility as elders. Prayer and growth in the spiritual life were explored and we considered deeply an article in 'the Friend' of July 26, 2013, entitled 'Elders' gifts and authority' by Thomas Swain, a member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting who is currently working with the Kindlers.

Thomas Swain's article speaks of authority, teaching and gifts. Being able to use authority and teaching as an elder is, indeed, a challenge to British Friends. We were asked to consider this in the light of growth in the spiritual life. We acknowledged the paramount need to nurture our own spiritual lives before and whilst nurturing that of our Local Meetings. One consideration was our encouragement of spoken ministry that is 'in the life'. A long time was dedicated to reaching the heart of this and we discovered the need to look beyond the outward manifestation of spoken ministry to encouraging/promoting that life from which it stems. The best way to do this is to lead by example.

In concluding the article, Thomas Swain suggests that elders 'need gifts of discernment, listening, expressing support and prayer. Having a gift of humility enhances their role. If they don't have these gifts, they can work to learn them.

'The important gift as an elder is the love they abide in while they nurture and teach the worshipping community. This is where authority and gifts come together.'

Due, at least in part, to the quiet and sensitive guiding of the sessions by Michael Hennessey, the retreat grew from a group of Quaker individuals to a team of close f/Friends, sharing our joys and concerns, sometimes grappling with difficult questions together and enjoying each other's fellowship, determined to continue to support each other and to grow together as an effective team of elders for East Scotland Area Meeting in the coming weeks and months ahead.

The elders are grateful to the Area Meeting for the funding that has allowed this weekend to go ahead, confident that it has provided us with a firm basis on which we will continue to build.

Meri Goad



Elders' retreat in Montrose, November 2013

Eco Congregation Scotland

On 19 November I responded to an invitation received through Perth Action of Churches Together (PACT) to attend a meeting of the Perthshire Eco Churches Network. Rev Trevor Jamison, seconded to Eco Congregation Scotland from the United Reformed Church, spoke about *Churches and the Environment*.

He introduced his presentation on 'Reading the Bible through green-tinted lenses' and I was very taken with a resource in the form of interlocking pieces of a jigsaw which has been devised by the Anglican Diocese of Worcester. It has six pieces representing the priorities for the church:

Worship God
Rid the world of poverty
Share the gospel
Build inclusive communities
Help people to faith
Care for the earth

It is underpinned by Psalm 24.1 - *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.*

I learned that not a single Quaker Meeting has joined Eco Congregation Scotland. Who is interested in being the first? All that is required for membership is a commitment by the meeting to engagement in environmental issues and to taking action in their church and community.

For more information, go to www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Philip Bryers

You are warmly invited to this year's **Eco-Congregation Scotland Annual Gathering** on Saturday 29th March, 10am to 3.15pm at St. Aloysius College, Glasgow.

At a time when energy policy has never been more controversial, with proposals for fracking and nuclear power stations, and growing

awareness of the impact of climate change. The theme of this year's gathering is ENERGY.

How can churches effectively manage their energy efficiency? Where can they get support in doing so? Should churches stop investing in fossil fuel companies?

We are delighted to welcome John Ashton as keynote speaker alongside a range of interesting workshops ranging from the local to national and international. One of the world's top climate diplomats, John Ashton is now an independent commentator and adviser on the politics of climate change. From 2006-12 he served as Special Representative for Climate Change to three successive UK Foreign Secretaries, spanning the current Coalition and the previous Labour Government.

A light lunch will be provided and teas and coffees available throughout the day.

Space is limited so please send in your completed registration form as soon as possible. A full programme and registration form can be downloaded [here](#):

PDF Format:

<http://gh.cm/1fBBgc0>

or

Word Format:

<http://gh.cm/LjbE6k>

This can be returned by email to:

manager@ecocongregationscotland.org

or by post to:

Eco-Congregation Scotland
121 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4YN

Meeting for Sufferings 07 December 2013

Meeting for Sufferings was held in Friends House, London on Saturday December 7th 2013.

We heard a report from the Swarthmoor Hall Project Group (of which I was a member). A partnership with the National Trust will not now take place. Trustees propose to strengthen Britain Yearly Meeting governance and management of the Hall through an interim planning group and to implement a sustainable business plan. The intention is to make the Hall more businesslike without affecting outreach.

Individual Friends are encouraged to use it more.

The Minute 36 group, set up after Canterbury, is organising a conference at Swanwick on the 7 – 9 March called “Transforming ourselves, Transforming the System”

We had a concern brought to us from West Cumbria Area Meeting about multiple pressures on children and teachers in the current state education system. We also heard from a Primary school teacher in Newcastle who told us that her Quaker values underpin her work and she never loses sight of the children as valued individuals. Relentless government changes can be hard to deal with. After small group session we returned and it was suggested that Friends could be involved as School Governors which might bring leadership and hope to a particular school. Also in England and Wales we might consider volunteering to serve on one of the Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE) in order to contribute to thinking on Religious Education. (I believe these councils do not exist in Scotland).

Finally in 2014 there will be Meeting for Sufferings Regional gatherings throughout the UK. The Scottish one will be on 13 September 2014 in Aberdeen.

Alistair Milner

Book of Meetings 2013

Published by Yearly Meeting of The Society of Friends: £8

The new edition is a much enhanced version, quite different from its predecessors in a size that is much easier to handle, and is bookshelf-friendly. Its main purpose is to provide comprehensive details of all and every Local Quaker Meeting. The details are invaluable to 'away from home' Friends should they wish to join the nearest meeting for Worship wherever they are. A contact phone number, email address and website is provided for each Meeting House/Local Meeting together with location to help travellers. Time and frequency of Meetings with arrangements for children and those with handicap are also provided.

In addition to the body of the handbook, there are full details of Britain Yearly Meeting, its committees and related Quaker bodies. Of particular value to anyone making contact with Friends House is a list of those you may wish to contact, their responsibilities and contact addresses. 50 pages are devoted to every related organisation that make up the family of Quakers worldwide. Finally, there is a complete index rounding off a thoroughly comprehensive and valuable resource. A 'must have' for every Local Meeting and a book well worth at least a few minutes of every member's time.

Len Goad

Meetings for Worship

Dundee Meeting House, Whitehall Crescent, Sundays 11.00 am

Children's Meeting, first Sunday of each month
Monthly midweek meeting at University Chaplaincy – Feb 13th,
March 13th 1-1.35pm
Children's Contact: Clare South
Tel 01828 628645

St Andrews Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, Sundays 10.30 am

Midweek meeting Thursday 1.15-1.45pm
Childrens' Meeting - each Sunday during school terms
Enquiries: Margaret Hannah. 01334 477929

Perth: The Subud Centre, 7 St Leonard's Bank, Sundays 11.00 am

Second and last Sundays. Children's Meeting by arrangement.

Angus: Montrose Day Care Centre, Sundays 11.00 am

First, second and third Sundays
Lilac Cottage, Montrose at **11.00 am** on fourth Sundays

East of Scotland Area Meetings in 2013

9 February (Dundee), 11 May, 24 August, 2 November
Venues to be confirmed

