

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

February 2017

Clerk's Letter	2
Area Meeting in Glasgow	3
Minute from Pendle Hill Meeting on Fracking	6
Why Should I make a Contribution to Area Meeting	7
Contribution Schedule	9
Why Truth & Integrity are needed in Social Security	10
Report on Meeting for Suffering	11
Quaker Faith & Practice Chapter 27	14
George Fox's Book of Miracles	15
New Books in Glasgow Meeting Library	16
Friends Fellowship of Healing	17
Experiment with Light on the World	18
Poem – To A Mouse	19
Quaker Life Representative Council	20
Poem – The Inner Light	20
A Story – The Gift of the Ewe Mothers	21
News from Local Meetings	22
Dates for the Diary	24

Clerk's Letter

Reading in meeting

A little while back there was a somewhat anguished correspondence in The Friend (the British weekly Quaker newspaper) about the rights and wrongs of reading during meeting for worship. An elder had asked someone, politely and not in public, not to read all the time during worship and asked for advice on how other meetings coped. They had felt that this Friend was holding back the worship for the meeting by not connecting with it. The responses ranged from near outrage that anyone could be criticised for what they do in meeting to some sympathy with the need to ensure a worshipping atmosphere. But mainly it was worry about being negative to what anyone wanted or needed to do in meeting. The person eldered might not come back.

We don't really tell people what to do when in meeting, so they don't always know what is right to do or not. Generally we pick it up by following what others do or finding what works for us. And there are leaflets. But I do recall someone telling me once about how to sit properly: comfortably, back up, feet on the floor, hands in lap – a posture easy for many to be in without moving for some time and that allows mental settling and doesn't distract with fidgeting. I found it really useful and found I can sit for an hour much more easily and get into things better. Some may use reading as a way into worship too, settling the mind.

One of the most profound spiritual experiences of my life was an intense gatheredness in a waiting room on Lancaster station. I was on my way back down south after a session with the warden at Swarthmoor Hall, whom I line managed at the time. The issues about running the hall were also intense and not always easy. Perhaps that intensity opens us to possibilities. Anyway, it was late and I was alone reading a magazine and the only other person there was a woman reading too, across the way. Suddenly I became aware of a profound stillness and a sense of deep connectedness with the universe. I suspect both of us felt it but we never moved or spoke. Quaker experience is that a truly settled meeting can end up like that, as we all contribute to the gathered nature of worship. Reading didn't seem to stop this at all.

But there can be a different experience – we don't settle, we are not gathered together as a worshipping whole, but remain distracted individuals. Small things like scratchy turning of pages regularly can distract and drive you mad. I've been to small meetings where everyone (nearly) was reading at the start

and it did feel like a waiting room again – but more like a doctor’s one where we all took refuge from each other and the place we were in. What would a newcomer make of that?

We can all have a tendency to want to control behaviour of others, to lay down rules on How Things Are Done. Quaker experience has been to eschew that. We can give advice on our collective experience of what works, but then we are flexible to the situation. It is not whether we are reading or not, or sitting correctly, or just speaking once, or not making worship a discussion group, or whatever. It is whether we are collectively open to the transformative experience of gathered worship. Yes, occasionally we need our elders to remind us of things or even to hold us to account, but that’s not the real point. Meeting for worship works if we all contribute to it by letting go of ourselves and being held by others; of meeting the Spirit. What is right is what contributes to a shared collective experience of gatheredness and meeting with the other. We can each review how we behave in meeting; is it allowing us to become one in the meeting? Is it allowing others to do so without distracting them by our funny little ways? Is the result transformative? And we can be generous with each other.

Are we doing everything to help the meeting for worship work, not just for ourselves? What sort of waiting room are we in?

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

Report of West Scotland Area Meeting, held in Glasgow 14 January 2017

44 members, 7 attenders and 2 visitors assembled, ready to listen to our leadings. This was a well attended Area Meeting, perhaps prompted by the discernment we were to undertake on a possible Concern on Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs. First, we used our discernment on matters to do with our own community.

- We agreed to send the testimony on the Grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Christine Davis to both General Meeting for Scotland and Britain Yearly Meeting – so that all Friends who read it may be inspired by the impact and extent of our Friend’s service.
- We dealt with an application for membership and the transfer out of our Ayrshire Friend Joan Yardel’s membership. Nominations matters included: the release of Clare Phillips (Castle Douglas) from AM overseers... to allow her to be appointed as an AM elder until the end of 2017; the nomination of Ian MacDonald, Zem Moffat and Gill Reid to look after the General Meeting Enquirer’s Gathering for 2017; and the request for release from AM overseers

of Margaret Gray. We appointed a number of WSAM Friends to attend General Meeting on 11 March in Edinburgh.

- We were troubled to learn that the Young People's Link Weekend for Scotland planned for February had had to be cancelled as there were only five 11-16 year olds going. Also, finding two Young Friends (aged 16-18) for Junior Yearly Meeting had not yet happened. We know how valuable these experiences can be in linking our young people into Quaker ways and to each other, when the norms of wider society and school may be very different, and local meetings were asked to consider Young Friends in their meetings.
- Our numbers in West Scotland seem to be relatively stable at (for 2016) 212 members (75 identifying as male, 139 female) and 237 attenders (80 male, 121 female, 36 children).
- No marriages had taken place after the manner of Friends in 2016 but we were pleased to agree to a request to marry after the manner of Friends by Elizabeth Mackin, attender at Glasgow meeting, and Amer Syed, attender at Aberdeen and Glasgow meetings – something for us all to look forward to!

After lunch we moved to the issue of Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs, prompted by consideration of the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust's decision to provide financial assistance towards the costs of Alastair Carmichael MP's court case. Michael Hutchinson reminded us of what our discernment was about – do we collectively have a Quaker concern upon which we have a religious imperative to act? Can we become clear on what is laid upon us to do? We might well be troubled about lack of truth and integrity but that is not the same as a 'concern' which 'arises from our faith and is a manifestation of it' (Jane Pearn).

Helen Drewery, Head of Worship and Witness for Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) gave us a helpful introduction. In describing what is bubbling up currently in BYM, she pointed to three things.

1. General feelings of anxiety and a deep unease shared widely by British society and beyond focusing on Brexit campaigning, 'post-truth', the US elections, fake news, a distrust of experts.... But it is not yet clear that there is a BYM Quaker position or leadings to any specific action.
2. Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) has begun to focus on aspects of government policy, the sense of government not being driven by the will of the people or the best interests of the country (eg climate change and big oil companies exerting undue influence on fracking), undue secrecy and attempts to mislead (eg militarisation of schools)
3. Concerns beginning to emerge locally across BYM, being tested by Area Meetings. One example is General Meeting for Scotland's concern on cadet forces in Scottish state schools. Another is Pendle Hill Area Meeting's concern on fracking (their inspiring minute to Meetings for Sufferings for February is included later in this newsletter).

Helen emphasised that the more focused we could be, the better. We need to be as

clear as we can of the nature of our concern and that we have a sense of a spiritual leading to this work.

It is very difficult to summarise the different contributions of Friends in subsequent ministry. Some themes were specific to the JRRT issue (it was an issue of perversion of democracy; should there be more Quaker directors of JRRT; could Friends House have intervened; the need to keep charity and political funding separate). Others were about more general issues and underlying principles (whatever we do, can we keep our language simple, Donald Trump communicates simply through tweets?; the importance of grounding in worship of any action; the need for support and expectations of truthfulness in our public servants including politicians, and how difficult it can be when a politician tries to express a truthful opinion that is not in line with party or expected thinking). A Friend reminded us of the saying 'when you point the finger, you should note that there are three fingers pointing back at you'. We can ask, 'how does the Truth prosper amongst *us*'?

We agreed to ask local meetings to exercise further discernment on this developing concern and to report back to AM in time for our April meeting.

The next Area Meetings are 13 March by telephone and in Wigtown on 8 April.

Sheila Semple, Glasgow

**Minute from Pendle Hill Area Meeting to Meeting for Sufferings
for discernment in February 2017
(see report from West Scotland Area Meeting earlier in this newsletter)**

Pendle Hill Area Meeting are concerned about fracking around the world. This is a world issue but it is also a local issue and we are particularly active around the current situation in Lancashire as Friends opposing fracking through actions, and as members of other organisations who protect the planet. We are known, as Quakers, for silence but we are talking, singing and shouting about this. As a yearly meeting, action is being taken on our behalf but we need more: more action in protests, in changing our lifestyles, but especially in challenging government. All the factual evidence is there against fracking and for sustainable alternatives but the powers that be can still speak out as if there is no evidence, act against all of the facts and act against the people that they represent. We have had our local democratic processes overturned by central government, we have had local people bullied and intimidated by big business and we have had our faith in our governing processes seriously undermined: there is a growing lack of belief that our country has the best interests of its people at heart. It is clear that this is not only an environmental issue regarding the stewardship of this planet, it is also about trust. We need to have a political structure that we can trust to tell us the truth in all aspects of the running of this country, representatives who we can trust to take a long term view of the future not a short term financial and political view and who we can trust to act in the best interests of its citizens rather than the best interests of business and their own careers. We ask Britain Yearly Meeting to maximise involvement in ecumenical and interfaith structures that allow faith groups to have a strong united environmentalist voice on fracking, and that as Quakers

nationally we take a public stance against fracking. We also ask that we act, however we can, to challenge the lack of accountability and integrity in the politics of this country.

From Mairi Campbell-Jack on fracking:

Claudia Beamish MSP currently has a private members bill on the banning of fracking, open for consultation until the 17th February. Response by both organizations and individuals will help form the basis of the bill. goo.gl/wsqqysy

Also, there is currently also a Scottish Government consultation on fracking which I will distribute information on later in the month. If you are interested in opposing fracking it is worth filling out both as they will both contribute to moving a ban further up the agenda. If anyone has any questions about this they can contact either myself or Chris Walker at Friends House.

Why should I contribute to West Scotland Area Meeting?

Membership entails a financial commitment appropriate to a member's means, for without money neither the local meeting nor the wider structure can function.

Quaker Faith and Practice 11.01

Friends in West Scotland Area Meeting share a commitment to the Quaker way of worship and are inspired by our faith to work for a better world. Our Area Meeting has 216 members and 236 attenders and we worship regularly in twelve Local Meetings and meet seven times a year as an Area Meeting.

We own 2 meeting houses, one in Glasgow and one in Wigtown.

You can help strengthen the Quaker community both spiritually and in speaking out to promote peace, justice, equality and sustainability.

There are many ways you can contribute to our work but an important one is by giving money.

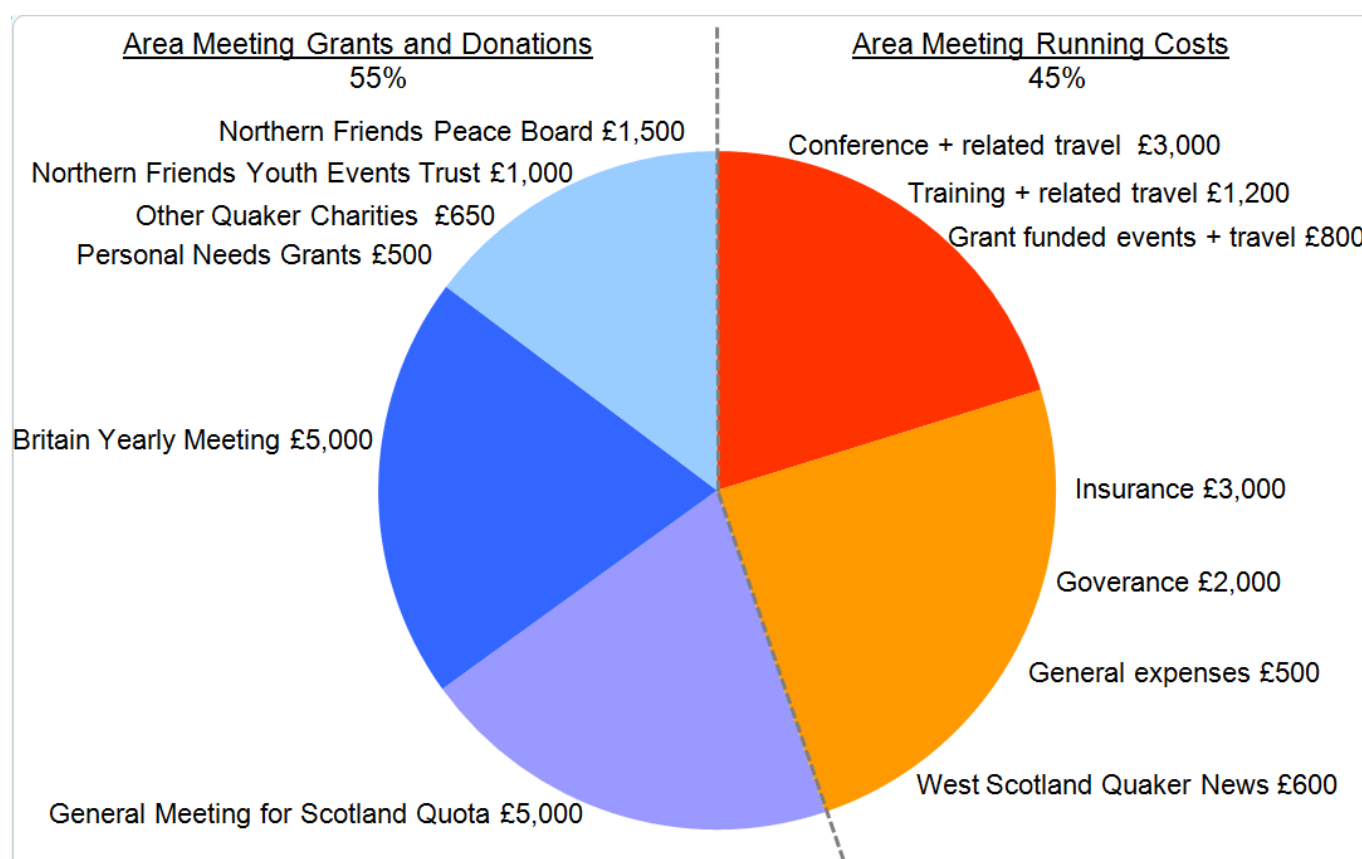
What will Area Meeting do with your contribution?

This year we hope members and attenders of West Scotland Area Meeting will contribute nearly £25,000 to support the work of the Area Meeting. This money is used to fund activities that enhance and enrich our spiritual community, to help Friends on their spiritual journeys and to work within the wider Quaker Community.

Some of the money is used to support the activities within the Area Meeting and the rest is used to support Quaker life and work out with the Area Meeting. This year's budget can roughly be divided into fifths:

- One fifth to Britain Yearly Meeting to support the central work of the Society
- One fifth to General Meeting for Scotland to support the work done in Scotland
- One fifth to support the spiritual life of the Area Meeting by sending Friends to conferences and on courses to learn about and share in the spiritual life of the Society
- Just over one fifth will be needed to cover the expenses of our community including insurance, governance and the newsletter
- Just under one fifth will be given as grants and donations to support other Quaker charities in their work on our behalf.

Area Meeting budget 2017



Please consider contributing to support the life of your Area Meeting.
Without your contributions this work cannot happen

We realise that everyone's circumstances are different.

Some friends are unable to contribute much financially, whilst others may be able to contribute more and we hope they will do so. Some friends can make a regular contribution, whilst others may only be able to make

occasional contributions.

We are grateful for all donations regardless of size or frequency.

How can I contribute?

If you wish to make a regular commitment complete the Contribution Schedule over the page specifying how your contribution should be allocated and send it to the Assistant Treasurer. If you do not specify any allocation the whole amount will go to West Scotland Area Meeting.

If you would prefer set up a bank transfer to make occasional one-off payments please contact the Treasurer 01290 553385

How much should I contribute?

If you need some help in deciding what to give, here are some guidelines:

Your Local Meeting Treasurer can tell you what your Local Meeting needs to cover its activities and commitments (room hire or meeting house costs, children's meeting, etc)

The Area Meeting budget shown here can be achieved based on an average contribution of £115 per member per year; this is just under £10 per month or £2.20 per week

Britain Yearly Meeting plans its central work on receiving £165 per member per year; this is around £14 per month or £3.20 per week

If you are a UK tax payer you can gift aid your donation which means we can claim an additional 25p for every £1 donated.

To find out more please ask the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer

Important

If you do not pay tax, you cannot claim Gift Aid

You must have paid enough tax to cover all the Gift Aid reclaimed, otherwise you will be liable to pay back to HMRC the amount falsely claimed. Please inform the treasurer if your circumstances change and you are no longer a tax payer.

If you have any questions or require further information please contact:

Kate Gulliver (Treasurer) 01290 553385

email: wsamtreasurer@gmail.com

**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
West Scotland Area Meeting
Contribution schedule 2017**



Name

I wish to contribute £..... per month / quarter / annum
to be allocated:

To Local Meeting £.....

To West Scotland Area Meeting £.....

To Britain Yearly Meeting £.....

I shall make my payment by:

(Please indicate)

Cheque

Standing Order / bacs payment

CAF Voucher / Standing Order

Please indicate:

- If you wish a receipt or acknowledgement
- If you would like a standing order mandate form
- If you would like bank details for bacs payment
- If you would like a gift aid declaration form

Cheques and CAF Vouchers must be made payable to

Religious Society of Friends West Scotland Area Meeting

Please return this form and any donations to the Assistant Treasurer
of West Scotland Area Meeting:

Margaret Morton, 13 Gartmore Road, PAISLEY PA1 3NG

email: margmor@btopenworld.com

Why Truth and Integrity are needed in Social Security

At the January West Scotland Area meeting, Helen Drewery presented us with the background to the Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs concern.

I was surprised that the way in which we seek to ameliorate poverty through the social security system had not been raised. The cruelty of the sanctions system has been highlighted in Ken Loach's film *I, Daniel Blake* [1] and academic research has shown how it contributes not only to poverty, but to destitution [2].

I suggested that the operation of the social security system is directly linked to the Truth and Integrity agenda because misleading presentations of people living on social security are routinely presented through newspapers and packaged as a form of entertainment (known as "poverty porn") on TV programmes such as *Benefits Street* [3]. Research has found a strong work ethic among people living in poverty in five case study areas across the UK. [4]

Yet the prevalent misleading portrayals lead to widespread misperceptions among the public, which feed back into policy. Thus a survey conducted by MORI on behalf of the Royal Statistical Society found that: "*people estimate that 34 times more benefit money is claimed fraudulently than official estimates: the public think that £24 out of every £100 spent on benefits is claimed fraudulently, compared with official estimates of £0.70 per £100.*" [5]

That several Friends expressed surprise and even scepticism to me after I made this point at the meeting reinforces my belief in the need for greater Truth and Integrity in public discourse about social security and poverty.

[1] M. Stephens (2016) *I, Daniel Blake demands a political response*, <http://j.tinyurl.com/zx9phf3>

[2] S. Fitzpatrick, et al (2016) *Destitution in the UK*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk>

[3] Wikipedia *Benefits Street* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benefits_Street

[4] K. Gibb. M. Stephens, et al (2016) *How does housing affect work incentives for people in poverty?* Joseph Rowntree Foundation <http://preview.tinyurl.com/j2ez9t8>

[5] MORI (2013) *Perceptions are not reality* <http://preview.tinyurl.com/pcoz524>

Mark Stephens, Lanark Meeting

'Leadership' is a concept we often resist. It seems immodest, even self-aggrandising, to think of ourselves as leaders. But of it is true that we are made for community, then leadership is everyone's vocation, and it can be an evasion to think that it is not. When we love in a close-knit ecosystem called community everyone follows, and everyone leads. **Parker Palmer in *Let Your Life Speak*.**

Report on Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) held at Friends House, 3 December 2016

(plus Young people/Young adults Participation day held alongside MfS).

Criminal Justice

The theme of criminal justice underpinned two key agenda items. MfS had asked Area Meetings (AM) to consider the following:

A paper from Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) entitled **“Towards a Vision for the Criminal Justice System”**.

A Minute of Cornwall Area Meeting: **“Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs.”**

Each of the above had attracted comments from more than 20 AMs, some of them very detailed, and representatives from some Meetings spoke to these comments.

Vision document

This consisted of “for” and “against” statements in terms of the various aspects of criminal justice. Quakers were “for” X and “against” Y. In this way the building blocks of a vision were assembled. Thus it was that MfS asked AMs to consider if the statements concurred with the views of Quakers throughout Britain. The comments were broadly in agreement with the statements and often contained useful suggestions about how this document could be elaborated upon and taken forward as something that could be more widely read and acted upon. They are seen as pointers about “where to go next” in terms of developing the vision.

Decriminalisation of drugs

Tony, the member of Cornwall AM whose concern had led to the Minute, spoke movingly how he came to this concern. Others, like him, had worked in the field of drug and alcohol abuse and rehabilitation, and all said that personally they were in favour of decriminalization.

However, the comments from AMs were mixed: some supported decriminalization, whilst others were against (though largely because they felt they did not know enough about such a complex subject).

MfS seeks to find ways in which Cornwall can further their concern.

I mentioned it to my son, Peter, who was with me attending the youth participation day. He is now 18 and explained that topic of drugs was of great interest to his age group; indeed, it was one of the main topics of conversation among his peers. Much of their discussion centred upon the issue of freedom to experiment if one wished.

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Elaine Green spoke about the work of the Council, which operates from a house in Brussels where quiet diplomacy goes on in the form of diplomats being able to discuss things off the record. Quakers are trusted as members of a Peace Church and

the house provides a safe, trusted haven.

She explained how Brexit had far reaching implications that could, however, be managed in terms of the Council's work. Britain Yearly Meeting is by far the largest of the European Yearly Meetings and all Meetings had agreed that, whatever happened, BYM would remain part of the Council. Commitment was to Europe as a community, not as an institution. The Council is being renamed as a "General Assembly" with a bureau acting as the legal body to safeguard the work, which consists of two strands: peace building and human rights.

Friends represent BYM at the following Yearly Meetings: Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.



Revision to the Book of Discipline

Lesley Richards spoke to the report of the Book of Discipline Preparation Group. This is of particular interest to Glasgow Meeting, which has a lively "Reading Quaker Faith and Practice" project involving 50 members and attenders. It is aimed at getting Friends talking about all aspects of our lives together.

At this stage, the group thinks that the church government part of Quaker Faith and Practice should be revised comprehensively rather than simply updated. This is seen as an integral part of a wider revision of the Book of Discipline; a revision which might start with church government, but may not be confined to this area.

Lesley explained that they were being guided by the following structure: an explanation of core principles followed by how this works out in practice.

She also said that the group felt that the terms non-theist and theist were not helpful and did not reflect the multi-dimensional differences within the Society of Friends.

Cadet Forces in State Schools

General Meeting for Scotland's concern regarding cadet forces in state schools in

Scotland was allied with a minute from Staffordshire Area Meeting expressing concern about the Government sponsorship of cadet forces in state schools. Both minutes are now with QPSW Central Committee for consideration.

First World War Commemorations 2018

The Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations encourages Area Meetings to be active in their local Churches Together and Interfaith networks, as well as relevant national organisations such the Royal British Legion, to influence commemoration services towards reconciliation. Friends are encouraged to use the QCCIR e-cluster for discussion and to learn about available resources.

Quaker Life Central Committee

This committee has been doing a lot of important work on Death and Dying, and Children and Young People. They are currently struggling with the following: how to support mobile unattached Friends and the pastoral and spiritual care of dispersed Friends living in remote rural areas.

Participation Day (young people and young adults)

38 young folk attended this event including two from West Scotland Area Meeting: Charlene Dalton and Peter Tyler.

I met them both for lunch in Friends House restaurant. They asked me many interesting questions including one called: “What do you think is the most difficult thing about being a Quaker?” I responded that I found it difficult to explain my Quakerism to non-Quakers. This struck a chord. In Charlene’s case, she had not been able to tell her boyfriend about Friends because she found it so difficult.

An interesting discussion: we could easily have spent the whole of our lunch exploring this question further.

Thinking about it afterwards, my difficulties seem quite different from Charlene’s or Peter’s. Recently I spoke to a new attender of retirement age about being a Quaker. She explained that she was of a non-theist persuasion. So, there I was called on to respond to someone who had already looked into Quakerism in some detail, whereas Charlene’s boyfriend and other friends had not even heard of Quakers.

Our get-together at lunch was, for me, the most interesting part of the day because it made me realize that young people need support to help explain to their peers (not fellow shindiggers, but folk outside their circle) what it is to be a Quaker – in terms that will make sense to people of that age.

I spoke to Peter afterwards about what he had got from the day, and he said it was good to meet up with young folk from all over Britain; in fact, he could have done with more time just to chat (he described the day as “rushed”). He learned more about Quakers and about young adult’s events that were going on nationally. He’s now on the email list for alerts about these activities (go to yfgm.quaker.org.uk if you want to join yourself).

Ed Tyler, Argyll, alternate rep. for West Scotland

Quaker Peace and Practice, Chapter 27

Spirituality is beyond language; God is beyond language. All are One and One touches All. This is how we started our session with the reading of Robert Barclay, 27.05.: *men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who . . . by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and there-through become true members of the Catholic church.* We said God will touch whoever he will regardless of faiths. *'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers'* – William Penn, 27.01. We had a sense of the unity of all humanity.

Jesus said that what he taught was the Father's – *God himself will teach his people.* We are taught in our silence and when we take it on as our own we develop it in relationship. How does it take us into the world? We are shaken by what goes on around us and seek to resolve it but we do not have a blueprint for peace . . . Our Quaker way is to respect and cherish the person.

Despite a central core of belief between churches, for a community of faith to develop we need to talk, to explore our ethical positions. As humans we are a broken plant, stuck in the head. How does the heart change? What are Quakers doing? Although we have transcended creeds, we have not yet managed to practice in community that difficult bit of engaging with our brokenness and our wonderfulness. Though we have no creeds we are still stuck at the level of cognitive mind but that is well disguised preventing us from living deeper in the heart to live the message of Jesus in a real way (or another wise being). Since Jesus is the striking example in our society we may as well journey with him! BUT WHAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY?

One member of the group started in the early 70s with a strong sense of spiritual connection, not in intellectual terms because no connection with the church. He was moved by the words: *what canst thou say?* He connected with the direct experience of others. In Quakers he met others on the same wavelength but he has been waiting 30 years for the next step. Gerald Priestland, 27.18: *The church is a community and it is a continuity. . . Quakers may be an experimental sect – both in the modern sense of pushing forward the frontiers of faith, and in the older sense of insisting upon experience as the basis of their faith – but if we are honest we must admit that we build upon the foundations laid for us over many centuries by the Church.* Fox and Woolman couch their writings in Christian language but push the frontiers of faith. Real ecumenicalism is found in a way of life. . Having empathy, where do we go now? What way of life expresses universal faith? Buddhists would say it is a rare thing to be born a human so not to waste opportunities.

The visioning process in Glasgow meeting brought the Quaker experience to life for some. How do we learn that today? Teaching ministry was a strong theme of visioning and the quality of ministry can vary. Small meetings can be overwhelmed by strangers who have no sense of what it means to be a Quaker. We felt spoken ministry could be shallow. Does God really speak to the same people every week? The same people tend to minister. How do we hold each other to be accessible, to be a Quaker? We felt we needed to converse with the people we travel with. How are we helping one another explore what it means to use our faith in practice? How do we use our privilege to help the world? We are not the last generation of Quakers to have these questions. Only 15,000, we have a huge influence and a wealth of energy, wisdom and principles.

On Ben Pink Dandelion's weekend at Swarthmoor Hall, Open for Transformation: being a Quaker, it was felt the Quaker meeting offered a valuable space in a busy world and we also offered our process of discernment.

George Fox's Book of Miracles

When George Fox died in 1691, he left money to pay for the printing and distribution of his written work, with thirteen Friends appointed to take charge of the task. Three volumes were published over the next fifteen years. One book that did not appear in print was the Book of Miracles, although there is proof that it existed in manuscript form from references in Fox's own writings and in a *Catalogue of George Fox's Papers* in 1694. There is no copy now known to exist.

What was this lost book about? Why did it disappear from view? These were questions that Henry J Cadbury set out to answer when he began his research in the Quaker archives in the 1930's, eventually publishing "*George Fox's Book of Miracles*" in 1949.

From the index in the *Catalogue*, cross-referenced with Fox's other written works and contemporary records, Cadbury was able to reconstruct an outline of the original text. The original was clearly a narrative account of the miracles associated with Fox, consisting mainly of instances where the sick had been cured of their physical and mental ailments through God's power and love. It demonstrates that George Fox saw healing as an important part of his ministry and a testament to the truth of his religious message. As he says in his Journal: "*Many great and wonderful things were wrought by the heavenly power in those days; for the Lord.... manifested his power to the astonishment of many by the healing virtue whereof many have been delivered from great infirmities, and the devils were made subject to his name....*"

For much of the 1600's, as in previous centuries, belief in divine intervention in the

material world was not a strange concept; it was a commonly held view. Indeed, miraculous powers were expected from those who claimed special spiritual inspiration. For many of the reformed sects – Seekers, Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers and the like - miracles were proof of the reality of Christ’s healing presence and redemptive power. True prophets were expected to be endowed with curative powers!

Such claims also attracted controversy. Numerous contemporary pamphleteers set out to disprove, or even mock, Quaker assertions of healing powers. By the time of Fox’s death, the climate of opinion was beginning to change and a new age of reason was creeping in. Prominent Quakers, like Penn and Barclay, openly stated that miracles were unnecessary to confirm the truth of their message: “*We need not miracles because we preach no new gospel, but that which is confirmed by all the miracles of Christ and his apostles*” (Barclay).

Could it be that Fox’s literary executors were embarrassed by the Book of Miracles? It is certainly true that, in the first edition of Fox’s Journal, the editor and his editorial committee saw fit to remove two references to the book of miracles, to omit some narrative descriptions of miracles and to alter the wording of others.

George Fox’s Book of Miracles was republished with extensive introductory material in the year 2,000 by Quakers United in Publishing It is a scholarly and somewhat demanding work which is fascinating for those who are interested in the history and experiences of early Quakers.

Margaret Morton, Glasgow

NEW BOOKS IN GLASGOW MEETING LIBRARY

Woodhouse, Tom and Lederach, John Paul. *Adam Curle: radical peacemaker*.
Hawthorn Press, 2016 P/WOO

Shukla, Nikesh (ed.) *The good immigrant*. Unbound, 2016 S/SHU

Bill, J. Brent. *Holy silence: the gift of Quaker spirituality*. 2nd ed. Eerdman,
2016. Q/BIL

Librarian, Paul Burton will send books at cost of postage. paulfburton@btinternet.com

It is what we decide to do with the time that is given us.
Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings*

Friends Fellowship of Healing

Quaker National Day of Healing

The FFH, founded in 1935, is an informal Quaker group, seeking to uphold the cause of a healing ministry. We have prayer groups attached to at least 75 Local Meetings across the U.K. as well as members in Australia and the U.S.A. In addition, there are postal prayer groups and telephone contacts specifically for Immediate or Urgent conditions with a designated group for the Mother and Unborn Child. The most recent addition to all these is a Healing Circle which operates online. The Fellowship runs conferences, retreats and workshops and there is a residential centre at Lingfield in Surrey. Many of our members engage in contact healing and these Friends form the sub-group of Quaker Spiritual Healers.

In spite of all this activity, it is perhaps surprising that the FFH does not have a higher profile in the Quaker world. This year, our committee are promoting a Quaker National Day of Healing, to be held on Saturday, 18th March. They hope to encourage as many Local Meetings as possible to arrange to take part in an open-ended Meeting for Worship starting at 11am and running through to perhaps 4pm. Prayers would be for the state of the world. It would be unlikely that many Friends would wish to spend the whole 5 hours in prayer for distant healing - rather it would be expected that we may come and go with a rota of Elders arranged to take charge in each hour.

Of course, it could not be expected that a committee down in London would be aware that a good number of West Scotland Quakers would be gathering at Crianlarich on their chosen weekend. However, I am happy to give any further information to any Friends who are interested in this project. We know that ideas do not necessarily spring up in isolation so I may add that Glasgow Elders are currently seeking dates to hold an open-ended Meeting for Worship later this year.

Muriel Robertson, Milngavie

For further information Tel: 01389 763 963

Arran Meeting will hold a Quaker Healing Meeting on 18th March, 11-4pm in the Small Hall at Whiting Bay.

Judith Baines and Gilliam Lithgoe and others will be giving hands on healing.

Judith is trained by the National Federation of Spiritual Healers.

Working with others on the island, they hope to send healing to the planet.

Embracing the mystery of depression does not mean passivity or resignation. It means moving into a field of forces that seems alien but is in fact one's deepest self. It means waiting, watching, listening, suffering, and gathering whatever self-knowledge one can – and then making choices based on that knowledge, no matter how difficult. One begins the slow walk back to health by choosing each day things that enliven one's selfhood and resisting things that do not. **Parker Palmer in *Let Your Life Speak*.**

Experiment with Light Meditation on the World

Rex Ambler *Light to Live By* Quaker Books

Here is a useful guided meditation from the Experiment with Light practice. You can do it on your own or with a group. Several groups already meet in different local meetings. This particular meditation is most apt on these troubled times.

1. Relax body and mind. Start by making yourself perfectly comfortable. Feel the weight of your body on the chair, then consciously release the tension in each part of your body. Now let all your immediate worries go; in particular, let go of any images or stories of the world that have touched you recently from television and newspapers. We want to know the truth about our world. So let yourself be wholly receptive. *Then wait 5 minutes to settle*
 2. In this receptive state of mind, let the real issues of the world emerge. Ask yourself: 'What is really going on in the world? What is happening in the world as I know it, as I experience it?' And be specific: ' . . . in the world of work, of commerce, politics'. Is there anything there that makes you feel uncomfortable? Don't try to answer yourself. Let the answer come. Let the light show you what is happening. *Wait in the silence 6-7 minutes*
 3. Now focus on one issue that presents itself, one thing that gives you a sense of unease. Try to get a sense of this thing as a whole. And ask yourself: 'What is it about this situation, those events, those people that makes me feel uncomfortable?' Let the truth disclose itself. And when it does, let a word or image come that says what it is really like, what it is that touches you. *Wait in the silence 6-7 minutes, or longer as you wish.*
 4. Now ask yourself what makes it like that. Don't try to explain. Just wait in the light till you can see for yourself. If you lose your concentration simply ask why? Keep asking why, then wait for an image, a word, a memory. Be open to the truth, hard though it may be, and it will surely be revealed to you. *Wait in the silence 6-7 minutes, or longer.*
 5. When the answer comes, welcome it. It may be surprising, even difficult to believe. It may not fit in with what you want to believe, or what you have seen and heard by others. But if it fits your own experience you will know immediately that it is true. And accepting that it is true will bring a sense of peace, and a freedom from the worry that has surrounded this issue. *Wait in the silence 6-7 minutes*
 6. Now finally, consider how you need to act. You won't need to weigh up alternatives or think through strategies. You will know in your heart what an appropriate response will be. What are you being called to do? How is the light leading you? Is it to do what you have already been doing for some time? Or is it to do something different? Only you will know, as you open yourself to the truth. *Wait in the silence 6-7 minutes, or longer.*
- When you feel ready, open your eyes, stretch your limbs, and bring the meditation to an end

Robert Burn's Ode to a Homeless Mouse

On turning her up in her nest, with the plough, Nov 1785

Wee, sleekit, cowr'n, tim'rous *beastie*,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee.
 Wi' murd'ring *pattle*!

I'm truly sorry Man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
 Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor. earth-born companion,
 An' *fellow-mortal*!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? Poor *beastie*, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
 'S a sma. Request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
 An' never miss 't.

Thy wee-bit *housie* , too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
 An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O' foggage green!
An' bleak *December's winds* ensuing,
 Baith snell and' keen.

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' wast,
An' weary *Winter* comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! The cruel *coulter* past
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a wary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble.
 But house or hald,
To thole the *Winter's sleety dribble*,
 An' *cranreuch* cauld!

By Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,
In proving *foresight* may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' *Mice an' Men*,
 Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us naught buy grief an' pain
 For promis'd joy!

Still, thou art blest, compare'd wi' *me*!
The *present* only touchesth thee:
But Och! I *backward* cast my e'e,
 On prospects drear!
An' *forward*, tho' I canna see,
 I *guess* an' *fear*!

Taken from the *Kilmarnock edition so Burns own spelling and punctuation.*



Photo taken from Wikipedia.

The Quaker Life Representative Council

The Quaker Life Representative Council which meets on the 21st to 23rd of April will have the following as its theme: **“Seekers Find Quakers – Being Worth The Finding.”**

A paragraph from QLRC invitation to your representative conveys the issues the Council hopes to explore :

“We know our Quaker message is still startling and powerful, that experientially we can know God directly in our lives; that is the well from which we draw our courage and inspiration. What is the story we have to tell? What excites us – and our Meetings – about being Quakers today? How can we, as Friends, become a more visible presence where we live, learn and work? How can we be seen as Quakers - letting our lives speak as patterns and examples? How can we take our message and reach out more effectively in our own localities?”

Send your thoughts to Howard Bartlem Howardbartlem@yahoo.co.uk

The Inner Light

Day after day, I find a little time to be alone.
I sit down quietly and listen to my feelings.
Beyond being present, there's nothing to be done.

Though I do nothing, everything will happen,
By no power of mine, but out of darkness.
It is like coming home. Little by little,

A sense of peace may come, a sense of stillness.
Once in a while, there may be something more,
A sudden breath, a light, an open line.

Robert Foxcroft, Milngavie

A Story – The Gift of the Ewe Mothers

Adapted from a short story by George Mackay Brown

Morag had a hard life, but we won't talk about that. She married a shepherd, Ewan, and went to live in a remote glen. She was happy there with Ewan even though he was often away on the hills looking after the sheep so she spent much time on her own. She often walked with him especially when the ewes were pregnant and in need of special care.

How she loved the ewes who came to know her gentle hands as she eased their pains and helped them with their lambs. All the time she sang to them. Especially she would sing to them when the time came to take their lambs away to market. At that time she would often lie beside them in the night singing as they cried at their loss. She brought them much comfort.

Morag and Ewan were happy except that they had no little lambs of their own. None of Morag's pregnancies would end successfully. She lost all her babies some before they were even born. Year after year.

Then the miracle happened and one pregnancy went right to the end. Alas, the little boy was still-born. Morag's heart was broken. She cried and cried. Her husband held her in his arms but his heart was broken too. He put the little baby aside and just cradled Morag, the two of them.

When the ewes started to bleat outside he had no heart to deal with it. It was the cry of a ewe who had lost her lamb. How could he deal with such a situation now. But the ewes cried and cried. What a racket! Eventually he went to the kitchen door.

There were all the ewes staring at him, waiting. Their white woolly coats standing out in the light from the door. He looked down at his feet. There was another ewe lying across the doorstep. And there, asleep, cuddling into her soft, warm wool was a new born baby. Alive. How could he believe his eyes? All around was still, or that was until he picked up the baby who immediately started to cry, lustily. He rushed through to Morag. Can you imagine her joy?

News from Local Meetings

Mill & Iona

In our first meeting this year, we read A&Q 33: "Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminates against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs?"

Bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society's conventions or its laws. Try to discern new and growing points in social and economic life. Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?"

Today's reading was relevant to the political changes and social attitudes.

Do we sometimes remain silent when someone else makes a demeaning remark about an ethnic or religious group, and to avoid disturbing the social cohesion of the group, and we fail to express what we think is right?

It was felt important for us to trust God and to give space to discern God's way.

Following on from these insights, the importance of coming together to listen to God's Spirit and then to allow a harmonic transmission of Grace into society, was emphasised.

The power of this collective transmission was illustrated from Thom Hartmann's book "The Prophets Way".

The meeting was followed by a soup and roll lunch, in which Chris Reade from the Mull Cheese factory spoke of her recent journey to an earthquake devastated village in Nepal.

Chris is raising money for the village, which she gives directly to the villagers. It has been used to build one house already and hopefully another one within 2 years. It has also bought a donkey at £1000 and 2 more Yaks. She is also training the villagers in cheese making so they can earn some money for their community.

People from Mull are funding 7 mountain children (the youngest is only 4 years old) to attend a school in Katmandu; which is a 3 days trek and one day bus journey away. The journey to school makes it impossible to come home at weekends, so they are away for a whole term. The cost for each child is £750 per year. There is still 1 child without funding.

Chris, who is 77 years old, intends to return again this November, and is hoping to raise more money to give to the villagers.

A very inspirational talk.

Castle Douglas

After Meeting for Worship on the fifth Sunday of January, there was a shared lunch followed by a discussion of Quaker Quest. As this was a cluster meeting, we had

some visitors from Dumfries. We are continuing to read Quaker Faith & Practice: the next session on 16th February will be Patrick Bealey's house from 10.30 to noon. Chapters 13& 20, *Varieties of Religious Service and Living Faithfully* will be considered at this reading. The meeting will be followed by a bring and share lunch for those who wish to stay on.

We continue our vigils at Dundrennan Artillery Range meeting outside the main gate for a Meeting for Worship at 11am. The next will take place on 16th February, then 10th September and 12th November.

Dumfries

Second Sunday Discussions. 12th February - – we will start our discussion on Richard Holloway's book 'On Forgiveness' at the home of Claire MacLeod. 12th March – we will continue our discussion on Richard Holloway's book 'On Forgiveness' at the home of Bill & Jenny Agnew.

Advance notice: Northern Friends Peace Board is holding a business meeting in Dumfries on Saturday, 17th June. We may need to provide a bit of support on the day and perhaps offer accommodation. More information nearer the time.

Letters to the Editor

Thanks to Jan Lethbridge for her report of the October AM in Ayr. I was slightly puzzled about why she puts plastic bags inside her wellies.

I would like to comment on the issue of population in respect of climate change. If the planet had 1/100th of the present population we would not have a problem of climate or scarce resources. So the size of our population is clearly a crucial factor. Part of the population growth is a result of better medical care and lifestyle resulting in longer life expectancy. We can't do much about that. However, we can do more about birth control. I am certainly not advocating any forced restrictions such as the Chinese one child policy. However, it appears that if women are more educated and their livelihood is more secure, many choose to have fewer children. This is therefore an important aspect that we should be addressing in parallel with other actions.

Also, in the printed version the headings are very difficult to read on the dark background. It is not such a problem on the electronic version where the background is blue.

*Thank you for your hard work.
Daphne (Wassermann).*

Ed's Note: the dark headings seems to be a print problem which will be looked into.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

27th Feb- 12th March Fairtrade Fortnight

3rd March Women's World Day of Prayer interdenominational services throughout Scotland.

11th March GENERAL MEETING in Edinburgh

13th March AREA MEETING by telephone

18th March Quaker National Day of Healing

17-19th March Westerly Friends Gathering at Crianlarich

26th March Glasgow Meeting tree planting at Wiston Lodge joining with Lanark Meeting for Meeting for Worship.

8th April AREA MEETING AT WIGTOWN 11.30 – 4pm



HOLD IN THE LIGHT We all seem well this quarter but no doubt the WORLD could do with our prayers.

You could use the Experiment with Light meditation, more info from their website.

West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Street, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

**The deadline for contributions for the next issue of WSQN is 30th April
Copy should be send in Word format to the editors Alastair McIver or
Margaret Roy**

Quakers stand alongside victims of racist policies

Quakers in Britain have responded to the global unease about recent political developments around the world with a clear statement asserting that, “Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international.”

In the statement made today (Saturday 4 February) by their representative body, Meetings for Sufferings, Quakers say, “There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority.”

The full statement from Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House, Quakers’ central offices in London is here:

“‘We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity’ (Margaret Fell, writing to Charles II in 1660). Quakers in Britain see these values now under growing threat around the world, not least from recent developments in the United States of America.

“We condemn all acts of government which set people against one another; which discriminate against people because of who they are or where they were born. We reject policies which condone suspicion and hatred; which turn away those who need and depend upon our help. We were not put on Earth for this, but to be a people of God, to live in harmony with each other.

“There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority. We pray for the courage and steadfastness that will be needed as we uphold our testimony of equality, justice, peace, sustainability and truth. For us, prayer is inseparable from action.

“Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international. We pray for those in positions of power. We call on them, as public servants, to work with all of good faith to build the world we seek, to fertilise the soil in which the tender shoots of peace, love and unity may flourish.”

Quakers in Britain

News Release

04 February 2017

Quakers stand alongside victims of racist policies

Quakers in Britain have responded to the global unease about recent political developments around the world with a clear statement asserting that, “Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international.”

In the statement made today (Saturday 4 February) by their representative body, Meetings for Sufferings, Quakers say, “There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority.”

The full statement from Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House, Quakers’ central offices in London is here:

“‘We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity’ (Margaret Fell, writing to Charles II in 1660). Quakers in Britain see these values now under growing threat around the world, not least from recent developments in the United States of America.

“We condemn all acts of government which set people against one another; which discriminate against people because of who they are or where they were born. We reject policies which condone suspicion and hatred; which turn away those who need and depend upon our help. We were not put on Earth for this, but to be a people of God, to live in harmony with each other.

“There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority. We pray for the courage and steadfastness that will be needed as we uphold our testimony of equality, justice, peace, sustainability and truth. For us, prayer is inseparable from action.

“Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international. We pray for those in positions of power. We call on them, as public servants, to work with all of good faith to build the world we seek, to fertilise the soil in which the tender shoots of peace, love and unity may flourish.”

Ends

Notes to editors

- Quakers are known formally as the Religious Society of Friends.
- Around 23,000 people attend 480 Quaker meetings in Britain. Their commitment to equality, justice, peace, simplicity and truth challenges them to seek positive social and legislative change.
- Seventy years ago, in 1947, the Nobel Peace Prize was jointly awarded to American Friends Service Committee and the predecessor to Quaker Peace & Social Witness, part of Quakers in Britain. The Prize recognised what Quakers did to help thousands of people displaced and made refugees by war.
- For more on American Friends Service Committee see <https://www.afsc.org/>

Media Information

Anne van Staveren
Media Relations Officer
Quakers in Britain
020 7663 1048
07958 009703
annev@quaker.org.uk
@mediaquaker
www.quaker.org.uk

Other News Out Today Tuesday 7th February

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT IS TO ALLOW ARMY CADET FORCES INTO STATE SCHOOLS

The Scottish Daily Mail had this as its front page heading: ARMY TO SET UP CADET UNITS IN SCOTS SCHOOLS on 7th February. Inside it gave a full page to the subject quoting a Scottish Government spokesman who stated on the previous evening:

‘Education police and the wellbeing of children are the responsibility of the Scottish Government and Scottish parliament.

The hosted cadet unit model is not suitable for Scottish schools as it does not contribute to the curriculum, which is why the Army Cadet Force has been working with delivery partners in Scotland to integrate with Curriculum for Excellence.

We would expect any consequential from additional UK funding to flow to Scotland, which would enable us to allocate additional funding to organisations, including cadet organisations, which contribute to our youth work strategy.’

According to the article the first school designated for such attention will be Maxwelltown High School in Dumfries which ‘will get its own cadet unit’.

The minute on the subject of army cadet units has been sent by MfS to QPSW. See Mairi Campbell-Jack for further information. mairic@Quaker.org.uk.