

West Scotland Quaker News

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This newsletter is available
in other formats.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of individuals. They do not necessarily represent the view of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Friends will have noticed the increasing number of web addresses in the articles. I realise that not all readers will have web access. I am mindful though that there was a time when Friends could not assume that others would have access to a telephone.

If you have a public library available, you should be able to access the web there — why not give it a try? Also it would be good if Friends who do have web access could print material out or otherwise show it to people who wouldn't find it for themselves.

It's a great way of disseminating information. You don't need to print what is not relevant and you can access it when you are ready to study it.

This newsletter is published also at www.quakerscotland.org/west.

My thanks to Janette Walkinshaw for proofreading this issue, but any remaining errors are my responsibility — as they were last time!

Editor

The deadline for the next edition of *West Scotland Quaker News* is
Wednesday, 4 June.

Copy should be sent to the editor, Jane Mitchell, either on paper or disk, by post to

Kirkokerry, Millhouse, Tighnabruaich, Argyll PA21 2BW,
in plain text, Rich Text Format or in Word (up to 2003, i.e., .doc – not .docx please) by email to: wsqn@phonecoop.coop.

Telephone 0845 345 7196 or 01700 811229.

Clerk's Letter

Chuck and the Meaning of Life

Every Friday afternoon Chuck Hoskin sets off on his bicycle from his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico for a one hour trip to the Kirkland Air Force Base with banners made from bed sheets around a pole strapped to his bike. On his banners are questions such as *Why waste a good mind on weapons work?* and *Will your kids survive your work?* He has done this trip almost every week for the last 25 years. Sometimes he is on his own; sometimes a small group come with him. Sometimes he endures abuse, sometimes he gets a friendly wave.

Mary Alice and I have known Chuck and his wife Mary Anne, who sadly died of cancer last year, since we were in Zimbabwe. Chuck taught maths at a local high school and still teaches part time at a local university in Albuquerque — his mathematical approach showed when he analysed the traffic flows at the base to find the optimum time for his witness. Chuck and Mary Anne always come to mind when I think of our testimony to simplicity. They contrived to earn less than the tax threshold so that they do not pay taxes to support the armed forces. They pay cash for everything, which is not easy in the American credit-driven society. His two criteria for acquiring material goods are: Can everyone worldwide who wants one have one? and, Is it more environmentally sustainable than what it replaces?

Chuck also came to mind a few days ago when I was asked to speak to an interfaith group on *Quakers and the Meaning of Life*. The speaker just before me was a fairly evangelical Christian and was able to answer the question quite easily. Everything is here for a purpose, he said, and our purpose is simply to love God. I have to admit that I didn't answer the question directly but talked about our testimonies and suggested that for myself and perhaps for other Quakers, the meaning of life is to be aware of our spirituality and to try to live out our spiritual insights in our every day life regardless of whether it changes anything.

After 25 years protesting Chuck doesn't bother to reflect on whether it makes any difference. "It makes a difference to me," he once said, "and ultimately I have to live with myself."

Martin Mansell

Reports

Area Meeting (AM): Milngavie, 1 March Memories and present-day Life *Report by Ian Macdonald*

The night of 29 February was another stormy one of quite a wild winter. Helen and I were met early by Les Dunford for our 200-mile round trip to Milngavie for Area Meeting.

I had last been at Milngavie some fifteen years back to see our son Stephen off on his attempt at walking the West Highland Way. Thinking of that time I remembered my first time in Milngavie when I was about 10 years old. It was in the early 1950s and our schoolteacher in Paisley decided to take us on a trip to Craigend Castle Zoo at Milngavie. We arrived on a bright sunny morning full of expectation. The teacher took the girls to see the big elephant which had appeared in a recent Tarzan movie, and the boys all climbed over a gate in an adjacent field to play football till the girls returned. I did not like football so parked myself under a tree to watch the others play.

As the game progressed we suddenly heard a heavy rumbling from the hill at the other end of the field. To our amazement we saw an enormous North American bison (to us a buffalo) charging

down towards the football team. In panic most boys shot up the nearest trees and I jumped over the nearest gate and out of the field. When I ran breathlessly to report this world-shattering event to our teacher she replied, "You and your stories Ian, they will be the death of you! Come along! Lets go and see the monkeys!" No Health and Safety in those days!

During our silent worship that morning I could not help but think on these times of long ago and smiled a little to myself. I often wonder what other Friends are running through their minds in the Silence. Not always pious thoughts I am sure!

Our Meeting got off to a rather different style. Firstly our Roll-call was done in a different way. Then we discovered that not a single copy of *Quaker Faith & Practice* was to hand so our reading was taken from the Scriptures instead. Yes! This was speaking to my condition. This morning my return to Milngavie was on course for another great experience in life.

The morning was well spent on reports by those Friends who take

the time and trouble to travel all over the country in our service.

After a short lunch I was called with my fellow Trustees to our planned Meeting in another room. During our Trustees' Meeting I felt very privileged to be one of a fine band of Friends who are doing their utmost to ensure that our corporate business as a charitable body is being well looked after. We are all on a steep learning curve with our new duties, relying much on support from each other. Later our Clerk of Trustees, Derek McLean, gave a worthy report of our activities to date. The after-

noon saw the remaining business dealt with in good humour before we settled into an exercise in testing our thoughts of our testimonies on each other.

After our traditional going-home tea I left Milngavie with memories of my childhood in Paisley and thinking of the day I was chased by a buffalo on the school trip... Little did I think then that I would return there some 50-odd years later as a Quaker on business from Galloway. Life is just so wonderfully surprising... a bit like this report!

QPSW Conference, Swanwick, 28-30 March

Work for society in the name of Friends

Report by Douglas Shaw

I am a Trident Ploughshares activist and attend the Lanark Meeting – the Conference was a memorable landmark in my journey. Thank you for sending me.

Its aim was to “provide a spiritually based framework in which participants are informed, inspired and encouraged to consider challenging topics... to learn about the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) and to share a weekend of focused discussion and faith-based exploration of many difficult issues currently facing society”.

After the opening plenary session on Friday evening, we were introduced to our base-group of eight Friends with whom we would discuss our expectations of the conference and share our experiences and thoughts about the issues raised. This group was a safe and welcoming base to return to at a large conference, and was as important as the organised programme.

The format of the conference was firstly three presentations; one from Kevin Franz and others from QPSW which outlined their work in Social Witness and Peace

Work; another from Teresa Parker about the Human Security Project; and a presentation from Jonathan Dale called *Growing from Testimony* about our responses to environmental issues.

We each had chosen two workshops in advance, and mine were Sustainable Security and The Role of Multinationals. Unfortunately these were only an hour long, half of which was a talk, but from our struggles with the subject we appreciated the complexity of the issues. QPSW practised “direct dialogue” with Multinationals and did not “demonise” them. They work as part as part of the Ecumenical Council of Corporate Responsibility (www.eccr.org.uk), which encourages church investors to recognise that shareholding provides them with an opportunity to improve and influence the corporate responsibility of companies. A new project is to devise a framework from which to measure companies’ good/ bad water practice; this came out of a recent report on the water crisis in relation to the food and drink industries. QPSW also work through the Ethical Trading Initiative (www.ethicaltrade.org), to which many UK retailers belong – this aims to promote and support good trading practice.

Kat Barton led the workshop on Sustainable Security, an approach

to global security which emphasises long-term solutions (and is also pre-emptive), rather than short-term military solutions which is the current approach. A recent report by the Oxford Research Group highlighted four main dangers to global security which were: Climate Change, Competition for Resources, Global Militarism, and the Marginalisation of the Majority of the World. Terrorism is not the number-one threat and does not take place in a vacuum.

The breadth of activities and commitment of QPSW is truly astonishing. Peter Franz talked of this as a vast landscape and asked us to consider where we were on it, and shared this from Rufus Jones: “I pin my hopes in quiet processes and small circles in which vital and transforming processes take place.”

On the platform Teresa Parker made and baked a chocolate cake in a microwave oven to illustrate how the Human Security Project gathered and combined different kinds of resources to assist peace, justice and the environment. We were told of their project in Gulu in Uganda, where 1 million people are displaced, 66,000 children were abducted for child soldiers, and where 82% of people live on less than \$1 a day.

Staff are also proactive in environmental issues such as new dams.

Jonathan Dale's presentation resonated with many Friends. Asking if we wanted to destroy this beautiful world, he told us that in 20 years time sea levels will have risen by 30 feet. A sea rise of 3 feet will displace 40 million people. Rainforests and glaciers are getting smaller, and by "choosing" to do nothing we are letting it happen.

Our testimonies are not just values – they are ways of aligning ourselves with God.

Rich countries will suffer much less than poorer countries and so Climate Change is a social justice concern and a spiritual challenge.

We respond as individuals but can work together in sharing knowledge and ideas. (Even

composting is a spiritual act.) When choosing low price goods assess their "true" value. He spoke of the social isolation of activists who had a lifestyle very different from most people and the subject of guilt felt by those who felt inadequate in comparison. Every aspect of living is problematic now.

I enjoyed meeting so many Friends from all over the UK and as usual the informal settings and conversations were just as fruitful as the organised programme. I'm still thinking about the weekend and encourage you all to find out more about Quaker Peace & Social Witness and to think about our testimony and the environment.

(Visit www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw.)

Meeting House Renovation Appeal

I would like to thank everyone who has generously contributed to the Meeting House Appeal Fund, which has now raised almost £24,000.

The external work on the Meeting House has now been completed, and I think you will agree that its appearance has been greatly improved. As well as being generally spruced up, essential structural work has also taken place.

There is still a shortfall of £2,500 between the cost of the work and income received. If you feel you can help to make up the difference, please send a cheque payable to 'Religious Society of Friends West Scotland' to the address below. If you are a tax-payer, please indicate if we can reclaim tax (Gift Aid) on your donation.

Margaret Morton, Treasurer, West Scotland Area Meeting,
13 Gartmore Road, Paisley PA1 3NG. Tel: 0141 889 2865

Features

Quakers and Quackers

A friend of a friend keeps ducks. Each duck has its own personality. Every duck has its very own name and their owner knows them as individuals. Her favourite duck is called Lily. However Lily has a problem. When she was forming in the egg, something went wrong in the frangible creative process and Lily now has a difficulty with orientation. In the yard where the ducks are kept, Lily keeps bumping into things — including other ducks! However the rest of the ducks seem to accept this as a reality of their ducky social environment.

Every morning the owner of the ducks marches them across the road to a large field. The ducks waddle over the road quite happily, and seem to enjoy entering into the wide open spaces afforded by the field. They then merrily grub around in the grass, doing the things that ducks enjoy doing. This arrangement seems to suit Lily because there are not so many things for her to bump into, in the generous expanses offered by the field. The other ducks seem to relish this too, because now they can more readily avoid collisions with Lily the disoriented duck.

Everyone has a happy time in the field, and when the owner calls them when it's time to go home, they waddle quite happily to the gate. When they get to the gate they stop, but make no attempt to cross the road. Everyone waits for Lily. It takes Lily a long time to find the gate, but the rest of the ducks seem to understand this and wait there at the gate very patiently. When Lily eventually finds the exit then (and only then) the group proceeds to cross the road.

It seems to me that Quakers have much to learn from Quackers.

Bill Bingham, Glasgow

Dumfries Environment Fair 2008

Dumfries Meeting last week took part in the local Environment Fair for the third time. In previous years we have made do with a half set of display boards borrowed from the local NHS, which had to be stood on chairs in order to be seen. This year, however, our participation was enhanced by the new full set of boards belonging to Glasgow Meeting, but available to all within the AM. Easy to assemble (for two people) and complete with the velcro fixers, they are a very useful resource for

outreach activities. Glasgow also has posters and leaflets which can be utilized.

In addition to planting seeds, which we have done before, an idea gleaned from the art room at Woodbrooke proved to be a popular activity for visitors. Paper flowers are cut out, a message appropriate to a theme is written in the centre, and then the petals folded over to cover the writing. When floated on water the flowers open as if by magic! In response to, “write your message to help us care for our world,” comments ranged from the lyrical

Nature is the greatest treasure the human race has seen
to the eminently practical *Pick up dog poo;*
from the cool *This world ROCKS. Take care of it* to
the slightly ambiguous *Our parents should leave the world for us.*

A beautifully simple idea which, judging by some of the positive feedback received, looks set to spread to homes, playgroups, schools, and even day care centres. That’s the sort of outreach I like!

Jan Lethbridge, Dumfries & Galloway

Britain Yearly Meeting 23-26 May, 2008

So far I have not attended a Yearly Meeting, but I am planning to go this year. I have been reading about it on the website www.quaker.org.uk/ym and I find that there is much of interest. The Agenda Committee hopes that our various meetings can be enriched by engaging with the topics in advance. This would give support to those who attend and involve more people with the work of our Society.

Saturday morning has a session called *Deeper and wider – united in the spirit*. In this “we explore how, as individuals and together, we connect deeply with the spirit and with creation and how that connectedness transforms us,

leading and sometimes propelling us to wider witness and service. This balance between action and being brings a wholeness to our lives.”

On the Saturday evening is the Swarthmore Lecture, this year *Minding the future* by Christine Davis from our meeting.

Sunday morning has *Being the seeds of change*. There is now on the website a compilation of documents to read in preparation for this. It includes Minutes from some earlier Yearly Meetings and the text of a splendid lecture delivered last year in Dublin to the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial by Marion McNaughton *An orientation to*

Prophecy. This reviews prophecy among the ancient Jews, the early Christians and among Quakers. We need methods that work; “nagging” (like this!) “has to stop.”

There are sessions on the Long Term Framework, for which readings are to be available soon, and on more routine business.

There is a special programme for Under 19s, but the deadline for booking places on this has already passed.

Web forum

A new venture this year (not

just for the YM) is a web forum <http://forum.quaker.org.uk/>. You have to register for this, which may take some days. I don't think many people know about it yet, and I've found it takes a bit of getting used to. But once it gets known it could be a valuable means of communication. In another area of my life (Open University tutors) a forum like this is a good way of getting to “know” people from all over the country while sitting at home.

Jane Mitchell, Argyll

Notices

European & Middle Eastern Young Friends Summer Camp in Norway (near Oslo) 10–17 August, 2008

Is your inner peace screaming (or gently whispering) to get out and make a difference? If so, this is the event for you!

Young friends and those interested in Quakers from age 18 are invited.

You can read more details and download the application form at <http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org>, and you are recommended to apply by 31 May, either online or via Rachel Hutcheson by email to quids_inn27@yahoo.co.uk or by post 18 Kilrymont Road, St Andrews, KY16 8DE.

Participants are asked to pay £100 towards the cost of food and accommodation. You may be able to obtain financial assistance from your own meeting. Additional financial contributions will be welcome.

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage 2008

Scottish hosts needed

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage takes place every two years, and is a wonderful opportunity for young people aged 16–18 from Europe and America to spend time working and learning together. Several young people from West Scotland have taken part in earlier pilgrimages. For more information, see www.yqspace.org.uk.

This year the pilgrimage will begin in Scotland before visiting England and Ireland. When the pilgrims first arrive in Scotland they hope to stay with local hosts within travelling distance of Glasgow for a couple of days to recover from their journey. Would you be able to help by accommodating two young people? The dates are 18–20 July.

If you are interested, please let Philip or Felicity Bryers know.

Telephone 0141 775 2903, or email the.bryers@virgin.net.

Diploma in Organisational Consultancy & Facilitation

This is a 14-month long development programme for leaders, managers, consultants and facilitators. The course is a unique opportunity to explore and study organisational development from a faith-based perspective.

The commitment is eight 3-day modules, plus reflective logs and a 10,000-word assignment. The course cost is £3000. People interested can get further information and a course brochure from the Craighead Institute at www.craighead.org.uk/pages/training.html, 0141 332 2733 or craiginst@aol.com, or they can call me on 0845 345 1077 or email duncanwallace@phonecoop.coop.

Duncan Wallace, Glasgow

Quaker Study Tour, Bolivia, 22 June–5 July

Bolivia has over 30,000 Quakers, indigenous people living in the High Andes.

This tour will visit Quaker congregations and see some projects of the Quaker Bolivia Link and the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund. It will also visit archeological sites. For more information and an application form visit www.TreasuresoftheAndes.com.

The cost is \$1195, not including travel to Bolivia. There is an optional extension of one week to Peru (\$995).

Gospel of Thomas Seminar 2008

We will be meeting over the weekend of 6–8 June and intend to discuss Logia (Sayings) 6, 12 and 14.

Details and brochure are obtainable from Rosemary Gascoyne, 57 Main Street, Dalry DG7 3UP, telephone: 01644 430468, or by email from Jack Squires at cummertrees@btinternet.com.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you intend to come.

April Area Meeting

The Meeting will take place at the Meeting house in Glasgow on Saturday 19 April at 11 for 11.30.

The following AM will be in Dumfries on **Sunday 22 June**.

Testimonies in Glasgow

Glasgow Meeting is holding a facilitated series on Testimonies after Sunday meeting for worship. Some details have had to be changed. Facilitators' names are given.

13 April: Truth & Integrity, Bill Bingham and Sue Ramage

11 May: Simplicity, Mike Brown and Duncan Wallace

15 June: Equality, Lindesay Burton and Pete Stuart

Arrangements for the testimonies to Peace and to Sustainability & the Environment will be announced later.

Lindesay Burton, Glasgow

Copy for the next *West Scotland Quaker News* should be sent by Wednesday 4 June to the editor at the address on page 2.

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