



**August
2009**

Scottish Friend



**At West Scotland AM in June Wigtown
Friends showed the Clerk the former vet
surgery, soon to be turned into their new
Meeting House.**

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Les Dunford took the cover photograph

The next *Scottish Friend* will be constructed in the middle of October, or as soon as the agenda for November GM is known. Please send material to me, Margaret Peacock, at 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk. Many thanks to all who have made suggestions. Please go on sending me news, reports, thoughts and pictures.

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



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The following story shows how valuable professional networking can be when seemingly-intractable legal obstacles prevent progress. In 2008 the Children's Commissioner for Scotland, Kathleen Marshall, was concerned that when sentencing for criminal cases in Scotland, the courts were not required to ensure the proper provision for the care of any children of the parent being sentenced. This fact must obviously be harmful to the well-being and human rights of children. Kathleen Marshall and Quakers had shared their concerns over this issue with Rachel Brett, Representative for Human Rights and refugees in the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. The Scottish judiciary's response to requests for this non-family friendly practice to be changed was to state that the matter was simply not relevant.

Rachel came across a reported case from South Africa where the legal precedent had been established for the court to be required to take the well-being of any children involved into account before sentencing. She informed Kathleen Marshall of this development and suggested that the renowned South African Justice Albie Sachs, a member of the South African Constitutional Court, be invited to Edinburgh to talk to Scottish judges and lawyers about this case. A meeting was organised in June 2009 and Justice Albie Sachs addressed a gathering of Scottish judges, lawyers, representatives from the Equality Commission, and children's rights charities. Hopefully, changes will now be made in this aspect of the law relating to children.

Rachel Brett flew to Edinburgh to attend the lecture. While in Scotland she and her husband undertook a speaking tour of Quaker Meetings, visiting Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, Perth, Dundee and Dumfries. It was a privilege to be given some insight into the patient, long-term work for justice being carried forward in our name.

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

“What are these, sergeant?”

“Conscientious objectors, sir!”

“Oh, conscientious objectors are they. I’ll soon deal with them.”

(Very significantly and with an oath)

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

“Don’t worry” I answered “we’ll get there some time.”

“Oh will yer, I’ll pay you for that presently.”

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

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

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

“What, damn you, you refuse to obey my orders”

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

“D— your God, you will obey me. You have the King’s uniform on.”

”Only because it was forced on”

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

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

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

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

“How dare you sit down in the presence of your commanding officer?”

Shouted the Commandant, accompanying the words with a savage kick on the shin. Then once again I was subjected to bruising at the hands of the N.C.O.s who always accompanied their chief. This time they forced my head during the process back over the end of the low platform, nearly choking me.

“Now are you going to obey my orders.” said the Commandant at last.

“Never” I answered. “You may injure my body, but you cannot touch my soul.” I continued: “and those men that you have set upon me - do they and you glory to call yourselves Englishmen? No Germans could be more brutal.”

Never in my experience have I felt the presence of Christ so near as when I confronted this circle of angry faces. All that I said I cannot remember, but sure as his promise it was given to me in

that hour what I should speak, and I spoke boldly and without fear. He was to me a living present reality, far more real than the men who were torturing me.

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

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

After a very long time, as it seems, I hear a slight sound outside the cell door, and looking up notice an eye applied to the judas spy-hole in the middle. I am apprehensive of some new devilry, thinking everyone in this place to be devoid of humanity. The eye continuing to stare, I break the spell by saying “Hullo!” “Hullo! What have they been doing to you, mate?”

“O knocking me about!”

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

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

This is the final selection from my father’s account of his experiences as a CO in World War1. - MP

Scottish Episcopal Church General Synod - 11-13 June **David James**

When visiting a neighbour's house for the first time, my eyes roam curiously around the room, assessing my neighbour's taste in furnishings, books and pictures and comparing it with my own. 'Well I wouldn't have *that* picture hanging on my wall!' There is always the temptation to look for evidence to support *my* belief that *my* ways of ordering my affairs are greatly superior to that of my neighbour.

I was conscious of having to avoid this temptation when I attended the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church as a representative of the General Meeting for Scotland. The Episcopal Church had abandoned the Gothic splendour of St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh as a venue for the General Synod and opted for the more restrained Classicism of the Church of Scotland's Palmerston Place Church across the road, and a fine venue it proved to be.

Two Key Issues

Amidst the plethora of committees and reports I became aware of two key issues for the Episcopal Church, topics that will not be unfamiliar to us, namely, finance and the status of committed same-sex relationships. It was not that these topics themselves were the focus of debate; rather, these issues probe how the Episcopal Church handles authority and how it sees itself as a church. Who discerns and decides on contentious issues involves the structure of an institution and how power is handled within it.

Has there ever been a church meeting which has not issued some kind of financial warning and called for more generous giving from the faithful? But the dire financial forecast issued by the Episcopal Church was something different. There is a 'triple whammy'. The Episcopal Church like many others has relied

heavily on invested income from capital – income that will be greatly reduced by the present financial downturn. The dramatic fall in the value of capital assets has also hit the Pension Fund for clergy and church employees. A large deficit has to be addressed by the adoption of a ‘recovery plan’ which involves transfer of capital and increased pension contributions from clergy and employees. Church membership continues to decline so that it is unrealistic to look for a significant increase in giving to the Church. There was a fall in membership between 2007 and 2008 of around 6% and also an even greater fall in an estimate of regular attendance of approximately 12% during the same period.

This means less money to pay clergy and for the past 20 years the church has compensated for falling numbers of paid (stipendiary) clergy by encouraging ‘Collaborative Ministry’ - shared ministry between clergy and congregations. This has not been easy in a church which has traditionally expected paid clergy to lead worship, preach, administer the sacraments and provide pastoral care. However I got the impression that opinion is now moving away from ‘collaborative ministry’ as a solution to the problem. John Mantle, the Bishop of Brechin, questioned aspects of collaborative ministry and pressed for more young clergy to be ordained to paid ministry. However, if paid ministry is indeed central to the life of the Episcopal Church, it can only exist in places that are able afford paid clergy, chiefly the affluent areas of the Central Belt. It is tempting to contrast the Episcopal Church’s dilemma with ability of Quakers to establish small meetings even in remote areas as the need arises.

A second issue which is testing the organisation of the wider Anglican Communion in recent years is the compatibility of Episcopal oversight with committed same-sex relationships. The consecration of Gene Robinson as a bishop has threatened to rend asunder the liberal and evangelical wings of the Anglican Communion, in particular, to split the liberal churches of North America from the traditional evangelical churches in Africa. Marginalised traditional churches in the States have turned to

Nigerian bishops for Episcopal oversight. This has led to an intractable questioning of the basis of authority within the Anglican Communion. The Catholic Church has a very clear focus of authority and unity in the See of St. Peter in Rome, the Pope and the Vatican. But in England after the Reformation, the monarch became the ultimate authority under God within the Established Church; in previous days, monarchs exerted very real power in the appointment of bishops and in the ordering of worship.

However, from the time of the American War of Independence there have been Anglican churches that could no longer look to the Crown as their ultimate source of authority. This process accelerated with the break up of the British Empire. The Anglican Communion now consists of many autonomous provinces. Attempts have been made to establish 'instruments of communion.' The oldest of these is the Lambeth Conference chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In more recent years regular meetings have been established of all archbishops, the Primates' Meeting, as well as an Anglican Consultative Council. None of these 'instruments of communion' have any direct authority over the autonomous provinces so, as a way of resolving the disputes arising from the consecration of Gene Robinson, the Archbishop of Canterbury has proposed an Anglican Covenant. Provinces signing up to the Covenant would agree to hold a moratorium over the implementation of contentious issues until a common mind is achieved.

The Secretary General of the Scottish Episcopal Church has recently attended the 14th Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council held this year in Jamaica. Supporters of the Covenant had hoped that the Council would find the latest draft - the 'Ridley-Cambridge Draft' - sufficiently acceptable for it to be sent to the provinces for their approval, but this was not to be. The sticking point was how to deal with provinces who do not respect the terms of the Covenant. The Scottish Episcopal Church has not been in the forefront of those welcoming the Covenant, (a word

that has particular connotations in Scotland) and so far has only agreed to participate in discussions about the future shape of the Anglican Communion.

Contentious issues probe the way churches handle the process of discernment and who at the end of the day has authority within the organisation. Is the process open and explicit, or do committees of the good and great meeting behind closed doors have the final say? Again it is tempting to compare the Quaker business method with the complex and often arcane 'dispersed authority' of the Anglican Church, with its Bishops, Synods and Councils. The one is based on a commitment to equality and an involvement of all its members in the process of discernment. The other is hierarchical but with many complex checks and balances.

One evolved in an Established Church that assumed that it was the religion of the whole of society, that the church community was society as a whole. The other grew up in small, closely knit, persecuted groups of Quakers with a strong sense of identity. They saw themselves as a new community within which all things were possible, superseding all previous ties and relationships; as apostolic communities of the New Testament, aware of the powerful dynamic created within them by the operation of the Spirit. My attendance at the General Synod brought home to me how historical differences still resonate within in the life of our churches. Whatever our process of discernment and decision making, we need to be aware of the assumptions and beliefs that lie behind them.

Gospel of Thomas Seminar

Rosemary Gascoyne and Margaret Roy

Our first seminar at our new venue, Wiston Lodge in Lanarkshire, was held on 6 June. Fifteen attended of whom four were newcomers. The number on our mailing list is now 29, so this move to a larger venue for our growing numbers was essential, and we were delighted that it retained the same warm and vital atmosphere that it has always generated.

Several of us had selected a specific logion from the Gospel of Thomas, which was then studied and written out as an essay, and these formed the centres for discussion among us. As this seminar was specifically designed with newcomers in mind we selected essays by both more recent members and those with a longer experience and familiarity with this unique gospel.

The logia that were selected, with their first lines, were as follows;

19 Jesus said: Happy is he who already was before he is----

A very profound logion concerning the oneness of creation, and a logion that one has to return to as one studies and comes to a deeper awareness throughout this gospel.

47 Jesus said: It is impossible for a man to mount two horses----

Regarding the inability to serve two masters, and that Jesus brings new light, that reveals to us our Real Self.

114 Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go out from amongst us----

This describes a `live` situation when Jesus rebukes Simon by teaching that there is no separation between male and female, that we must go way beyond worldly conceptions.

10 Jesus said: I have cast a fire upon the world----

The Teaching here is repeated within several other logions which relate to cleansing and to regeneration.

77 Jesus said: I am the Light that is above them all----

A most beautiful logion that fills us with a great sense of the eternal.

During our lunch break a number of books were displayed - books that people had read and recommended, that everyone was invited to consult and to note down. Afterwards, Jack Squires presented us with a brief résumé of some of the books he had read in studying the Gospel of Thomas, which was of great interest to everyone. A list of these can be obtained from Jack by email at cummertrees@btinternet.com

Our new venue with its spacious rooms, extensive gardens and friendly atmosphere has proved a happy new home for our continued study of the Gospel of Thomas and at our Autumn seminar (November 7th and 8th at Wiston Lodge) we look forward to welcoming Andrew Redpath as our guest speaker. Andrew is a member of the original group in Southern England that was associated with Hugh McGregor Ross and the first translations of the Gospel of Thomas into English. He is a regular visitor to India, and we are very delighted that he will talk to us.

A programme will be available nearer the time.

Report from your Representative Friend

Pamala McDougall

GM regularly sends representatives to other church Assemblies and Gatherings and as a GM we value ecumenical relationships. Now a new practice has been agreed and we invite a representative from the other churches in ACTS to share in worship, experience our business method and get to know us better on a personal level. Bill Reid from the Methodists joined us at our last GM and Elspeth Davey, Ecumenical Officer of the Scottish Episcopal Church will be with us in September. Highlights of my recent activities as Representative Friend include –

1. The annual face-to-face meeting of GM ACTS representatives was held at Scottish Churches House. It was particularly helpful for newish reps. and we covered quite an array of topics including updates on all the Networks and the developments of SCH itself. The meeting gives us an opportunity to support each other's work and have a rounded view of ecumenical life.

2. Cardiff was the venue for the CTBI Trustees meeting in May when the proposals for the rather drastic changes to the CTBI directorate, and of its complete reorganisation, were approved. We await with interest the results of the ‘down sizing’ of both personnel numbers and premises as Trustees are hopeful that the focus of ecumenism will shift back from central to local activity.

3. Presentation to the Church of Scotland Guild Conveners. Having done my homework and knowing how friendly and welcoming Guild members are, I enjoyed the time spent at the C of S headquarters in Edinburgh at the start of their new Guild year and their theme of ‘What does the Lord require of you?’. I had been asked to contribute on ‘Quakers and Justice’ and spoke on ‘Living What we Believe – Testimony to Justice’, concentrating on Restorative Justice. I now look forward to meeting up with Guild members again as ACTS representative to the annual meeting in Dundee on 5th September.

4. ‘Friends of Ecumenism’ is a body which has been a support group for SCH and its programme, and also as a unifying group for a wide range of religious, secular and civic individuals and organisations. SCH is set to become an autonomous legal body with its own Constitution and at the AGM of the Friends of Ecumenism on 27th June, Kathy Galloway, Leader of the Iona Community, led us in discussion using her own extensive experiences in visioning the future of ecumenism in Scotland and how SCH might fit in with that vision. The House will need a new body as Trustees and discussions are going ahead to be fully decided at an extraordinary GM in September.

5. Human Trafficking. When I was part of the ‘church leaders’ group meeting with the First Minister in the autumn of last year, I was asked to lead on the topic of Human Trafficking. Other churches, notably Methodists, Salvation Army and the C of S, and organisations such as Amnesty International, have done a great deal of work in this area so I researched their material in preparation. We did not have much time to cover the latest information and it became apparent that the politicians were lagging behind the churches with hard facts, so Alex Salmond said he would call another meeting ‘later’ with relevant people. That ‘later’ turned out to be 8th June and we, members of ACTS Human Trafficking Group and other ‘church leaders’, were invited to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice Minister, Kenny McAskill, and Frank Mulholland,

the Solicitor General. We had a very useful and wide ranging discussion including ‘safe houses’, prosecutions of traffickers, and support and services for victims. We were assured the government are committed to tackling the scourge of human trafficking in Scotland and the churches were urged to continue campaigning to inform the public and to hold the authorities to account.

There are plans to continue discussions with the Criminal Justice Directorate.

6. And finally ----- a most enjoyable day at the Royal Highland Show as part of the churches group which was given an escorted tour after being welcomed by the Rural Minister, at the Churches Rural Pavilion. The Scottish Churches Rural Group, part of the Mission Network of ACTS, did a great job in the children’s programme at the show, highlighting fair trade and food miles, care farming and genetic modification in food production in most imaginative ways. The Churches Pavilion was very attractive, luring visitors in with free Fair Trade coffee and lots of information (including Quaker leaflets!). We were guests of the President of the Show at a very posh lunch in a beautifully decked out marquee and met some very interesting folk (a perk of being Rep. Friend!). It so happened I met one of the officials of the Show who is also Managing Director of the firm which is developing the Ury estate --- so I’m up to date on that too. Networking and serendipity made my day!



Photo: Paul McSherr

Meeting for Sufferings - June 6 2009

Beryl Milner

Priority of A Framework for Action is PEACE and that was the theme of this Meeting for Sufferings.

Naturally we heard a good deal about some of the centrally managed work carried forward in Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW). Marigold Bentley, Assistant General Secretary in QPSW spoke about the work of peace campaigning and networking where co-operation with and support for the peace movement as a whole, and for individual Friends and Meetings takes place. She spoke also of the conciliation work in Nagaland, north India. The work here is done largely by Friends who are not staff members, and as is usual in conciliation work, is fairly slow. Finally she spoke of the Ecumenical Accompaniment work in Palestine/Israel, and reminded us that all three of these programmes of work fit with the priorities of A Framework for Action although they were designed before it existed. The reason that they fit is that QPSW has always tried to listen to Friends and act on the concerns heard.

In the lunch break there was an opportunity to watch a film about the now devolved QPSW work in the countries of Former Yugoslavia, and to hear first hand about the Ecumenical Accompaniment programme from a member of Meeting for Sufferings who has been volunteer on that programme.

In our Home Groups, we took part in a typical exercise from the Turning The Tide programme. This invited us to consider as individuals how we viewed - on a spectrum of violent/not violent - various acts- eg letting down the tyres of a JCB working on a construction project that is destroying a bluebell wood. It's an exercise designed to provoke discussion and in my group it certainly did.

In addition, we heard three presentations from those involved in work that is alongside or in partnership with QPSW.

The Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB), no stranger to us here in Scotland, was founded in 1913, "to advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow Christians and citizens generally, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth". With those aims NFPB is still going strong and looking forward to celebrating its

centenary in 2013. Philip Austin, the co-ordinator, stressed that the Board works closely with QPSW in mutual support, taking steps to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Much further away, in Zimbabwe, Hlekweni, the Quaker rural training centre outside Bulawayo specialises in bio-intensive agriculture and offers courses in a variety of other marketable skills. It is a beacon of hope in a country in free fall disaster. The centre is 40 years old and is supported by Friends in Central and South Africa Yearly Meeting; around 30 meetings in Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM); and receives some grant support from QPSW. Friends from BYM give not only money but time and expertise to support both the market garden - developing and upholding sustainable organic cultivation and spreading the 'how to do this' (including carpentry and sewing) to the wider community - and the on-site school and feeding programme.

Nearer to home, the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in London works on themes very familiar to Quakers. It has worked closely with the Turning The Tide (TTT) programme on workshops, and has been involved in the development of the development of TTT's year long course. This year the centre has benefited for the first time from a QPSW UK placement. The staff member who made the presentation to us spoke warmly of the mutually supportive relationship with QPSW.

But it wasn't all sitting and listening - the meeting took a decision too! At the previous Meeting for Sufferings representatives had been asked to take back to their Area Meetings a paper asking whether we were able as individuals and as meetings to commit to working towards a truly sustainable mode of living. This request arose because, in advance of the United Nations Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen in December, the Alliance of Religions and Conservation had invited the Yearly Meeting to join with other faith groups from over the world in expressing our commitment to sustainable living by making a corporate statement to this effect, that would be forwarded to those closely involved in the Copenhagen Summit negotiations. It is hoped that such statements might encourage the decision makers to be bold, as well as encouraging us all to continue to make efforts to reduce our collective and individual carbon footprints.

Helen Drewery, General Secretary of QPSW spoke of the large number

of overwhelmingly positive responses that had been received despite the short time and rather unorthodox process! Meeting for Sufferings agreed to make a statement, considered and commented on the draft we had received and authorised the clerk, together with the Clerk to Trustees to approve a final draft. It is also hoped that the clerk of Europe and Middle Section will be able to sign on behalf of European Friends.

The text of the final statement has been printed in the latest edition of *Quaker News* and is also available on the Quaker website: quaker.org.uk. Search for Climate Change Statement, and select the second result of that search.

This statement has been endorsed by the Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation.

See their statement at: www.fwccemes.org

Quakers Gather at Kindrogan. Diana Brockbank and Mary Dower

“Sharing experiences with new Friends over coffee in a sitting room filled with light”

We were each given a piece of paper to write something special we had found this week-end. The quotes are from these.

“Meeting new people, hearing new voices, hearing people’s experiences, memories and wisdom”

I knew some Friends this year, my second at Kindrogan. Not that it matters; it is a very friendly event. Many of us had rooms in the main house: a fascinating building with unexpected turnings and doors and lots of steps up and down. I easily got lost, needing a notice saying “This is the door you came through to enter this labyrinth”. It also meant sharing a room: I hope I didn’t snore too badly!

“The weather was rubbish but the food was nice, the Leaveners are great and I am now addicted to tapestry”

The food was vegetarian only, our end of the room, but some Friends could be seen helping themselves to bacon when the other group had finished serving themselves!

Mostly the weather seemed fine to me, and after lunch on Saturday I joined a lovely man for a delightful walk: one of the bits I delight in: getting to know somebody better and solving the problems of the world at the same time!

“Walking with a Friend in lovely woods”

The weather changed around lunchtime on Sunday, treating us to a

dramatic thunderstorm. My final memory of the week-end is of a group of adults and children crammed into a doorway watching it, then some of us waterproofing and venturing out to glory in the downpour.

“Delighting in the sound of running water”

“Fish rising to catch midges”

“ Purple orchid”.

“Sitting beside the bumble bees on the wall of the walled garden”

“Soft grey evening light. Lime leaf green. Instant flash of lightning”

The history side of the week-end was not my cup of tea. There was some rebellion in the ranks, which meant we did get to focus some on “HERstory”, the personal and social side of these lovely people. More of all this from Mary. Our programme said “Scottish Quaker History – linking up the past with the present”. Did we achieve that? Then there was the question of whether we want to prepare an updated anthology. Possibly a historical page for our website is a useful up-to-date tool. As well as historical facts, dates, names etc. it was felt it would be a good idea to have stories of what Quakers have done and are doing in their Quakerly lives, both the great and the less well known. For instance, I did not know that Elizabeth Fry had visited Scotland, but now I would like to know what she did here. “The recent history of local Meetings” was a session heading. There must be lots of wonderful stories of Friends quietly going about their business, as well as more newsworthy stuff. What about the island hoppers who have a 2-day trip to attend Meeting for Worship? And the people camping or having Meeting for Worship at Faslane? Do you have any interesting stories of Quaker folk in Scotland? Could you talk to people? If you get stories, and permission for them to be told, please send them to Margaret Gladden. (see book of members)

“Just being easy and relaxed, chatting or not chatting, on my own or with others, AND talking and remembering early Quaker Spirituality”.

I am so glad a way was found to encourage and support more families to come this year. The youngsters were exceedingly lucky to have two young women from the Leavers for their programme. We were treated both to a play by the younger ones, and an activity and a play by the older group. We could join in the activity which was part of the evening ceilidh on Saturday, along with a tune on a penny whistle, drumming, limericks, a humorous Meeting for Worship, singing and various other items. Sadly, the Scottish dancing got lost!

“Drumming, walking and relaxed conversation”.

“Trusting myself, raising people’s creative spirit, and sharing the confidence life has given me”.

Special, to me, were the Epilogues, and the Meeting for Worship in this larger group.

“Peaceful thoughts”.

So to next year. We brainstormed for a theme, looking for something more interactive. Some ideas were: to make use of the Field Centre staff for nature walks: to bring craft materials, musical instruments etc. to share with others : to have the Leaveners for the adults too. Have you any other ideas? What would inspire you to join us? Again, please send ideas to Margaret Gladden, or chat with any of us who were there.

DB

The topic of the History of Friends in Scotland was not every one’s cup of tea but I revelled in it. We began with a talk by Paul Burton based on his Ph D. His study had been sociological trends in the Society of Friends but he was able to present to us a variety of interesting facts without it being in the least academically off-putting. He demonstrated that our membership is gently climbing overall though not in the immediate past. Observations later in the weekend reassured me that the great increase in attenders in Scotland is related to the great growth in the number of meetings. One cannot become an attender unless there is a meeting to attend whereas you remain a member even if you have left the country. This was observable in the number of Friends resident in America in the mid 19th century. There were few meetings there to which their membership could be transferred so they remained on the list of members for Edinburgh, Glasgow or Dundee. (That said it is still a matter of concern that some attenders now decline to apply for membership because they fear being asked to serve the society that they are glad to worship with.) We were reminded that many of the first Quakers to bring the message to Scotland were members of Oliver Cromwell’s army. Initially Friends were not pacifists. The most visible evidence of early Friends is found in the numerous small burial grounds. In Aberdeenshire there are burial grounds at Tarves as well as the better-known

Kinmuck and Kingswells. On a lighter note I was amused to learn that the benches still to be seen in Glasgow meeting had come from Edinburgh Pleasance Meeting House, one before the one I remember.

Later we heard accounts of these three Meetings in the last 50 years with the addition of Inverness, Aberdeen and the many other meetings which have grown up since. [The early history of Aberdeen was covered by reference to a published paper by Delia Seager.] These personal accounts were of rather more interest to those of us who remembered the events and characters than for newer-come folks.

As I say I had a wonderful time especially enjoying seeing early documents and photographs of meeting houses I had heard of but never seen. However next year we have asked for a topic that is fun and frolicsome in contrast to the earnest indoor nature of this one. Watch this space friends. So far our ideas have to have a variety of activities, leading our own small groups in the main, and maybe invite the Leaveners back to run a session for us. We were a little envious of our children meeting with them this year! We also suggested a longer tapestry session, and more of us bringing our knitting or sewing to sit and natter.

We envisage groups for an energetic walk, one that looks at trees, and a stroll.

So Friends who is coming? Mark your diaries for 11-13 June 2010.

We need volunteers to act as hosts and to lead some of these activities.

MD

"Each term Pendle Hill hosts Friends in Residence who are present throughout the term and provide support and guidance founded on their long experience in the Religious Society of Friends. The company of these seasoned Friends adds a special dimension to the community's understanding of what it means to be a Quaker" (a quotation from a recent brochure).

Since its beginnings in 1930 there has been a close link with Britain and in 2008 I was lucky to be able to spend a term in this worshipping community together with Takako Mendl from Watford Meeting. We went in early September to join the staff retreat (the first forty people to get acquainted with). We had a few days to get our bearings before the international students arrived and had their orientation. They were followed by the US students. After their orientation and before students made their choice of courses we (Friends in Residence, students and new staff members) had a full week of trying everything which was on offer. By the time this process was complete there was a real bond between us. There were four courses for the resident students - yoga, pottery, Quakerism and criminal justice and there were opportunities to take some of the weekend short courses. My choice was pottery in the well equipped studio and criminal justice led by Laura Magnani, an AFSC worker with a particular interest in the evils of solitary confinement. It was a suitable choice for your representative on the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group. We had the chance to see the working of the system when a young black friend of Quakers in the local meeting was accused of assaulting two policemen. The Quakers' perception of the incident was that Noah was dragged from their car and beaten up. This was the low point of the term but on the plus side we had Halloween, the election and Thanksgiving. We had a thoroughly enjoyable fifteen weeks and I hope other Scottish Friends will be able to visit Pendle Hill.

INTRODUCTION

Advice 30: ... Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully.

Because of my interest in issues around aging and of course its inevitable consequence – dying, I went to a 3-day Woodbrooke course in May to explore our “issues around death and dying”. It is still largely a topic of conversation we try to avoid, and yet once we do start to talk about it, it becomes less scary and - yes - more comforting. “We suffer most from the suffering that we fear but does not appear” - so goes a Dutch saying.

The course was attended only by women, not by design. When I realised this, it did not seem so strange. In the past, it was the women in the community who came to help when a person had died, and it was a matter of pride and honour to “lay the body out” for the wake and the burial.

During my time as joint Funeral Advisor, we tried to encourage Friends to complete a little form to show one’s preferences and necessary factual information. It was not taken up widely!

PREPARATION

“Putting your affairs in order” is something we tend to postpone as long as possible. Would it not be better to look at what we want to happen and what needs to be done while we are reasonably healthy and happy? Without the pressure of a “deadline” (literally) we are likely to make better thought-out decisions. Planning for our final days can be rewarding and give a sense of peace to all involved.

Ideally, this planning would be done with our closest family or close friend. They may not be so keen to talk about it, though. Children of whatever age are rarely prepared to face the mortality of their parents.

What our near and dear ones need during a terminal illness, at the time of death and at the funeral could be different from what I think I need. For instance, I might want to donate my body or parts of it but they might not like the thought of me being cut up and “cherry-picked”, to put it crudely.

(The perception is often a crude one). I might believe my body is not me anymore, an “empty cask”, but they might feel very different. It is therefore important to have some agreement between my choices and their views, or that at least both my and their voice is heard clearly. Perhaps especially so when we consider a long illness preceding death. What form of care would I choose myself, what are the realistic options, and which way would be the most satisfactory? Satisfactory for me? For them? After all, they have to live with my death afterwards. Similarly, we have choices between burial and cremation. A place to visit in the cemetery is very important for some people, not at all for others.

DIFFERENT DEATHS

During the Woodbrooke course it became clear that each one of us had different ideas about our own death and different experiences of deaths of dear ones. It also became clear that there are many different kinds of deaths.

First we can distinguish between sudden deaths and expected deaths. What needs to be done, and how, will be quite different in both cases. There are however steps that we can take which are the same for both situations. We are likely to be better prepared for an expected death, but not necessarily so.

Sudden Death

Sudden Death can come from natural causes but more often comes in a violent way, either from an accident, an assault or by self administration. Death by self administration (in other words: suicide) is not necessarily violent for the person taking the action, but it certainly can be felt to be a violation from the point of relatives and friends.

Expected Death

Expected Death can come from Old Age and from an Incurable Illness.

Death from old age.

More than once I have heard older people say: “I just want to go to sleep and not wake up again”. The fact is that few people die that way nowadays.

Pneumonia used to be called “the old person’s friend”, as it was often a short and comparatively pain free end to a long life. Pneumonia now often follows after admission to a hospital for a broken bone acquired from a fall at home.

Treatment, once in hospital, tends to be “active”, i.e. by operation to set the bone and strong antibiotics to cure the lung infection. The patient then returns home with or without extra help, or is transferred to a care- or nursing home. The latter is what most people dread and want to avoid at any price.

Death from Incurable Illness

Although old age is not an illness, many people acquire debilitating and restricting conditions once past their 3 score and ten, needing nursing on a daily basis.

The thought of ending up in a nursing home amongst “nothing but old people”, often incontinent, often senile and/or with difficult behaviour, is abhorrent. “I don’t want to end up like that”. None of us do, but many of us are forced to do so by circumstances beyond our control – which is what most of us dread: having no control over our life. With really good and loving care from staff this can be made at least bearable. But sadly many homes are strapped for cash (or run for profit) and short staffed, providing care less than we would wish for ourselves.

WHAT TO DO?

It is at such times that thoughts may turn to how to bring this ‘half life’ to a close. But the price for this can be high, especially for those who are most affected by such action. We are now travelling in the realms of euthanasia, suicide, assisted suicide or self deliverance and assisted dying. It is important that we make clear distinctions between all these options, and that we describe clearly to our loved ones or even in conversation with friends or colleagues just what we have in mind.

Sometimes the meaning of these terms overlaps. How clear are we, what do we mean when we use those words? How does the other person receive them in their mind? Do they mean what I mean? It gets even more confused when we talk of assisted suicide, assisted dying and (to throw another one in) palliative care. When does palliative care become assistance to dying? Then again, is it assisted suicide when we supply the tablets but leave the patient to take them at the right time? Is it assisted

dying when we see the loved one in so much pain, suffering so much, pleading for us to do something, if we give them the tablets and hand them the glass of water, while staying beside them?

I hesitate to write these words, but I think we have to face that this is happening, and too often with much anguish and guilt. Because it can't easily be discussed there are some very lonely and guilt-ridden humans out there.

Each of us has probably a different image of the different concepts. This causes confusion and misunderstandings. As a society I believe we need to start making clear distinctions between these terms as well.

Incurable Illness or Old age?

We have heard of some controversial cases where people have travelled to a clinic in Switzerland to be helped to die. People with terminal cancer are much better provided for these days with more hospices opening in all countries. People are lovingly cared for and pain is kept to a minimum as long as possible. There is evidence that this last phase can be a good experience once all "affairs have been put in order". However, dementia, Parkinsons, MS, Motor Neurone Disease, Vegetative State and other such conditions are not so well provided for. In these circumstances some people's thoughts may turn to how to bring this life to a dignified close.

STAYING WITH THE PROCESS

From my own experience, I believe there is value in staying with the dying process instead of trying to jump ahead. Having had all the discussions that you needed to have, having resolved as much as could be resolved in the way of relationships, and having come to terms with the finality of your physical life, you can lie back and rest, and you and your loved ones can enjoy as much as possible those last weeks, days or hours that are left. Visitors begin to feel peaceful when they come, rather than anxious and upset. Sometimes serenity settles in the room that everyone benefits from. In our life we often act a part rather than being completely ourselves.

In those last precious moments the real self comes through and can be a comfort and inspiration to those around.

PRACTICALITIES

As mentioned before, putting one's affairs in order is the first thing to tackle. That includes looking out information that is needed beforehand, and also after death. If that be your wish, prepare an "Advance Directive", have copies at your doctor's and with your next of kin, or whoever has to take decisions on your behalf if you were to become incapable to do so for yourself. Decide what arrangements you would want to make for yourself and for those left behind, especially where it concerns children. Make a Will, even if you think you don't own anything worth while. It is amazing what small things will upset people after a death. Have discussions with your family, or start to prepare them gently for these discussions, indicating it would help your peace of mind if you could hear their thoughts too.

To what degree you want to plan (control?) your funeral is surely different for everyone. There are nowadays more choices and it is natural to express a preference. All this can be expressed in a document like an advance directive, and some organisations have their own forms as well. (Friends have one as part of the series Eldership and Oversight – speak to your Funeral Advisor).

See The Friend of 22nd May 2009 – A Quaker Funeral. Also Marie de Hennezel 'Intimate Death', ISBN 0-7515-2332-1

Dignity in Dying, tel. 0870 777 7868 (costing about £5) or you can download an NHS form for free on www.adrtnhs.co.uk.

Updates

The most practical thing is to make sure you keep the plan up to date; revise every 2 or 3 years, or when circumstances change. You might at the start have decided to be buried, but you may change your mind to cremating, or to leaving your body to science - a worthwhile use of "an empty cask".

AND FINALLY

Preparing for our death implies a certain amount of acceptance that we are mortal beings, who are born, grow up, grow old (hopefully) and then pass on to another state. Depending on your beliefs, this state could be a form of greater happiness, or perhaps just being turned into compost. Accepting one's ageing process goes a very long way to accepting that

there comes an end to us all. That's how nature does it, and we are part of nature. We can admire an old tree, and Rembrandt's favourite sitters for portraits were old people. We can see the beauty in both. So why do we find it so difficult to apply it to ourselves? Some people might want to explore the issues further – I suggest together in a small group is much easier than on your own. Many other issues arise when you start exchanging thoughts about the subject. For instance, what happens after you die? Is there an afterlife? What about the mourning process, how do we deal with that? (not so well, these days). These are subjects deserving further thought, but not now in this article!



The Recording Clerk visits General Meeting Phil Lucas

General Meeting was held in Glasgow on 20th June, where we were joined for the day by Bill Reid, Connexional Officer of the Methodist Church in Scotland and for the afternoon by our own Recording Clerk, Gillian Ashmore, who kept us on tenterhooks by arriving at the last moment due to a health problem in the party she was travelling with from France.

Pamala McDougall, our Representative Friend, filled us in on the restructuring of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, which sounds as though it is struggling a bit, and not only with funding issues. Pam is very involved with a churches group working on the trafficking of women, trying to get the Scottish Government to take firmer action and for traffickers to be prosecuted in the courts. Quakers have also been part of a group lobbying the Scottish Parliament regarding the Climate Change Scotland Bill due to be considered at Holyrood the following week.

Kate Arnot updated us on Quaker Housing Association Scotland's proposed takeover of an ex Orthodox synagogue in Glasgow to provide a Quaker housing community and Margaret Gladden told us about the recent lively Kindrogan weekend, attended by 37, including 6 children and 3 teenagers. Daphne Wassermann

presented the annual accounts for 2008 (we agreed we didn't have to examine them too carefully as we now have Trustees to carry that responsibility) and Beryl Milner told us about the current review of our Function Group structure.

At lunchtime, the Recording Clerk miraculously appeared. 'Is the Society in rude health?' she asked, and proceeded to provide some answers. She said her natural inclination is to give optimistic answers to this big question, but she confessed that finding hard evidence to support her optimism is not always easy.

Gillian started by explaining her own multi-faceted role: to manage the Yearly Meeting staff; to be secretary to eleven bodies (including YM Trustees, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting itself); to be interpreter in chief of Church Government (where she's profoundly grateful to have Michael Hutchinson sitting at her side); to be the external face of Quakerism in Britain; and to look after the relationship between Meetings and the centrally managed work.

Rude health means being alert and oriented. It means the different parts of the body working together and supporting each other effectively. Gillian addressed how well we are doing this under six headings:

a) Spiritual enquiry. There's a tremendous spiritual hunger in the nation. Friends want to learn and Woodbrooke is being enormously successful. Gillian sees vibrant spiritual health in many of our Meetings.

b) Community. The statistics of membership are worrying and of particular concern is a recent dive in the number of children attending Meetings. Why should this be when we have a strong support system and some excellent work going on? But the activity in which people are engaged and levels of participation are extraordinary. This year's Yearly Meeting Gathering promises to be really exciting, even though it's a nightmare to organise.

c) Organisation. Gillian described the way we organise ourselves as Byzantine. (I've visited some Byzantine sites, I thought, and they are pretty impressive!) It does place very heavy demands on a centrally managed staff team which is not really big enough to cope. We use our resources and buildings well, she thinks, but

not always our people. It's sometimes hard filling posts but Gillian believes, with Ben Pink Dandelion, that volunteers will come forward when the post to be filled has life. There is an uneasiness around the trust/distrust between Meetings and the Centre.

d) Witness. We're very active in many areas but cross-area communication is not always so good. We're very good when we're at the cutting edge. Gillian quoted Circles for Support and Accountability as a prime example. What are we replacing this with now we have handed it on? We need to have that sort of work but projects don't need to involve the centre. Some meetings have found ways of working co-operatively on initiatives of this kind.

e) Influence. Gillian is astonished by the number and range of media references to Quakers but how much of our national life are we actually influencing? We need to keep working at this.

f) Courage. Early Friends showed enormous courage in the face of persecution. Are we inclined to make it too easy to be Quakers today? The testing of our individual and corporate courage is a bit light. Are we too ready to find reasons not to act?

We engaged with these insights and challenges in groups and were grateful for a stimulating afternoon.

Notice of change of Correspondent for Ayrshire and Arran Meeting

The new correspondent is Kate Gulliver, at
Auchmannoch Cottage, Sorn, MAUCHLINE, KA5 6JP
Telephone 01290 553 385,
Email [kathryn.gulliver@phoncoop.coop]

General Meeting on Saturday September 12 2009 will be held at the Chaplaincy Centre, University of Dundee.

The meeting will start at **11am** and end at about **4pm**.

Below is a section of the campus map taken from the Dundee University website

www.dundee.ac.uk/general/campusmap.

(I also recommend www.multimap.com which has an aerial photograph and a bird's eye view to help you to know where you are - MP)

The Chaplaincy Centre is number 31.

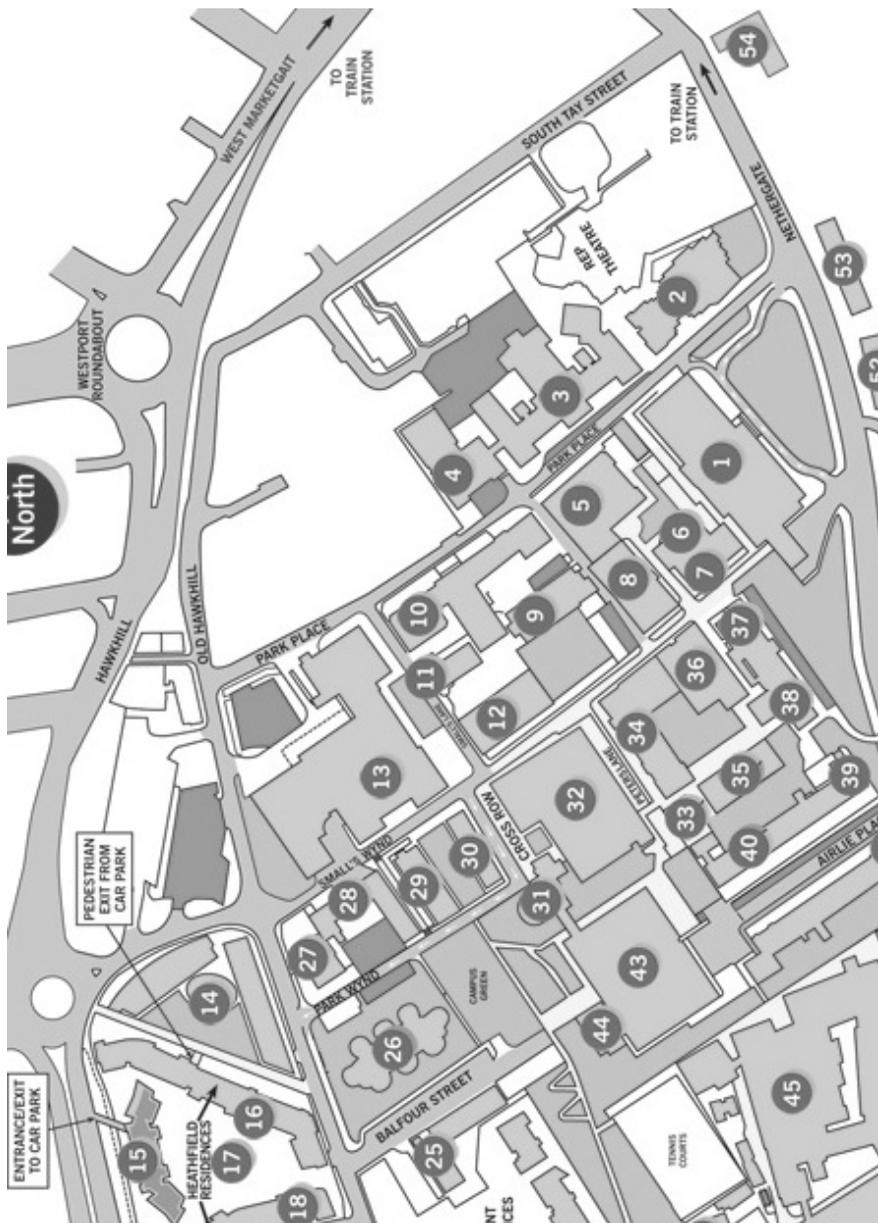
Users of the Chaplaincy Centre are allowed to park without charge on the University Campus at weekends. The dark areas represent car parks.

The Centre is within walking distance of the Railway Station. Turn left out of the station and follow the road until you come to the traffic lights opposite Debenhams. Then turn left along the Perth Road, past the Contemporary Arts Building, left along Nethergate- past Dundee Rep and Bonar Hall (2 on the map). Go past three right turns on Nethergate and you will see a footpath leading into Small's Wynd. Cross Row is the second left turn.

If you would like any further information about the venue, or more detailed directions, please ring Dundee MH on 01382 225213. You may need to leave a message, but the administrator there, Elizabeth McFall will call you back.

Hot drinks will be served from 10.30, and also at lunch time. Hot drinks and refreshments will be provided at 4pm

If overnight accommodation would make it easier for you to attend GM, please contact the GM Assistant Clerk, Beryl Milner 01250 870 115.



General Meeting for Scotland

Dundee 12 Sept 2009 - 11am until about 4pm

“A positive response to aberrant or destructive behaviour through reconciliation, restitution and reparation may take longer but it will be more likely to encourage the good in all parties, restore those who are damaged, reduce resentment and bitterness, and enable all those involved to move towards fuller integration..”
Quaker Faith and Practice 23.102

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in September will be in the Chaplaincy Centre of Dundee University – see separate notice for directions.

The special topic for this GM is Restorative Justice. At a previous GM we looked at aspects of the criminal justice system, and this time we will focus on the restorative aspect. Our speaker will be Marian Liebmann. Marian is a mediation trainer, consultant and writer. Her former affiliations include probation officer, victim support worker, and director of Mediation UK. For the last four years, Marian has worked as a freelance trainer, and her endeavors have included training several Youth Offending Teams in the UK, plus carrying out restorative justice training in Uganda, Russia and three West African countries.

We will also be concluding the review of our GM function groups.

Please join us in Dundee, meet new Friends, and uphold our business method.

Robin Waterston, Clerk