

# Scottish Friend



**Sign outside the Meeting House  
in San Jose, Costa Rica**

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Rowan Eisner took the photograph.

The next *Scottish Friend* will be constructed in the middle of January, or as soon as the agenda for March GM is known. Please send material to me, Margaret Peacock, at 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or [nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk).

If your article has already appeared in a regional newsletter, please change it a bit, so as not to bore some of the SF readers! 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.





**Paper introducing the 10:10 campaign for West Scotland Area Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> October. Margaret Gladden**

The rate at which carbon dioxide is added to the Earth's atmosphere is not sustainable. The concentration of carbon dioxide in air began to rise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when industry changed from relying on energy from 'renewables', such as water power, to burning fossil fuels. Additionally, in Britain domestic consumption of energy has increased from the 1940s when most households were without fridges, washing machines, central heating and cars.

The Climate Change Act is a 'world class piece of legislation' according to Friends of the Earth, but there is fear among members of the government Committee on Climate Change and 'green' activists alike that principle is not being converted into action with sufficient urgency.

The idea of the 10:10 Campaign came to Franny Armstrong as she walked across Hyde Park to a meeting with Ed Miliband. Franny Armstrong makes films to promote action on climate change. She had just read a paper by the Public Interest Research Centre calling for the UK to reduce carbon emissions by 10% in 2010, otherwise we pass the stage when we can make a significant contribution to world-wide efforts. She floated the idea at the meeting and Ed Miliband said it wouldn't work.

The purpose of the 10:10 Campaign is not only to do our own bit to reach the target of a 10% reduction in carbon emissions in 2010, but to give support to Ed Miliband in negotiations, and put pressure on other governments at the Copenhagen summit. That's why the immediate urgency to sign up.

Since the launch of the Campaign which has been promoted by the Guardian newspaper about 35,500 individuals and over 1000

organisations have joined, including B&Q, Microsoft UK, Domino UK, British Gas, the British Medical Journal, Manchester City and other district councils and Edinburgh University.

The target for individuals is to prevent 1.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide reaching the air (on average we are each responsible for about 14 tonnes yearly). We can do this by reducing our electricity and gas consumption, traveling less by air and car, buying fewer electronic gadgets, eating vegetarian meals and better still vegan meals, buying fewer new clothes, using less water – because energy is consumed in pumping and purifying it, using recycled paper and reducing paper use - because shredding trees to produce paper uses enormous amounts of energy. For further information go to [www.guardian.co.uk/environment](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment). Look for 'Climate Change 10:10 starts here'.

For organisations joining the Campaign the rules are more stringent. They should monitor their energy use over a year (a baseline year) before making cuts during an action year in four areas – grid electricity, on site fossil fuel use, vehicle fuel use and air travel. (In fact it is preferable for individuals too to monitor their energy use before taking action because the guidelines for individuals are based on average use in the whole population). The details for organisations can be found at <http://downloads.1010uk.org/docs/1010%20Organisations%20Methodology.pdf>.

A representative from Community Energy Scotland is willing to come to our Summer Weekend in Kindrogan to explain to us how to reduce still further the energy requirements of our Meeting Houses. This Company is a charity which specialises in helping communities to obtain grants to reduce energy use and promote the use of renewable sources of energy. There is more information on their web site at [www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk](http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk)

MG

(West Scotland AM has minuted its support of Devon AM's minute to Meeting for Sufferings calling on the Society of Friends

to sign up corporately to 10:10. Management Meeting has already stated its intention to reduce the carbon consumption of Friends' House in this way, but obviously has no mandate to speak for the Society. As I read it, the requirement for a participating organisation is to comply with 10:10 in its central office and to strongly urge its regional offices and its individual members to do the same, whether or not they are simultaneously taking part in another scheme.)

MP

## **JOHN WIGHAM (ENJOYMENT) TRUST**

### **Annual Report For 2008**

**Anne Miller, Convener of Trustees**

The John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust continued its very happy role of giving grants to 'deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures in life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life'. During 2008, fourteen such awards were made (or committed for payment in 2009), totalling £7,399. These left the fund standing at £23,534 at the end of December.

2008 was a more active year for the JW(E)T committee than 2007, and it would appear that the new procedure, making it easier for folk to apply for awards, seems to be bearing fruit. We hope that Quakers will continue to be pro-active in encouraging people who might fit the criteria to apply for some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature. It must be emphasised that grants cannot be made to reimburse someone retrospectively, for instance for an event that has already occurred, or for goods already purchased.

One of the joys of administering this trust is that of hearing afterwards of the great enjoyment that even modest grants have added to people's lives. The most frequent reason for applying

for an award is for a holiday, but the variety of such holidays is quite wide, ranging from a week's holiday locally, to helping a mother and her 10-year-old son to visit Canada, where he was able to undertake some swimming-training and competitions. He wrote afterwards "Thank you for the money. I had lots of fun in Canada. I went to Canada's Wonderland and went on the biggest and hiest roller coaster. I went to niagra falls and they were really good. It was a great holiday. I swam with professional swimmers. Thank you very much."

We were very pleased to receive the following report from a Chechen refugee family, now living in Scotland, who enjoyed a week's holiday. The mother wrote "We went to the beach and spent time on the beach. Went to the swimming pool in the centre and the children played in the soft-play centre a couple of times. We walked to Burntisland and the children went on the carousel. We walked to Kirkcaldy twice. Paid all our attention to the children. D. and G. learned new words. I am much calmer now, more relaxed and not so nervous, just different! R. now goes to sleep earlier instead of 12 or 1 am, because we couldn't sleep".

Coming in as a close second, the next most frequent reason for applying for an award has been to enable the applicant to attend a residential course, or a series of classes in their locality to learn some skill which would make a difference to their lives, or to attend a conference or retreat, giving them a new experience. One award was given to enable the beneficiary to undertake a course to learn how to teach yoga. The report told us "I was very grateful to the trust for the help towards the training costs. ... The training course has given me an outlet in a time of stress and given me another focus. The course is thorough and well delivered. I am enjoying it and finding I am learning a lot in so many different ways. I would like to use some of the skills and knowledge that I am gaining so that other people can experience the benefits of yoga practice. Thank you again."

A few of the applications are for events that do not fall into the category of a holiday or a course, but could be to attend concerts

or art exhibitions purely for enjoyment, or to enable someone to meet up with an old friend or relative. A post-graduate student who was missing her newly-engaged fiancé studying some 400 miles away, was given a grant to enable them to meet up occasionally during the year. She wrote “Thank you very much for your incredibly generous grant. I can’t tell you how grateful I am! ... Your grant will cover travel costs making it possible for us to meet up and spend time together and be very, very happy! ... I am thrilled that there is a trust that can focus on the joys of life. It is a beautiful idea, and I am grateful to have been considered for a grant”.

The last category into which a few of the applications fall, is for some goods, such as a particular piece of software for a computer, a camera and a special purpose computer printer. An unusual request came for help towards the cost of the purchase and installation of a multi-fuel stove in a large living room in a croft in the Highlands. The beneficiary said “The stove (installed just before Christmas) has changed the room completely. Our sofa now divides the room into the outlook (summery) bit and the cosy winter bit. ... We had a party to which 17 people came – warmed and admiring. Many thanks.”

Administering the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust has truly been an enjoyable, humbling, satisfying, moving, and at times an emotional experience for the trustees. Long may it continue to be so!

Further information and application forms may be obtained from Anne Miller (0131 447 3268, or [anniemiller1@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:anniemiller1@tiscali.co.uk)).

## **On representing Friends at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland , 2009**

**Margaret Mortimer**

A huge parcel arrived at my house. Ah yes - The General Assembly! I found within it invitations to receptions and suppers, an excellent cd showing the organisation and idiosyncrasies of the

Assembly, some background papers, and a very thick book of the processes for the week - just like Documents in Advance. The annual reports of the Kirk's myriad committees were in this, too, and it all looked very daunting. Closer inspection revealed so much substantial work which the Kirk is carrying out within Scotland and internationally.

I still felt some anxiety however. What should I wear? Would I - and Friends generally - be viewed as "unsound" by the assembled multitudes? How would I cope with serried ranks of Reverends I.M.Jolly? How would it compare with Yearly Meeting? I did discover, in the event, that my anxieties were unfounded.

The hospitality of the Kirk was so generous, thoughtful and kind. Those of us from the other Christian churches were brought together at the beginning, sat together, and were invited to various events where we could meet each other as well as members of the Kirk. The inclusion was spiritually-based - much emphasis was placed on our participation in the Assembly. We were warmly welcomed in session by the Moderator; we could speak in any session; and we were encouraged to voice any agreement/disagreement we might feel with an issue. I wanted to speak on several issues, particularly in the session on same-sex partnerships, but felt paralysed by the technology!

I did, however, during the session on child protection ask if the Kirk had any connection with "Circles of Support" the answer was not at present, but they are aware of the project.

There were more similarities with our Yearly Meeting than I had imagined. The Assembly Hall bears some resemblance to the Large Meeting House in Friends' House in its layout, and the processes of the week were much like ours in Yearly Meeting, with committee reports being presented, discussed and agreed - although instead of our "I hope so" the participants really did vote with their feet - by stamping on the floor under their chairs. The discipline was exemplary, and while the Assembly was for business, and so differed from our "Meetings for Worship for Business", proceedings were in a spirit of quiet respect. The

Moderator called people to speak as they indicated their wish electronically. He read out their names from a screen, rather than exercising the discernment of our Clerks.

Many of the issues discussed resonated with me from a Friend's point of view - Trusteeship, the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, peace, declining financial contributions, the environment.

Same-sex partnerships was a major issue, as many Friends will be aware from the media interest. At one point the General Assembly became a court as a challenge was presented by some members of a presbytery where an openly gay minister had been appointed. They challenged the legality of the decision to appoint him. Their appeal was not upheld, but in an ensuing debate I heard much anger about this. I was horrified not only by the homophobia expressed, but also the ugliness of some of the contributions. There seemed to be a well-organised group focusing on this. At one point one member shouted at the Moderator, who was gently describing a possible solution - "No Moderator! We're Presbyterians. We vote!" I really wanted to speak at this point, quoting Isaac Penington but wasn't at all sure that an intervention from a Quaker would be appropriate. And I was worried about the technology.

I was left wondering "is this ongoing ugliness really about the issue? Or is it about power, rather than morality?"

There was so much about this week that was wonderful - unaccompanied psalm-singing at the opening of the day's business; an address from Archbishop Tutu which emphasised the inclusive nature of God's love - how I wished he'd given it before the distressing discussions earlier in the week! - quiet talks with a woman Elder from Edinburgh, and a woman Minister from the West of Scotland.

And I have learned so much from this week. The Kirk has kept its own vocabulary - "Kirk session", "presbytery" and how I wish we hadn't lost ours. The Kirk is broad, and there were many

members with whom I felt able to build bridges. Much good work is being done by the Kirk throughout Scotland and indeed the world, particularly in Africa, and I have begun to value ecumenical needs-based activity where I had previously denied the need for it.

My earlier worries were easily dissipated I found no Reverends I.M.Jolly, but I did find many warm, kindly souls every bit as concerned about the world as Friends. No one told me that Friends are "unsound" but Mario Conti and others did express thanks for Friends' contributions to ecumenical and other activities "out of all proportion to your numbers".

The final event was the "clapping-out" of the Lord High Commissioner (George Reid) and the current and previous Moderators, as they left the Assembly Hall for the last time. I was standing against a wall, and as they passed by they seemed to be turning to me, smiling and waving. I was rather surprised by this, and then realised that Scott Rennie the minister at the centre of the Aberdeen controversy was standing next to me, and of course it was he whom they were greeting! One elderly male - former Moderator came over to us, and kissed Scott on the cheek.

Such grace.

At our meeting on 9 September we heard of progress in planning a conference jointly organised by ACTS and the Scottish TUC. It will be held on Friday 6 November at the Easter Road Conference Centre. The keynote address will be by Richard Wilkinson, author of *The Spirit Level* – why more equal societies almost always do better. I can recommend Richard as a speaker having heard him give the Salter Lecture at Yearly Meeting Gathering this year. A Scottish Minister will then outline government perspectives on tackling income inequality, followed by responses from the trade unions and the churches. The afternoon has opportunity for follow up on specific topics in 5 different workshops. With a conference fee of only £10 this day has a lot to offer. Further details from [www.acts-scotland.org](http://www.acts-scotland.org) and follow the link. We discussed a paper we had received from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) entitled Scotland's Global Crisis: towards a civil society response? This lists 11 topics including increased carbon taxes, replacing GDP with an index of well-being and sustainability, and structural reform of banks, seeking responses from other organisations with a view to holding a wider civil society conference this winter, to discuss how these proposals might be promoted as part of public debate. Further details from the SCVO website at [www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk) On mentioning Circles of Support and Accountability there was a positive response especially from the Church of Scotland, so there may be a possibility of the churches taking this forward together.

**Quaker Housing Association Scotland  
Annual General Meeting  
Sunday 15 November, 1-00 pm  
Glasgow Meeting House**

## Meeting for Sufferings

Peter Kennedy

Meeting for Sufferings, the body charged with acting as Yearly Meeting in between its official sessions, met for its Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs in the Small Meeting House on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009.

As this was the beginning of a new triennium with about a third of the members of the Meeting being “technically” new – though some were well kent faces having served in a previous triennium, the Clerk took Friends gently through the agenda.

Much of the meeting was taken up by the consideration of minutes from Yearly Meeting Gathering. One of these was Climate Change and members of Sufferings were encouraged to make sure Friends in our respective Meetings have seen the BYM statement on climate change and are thinking about the commitment they can make in it to change their own lives. We were encouraged to tell you about the 10:10 campaign and encourage them to sign up. Look up details and ideas for steps that you can take at <http://www.1010uk.org>. Should Sufferings sign up for itself and/or for all Quakers in Britain? Although there was not time to discuss this matter I personally have a stop in my mind about initiatives like this!

Whilst it is perhaps impressive that individuals might commit to cut their carbon footprint by 10% during 2010, it still remains the fact that the far and away the single biggest polluter in the world is the United States military. Any savings made by the 10:10 initiative is by comparison small fry. Even if every citizen of the UK cut their carbon footprint by 10%, this still wouldn't equate to a fraction of what the US military use. Perhaps this is a bit defeatist, but I would personally be happier if the 10-10 initiative also tried to influence the US military in cutting their carbon footprint. Now that would achieve something!

A second point, which is often missed is that whilst we are encouraged to cut our carbon footprint, no moratorium has yet been issued by groups such as the G-20, on the search for more hydrocarbons in which huge investments are made, and are one

of the underlying reasons for much of the world's conflicts.

Another of the issues considered at Yearly Meeting Gathering was that of Same Sex Marriage. Meeting for Sufferings was asked by YMG to initiate several strands of action which are already in hand as per YMG 2009 Minute 23. There will be an interim process for conducting same sex commitments in meetings while work goes on to revise Quaker Faith and Practice. There may be developments in the near future on changing the law through amendments to the Equality Bill in England and Wales, though not Scotland. We were reminded that some Friends will find our corporate position challenging. The leaflet *We are but witnesses* from the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations might act as a useful starting point for discussions with Friends locally, and with neighbouring churches and faiths.

When it came to the time the clerk presented the minute on this item, I'm not sure whether she was testing us, since the heat and/or effects of over-indulgence by some at lunch was beginning to tell, but as she quoted the YMG minute I was sure that she had misquoted the number. On checking the YMG minutes, it appeared that she had indeed had a dyslexic moment, for she had in error transposed the YMG minute 32 for 23. With some trepidation I rose to my feet to question the minute, fortunately, my interjection was gratefully received. So it would seem that even the most experienced of Clerks can sometimes get muddled with their minutes!

Friends being Friends, it was perhaps not surprising that when considering the list of appointments, questions were raised over one appointment. That is perhaps one of the good things about our process, that we can challenge things in a spirit of loving concern for the individual concerned. In this case, concern was raised that the same Friend was being asked to give simultaneous service to the different parts of the centrally managed work. Central Nominations Committee were asked to reconsider this and come back at a future meeting.

During consideration of the Draft Operational Plan 2010-2012 and Budget for 2010 the meeting was reminded that we cannot use reserves more than once. Donations are needed to support

the work that we want to see done. There is anecdotal evidence that some Friends and attenders are not even being asked to contribute.

The Recording Clerk explained the processes by which the priorities of Meeting for Sufferings in the Framework for Action are being developed into the operational plan by Trustees, Management Meeting and relevant committees. She has introduced the draft Operational Plan 2010-2012 showing how particular projects relate to the priorities. We recognised the difficult judgments which Trustees, Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee and our staff "Management Meeting" need to make and we minuted that we uphold them in their task.



## **Christmas Carol**

**Andrew Kinnear**

A baby in a manger. The herald host appears.  
A star shines bright and casts its light across the troubled years.  
*"Peace on earth, goodwill to all."* We sing it once a year  
And then retreat behind a wall of prejudice and fear.

While children cry in hunger, we celebrate the feast,  
Yet sidetracked with display and myth the basic theme is missed.  
*"Peace on earth, goodwill to all."* Let's sing it loud and clear,  
Not only as our Christmas call but all throughout the year.

Secure the children's future: an end to war and strife.  
Let neither pride nor fear divide. Reach out in love for life.  
*"Peace on earth, goodwill to all."* Let hope and trust increase,  
As each successive bar must fall - for *"We Shall Live In Peace!"*

**Report of QCCIR meeting 9-11 October 2009 at Whirlow**

## Grange, Sheffield.

**Margaret Peacock**

As GM's nominee on Quaker Committee for Christian and interfaith relations, I am reporting to GM. We meet in different places throughout the country, in order to meet local Friends and hear their experiences of interfaith and interchurch activities. This time we were privileged to hear about Sheffield being a City of Sanctuary, and about one Friend running a retreat house for anybody who wishes to come.

We used to be a much larger committee, because we do all the work ourselves with minimum secretarial support from Friends' House. However, the new BYM trustee body has limited us to 15, so we now follow the Quaker Life model and recruit Friends from outside the committee to spread the work more widely. This process is in its infancy, and we hope to work with all the AM correspondents.

As a slim committee, we need to slim down our Quaker representation on various external bodies. We shall keep the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, plus the associated four national bodies, plus the Churches Inter-religious Network. That was quite enough decisions for one meeting; more will be attended to next time.

Because we are the committee that represents Friends to other churches, we have some theologians, and connections to others. Most recently we have responded to World Council of Churches *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, and *Quakers and the Ecumenical Agenda*. And of course the recent necessity to explain ourselves to other churches and faiths has caused us to undertake the rush job of writing *We are but witnesses*.

Previously we have written several small leaflets on arranging interfaith or interchurch occasions, and on Remembrance Day. All these are downloadable from the Quaker website.

## **Report from your Representative Friend**

**Pamala McDougall**

As usual, many varied meetings, events, talks and conferences – all interesting and enjoyable. Here is a sample.

1. *Church of Scotland annual Guild conference.*

Having given a presentation on ‘Quakers and Testimony to Justice’ to the Guild in Edinburgh in August at the start of their new theme ‘What does the Lord require of you?’, I was looking forward to renewing some friendships made there and hearing how the theme had progressed. This time I was joined by Margaret Boland and Alison Burnley, the latter representing the Quaker tapestry. Alison Twaddle, General Secretary of the Guild, was unable to be with us through serious illness and sent a greeting by video. She was missed greatly and there was a huge amount of loving feelings and prayers directed towards her. There was a stirring address given by the Moderator of the General Assembly, Bill Hewitt; a review of past work and a novel way by live interviews of the description of the charities the Guild will support in ‘doing what the Lord requires’. We enjoyed some very rousing hymn singing which carried out of the open doors of the Caird Hall into the sunny Dundee city square. A wonderfully uplifting occasion where we felt warmly welcomed.

2. *Ecumenical Committee of the Church of Scotland 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September*

As an invited representative (one out of 3 of the ACTS church members) I enjoyed an overnight stay at Scottish Churches House in one of the beautifully refurbished rooms (en suite!) . There was a long agenda and we reps were fully part of the discussions. Items included financial matters – worryingly depleted for ecumenical affairs – and the difficulties of meeting OSCR requirements. The Church of Scotland has set up a Commission to investigate its members’ views and ideas and 2 of its members joined us for a session. They were particularly interested in how Quakers manage with our separate meetings and charitable status. The enthusiasm for world wide ecumenical work was evident at the meeting and updating of plans for the conference ‘Edinburgh 1010’ were heard. I shall personally miss the fellowship and generous hospitality of this group on behalf of Friends.

### 3. ACTS Members' Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October

Another stay at Scottish Churches House and its wonderfully calm ambience for the ACTS Members' meeting with our new convener Philip Kerr. As member churches rotate to provide a convener, it is the turn of the Roman Catholics and Philip is a parish priest. Margaret Peacock and I had hardly time to draw breath, never mind have much time together as we immersed ourselves in the busy agenda. As Quaker reps, we had some items and papers to present which were –

- a) 'We are but witnesses' on marriage equality and the decision of BYM to recognise same-sex marriages.
- b) Our booklet 'Quakers and the ecumenical agenda'
- c) '10-10' which is a paper on ecology in which all are invited to sign up to reducing 10% of our carbon footprint by the end of 2010.
- d) A proposal to ask ACTS to write to Prime Minister Gordon Brown approving his intention to reducing Trident as a step in the right direction. It was decided that ACTS General Secretary, Stephen Smyth, be asked to write to each of the member churches encouraging each church to write its own letter as it was felt that nine letters would be better than one.

It has been one of the minor frustrations during my time on ACTS that it often leaves the 'action' out of its name! However, I was pleased that this particular agenda item was approved at my last ACTS member's meeting.

This will be my last report to the SF as I hand over (with accompanying files!) to Leslie Stevenson as "Representative Friend (ACTS)". Nominations FG is to bring to GM a list of 'mini reps' who are willing to help represent Friends at various events and so share the load.

Thank you, Friends, for the privilege of your trust in doing this important work and especially to those who have supported me during the past 2 years, in particular Margaret Peacock who has shared so much and who always helped me to 'walk cheerfully'.

## **General Meeting held on September 12<sup>th</sup> in Dundee** **Daphe Wassermann**

The September General Meeting is the only one in the year for which I, as treasurer, have no official duties and no preparation to do. So the first request that came to me was whether I could give our speaker a lift back to Glasgow. Unfortunately all the Friends that I knew from Glasgow were taking advantage of various public transport concessions. So I ended up having an interesting conversation with Marian Liebmann on the train back.

The train to Dundee was full of fathers and sons on a day out to the Leuchars air show. On arrival at the University I discovered that Freshers' week included armed forces recruitment on the lawn round the corner from our meeting and that someone was setting up amplification equipment for music. It was with some trepidation, therefore, that I sat down in the funnel-like chapel of the University's chaplaincy centre. Fortunately the windows were high and the soundproofing good so the noise outside was only faintly audible. The light from above resonated with the inner light.

During our business sessions we completed the task of re-organising and slimming down our Function Group structure.

Noting that this year we have an over-supply of lists of Members and Attenders, we also agreed to issue an electronic amendment list next year and in subsequent alternate years. If you haven't got this year's book, Bronwen Currie, our administrator, has spare copies.

Pamala McDougall has represented the Society in Scotland to ACTS, the Parliament and elsewhere both as GM Clerk and, subsequently, as Representative Friend. This task will now be shared more widely, with Friends being selected from an approved group of volunteers, co-ordinated by Leslie Stevenson.

Beryl Milner and Adwoa Bittle gave us their personal accounts of Yearly Meeting Gathering. Adwoa is that rare treasure, a

young person who enjoys Quaker business meetings, and I was reminded of her reported experiences of the World Gathering of Friends in Kenya many years ago. As a less gregarious person, I am very grateful to the Friends who attend these large events and contribute their insights to the business sessions on our behalf.

Marian Liebmann's background in victim support and work with offenders led naturally on to Restorative Justice (RJ) and mediation.

The use of RJ pre-dates our punitive system which was introduced in the middle ages and has now led to overflowing prisons. Indeed, in other parts of the world it appears crazy to incarcerate an offender, leaving his family without support and the harm not redressed.

RJ brings together the offender and the victim and sometimes the wider community as well. RJ is no soft option as the offender must first face his or her own demons, recognise and accept the harm done. Then they can try to put things right. In some cases direct reparation to the victim is not possible but the parties are able, nevertheless, to find a way forward that heals both of them, contributes to the community and prevents re-offending.

One small story was of a young boy who got caught up with others in vandalising a milk float. After apologising to the milkman and paying for some of the damage, he was given a job as milk boy.

Despite studies that have demonstrated the benefits of RJ compared with prison, the Government continues to drag its heels. This may be because RJ is perceived as not being sufficiently punitive. We can all play our part to inform and change public opinion on this.

## GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND,

ABERDEEN 21-22 Nov 2009

“In the depth of meditation, in the gathered meeting we rise above all limitations. Gone are the concepts of Quakerism and Vedanta. Gone are the ideas of being a Christian or a Hindu. All these concepts are valid on their own level. They have their place, but they are transcended when we merge our minds in Spirit. I believe this is what Jesus and all the other World Teachers wanted us ultimately to do.”

Swami Tripurananda (Jonathan Carter), 1979

from Quaker Faith and Practice 27.10

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

At this residential GM our speakers will be two Friends with exceptional experience of Friends across the world. Ali Ghanem and Bronwyn Harwood will reflect on how encountering the divine in "the other" can both challenge and discomfort but also deepen personal understanding and connection with the divine.

Ali is a Syrian Muslim Quaker currently living in London, whose journey into Quakerism includes time spent with Aberdeen Friends. He is a former clerk of Europe and Middle East Young Friends.

Bronwyn's spiritual journey has taken her beyond her Quaker home in Central Edinburgh Meeting to world-wide encounters with Quakers and others during her period of service with Friends World Committee for Consultation.

They both attended the Europe and Middle East Young Friends' Gathering in Damascus in April this year where the theme was: Faith, the Divine and the Other.

Our business will also include looking at the work of our Representative Friend during 2009, and of our Meeting for Sufferings representatives. We will consider the budget for 2010.

It will be a varied and stimulating weekend, and an opportunity to meet Friends from across Scotland. Please join us in Aberdeen, and do encourage anyone in your meeting to come who may not have attended GM before.

Robin Waterston, Clerk