



May
2010

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Scottish Friend

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Andrew Farrar took the cover picture.

Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 1st August to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

For the front cover I like to publish photographs of your meeting places. Please go on sending me news, reports, thoughts and pictures. Many thanks to all who have made suggestions.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website at the same time as it goes to the printer. If you would like an email copy instead of a paper one, please email scotfriends@gmail.com, to let Bronwen Currie know.

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.



Behind the scenes at GM in Glasgow in March

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The Big Outreach Conference-Swanwick 22-24 January

Robert Thompson

Around 125 Friends gathered from all parts of BYM (including four from Scotland) at the very fine Hayes Conference Centre in Swanick to discuss, debate, listen and reflect on all aspects of Quaker Outreach. A very full and varied weekend began on the Friday evening with "A Gentle Leading" from Jennifer Barraclough from Woodbrooke giving a very personal insight into her journey to Friends and offering thoughts on "Building Communities". Her understated but profound talk set the mood well and brought the large gathering together.

Saturday morning saw a robust presentation from Geoffrey Durham called "To See Ourselves as Others See Us." This was based on the detailed findings of Market Research undertaken on behalf of Quakers by DVL Smith in June 2009. The results make very interesting reading for anyone concerned with future of the Religious Society of Friends.

Key points-

1. There appears to be considerable confusion amongst many people about the role and beliefs of Quakers.
2. Five in ten respondents thought that Quakers are "very strict" in their religious outlook.
3. One third felt that Quakers were "evangelical"

The main discussion point for Quakers as we look to the future can be summed up as follows-

" One communications approach for the Quakers is to continue with their traditional "passive" style of communications, based on

the critical underlying assumption that people will find their way to Friends.

The counter view is that the negative messages and confusing "noise" circulating around what the Quakers stand for is blocking people's paths to finding Quakers and that therefore more overt communications about the Quaker message should now be considered."

Following this presentation and some lively discussion Ginny Wall from Woodbrooke introduced the new "Becoming Friends" project on behalf of Woodbrooke and Quaker Life.

The main work of the conference took place in seven separate "Concern Groups" which met three times over the weekend and were asked to produce a Minute by lunchtime on Sunday .Three of the four Friends from Scotland joined the rather too big "Rural, Small and Scattered Meetings" Group and produced a Minute that included nine proposals for further consideration re. Outreach. The seven Concern Groups generated a great many ideas which I hope to pull together in the near future for use in Scotland .(Along with the Geoffrey Durham presentation.)

Packed in between all this work were two Special Interest Group sessions, two Epilogues and a great deal of discussion and laughter over excellent meals and refreshment breaks!

In the prayer attributed to St Frances of Assisi are the words 'where there is despair let me bring hope'. With the exception of mental illness and execution (Socrates and Field Marshall Rommell both committed suicide under duress), suicide is an expression of deep despair. Despair caused by loneliness, by setting unachievable goals for oneself, by lack of money to cover all ones commitments, (in one particular case thinking that was so), of young men who have been jilted and for the purpose of this article also people in great pain and those who are fearful of being a burden to their families.

Anger is also a prime mover of suicide ('I'll make the b...r suffer'). In his book the Mammon of Righteousness, P C Wren, the creator of Beau Geste, shows how an innocent man could hang on the circumstantial evidence of an angry suicide for there must always be a prevailing sense of guilt amongst those who are left behind. That terrible feeling of 'we should have done more'.

'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord'. At some times in our lives we will all hear these words, for death is the only certainty of life and God the giver of both. It was horrible last year to see my brother wasting away before my very eyes. All one could do was pray that the end would come soon and when it did along with the sadness came a profound sense of relief. Relief that not only this poor body was at last at rest but relief also that to use Masfield words 'the long trick's over', for those of us who sat so long at his bedside. For the terminal illness is a preparation for those who are going to be left behind and in suicide there is all too often no such preparation.

In Bathford Church where my family stayed during the war

there is a stained glass window erected by the spinster lady of Warley manor in memory of her brother killed in World War I. The window depicts a young man in uniform lying at the foot of the cross with the accoutrements of war lying all around him. Under the picture are the words of St John's gospel 'greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. Along with this one is reminded of the heroism of Captain Oates walking out into the frozen wastes in Antarctica so that his companions might have a better chance of survival.

The Bible is unequivocal on the subject of murder, and suicide whether assisted or not is murder. In the most recent issue (Easter 2010) of the Journal of the Christian Medical Fellowship the editor makes the point that 'British law is based on the biblical prohibition of the intentional killing of the legally innocent'. Intention is an important word in this connection as anyone who remembers the case of Rex. versus Bentley and Craig will recall. This case, which still surfaces today, concerns two young men who went out one night. One of them, Craig, was armed with a pistol with which he shot a policeman. At the trial it was alleged that Bentley had shouted to Craig 'let him have it'. To this day it has been unclear whether he meant Craig to shoot or give up the gun. However the trial judge in the summing up laid emphasis on the fact that the evidence had shown that the two men had gone out with the 'intention' of killing. Both men were found guilty. Bentley who had not killed was hanged and Craig (a minor) was detained. It follows therefore that no amount of motivation is sufficient to justify a mercy killing.

By contrast self-murder or suicide is destructive not only of the victim of also of those left behind. I shall always remember the shock and horror that greeted the news of the suicide in the small Irish village that I lived in during the sixties. It was, I was informed,

the first in the Republic for sixteen years. Although doubtless there had been others that had not been so blatant and had in charity been called something else. For the Catholic Church abhors suicide and is threatening to mount a legal challenge in the courts should Margo MacDonald's bill become law.

Where in all this does the Hippocratic oath come? This great oath for two and a half thousand years has sought to protect the life of society from such murderous activities as those of doctors Bodkin Adams and Shipman. In eroding this pledge still further, it will become nothing more than a ceremonial form of words. At this time of year, Easter, we are reminded of the most desolate of suicides, that of Judas Iscariot who having betrayed the greatest teacher that the world has ever known hanged himself. Legend has it that the tree on which he died is known today as Certis, common name the Judas Tree, and ever since that fateful day it would fall down if anyone tried to climb it. It has the most beautiful pink flowers in spring.

In a review article in the current issue of the *The Psychiatrist* the authors call for greater access to palliative care. At present only sixteen percent of cancer deaths occur in hospice care and four percent of all deaths are under hospice care. The remainder of people dying have to put up with non-specialised care often in general wards in hospitals that out of necessity have different priorities.

The words of Zachariah the father of John the Baptist echo down the ages 'And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' Luke 1:76-79 (King James Version).

New ACTS appointment
Scottish Churches Racial Justice Officer
Margaret Boland

Francis Alao was recently appointed.. He came to meet people from local churches at Renfield St Stephens church centre, and I went along. Meeting in the Chapel with chairs in a circle and the sound of music from the Glasgow Music Festival sessions held elsewhere in the building it was a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The funding for the post has increased so that Francis has a 4 day week compared to the 2.5 day week that his predecessor, Nelu had, and his enthusiasm for the work will make the most of that extra time.

Francis told us of his journey from Nigeria to Scotland, and made some interesting comparisons between the two. He suggested that the ministers who are coming to serve the church from overseas are "reverse missionaries" coming to reinvigorate the church of the "mother" country and that mission should expand into the community.

Having been 5 years in Scotland, first coming as a student, and then working with 'Heart for the City', a project based at Maryhill, North Glasgow which has links with the Scottish Episcopal Church. He is the Senior Pastor of Glasgow International Christian Church, the worshipping community of Heart for the City, situated in Glasgow Caledonian University .

Since coming to Scotland Francis has been passionate about networking Churches and Christian organizations together. He is particularly keen on bridging the gap between the established Churches and emerging Churches in Scotland, believing there is much the churches can learn from each other, and together they can find new opportunities for engaging in God's mission. He has been part of the MECTIS (Minority Ethnic Community Churches Together in Scotland) organising group, and plans to build on this work.

He identified needs to connect asylum seekers and refugees with their partner churches in this country; to find ways to link international students with their faith communities here; and to integrate overseas members of partner churches into local congregations. The underlying theme was of giving and receiving spiritual nurture and learning from one another.



SOULMATES (!)

Margaret Peacock

"George and Margaret WLTM 2 or3 Friends 4 MfW on Skype.
Tel 0141"

How's that for an advertisement in SF?

We recently bought a new laptop, which has a built-in webcam, with a field of view of 60° and big depth of focus. On Skype it could show three people sitting together. Anybody who has a similar facility could use the Skype to join with a group of up to three others for a Meeting for Worship.

I am thinking of Friends who live in very remote locations, who cannot normally manage to attend a Meeting. Maybe they hold their own private Meeting, maybe not. But possibly they have the technology to keep in touch with their families abroad, and would value using it in this new way for worship. They could get in touch with the nearest isolated family to explore the possibilities, or they could put an advertisement in SF (not quite like the one above!) to see if there is anyone further afield who is equally unable to attend a regular Meeting for Worship.

I am also thinking of Friends who for reasons other than remoteness cannot attend a normal Meeting - Friends with disabilities and Friends who regularly work on a Sunday morning.

SCOTTISH CHURCHES HOUSING ACTION

Supported Lodgings

John Foster

There are young vulnerable persons in Scotland who require support to help them cope with every day life. Many of them have been denied the basic skills needed to live normally and have often been homeless. They require a helping hand to learn the basic requirements of living in a balanced and caring home.

For several years Nightstop has provided short stays in peoples homes for just one or two nights. This can provide relief from the endless round of homelessness - a clean bed, a bath, a meal or two and some companionship. This is a great value but in some ways rather limited.

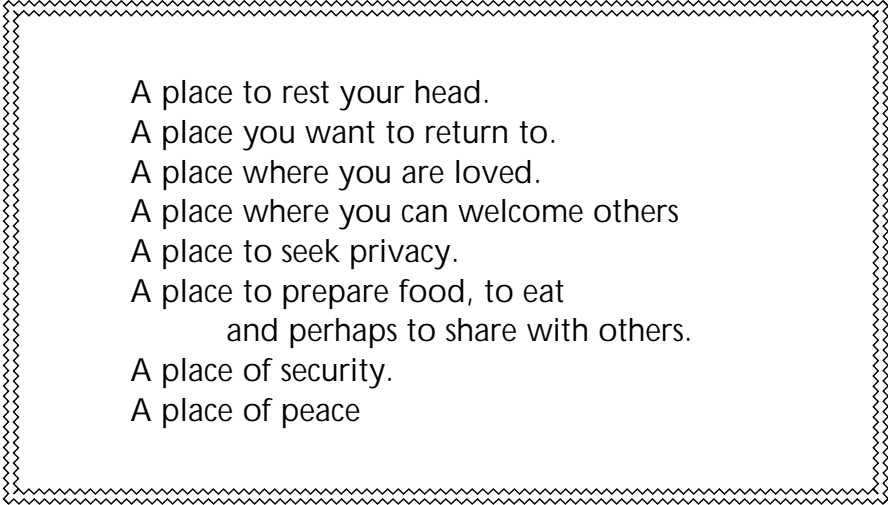
The concept behind the supported Lodgings Scheme is for a young person to stay longer in a home. The basic requirement is for the person to have their own room and to share the kitchen and bathroom facilities and as appropriate to become part of the family. The hosts can be families, couples or single people.

Supported lodgings can help prevent homelessness at a time of crises, fitting into a network of services providing more settled supported accommodation for young people. Often, however, a previously homeless young person who lacks the appropriate knowledge cannot cope with living in their own accommodation and becomes homeless again.

Several local authorities support this idea but it does require volunteers to participate and much care needs to be taken in matching the needs of the young person and potential hosts.

I recently sent out an appeal letter and flyer to all Quaker Meetings in Scotland. Please support the development of Supported lodgings.

In the last edition of Scottish Friend I posed the question What do you mean when you use the word "HOME"?. Some possible thoughts could include;



A place to rest your head.
A place you want to return to.
A place where you are loved.
A place where you can welcome others
A place to seek privacy.
A place to prepare food, to eat
and perhaps to share with others.
A place of security.
A place of peace

I am sure you can think of others.

And don't forget, a homeless person is denied most of these.

At the age of seventy one I found myself packing up a life-time's belongings to move to the magical Isle of Skye. My son had taken me to Skye in the autumn of 2000. We arrived late in the afternoon and I gazed in awe at the rushing waterfalls and towering red Cuillins rising nearly three thousand feet from the sea loch Ainort. Over the next eight years we came to Skye two or three times each year, often debating how we could live here, and in the autumn of 2008 we came to stay.

Skye is roughly seventy miles long and is made up of five peninsulas so that nowhere is more than five miles from a tidal sea-loch. Often these estuaries are quite calm in spite of the frequent winds. When the sun shines it has a special purity and extra beauty. In the twelve weeks either side of Midsummer Day the sun has an extra beauty when it sets for an hour with a long twilight.

The bridge to Skye no longer has a toll so it is a free journey from Kyle of Lochalsh, and the island does not feel isolated as are many of the other islands around the Scottish mainland. The principal town is Portree which has Banks, a very good Library, most of the usual shops and a Co-op Supermarket on the outskirts of the town. There is a Doctors' Surgery and a small Hospital. "Specsavers" visit once a month but the NHS Dentist has a very long waiting list. There are several "beaches", a harbour and pier with boat trips to the cliffs to see the abundant wildlife. A Sea Eagle's nest is videoed and shown in the Aros visitor centre.

From the Bay Beach and area of green islets one can see Eider ducks, and beyond the famous Cuillins (at present under

snow). North of Portree are the Storr, with the "Old Man" rock and the rocky Quirang. On the coastline is the "Kilt Rock" with a wonderful waterfall plunging many feet into the sea.

The Cuillins straddle the centre of Skye. For those like me who are no longer able to climb there are wonderful views: from Glen Brittle to the north; Sligachan, on the road to Portree; and Elgol, a stunning village on a steep hill with the school on the beach. There are boat trips from Elgol to Loch Corusk, in the heart of the Cuillins. The road to Elgol goes around the sea-loch, Slapin; Blaven (at three thousand feet) towers above the road. With a high tide, the seas can engulf the road here. We think this happens more frequently now and possibly points to a slightly higher sea level. This place is special to us - heaven on earth?

How about Quakers? We saw notices in Portree when we visited so once we had settled I went to Meeting and had a warm welcome. Since then I've had great support. There can be ten or twelve people, similar to my old meeting at Caerleon. We meet twice a month at Portree and once a month at Breakish, then come together twice a year for a shared lunch. Thanks must go to Ruth and Carel Goodheir who started Quaker Meetings ten or twelve years ago. Alasdair and Ann often go to Area Meeting for us. The distances are vast! - even compared with South Wales, but people in Scotland seem to accept this. We are hosting an Area Meeting in May this year - this will be quite an occasion! At present we are half-way through "Hearts and Minds" although I had already worked through this at Caerleon several years ago. It is so interesting to hear all the different view points, but in the end we all agreed to the spiritually fulfilling nature of Meeting for Worship, the silence and the testimonies. All of us try to live up to these truths in our individual ways.

A retired Canon and Forces Chaplain occasionally joins us in Meeting. Before I knew he was connected with the Armed Forces, I discussed Peace with him and Alasdair. Afghanistan had been on the news. "Fred" told us that soldiers don't really like killing people. He has offered suggestions for charitable work that our Meeting could arrange. He struck me as a very caring person and I was sorry at what I had said. On another occasion I apologised and he accepted graciously. I thought of my late husband who could usually see that there were two viewpoints, sincerely held, in discussions.

We have a "Faiths together" group on Skye. They run a "Taizé". Morag leads the chants with about five minutes of silence between the singing. This is held in the Scottish Episcopal Church once each month. "Fred" and the Vicar often join us.

I am a country person, I like animals and plants, as well as the sea lochs and mountains, so don't much like towns and crowds. Skye offers a special tranquility. I learnt a number of years ago that happiness is important and comes from within one's soul whatever one's circumstances. I know it's no good moving to an idyllic place and hope to solve one's problems, these, I fear are endless, whatever one's age. I am thankful and think I am lucky to be able to try to overcome them in a place that to me will always be very special.

Geraldine (Gerry) Layton, (Caerleon Meeting, South Wales 1985 - 2008), Skye Meeting, North of Scotland Area.



Margaret Gladden

Diane Bowes

[Margaret survived only three days after a stroke early in April. She was 69 and we all thought she was much younger. - MP]

Bryan and I personally felt devastated by Margaret Gladden's death and our small meeting is bereft. We will miss her shy smile; her hesitant speech; her sharp analytical mind; her honesty; her formidable intellect and above all her integrity. She was a diligent and innovative correspondent. When it looked as if the Kindrogen family week-end would have to be cancelled, Margaret stepped in and took it over, together with Kate Arnot.

Margaret became our 'Yours Faithfully' column writer for the Milngavie and Bearsden Herald, where local church ministers write a personal letter. Margaret's letters were always imaginative and thought-provoking. As we came to know Margaret better over the years, we learned of her academic achievements, and how she continued to lecture her students after retirement, without any salary, so as not to let them down. Her extreme modesty and self-effacement were a mystery to us!

Margaret was deeply serious in her interest and study of the 'Gospel of Thomas' and was learning Coptic so as to read the original manuscripts, just as she learnt Gaelic so as to speak at her daughter Rona's wedding.

The Thomas Group were down in Dalry, at our June Seminar [with Rosemary Gascoyne], and we'd each been asked to choose a logion from Thomas, that had been particularly meaningful or helpful to us. Margaret chose this one. She said she'd been in a difficult situation at work, where someone was giving her cause for worry, but refusing to take her advice.

Logion 42: "Jesus said: become yourselves, while passing by".

This has been interpreted as: 'letting go' is sometimes the best way of dealing with a situation [ie. letting go of 'self'].

As a result of this Margaret decided to stand back and not intervene further, and this happened to be a good decision.

Margaret was the most kind and thoughtful person and was offering to do shopping for us just a few days before she died. It's so hard to believe we have lost her.

We will hold her warmly in our memory always."



General Meeting - Glasgow 13.3.10. Chris Stapenhurst

General Meeting for Scotland was a welcome reason for me to extend a stay with a close friend after a concert (the subject of which, incidentally, was Dave Matthews, an American Quaker), also allowing me to visit Scotland's only Co-operative Bank branch to transfer my bank account. The train strike was reason to stay another day and worship in Glasgow the following day.

After the 'housekeeping' items, the next steps on same sex marriage were considered. A group was formed to advance the decision, but more interestingly dissent was expressed by a representative of an informal group regarding BYM's Minute 23 itself and the way in which it was reached. Of course there are implications for advancing same sex marriage if the decision itself is not sound, but the Clerk reminded us that this item and meeting were not the proper place to question the decision itself, nor was GM responsible for the original decision. I found it an interesting controversy. The 'dissenting' group have made a submission to Quaker Life detailing their concerns.

Surprisingly unified was our response to a draft statement from Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), for our aversion to creed seems to extend to written statements in general. In this instance we agreed that 'Scottish Churches are deeply concerned about the present involvement of British forces in Afghanistan', but could not go further since we found no possible conditions for a 'just war', nor did we desire the deployment of troops under the International Security Assistance Force or otherwise (these being the subjects of the remainder of the statement).

In the various reports I was interested to hear from the Archive Group, this being a concern I had not hitherto considered; also from Margaret Peacock regarding the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, though was surprised to hear that the committee is lacking in input from individuals informed on interfaith issues. 'Becoming Friends' seems to be the object of some slight controversy, and I confess that although I have not yet seen the course itself, was sceptical of its seeming artificiality; fortunately, Friends in West Scotland seem quite satisfied with it, for they have asked that Woodbrooke might deliver a companionship training course, which the GM supported.

Thank you to Glasgow Friends for lunch – it is ironic that Quaker events are always so conducive to such gluttony on my part.

The afternoon's talk was delivered by Alastair Cameron of 'Scottish Churches Housing Action' (SCHA). The group – which incidentally involves representatives of more churches than does Action of Churches together in Scotland – whilst recognising the wide array of issues facing the homeless and the insecurely housed, prefer to focus their resources on finding housing for the homeless. This requires consideration of both the 'unit' and the 'context'; many homeless people may not be able to cope with a sudden house keeping responsibility, paying rent, etc, and are further hampered by their lack of simple possessions such as furniture, toiletries, cleaning utensils. SCHA works to overcome these problems, so that the newly housed might keep their homes. Small considerations as these, as well as the actual housing of the homeless are the concern of the group.

For the second part of the talk, Alastair partitioned us into three groups, each to consider two challenging questions: "what effect has the recession had upon the issue of homelessness?" and "how might we 'unwittingly' be part of the problem?" (I paraphrase)

That homelessness is allowed to exist – this is sickening - the more one dwells upon it the more so. But that I might be a part of a group engaged in the discussing of this issue, and concerned so sincerely for it – this is surely a joy to outweigh any disgust.

Regretfully, I found no definitive answer to these questions; for the first my group considered that we might unnecessarily occupy more accommodation than we require, and for the second that services to aid the homeless had been cut back by lack of funding. Really a great deal more time and better informed minds, I think, would have been required to produce more comprehensive answers.

After the Signing of the Minutes and closing Worship, I was anxious to return to my friend, but not so anxious as to neglect to wish Friends farewell, nor to smuggle some delicious slices of the various home bakes into my Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band lunchbox to share with my friend. Would the producers of these cakes kindly give us the recipes?



The meeting was concerned with two main subjects: growth of our meetings and work to liberate children from detention centres. Before that we had an innovative opportunity to return briefly to last time's issues that might have moved on or were not satisfactorily dealt with.

The Recording Clerk reported on the Equality bill in the House of Lords. She had been extremely impressed by the speed and power of Friends' mobilisation. The success of the vote (95:21) showed how effective our cooperation with other churches and faiths can be, and is an inspiration for the future.

In home groups before the plenary we discussed growth of our meetings. In spite of being timetabled as a re-visiting of Priority A, most people took growth to be growth in numbers, and we heard about buildings versus no buildings; Quaker Quest; different kinds of innovative programmes and non-Sunday meetings; and many variations on the subject of welcome. There were dire warnings about the widespread perception of Friends as cliquy. In our rush after Meeting to ask if our friends are recovered from their colds, we leave new or quiet attenders standing lonely. So please, Friends, abandon the conversation with your friend the moment you see anybody with nobody to talk to.

After what was referred to as sharing our experiences, we were brought back to the fundamental issue of the growth in quality of our Meetings for Worship. The two kinds of growth are not necessarily related but, if we pay attention to the Spirit, we may be led to surprising and powerful innovations leading to growth in numbers.

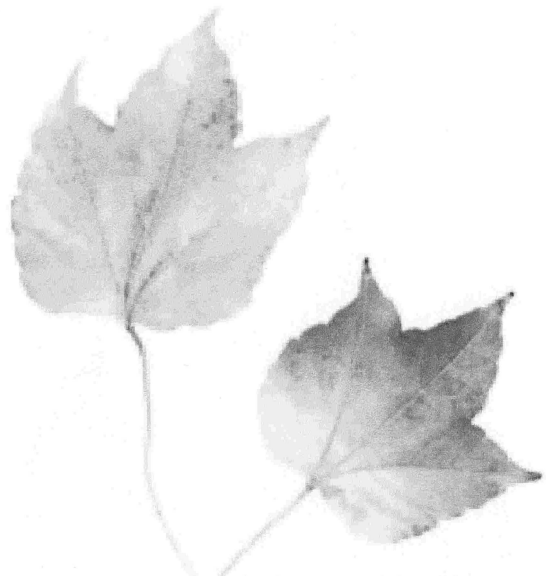
With regard to the scandal of detention of child refugees we had a very competent introduction paper from Michael Bartlet, detailing the current situation, sources of information and quotations from recent reports, and a list of organisations working on the problem. In particular we were reminded of the existence of the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network and urged to visit the website of the Churches' Refugee network. Detention will be one of the subjects for discussion at YM. YM may decide to make a public statement in the form of a letter to the Minister of Justice, and Michael provided a draft text. (See page 24) We were also given the text of a letter to the *Telegraph* which was sent above the signatures of fourteen Christian denominations. (See page 25)

Ron Barden, Clerk of Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee, summarised the financial report for 2009. He was greatly relieved that Friends had responded to his urgent appeal at the end of 2009, so that BYM ended the year in the black. He was not sanguine about 2010, still in the recession, and said we had to get tough and say to Friends that if we want the good work done in our name, we have to pay for it. Usefully, we shall shortly be getting a figure for the average contribution required from Friends.

Jonathan Fox, Clerk of Trustees, commented on their minutes. They see the core purpose of BYM as maintaining and developing the faith community of Quakers. In view of the high cost of our governance relative to other charities of the same size, they question whether the current committee structure provides the most efficient means of discerning and monitoring centrally managed work. They seek to identify Friends' skills and experience that could be put to use, and they

ask Friends to think fundamentally and be ready to accept change.

Personally I think we might sometimes save a lot of money by foregoing the social advantages of committees holding physical meetings. Telephone conferences work very well if properly prepared, and if the will is there they can be held in a Quaker manner, incorporating silence, under the same divine guidance as normal Quaker business meetings. Even an all-day phone bill would be cheaper than a train fare and emit less CO₂ than a car journey.



Letter sent to Jack Straw on 30 March 2010.

We are writing on behalf of Meeting for Sufferings, our national representative body, to express our dismay at the continued detention of children who are subject to immigration control in Britain. We remain deeply concerned at what amounts to the imprisonment of children despite very clear UNCHR guidance that young people should not be subject to immigration detention. We do not consider that this practice reflects the humane values of this country or corresponds to any proper understanding of the rule of law.

We urge you to reconsider your current policy both in the light of the recent report of Sir Al Aynsley-Green the Children's Commissioner, and the overwhelming evidence offered by the Royal Colleges of Psychiatrists, Paediatricians and GPs in their recent report of the harmful effects of such detention and the report by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers on Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre that sharply criticised the detention of children. We draw to your attention the findings of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights that "detention centres are prison-like" and the Home Office Select Committee's finding that "present practice is unacceptable."

In the light of these reports, we would like to know what changes you have made or are planning in the way children are taken from their homes and transported to detention and the efforts made to ensure their well-being while they are detained.

We would also like you to clarify in particular, what action the UK Government will be taking in the light of the recent judgment in the European Court of Human Rights in the case of 'Muskhadzhiyeva' where it was found that the detention of children in Belgium was unlawful.

This letter to the Daily Telegraph was sent above the signatures of 13 representatives of other churches.

Detention of children

SIR – We are writing to express our grave concern at the findings of Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the Children’s Commissioner, on children detained at Yarl’s Wood (report, February 17). We call on the Government to bring an immediate end to the unnecessary and inhumane practice of imprisoning children, babies and young people in immigration removal centres. We note that the Children’s Commissioner, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Children’s Society and many other bodies concerned with the wellbeing of children all support an end to child detention because of the appalling effects on children. These include insomnia, bed wetting, weight loss, speech regression, depression and self-harm. Our faith calls us to look particularly to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. We therefore urge the Prime Minister to bring Britain in line with other Commonwealth and EU countries, which provide less harmful community-based facilities for families awaiting a decision about their future.

“Prospects” - a paper from BYM Trustees, who have been considering Quakers’ response to their financial situation.

We see the core purpose of BYM as maintaining and developing the faith community of Quakers. We acknowledge the importance of the centrally managed work in fostering the worship and witness of Friends. We recognise that the centrally managed work encompasses three strands: church,

charity and business. In our discussion we have explored the relationships between these three strands.

A key aspect of the centrally managed work is the provision of services which will support and enable Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting in their work and in realising the aspirations expressed in *A Framework for action*. We hope that imaginative ways may be found to develop and organise these services, such as we already see in the development of advocacy work.

The question whether the current committee structure provides the most effective and efficient means by which central work is discerned and monitored, while recognising the essential value of wide participation. Many Friends have skills and experience which are not currently being used to assist Quaker work. We need structures and mechanisms which are appropriate to Friends’ lifestyles today and which will not deter some Friends from accepting service.

We sense that the governance costs of BYM are probably too high for the times in which we live and for the size of the organisation. We urge Friends to be bold in considering and accepting different ways of achieving good governance which are nevertheless consistent with our faith, rooted as it is in the worshipping communities.

We could make more effective use of resources by being more willing and able to withdraw from or hand on areas of work where others are also working and where the distinctive Quaker voice is not vital.

We encourage the continuing exploration of collaboration with the Woodbrooke Trustees and remain open to the potential for collaboration and partnership with other bodies.

We reaffirm our vision for Friends House as expressed in our paper of July 2008, which is attached to this minute. (See extract below) As part of this, we confirm the role for Friends House in generating income to support Quaker work and we encourage Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd to develop proposals to increase this potential.

The building should be recognised as an asset, not a burden - it is an investment, with any profits contributing directly to Quaker work. Moreover Friends should aim to capitalise on its unique offering - this is the Quaker gift to Britain. It is a hospitable, non-judgmental environment, open to all visitors and to new ideas. Friends have never shied away from the uncomfortable and the building will reflect this adventurous and welcoming approach. The building offers affordable space in central London for organisations to meet, particularly those that are not-for-profit. Through reconfiguration, the building has the potential to become a centre for Peace and a forum for exchange for all groups working towards goals shared by Friends.

**General Meeting for Scotland
will be held in Inverness
on 5 June 2010**

Out of the main entrance of the station, turn right into Academy Street, cross to the other side and the Old High Church Hall is just past Farm Foods. The best parking is in the Rose Street Car Park as it is open 24 hours, is less busy on a Saturday than the Eastgate car parks and is also cheaper!

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

“Peace begins within ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family; in our meetings; in our work and leisure; in our own localities; and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached.”

Sydney Bailey 1993, from Quaker Faith and Practice 24.57

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in September will be in Inverness. Venue is described inside. We start at 11 am, tea and coffee available from 10.30 am. Please bring your own lunch. Refreshments will be provided after the meeting, which is expected to end about 4 pm.

'In the afternoon session our special focus will be on inter-faith relations, and we will welcome as our speaker Isabel Smyth. A Catholic religious sister, Isabel has been for many years at the forefront of dialogue between the faith communities in Scotland. She has served on numerous inter-faith bodies both local and national and was instrumental in the creation of the Scottish Inter-faith Council. Speaking from her experience she will reflect on the enrichment and challenges which engagement with people of other faiths brings, and stimulate Friends to reflect on what it means to be part of a mature multifaith society.'

Please join us in Inverness, meet new Friends, and uphold our business method. Do please encourage anyone from your Meeting to come who may not have attended GM before.

Robin Waterston, Clerk