



October
2010

Scottish Friend



The newly refurbished Large Meeting House
in Friends' House

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Penny Dixie took the cover picture.

Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 31 January 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.



Recognising the gifts they bring (A&Q 19)

Bronwen Currie

"We would do well to nurture the young in our midst for they may know God most intensely of all"

When I read these words in Roger Seal's article "19.21 Revisited" in *The Friend* of 11 December last year I was immediately transported back to a summer night in Drax, Yorkshire, in 2001. It was the Thursday of Northern Young Friends Summer Gathering (as it was then called) and we were trying an experiment. Instead of the usual late evening whole-gathering epilogue, we were meeting in small groups for a session of worship-sharing. In our junior discussion group my co-facilitator and I and our eight 11-13 year olds started the session with a short activity which involved covering one side of a paper flower with wax crayon and then floating it on a tray of water. As the non-waxed side of the paper gets wet the flower "opens".

What followed from this was some of the most creative and profound ministry I have ever heard. And it kept coming. After half an hour or so, when we felt it was right to bring the session to an end, we held hands in a circle, and then the youngsters without more ado scampered off for juice and cake, leaving the two of us on our knees beside a tray of soggy paper, stunned and moved almost to tears by what we had just experienced.

If I had ever doubted the value of Summer School/Gathering/Shindig (and of course, with my own three children having attended for as many years as they were allowed, I never had) that experience confirmed me in my conviction that this week-long event is one of the most important things we do as Friends. We may create a welcoming and caring environment for our children and young people in our local Meetings, but rarely if ever will they have the opportunity and time to develop that closeness to their peers, that level of knowing each other in the things which are eternal, which allows them freely to share their deepest spiritual insights and to experience and contribute to gathered and

meaningful worship. That experience, and the bonds of friendship they form over their years of attendance at Shindig, stay with them into adulthood. These youngsters are part of the future of our Society. Of course Summer Shindig is also a great deal of fun. If you were a participant yourself in the past, or if your children are or have been participants you will know this. We know how much it is valued from comments received from many quarters, and from the financial support which General and Area Meetings give us. This core funding covers our running costs with regard to planning, staff travel and training and the week's activities, but the ever-increasing costs of board and accommodation have to be covered by the fees we charge. This year has seen a steep increase, and the raising of VAT to 20% may mean another next year. We would like to be able to offer more in the way of bursaries to help families with the fees, and have decided that donations we receive from individual Friends will be put to this use. Could you help in this way? Either by allocating part of your annual giving via the schedule, or directly?

Fund-raising should be fun too! So as we think Summer School/Gathering/Shindig is just about coming up to its half-century (estimates as to when it began vary from around 1961 to 1963) we thought it was time for a birthday party, and are planning a Grand Reunion, to take place in Edinburgh in May 2011 (date still to be confirmed). We hope you will come! For more information or just to let us know you are interested, email summerschoolreunion@gmail.com or join us on Facebook - search for "NFSS 50 year(ish) Reunion"

If you're not able to come to the reunion but would just like to contribute to the bursary fund - or even if you'd like to do both! - please make your cheque payable to "Northern Friends Youth Events Trust" and send it to:-

Bronwen Currie (Treasurer),
Taigh na Torraig,
Bruichladdich,
Isle of Islay
PA49 7UN.

'A Family around the world'

Tim Crump

I imagine you want to hear about Seeds for Peace...?' Mr Mahmoud Amra, Principal of the Friends School in Ramallah is talking to our dusty group of QVA volunteers. 'I think our students should share their experiences.'

One by one the four students came to the front of the hall. The 'Seeds for Peace' camps in the US which bring young people living across divides to share time with each other and hopefully reach understanding.

For the students who attended from the Friends School that year it had not built any bridges. Masa told of how an Israeli girl in her group told her, 'No-one died in the Gaza war, only a dog.' Yazan told of how an Israeli boy attacked him in a football match and the local paper reported the incident as 'Palestinian attacks Israeli.'

The calmness of their presentations and the way they expressed their differences with each other spoke of impressive schooling. I realized then what important work was being done by the Friends School.

This year's Northern Young Friends Summer Shindig was on the theme of 'Living in a divided world'. On being invited to speak about my knowledge of Israel/Palestine I followed Mr Mahmoud's example. 'Let those who know speak.'

Our Meeting adopted the concern to bring two students from the Friends School and the money was raised through sponsorship and two generous gifts from Quaker charitable trusts.

Nada Hashweh and Michael Khayyat came to the Shindig in August and touched all. Nada told me 'I have found a sister here', and

one of our young men told me 'Michael is staying here with us. You can't take him home.' Their presentation about their lives was met with prolonged and heartfelt applause.

I felt that they were carried to us on the hands of love, from their Student Counsellor Brian Phelps who worked so hard to prepare them for their visit, the Friends who supported with donations, their aunts and uncles who they stayed with in Amman to the young people and staff of Shindig.

Nada wrote a moving article about her time here which I share with you.

An experience I'll never forget

Nada Hashweh

Summer Shindig has been such a great opportunity for me to express my thoughts and ideas, share my stories with people of different cultures and places, and learn many new things as well.

Though it has been my first year to attend Summer Shindig I easily got to know people and build strong friendships with them. Everyone had a special characteristic that helped to create this one family.

As a Palestinian, it's been great to share about my life and the hard times that Palestinians have under occupation because I found many people who did not know about this conflict, but were willing to help. On the other hand, I've learnt many Quaker values, love, caring and that we are all God's children hoping for peace.

Finally, I would love to thank everyone because now I know I have a family all around the world.

Dear Friends,

Jack's report on the Thomas Group meeting in June gave a misleading representation of my paper to the group which I would like to correct because I believe it concerns a fundamental issue for Quakers/Christians today that the Gospel of Thomas can answer.

In such sayings as: I. (And he said, 'Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death) and 111 (... who ever is living from the living will not see death). Thomas addresses the thorny question of the results of belief in Jesus' teaching, viz. resurrection and the afterlife. These are articles of the Nicene creed, that turn away many modernists from religion as unbelievable. Buddhism has much to say on these matters.

The main thrust of my argument and presentation was on sayings 83 and 84:-

Images are visible to people, but the light within them is hidden in the Father's light; He will be disclosed but his image is hidden by his light; and in 84, Jesus said, 'When you see your likeness you are happy, but when you see your images that came into being before you and that neither die nor become invisible, how much will you bear?

My reference was to the Buddha's teaching in the Abidhamma which is the psychology of how Mind works. Basically it teaches that three-dimensional consciousness is wrapped up with the Ego which is very limited. The full potentiality of the human rests in going beyond Ego and almost all religions teach this means the death of the Ego, a terrifying experience often called in Christian mysticism the Little Death and which caused Quakers to quake because at this point we enter a different level of consciousness. As Christians we have lost the experience here and reduced the religion to a set of beliefs (and practices). In a society whose

mindset is still based on Newtonian Physics of materialism, Quakerism has degenerated into service that supports radical social change but it does not address the crippling spiritual poverty of our day, nor does it tackle the theory of our infantile concept of God as Him-out-there. If the Kingdom is within, and all around if only we could see it, then what is Jesus referring to? The Light Within is not the comfortable Ego that has learned to adapt to the world but a deeply disturbing phenomenon that challenges how we see the world. In these two sayings Thomas is talking about perception, and hence spirituality. At a time when Stephen Hawking's *Grand Design* once again challenges our concept of God when will we address this issue from experience rather than belief? Are we afraid of the supernatural God or of the little death that we must go beyond?

Tim Peat-Ashworth (of *Paul's Necessary Sin*) runs courses at Woodbrooke that look at Paul's teaching in a new way that looks at faith as transformative. Marcus Borg in *Jesus* clarifies the parameters of Bible study in a way that can revolutionise belief - Jesus taught simply about lifestyle, of no one owning the earth and against the 'domination system' where a few keep the products of the earth as riches. Both are in the Library and the first is the inspiration for the Edinburgh Bible Study group to look at *Romans* in September and October of this year. This is a call to get out of your old redundant mindset and radicalise beyond materialism. George Fox saw apostasy start very early on in the Christian religion - first or second century. The Christianity of today was not his view.

I will happily e mail my full paper to you - on Buddhism and Thomas (not meditation).

"We are not so much human beings on a spiritual journey, as spiritual beings on a human journey". What a thrill on first reading these words. It puts everything into perspective. I came across them in a leaflet from the Quaker Fellowship for After-Life Studies which provides a forum to open up discussion on death and immortality.

Early Friends, like all Christians, believed that death was the gateway to eternal life, and many passages in Quaker Faith and Practice testify to its importance.

The article on Euthanasia in the Scottish Friend May 20 failed to address the issue of choice and autonomy. It failed to realise that it is possible to support disability rights, as well as assisted dying for terminally ill adults for those who wish. Today, even with new medications not everybody has a good death, and the quality of their dying in the final weeks and days of their life can be distressing for them and for all those who love and care for them. This can sometimes come about because over-zealous professionals have struggled officially to keep them alive. My own parents were resuscitated against their wishes, despite having advanced cancer and degenerative diseases. Their deaths, which would have been peaceful, and when nature had dictated, instead became long drawn out and painful. This is why people can sometimes ask for assistance to die and is quite different from suicide.

Suicide, when an individual does violence to him/herself tragically, usually suddenly, is perhaps due to forces he could not control. *Suicide is a permanent response to what is often a temporary feeling.* Let us be non-judgemental towards those who take their own lives in an unexpected manner. There may have been a feeling of tremendous fear for many reasons. Fear of the future, employment, housing worries, break up in relationships, influence of drink or drugs or increasing incapacity.

Let us keep a place in our hearts for those who die by their own hand in this way. Let the Light from within be reflected to them by our thoughts and prayers. They need the comfort of our loving thoughts and prayers.

However, this is different from someone who after much thought, discussion with friends and loved ones, wants to think ahead to their own death, and wants to prepare for it, both practically and spiritually. See Quaker Advices 28 - 30

I fully respect people's rights not to choose an assisted death, but for those, including myself, *if* palliative care does not and could never address all of my suffering at the end of life, I would not wish anyone to make decisions on my behalf. It is my body and my dying which is important. To know that others would have compassion, acknowledge my fundamental right to refuse medical treatment if the situation arose, this would give me great comfort and would improve the quality of the life left. The time has to come when those assisting us to have a good death, which I don't regard as suicide, will not be prosecuted. The best person to look after someone who's dying is someone who loves them.'

QFP 21.54 Death is not an end, but a beginning. It is but an incident in the 'life of the ages', which is God's gift to us now. It is the escape of the spirit from its old limitations and its freeing for a larger and more glorious career. William Littleboy, 1917

Summary of the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill Bronwen Currie

End of life assistance may be provided under the Act only where the person who wishes such assistance (the "requesting person" - (RP) has made two formal, written, signed and witnessed requests for such assistance to a registered medical practitioner; and

1. those requests have been approved by that designated practitioner (DP).

The RP must

- . be 16 years of age or over at the time of making the first formal request;
- . have been registered with a medical practice in Scotland for a continuous period of at least 18 months immediately prior to making that request;
- . have been diagnosed as terminally ill and finds life intolerable; or
- . be permanently physically incapacitated to such an extent as not to be able to live independently and finds life intolerable

Both formal requests require two witnesses who must each sign a statement that the RP understands the nature of the request, is making the request voluntarily, and is not acting under any undue influence in making the request.

Before the DP can approve either request both s/he and a psychiatrist have to meet physically with the RP and discuss with them

- . their medical condition
- . all feasible alternatives to end of life assistance, including hospice care and palliative care where relevant;
- . the nature and consequences of the request, including

its revocability*; and the forms of end of life assistance which may be provided.

The psychiatrist has also to ascertain that the RP is not suffering from any mental disorder which might affect their understanding, communicating or retaining the memory of making such a request.

* End of life assistance may not be provided if, at any time, the RP gives notice, however informal, to the DP that the RP no longer wishes it.

Neither the DP, the witnesses to the requests, the psychiatrist(s) involved nor the person providing the end of life assistance can be a relative of the RP, a person who would benefit from the RP's estate on the RP's death, or a person who would have another interest in that death.

In addition there may be no financial connection between the DP and either psychiatrist, and neither psychiatrist may be a witness at either stage.

Neither the witnesses nor the psychiatrists acting in relation to the two requests need be the same.

Only after the DP has approved the first request and informed the RP of this can the second request be made.

Where the second formal request is approved, and before end of life assistance can be provided, the RP and the DP must agree:

- . that end of life assistance is to be provided;
- . who is to provide the end of life assistance;
- . on the place where that assistance is to be provided; and
- . on the means by which that assistance is to be provided.

The agreement must be in writing, signed by both the RP and the DP, and dated, and does not become effective until the expiry of

at least two clear days from the date of its conclusion.

The actual provision of assistance

- must be provided before the expiry of 28 clear days from the date when the RP was informed of the approval of the second formal request.
- may be provided only if the DP is satisfied that the RP is still acting voluntarily, is still not acting under any undue influence and still wishes to proceed.
- must not take place where the public has access at the time when the assistance is being provided.

The DP must be present at the end of the requesting person's life.

More information can be found at

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm#Stage1>

The deadline for Stage 1 of the Bill is 24 November 2010

The Palliative Care (Scotland) Bill is an amendment to the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 (c.29) which requires the provision of palliative care to every person diagnosed as having a life-limiting condition, and family members of persons so diagnosed, and the statutory reporting thereof.

Most of the Bill consists of definitions of "palliative care", "life-limiting condition" and "family members" and the details of what is to be reported.

There is more information at

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/50-PalliativeCare/b50s3-introd.pdf>

THANKS FOR SUMMER GATHERING.

Pam Apted

It was with sadness, but not surprise, that I read that our Scottish Summer Gatherings were coming to an end. I was aware that the numbers were gradually decreasing; this year was one of the first that our family had not attended, my girls now growing up and doing their own thing.

My three girls and I attended Summer Gathering consistently for several years and I have a great debt of gratitude to all those who made this possible for us.

We have so many happy memories of Summer Gathering, first at Bonskeid and later at Kindrogan. I remember what an effort it was just to get ourselves organised and get there. The girls stayed close to me in the early years, but soon made friends and felt at home, (too much so perhaps, I remember the teenagers coming down to breakfast in their pyjamas!). I got used to the girls disappearing on arrival, catching occasional glimpses of them through the day, seeing them sitting together with other young people at meal times, hearing the occasional outburst of laughter.

I'm ashamed to say that, interesting as the many varied topics were, Summer Gathering for me was foremost about getting to know Friends. I so valued the chats with Friends over coffee and at meal times, touching briefly on each other's lives, seeing our children grow and trying not to comment each year on how much they had grown! In the early days, Saturday afternoon was often spent dozing on my bed, listening to the wind in the trees, whilst the youngest, quietly ate her way through food secreted from breakfast and lunch.

Special thanks to all those regulars who made it such a happy place, but in particular to Jenny Robertson and Kate Arnot, who regularly went beyond the call of duty in making the weekend special for the

children and their parents.

The Summer Gatherings also played a very important role in enabling the children to make friends with other children their age and in so doing gave them the confidence to attend the wonderful Northern Young Friends Summer Gatherings and the Link weekends, which my children have valued so much. Most young people in our meetings have very limited contact with children their age and Summer Gathering played a vital role in bringing them together.

Without Summer Gathering we must consider what we can put in place to enable our young people to make those essential connections.



Papal Mass in Bellahouston Park. 18.9.10

Margaret Peacock

The Pope had four days in the UK, beginning in Scotland with a morning visit to Holyrood House in Edinburgh, meeting the Queen, MSPs and other VIPs, including Stephen Smyth, General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. He, being a VIP, was invited to receive communion from the Pope at the mass celebration of Mass in the afternoon in Bellahouston Park in Glasgow. (Big problem of transport between, with roads either closed or gridlocked!)

As a Trustee of ACTS I was a lesser VIP, presented with a book of all the liturgies and background of the trip, a DVD and a nice yellow rucksack; and invited to light refreshments beforehand and buffet meal afterwards, courtesy of the Lord Provost of Glasgow. I was allotted to "gold" area of seats at the front - about 800. "Silver" was behind and to the sides - about 1200, I think. (They didn't get fed.) All the rest of the huge area was heaving humanity, waving banners, sitting on the ground, eating picnics - - - . The Catholic press estimated 70,000.

At the perimeter were fast food booths, souvenir booths and portaloos - more than I've ever seen in my sheltered life, but doubtless familiar to T in the Park attenders. A large marquee covered the orchestra and choirs, who entertained us for hours beforehand, the action being relayed through very large loudspeakers and TV screens. The sun shone, and everyone had a party. Susan Boyle sang both before and after the mass, to loud cheers.

Eventually the Pope arrived and drove to and fro on the geotextile-protected grass walkways in his popemobile, being greeted all the way with huge enthusiasm - but not, unfortunately, visiting the gold and silver. Then we were asked to stand quietly while he got

dressed up somewhere out of sight. Impressively, we did, for what seemed a long time, till the procession appeared – 80 priests, all in matching chasubles with a papal emblem on the back.

The Mass was quite plainly performed, and well organised, with a stream of priests distributing themselves under yellow umbrellas to serve the 70,000 people.

Seeing the video recording, I realised that the chalice used by the Pope was the one made by our Glasgow Friend John Creed for the visit of Pope John Paul in 1982.

By the end, the sun had set and I was shivering, but I enjoyed the afternoon and could appreciate the exaltation experienced by the Catholics, who had come from all corners - monks from Moray, parish parties, school parties and individuals. Seeing a Pope was very important to them. One woman, who was travelling with me to London overnight, was going to the Hyde Park vigil, and then to the Beatification in Birmingham. At Keele motorway services at half past two in the morning there were two coaches of a school party, wide awake and as high as kites!

ACTS trustees went in a body next day to the Westminster Abbey vespers, but we were sorely disappointed because of the inadequate technology. Sitting at the back of the north transept, we could neither hear nor see, and it was impossible to enter into the spirit of the service, even though we had the printed words. All we could do was admire the chandeliers and follow the printed page. Other Friends who were there lingered after the service and visited the tomb of Edward the Confessor, where the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope had so recently knelt to pray. Amid the lingering incense they found Quaker quiet.

Meeting for Sufferings 2.10.10

Margaret Peacock

I am sensitive to Friends' boredom when they encounter more than one account of the same thing. But perhaps, as a GM representative, I may seem to have attended a different meeting from your AM representatives!

1. In a small update on the National Arboretum, we heard of a good number of expressions of interest and support for a memorial to Friends' Ambulance Unit and other wartime organisations.

2. Trustees' Report.

Jonathan Fox reminded us that the trustees' minutes can be accessed on the website.

Trustees authorised the reconfiguration of the office space and the interim refurbishment of the Large Meeting House. Interim, that is, for at least three years. We sneaked a look into the LMH from the gallery, and liked what we saw. Last weekend I tried out the seats and thought the slightly padded stacking chairs on the flat floor were actually more comfortable than the tiered seats. But that's my shape.

3. Trustees were much relieved that Michael Hutchinson accepted the role of Interim Recording Clerk. Jonathan assured Sufferings that there had been no untoward reason for the resignation of Gillian Ashmore and Gillian Palmer. "If there were, Trustees would find it." On the issue of speedy replacement, Trustees are doing what they are supposed to do: keep down the expense of interim arrangements and consult extensively with the staff about desirable changes. There was discussion about the role of the Recording Clerk. She is not the equivalent of the Archbishop of Canterbury! She does, however, have to preserve the integrity of our Church Government and interpret it to outsiders.

4. We were invited to comment on the rolling three-year operational plan for central work. I see it as a masterpiece of

clarity, avoiding management jargon but clearly setting out aims taken from the Framework for Action, together with the expected evidence of achievement. (The Framework was intended for the detailed guidance of centrally managed work, but with Society-wide input and applicability.)

Everything, of course, has to be costed. "If Friends do not give an average of £150 per annum then clearly they do not wish all that good work to be done on our behalf by impressively competent and dedicated staff." It is astonishing how uninterested many Friends are in the central organisation and in centrally managed Quaker work in the world. Only 21 of the 72 Area Meetings met this target last year. If only we had fixed (even if sliding) subscriptions - - -.

5. The revised version of the Quaker marriage regulations was hailed as "a victory for common sense".

6. A minute from Mid-Thames AM, among others, expressed alarm at the disproportionate effect of government cuts on the poorest members of society. We were encouraged to write to our MPs in the next few days, offering to suffer more so that the poorest might suffer less. (Searching for the causes and remedies, we were directed to the work of Miliband Senior, Ralph, who wrote *The State in a Capitalist Society*.)

7. Young Friends are worried about obscure wording of Quaker publications, which apparently require a reading age of 15 - not feasible for those for whom English is not their first language, and for those with learning difficulties.

8. We expressed support for the management of Friends' House lettings policy, saying that a normal respectful Friendly welcome is more important than an occasional public mistake which is likely to be due to deliberate misrepresentation by the hirer.

9. An enthusiastic report from Quaker World Relations Committee lamented the complete ignorance of many Friends about Quakers in other countries, and communicated the excitement of finding out that there are Quakers who are very different from us, but still claiming recognisable descent from the early Quakers.



Scottish Churches House

Margaret Peacock

Scottish Churches House - the only conference centre in Europe wholly owned by the churches - has come to the end of the road, finally and tragically beaten by the economic climate, after strenuous efforts by the management and many, many donors to two appeals.

Probably by early December there should be complete figures assembled to inform Action of Churches together in Scotland (ACTS) in its decision on the next steps.

The most straightforward is to sell the whole House as soon as possible, despite the bookings it has for 2011. (Mosset, the self-contained house next to the Haining car park, is already on the market.) In the present circumstances SCH may not sell for a long time, or it may not fetch an appropriate price.

To put off the sale until times improve (possibly two years), there is an idea that the House could be used as ecumenical accommodation for Christian postgraduate overseas students, who in Stirling University residences often feel the surrounding culture is completely repellent. This is so different from the primary charitable purpose of the House, that it would need a positive vote from the churches, and possibly the return of some donated monies. The kitchen, among other things, would need

restructuring, and the business plan would have to be credible. Maybe the students could not move in till next September. It is possible that, if SCH is put on the market and does not sell, then student accommodation may look more attractive.

Another idea, whatever happens to the main house, is to keep Leighton House and convert it into a good office space for the ACTS staff, if they would like to move back from their rented space in Alloa. There would be extra space there to be let out as offices.

The warden's house, up the hill behind the main house, could be sold or let. That has not been thought about yet. The chapel, if necessary, could be deconsecrated and revert to an antique ice house.

As one of the voting members of ACTS, Friends should brief our voting representative, Leslie Stevenson, on their thoughts and preferences.

**Residential General Meeting
Scottish Churches House, Dunblane
13-14 November**

The closing date for booking of accommodation is October 22nd, and forms are available from local meetings, from the GM Administrator (01496-850006 or scotfriends@gmail.com) or can be downloaded from <http://www.quakerscotland.org>

Even if you do not require accommodation, please send in the form, saying which meals you want - Saturday lunch, dinner, Sunday lunch.

General Meeting on 11 Sept at Edinburgh Meeting House

Ann Millar

'We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God and with one another, there these things may abound'.

Edward Burrough, 1659.

Phil Lucas spoke movingly to us about his recent experience as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine during the first three months of this year. Using illustrations of maps, people and situations that he had brought back with him, he gave us a vivid account of the impact of the Israeli Occupation on the lives of Palestinians faced with the growth of illegal settlements and the building of this truly overpowering separation wall.

We were deeply moved by Phil's descriptions of the suffering of Palestinian families as they attempt to carry on their daily lives while subjected to land grabs, house demolitions and the indignities of checkpoints. The emotion that came over to me as we listened was that of anger and a feeling of impotence. We are urged to do whatever we can to help raise public awareness of these issues. Do ask Phil to speak to your meetings. It was a compelling hour.

While there was not much formal business to attend to, we were able to welcome another speaker to our afternoon session. Chloe Clemons, the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer, was this speaker. The Office was established by a broad range of Scottish Churches in 1999 with the task of building a fruitful relationship with the Holyrood parliament and now also with that in Westminster.

The Office operates by building knowledge through providing briefings and by offering practical advice to help churches and groups in the lobbying of politicians. To this end Chloe led us through a group exercise whereby some of us were put in the 'hot seat' as either the politician or the lobbyist to experience some of the dynamics of lobbying and what it can mean to be a 'seed of change'.

Regular communication channels are very important at this time when there is a measure of unpredictability in political life due to having a coalition administration in Westminster and a minority administration in Holyrood.

Many Friends have been involved with the Office since its inception and have worked with ecumenical partners on matters of common interest.

Chloe's presentation stimulated us to think afresh about our political engagement - though not always through lobbying.

The formal business included the consideration of the pattern of our future residential GMs. This matter has arisen due to the laying down of the Kindrogan summer gathering at last GM. We felt that we now have the opportunity for considering new ideas about the purposes and programmes of our residential meeting.

The Central Committee of GM has been asked to prepare a short discussion paper, for circulation to all meetings, to stimulate imaginative thinking on the way forward.

I felt that this was a very thought-provoking GM, but also with plenty of time to meet and greet and chat in a relaxed way.

General Meeting for Scotland

Dunblane 13-14 Nov 2010

"Our vision of Europe is of a peaceful, compassionate, open and just society, using its moral influence to encourage other countries and peoples towards the same goals. It is of a community of peoples which acts towards individuals and other communities as we would have others act towards us."

Quaker Faith and Practice 24.47

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,
Our meeting in November will be in Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. The weekend starts on Saturday 13th with Meeting for Worship at 10.30 for 11 am, followed by business items. Please let Margaret Munro know your meal & bed needs now, if you haven't yet.

The Saturday morning session will include consideration of our views on the End of Life Bill, currently before the Scottish Parliament. Friends are asked to prepare for this topic by looking at the content of the Bill beforehand.

Our speakers during the rest of our time together will be Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch from Quaker House in Brussels. The work done from that centre is an important part of our witness in Europe, and is not as well known to British Friends as it could be. This will be a special opportunity to hear from Liz and Martina about how they approach this work, and to put forward our thoughts on the topic.

The Saturday evening will be enlivened by a Friendly introduction to circle dancing.

Please join us in Dunblane, 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