



August
2011

Scottish Friend



Summer School Reunion, 17 May 2011
Edinburgh Meeting House

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James McLeod took the cover picture.

Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 8th October 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.



Gandhi's interpreter: A life of Horace Alexander by
Geoffrey Carnall

Mike Brown

Horace Alexander was one of those rare creatures: an ordinary member of the public who rubbed shoulders with history, a confidant of decision makers and witness to great events. In Civil War Spain, in the bitter Germany of the 1930s, in impoverished Eastern Europe, he travelled, investigated and worked to foster understanding. He championed the League of Nations and the UN and as late as 1940 was seeking peace in Europe. India, however, was the big project.

Horace Grundy Alexander ('HGA' to the author) was a birthright Quaker, born in 1889 in the same month, he would drolly recall, as Hitler and Charlie Chaplin. His father, Joseph Grundy Alexander, was an international lawyer who campaigned against the British government's complicity in the Far East opium trade. HGA inherited his father's dedication to justice, the readiness to speak truth to power, a mosquito-like ability to pester officialdom and a passion for India.

King's College Cambridge – pre WW1 - provided contacts among rising power-brokers and the confidence to use them. Combined with his Quaker establishment connections, this launched him into a lifetime of campaigning at the highest levels for peace, justice and the rights of the disadvantaged. From his base at Woodbrooke, where he taught international relations, he cultivated a world-wide network of alumni, maintained by the diligence of his first wife until her early death.

Geoffrey Carnall, who met HGA in India after WW2, has written a book of great erudition honouring the strengths of his subject

but not sparing his foibles and limitations. Flashes of Geoffrey's dry humour lighten the earnestness of HGA. The book is many layered. Principally it is about the struggle by HGA and others to support the Indian independence movement against the resistance of the British, whether the imperialists who required India as part of the Empire or the paternalists who doubted native peoples could govern themselves. This latter sentiment could even be found among Friends and HGA's opponents included his own father-in-law.

HGA visited India frequently, enduring hardship and tedium with courage and persistence. The subtitle is misleading. HGA was never an interpreter in the conventional sense: rather through writing, lecturing and lobbying he interpreted Gandhi to the west. In Britain and India he was a familiar figure in the corridors of power: too familiar for some: 'our old friend Alexander' in Civil Service minutes was not always affectionate. Nevertheless he was close to key politicians. R.A. Butler welcomed his advice, as did Leo Amery and Sir Stafford Cripps among others. Relations with his Indian friends could be volatile but his commitment to Indian self-determination was steadfast despite the traumas of partition, civil war, the invasion of Goa and nuclear weapons. India always had a friend in HGA and an interpreter in an often suspicious Britain, not least when India promoted non-alignment during the Cold War. When, in Pennsylvania, he was marrying for the second time, an official car pulled up with a surprise wedding guest - the Indian Defence Minister, Krishna Menon.

The book reveals much about early 20th century Quakers who were not always of one mind on the Peace Testimony and ambivalent about working, as HGA advocated, with other faiths. India's future was debated fiercely in *The Friend*. HGA was an

indefatigable pamphleteer and thrived on committees and meetings. His Far East service in Quaker relief and the Friends' Ambulance Unit reveals the political difficulties of working in the field and the frosty relations with American Friends.

HGA comes over as a dedicated though irascible character, preferring intellectual to popular company. His clothing was the despair of friends who would lend him a respectable suit for important meetings. A willingness to believe the best of people led to gullibility – he was conned into giving the Nazi salute on a German school visit and sometimes defended Indian friends when criticism was well-founded. Throughout he found time for his single recreation, bird watching at every opportunity.

Two other characters stand out in the book's cast of hundreds. Agatha Harrison, a Friend of awesome determination and an ally in his Indian work, who would terrorise officials and chide HGA on any backsliding. Fritz Berber was a Woodbrooke alumnus who ended up working for Goebbels and survived the war by judicious compromise. Not all Friends shared HGA's understanding of Berber's position.

Many will enjoy this perceptive and well-written insight into Quaker witness amid momentous events though few are likely to afford the Edinburgh University Press's price of £65 (Yes, sixty-five!) Such a price raises production expectations EUP fails to fulfil. The proof-reading is inadequate: 'Duncan Wood' becomes 'Duncan Word' within the same paragraph. Duplicated vowels suggest a Finnish spell-checker. Illustrations are sparse and badly reproduced within the text. There is no map of India to help the reader follow the complex politics. Even at £36 on Amazon (subsidised by his sponsor and former student, the writer Phillippa

Gregory) most readers might opt to press their library to invest in a copy.

Edinburgh University Press, 2010, 314 pages
ISBN 978 0 7486 4045 4

* * * * *

The end of Scottish Churches House – and a new vision for ACTS?

Leslie Stevenson

Many Friends will be eager to know the latest chapter in this long-running saga. As most of you will know, ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) has been struggling for some time with the problems of the financing of SCH (Scottish Churches House), the ecumenical meeting centre beside the cathedral in Dunblane. No doubt various mistakes have been made by several parties in this complicated story, and I am not going to reopen any of those old issues and wounds now.

But the bottom line (quite literally) is that in recent years, in a difficult economic climate with conference bookings declining, SCH has not been able to pay its way. ACTS, which depends on funding from its member churches including us, simply could not go on meeting the substantial deficits. At a series of meetings of ACTS over the past year we have struggled with this problem and the painful dilemmas it has presented to us. Tenders for leasing the building for Christian-related uses were invited, and two were submitted. However the scrutiny group appointed to evaluate the business plans were not sufficiently convinced by either.

We have thus been wrestling with the question of whether to sell all or part of the buildings owned by ACTS. We have decided to retain Leighton House to provide office space for ACTS and for denominational partners, and some small non-residential meeting facilities. At a meeting of voting members of ACTS on 22nd July we finally and formally decided, almost unanimously, to give permission to the Trustees of ACTS to sell the remaining properties. It will be up to the Trustees to decide when and whether to offer them for sale or lease.

This is a significant milestone, but not the end of the story, for it remains to be seen what interest there may be in buying or leasing the properties. Friends of Dunblane cathedral and many others will be concerned that no inappropriate development should take place in this historic square, but presumably the planning regulations will be very strict in such a place. ACTS will retain a foothold in the area in Leighton House.

Members of ACTS are beginning to talk of the need for a new vision for ACTS, and I heartily agree (though I haven't yet heard any specific ideas). SCH has performed a valuable function since its foundation some twenty years ago, but my feeling is that ACTS have spent more than enough time and energy and money on dealing with the problem of what to do with it now. Our ecumenical vision need not be tied to this particular building. If we can sell it at a reasonable price, that will realize some capital which we could use in other ways. I would be glad to hear any ideas Friends may have for what churches could do together, especially in reaching out to the wider world

* * * * *

Reflections on Meeting for Sufferings: 4 June 2011
Peter Kennedy, GM Co-representative

There are four months before Meeting for Sufferings next meets in October, so as well as reflecting on our June Meeting, I will add some thoughts about future work. The subject 'Radical Resistance and The State' has many aspects most of which we did not address in the plenary session. This is not unusual when a new subject is first presented, but Area Meetings may wish to consider more widely. Our session looked at the place of non-violence as one way to achieve change. We heard a little about the Turning The Tide Programme, which trains activists to check their motivation and manage their reactions.

Steve Whiting (Programme Manager: Turning the Tide, Quaker Peace & Social Witness) and Sam Walton (Programme Manager for Peace & Disarmament, Quaker Peace & Social Witness) have introduced the issues raised in their paper Radical Resistance and the State (paper S/11/06/A).

Our attention has been drawn to passages in Quaker Faith & Practice which remind us that peace is not the absence of conflict. When conflict arises between the promptings of love and truth and the demands of the State, non-violent direct action is a response. It is a costly option, but it can be effective for positive and political change without perpetuating cycles of retaliation. It keeps open the possibility of negotiation, whilst radically resisting injustice. It always holds out the aim of co-operating for a better future. Steve Whiting explained that non-violent resistance is one of three complementary approaches.

However, Friends in general are more comfortable with the other two approaches - reforming institutions from within, and building

the alternative so as to bring the future into the present. Resistance carries risks of confrontation and conflict but strengthens those who are working for reform and for alternatives by creating the political space they need.

Sam Walton has told us of his experience under personal concern in a variety of political protests and how he has committed himself to providing legal observation and advice to nonviolent protesters. He told us the police have a duty to facilitate peaceful protest and not to prevent it. He has observed a build-up of repression in the policing of protests. The personal witness brought by Steve and Sam made a strong impression on a number of the Friends present. We affirmed our Quaker commitment to bearing public witness against injustice and our democratic right to hold the government to account.

Our plenary session included personal experience from Friends. We reflected on the fact that there is a variety of styles of policing in this country. At demonstrations a contrast has been observed between policing that accepts protest and policing that is repressive, and that over the years a repressive style has become stronger. This needs to be challenged. Friends were concerned that the media narrative can distort the experience of participants by selective reporting, and that this encourages exaggerated responses from the police. It is inappropriate if there are no other means for police accountability than that provided by the media.

We could have spent more time on the legality and effectiveness of nonviolence and the kinds of direct action we would endorse. We heard concerns expressed about some repressive policing in Britain at demonstrations, and the lack of robust accountability procedures for the police. This aspect came to dominate the meeting but need not preclude wider consideration when we

return to this topic. It would be helpful if our Area Meetings and Friends at General Meeting could consider the topic with as much depth and breadth as possible: how should we challenge repressive policing? how can we make nonviolent protests more effective? how can we support activists - perhaps especially Young Friends - who take the risks involved? QPSW's paper on 'Crime, Community and Justice' deserves attention and appreciation. It is encouraging to find local initiatives reported as well as centrally managed work. Friends may be interested to hear how many Area Meetings are responding to the decision to boycott Israeli settlement goods. Further support could be given and received by sharing insights and problems on the MfS website.

Friends are concerned that boycott should not block dialogue, so please mention the meeting which Paul Parker, Marigold Bentley, Jonathan Fox, Robin Bennett and Christine Cannon have already had with members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. It was agreed that this would be the first of a series of meetings. Friends may be pleased to learn that BYM's centrally managed work has no investments in companies operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Finally, some of the positive actions Friends can take, for example place a positive message on the Quaker website, and

- i. explain our actions clearly
- ii. encourage industries to locate themselves in the Palestinian Occupied Territories
- iii. teach English in Palestinian Schools
- iv. source Palestinian products
- v. twin with Palestinian towns
- vi. use the email link with a church in Gaza
- vii. enter into dialogue with Jewish groups

- viii. reiterate our aim to see reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

One Area Meeting asks for Friends to hold a day of prayer for peace in Israel and Palestine. This could be part of Quaker Week in October. We forward this minute to the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations for their further discernment.

There are two topics which we hope to take in the autumn which Scottish Friends could think about over the summer months. One is the question raised by Cornwall Area Meeting's minute - the decriminalisation of drugs.

The other concerns the booklet 'A Framework For Action' (AFFA). Discerning the priorities of Quaker work and witness rests with MfS. AFFA's title includes the dates '2009-2014'. We need to consider 'after 2014'. It would be useful if you could sound out local meetings and local groups/committees to find out how aware they have been of AFFA, and how it has influenced their thinking/planning. Who uses it and how? Is it helpful? Does it need changing? This is a fact-finding exercise but not a minute-generating one. So, there seems to be plenty for Friends Meetings to consider during the summer months. At our October Meeting we will:-

Review Yearly Meeting Gathering

Receive from the Trustees the draft budget and operational plan

Receive a report from QCCIR

Return to the topic of 'Strengthening Area Meetings' and possibly use Home Groups to share the views you have gathered about AFFA.

For example, here is the minute from West Scotland AM on Strengthening our Area Meeting MP

65/11 Further to minute 38/11, we have considered the need to strengthen our Area Meeting and the ways in which we are attempting to do this.

West Scotland Area Meeting is geographically vast and one of our greatest challenges is how to bring Friends together.

We do this locally, often very successfully, by holding social events and organising programmes of activities. Some Friends make a point of visiting one or two Local Meetings other than their own, during the course of the year. We encourage more Friends to do this.

The only opportunity we have to meet as an Area Meeting is at Area Meeting itself. We have been experimenting with holding Area Meeting by telephone conference as, not only is this of considerable environmental benefit, it also makes it easy to bring Friends from our scattered meeting together. The experiment has been successful and we plan to have three Area Meetings by telephone conference in 2012. On four further occasions in 2012 we will hold face-to-face Area Meetings. At our telephone conferences we will deal with routine business, freeing up time when we are together in person, which may be used creatively, if we wish.

We acknowledge that we have a problem filling the various roles in Area Meeting and that frequently we have to rely on the same people and often older Friends to do these tasks. We need to engage all Friends regardless of their age and to use the gifts which each of us brings. For some this will be long experience of Quaker discipline, for others it may be skills which could be put to good and appropriate use, for example an ease with the use of innovative communications technology. It is in valuing what each of us has to offer that we will be drawn together.

We send this minute to our Meeting for Sufferings representatives, as our contribution to the discussion on 'Strengthening our Meetings'.

SCOTTISH QUAKER COMMUNITY JUSTICE NETWORK
Annual Gathering on 16 April 2011 in the Quaker Meeting House,
Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

David Turner

QUAKER ACTIVITIES UPDATE

AVP. A report by Derek McLean, Coordinator, had been circulated. There are some very positive features, here summarised:-

a. Successful funding application- £6000 from Allen Lane Foundation with £4000 for this year. This means that, with what is to hand already in grants, £15000 is available for a possible part-time development worker - 2 days a week;

b. Level 1 workshop in Edinburgh likely to go ahead - 5 applicants

c. Prospects of resumption of workshops at Kilmarnock Prison. This is subject to a favourable review by the new manager;

d. Discussions with Resources Manager at Addiewell private]y-run prison

e. Possible partnership with SACRO re new Community Payback Orders, and over office space should a development worker be in post;

f. Exploration with Barnardo's of involvement in a project with young offenders at Polmont YOL;

g. Liaison undertaken with Domestic Violence Unit in Glasgow. These illustrate the potential for a partnership approach at various levels in both prison and community settings. We were reminded that more volunteers are needed.

CIRCLES of SUPPORT and ACCOUNTABILITY

Two Circles are now in operation in File (Kirkcaldy) and all is going well. Coordinator Tim Richley works part-time on this, SACRO being his other employment. The very positive

relationship with Fife Council and the front-line agencies has made this possible, and there is reason to hope that next year the post may be full-time, with four Circles in being. Some volunteers are already sharing with Tim in publicity talks. An independent evaluation has been set in motion.

PRISONS

Prison Worship continues at Peterhead Prison, with numbers a bit less. At Edinburgh Prison, Margaret Mortimer has begun her role as Quaker Prison Chaplain. Hopes of resumption of Quaker Worship and/or Quaker Listening Groups have not materialised, but aspirations remain for a more meaningful role for interested Friends at this prison.

Concern was expressed over the apparent absence of any volunteer involvement, as was the case for many years until 2008, in provision for children visiting, with an adult, a relative in custody. Options for taking this up, initially for information, include contacting Barnardo's or Kate Philbrick. An approach to the Governor could be considered at some point.

Peter McCaffery spoke of the confusion being experienced among Prison Ministers in England and Wales over the question of continuing contact with prisoners following release. In places this is strictly forbidden, but in others it isn't really an issue and this would appear to be the case in Scotland.

QUAKER VOICE in SCOTLAND on CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES.

A "conversation" has been initiated by Elizabeth Allen, who has circulated a paper with a possible framework for discussion at the gathering. With time restricted for a consideration in depth, a need was seen to have an outline of a way forward, with detail left for further thought. It was agreed to write to the Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland with a request that:-

a. he make an application to Joint Faiths Advisory Group on Criminal Justice regarding Quaker representation on the Board, as one channel for expressing Quaker concerns, among those arising at interfaith level, over criminal justice legislation;

b. he suggest a time when, at a General Meeting, information can be shared about the range of involvements by Friends in Scotland in criminal justice or related matters, and the role of the Network. This would also be an opportunity to discuss how Quaker perspectives, based on our long history of witness in this field, might be expressed both pro-actively and re-actively, and given collective expression in submissions to the Scottish Parliament.

* * * * *

CIRCLES of SUPPORT and ACCOUNTABILITY (for released sex offenders)

A number of Friends in Scotland have followed with interest the history of the development of Circles in England and Wales since the inauguration of two pilot areas in 2010. Since then the growth of Circles has been remarkable, particularly since 2005. Following the setting up of Circles UK as an independent agency in 2007, new projects have been emerging with ever-increasing regularity.

A Scottish Steering Group, representative of criminal justice, prisons, the police, SACRO, Victim Support, COSLA and the churches was set up in 2001 at the-suggestion of Scottish Quakers (the latter-being consistently involved over the years of activity) to publicise Circles, and to promote the idea of a Scottish scheme widely, including with the Scottish Government since 2007.

With the reluctance of the Scottish Government to commit any funding, despite regarding Circles sympathetically, the-attention of the Group was redirected to a number of the new Community Justice Authorities. Interest was found, and was followed up, in South West Scotland and Fife. Now, after a period of intensive negotiation and networking, there has been a breakthrough in Fife. Funding is on the table to set to set up pilots in that area - a year's money initially. This has enabled the Group, through a SACRO criminal justice adviser being employed part-time, to pursue a process of preparation for setting up a first Circle, including recruitment, training and support of volunteers. Alongside this there is the establishment of protocols governing the interagency work which is vital for the integrity of a Circles scheme. Locating a suitable candidate to be involved-as "core-member" can be undertaken in parallel with these tasks. Interest from Friends is invited, both to obtain more information and to express a desire to help in some way. This can be done by phoning or emailing Tim Richley at 0131 624 7266, or email trichley@national.sacro.org.uk.

The writer of this article is willing to be contacted at any stage. David Turner, Tel 0131 669 1308

Poverty will be overcome only if people at the 'sharp end' are at the centre of policy-making. That's the view of the Poverty Truth Commission, who insist that 'charity reports and government strategies' will not work unless people who experience poverty first hand are at the heart of the process.

The commission spent two years investigating poverty in Scotland before publishing their findings, which they believe are also relevant to the rest of the UK. The thirty-one commissioners included people on low incomes, survivors of violence, charity workers, politicians, academics and religious leaders.

A Quaker voice was provided by Alistair McIntosh, fellow of the Centre for Human Ecology and author of *Soil and Soul*.

He emphasised the commission's focus on hearing the truth about poverty. 'We must allow ourselves to be challenged by the Truth,' he said. 'Truth is an active power for change.'

The commission's working group on violence found that early intervention is the key to tackling domestic abuse and gang violence. Going to the root causes, they highlighted the structural violence that can be found in inequality. They also reported that initiatives to tackle violence 'work best if they are created and owned by local people or those affected by it.'

John Carnochan, a detective chief superintendent and a member of the working group said the experience had shifted his perspective. He explained: 'We now look for the assets in a community which help effect positive change, rather than

assuming change is something that needs to be brought in by an outside agency.'

The commission drew attention to 'kinship care,' where children find themselves cared for by relatives other than their parents – usually grandparents. Kinship carers on the commission said they receive little emotional or financial support. Around 3,000 children in Scotland are officially recognised as being in kinship care, but the commission estimated that the figure may in reality be over 20,000.

There were harsh words for the stereotyping of people in poverty, particularly the attitude of parts of the press towards benefit claimants. 'There are incredible stories of community spirit, mutuality, courage and resilience in deprived communities,' insisted the commissioners, 'but they don't make the papers.' The commission have convened a group of press officers from civil society organisations to promote positive examples to the media.

The commissioners hope their model of working will inspire others to take a similar approach. In particular, they have urged politicians to include people with direct experience of poverty among their advisers.

'We're not going to stop after the Poverty Truth Commission', explained one commissioner, Blair Green, an HGV driver. He said: 'We're on the move. After this, I want to say these things in Holyrood and in Westminster. I'm not stopping until things change.'

Symon Hill

(First published in The Friend of 29 April 2011)

Presentation of the Poverty Truth Commission Report
16 April 2011

Barbara Potter

I went to the presentation of the report outlined in the article. There were a variety of presentation styles, talks, conversations, film, poetry and music. Listening to the experiences of those in poverty was instructive:

the young woman who had started full time work 3 years ago, and was still paying off the debt incurred because of having no money to live on for the first month until she got her pay cheque;

the experiences of the kinship carers who had struggled to get some form of payment for their caring work. Often these people have had to give up work to care for babies or very young children. Most of these are the children of addicts and have continuing health or behavioural problems because of their exposure to drugs during pregnancy. While there has been research into foetal alcohol syndrome, the kinship carers are not aware of similar research into the syndrome associated with foetal drug exposure;

the experience of the academic from the commission who had gone with a member who had lived in poverty to a seminar where the reality of poverty in Scotland was put forward to an international group in Edinburgh. As two Glaswegian women they had met for lunch, and had made connections with each other, and chatted away. On the train across to Edinburgh they had continued their chat. The academic was a little panicked as she would normally be fully prepared with notes and exercises. She asked her friend how they would manage, and was told, 'Oh, we'll just wing it' Her delight and surprise when the session went well enabled her to acknowledge that her friend was an expert in the realities of poverty in Scotland as she lived the truth of it, rather than just having studied it;

three teenagers who presented a film they had made about the difficulties of living on a scheme. One of them lives 2 minutes walk

away from her friends, but cannot make the walk round there because of the local tensions;

the woman who spoke out about domestic violence in ethnic community, and how she found the right media (Ramadan radio) to tell her story.

After the session I remembered the Brazilian educator Paolo Friere's technique of going into the community and listening to the locals humbly, to learn from them what their needs and desires were. He has written many books on this issues of community development and education, which have been widely translated.

More details of the report can be found at the Poverty Truth Commission's website at www.povertytruthcommission.org which includes videos that were shown at the presentation. I also have paper copies for those who are interested. (A Social Worker friend has already asked for copies to share with her team).

TRANSCRIPT OF HAND-WRITTEN LETTER FROM DON
MACLEOD

"Dear Friends / Trustees (of John Wigham)

Thank you again for making possible my attendance at the retreat 'Living Mindfully, Living Peacefully' with Thich Nhat Hanh on August 13 – 18.

I was one of more than 900 who attended.

The days of retreat provided me with the opportunity for very much needed deep rest and an environment and company that was so conducive to mindfulness in all activities – sitting, walking, eating, discussion, exercise.

Much of the day was spent in silence. Each day began with communal meditation at 6.30 followed by a reading and then gentle exercise before breakfast..

We then had a dharma talk from Thich Nhat Hanh and then all together went for a walk – walking meditation – this was again conducted in silence.

Afternoons were spent with group activities and discussion groups, and evenings altogether again for a talk or teaching, and then a short walking meditation.

‘Noble silence’ was observed until after breakfast the following morning.

The energy generated by so many people was beautiful, powerful and healing. It was so good to be in the company of like minded people and at the same time be free from normal social and other ‘pressures’ - ‘to be freed from the complex of superiority, from the complex of inferiority, and from the complex of equality.’

A wonderful week of wonderful privilege – living so simply together – indeed living mindfully, living peacefully.’

Thank you once again for making this possible for me, and thank you to John Wigham. There is one practice within Thich Nhat Hanh’s way called ‘Touching the Earth’. Part of this practice is to give thanks to our current and ancestral friends, family, teachers, social, and spiritual, all of whom make and have made our life and realisations possible. I hold you and John Wigham in this spirit of gratitude.

I wish you peace and happiness.
With love, Don Macleod.”

Statement on End of Life Assistance Bill. Roger Quinn

Friends, I have been saddened by the response of Friends outwith Inverness Meeting to my call to oppose the End of Life (Scotland) Bill.

Having read the three articles in favour of the bill in *Scottish Friend*, I can only ask the question Quo Vadis Quaker? Sometimes when I sit in meeting, I wonder what George Fox would say if he came back today. Would he say “Did I suffer all those imprisonments and abuse for this? “This” being the insidious atheism expressed by the writers of those responses. For to Fox and to many of us today the Almighty has a very real presence. I have read the responses of the other mainstream churches, all of whom oppose the bill. Yet there has been no official response from the one which steadfastly down the centuries has been opposed to war.

How can we reconcile the Peace Testimony with assisting someone to die?



Gospel of Thomas Seminar June 4th/5th 2011

Rosemary Gascoyne

The programme for our main yearly seminar on the dates above is sub-titled 'Knowing and changing Knowing', and this was aptly selected as it forms a very important part of the Gospel of Thomas. The Knowing that is described in this gospel is a knowledge far deeper, more profound and much more akin to an inner and intuitive sense that comes rather from the heart than the head.

This seminar which was slightly less in its numbers than our usual meetings was no less enthusiastic and positive within its core, and the exchange of views and passing of personal opinions no less than enthusiastically expressed. The question that always opens the seminar this time was "what aspects within the Gospel of Thomas have changed your Knowing?". The different answering as we proceeded around the circle of attending people frame as usual the close bond that begins each occasion.

There is no mention of sin nor of repentance within the Gospel and many of the teachings need a great deal of time to fully comprehend.

Some are very short but so 'finely wrought' that they are the ones found eventually to be the most profound.

There were three 'presentations' for this seminar (that is studies made by specific people) which were freely discussed afterwards by all. The first presentation was upon the translation of this Gospel, and formed a loving memorial to our dearly loved colleague Margaret Gladden who died unexpectedly last year.

In Logion 103 - Jesus said:-

"Happy is the man who knows
where and when the robbers will creep in,
so that he will arise and gather his strength
and prepare for action before they come."

A personal interpretation of this logion was given and afterwards discussed by all, and our usual session on the sharing of books read and recommended formed an important section, as it seems we are all avid readers and enquirers. The final presentation was a valued English translation of some of the 'Metanoia Commentaries'. These commentaries were originally published in French by a group of scholars that held the newly discovered (1945) text of the Gospel of Thomas in the greatest esteem. There are commentaries on each of the 114 sayings of Jesus which are greatly valued because of their lucidity.

On Sunday we joined for a short silent worship although not all are Quakers, and follow this by a free discussion.

We ended by enjoying a shared meal cooked at Wiston Lodge.

Our seminars began in 2004 and are held twice a year. Next date is Saturday 1st October – a one-day event at Wiston Lodge, Lanarkshire.

If you are at all interested either phone Rosemary Gascoyne. Telephone 01644 430468 or

Jack Squires. Email; Cummertrees@btinternet.com

Gospel of Thomas Seminars.

The Gospel of Thomas is full of pithy sayings from Jesus - some familiar and some not. The sayings speak directly to us and probing the truths behind them is a wonderful introduction to early Christian spiritual self-help. The Scottish seminars have been running for a number of years now, and yet studying the sayings still continues to be refreshing with new insights brought out by sharing these together.

The seminars are regular events held twice yearly at Wiston Lodge, Near Biggar, Lanarkshire:-

There is a one and a half day event on the first weekend in June and a shorter one day event on the first Saturday in October.

Previous knowledge of the Gospel is not necessary - only a spiritually inquisitive mind.

We are very informal, diverse in ages and interests, and find within our seminars a wonderful means of coming together to talk about our personal spirituality.

For a friendly chat and further details, or a request for a programme on the next seminar which is always available one month in advance please contact:-

Rosemary Gascoyne, Tel 01644-430468

Address: 57 Main Street, Dalry, Castle Douglas. DG7 3UP

Or Jack Squires by email Cummertrees@btinternet.com

Our next seminar is Saturday 1st October 2011

Summer School-ers Reunite

Bronwen Currie

Saturday 7 May saw a wonderful gathering and Meeting for Worship in Edinburgh Meeting House. What we all had in common was some connection with Northern Young Friends' Summer School - or Summer Shindig as it is now called - either as participant, as member of staff, as trustee, or indeed as future participant: our youngest attender, wee Dio, aged 4 months, ministered delightfully through the Meeting!

Unfortunately, owing to illness, Mary Bradbury, who was involved in organising the very first Summer School in 1961, was unable to be with us, but we had at least one participant from that event (who with her daughter, a more recent participant and valued member of staff, "elidered" the Meeting), others from the very early events in the sixties and others from every decade after that.

We heard moving ministry about the value of Summer School to us and our children, and about the amazing young spirituality and insights we had experienced and witnessed at the event. The gathering, which had begun with a veritable feast of Quaker hugs, laughter and cries of recognition in a packed Meeting House foyer, continued with another feast of cakes and tea while we reminisced and enjoyed an amazing slide-show of past Summer Schools.

The party continued in a south-side church hall, with yet more food, more reminiscing, and a wonderful Radio Aytondraxbello (don't worry - it's a combination of the names of the venues at which this amazing event has taken place!) organised and compered in his inimitable style by Ken Latham. Sketches and songs were re-hashed to much hilarity, the old games were

played, and middle-aged (OK - and younger!) folk were suddenly 14-year-olds again with as much energy and determination as they ever had. And if you want to see a picture of your GM Clerk being a giant (or possibly a very tall elf).....!

There was a serious side to all this fun and frolicking. Thanks to huge generosity the reunion raised almost £2,000 towards the Summer Shindig bursary fund, which will enable us to help families with the Shindig fees. And the generosity continues: lots of people have signed up to be "Friends of Summer Shindig", and for a minimum donation of £10 per year will receive a Summer Shindig magazine and a report of the event, to remind them of what they've missed! If you would like to be a Friend of Summer Shindig, please get in touch with me at bron.currie@gmail.com or on 01496 850006. All proceeds go to the bursary fund.

Finally, a huge vote of thanks from the organisers to all those who came and contributed so generously. It was a fabulous and memorable day!

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Young Friends on the move

Bronwen Currie

Public transport seems to become ever more expensive, and for young Friends travelling to Quaker events the cost can sometimes seem prohibitive. The following two Quaker trusts may be able to help with costs:

Wigton and Ayton Friends School Trust makes grants (normally a maximum of £75 per person per year) towards travel for attendance at Quaker events to young people under the age of 25 who are (or whose parent is) a member or attender of a Quaker Meeting within Scotland or the former Cumberland or Durham General Meetings. Application should be made to Christine Ellerton, c/o Quaker Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7TR; email: christineellerton@btinternet.com

The Francis Camfield Trust exists "principally to support individual Friends in need engaged in witnessing to Christian and Quaker Testimonies". They do not restrict their support by either age or geographical area but focus instead on the need of the person applying and the nature of the work/activity to be undertaken.

Application should be made to Roger Seal, 34 Church Lane, Moulton, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 6NP; email roger@sealatmoulton.co.uk

General Assembly of' the Church of Scotland
May 21 - 27 2011

Alison Burnley

It was a great privilege for me to attend the General Assembly this year, though the reason was less lovely. Christine Davis gave me the papers very much at the last minute and as I had other things planned I only got to the Assembly on the Monday morning — thereby missing the welcoming, explanations and the party in the Princes Street Gardens on the Sunday,

If there had been a title to this assembly it would have been —“in conflict there is no them and us; there is only us”. The Moderator quoted this more than once during the week.

We all have our own jargon and the Church of Scotland is no less or more impenetrable than ours. So, in the future I will not worry about Monthly Meeting or Meeting for Sufferings; they both have quick and easy explanations. There were two major debates, both of which kept us in the Assembly Rooms long after we should have gone home. The first one has received a certain amount of publicity, in Scotland anyway, They were considering whether or not to accept for training someone who is in a committed same—sex relationship, There had been a two-year commission — the report of which is in the ‘blue book’ — convened by The Hon. Lord Hodge (Patrick S. i-iodge to those who know him) whose real job is as a Court of Session Judge. The rest of the commission consisted of ten members of the Church of Scotland, covering a complete range of beliefs and opinions on the subject. It was an interesting debate, also agonizing, familiar and heartbreaking as they went round and round the subject, The Bible was quoted to prove their point, whichever point they were making. Desmond Tutu was also

quoted. I fear that a lot of people went with their minds made up — but that was only natural I suppose. David Arnott, the Moderator, and the Judge handled it all beautifully, answering questions, reiterating points already made — they neither of them allowed themselves to give any indication of where their own thoughts lay. It was masterly. In the end the Judge received a standing ovation - a first for the General Assembly.

The final result was, after an electronic vote with a majority of 57 to be a commission to study further the theological understanding of training for ordination of persons in a same—sex relationship. (Scot Rennie and his partner were in the public gallery).

The other major debate was the Ministries Council; they were trying to decide how the Presbyteries were to be arranged, Should the Presbyteries have more ‘Charges’ in them; should they therefore be larger; how were they to be classified i.e. mostly urban, urban—rural or rural-urban; the only simple one was ‘island’ - after all an island is an island! I didn’t quite understand all the ramifications but I suspect that the problem was to do with how much money there was depending on the classification and the distances to be travelled for meetings.

It was also about not meeting face to face so often but using modern technology in its various ways. There was a huge tussle between the committee and the parish ministers and the moderators of the Presbyteries. Scotland as we all know has few roads that go as the crow flies and it can take a long time to get from A to B without going through X and Y. The committee met much resistance. I was tempted to say that West Scotland Area Meeting has organized two tele-conferences but decided that it would be better left to the Australian and Canadian Moderators

to talk about real distances and how they take advantage of modern technology. The matter was carried over to the last day and then was voted out with only a difference of ten. It seemed to me that people were digging their heels in on petty matters and not looking at the bigger picture — which is supporting their parishioners who pay their bills and doing God's work in Scotland, It was also, I fear, about not trusting the committee.

We had reports from The Guild, The Social Care Council, Ecumenical Relations, Housing and Loan Fund, Central Service Committee, Safeguarding Committee, Church and Society Council, Iona Community Board; Chaplains to HM Forces and World Mission, HIV Programme and Cross Reach. Most of these were about how the Church of Scotland cares for people and supports them during tough times and in difficult places. Both the Guild and World Mission have a presence in Palestine. Andrew McLellan told us how he went to visit a Rabbi and his family, how generous they were and what a great meal they had. As the sun set he heard everyone's sprinklers come on to keep their lawns green, And only the previous evening he had a good meal with a Palestinian family who had had no water for two weeks. They were lucky in that they had a well but they had to be very careful,

The Guild is also working with the police in Scotland to be aware and work to prevent women being trafficked into Scotland before the Commonwealth Games, The Government support for the Poppy Project is being cut — this project helps women and gets them flats, Poppy stands for 'Pissing off Ponces and Pimps - Yes!' Men are in some places working with the Guild - things do change.

Much of the work of the Church of Scotland is about supporting

people of every age and circumstance to remain in the society or how to get back in, The large residential homes are mostly gone now but there are still places where people can go to get help; whether it be to get off drugs or to live with drug-taking parents or how to remain stimulated and safe as people get older, It is all God's work with God's money so there always needs to be an eye on the budget. One Committee called Finance and Planning wished to rename themselves as Christian Stewardship, which I thought apt and might suggest to Friends House, We heard about the trouble some parishes were having keeping lead on their roofs and therefore maintaining the buildings with ever decreasing budgets, There is a small committee which helps retiring ministers and widows and widowers of ministers to have a suitable place to live, Part of the problem is that there are a number of unsold manses which means that capital is locked up.

We heard about the work of the chaplains to HM Forces, Their work is very hard and much appreciated by the soldiers and their families. The Chaplains are needed when the soldiers return from a sortie because of what they have seen and done, or because the whole party did not return or because they are injured. They are needed in the dark watches of the night when sleep doesn't come. We heard from the Air Marshall that HMS Diamond has a designated chapel, November 11 is the feast day of St. Martin of Tours which is why that day is often chosen on which to sign an armistice, Chaplaincy is another very old profession. The Air Marshall then went on to tell us how the forces were doing a great job creating a better, safer world. Were I a person who cried easily I would have cried,

The Safeguarding committee is about safeguarding vulnerable people — so I sent the convenor a note asking if he was engaging in the Circles of Support and Accountability programme . I have

yet to hear from him.

On the Friday morning Julia Neuberger (whoops — Rabbi) spoke to us; it was a real treat. Also the Lord High Commissioner spoke to us about what we had been discussing — he made some very cogent comments, He also told us that he had met the captain of the Scottish football team — the homeless team!

I spoke to the Guild report — that I might thank them for their generosity over the past 20 years or so when we spoke to them about Quakerism using the Quaker Tapestry. It was also a way to let people know that there was a Quaker there! A Woman came up to me at lunch to say that she had been given a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Trust to attend a course at Birmingham University.

During two of the lunch breaks I went to the Christian Fellowship of Healing which I found very helpful.

It was an amazing and exhausting week and I thank you.

St Martin of Tours c.316-397. While yet a heathen he gave his cloak to a beggar. After conversion he went to St. Hilary of Poitiers and built himself a hermitage. c.360. Acclaimed bishop against his will 371. His feast on November 11 is called St Martin's summer.

Scottish Episcopal Church General Synod 9-11 June 2011.

Margaret Peacock

From the Scottish Province of the Anglican Church about 200 people attended, in three voting "houses": bishops, clergy and laity. To them it feels like a large family, all members equal in importance, including the bishops - unlike the English Anglican church (which it pre-dates). It is not high or low - just "comfortable".

There was $\frac{3}{4}$ " of homework. I tried to read everything necessary, but inevitably I guessed wrong and got caught out. Their equivalent of QFP is the Code of Canons, several of which were amended by a vote. For this they need a 2/3 majority in each house.

A big slice of time was taken up by the Anglican covenant, a long document for preserving unity among the provinces that sign it. The SEC is unlikely to do so: it is too constricting. If it had been in place a few years ago they would not have been permitted to appoint women priests. Covenants are not written in order to bring about agreement, but to celebrate it, and this one was born out of the controversy over the gay bishop. Moreover, it requires assent to the thirty-nine articles, which are an affront to the RCs, as well as impossible to subscribe to with honesty, and no longer binding on the SEC.

"The primary task of congregations is mission". There is a very active "Mission and Ministry Board", with a long policy document which appears to define mission in the traditional way as evangelism. It finishes with a statement of principles for environmental sustainability which would not be out of place in a Quaker document.

Its Overseas ("pendant") Committee reported (among other things) enthusiastic support for Jubilee Scotland, and that an SEC member had taken part in EAPPI. Reports from this and other Boards took up a large slice of time, followed by amplification and questions. Not much innovation was suggested at this level.

There were optional lunchtime sessions. I went to the one on uploading videos of sermons to the church website, for the benefit of those who cannot attend. This may be something to think about for the Swarthmore lecture. I also went to the one on using Facebook for a church group. It offers services I have never heard of, as well as the basic conversations beloved by young people. I must investigate.

The business of General Synod is shared in real time through a twitter stream by an official twitterer. 140 characters per tweet allows the necessary speed. The congregation was encouraged to tweet perceptions of the business, except in a couple of sessions where tweeting was judged inappropriate, but I didn't actually notice anybody doing so.

The most entertaining act was the public conversation between the bishops of Edinburgh and of Glasgow and Galloway. In discussing the qualifications for being a bishop, they agreed that the most important one was not theological erudition but the ability to give an instant response to media questions about the Church's attitude to government policy or world events. All the bishops seem very popular, very hard-working, very witty and very supportive of their congregations.

With regard to Scottish Churches House I realised that, frustrating as it is for Friends' representatives not to be able to inform every individual about every subject, we are far ahead of churches whose synods/assemblies are only annual. The rapid final slide of the House from about last May onwards was a tragic shock to at least one member of the SEC.

Hot off the press today - 15 June - ACTS members' meeting has voted unanimously to retain Leighton House and sell or lease the rest of the buildings. Mosset, the house next to the car park, is already sold; it is not precious or architecturally interesting.

ACTION OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SCOTLAND (ACTS)

RobertThompson

The role of restorative approaches in Schools and Involvement of School Chaplains.

Thursday 2 June 2011 - Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

This meeting was a follow-up from February 2011 when Scottish Church Leaders/Representatives met with the First Minister to discuss Restorative Justice, the Socially Just Economy, and Churches, Communities and Volunteering. Pamala McDougall represented Friends.

The group from ACTS met with members of the Government's Health and Well Being Team; Susan Bolt, Maggie Fallon and Brian Steele.

The first part of the meeting was a wide ranging discussion on the current state of school chaplain involvement in Scottish schools. There seems to be a very fragmented and uneven approach, dominated where they are involved by clergy from the Church of Scotland. Involvement seemed to be at the discretion of head teachers and roles included taking assemblies, counselling and contributing to teaching about world faiths.

I offered my view, based on thirty years' teaching that chaplains generally had a poor "public relations" image and could be seen by many pupils and staff as an outsider or the man/woman from the local church that

almost no pupil attends. This view was readily accepted by those with direct experience of being chaplains! This led to discussion on the use of "religious and exclusive language" when working with children and young people.

The second part of the meeting followed an excellent presentation on the development of Restorative Approaches in Schools. (I can email a copy to any Friend who is interested in seeing it.) As a Quaker teacher closely involved in Pastoral Care and the use of Restorative Practice, I felt I had more to contribute to this part of our discussion. The team from the government outlined the excellent work going on in many Scottish schools and summed up well in this quote;

"The ethos and culture of a school are the foundations on which to build a supportive, inclusive and peaceful learning environment. Positive ethos can be further developed through the introduction of restorative approaches".

There followed further discussion on how these ideas can be very challenging to many staff who work within the traditional Scottish school system but how liberating it can be when faced with results:

" Two kinds of Discipline:"

RESTORATIVE	TRADITIONAL
Harm	Rule breaking
Problem solving	Blame or guilt
Dialogue and negotiation	Adversarial
Restitution/reparation	Punish to deter
Interpersonal	Impersonal
Empowerment	Affected ignored
Accountability= put things right	Accountability= being punished.

Scottish schools face great challenges in the coming years as a direct result of cut-backs in local authority education budgets. It is to be hoped that the real progress made in developing Restorative Practices will not be knocked off course.



There were thirty-three of us present, plus assorted visitors. I will concentrate mainly on reporting on our 'special topic', but first a brief summary of the business we attended to:

After recording two deaths and two new members, we had the financial report, presented by our previous treasurer Daphne Wassermann. We have a balance of roughly £16,500 and this represents about ten months' expenditure... 'more than we need'. Our new treasurer John Phillips is suggesting that we may want to reduce the AM quotas (something we can consider in November); meantime he is asking us to email any suggestions we may have on spending GM money, and on how to present the accounts: possibly in a different format?

We had the Report from the Trustees, also given by Daphne, and Alison Burnley gave us a report on the Church of Scotland General Assembly. We heard that no decision will be taken on the future of Scottish Churches' House until there has been a meeting of representatives from all the member churches. Kate Arnot then told us about the 28% cut the Scottish government has made to its funding of Scottish Churches' Housing Action, just at a time when there is an increase in the need for affordable housing. Alistair Cameron would be the Friend to approach if meetings want somebody to give them a talk on this; meantime, meetings are asked to consider having special collections for SCHA.

We were a long time deliberating how to respond to a request by East Scotland AM for GM to write a letter to

President Obama regarding the killing of Osama bin Laden. We were united in our condemnation of this act, but were also reminded that there are many Americans who are saying that this was not done in their name. Mindful that there would be Quakers in the States who were making representation to their government, we decided in the end to add our voice to theirs. This is what we minuted:

As Quakers, we regret the killing of Osama Bin Laden and the lack of opportunity for a fair trial. We feel it important to respond to this event by reaffirming our belief in the sanctity of life and that of God in everyone. We agree that we should communicate to Friends in America through Friends World Committee for Consultation our support for them in representing these Quaker values to their Government and in particular to their President. We will send this Minute to FWCC.

Our special topic was 'Looking at how we do business'. Or we might have called it 'Meeting for Eating for Business?' , because that was one option we considered - Quaker business method with added sandwiches? Maybe not. We thought being adventurous was all very well – up to a point. We had invited three Friends from Young Friends' GM (Rachael Swancott, Maurice Nagington and Ged Manning) to be our facilitators, and this they did with some aplomb. We started with role play: our brief was to behave *as badly as possible* at a mock business meeting. We duly chatted and rustled, interrupted, contradicted, walked out ('Boring!'), jumped to our feet and spouted private opinions un-called by clerk and unlistened-to by anyone else...while the clerks repeatedly refused to call a patiently waiting Friend because 'we don't like you' and closed the meeting by promising they'd 'write the minute tomorrow'! Once the laughter had

died down, we easily filled a flip chart sheet with a list of our crimes. We were reminded, though, that the clerks don't *have* to call you – it is within a clerk's discernment whether for instance enough contributions have been made, or maybe a period of silence is called for at that point. We then considered a number of questions in small groups and I will give a digest of some of our ideas here:

How to try and ensure good business practice?

A long enough period of silent worship at the start; clerks should set the tone by not rushing through the agenda and insisting on silences between contributions; explain 'ground rules' at the beginning or write them routinely at the top of the agenda sheet; intervisitation between meetings to help smaller/remote meetings; elders and clerks to meet for silent worship before start of meeting; properly prepared agenda items.

How to teach newcomers about our business method? Don't just call it 'business meeting' but 'Meeting for Worship for Business'; invite attenders along and on the train/in the car take the opportunity to explain; the bigger the MfWfB, the better it seems to 'work', so suggest attending GMs and YM to newcomers; membership application visits should *always* go into the meaning and rules of our business method.

How not to over-run/run out of time?

No last-minute additions to agenda allowed; avoid AOBs; shave draft minutes (but beware of *over-writing* them); have extra meetings for thorny/lengthy topics; delegate to committees; make more mundane decisions via email or

phone conference; on agenda sheets give approximate time each item could be expected to take – not set in stone, but should aid discipline; clerks need to present items clearly and break them down into separate chunks for decision making (Yes/no? - If yes, when? - How?); circulate items that require much thought well ahead of MfWfB.

How to deal with frustrating/challenging behaviour?

Elders should feel free to rein in an over-bossy clerk; elders can be appointed to 'calm' specific Friends; Friends unhappy with decisions can be offered a Meeting for Clearness; thoughtfully chosen readings during opening worship may 'de-fuse' controversial items on agenda; doing business worshipfully doesn't preclude humour! After all that, we were left impressed with our Young Friends' enthusiasm for our business method, and astonished at just how long and passionately we could talk about a 'dry' subject we had all thought we knew inside out. The one point of controversy: to knit or not to knit? Characteristically, we didn't argue much with the one Friend who was outspokenly pro – there was some tutting later, though, in my group! Which had me wondering: is a reluctance to state overtly what we think is right or wrong practice maybe the one problem we didn't quite fully address? Hmm. So much food for thought in one afternoon. And all followed by the usual great Aberdeen hospitality.

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General Meeting for Scotland

Glasgow 10 Sept 2011

“Be patterns, be examples ... wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”

George Fox, 1656, quoted in Quaker Faith and Practice 19.32

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in September will be in Glasgow Friends' Meeting House, 38 Elmbank Cres, Glasgow G2 4PS. We start at 11 am, with 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.

The morning session will include reports on the work of the Iona Community Board, and the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network.

In the afternoon we will welcome John and Diana Lampen, who will give us an overview of the principles behind the Experiment with Light programme. Experiment with Light is based on early Friends' discoveries. It was devised in 1996 by Quaker theologian Rex Ambler following his study of early Friends' writings. What was it that made them so sure, so centred, so willing to suffer such privations to keep alive their faith? The Experiment with Light has found ready participants both in the UK and throughout the world.

Please join us in Glasgow, meet new Friends, and learn more about Quaker activities in Scotland. Do please encourage anyone from your Meeting to come who may not have attended GM before.

Robin Waterston, Clerk