



April
2012

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Scottish Friend

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Perth Subud Centre, the meeting place of Perth Friends.

MP

Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 31 July to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website and can be emailed to you 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. You are strongly encouraged to do this, in view of escalating postage costs - and of course you get the photographs in colour, as an incentive!

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or elsewhere. Published by Quakers in Scotland, 01496 850 006
quakerscotland.org.uk (British website: quaker.org.uk)
Printed on recycled paper by
Print Force, Milngavie, 0141 956 1052



Wanted - yet more Knowledge and Experience

Bronwen Currie

This is another of my periodic reminders about the database I maintain of Friends and attenders who have knowledge, skills or experience in particular issues or areas of work. Just now we are thinking about how to engage better with the Scottish Parliament - how best to respond to consultations and make our small Quaker voice heard by those responsible for drafting legislation. So, Friends, your knowledge and experience is really important, particularly current knowledge from your professional or voluntary work. You're not being asked to give up a lot of time to go to meetings or to sit on committees. It may well just be a phone call to ask you for an informed opinion on some matter - anything from human trafficking to solar power to post-school education. But we need to know who you are so that we can make that phone call!

Please do complete and return a form to me. The form can be downloaded from the Quakers in Scotland website at http://www.quakerscotland.org/gmquestionnaires_forms and either completed electronically or posted back to me.

Or I can send you a paper form if you contact me on 01496-850 006 or email me at scotfriends@gmail.com.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Report on Meeting Sufferings 4th February 2012

Peter Kennedy

It was a long and demanding day; perhaps we attempted to cover too much.

There was discernment, the first message, common to both our consideration of *Radical Resistance and The State* and the general topic of *Advocacy* – namely that we must be sure of our knowledge/facts, be grounded by first-hand experience, and be rooted in a deep relationship with God. This is the main message from our February Meeting for Sufferings gathering.

The second message, concerning *Advocacy*, evokes a quandary. We recognise that dialogue, discernment, peacebuilding, developing relationships with decision-makers, are slow processes requiring careful preparation, commitment, deep listening and honest sharing. But much advocacy, particularly when responding to the media, uses electronic communication characterised by speed and deadlines.

Somehow we need to find ways to combine both methods, knowing when the slow process is essential and when the immediate response is valid and safe. A right relationship with God and the prayerful commitment and support of our worshipping communities will underpin both approaches. This is perhaps the third message for our local meetings from February Meeting for Sufferings.

All three messages must be held together if our advocacy is to reflect Quaker values and testimonies.

This was as far as we reached. We have deferred till our next meeting consideration of the process for formulating and issuing public statements.

We will also return to the Southern East Anglia Area Meeting minute. This Area Meeting has offered a substantial donation of £30,000, over and above its usual donation, for a specific use - namely, providing administrative support for our Parliamentary Liaison work.

It should not surprise us that when well-trying processes are not followed we need to tread cautiously. Britain Yearly Meeting needs time to weigh up consequences when this happens. Meeting for Sufferings needs to discern whether Yearly Meeting advocacy needs strengthening, and to share this discernment with Yearly Meeting Trustees to guide their operational decisions. We hope to complete this task when we next meet.

We heard from the Clerk to our Trustees. Some Friends find these quite dry reports dealing with the temporal as opposed to the spiritual dimension of our Quaker witness, but I personally welcome this interaction between those who make critical policy decisions on our behalf and representatives of the wider Yearly Meeting. Among the items brought to our attention were:-

- Quaker United Nations Office Geneva and its work are currently being reviewed and we hope we can continue to support it.
- The fundraising function of Britain Yearly Meeting will be within the new Communications & Services Department.
- James Turrell, the American artist who is also a Friend has offered

his service free of charge and has been working on a rooflight for the development of the Large Meeting House at Friends House. This feature would allow the roof to open up to attract natural light into the structure. However, its cost is considerably more than having a fixed roof and the Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees were not of one mind as to whether or how to proceed with incorporating this feature.

In considering nominations for the centrally managed work and appointments to represent Britain Yearly Meeting at other European Yearly Meetings, Friends were asked to consider transparency in their nominations and appointments procedure.

If a committee presents single names, mainly of its members for nomination through another committee, is this in the spirit of true Quaker discernment? If it isn't, then should Sufferings as the appointing body be aware of this fact? Normally, Central Nominations Committee will consider more than one name for each appointment and only in very exceptional circumstances will it allow itself to act as a channel for other committees to present names.

What it means to be a Yearly Meeting in 2012 will be the overarching theme for Yearly Meeting to be held at Friends House, London over the weekend of 25-28 May. Lis Burch, Yearly Meeting Clerk, outlined the agenda to us.

The main items are:

Economic Justice & Sustainability

There will be sessions exploring why this theme is important to us as Quakers and what our meeting and individual responses might be. Meeting for Sufferings will report on progress so far, and we

hope to find inspiration and encouragement.

Quaker today?

This is the beginning of a three year focus on this topic for Yearly Meeting which, with Quaker Life, should involve all our meetings at some stage. Junior Yearly Meeting discerned this as an important focus that will progress beyond Yearly Meeting itself. Friends planning to attend will need to be aware that the Monday of Yearly Meeting will not be a bank holiday in any part of Britain. The Monday will include group sessions for deeper sharing about the issues, and the day will end earlier than usual.

Meeting for Sufferings representatives were asked to encourage Friends to identify with Yearly Meeting, and uphold it, and attend if possible. Lis reminded us of *Quaker faith & practice* 6.11, and we had our attention drawn to Simon Best's article in a recent edition of *The Friends Quarterly*.

As a Privileged Body, the right of which was established when the Quakers presented their Quaker Peace Testimony to Charles II in 1660, we have received a letter from the Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's Office inviting us to present a loyal address to Elizabeth Windsor, on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee, at Buckingham Palace on 27 March 2012.

We heard some reservations about the principle of offering a loyal address but we believed this is an opportunity to communicate what we hold most important.

The address will be drafted in the light of comments made during the meeting. We agreed that the delegation should be made up of Friends representing different parts of the yearly meeting.

A draft of the address will be considered by the Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group at its meeting on 17th February. After this, we asked our clerk to approve and sign the address on our behalf.

Meeting for Sufferings, 31st March 2012

During the last Meeting for Sufferings of this triennium, two ways of working were prominent. It was encouraging for the meeting to have received so many Area Meeting minutes, as this dynamic two-way communication is so important in building the "crucible" that the new Meeting for Sufferings, freed from trusteeship, hoped to become. A second way of working concerns the relationship between Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.

In the morning we continued our consideration of Speaking out/Advocacy, and we minuted (Minute 5) that Public Statements should be timely, but not too frequent, and should relate to issues in which BYM Friends are actively engaged. This concurs with our current policy. However, we agreed a change of practice when we put our trust in the Recording Clerk and Central Staff to issue statements on our behalf if delaying the statements would be unhelpful. We asked that the Meeting for Sufferings Clerks, BYM Trustees, and relevant Central Committees be consulted before issuing them.

A revised policy/procedure is in the process of being drafted.

A second message for you is the decision (Minute 6) to ask BYM Trustees to give greater priority to advocacy with political decision-makers, and our willingness to see other Quaker work curtailed if necessary, to release resources to achieve this

strengthening of advocacy.

Our positive hopes in the morning met the financial realism in the afternoon when we received the Yearly Meeting Treasurer's verbal report (minute 12). A decline in the level of individual contributions to central work has been previously reported. The same message needs to be given again - that is, our Centrally Managed work is only currently sustained by the legacies of past Quakers and income from the Hospitality Company at Friends House. The surplus for 2011 was only realised because of two generous legacies during the year and the £2 million contribution from Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd.

Following questions to the Clerk of BYM Trustees, the Meeting was reminded that Trustees sometimes 'consult' or seek guidance from Meeting for Sufferings and sometimes 'inform' Meeting for Sufferings. Our minute 6, to strengthen advocacy, was an example of successful consultation to clarify priorities. On the other hand, the many reports about the refurbishing of the Large Meeting House had been brought to us over many months for information, and to hear what members of Meeting for Sufferings felt about the plans.

There is still some disquiet about how the relationship between Meeting for Sufferings and Trustees feels. Perhaps we are still discovering by experiencing. In the morning the roles related well; in the afternoon there was clear doubt. The BYM Trustees acknowledged the need for clarity of purpose when reporting to Meeting for Sufferings, and as representatives we acknowledged the need to give good attention to Trustees' reports.

Friends are asked to take the following actions:

1. to take immediate action to advocate through MPs for the end of indefinite detention of migrants and asylum seekers (minute 4);
2. to write individually to the Foreign Secretary for the UK to oppose any attack on Iran and uphold peaceful means of resolving conflict (minute 13 (b) VI);
3. to support the October 2012 March for Justice (Jansatyagraha) in India (minute 13 (b)VIII, and paper S/12/03/MC11);
4. to review their Area Meeting and individual financial contributions to centrally managed work.

As my current service on Meeting for Sufferings draws to a close I would like to thank General Meeting for their trust in asking me to be one of their representatives on this body for the past four years. I have found it a very worthwhile and enriching experience.

Peter Kennedy, Co-Representative to Meeting for Sufferings



Quaker Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum
Helen Lockwood

The immediate purpose of the memorial will be remembrance of the service by Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service during World War II. For the Society today it will also be an opportunity for outreach. Some 300,000 people visit the National Memorial Arboretum, at Alrewas near Lichfield, each year. A memorial which is explicit in its statement of Friends' witness and commitment to peace may well find resonance, provided its message draws on our common humanity.

There will be six texts, four carved on the backs of the stone seats and two on the front. The wording will need to be succinct. The proposed wording is:

on the backs of seats

1: FRIENDS' AMBULANCE SERVICE - The Unit enabled conscientious objectors to serve in theatres of war. They cared for civilian and military casualties of any nation in both World Wars. Seventeen members were killed in World War II.

2: FRIENDS' RELIEF SERVICE - The Service was set up in 1939 to relieve civilian distress in practical ways. It worked in a spirit of peace at a time of war in the UK, Europe and further afield.

3: NOBEL PEACE PRIZE - "It is the silent help from the nameless to the nameless which is the Quakers' contribution to the promotion of brotherhood between nations" Citation from the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Quakers in 1947. *On the front*
"Let your life speak, answering that of God in everyone"
George Fox, 1624 - 1691, founder of Quakerism.

4: RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS):

The Society emerged after the civil war of the 1640's with a commitment to "live by the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars". Quakers continue to work worldwide for peace and reconciliation.

On the front

Quaker meetings for worship are often held in a circle, a symbol of unity and equality.

Wording adapted from Meeting for Suffering agenda, 2 April 2011.

The memorial has received the approval of Meeting for Sufferings and the Arboretum Trustees. The Staffordshire Area Meeting working party (Clerk: Anthony Wilson, 10, Beacon Mews, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 7AH. Tel..01543 258016 or E-mail Anthony Wilson) is taking the proposal forward.

We have selected la tieul limestone, from the south of France, which is exceptionally hard, maintains its pale colour when wet, and carries carved lettering very clearly over many decades. Contracts with our supplier and installer are now being negotiated. Construction work will begin in the spring of 2012, and last two months.

The site allocated is near to the wild flower meadow in the Arboretum, in open space between woodland.

Helen Lockwood

ETHICAL INVESTMENT

Brian Mayes

Duncan Wallace's article in the February issue confirmed my personal belief that in today's world a truly ethical investment is virtually impossible. No matter how carefully one may select and vet the investment, once the money is out of your hands it is out of your control; the financiers, who live in a 24-hour day, will soon have it whizzing round the globe in and out of innumerable accounts.

If the income is required to provide your livelihood one eventually has to say : "Well, that is the way of the world and we have to live in it. After all, there are hundreds of accidents every day on the roads and yet we go on using them. I'll do the best I can".

There is one small and limited avenue open, which is to join a Credit Union, in which the more affluent members pay in money which is made available to members in difficulties and is used to provide part of an overall financial plan designed to help them to work their way towards financial solvency. For this they pay a reasonable rate of interest. The investment is thus not only ethical but socially valuable. However, it is unlikely to be on a scale sufficient to support a pension.

This may be considered too negative a view for Friends but I believe it to be realistic; it is part of a bigger problem to which nobody seems to have an answer.

TIME TO MOVE ON

Roger H Quinn

Friends....although I had hoped that we could have moved on from the subject of death and dying, I welcome the two articles in the *Scottish Friend* (Feb. 2012).

I was fortunate in having grown up before the increased urbanisation of the U.K. For it is harder to be in tune with nature and therefore life and death in the often soulless uniformity of the modern city, where the great God Mammon reigns supreme in shopping malls and supermarkets. Did not Jesus himself go out into the countryside to pray? Did not God tell Abraham to take to the harsher life of the hills, rather than follow his son-in-law down to an easier life on the plains?

It is a pity that the current season of Lent has been of dietary necessity 'tacked on' to the end of the Master's life. As Lloyd Douglas has pointed out in one of his novels, the time in the wilderness, was a period of preparation for the greatest Ministry the world has ever known. Just as the wilderness days were a preparation for that ministry, so our own lives need to prepare us for the one and only certainty of life.

It is of one road to that certainty that Isobel Bracewell has so movingly written, although this author cannot agree to any change in the law that would be an invitation for abuse. Besides, few in the medical profession would be prepared to administer the *coup de grâce*.

It is surprising that a group of people who were so opposed to the death penalty should now be sending such mixed messages over something so fundamentally similar - i.e. the intentional killing of

our fellow human beings. For in our more merciful society of today the state can only kill its citizens in Defence of the Realm and to do this martial law would have to be imposed. Even the police marksmen do not shoot with intent to kill, although they may kill in order to prevent a crime.

In this week's Economist (March 17th 2012) there is a review article entitled "Go gently into the Night". Written by the professor of medicine at Dartmouth Medical School the book is a plea for less medical Intervention at the end of life and more emphasis on palliative care.

It is my hope and prayer that we can move on from this subject and that the Society, at least in Scotland, can show that it is still grounded in the faith of early Friends.

In his George Gorman memorial lecture ² Simon Best has raised the question of where the Society is going. Do we really want to belong to a church where anything goes? A church which over-values the individual, to the extent that the tail wags the dog? I for one do not! The lack of a creed should be no hindrance to the believer, for God is too big, too infinite to be tied into a mere form of words. Although one respects the needs of other churches to speak and constantly reiterate their belief. Simon has stated that if we carry on as we are, in fifty years' time there may well be no BYM. And the old story of the coach party at Kinmuck Burial Ground, being told that there are no Quakers any more because they are all DEAD, will have come true.

It is this author's belief that any rejuvenation of the Society in Britain needs to come from outside. Where better than from Ireland, for Irish Friends have retained so many of the qualities of

the early Friends, which are now being enriched by the inclusion of disaffected Catholics, who are bringing their own Christian faith to Friends.

It was Columba who brought Celtic Christianity from Ireland to Scotland. Could it not be that Celtic Quakerism will be the salvation of Friends in Scotland?

References

- (1) Until the advent of swedes in the eighteenth century people lived on salt meat from Christmas to Lent when the church forbade the eating of meat as a precaution against scurvy.
- (2) The Friends Quarterly Issue one 2012.

READING PDF FILES

When there are columns I find it annoying to have to scroll up to read the second column. Recently I noticed a facility in ADOBE that will iron out the columns so you keep on reading downwards.

View - Zoom - Re-flow.

You may find this useful for SF if you are reading it at high magnification.

Margaret.

JOY IS A LARGE-SCREEN, REMOTE-CONTROLLED TELEVISION SET.

Anna Robb

On receiving the grant, I wrote to thank the Trustees of the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust:

"My Mum had a television which wasn't digital and the remote-control could adjust for volume only, which meant my Mum had to wait for a staff member to change the channel. Her eyesight is failing even more which has meant this new, large, clear TV is just wonderful for her. The adjustable wall stand allows Mum to watch TV from her chair or bed and doesn't take up the little table-top space she has.

It has made her every day far more enjoyable and I thank you very much."

We still can't thank your Trustees enough for the donation for my Mum's television. The freedom it has given her has had a huge impact on her well-being. It was hugely frustrating for her having to wait (albeit understanding why!) for a staff member to change the channel and then watching something she could just make out and no more. The large screen, clear picture, working remote-control and ability to move the stand, so she can watch from her chair or bed, has made for one very content and happy Mum! As you will know my Mum cannot walk and therefore her television accounts for the majority of her social life.

The change in my Mum because of this gift is wonderful. What a special thing this Enjoyment Fund is!

Thank you so very much on behalf of my Mum (Catherine Somerville) and me,

Corfu, September 2011

Chris Hall

Thanks to the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust, I was able to return to Corfu after 50 years with Liddy, my wife. Back in '62, I hitched to Otranto, Calabria and sailed to Corfu for a two-week sojourn en route to Athens & Crete. At that time the island was completely undeveloped for tourism and what we found was a very charming rural culture away from the towns. My most enduring memory, arriving at dusk, was the almost pungent aroma of olive preparation in the suffocating heat - somewhat equivalent to the maltings in Edinburgh, bar the heat!

It was something of a shock, therefore, to witness on our coach drive on metalled roads to Roda, a total transformation of culture.

Nothing I saw resembled my previous experience. I recognised nothing! This presented something of a paradox. We were able therefore, to enjoy Corfu as a land unknown. Our B&B accommodation was very clean, comfortable & private. Almost all our companions were British, and we could easily have stayed by the swimming pool, soaking up the pleasant sunshine. However, with frequent forays into the nearby town, we met and enjoyed meeting local Greeks and the food in the Tavernas. Our lively conversations revealed an admirable stoicism towards the current financial crisis in Greece.

Altogether, it was a very refreshing break for us both, a rare holiday for us in our 26 years of marriage, and we gratefully returned, fully fortified for a Scottish winter.

Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House
Windows to the World

Susie Harding

We, the 7VT Windows group, would like to inform you about the work of our Windows to the World Appeal. We are small, time-limited group appointed by South East Scotland Area Meeting, tasked with raising funds to replacing the failing windows in our main Meeting Room and Hall at 7 Victoria Terrace, the home of Edinburgh Central meeting.

Recently a number of upgrades and enhancements have been carried out in the building, to ensure the building is as safe and accessible as possible, and to meet all current standards for WCs, food preparation areas and so on. These repairs and minor alterations are being paid for by Friends from existing funds. The exceptional cost of replacing the failing windows was decided to be undertaken as the subject of a discrete appeal. The windows are unfortunately not the originals, so historic fabric isn't being lost, and the new ones will be specified to be sustainable, and of a suitable design and materials to complement the historic setting. New windows will also enhance heat conservation and contribute to a reduced carbon footprint for the building because of their improved insulation properties. The cost of the work is estimated at £108,000.



We decided upon the title Windows to the World for our appeal, because of the very special views from the Meeting Room, over the fantastic Old Town roofscape, and to distant hills beyond. We feel very lucky to have such a beautiful space, and we want to ensure that future generations can enjoy it as we do now. The consequence is making sure everything is in good repair, especially our windows to the world.

The appeal group has been busy making applications to a number of Quaker and historic buildings grant-making trusts, as well as the statutory body Historic Scotland. In addition, an appeal leaflet is almost ready for a mailing to all UK meetings and to go out with The Friend in July. We also plan to publicise the appeal during the Edinburgh Festival as the building hosts even more visitors as a festival venue and café.

We would like to invite all the local meetings in Scotland to join us in our fundraising efforts. While it is our Meeting House, we do feel that as hosts to many people and shows during the Festival, and to many clubs, societies and other organisations within the capital and from further afield too, we are a very public face of Quakers. We would love your help to be responsible guardians for our lovely Category B listed building. Perhaps you or your meeting could organise a cake sale, a bring and buy sale, a ceilidh, a sponsored walk, or a bring and share lunch after meeting, and ask for donations. You will know what skills and creativity that you hold within your meeting that could be harnessed into a community event. All fundraising efforts, however small or large, will go towards reaching our target.

Donations from individuals to the appeal are welcome by cheque or BACS. Please make cheques payable to *South East Scotland Area Meeting* and send to: Caroline Evens, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1 2JL.

BACS payments can be made to the following account:
Name of Account Holder: South East Scotland Area Meeting
Name of Bank: Triodos - Sort Code: 16 58 10 - A/c Number: 00652501
Reference: Windows to the World Appeal

If sending donations by BACS, please drop us an email at

sesam.appeal@gmail.com so we can thank you, and keep track. Please include a statement if you are a UK taxpayer, as this will enable us to reclaim Gift Aid on your donation. To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year.

Thank you in anticipation of your support. We will keep you updated on our progress later in the year.



A New Quaker Bank?

Daphne Wassermann

I was very interested in Duncan Wallace's article in the last edition describing his search for an ethical pension. Friends may be interested to know of a different ethical and Quaker initiative.

Members of the Quakers and Business group are exploring the possibility of founding a new Quaker Bank.

They intend that their Bank should be founded on the Quaker testimonies of truth, integrity, justice, equality, simplicity, peace and care of the environment. The Bank should be recognised by Britain Yearly Meeting and follow our business method. The Bank's work would be for community benefit, in terms of those who provide deposits and take loans, whether primarily for social or financial purposes, and the Bank would be transparent to stakeholders. Those who borrow money should operate their businesses in harmony with our testimonies.

They give some examples of details that they are considering in terms of transparency. Salaries of all employees, and all fees and commissions paid to suppliers should be published on website in easily accessible and understandable form, together with all banking parameters, and full lists and details of where the Bank or its suppliers place their investments. The performance and state of repayments, - including defaults - of small and medium-sized companies we lend to, should also published in full detail.

With small and medium-sized companies, *instead of charging interest*, they are proposing to follow Islamic and biblical principles of sharing in the success of the project we invest in. That is, we take a share of the profit (if any) of that project as certified by auditors. Risk management would need to be in the form of setting a higher or lower proportion of the projected profit, to be modified based on performance. There could also be fees for monitoring of ethical as well as financial performance, again higher or lower depending on performance.

Zem Moffat of Glasgow Meeting will be attending the Q&B annual conference in April and may be able to report further on this initiative as well as on Quakers and Business in general.

Death Row Poetry

Penny Lilley

I would like to tell Scottish Friends about a music project a friend of mine has initiated.

My friend Hilary Christie and I both belong to an organisation called Human Writes* and we both write to prisoners on US Death Rows. Human Writes, a UK-wide organisation produces a newsletter, more like a magazine, which is sent out to all members of the organisation and their US penfriends. Art work, poetry and prose produced by US DR inmates is reproduced in the newsletter, some of it of a high standard.

My friend Hilary, who stays in Morayshire, has taken some of the prisoners' poetry and contacted Scottish musicians and asked them to set the poetry to music. Musicians have then performed and recorded their songs, the predominant style being in the folk/ blues/ traditional. There are also some relevant indigenous Scots and other pieces of music. Hilary has put together an amazing album. As you would expect, the tone is generally, but not entirely, quite sad, but there are some beautiful pieces of music. It says a lot for the generosity of many Scottish musicians, some well known, that they gave their time and talent for free to make this album.

The album comes with most of the words of the original poetry and notes by Hilary about many of the tracks. There is also a foreword by the MP for Orkney and Shetland, Alistair Carmichael, who is on the All Party Parliamentary Committee campaigning against the death penalty.

If you would like a copy of the CD it is obtainable from Hilary Christie and costs £11 including postage.

Contact Hilary on christiehilary@talktalk.net

*(www.humanwrites.org)

ACTS Church and Society Network
8 February 2012

Barbara Potter

This time we met in Dunblane Cathedral St Andrew Room. Since the loss of Scottish Churches House as our regular meeting place, our previous meeting had been at Stirling Baptist church, conveniently close to the station, but not available for this meeting. As usual we started with coffee and chat – I do find these informal meetings very useful, especially now I am a little braver about saying, “I remember you but can’t quite place all the details”, and there are so many who help me fill in the forgotten bits, and I can reintroduce myself to them. When the network meets only 3 times a year and I don’t see any of the people in between times it is harder to remember folk.

At this meeting we considered ideas for work to be done ecumenically. In the current climate of austerity, refugee and asylum support has been cut significantly, with an increasing use of destitution rather than support on vouchers. I was asked to work with David, the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer (SCPO) to bring forward background information and proposals for action to the June meeting.

Parliamentary matters included:

The End of Life Choices bill is being re-presented to the Scottish Parliament, with another consultation exercise, which will end on 30 April.

The Criminalisation of Sex Purchase bill will be presented again. Where this has been enacted in one of the Scandinavian countries it has changed the emphasis, and the hope is that it will do so here.

The independence referendum has raised a number of issues.

Scottish Civic Society are encouraging and enabling debate at <http://www.futureofscotland.org/> There will be a conference at the SECC in Glasgow on 1 March.

The Church of Scotland has been working on the purposes of economic activity, and expect to have first findings ready by the end of February with the final report published in March.

Elizabeth Allen reported on the Criminal Justice group. They have a submission on women offenders, and an interest in the continuing independent monitoring in prison. The group has not reviewed its constitution for 10 years, and has been given a day of staff time to look at their constitution, primary function and membership.

Francis Alao, the Racial Justice officer gave a report. This year the national Racial Justice Sunday service will be held in Edinburgh at on the theme “Being an inclusive church” on 9 September at Greenside Parish Church. I have been to one of these services in the past, and can recommend the African style hymn singing with actions.

A power point presentation on the Travelling Community has been prepared and will be taken out to churches by a church member from the Travelling Community.

The Network for Ecumenical Women in Scotland is in the process of being laid down. The history of the group will be written up, and the first draft seen by a final meeting of the group. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) will be looking at ecumenical women’s work.

A Church of Scotland representative has become aware of the way gender identity is being discussed on the continent where it is considered a social construct, rather than a result of sexual

differentiation, or a combination of these. They will be taking this forward within their church committee structure.

The Faith in Older People group are offering 2 courses, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, on communicating with people with Alzheimer's. Their representative spoke about the need to retain community links for those who move into homes. Currently they are organising a conference for 2013 on Age and Spiritual Care

The Domestic Abuse group has expanded from ecumenical to interfaith, and has recognised that while abuse is mainly directed at women, men can also be victims. They are taking education packages to colleges and schools and have set up a website.

Our convener has finished her term of service, and we are currently looking for a new convener from one of the smaller churches. This meeting was ably convened by Bill Reid from the Methodists. Alas he will not be able to fill the role as his church supplies the convener to another network.

Alastair Cameron came to the meeting to present a report from Scottish Churches Housing Action (SCHA) on Achieving the 2012 pledge to end homelessness. He started with a brief review of the process of presenting yourself as homeless, and the tests that have to be fulfilled for the Local Authority (LA) to accept you as homeless. He admitted that there were no statistics kept on those who did not pass all the tests.

There has been a tension between the national government's target, and the LAs who have the responsibility to house people. In the sample of 25% of LAs, 82.5% expect to meet the target. The lack of sufficient affordable homes is key.

There is also appreciation at local and national level that homelessness is about more than 4 walls, with particular appreciation for starter packs, and support/befriending projects, though much of this is based on uncertain funding. The full report or summary can be found at <http://www.churches-housing.org/news/2012-homelessness-target/>

The Church and Society network has been concerned about the issue of people-trafficking. At this meeting we received a report from the group set up to research this issue. This will be presented at the Church of Scotland General Assembly. In an 11-page report the variety of forms of trafficking affecting both sexes, and children have been identified. There is great difficulty in assessing the size of the problem, but the association of trafficking with big sporting events is known, and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow has been a spur to this work. The report ends with recommendations for action. I have a paper copy of the report if there is anyone who would like to see it.

We received a progress report from the Good Society Research Project. They are working with communities around the UK to research what makes them thrive.

Our meetings are a whistle-stop tour round the issues, keeping each other updated on current action.



Equal Marriage comes to Holyrood

Phil Lucas

Four Quakers were among around 400 people who filled the Garden Lobby at the Scottish Parliament on the evening of 31st January to raise the profile of the Scottish equal marriage campaign. The lively and enjoyable evening was organised by The Equality Network and was sponsored by five MSPs, one from each of the parliamentary parties: Joe FitzPatrick (SNP), Jackie Baillie (Labour), Willie Rennie (LibDem), Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) and Patrick Harvie (Green).

Tim Hopkins, Director of the Equality Network, introduced the evening, reminding everyone that the majority of Scottish people now support the legalisation of same sex marriage and that this includes majorities in the major Christian denominations, including the Catholics. He mentioned Quakers, the years it had taken us to work towards our decision and how this had been reached 'by consensus'. (Hard to blame him for not quite understanding our concept of 'the sense of the meeting'!) We were reassured that although far more responses had been received from those opposing the proposed change than from those supporting it, very many of the former were mass distributed postcards while most of the latter were more substantial, being supported by reasoned argument.

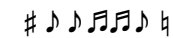
Rae Cahill, the Deputy Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament, told us how and why they made this campaign a major part of their work for the past year and Mark Solomon, Rabbi to the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish congregation, explained that they, like Quakers, are seeking this change in the legislation in the name of religious freedom, not seeking to impose equal marriage on those religious communities which do not wish to accommodate it, but seeking freedom for couples of faith who wish to celebrate their union within faith communities which do. (I had a long and very interesting conversation with Mark in the course of the evening and found he shares many of my views on the Israel/Palestine situation).

A married couple gave us moving testimony on another aspect of the same sex marriage issue. Male and female when they married and the parents of

children, one of them had since changed gender. They wish to stay together as a married couple but the present law cannot recognise them as such. They expressed their continuing commitment to each other and the pain this situation causes them.

The Edinburgh Gay Men's Chorus then sang to us, very ably I thought, though most people needed to talk to their neighbours so it was not easy to listen to the singing (the modern day curse of music being treated as background to everything, I muttered darkly to myself). The speeches by the five politicians were brief but well made and equally supportive, after which a huge wedding cake was cut and distributed.

We were told that the Scottish Government will debate its response to the consultation exercise and make its decision shortly after the election in May.



Angus Meeting's weekend

Pamala McDougall

Angus Friends are arranging a Quaker Pilgrimage 1st -4th June staying at Swarthmore Hall and visiting several sites of Quaker interest. By fortunate timing, Melvyn Bragg introduced his programme on radio 4 'In Our Time' on April 5th entitled 'George Fox and The Quakers' which I managed to record. It gives 45 minutes of well-researched Quaker history, discussing the origins of Quakerism. Those taking part were Justin Champion, Professor of the History of Early Modern Ideas at the University of London; John Coffrey, Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Leicester; and Kate Peters; Fellow in History at the University of Cambridge.

Angus Friends will listen to the tape as part of the Preparation for Pilgrimage meeting prior to travelling to 1652 country, which will include discussing the itinerary, travel arrangements and a get together to prepare spiritually for our journey together. One Friend from each of the other local meetings (St

Andrews, Perth and Dundee) will join us in a piece of serendipity! As a subscriber to Melvyn Bragg's newsletter I was interested to read about his decisions to talk about Quakers on the programme and here is what he wrote.

“ I wanted to talk about the Quakers I had known back in Wigton in the 1950s. There was a Quaker school on the edge of the town, said to be the first co-educational boarding school in the country. The Quakers came into the town itself to a fine, plain, brownstone meeting house which later became the town library, run by Quaker ladies who I remember as almost beatific in their kindness and assistance. I also remember helping them to put up the boards in front of the books so that the spines of the volumes did not interfere with the calmness of the Quaker meetings, and it was panelled all around the room.

“I thought of the Quakers as then as pacific, kindly and altogether exemplary in their quietism and even in their meetings (rather than services). It seemed to me (a few years later when I learned about the Celtic monks) to hark back to a purer and more inspirational notion of Christianity, which itself harks back to what we know of the Apostles through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

“We played them at rugby which was a bit unfair because we had a rather larger school than they had. And they have stayed with me as a presence. I wasn't surprised when Tom Morris, the producer of *In Our Time*, told me that there had been a far greater than usual response to this programme on the audience log etc. and also observed that a friend of his had said that the Quakers were the only people that every faction in Northern Ireland, at the worst times, felt they could talk to.

“I like the idea of Pennsylvania. I like the idea of turning to chocolate in order to give people an alternative to drink. I also like the idea that perhaps they didn't understand that to have a glass of red wine AND a dark chocolate is irresistible.”

Some things to live up to!

Retreat Now!

Presentation at General Meeting for Scotland at Perth
Saturday, 3rd March 2012

Constance Tonge

The theme which emerged during Scotland GM was “passion, knowledge and experience” and this was mentioned by those Friends who followed the 20 minute section I was given for The Retreat. The clerk also kindly allowed me to mount a small exhibition and I was able to display the S (Spirituality) Group posters, The Retreat Newsletter to Meetings and (public) information about the units within the hospital; as well as information about referrals and the Benevolent Fund.

Two of the Friends who spoke later, on different topics, said that well-meaning interest is not enough - we must know what we are talking about and use the expertise of those Friends with huge relevant knowledge and experience.

I had been told, by the GM clerk, that Friends would be interested in what was happening at The Retreat now - having heard history on previous occasions - and I felt that this was a good way of taking up the challenge of that Friend at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011, who said that The Retreat is isolated from meetings (I have checked with others, and they are rather in agreement). My aim was to try and engage interest by Friends' personal identification with the work and had asked The Retreat's Clinical Lead Managers if they could possibly find time to write me a little case study of an individual (anonymised of course) and, preferably, a few comments about how the person felt about her/his treatment. I was delighted that some were able to respond and I intend to pursue the others for the next time!

The display looked OK and lots of Friends (there were about 50 at the meeting) came over to read the “work” information and ask questions, make comments. These were all positive and interested and lots said that they were delighted to “own” The Retreat as Quakers!

The talking part of the exercise seemed to go down well and there were many who were impressed by the variety and scope of the work done. I started with the two quotes (from The Retreat Strategic Vision” and the Terms of Reference of the S Group)

“We see the people who use our services as whole people and are committed to meeting their spiritual needs as a key part of their mental health needs. We want to become a leading organisation in developing and supporting the spiritual needs of people who use mental health services.”

“Valuing and enhancing the spiritual life of all individuals and the community is central to the work and culture of The Retreat”.

I spoke a little about the Green Group, which is making the hospital greener every day, and a lot about the S Group (because I’m on it!). Although the Green Group has been longer in existence than the “S” Group, the original mission of The Retreat was based on spirituality - on the whole person; it was founded under concern about mental health. The Group is called the “S” Group to avoid any confusion with “spiritualism” and to provoke questions about what is a very complex concept. There is a growing list of spirituality-related work already going on and I talked about the many things which can be contained in the S Group definition of “what uplifts us, what connects us, what makes us whole”.

The last bit was about what I was asking Scottish Friends to do about The Retreat. I want them to “own” it as Friends; it is not only part of our Quaker heritage but is doing brilliant work today; I hoped for their prayers and upholding, and, perhaps, their money for the Benevolent Fund if they were moved to give it. I hope that they will keep The Retreat in mind should they be qualified to make a referral or have a Friend in need of its services (for which Quaker funding is available).

I had taken along a sheet of flip-chart paper with the heading “What uplifts me? What connects me? What makes me whole?” and a border of felt-tip pen flowers in many colours drawn by my sister, who suffers with severe depression. I asked that any Friends who wished should add their own items. Many did. The full list is:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Wild places | Swimming |
| Mozart’s “Exultate Jubilate” | Pretending to be a donut! |
| Being needed | Kind words |
| Our healing group | A Friendly email! |
| Gardening through the seasons | Roses and lilies |
| Conversation | The sea coast |
| Laughing (YES!) | Meeting for Worship |
| Being useful/valued | Sewing |
| Walking | Birdsong |
| Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” | My dog |
| Listening to the sea advancing & retreating | |
| A robin perching on my shoulder | |
| A letter or card in the post | The Ardebil Carpet |
| Being valued and being heard | Being in nature |
| Contributing, not only being | The silence with others |
| My cat at play | A Gathered Meeting |

Sitting in a circle with Friends because I feel I belong
 The last part of the Book of Job A beautiful garden
 Looking up at the stars Sailing with crew
 Stroking an animal's fur Good feedback
 A Big Smile! Light, sounds, smells
 Caring for a plant, a pet or people Gardening
 Stroking other people's dogs (therapeutic!)
 Being in the moment noticing the small things:
 New growth in the garden
 A smile Children playing
 Someone helping another

The presentation ended with the well-known quote from George Fox:

"Be patterns, be examples...that you will come to walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in every one."

That is what The Retreat is trying to do.



Sir Walter Scott and the South Inch, Perth. MP

General Meeting for Scotland, 3rd March 2012
 John Phillips

General Meeting met in Perth on 3rd March 2012. During opening worship we were reminded of *Quaker faith & practice*, 8.21 and 8.23:

"It is neither possible nor desirable for every Friend to take a detailed interest in the work of every committee. We are, however, called to a broad sympathy with, and understanding of, the extent of the work entrusted to the committees under the guidance of Meeting for Sufferings in the name of the whole yearly meeting."

Quite a challenge! - and one that was addressed at various points and in different ways during this meeting.

We started with a report about Constance Tonge's experiences as a member of The Retreat in York, which, since its foundation by Quakers in 1792, has been catering to diverse needs in the field of mental health. Its emphasis is firmly on a holistic approach to its patients, considering the needs of the whole person, and Constance has been serving on the "S group", which is considering the place of spirituality (in its widest sense) in the Retreat's work. The seeds of cure lie within the individual and opportunities to facilitate spiritual development occur at many points, through art, music, prayer, outdoor activity, gardening – the list seemed comprehensive and rather inspiring.

Margaret Peacock gave us a report from Meeting for Sufferings – this has of course been reported elsewhere, but I found her thoughts about "advocacy" by the Society refreshing. Barbara

Potter then brought a concern from the ACTS Church & Society group about the difficulties of helping asylum seekers who are refused permission to stay in Britain: following such a decision, their financial position and even their housing situation can become extremely uncertain and churches are deeply concerned with the support that is so sorely needed at such times. Their position is made all the more difficult by the uncertain timescale and framework for making appeals about the Border Agency's decisions, and difficulties can last for many months, even years.

"Quakers and the Scottish Parliament" – Elizabeth Allen presented a report based on that printed in *Scottish Friend* in February (page 36); the meeting asked a small *ad hoc* group to bring definite proposals to our June meeting for mechanisms to be followed both in reacting to parliamentary consultations and for undertaking proactive work.

"*The leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations*" (on the Quaker Tapestry panel that used to be displayed in Scottish Churches House): the panel has been returned to us and we need to find a new home for it. Leslie Stevenson told us that ACTS has now put their property on the market – and he reported that ACTS is looking for a new vision for its future: he would welcome suggestions!

For information, the following dates were suggested for General Meetings to be held in 2013: 2nd March (West Scotland); 8th June (South East Scotland); 7th September (East Scotland); 16th/17th November (North Scotland) and 8th March 2014 (West Scotland). And, incidentally, the 2011 Tabular Statement showed that the total of Members in Scottish AMs had decreased to 706 from 720 in 2010.

Our main business was a talk by Katie Frost, Community Fundraising Officer, Friends House.

"But what can I do?"

"Freely ye have received, freely give"

This short report is what I took from her presentation. I can see that each of us has distinctive gifts and talents, but every day we are faced with bad news about the world – bad news concerning our local communities, our country or the international community. It can seem overwhelming. We hear about endless initiatives, charities, Friends' concerns – but where do we start? How can we possibly engage with things, or how can we respond to the challenge of "what can I do in the face of all this need?"

We all have different ways of doing things and different opportunities. Just as we differ in our own personal interests and in our family circumstances, we differ in our capacity to make some sort of response. Only one thing is certain – we cannot achieve much in the face of the vastness of the need that we hear about. It would be easy to get depressed about this, or to cultivate indifference as a defence against it. But as Quakers or attenders we have a huge advantage: we are not facing these challenges alone, for we belong to meetings for worship, communities of souls seeking together to find ways of contributing and of coping with these needs.

Just as we ourselves vary, our meetings also vary. Some (usually not our own!) seem to have enormous capacity to innovate and explore solutions together, while others seem almost cut off from the world. But that would be a misconception. While there are

certainly individual meetings that offer their members remarkable opportunities to participate in charitable activity serving their local community or serving some larger charitable endeavour, we must always remember that there is also an over-arching community of Friends covering the whole of Britain. These Friends have carefully discerned a multitude of selfless activities that we can all support, activity which may be playing out on the world stage or may in contrast be relatively local. Such work is supported for us through QPSW, QUNO (or some other set of Quaker initials). Much of this activity is ground-breaking, novel and unique to Friends: it draws on Friends' special talents and insights and we are not simply duplicating activity that other larger organisations can provide.

We all contribute to these initiatives through our prayers and through our supportive membership of our meetings, where we hold the work in the light and keep ourselves informed about it. We can offer our time to our meetings, releasing others to play a more active role. Above all, everyone can contribute financially – how often do we hear that every little helps? Surely we know that the funds of our own Yearly Meeting can use everything that we can pass on. *"Contribution 2012: meeting our responsibilities, living our witness"* is the donations leaflet prepared for our use this year: it sets out very clearly how we can help. As Katie Frost told us, "on the whole, only Quakers give to Quaker work", so it is simply up to us how much can be achieved. Quakers have lots of projects on the go at LM level and AM level as well as nationally and internationally: they are spirit-led, they combine worship and witness. They deserve our support.



General Meeting for Scotland
9 June 2012 at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

"Oppression in the extreme appears terrible: but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression; and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive. To labour for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world."

John Woolman 1763 - Quaker Faith and Practice 23.14

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in June will be in Edinburgh Friends' Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace. We start at 11 am, with tea and coffee available from 10.30 am. Please bring your own lunch to supplement the soup which will be provided. Refreshments will be available after the meeting, which is expected to end about 4 pm.

There will be reports and business items in the morning. Our speaker in the afternoon will be Judith Moran of Quaker Social Action. QSA is an anti-poverty charity, founded by Friends in 1867. They work mainly on supporting people on low incomes in East London to seek solutions to the issues that affect their lives, by developing innovative & practical projects. They see it as essential that they share their experiences to benefit communities throughout the UK.

Please join us in Edinburgh, meet new Friends, and reflect together on ways of responding as Quakers to social injustices. Do please encourage anyone from your Meeting to come who may not have attended GM before.

Robin Waterston, Clerk