



August
2012

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Scottish Friend

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Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 12th October to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.


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Understanding Quaker Social Action -
Working in groups at GM in Edinburgh

MP

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Finding my brother – after 60 years

Jeny Faulkner

In 1951 HM Submarine Affray was lost on a routine training patrol in the Channel; there were 75 men aboard including my brother, Michael, an Engineer. After a two month search, the wreck was located 17 miles off Alderney; questions afterwards proved an embarrassment to the RN and the government and there was a clamp down: no bodies, no memorial service or publicity; relatives were fobbed off.

This year a memorial was erected in Alderney and the ceremony on April 16th publicly acknowledged for the first time the loss of Affray and those 75 men on this, the 61st anniversary; the granite block bearing all the names was unveiled at Braye Harbour. My three daughters and I went (a long way!) south to join the 200 relatives, friends and ex-submariners gathered for the simple, very moving ceremony. For me, it was doubly important that the Captain RN in his speech acknowledged the naval shortcomings leading to that disaster .-... but there can be no answers to why or how they died. We all laid our wreaths or roses.

That afternoon (a day earlier than expected due to a bad weather forecast) about 60 of us went out in the 'Sark Venture' to the Hurd Deep. It brought me close to tears as my daughters and I dropped our roses over the site of the Affray. It was a breezy day for the 4 hour trip!

It is so important that the loss of the Affray has been publicly acknowledged, even after so long. The relatives, mostly all strangers to each other but who had lived through the experiences of 1951, can now share the sense of acceptance, which has helped to relieve the long unresolved grief and anger ... and we are no longer isolated.

I had had email contact with a Friend in Alderney, Struan Robertson. He contacted us when we arrived and helped in many ways, not least by lending us his car, and afterwards sending the local paper reports and photos. Also, I am very grateful to the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust, which helped to make my journey possible.

It meant so much to us to BE THERE – my brother is not forgotten.

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Scottish Episcopal Church General Synod 7-9 June 2012
Eva Deregowska

This was an opportunity for me to gain further experience of the main churches in Scotland as I was privileged to have been appointed Quaker representative to the Church of Scotland General Assembly in 2008.

Each day started with a service, but the first day, falling on the feast day of Corpus Christi, there was a Eucharist service. The language of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) is certainly different from that of Quakers, although the phrase "being salt and light" was used at one point. It probably helped my understanding that I was brought up in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark. Despite the multitude of layers of office I found the Synod members, whether bishops, clergy or laity, very friendly and with a sense of humour. A very welcome touch, which we could do well to imitate at BYM, was the appointment of a "buddy" for the ecumenical delegates. Thanks to Hilary I was made to feel at ease, not just in the gathering but also at the dinner. (There, by the way, we heard a thoughtful after-dinner speech given by Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at New College, the Church of Scotland Theological College.)

Unlike the General Assembly, where I was impressed by the large number of "faith in action" programmes, the Synod reports relating to "the world" were few. There was a preoccupation with organisation and doctrine, or "faith and order". Two subjects illustrate this, the Anglican covenant, and the Diaconate. (Before we get too smug, let us not forget that we have also spent a lot of time on reorganising and redefining Meeting for Sufferings and our central committees.) The Covenant is a proposal from the

Archbishop of Canterbury as head of the Anglican Communion offered for adoption by all the "provinces" of the communion. This has been an attempt to bring some unity to the worldwide Anglican church, which is split on the issue of sexuality, whether in the form of gay priests or women bishops. (Unlike the C of E, the SEC allows women bishops, although there is none at present as bishops hold office until retirement age.)

The other dividing issue less talked about is that of "colonialism". The question for some is: why accept as head someone who is head of the Church of England and appointed by the English Queen? While the Commonwealth is a loose association of countries which have accepted the Queen as head, the Anglican covenant would impose a far from loose federation. It was these issues which led the fiercely independent Scottish branch of the communion to vote overwhelmingly against the Covenant at this Synod. (The C of E has already rejected it.) It now looks unlikely to come about and it will be up to the new Archbishop to find a way of reconciling the various factions.

I was comparing this to our worldwide body Friends' World Committee for Consultation which reflects similarly differing views as illustrated recently at the World Conference in Kenya. It is just as well that it is not in our Quaker practice now to impose a structure and a doctrine which all have to abide by, although American Friends in the past have seen plenty of schisms relating to these matters. FWCC is a sufficiently loose body to hold us all together somehow.

The other subject which was only briefly debated (we were given lots of discussion and background papers) as it will come up at next year's Synod, was the understanding of the "Diaconate". The background to this needs some explaining for those not familiar with the Northern European, post-reformation church

scene. In 1994 the SEC approved the "Porvoo Common Statement" (the Porvoo Communion of Churches is a loose grouping of Anglican, Nordic and Baltic churches in the Protestant tradition). The Statement declares a commitment to "work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry." The way the SEC tries to define the Diaconate must also be seen in the context of their discussion of the role of the lay ministry and is an attempt to define all the various roles within the church. The SEC's Diaconate Working Group had held a seminar in March 2012 and representatives from the eight churches present were asked, inter alia: what is a deacon in your tradition, and how is this calling expressed in the life of your church.

I read with great interest the submission from the Salvation Army (one and a half pages), which could almost have been written by a Quaker. He quoted Catherine Booth: "You need no human ordination, no long and tedious preparation, no high-flown language, no towering eloquence, all you need is the full baptism of the Holy Spirit." He also says: "Ministry flows out of a relationship of grace received. Therefore social action and care is never just a charitable act to those in need, but rather the overflowing of grace received." It contrasted strongly with some of the other statements (for example the Roman Catholic's ten pages!) and the SEC's struggle to define the different roles.

I have gone into this in some detail, partly because I was interested in learning about the Porvoo Churches, having been brought up in one of them, but also from a Quaker point of view. It is amazing how much energy is spent on these matters. British Quakers are fortunate in having no paid ministry. We do of course have "jobs", or tasks, with "job descriptions", but not for life. Compared to this the SEC have to deal with payment to the different layers of staff, pensions, housing for retired clergy,

deciding who can vote (this Synod decided that lay ministries would be allowed to vote for the first time), and other matters.

But yet, just as Scottish Episcopalians, or "piskies", try to define what their role should be – are the Ministry of the Word and the Ministry of Service different aspects of the same? - let us not forget that we too are asking: what does it mean to be a Quaker today?

They did indeed conclude that social action is integral to Christian life and mission. I think Quakers can agree with that, even if wording it differently.

I bought a publication when I was there: Grosvenor Essay no. 8, on "Marriage and Human Intimacy: perspectives on same-sex relationships and the life of the church", published by the Doctrine Committee of the Faith and Order Board. They stress that the members of the Committee "represent a number of different views and are not in full agreement on the important questions and by no means possess all of the answers." They "try to avoid prejudicing one view over another, and seek to provide an honest appraisal of the various issues." The essay seeks to set out a "broad view of current historical, theological, liturgical, and scientific perspectives so that the discussion will not be just the church's traditional understanding of marriage, but 'Marriage and Human Intimacy.' "

I find it a fascinating and very honest and humane approach to the subject and I like especially the notion that: "the church could show itself to be more prophetic and also more pastorally sensitive if it devoted more attention to such issues (of other forms of committed relationships) instead of focusing so exclusively on the agenda of sexuality and marriage."

Angus Meeting Quaker Pilgrimage June 1st – 4th 2012



At Brigflatts Meeting House

During the Millennium year 12 years ago, Angus Meeting undertook a Christian Roots pilgrimage visiting over the year Iona, Whithorn, Dunfermline, Easter Fowlis and Inchcolm Island in the Forth. Inspired by the Church of Scotland Rural Group initiative to promote pilgrimages, it was in the autumn of 2011 that Angus Meeting started to prepare for a Quaker Roots pilgrimage to take place in June 2012. After much planning and complicated logistics we held a Preparation for Pilgrimage meeting a couple of weeks before being due to set off when we discussed the programme, travel arrangements and how we were preparing spiritually.

Fourteen pilgrims, including three from each of the other

local meetings (St Andrews, Perth and Dundee) travelled by train to Ulverston to stay in historic Swarthmoor Hall. By a piece of serendipity, our Friends in Residence were Pat and Phil Lucas hotfoot from BYM! Our base proved a peaceful and meaningful place in Quaker history and we enjoyed the gardens and surroundings as we learned more of our Quaker roots. Having Gordon Slaymaker as our volunteer minibuss driver and guide was a real blessing, and although some of the sites we visited were sometimes far apart, we appreciated the passing countryside and pondered on the distances early Friends had to travel without the comfort of our minibuss!

We visited Sawley Meeting House where Ben Pink Dandelion gave us a talk (for some of us a modern day Quaker hero!) and afterwards most of us climbed Pendle Hill while the less physically able stayed at the MH (some of us in our 80s!). We were welcomed to Settle Meeting House by the warden Alison Tyas who showed us round the old part with its movable wooden partitions in the gallery for the women, and then the lovely extension with modern facilities.

On Sunday we joined Friends at Brigflatts Meeting House for Meeting for Worship and then were enthralled by the talk given by the warden there, Tess Satchell, and afterwards enjoyed our packed lunch in the MH with lively conversation with local Friends. A visit to nearby Firbank Fell with our own brief meeting for worship beside the plaque commemorating the spot where George Fox stood and saw his great vision, contributed to our experience and to our own spiritual journey on the pilgrimage.

On Monday we left Swarthmoor Hall and headed for the Quaker Tapestry Exhibition at Kendal where a talk and audio

guides enhanced the experience. After lunch in the exhibition café we made for the railway station and our journey home, tired but full of memories.

Since then we have met together for a feedback pilgrimage meeting to share highlights, photographs and also share what we had gained and learned from the whole experience. From discussion and a questionnaire it was apparent that individual Friends have gained a great deal of knowledge of our Quaker roots and the experience brought us together in a unique way 'in things which are eternal'. Our meeting as a whole has also gained in the corporate experience as shown in the sharing of the pilgrimage with others and in ministry. As one pilgrim said "It has made me feel more confident as a Quaker and appreciate our Quaker roots".

If any other Quaker meeting is thinking of planning a pilgrimage, the booklet 'The 1652 Country' is invaluable (we purchased one for each pilgrim for preparation) and BYM employs a part time Pilgrimage Co-ordinator to assist in planning. Another publication is 'Pilgrimage Roots Across Scotland' produced by the Scottish Churches Rural Group which makes useful and interesting reading. As organiser of our Angus Pilgrimage 2012 I would be happy to share our planning experiences with any meeting. There are some points which should be taken into account e.g. the physical capabilities of pilgrims, and costs. We were grateful for a grant from the Dundee Property Trust.

Finally, it was said that we took 14 pilgrims and brought 14 back – but, asked one wag, were they the same 14?

Pamala McDougall.

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2012

Elizabeth Allen

"If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk with others."

African proverb

It was an uplifting and enriching experience to 'walk with others' as one of the ecumenical delegates to the Church of Scotland General Assembly 2012. I was the only Quaker there and for that week I worshipped with others, I listened to others, I shared food and fellowship with others. I even walked to St Giles Cathedral on the Sunday morning in a ceremonial procession with others: they in their robes and I in my good jacket!

Honoured and endorsed by a message from the Queen, and representatives from the Scottish parliament, local authorities and the military, the Church of Scotland gathered with pomp and ceremony to open the General Assembly 2012. I had already had a taste of grandeur the night before, as a guest at the traditional Ceremony of the Keys in the Palace of Holyrood House. I was growing uncomfortable with all this pageantry and I have to admit that at times my republican sentiments were being ruffled - but, I was with kind friends and they were most welcoming.

The Assembly, of course, is about church business, not pageantry. Indeed, it is clearly a meeting for worship for business. The new Moderator, Albert Bogle, was very keen on uniting the Assembly in praise. He taught and led the singing of a Zimbabwean chorus at morning worship, and at other times:

Listen for the Gospel! Alleluia!

It is God's way of healing us! Alleluia!

*Pay attention to the Gospel! Alleluia!
It is God's word for saving us! Alleluia!*

On the Monday we started the day with the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Again I found myself in an uncomfortable place. I had never before taken communion and was not sure I wanted to do so - but I did. At the Assembly communion was taken in silence. While the common cup of wine was being passed around and the bread was being shared, there was a prolonged, profound and reflective silence in the hall. It felt like a gathered meeting. Joining in this symbolic act of communion was for me a step on the journey I walked with others.

My introduction to the General Assembly began with a briefing session in St. Columba's by the Castle, before delegates and visitors were led into the General Assembly to take up our reserved seats. Ecumenical delegates were told that although we may not vote, we could and should contribute to the debates. Many of us took the opportunity to do this, when it was appropriate. Following the report from the Panel on Review and Reform, in which alternative ways of decision making, including consensus, were explored, I spoke about the Quaker business method, and explained that it went beyond consensus.

Many of the matters covered in the reports were familiar: trustees' report; nominations committee business; safeguarding; legal matters; staffing requirements; management of buildings. These are the nuts and bolts of running an organisation. There was also overlap in areas of concern such as peacemaking and international affairs, ecumenical relations, housing, work with parliamentarians, marriage, children and young people. The leadings of the Church of Scotland have opened up a wide range

of work, much of it in our communities. For instance, Crossreach provides social care, supporting children and their families, helping adults maximise their potential, caring for older people. Their life-changing work is innovative, creative and inspirational.

Mission is a concern, which the Church has long nurtured. The work of the World Mission Council has links to past overseas missionary work but is firmly focused on present needs. We heard a detailed report of the Church in China, introduced with a display of the motto of the Chinese Amity Foundation, "Love never ends", written in beautiful Chinese calligraphy. The Amity Foundation is a key player in Chinese civil life and a valued contributor to the wellbeing of society. Its work includes training adults with physical and learning difficulties to be bakers in the Amity Bakery in Nanjing. Each of us received the gift of a sample biscuit from the bakery, with the recipe and an invitation to make the biscuits and sell them after church to raise funds for the Amity Bakery. This is one of the many opportunities for the Church in Scotland and the Church in China to walk together, linking and supporting each other in friendship.

Of particular significance was the much heralded report, "A Right Relationship with Money". In introducing the report Charles Munn, convener of the Special Commission on the Purpose of Economic Activity, reminded church members that the poor were very close to the heart of Jesus, who identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked and the sick. The economy must be for God and it is the love of our neighbour which must be the ultimate test of whether we have it right.

The Commission suggests that this is a time of *kairos* – of crisis and opportunity in the economic life of our country. It is no time for

business as usual. Our economic culture needs to be shaped by our values and not just driven by market forces. The report suggests that we have allowed elements of our social and economic system to degrade human beings and the environment and that we need a more holistic, balanced approach. The churches have a role to play in the conversation about the relationship between ethics and economic policy.

The report calls for clear and urgent action to transform our social and economic life, focused on four priorities:

- Reducing inequality
- Ending poverty
- Ensuring sustainability
- Promoting mutuality

Inequality in the UK is increasing faster than in most other developed countries, with the average income of the top 10% of earners currently twelve times higher than the lowest 10%. By reducing inequality and social exclusion we create a greater sense of wellbeing.

The Church of Scotland already supports Christian Aid's 'Trace the Tax Campaign'. The report backs this and speaks of the revenue that is lost in the UK through tax avoidance and evasion. It points out that many of the world's tax havens are British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and that there is therefore an inconsistency in the government's commitment to overseas aid while supporting tax havens, which deprive developing countries of the tax revenue they need. The Assembly requested that multinational companies in which Church funds are invested be asked to support greater international tax transparency. When the

Church procures goods over the value of £100,000 in any year from a company, it will be asked to disclose the extent to which it uses tax havens and where appropriate the company will be encouraged to avoid this practice in the future..

The report is very strong on the need to end poverty and suggests that all too often lip service has been paid to this. It spotlights the current trend of blaming and stigmatizing the poor for their own poverty. This 'divide and rule' strategy, which pits the slightly less poor against the poorest is deeply offensive.

The downward spiral of poverty, personal credit and debt is discussed and the Assembly called for regulation on the price of consumer credit. The report encourages credit unions, as they promote a culture of saving and not just borrowing. The recommendation of the Commission to instruct the Council of Assembly to consider the feasibility of making money available to local Churches to establish and support credit unions was accepted.

The General Assembly also supported growing the mutual and co-operative sectors of the Scottish economy and backed proposals to support the promotion of business models which emphasise positive social impact.

People need to become more literate in financial matters and the Church should be encouraged to support initiatives such as the Financial Education Partnership. The Assembly called on the Scottish and UK governments to promote financial education in schools as a matter of urgency.

Although there is mention of the need to protect the environment from over-exploitation, I think the report could have gone further

in spelling out the consequences of rampant consumerism and in questioning the values of an economic system which promotes it. The starting point of the Commission was to accept the current capitalist economic system and to promote measures to regulate it for the common good. From that standpoint it is an excellent report. But at this time of *kairos*, it could have asked the Church to be open to the possibility that for a sustainable and just future, a new and different global economic system may be needed.

The report was well received.

Attending the General Assembly was an intense and memorable experience. Being the only Quaker in this throng of people of faith I was alone but with friends. Together we walked far.



Gospel of Thomas Seminar June 2nd & 3rd 2012
Rosemary Gascoyne.

The opening query that was put on everyone's chair this time to begin the proceedings, was:-

HOW HAS THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS TOUCHED YOUR LIFE?

The following is just a smattering taken from some of the answers;

"---to know ourselves---"
"---a spiritual level of consciousness---"
"---background to my life---"

"---always seeking---"
"---very personal, changes as you change---"
"---letting one's ego fall away---"
"---seminars on Gospel of Thomas very important---"
"---untouched by the church---"
"---mysterious so deep---"
"---not straight forward needing one's work---"

This occupied the first hour, after which there were three `presentations` that is individual attempts to express a personal understanding in written form, of one of these teachings. Each of these leading then to a general discussion. This always produces such a wide variety of reactions to these profound words of Jesus. These words, written down from the memory of Jesus' disciple Thomas (who only in St. John's gospel was made to appear initially as a sceptic of the resurrection).

But how can I condense all that was said at that most inspiring seminar? It was the smallest group we've had so far - only eight - but from whom so much was given. I can merely issue an invitation to join us for our next seminar on October 6th 2012 - 10am-4.30pm at Wiston Lodge near Biggar. Email Jack Squires on Cummertrees@btinternet.com for more details.

You do not have to be a Quaker or attender, belong to any religious order, can be a complete sceptic, and do not have to have read the Gospel of Thomas. Just come with an enquiring mind or come to sit and listen.

Rosemary died following a stroke in July. This will mean changes in the 'Thomas Group' organisation which will be announced in due course. She will be sadly missed.

“All change” at the Quaker Council for European Affairs.

After a decade of representing Quakers in Brussels, Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch are handing over the reins. Over the past 33 years, successive Representatives have acted as the voice of Quakers at European institutions. After ten years of hard work in Brussels, Liz and Martina are the longest serving Representatives in the history of QCEA. However, from October 2012, the Quaker voice in Brussels will have two new faces.



Alexandra Bosbeer, a Friend of 20 years' standing says: 'This opportunity to promote Quaker values is very exciting, and I am very much looking forward to two-way communication with other European Quakers on issues of importance to us.'

Internationalism has always been a part of Alexandra's life, starting with a childhood spent in three countries with a mixed-nationality family and later working in a wide range of countries. She has recently been blogging about her experiences in Central America and thoughts regarding social injustice from a Quakerly point of view. She was also lately involved in witnessing and supporting the Occupy movement in Portland, Oregon, together with local Quakers. Alexandra's previous experience includes managing part of the international accreditation programme for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and fifteen years in Ireland teaching environmental and social

forest management. In addition to photography and blogging, she is a keen potter.



Gordon Matthews, a birthright Friend, and a former Senior Volunteer at QCEA is 'passionately committed to working for justice, peace and environmental sustainability, and especially looking forward to engaging in advocacy on behalf of Quakers at the European level.'

Gordon has been the warden of the Quaker Meeting House in Evesham since 2004. From 2007 to 2011 he served as a town councillor. He attended Sidcot

Friends' School, studied environmental science at the University of Bradford, and lived at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre whilst training to be a teacher. He has worked for most of his adult life either for Quaker bodies or for ecumenical peace organisations, and has served with the Quaker Peace Action Caravan (January – March 1981); the Fellowship of Reconciliation in England (1981-1986); Charney Manor (1987-1990); Church & Peace (1990-1997); and Quaker-Hilfe (1998-2001).

Liz and Martina, looking back over these last 10 exhilarating years in which they have been privileged to serve Friends as their voice in Europe, reflect on their contributions to policy development, and to the growth and prospering of a number of NGO networks inspired and co-founded by QCEA. Martina and Liz are delighted

to leave the solid foundations they have built with such capable successors to take the work forward in new directions. Liz comments, 'We are handing over an organisation that is well known to and well respected by decision-makers and NGO colleagues alike.' Martina adds, 'A decade of continuous management has put QCEA on solid ground with a heightened profile among European Quakers and others.' Liz and Martina are also proud to leave a beautifully renovated Quaker House Brussels. This resource acts as a central meeting point for many groups and organisations as well as the physical presence of Friends in Belgium.

For further information or additional comment, please contact:
Richard Condon, Clerk of QCEA (richardcondon@clearwire.be)



QCEA study tour -
Marion Fairweather's writes of her experience

Dear Friends,
I have just returned from the Quaker Council for European Affairs study tour. I first heard about this tour through Sarah Brown at my local meeting telling me that there would be financial support available if I was interested in attending; on the basis of this and a curiosity to find out more about Quakers' work in Europe

I applied and had one of the most enjoyable and enriching weeks I have had in a long time.

The QCEA has been working in Brussels for over thirty years to bring the Quaker voice to issues in Europe, raising concern about issues including the treatment of women in prisons throughout Europe, the impact of our energy use (particularly the vast amount of water it uses up when there are droughts throughout Europe) and promoting peace building and imposing bans on products that come from illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank. During the course of the tour it became clear that, despite having a very small staff and limited budget (all their funding comes from donations) QCEA have managed to have a disproportionate influence in Europe - helping guidelines to be developed and adopted by the European Parliament on the treatment of women in prisons, setting up the European Peace Liaison Office to promote peace-building in the works of the EU and in many other areas. All the staff from QCEA were passionate about their work and helped us gradually to get a picture of how the institutions worked amongst the bewildering number of institutions with similar names (the Council of Europe and the European Council were ones I always got confused).

The study tour was made up of Quakers throughout Europe, including the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland and Georgia. We were also joined by two teachers from Quaker schools- Motesem from the Ramallah Boys School and Aline from Brumallah in Lebanon. It was brilliant to be a part of such a diverse group and I feel I learned as much from conversations over dinner as I did during presentations on the working of the European Parliament. It was humbling to meet one of the ten Georgian Quakers and put my experiences of being the only

Quaker in school into perspective. We were watched over with loving care by Liz Scurfield (who has been working for QCEA for the past nine years), programme assistants Hannah Slater and Cat Hellewell who ensured that we remembered to bring passport ID to visit various EU institutions, caught the right trains and turned up on time. Organising a group of twelve Quakers was a bit like herding cats and I am impressed how well they managed this task with great good humour despite our group's tendencies to wander off and go in the wrong places.

The study tour gave us an introduction to the workings of the EU and we visited the Commission, the Council and the Strasbourg parliament. This made me very aware of my ignorance of what happens in the EU and its role in building peace in Europe through creating solid economic ties and policies. The work of the EU was enlivened by a talk from Jeremy who is a Quaker and diplomat in the commission working with African countries; he spoke positively about the EU's impact as an aid giver and its role supporting other countries with their move towards democracy. Misha, our Georgian Friend, explained that in his country the EU is seen as the second biggest power after the USA. Jeremy expressed concern that there was a move towards "fortress Europe" - becoming more and more hostile towards outsiders, particularly refugees arriving from Africa and the Middle East as well as the economic uncertainty for the future of countries like Greece and Spain with incredibly high youth unemployment.

While there is definitely a lot of waste within the EU, particularly moving between two huge parliamentary buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg every month, there is also a lot to be optimistic about and there are opportunities for civil society to be heard. I was also impressed with the Council of Europe (a body quite similar to the

UN) and its work with the court of human rights which has allowed Georgia to bring Russia to court for the war in 2010 and the work they do visiting detained people throughout the member states (including Russia and Turkey) to ensure that they are not being subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment, or torture.

In writing this report it is hard to keep it short when I learned so much and have so many memories, from one friend "plain speaking" to MEP Nick Griffin who we bumped into in a restaurant in Strasbourg, a lovely shared meal the first night in Quaker house, seeing deer grazing in the centre we stayed in at Strasbourg and a quiz (which brought out a very competitive streak in some Friends!) on the train journey back to Brussels. It was a wonderful week and I feel privileged that I was given the chance to attend and would recommend it to all Friends

I was the only Friend from Scotland and was told that it was sometimes difficult to get Scottish Friends to participate. I hope that anyone reading this article will consider the 2013 study tour.

If you are interested in finding out more about the works of QCEA I would recommend getting their newsletter "Around Europe" (for more information go to their website www.qcea.org/stay-in-touch/) or to more actively support them in their work you can sign up for their Action Alerts to find out what you can do to support their campaigns and research (www.qcea.org/home/involved/action-alerts/).

Yours in friendship,
Marion Fairweather.

First Minister's meeting with Scottish Church leaders and representatives on Thursday 17 May 2012.

Leslie Stevenson

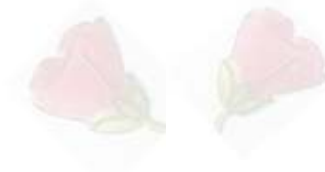
On Thursday 17 May 2012, First Minister Alex Salmond met with senior figures from ten Scottish Churches to discuss current issues facing society and the Church. These included sharing serious concerns about fostering, kinship care and child poverty; despite some significant progress the present economic reality means that there remain real challenges in achieving targets and improving standards across the country. The First Minister stressed the importance of forthcoming legislation on children's care and support. The related topic of marriage and the recent consultation was also discussed. The Church leaders and representatives raised the issue of the role of faith and Christianity in the public square. The First Minister recognised and affirmed the positive contribution of churches and all faith communities to the common good. He encouraged the Churches to continue to be steadfast in the practical outworking of their faith and for individuals to have confidence to share with others what and why they believe.

This annual meeting illustrates the increasingly active engagement between Churches and civic society in Scotland, both nationally and locally.

First Minister Alex Salmond said: "This annual meeting provided, once again, an opportunity for me to thank senior representatives of Scotland's churches for their commitment to supporting our communities. It also provided an opportunity to hear their views on a range of issues, the issues being discussed in and out of churches the length and breadth of Scotland.

"The issues that concern the churches are issues that concern government - such as how we can best deliver better lives for vulnerable children, particularly those growing up in relative poverty. I am very much aware of the efforts of the churches in this area and their experiences do, and will continue to, inform our approach.

"Scotland is a better place because it is home to a number of faiths - and I am clear that people should be able to express their faith openly and proudly."



Link with Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre

For the past couple of decades we have had an informal link with this Buddhist Centre in Eskdalemuir in the Borders, largely I think consisting of an annual invitation to their Open Day and Tea Party. The Friend who undertook this link is now unable to continue, but we think it would be a good relationship to maintain. Is there anyone out there, within reasonable travelling distance of Eskdalemuir, who would like to take this on?

More information can be found at <http://www.samyeling.org>

If this is something you would like to do, please contact Bronwen Currie at scotfriends@gmail.com or on 01496 850006

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Quaker treasurership in Scotland:
a day of reflection for Quaker treasurers

10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Saturday 6th October 2012
in the Quaker Meeting House, 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow

This meeting is for treasurers of local and area meetings and it will also be relevant for Quaker trustees. We will reflect on the tasks undertaken by treasurers, how they manage to cope, and the support that both their own meetings and Friends House staff can offer them.

Please bring a packed lunch. There will be short shuffle breaks between the sessions.

Programme

- 10.30 Coffee
11.00 Welcome and introductions; opening worship
11.20 Session 1: Treasurership within our meetings
Why do Friends donate to their Meetings?
What do they expect their treasurers to do for them?

12.15 Session 2: Treasurership within the context of
Britain Yearly Meeting
What do Friends want to know about central work?
How do they react to the Annual Appeal?

12.45 Lunch break

- 13.30 Session 3: Quirky questions and shaky scenarios
(small groups)

14.15 Session 4: How do we support our treasurers?
The West Scotland experience
The wider scene – Annual Conference of Treasurers
Treasurer teams; and employing assistants

15.00 Session 5: Treasurers and trustees
Where does OSCR fit in?

15.30 Closing session: what have we learnt?
Feedback on the day
Closing worship, tea, departure.

If you would like to attend this meeting, please let John Phillips (treasurer of General Meeting for Scotland) know so that he has an idea of numbers. It would be helpful if you could provide him with the following information:

Your name and address or email address
Are you / have you been a Quaker treasurer?
If so, in what role / roles and in which Meeting?
Are you / have you been an AM trustee?

Please send this information by post or by email to:
John Phillips, 46 Granby Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5NW.
john.h.phillips@blueyonder.co.uk - Tel 0131 667 5322
You are welcome to telephone him with questions or comments:.

Do you need a Small Grant?

FISCAF awards Major Grants of up to £15,000 to faith-based projects working for change in their communities, particularly to those that struggle against poverty in the most fragile communities.

FISCAF announced earlier this year that it wished to support small faith-based local community groups across the country, often run on a shoestring budget with limited staffing and resources.

To receive a Small Grant projects should have an annual income of no more than £30,000 and have no more than one full-time equivalent employee. Many projects will operate on much, much less.

FISCAF has decided to award Small Grants four times in the year.

Applications for a Small Grant are now welcomed by the end of April, July, September and December.

If you would like to apply for a grant, both Major or Small, please visit our website, www.fiscaf.org, for more details.

This was my first meeting as GM representative and the first Meeting for Sufferings under its new 'constitution' – a smaller body consisting of a single representative from each body. There were new faces, and new ways of working, so the first part of the day was taken up with induction. We heard from the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, about the five teams who are responsible for the centrally-managed work: Facilities and Hospitality, Finance and Property, Quaker Life, QPSW; and Communication and Services, which is a new department, combining the functions of the old Communications department and the Recording Clerk's Office.

We were reminded that part of the role of members of MfS was to be visionaries – but practical ones, and that we should work with our appointing bodies on developing a concern to the point where it is ready (and/or appropriate) to go to Sufferings for consideration. Our Clerk expressed the hope that the new body would be able to find more time for discernment and worship. To start to know one another better, we met in small groups as well as in plenary.

As part of the induction process, members of Young Friends General Meeting gave us their unique take on the Quaker Business Method, as they did recently in Scotland; helping us to remind ourselves about good discipline. An impromptu high spot for me was when the 'Clerk' sat down at the table, looked around at the assembled members of Sufferings, and murmured to herself "Living the Dream". Then we set to work.....

Syria - following a concern brought by Leicester AM that we should make a public statement; it was agreed that without any direct involvement in the country, Quakers were not in a position to speak with a distinctive voice, or from experience. In response to a query about arms sales, Marigold Bentley of QPSW said that most supplies to Syria were from

Russia. However as individuals we were encouraged to write to our MPs asking them to back the UN peace plan, and to support Syrians in our communities, giving them opportunities to tell their stories. And, of course, to pray.

Using the 'Between-Meetings procedure' it was agreed for Quakers to be jointly named with Christian Aid in a Parliamentary Briefing paper, calling for a ban on the import of Israeli settlement goods to the UK.

We heard that the same-sex marriage issue [in England/Wales] has been a focus for parliamentary liaison, and has led to wide media coverage - 'Quakers speaking out'.

Gambling Watch UK – Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs had asked that BYM publicly support this initiative: it will be an independent mechanism to question the present policy of expansion of gambling opportunities in Britain, and to propose alternative policies. This was agreed.

We were asked to consider two matters which will be considered in more detail at a future MfS:

- Funding centrally managed work.

A concern was brought by E. Sussex AM, with two suggestions: a) should operational expenses be kept separate from service activities? b) should the quota/levy system be revived to cover operational costs, while contributions to service costs would be voluntary?

The value and use of A Framework for Action

Friends continue to be exercised about the role of Trustees, and their relationship with Sufferings. Trustees presented 5 fictional scenarios to illustrate their role; it was helpful to be reminded too that our Trustees are also Friends, taking decisions under the guidance of the spirit and seeking the right way forward: vision is not an exclusive property.

Jaffa Cakes, Funerals and a knitted cow –

GM in Edinburgh on June 9th

Beryl Milner

Comparative tasting of Jaffa Cakes is not a usual activity for Friends at General Meeting. On June 9th however, encouraged by Judith Moran, Director of Quaker Social Action (QSA), Friends did just that as a taster(!) of one of three of the activities

QSA uses to promote financial literacy in its "Made of Money" programme. Later, there was group discussion about that programme, about the community building objectives

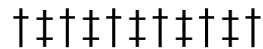
of "Knees Up" and about "Down to Earth". This is a practical service helping people living on low incomes to have the funeral they want at a price they can afford, and supporting them through bereavement. Judith's practical approach and lively style ensured that we understood the relevance of what QSA does in the East End of London to our situation in Scotland.

Earlier in the day, as well as a certain amount of required business which included the Financial Report, and a report from our Trustees, we had heard Margaret Peacock's 'whimsical' (her word) and rather wistful to my ears, last report as one of our two Meeting for Sufferings representatives. She gave her impressions of the meeting on March 31, which was reported in full by Peter Kennedy in the April Scottish Friend. In this new triennium our representative is Jane Pearn with Kevin Franz as "alternate".

In March GM set up a small working group to investigate ways we might strengthen Quaker contribution to decision making in the Scottish Parliament. The group's proposals came to us and we

willingly agreed to set up a Parliamentary Liaison Function Group as a mechanism for such advocacy work, as well as to redesignate the existing Parliamentary Liaison Officer as Parliamentary Advisor, reflecting the reality of the role. We asked trustees to consider the implications of the proposal that a part time paid post of co-ordinator of the group be established. Friends who are interested in this work are encouraged to make themselves known to the Nominations Committee.

We also heard a preliminary report from two Scottish Friends, Jasmine Perinpanayagam and Alastair Reid who had attended the recent World Conference in Kenya. They shared their enthusiasm and experiences, whetting our appetites for the more detailed report we will receive at GM in November. Their presentation was enlivened by the presence of a small cow knitted by Kenyan women from wool they had carded and spun!



General Meeting - Nairn 8. 9. 2012

Directions to Seaman's Hall, Nairn

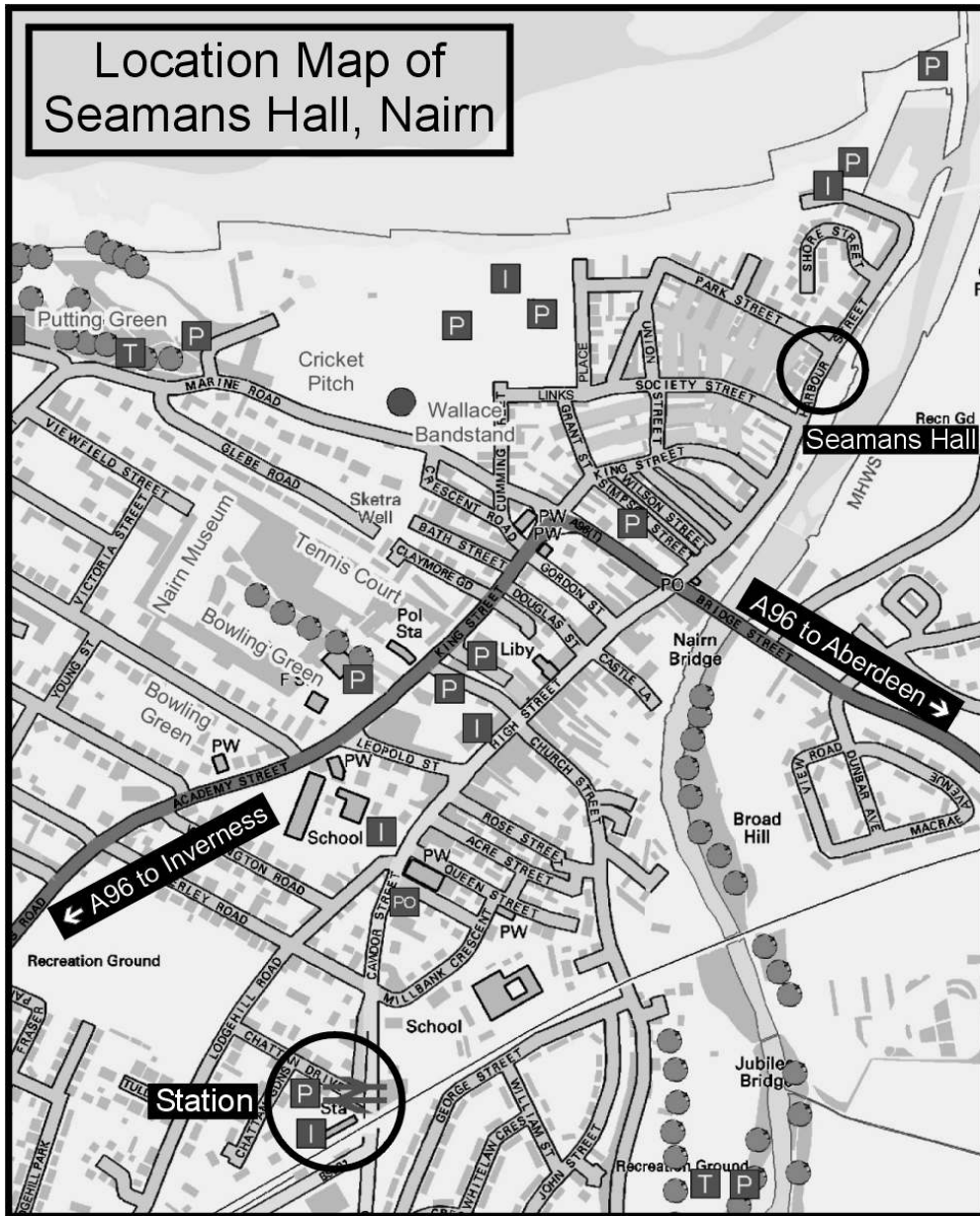
By Rail - Walk straight out of Station. You will see a road converging on the right from under the railway bridge. You will then see some shops ahead, Continue to walk towards them. This is Cawdor Road, and will lead you into Nairn High Street. Walk

down the High Street, against the one way system, then down the Brae (extension of High Street), a hill with shops, to the A96. Cross the A96 at pedestrian crossing, and walk down Harbour Street. The Seaman's hall is on the right approximately quarter of a mile down, a large building which is clearly signed.

By Car (If coming from Aberdeen direction) Go past Sainsbury's supermarket (on left), through 2 sets of traffic lights, then across the bridge over the River Nairn. Straight after the bridge, before the pedestrian crossing lights and hatching on the road, turn right down Harbour street. Seaman's Hall is on the right about a quarter of a mile down and is clearly signed. You can park anywhere in that area not marked with yellow lines

By Car (If coming from Inverness direction) Come into Nairn, to the centre, you will pass the Police Station, Community Centre, both on the left, continue to the roundabout. Follow round to the right the A96 east for another 400 yards, to pedestrian traffic lights. Immediately after these traffic lights (and before River Nairn bridge), turn left down Harbour Street. Seamans Hall is on the right about quarter of a mile down. You can park anywhere in that area not marked with yellow lines.

In addition, Inverness Friends have offered to ferry Friends by car from Inverness Station if required, as the train from Glasgow/Edinburgh arrives at 10.28 (and leaves for the return journey at 17.22). If you would like a lift from Inverness Station, please contact Oriole Hall on 01349-864 086 or oriolehall@hotmail.com



“Come with heart and mind prepared. Pray silently as you gather together that you may all be drawn into the spirit of adoration and communion in which fellowship with one another becomes real. Yield yourselves and all your outward concerns to God's guidance, that you may find the evil weakening in you and the good raised up.”

Advices, 1964, Quaker Faith and Practice 2.42

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in September will be in Nairn. See inside for details of venue and travel arrangements. 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 a report on the work of Meeting for Sufferings, and we will consider the next steps on the concern on Advocacy and the Scottish Parliament.

In the afternoon we will welcome Sandra Berry from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. She has been Director of Woodbrooke since late 2010. With a background in IT systems, Sandra is now more interested in the sort of systems and processes which help people, rather than technology, and she will lead us in a discussion of how Woodbrooke can help Scottish Friends in our learning and spiritual development. Come prepared to contribute your ideas on what you think our needs are!

Please join us in Nairn, meet new Friends, and learn more about Quaker activities in Scotland.

Robin Waterston, Clerk.