



October
2014

Scottish Friend



**Ness Bank Church, Inverness,
the location of our last General Meeting.**

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.

TEA AT THE MOSQUE

Eleanor Fairclough (Inverness)

Inverness Mosque has met for several years in temporary accommodation, renting a hall next to the Northern Meeting Park. On various occasions they have invited worshippers of other faiths to a social event - Tea at the Mosque. Along with a group of us from Inverness Meeting, I attended one of these events, on a sunny afternoon earlier this summer. There were so many gathered that we all sat outside, under the shade of the huge, old sycamore trees, next to the Mosque and enjoyed the presentations made, while the children played on the grass of the Northern Meeting Park.

We were made really welcome and the several presentations were instructive and helpful. Using modern technology, we were given a power point talk, on a large screen, about the Five Pillars of Islam, the similarities between Christianity and Islam and ten common misconceptions about Islam. A new adherent from the Highland community spoke about her experience of Islam. After this we all enjoyed the delicious food provided by our hosts and there was time for chat and greetings. In all, it was a friendly, happy gathering.

Amidst the terrible news and conflict in the Middle East, I am so heartened by the friendship and welcoming spirit of the Moslem community here. We wish them happiness as they move to their new Mosque in Inverness.

Book review

Philip Bryers (Perth)

Surveillance, Secrecy and Sovereignty: How a Peace Campaign Challenged the Activities of a US Base in Britain

Margaret L Nunnerley

York Publishing Services Ltd. 2014. £7.99

This is the story of how a local campaigning group, building on the experience of activists at Greenham Common, confronted the growth of a US military presence at nearby Menwith Hill over more than two decades. There are parallels with campaigning activity at Faslane which make it a particularly significant study for Scottish readers.

The core chapters describe the campaigning strategies of what became the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB). To engage with the law required an extensive, in-depth knowledge of its workings. Making effective use of the media and building up networks offering access to those in positions of power and influence needed an equally meticulous and detailed approach. Effective campaigning is not just about shouting loudly - though in this case it also involved regular, faithful Quaker meetings for worship outside the gates of the base! Nor is it easy to sustain commitment and enthusiasm over a lengthy period. The contribution of dedicated individuals is always necessary.

The book records academic research on CAAB. It places non-violent direct action within a historical and conceptual framework. A key theme is civil liberties - what they are and how they are changing. One chapter usefully records the responses of a variety of stakeholders from 'both sides of the fence'.

Throughout the book there is a Quaker thread, including

examination of how testimonies to peace, equality and truth have developed and their relationship to this campaign. It traces the dual strands of 'prophet' and 'reconciler' as set out in Wolf Mendl's 1974 Swarthmore Lecture, *Prophets and Reconcilers: Reflections on the Quaker Peace Testimony*.

There is much substance in the 152 pages of Margaret Nunnerley's book and the story it tells is not without hope, even though it highlights the new threats to civil liberties and democracy posed by electronic surveillance, centralised decision-making and international realpolitik. Do read the book yourself - you will certainly find it thought-provoking.



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We went to BYMG

Jackie Ward and Robert Wilson (Orkney)

There were a number of stops on our journey from Orkney to Bath. You just don't achieve that sort of distance in a hurry. There are no motorways in Orkney. We don't even have a dual carriageway or a set of traffic lights so we were very aware of joining a different world as we made our progress south. Our spiritual journey to the time of this occasion in Bath has also had a share of fits and starts so we were seeking direction at a deeper level and on the lookout for signposts along the way.

All went well and we arrived on the camping field having picked up our Documents in advance, Agendas, Financial Statements and information about the Journeys and Events available to us over the next few days.

Journeys were a series of pathways on six themes: Being a Quaker Community, Creative Expression, Faith and Belief, Governance - understanding and owning our work, Witness in the world, and Worship.

We wanted to get a taste of everything so didn't choose just one pathway. We attended individual sessions depending on the subject and usually different ones - whatever floated our boats.

The beautiful weather seemed set and there was a gradual stream of arrivals. We learnt of our route to the Gathering Village and so set off along leafy lanes to the Big Top.

Inside the Big Top we found tiered seating and enormous gantries holding the lighting systems like in a theatre. There were drapes to the side just like in a wedding marquee but the stage was the main focus, above which were positioned three enormous screens for people to view the speakers. A smaller screen showed the written word almost as soon as it was spoken - such was the technology. Stewards were positioned all about and were ready with microphones during the business meetings. We were to get used to these

surroundings during the week as we popped in for various of the business sessions.

Oh but I'm jumping ahead! We went straight in to the Big Top that first day - out of the sunshine to a scene I'll never forget.

Nothing could have prepared me for the sense of enormity as we made our way to the front and sat amongst the hard of hearing brigade. It was ok till I turned around and saw all those folks. Around 2000 of us gathered in a tent. It was awesome - it was awe inspiring and I confess to being just a bit overcome by it all. Then we settled into the first silence and it was alright. This was something I recognised and was so comfortable with.

I sat there calmly and expectantly. The clerk addressed the gathering but it became apparent that technology had let us down. The microphone didn't work - but only for a moment. He opened with;

"A gathering is made by the Friends who attend."

BYG HAD BEGUN.....

Friends from Southwest Area had made a film depicting their life and works showing everything from waste management to a peace garden not forgetting the ways art can be used to solve conflict, wool against weapons but the strongest message for me came from a small girl who beamed at us all and reported that the best thing about MfW was the biscuits. But of course!

There are some things that come to mind especially that I'd like to share with you:

The Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD) talk on Sunday was a particular interest of mine. It gave me a chance to renew acquaintances with Friends I had met at the QAAD conference at Woodbrooke in July.

The Island Gathering Meetings on Monday and Friday were informal

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but gave an opportunity for island dwelling Friends from around Britain to discuss the particular joys and challenges of living Quakerly lives on islands and in remote places. There was welcome input from Friends House with the proposed implementation of an Islands Forum on line. This will enable us to discuss things and to support one another. We hope to be able to share not only our experiences of Quaker faith and worship on islands, sometimes individually and in isolation and in small communities but also the unique everyday issues of our lives.

I went to the 'BEING FRIENDS TOGETHER' talk and heard about this new online learning resource which is due to be launched in October and be used from 2015. We learnt that this draws together resources we already have on line and offers practical and creative things we can do in meetings. It suggests ways to connect to community and the wider world and can be used by all types of meetings both large and small.

This will be available at a cost of £35.00 to each local meeting. All that is needed is an email address and password and then any number of persons can log in at the same time. A weekend exploring Being Friends Together resources, approaches and opportunities is being held in November at Woodbrooke.

We walked miles! After each event we would scurry back to the camping field to share notes, walk the dog, grab a bite to eat and go on to our next choices.

There was just so much to do. There were separate sessions for the 'larks' or early risers and also for the 'owls' or night birds. There was a complete programme for the 300 youngsters. All of this was available to all as the provision for those with disability was superb. There were little buggies whizzing about all over the place. I could hear everything wherever I was and much appreciation was expressed by all for this special provision.

I attended the QCEA talk.

"Your Quaker voice at European level working at the intersection of voices from other groups."

This very important work involves human rights, peace, sustainable energy, democratic governance and economic justice. All this is achieved by a very small team.

Involvement on a small scale can be through the 'Action Alerts' - again on line. We certainly live with modern communications.

During the week I also attended two faith and belief Journey sessions regarding Quakers in WW1 - a particularly poignant subject for me, since my family disowned an under-aged relative who disappeared on The Western Front - a tragic event which is difficult to understand in these modern times.

The sessions, which mainly related to Friends' work during the conflicts helped to explain some of the immensely traumatic decisions that were taken at the time and the bitter hostilities former Friends had to endure and overcome.

Back to the camping field once more.

The serious business continued through these warm days.

Individual people were moved to minister. The microphones were brought to them. Discernment. That special silence of support as the clerks worked to form the minute. Sometimes it took a while. There would be a flurry of 'no' echoing around; more ministry and then, 'Friend speaks my mind', and 'I hope so'. We wonder who will be present in 2015/16/25?

At 'Nominations and Discernment' I heard about the meaning of service from a business meeting for worship perspective and the spiritual discipline required when seeking nominations. The concern of Friends was evident where insufficient members are available or Friends' gifts may not match the vacant positions. And what about Attenders - especially those with the necessary gifts? The importance of completing the 'Offers of service' forms by all

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Friends was stressed. It is also the role of the Nominations Committee to help Friends with their development and to support and train them before and after selection. Then there are the members not selected - the disappointment. The committee must work to uphold all. In the end it is as one Friend said, "Willingness to serve IS service."

We did have some fun. The hairdryers were, in fact, places where folks could sit and listen to the recorded stories of others. A lovely way to spend a few spare moments!

We really got to know our way around the tented Gathering Village which formed the four sides of a central grassy area.....where some dozen other tents housed meetings, groups, workshops, talks and worship.

Many people enjoyed picnic snacks out in the sunshine in between attending their chosen sessions.

There were two benches where the really young Friends were encouraged to contribute and comment on BYG - graffiti style.

The young people organised Epilogue on Monday 4th August. I had been at events since 11am and had just come from the George Gorman lecture. Instructed to bring torches, we gathered around the four sides of the grassy area in the failing light and were part of the all age reflective commemoration of WW1. The lights were extinguished in mourning and re-lit in hope. Indeed a moving experience. We followed this by going on to the 'Owls' MfW - just five of us in candle-light. These are some of the deep experiences that will remain with us for a very long time to come.

The Worship tent was a small haven of quiet, sometimes enjoyed by a few or by any of us needing time out.

It was a privilege to attend the Swarthmore Lecture and the George Gorman Lecture - both of which are well documented and will inform us for the future. These huge events played out in this big top arena amongst so many Quakers brought with them an awareness

of the strength, integrity, history and permanence of the Society of Friends.

During the week the campers got to know one another very well. We held our own worship mornings and nights and all went our separate ways knowing that we had more Friends than ever before.

Tuesday evening I attended 'Once upon a Conflict', a conversation between the book's author, Tom Leindorfer and Marigold Bentley from Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW). Tom's book is pioneering work on peace education and conflict resolution. It is truly inspirational as it uses simple fairy tales adapted to conflict scenarios so that parties can start to see and understand opposing views, thus finding resolution.

The process has been used extensively and successfully in areas from business disputes to school and other situations. The secret is in accepting that we cannot control the outcome but we can control the process and value and respect each party.

Communication - valuing and connecting with the Divine in each other.

We had chosen our pathways through the week and experienced the joy of learning together. We have only included a selection of the events attended and I'm certain more memories will emerge with time of this life-changing gathering.

From Ben Pink Dandelion's Swarthmore Lecture 2014:

OPEN FOR TRANSFORMATION

"We have at our spiritual fingertips the continuing power and forever-possibility of Quaker worship; the 'magic' of what we so regularly find in the silence together, and of all we can achieve through that practice."

Oh yes - and we flew the flag for Orkney!

Silence, Solitude and Stillness

Avis Swarbrick - October 2012

I was late for Quaker Meeting for Worship one Sunday. About eight people were sitting silently in a circle in the middle of a large empty hall. As I sat down I felt a circle of deep stillness come into my body just below my solar plexus. "This sort of experience has happened before" I said to myself. "Let it happen. Don't think. Don't do anything. Wonderful. Let it be." And for half an hour we sat together in that stillness, until someone was moved to read a passage from our *Advices and Queries* about caring for the young people in our Meetings, encouraging their enquiries, and listening to them as they talk about their spiritual searches. The silence returned. A quotation came into my mind - a simple sentence that read: "Seek to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life." I had just started to say this when the children were at the door after their Children's Meeting. We let them in, and I welcomed them into our silence, and quoted it to them too. Together we continued in silence for about ten minutes (two young ones a bit restless at first), and then the Meeting was closed.

Earlier that week I had read an article in the Winter Newsletter of the Bede Griffiths Sangha about Silence, Solitude and Stillness, written by Shirley du Boulay. Here is a personal response.

As a birthright Quaker I have always had difficulties with the notion that a real depth in meditation can only be reached within individuals in solitude. Personally my own way into prayer and meditation came during my childhood encounters with the Holy Spirit in the silent Quaker Meetings for Worship. I was with people who come together to meet in corporate silence, stilling their bodies and minds to wait upon the "Presence in the Midst"

and this made me realise that in these situations the power of the whole is greater than that of each of its individual parts.

The meetings of the earliest Christian groups, stunned by their encounters with the "Risen Christ", seem to have taken this form. They met together to experience the presence of the Living Jesus, and in that silence the Holy Spirit entered those who were called to prophesy. Some ten years after Paul's Damascus Road experience, Christianity had reached the Middle East. In 1 Corinthians Paul is giving advice about the conduct of these early meetings. We can see that every attender had equal status and that people spoke "as the Spirit moved them". Paul stresses that it is the Agape that fills these meetings that gives them and the individuals who come to them their real spiritual depth. The moving power comes from God, and he warns against excessive enthusiasm and about big egos trying to dominate the proceedings. He stresses the importance of individuals being prepared to stand aside and listen with attention when someone else has a message for the group.

During the following 300 years many Christian communities were founded all over the Roman Empire. Paul writes to beginner communities in Asia Minor and beyond. In Turkey and Egypt the Desert Fathers met in Communities of silence, solitude and stillness. The first Christian monasteries were founded. I was born in Somerset, and our local tradition is that Joseph of Arimathea, who was a tin merchant, visited the west of England on business trips and that at Glastonbury he planted the first Christian church in the Celtic world.

Eventually the Roman Emperor was converted. It was a political decision, and he expected uniformity. The Council of Nicea wrote the first Christian creed, formalised the New Testament, and set up a centralised church based on Constantinople.

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Shirley du Boulay's article is mainly about silence in solitude. She writes in passing about group uses of silence, including the silence that forms the background to monastic life, but she omits another very important use of silence. My own experience is limited, but I belong to a Christian group whose worship is, like that of the early Christians, based on corporate silence. We are the only group that I know of who gather for worship without an agenda: that is, we meet without a theologically trained minister or priest to lead us through a programme of pre-selected hymns, prayers, readings and sermon. For over three hundred years the unprogrammed groups of Quakers have gathered in silence "with heart and mind prepared", in order to become open to the Spirit of God, not knowing where that Spirit will lead them.

Their founder, George Fox, had wandered for eight years, Bible in hand, through the wilderness of the English Civil War. Numerous small groups of Protestants had been formed at that time, and the "Seekers" eagerly welcomed his radical - and very "dangerous" - interpretation of the New Testament. A new denomination was born. From the beginning this interpretation of the cross and resurrection was branded as theologically unacceptable. Church and State resorted to physical violence to maintain their power structures. To their surprise Quakers responded with verbal challenges to their hypocrisy, but no physical violence. The ahimsa that Jesus had shown on the Cross was being put into practice in seventeenth century Britain. Quakers told the judges and Church Leaders to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously. William Penn called it "Primitive Christianity revived."

So here we are, 350 years after that. Modern knowledge of nuclear physics, history, psychology, etc. is making the world take a new look at its religious heritage, and the Quakers as well as the Bede Griffiths Sangha are contributing to this, along with many others.

All who attend Quaker Meetings are seen as equal in the sight of

God and all contribute from their own spiritual resources, letting the silence nurture them, and offering a spoken - or even sung - message if the time is right. Considerable discipline is needed, but the silence provides it - those who do not benefit from the silence do not come back. Of course, if the Quaker Meeting for Worship is to become "gathered" into the presence of God, Quakers also have to spend time in Meetings for Learning as well as in private times of prayer, meditation and reading. We are enjoined to be "open to new Light, from whatever source it may come". The gathered silence sifts the wheat from the chaff.

Thank you, Shirley du Boulay, for drawing attention to the necessity of seeking out silent places in this noisy world. I would like you to add the Quaker tradition to your list.



Where Stands our Nineveh Today?

Sermon from Iona Abbey after the Scottish Referendum

Alastair McIntosh, Sunday 21 September 2014

(At press with Coracle, Autumn 2014, The Iona Community)

Jonah's anger with God at Nineveh, Jonah 3:10; 4:1-11
Jacob's wrestling the angel at Peniel, Genesis 32:22-31

I drafted this sermon on Thursday, while the voting was taking place on whether Scotland should become an independent country.

At that time, none of us could tell which way the ballots would be cast. Now, three days on, I read it to you pretty much as sketched out then. But first, a preamble in the light of the outcome.

This weekend sees the joy of the 55% standing tempered by the sorrow of the '45; and that, both as a percentage, and an apostrophe.

Some of you will recognise there my allusion to the Jacobite uprising of 1745 against the fledgling British state.

To the crushing of the clans the following year at the last battle on mainland British soil, Culloden, on Drumossie Moor near Inverness. Such was its psychological impact that when George MacLeod who rebuilt this Abbey and founded the Iona Community was nine years old, his father took him down to the village pier to shake hands with a Mrs McCormack, who was 85 years old.

"Now I'll tell you why," the old man later explained. "When she was nine years old she shook hands with a Mrs Campbell who was then 85 years of age, and Mrs Campbell, when she was nine years of age, stood at exactly this point on the jetty and watched the boat going down the Sound of Iona taking Bonnie Prince Charlie back to France [after the defeat at Culloden]."

I shook hands with George MacLeod when he was 85, so I'm just 3 handshakes away from the '45.

Right through to my generation, the psychological, social and economic problems of Scotland would often be summed up - albeit

with poetic licence - by the one-liner: "It all goes back to Culloden." It helped to usher in the era of the Highland Clearances, the empty glens of the Isle of Mull that many of you will have passed through yesterday, the intergenerational poverty in our cities; and one can make tentative links to the evils of sectarianism, to chronic alcoholism, and to other symptoms of the violence in our culture never yet resolved for which, if you wanted to push the point and sum it up in a single word: you could say Trident. Our weapons of mass destruction.

On Friday, after the No vote, I had an email from a Yes-campaigner and cultural figurehead. He begged the question: "How do we process the genetic memory as we, again, scan Drummosie Moor for our wounded loved ones?"

So that's the psychohistory that echoes down the glens into the present.

But let me be very, very clear.

Had the vote gone the other way, the heartbreak might reciprocally have fallen on the other side. A different set of narratives, another sense of loss, would today be playing out.

That is why I could draft most of what follows blind to the Referendum's outcome, and directed equally to both sides.

I did not know who might be suffering, but what I did know is that God is always on the side of those who suffer. God hangs with us on the Cross. As a proverb of the Scottish Traveller people has it, "God's no' sleeping."

In today's reading from the lectionary, the prophet Jonah anticipates God's vengeance upon Nineveh - the modern-day city of Mosul in northern Iraq.

Picture it. There's Jonah, nursing his wrath and hoping that God will live up to his firebrand reputation.

The citizens of Nineveh had it coming on account, we're told, of "their evil ways and ... the violence that is in their hands."

Jonah was anticipating a spectacle of fire and brimstone. The perpetuation of the myth of redemptive violence. The idea that violence can redeem violence.

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But the King of Nineveh repents. He undergoes a massive inner transformation. He manages to break the spiral of violence and short-circuits the myth of redemptive violence.

Then, and only then, we glimpse the true face of God: "gracious ... merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."

But here's the ever-so-human irony. That very salving light leaves Jonah's small self feeling cheated.

The text tells that God's laid back attitude was, "very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry."

Why? Because the reluctant prophet preferred to think of God as being armed for vengeance. A God made, we might infer, not in God's own image, but in the idolatrous image of Jonah's own projected violence.

What does God do? He catches the opportunity. She uses it as a spade to dig for deeper spiritual gold.

God sends a bush to shade the over-heated prophet from the sun. But scarcely has its foliage burst forth, when a worm is sent to gnaw its stem and cause the leaves to wither.

Have you or I, in our lives, ever met - that worm?

The worm that strips away the fig leaves of our self-deception and our righteous indignation? The worm that composts them to something that can grow new life?

Jonah's left beside himself with rage. He cries out to his creator: "Please take my life from me, it is better for me to die than to live." Only then one feels the warming smile, the raising of the eyebrow, even the humour in God's reproach.

"Is it right for you to be angry [...] about the bush?"

Poor Jonah! He can only beat about the bush.

"Yes, angry enough to die."

To which God replies: "You are concerned about the bush ... for which you did not labour and which you did not grow ... [But] should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there

are more than a hundred and twenty thousand [souls]?"

Here is the God whose name is Holy, who inhabiteth eternity, who has just pressed "reset" on his prophet's shrivelled and shrunken worldview.

Here is the God who takes a God's-eye-view. Whose tickling worm recasts the suffering of a blinkered humankind and opens up what Tillich called the "depth of existence," the depth of life itself.

And so I put to you gathered here on Iona, today: What is a nation? What does it mean to be a community writ large?

The Bible shows an historical progression in its sense of nationhood. It starts with *Genesis*, where the nations rest upon an ethnic basis of blood lineage.

Then half way through, *Ezekiel* introduces a civic basis of nationhood. Here the children of the aliens - the refugees and the incomers - shall be adopted, and given land: and "they shall be to you as citizens of Israel."

The New Testament further ramps it up towards a spiritual basis of nationhood. In Christ, there is "neither Jew nor Greek." And recall how Jesus was pressed by the Canaanite woman to extend his Jewishness, to render it inclusive, and thus to heal her daughter who he had initially shunned on grounds of racial discrimination.

It has been said: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle."

That collective sense of soul is what the Bible calls, the "angels" of the nations.

In the Book of *Daniel*, the angels of the nations wrestle each other, even to the point of fighting.

We must, says Walter Wink, the late great American theologian of power and peace, name these powers and what they do.

And then unmask the ways in which, when they are "fallen" or corrupted, the poor are oppressed and the natural world, wasted.

Only then can we engage the Powers that Be: can we call back the angels of the nations to their higher, distinctive, God-given callings or vocations.

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I am not entitled here to suggest that Scottish nationalism trumps British nationalism, or the other way around.

I am just pointing out that the Book of Jonah suggests that when the worm wilts our foliage, when things don't work out the way we'd have hoped, we can either wallow in self pity and our wrath, or be uprising to a greater understanding.

It is that, to me, that gives legitimacy to nationhood. By our values they shall know us.

In our other reading this morning, Jacob wrestled all night long at Peniel, struggling with an otherworldly man, another kind of "angel".

It left him limping, struck and dislocated at the hip.

What is the symbolism of the hip?

It is the means by which we stride out into the world. Psychologically, it is our outer self, our ego self, the small self that's yet to grow up spiritually.

It fears the worm, yet something somewhere yearns to glimpse the God's-eye-view.

Jacob found that when you wrestle with an angel, you get hurt; but the endgame - is blessing.

That's the wrestling with the angels of the nations that has been, and remains in its aftermath, the Referendum process.

That is why the Referendum outcome may have closed a door upon the '45, the 45%. But the challenge now, for the 100%, for both sides, is to ask: where stands our Nineveh today? To seek a deeper opening of the way.

An opening already glimpsed in the huge surge of creative energy and political participation that the process has set free.

Pray this day that we can learn from Jonah's confessional sharing of his vengeful wrath.

Pray that we might find the blessing wrought, for all his flaws, by Jacob. The blessing wrought at Peniel, a place that means, "the Face of God."

Pray to find, amidst our suffering, or our joy, the face of God. And that, in God's own image. The face of steadfast love.

A New "Scotsman's" reflection on the referendum.

David Rees (Lanark)

I am a Quaker married to a Roman Catholic. We moved from South London to a retirement village in South Lanarkshire at the end of February this year and have been on the Electoral Roll since April. We were therefore able to vote in the Referendum. My wife had decided from the start that she was going to answer 'Yes' to the question: Should Scotland be an independent country? I was inclined to the opposite view until I visited a shop in Hamilton which had been given over to distribution of Yes campaign material. I took some home with me and was so impressed by it, in particular by four speeches recorded on a DVD, that I changed sides.

It is interesting to make conjecture on the way that demographic patterns may have influenced the result on 18th September. I believe that the young and those of modest means (comparatively poor) made up the bulk of those voting Yes. The elderly and the comparatively wealthy, i.e. those less inclined to take risks, made up the bulk of those voting No. It is ironic that the young have been denied the perceived benefits of independence by a decision of their parents and grandparents.

Natural resistance to change is not, to my mind, a wise or trustworthy emotion. One of our Advices recommends living adventurously. I regard the No voters as being like the servant in the parable of the talents who could not bring himself to take the risk of investing that with which he had been entrusted. I have reason to believe that most members of our small rural Local Quaker Meeting voted Yes, the main motivation being to rid Scotland of Great Britain's weapon of mass destruction: Trident. I suspect that most of our neighbours in this retirement village voted No, but have heard nothing to confirm or deny that suspicion.

The above is a personal view which may be of interest to other Quakers. I sincerely hope that Friends who supported the Better Together movement will not take any offence.

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General Meeting for Scotland 13th September 2014

Phil Lucas

About fifty friends were in Inverness on Saturday, 13 September for General Meeting, clerked by Martin Burnell and Adwoa Bittle. During opening worship, the poem 'The Morning After, Scotland, 19th September 2014' by Edinburgh Makar Christine de Luca was read to us, including these lines:

We aim for more equality; and for tomorrow to be more peaceful than today; for fairness, opportunity, the common weal; a hand stretched out in ready hospitality.

It's those unseen things that bind us. Not flag or battle-weary turf or tartan. There are dragons to slay whatever happens: Poverty, false pride, snobbery, sectarian schisms still hovering. But there's nothing broken that's not repairable.

Kascia and Erin Smith, from Nairn Meeting, shared with us their experiences of Summer Shindig, held at Ackworth School. Kascia, who has been part of Shindig for several years, was a junior staff member this year and Erin was attending for the first time. It was a lively report on a very enjoyable week, leaving some older Friends wishing they qualified to attend. 'I wouldn't be the person I am today without Summer Shindig', said Kascia.

Elizabeth Allen, who convenes GM's Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, reported on the new post of Parliamentary Engagement Officer, which is currently advertised, with the hope that the person appointed can take post early in 2015. The initial appointment is for three years, will be based in Edinburgh and will work as a member of the Yearly Meeting advocacy team, but working closely with Scottish Friends. General Meeting is contributing about half the costs and AM treasurers will need to be in touch with the GM treasurer about their contributions.

Our clerk, accompanied by John Phillips, has met with Scottish Government officers to explore the implementation of the Marriage

and Civil Partnership Act 2014. We shall be able to register same sex and opposite sex marriages in exactly the same way and using the same paperwork. Those with previously registered civil partnerships will be able to opt into marriage but we have not expressed a wish to register Quaker civil partnerships in the future.

We agreed to make an annual donation to the Prison Week Scotland Trust and we agreed to set up a working group to explore appropriate ways of commemorating the 1916 Conscription Act, which resulted in the suffering of many conscientious objectors during the First World War.

We heard an interesting report from Jane Pearn of the September Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) and our relationship with that body provided the content of the afternoon session, which was led by Anne Ullathorne, assistant clerk of MfS and Juliet Prager, deputy recording clerk. We were asked to indicate how many of those present had been engaged in central BYM work or as meeting clerks. A surprisingly large percentage of those present raised their hands, a reminder that many of those who attend GM are the same Friends who give time to other parts of the Quaker structure and glue that enable worship, community and activism for the rest.

The session gave us the opportunity to have our questions answered about how MfS is working following the changes made in recent years, its relationship with Yearly Meeting Trustees, with Area Meetings and General Meeting and how minutes from Area Meetings contribute to its work. Every effort is being made to ensure that communications work well in both directions. The role of our appointed representatives is key both to this and to the work of MfS.

Residential General Meeting for Scotland

15th/16th November 2014 at 11 am in Renfield Centre,

Renfield St Stephen's Church, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow. G2 4HZ

Sunday session 9.30 am in Glasgow Meeting House,

38 Elmbank Crescent, G2 4PS

"We may seem at times to take God for granted. But we know the beyond in our midst; we rely on God's free, sustaining, creative and lively action as we rely on the air we breathe and the ground we walk on"

London Yearly Meeting 1986. QFP 26.66

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our gathering in November will start with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00am. Business will include a report on the outcome of interviews for the Parliamentary Engagement post; a report on views submitted to the Smith Commission which is formulating proposals for further devolution; the future of the Outreach Function Group; the financial budget for 2015; and various appointment matters.

Our remaining sessions during the weekend will focus on this year's Yearly Meeting Gathering, held at Bath. We will have the opportunity to listen to the experiences of BYM gathering participants. They will share their highs and lows and learning. These participants will span the age range of our Quaker family from the very young to the older generations. Following the presentations we will move into smaller groups and, through discussion, tackle some questions relating to material from the Gathering and linking with Meeting for Sufferings' Long Term Framework questions for January 2015.

On the Saturday evening, after a shared meal at a local restaurant, Glasgow Friends are planning an entertainment where everyone will be invited if they wish to share a poem, story, song, music etc. Please come prepared!

This weekend gathering is a good opportunity to get to know Friends from across our wider Scottish community. Do encourage any new Friends or attenders from your Meetings, who may not have been to General Meeting before, to come along.

Martin Burnell, Clerk

**Religious Society of Friends in Scotland
Residential General Meeting**

15/16 November 2014

Renfield Centre, Renfield St Stephen's Church

260 Bath Street, G2 4HZ

"We may seem at times to take God for granted. But we know the beyond in our midst; we can rely on God's free, sustaining, creative and lively action as we rely on the air we breathe and the ground we walk on"

London Yearly Meeting 1986. QFP 26.66

Our gathering in November will start with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00am. The morning, as usual, will be devoted to business matters and reports.

Our remaining sessions during the weekend will focus on this year's Yearly Meeting Gathering, held at Bath. We will have the opportunity to listen to the experiences of BYM Gathering participants. They will share their highs and lows and learning. These participants will span the age range of our Quaker family from the very young to the older generations. Following the presentations we will move into smaller groups and, through discussion, tackle some questions relating to material from the Gathering and linking with Meeting for Sufferings' Long Term Framework questions for January 2015.

Please come to General Meeting, uphold our Meeting for Business, take the opportunity offered by the weekend gathering to get to know Friends from across our wider Scottish community, and do encourage any new Friends or attenders from your Meetings, who may not have been to General Meeting before, to come along.

The Saturday day sessions will be held in the Renfield Centre in Bath Street, but we will have the use of the Meeting House at Elmbank Crescent for Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

Children and Young People:

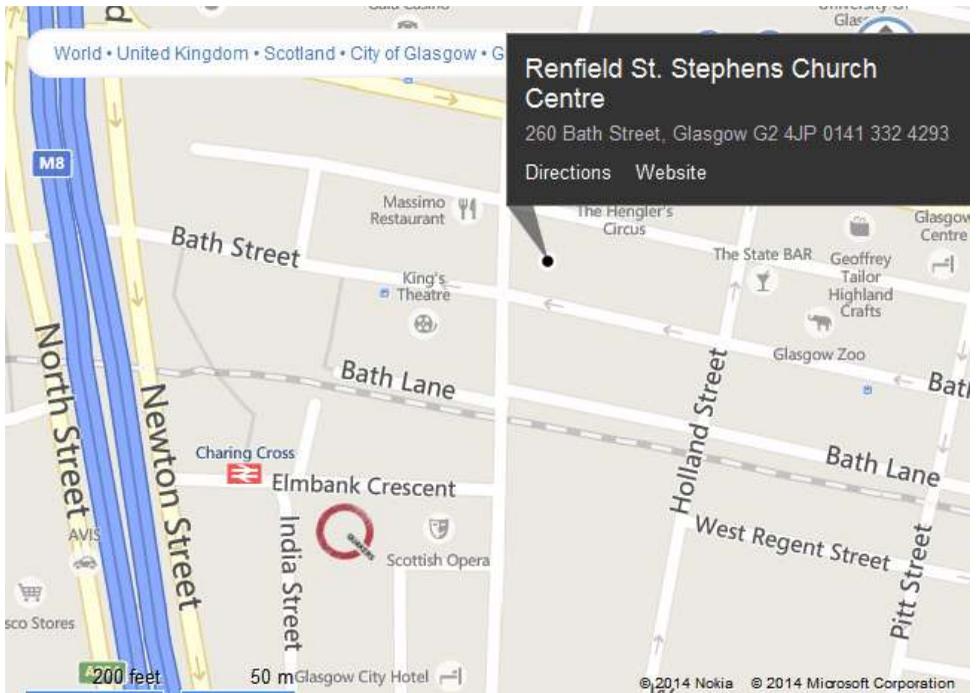
There is no specific programme planned, but if we are notified **by the closing date** that you are bringing your children we will arrange childcare.

Saturday evening: Following dinner (TBC), Zem Moffatt will lead a ceilidh. Bring a musical instrument, a poem, a song, or a pair of ears to listen.

Sunday morning: Will start with tea and coffee from 9am. Meeting for Worship with Glasgow Friends is at 11am, and there is a shared lunch afterwards at 12.45pm.

Saturday Venue:

The Renfield Centre complies with current accessibility legislation and is close to public transport (see map). The nearest convenient day parking is in the parking garage at Elmbank Crescent across from Glasgow Meeting House, about 2 minutes' walk away. There is no Saturday parking on the street.



Booking Form:

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode

Tel:(home) Email:

Names of any others for whom booking is being made:

.....
.....

Do you require childcare? If so, please give name(s) and age(s):

.....
.....

Meals

(please complete and return this, to help us with numbers, even if you do not require accommodation)

	No. adults	No. children
Saturday lunch		
Saturday dinner		
Sunday lunch		

All meals will be vegetarian. Attempts will be made to maximise fair trade and organic ingredients.

Do you have any special dietary needs? Please state below if vegan, or anything to which you are allergic (dairy, nuts, wheat etc)

.....

Accommodation

Mary Alice Mansell will be co-ordinating accommodation via the Glasgow Friends B&B scheme. If you require accommodation please contact Mary Alice on mamansell@hotmail.com or 01505-842 380

to give her details of your requirements **by Friday 31 October at the latest.**

Hospitality will, as far as possible, be provided by local Friends. We will try to accommodate everyone and will allocate on a first come first served basis. If we run out of bed spaces we will send you information on local B&Bs. Please note that whilst catering costs will be covered by General Meeting, commercial B&B costs will not.

Return completed form to:

Rosemary Morgan

1 Cameron Crescent

Carmunnock Glasgow G76 9DX

Tel: 0141-258 7954

email: rosemary.morgan1@gmail.com

by: Friday 31 October