



August
2015

Scottish Friend



Glasgow Friends' Meeting House - still standing!
Fire Escape reminds me of "Kidnapped".

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Helen Sutherland took the photographs of Glasgow Meeting House. Please send material for next Scottish Friend by 3 October to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

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Apologies for hurried formatting and proofreading this time

Report for Scottish Friend: Methodist Church of Scotland
Spring Synod - April 25th 2015

Several members of my extended family – aunts, uncles and cousins – were involved in the licensed trade when I was young, and I enjoyed playing skittles for a pub team. One of our regular opponents was a team from The Five Alls, and I often wondered about the origin of this name. I thought I had the answer when I attended the Methodist Church of Scotland Spring Synod, representing General Meeting Friends. For on the agenda was an item 'The Four (or Five) Alls of Methodism'. As it turned out, it wasn't the answer at all. There was, in my small discussion group, a gentleman who had made an extensive study of the history of inn signs, and he was able to put me right, although he never actually did tell me what the Alls of the pub sign were!

However, I am now acquainted with the Methodist ones:

All need to be saved.

All can be saved.

All can know themselves to be saved.

All can be saved to the utter most.

All should declare their salvation.

When I saw this on the agenda, I did feel some anxiety, not being comfortable with the idea that some, but not others, might be saved, whatever that might mean. But I need not have worried, because I learned that emphasis for Methodists is on the ALL, being a commitment to equality. And in the group I joined, views ranged from this teaching being the very bedrock of personal faith, to something of no significance! As diverse in views as one finds within Quakers.

You'll perhaps have deduced from what I've said so far, that my attendance at this Synod was one which allowed close involvement in the proceedings – not merely observer status. The other ecumenical guests and myself were warmly welcomed and introduced to the

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gathering, and well fed and watered throughout the day, and each allocated to a different small discussion group.

In the morning the main item on the agenda was to do with Marriage and Relationships – specifically the issue of same-sex marriage. The presentation on this was given by clergy of the United Reformed church. (There exists a partnership between the Scottish Episcopal, Methodist and United Reformed churches.) It was a remarkably frank presentation. In common with all denominations I imagine, Methodists demonstrate some conflicting views on this issue, and are seeking to resolve this. A task group was appointed last year and will report next year, so this is very much a work-in-progress. It appears that Methodists have a practice similar to that which I think was once part of Quaker tradition, whereby nothing goes ahead until all are 'on side'. Each small discussion group was given a task – ours being to present one argument in favour of same-sex marriage. Happily we offered the argument from Equality, that no-one who seeks marriage should be excluded from it on any grounds. Arguments against, from other groups, focussed on the biblical depiction of creation and following from that, procreation; and the notion of Christians being in society but also separate from it.

Before lunch a short visual presentation was given to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Action for Children in Scotland. The Methodist Church has a long tradition of support for this charity. Also an ad hoc charity appeal was made for the work of St Andrew's Church in Valetta, Malta. They have begun an initiative – Out of Africa: Into Malta, rescuing those fleeing North Africa in unseaworthy craft.

Lunch was a cooked meal, with choices, served in the integral café, The Well, which is open to the public. The building in Nicolson Square has brought together four city congregations and is very much a community resource, hosting gatherings ...”from Edinburgh

Interfaith Association to Aikido, and Edinburgh Fringe events”.

I've somehow written this report largely in reverse, but there was one more part of the afternoon new to me – A Methodist Love Feast. Seemingly John Wesley held love feasts in the earliest days of Methodism. Members shared their Christian experiences/hymns/insights whilst sharing a simple 'meal' of water and cake: a mixture of worship sharing and communion. We had bread and water (thoughtfully including gluten-free rice cakes). No pressure to share aloud, but the group was so open, warm and friendly that sharing was not difficult.

Naturally, being a Methodist event, we closed with a hymn and benediction. Half of my life was spent as an Anglican, and I love hymns, but I wasn't quite prepared for the Methodist gusto with which they were sung!!

Thank you to General Meeting for the opportunity to attend this event on your behalf – most enjoyable and informative, and made so very welcome.

Jan Lethbridge
Dumfries Meeting
7 May 2015

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Church of Scotland General Assembly 2015

Elizabeth Allen

A gong sounds, the cry, "Moderator!" rings out and we all rise while Angus Morrison accompanied by the legal team, the clerks, and the convenors of the Business Committee walk in procession through the hall and take their places at the raised platform. We stand waiting for the turn of our section of the hall to bow to the Moderator. Having greeted us all, he turns to face the throne gallery above. He watches and waits. We do likewise. Large television screens show a second procession making its way past the statue of John Knox in the Quadrangle and up the endless steps to the General Assembly Hall on the Mound, Edinburgh. Enter the Lord High Commissioner, appointed by the Queen as her representative at the General Assembly: David Hope, Baron Hope of Craighead. He is accompanied by his wife, her ladies-in-waiting, his Chaplain, The Purse Bearer, three Aides-de-Camp and The Macebearer. More bowing, the singing of a hymn or psalm of praise and we sit to hear a Bible reading and the day's reflection from the Moderator. We stand again to hear a prayer, joining in when the time comes to repeat The Lords Prayer. We sing a second hymn and another day has begun at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2015.

This was a week of wall-to-wall church business cradled in worship – not our silent, 'listening' worship but a vocal one of praise and honour to our spiritual Lord on high. We, the people gathered in Assembly were united by this worship, in particular by the communal repetition of the Apostles' Creed and the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The imagery of building God's house was central to our reflections. In a reading from Ephesians 2: 20-22 the household of God is described as,

"... built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom

you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place of God." We are all 'living stones' and Christ is the 'cornerstone'. This was the message of the General Assembly 2015. Each of us was enjoined to consider what is ours to do as a 'living stone'.

I attended the General Assembly as an ecumenical delegate along with representatives of other Christian churches. Whilst there, we were under the care of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations. Theirs was one of the first reports to the General Assembly and it focused on how we are travelling together in faith. We heard that the committee is continuing to encourage congregations to take up the invitation of the World Council of Churches to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace and to do so ecumenically, wherever possible. It painted a powerful image of groups and individuals joining this journey of faith for as long or as short a time as they can manage, with everyone moving towards a common goal, for as a people of faith we have no choice but to seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. Walking with others gives an opportunity to share our stories of the things we do to address issues of injustice and violence, so that we can learn from one another, pool our resources and make our contributions more effective. It seems to me that Friends are already walking among the pilgrims. Garlands of the paper doves made by congregations as symbols of support for finding peaceful means to resolve conflicts across the world festooned the hall on Monday. Through these we were reminded of the glass doves made in Bethlehem by Palestinian Christians living under occupation, from glass recovered from bombsites, which John Chalmers, the retiring Moderator brought back from his visit to Palestine: a symbol of the possibility of creating beauty from brokenness, wherever brokenness occurs. We cannot be complacent while others suffer. In our living rooms, we witness overcrowded boats adrift in the Mediterranean - the visible face of people trafficking. Christians can and do build effective networks to combat human trafficking and provide support and care for victims of this crime. But we need to do more. We need to raise

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awareness of global problems and find practical and radical solutions. One simple and practical way of raising awareness is the twinning of congregations across the world.

This year the Church of Scotland is commemorating the life and pioneering work of Mary Slessor (1884–1915), who promoted healthcare, education and justice in Nigeria, ending the practices of killing twins and the widows and slaves of a dead chief. The Church of Scotland at a national and local level is committed to continuing to work with partners around the world. At the reception for Delegates and Overseas Visitors, I was drawn into a conversation about Quakers in the world. I spoke of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the World Conference of Friends 2012 in Kenya and the partnership work between Turning The Tide and Kenyan Friends.

The Church of Scotland is still struggling with same sex marriage and the implications of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 for the church. On Saturday afternoon, after much debate, Commissioners agreed church legislation regarding the filling of a vacancy, which will enable Kirk Sessions to allow the ordination, induction or appointment a minister or a deacon who is in a civil partnership, should this be their wish. When on Thursday, Commissioners were asked to agree similar measures with regard to a minister or a deacon in a same sex marriage, it looked like this was going to be a step too far. However, the church legislation was passed by a very narrow majority of eight votes but the Assembly then agreed that the matter should go back to the presbyteries, under the Barrier Act. Until the matter is considered by a future Assembly, interim measures were put in place allowing a minister or deacon who was ordained or inducted or appointed before May 2009 to remain in post and not be prejudiced because he or she is in a same sex marriage. Nevertheless, if now in a same sex marriage, he or she may not be inducted or appointed to a congregation, unless the Kirk Session has agreed take the necessary measures under church law. Clearly the Church of Scotland requires more time for

reflection and debate on this issue.

It will come as no surprise that it is the work of the Church and Society Council, which most closely parallels the current concerns of Quakers in Britain, focusing on Justice issues, Education, Health, Politics and Government. The section of their report on Social Justice, "Common Wealth", began with a quote from Acts 4:32-35,

"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one else claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to each as any had need. "

Challenging questions were raised on tax, giving and wealth sharing for us as individuals and for our institutions. We were asked to consider the society we live in and urged to share our vision of the society we would like to create. How might taxation contribute to making this vision a reality? Do we need to explore new ways of financing government and sharing wealth? Christian Aid's work on taxation suggests that taxation is a part of the relation we have with one another, helping the redistribution of wealth. However when the state is failing to do this, we must speak out and hold the government to account. Moving on to Christian Stewardship, we were asked to reflect on the proclamation, that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it: a concept of being in a relationship with God's creation, not exploiting it; a concept of bounty and needs being met, not one of fear and scarcity, with prosperity going to the most deserving. We need to challenge our attitude to those who struggle against poverty. Understanding the systemic injustice which leads to poverty and inequality, is key to building a society which is fairer and more cohesive, rather than divided and unequal. Pope Francis also made this argument about the common good, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013. The need to look at the root causes of the ills in our society and to search for an economy, which does not wreck our planet, was explored this year at BYM. Are we all hearing the same drum?

Memorabilia from Newton Terrace

The old Meeting House in Newton Terrace had been a typical posh dwelling house, with a bed alcove in the servants' quarters in the basement next to the kitchen, a butler's pantry on the ground floor, and maids' bedrooms on the top floor. On the stair landing was a space which was used as a cupboard/glory hole. Eventually we realised it had been a maid's cramped bedroom, with a box bed and a ventilation shaft up to the top floor. Among the rubbish/interesting items was a big wooden signboard saying FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, which hangs at present in our front porch. It is quite unsuitable for Newton Terrace, so it must have come in about 1922 from the Meeting House in North Portland Street. It is now time for us to relinquish it. Would any Friend like to give it a new home?

We have also given a temporary home to the Cradle Roll, which is pictured on the opposite page, and will now join the Meeting archives. Friends who have been in Glasgow Meeting as long as us or longer, will recognise some of the names.

Janette More	1948
Julie Eileen Hetherington	1948
Robert Barclay Braithwaite	1948
Catherine Elizabeth Joachim	1949
Timothy William Morris	1950
Ruth Rosemary Hetherington	1950
Stephen Robin Boshell	1950
Irene Margaret Heather Parker	1949
Alison Fell Ross	1951
Alistair Crawford	1952
Roderick Fenner	1952
Robert More	1952
Christopher Peter Ross	1952
Robin Boath Watson	1953
Martin Rossman	1955
Stanley Smith	1955
Alice Rossman	1956
Heather Rossman	1959
Peter Michael Long	1959
Naomi Margaret Strachan	1959

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6th June - Aberdeen General Meeting

I am sitting here wondering how to write this report. All the facts are in the minutes of the meeting which you will have seen or can have access to. So I think, in the absence of a report format that it should be my impressions of the meeting.

We arrived early to the meeting house on Crown Street and were warmly welcomed by members of Aberdeen meeting. For me as a newly arrived member of East of Scotland there are always new faces to see and it was good to see some faces I remembered from St Andrews and Glasgow. As with most things Quaker these days it seemed that there was a large proportion of "the usual suspects" in attendance. We were 45 in attendance including one attender. There was the usual smattering of subjects such as new members (9) change of administrator, Marion Sharkey replacing Bronwen Currie, dates for 2016/7, and archived records.

Issues which raised some discussion were, a between meetings letter submitted to the Scottish Government on the subject of 'recognition of non Scottish civil partnerships', again this is available with the minutes, and a brief discussion on whether we should continue to record new memberships at General Meeting level, as this is an Area Meeting issue. AMs are to be asked to comment on this.

Further admin included the laying down of the GM Outreach Group and development of the GM website. On this latter matter a steering group is to be set up with representatives from each area, and the clerk is asked to continue discussions with BYM, and the Recording Clerk. We had a report from Elizabeth Allen, on the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group and I was involved in 2 items, a report on the Scottish Congregational Federation Synod and approval of my offer of service in prison chaplaincy.

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The afternoon session was taken up with a presentation on Militarization of schools and attempts to influence children to look at joining the military as not only normal but their patriotic duty. Mairi Campbell-Jack, The Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer and David Gee of Forces Watch presented various aspects of this subject and worked with Area Meeting groups looking at how the society should respond to this creeping militarization.

We were told about a new video which has since been released by QPSW on the subject of militarisation. We were asked to look out for a petition on the subject to be submitted in the Autumn. Overall my impressions of the day were that it was the usual mix of socialising and business with a smattering of fundamentally important issues for our society. I wish that there were more of the membership attending because this is where we are representative in Scotland and how we avoid being congregational. But that also applies to area meetings as well. I would love to meet more of the members from other areas at the next General Meeting in Glasgow.

In friendship, Robin Baker

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Report on Meeting for Sufferings July 4th at Friends House, London.

This was the first meeting of the new triennium, so a large part was taken up with induction, and re-induction for those of us serving a second triennium. It's always helpful to be reminded about our structures and systems. They are the tools we use to support our work with each other and in the world.

Paul Parker, our Recording Clerk, gave a resume of his role/s. This includes representing Quakers to the outside world. He encouraged us to 'use me' to reflect what Friends want said. Ministry in our opening worship provided the image of Sufferings as the beating heart of the Yearly Meeting, sending nourishment to all the various organs. Much of our work is about relationships – with Friends in their meetings, with the central committees, with staff and with trustees. Minutes, we were reminded, should not be 'paper aeroplanes', but part of a conversation.

At lunchtime we were allocated rooms to meet together in small groups, arranged according to geography. I appreciated the chance to meet the representatives from AMs in Scotland and talk about our hopes for the next three years. In our conversation we touched on the issues of working in a Yearly Meeting body where we share concerns and priorities with Friends in England and Wales, but where our experience may be somewhat different. This is particularly so in relation to matters which are already devolved or likely to become devolved. One Friend also pointed out that when it comes to parliamentary engagement we have another 'layer' to work with.

Yearly Meeting has laid upon Sufferings the responsibility for carrying forward the tested concern of housing, and the 'Call to Equality' conveyed in this year's BYM Minute 36. In session, we started to address this. Ministry expressed distress, and more, at the levels of increasing inequality. We heard of personal experience of the growing housing crisis in England. There was anguish too at the plight of refugees driven from their homes by war, the effects of climate change, and persecution. Helen Drewery of QPSW told

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us there may be as many as 50 million people worldwide fleeing their countries in search of safety. There is no quick fix, or easy answer. But we heard of the value of quiet conversations, one by one, inspired by John Woolman's example, seeking to change hearts and minds.

The morning after Sufferings, I went into my garden, dismayed by the weeds flourishing after only two days absence – especially the bindweed, strangling my cherished plants. I know I'll never get rid of it completely. But as I carefully disentangled its stems and uprooted it, I found myself thinking about mistrust, division and prejudice. If they are fostered and encouraged, they can threaten to strangle the good society we want to build. With every letter we write, every act of witness, every conversation we have, every petition we sign, we can try to uproot just a little bit more, and give what is good a chance to flourish.

Jane Pearn



Glasgow Meeting House, with Scottish Opera behind, HS both dwarfed by the bulldozer.

General Meeting for Scotland

12th September 2015 at 11 am in Glasgow Meeting House

"We can now see that the economic order is not a peripheral concern, but central to the whole relationship between faith and practice... economic affairs are now so central to our whole existence that no other aspect of personal relationships or individual life-styles can now be looked at without first understanding what it means in terms of our national wealth, incomes and their distribution."

David Eversley, 1976 CFP 23.53

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our gathering in September will start as usual with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00 am. In our main afternoon session we will welcome Richard Murphy, the founder of the Tax Justice Network and 2014 Salter Lecturer, who will introduce a session on developing a more socially responsible taxation policy. I expect this to be a highly informative and thought-provoking session and you are strongly encouraged to attend.

Among the items of business in our morning session will be a reports from our Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, and from Margaret Roy on the Episcopal Synod and the Women's World Day of Prayer; further consideration of the conversion of non-Scottish civil partnerships to marriages; and a report on proposals to relocate the offices of Action of Churches Together in Scotland

I do hope you will be able to join us in Glasgow.

Martin Burnell, Clerk