



February
2015

Scottish Friend



Knitted poppies frame individual remembrance crosses MP

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Please send material for next Scottish Friend by 1st May to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website and can be emailed to you at the same time as it goes to the printer. If you would like an email copy instead of a paper one, please email scotfriends@gmail.com, to let Bronwen Currie know. You are strongly encouraged to do this, in view of escalating postage costs - and of course you get the photographs in colour, as an incentive!

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.

JOHN WIGHAM (ENJOYMENT) TRUST

For many years we have been in the happy situation of having a modest legacy to disburse. John Wigham directed that grants should be made "to 'deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures of life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life".

Funds have been distributed over the past 10 years. At their October 2014 Committee Meeting the Trustees were delighted to record the receipt of some further donations including a very generous anonymous one. These may enable the Trust to give grants for a further three years.

We welcome applications from Quakers and non-Quakers resident anywhere in Scotland, for grants large or small. £500 will normally be the maximum. Applicants may obtain an application form and further information from :

Audrey Sinton,
66/4 Willowbrae Road, Edinburgh, EH8 7HA,
Tel: 0131 661 6051
Email: audrey_sinton@hotmail.co.uk

The completed form should be passed to a Quaker of long standing who is well known to their meeting, who will countersign it and forward it to the address above, to arrive by March 31st or September 30th. Applicants will normally hear the results of their application within 8 weeks of these deadlines.

Below are printed some of the testimonies that beneficiaries have written in gratitude for what the Trust has enabled them to do.

The award's recipient wishes this to be published anonymously

"To begin with, I would like to apologise for having taken so long to write and thank the Trustees of the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust for the generous grant that was given to me.

I do not have good health and I have restricted mobility which can make everyday life challenging. I used the money to go for acupuncture treatment to help with pain control so that I was able to attend classes at University.

I do realise that studying for a degree was not a priority, given that day to day survival was a greater imperative, however I do derive great pleasure and inspiration from my studies. Some of the residual benefits from having received a good education, other than improved self-esteem, are that I am much better informed about many of the serious issues that affect our world, and I can, now, contribute an informed opinion to any debate.

I am delighted to say that I graduated in June 2013 and was given a BSc with Distinction. I feel that this achievement can be described as an additional pleasure, "of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life," and so fits in very well with the aims of the Trust. The timing of the grant was also crucial as, at the time, I was coping with many difficult family issues as well as a deterioration in my health, and had to abandon my studies. Help from Members of my Quaker Meeting and well as the grant from the Trust, helped me to get back on course, as it were."

A CARPET AND A TABLET TO HELP MY STUDIES

**God Bless and in Thanks,
Ian Johnstone, Connel Meeting.**

A carpet was purchased for my home study, which was previously a room that could not be used. Due to the amount of time that my degree course consumes and having two children around the house, I had nowhere where I could disappear into and leave works in progress lying around. Having the room carpeted has really changed my day-to-day life. I am able to disappear into my office and work until all hours in peace and in the right mind-set. I am able to leave work out and know that the children cannot get at it and ruin it.

I also applied to the trust for a tablet that enabled me to download the PDF Lecture files and make notes directly onto the files. What this has meant is that I do not need to print off hundreds of course notes and lug huge folders around, but further to this I use the tablet all the time. When the children go off to bed, I am able to relax and watch films and conduct research from anywhere in the house. I am also able to use the functionality of the tablet to create fantastic presentations and reports.

I would like to thank the trustees for their generosity and to assure them that this really has made this academic year much more enjoyable and a lot less stressful. It has also felt really good having something for me.

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Birds and Words in the Garden

Constance Tonge. East of Scotland Area Meeting.

Last winter, the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust kindly gave me a grant for a second-hand laptop computer, which I could use to write in the garden.

Though it was a very cold winter, here in Aberdeenshire, with snow on the ground for several months, I am a fresh-air fiend, and I went outside whenever I could. Even when it was raining (but not actually snowing), I was able to shelter under our easily erected gazebo and write on the garden table! This has not only led to several pieces of writing, with which I am quite pleased, but also to a previously non-existent interest in birds - we have, apparently, blackbirds, thrushes, wrens, crows, jays, rooks, bullfinches, buzzards, chaffinches, robins, sparrows, starlings, pigeons and great and blue tits, at last count. And I saw an owl last night, although I don't yet know what kind. I may even learn what they sound like...

When the snow transformed into a beautiful summer, I wrote a lot more in the garden - and am well on with my novel. I cannot only produce lots of words and watch the birds but smell the flowers and hear the wind in the trees. I feel close to nature and the spirit. This has changed my life. Thank you, Friends.

Christine Sadler, Inverness

In March 2014, thanks to a grant from the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust, I was able to attend an event at Woodbrooke, in their category **Creative Arts and Spirituality**. It was a Course exploring the poetry of George Herbert and others. As the course tutor, Barbara Vellacott, said, 'Herbert has a marvellous way of expressing the heights and depths of human experience.' This was reflected in the intriguing title of the course: "Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust..." This quote, from one of Herbert's poems, was printed on our name labels and evoked considerable interest from people attending other events at Woodbrooke!

For me, the first delight was being at Woodbrooke, which I had not visited since I was a young Quaker about 50 years ago. There were changes appropriate to 2014 including a more explicit environmental awareness and inclusiveness, but I found the same spirit of simplicity and beauty, friendly welcome and care, and Friendly spiritual purpose and inspiration, that I remembered as a teenager.

The second delight was the group on the Course - a comfortable blend of Quakers and others, of published poets and complete beginners in appreciating poetry, of those who had enjoyed Barbara Vellacott's courses in the past and newcomers like myself, and a happy blend of variety and mutual respect in different personalities that added to the richness of the experience.

The third delight was Barbara's amazing skill in helping us each to discover and experience the poems for ourselves in a variety of ways. It gave me a new confidence that I can continue to find treasures and meaning even in poems that at first sight seem remote or incomprehensible. And the poems themselves, Herbert, but also Muir, Emily Dickenson, Sylvia Plath, G.M. Hopkins, Gwyneth Lewis and others, were wonderful - tingle-thrilling reverence!

I feel encouraged to glimpse the immense insight and courage that some poets have found in times of personal or global despair, as well as gratitude for the creative periods of freedom and love that we all have access to, often through the simplest experiences of friendship, beauty and imagination.

The gift of being able to attend continues to make me smile. And I just love the idea of an 'Enjoyment Fund.' What a wonderful title! I hope that it will be able to continue bringing pleasures to many others who might otherwise not be able to find means to enjoy them.



Financial Assistance

Any Friends who wish to receive financial assistance to attend *General Meeting* or other events supported by *General Meeting* (such as *Young Friends* activities) are asked to get in touch with the *General Meeting Treasurer*, John Phillips (john.h.phillips@blueyonder.co.uk).

Yearly Meeting (Bath) comes to Scotland.

Or:

What an amazing week-end we had at GM Glasgow!

Diana Brockbank, Forres

It was in the afternoon of our *General Meeting* for Scotland. Living on the Moray coast, and encountering trees on the line on the way down, it had taken me all day Friday to reach the home of my lovely Quaker hostess in Barrhead. I was looking forward to getting this taster of Yearly Meeting.

We had an impressive array of contributors giving reports, ranging from a family of 5 with a lassie of 5 and older twin boys, to the oldest, a very little sighted woman who was on the pastoral care team. She said that a lot of their work was sorting out the little things - some people were "just" lonely. The family camped and found themselves by another family with whom they really clicked.

We had 2 wee slide shows first. I had seen photos in "The Friend" but these pictures brought it all more alive for me, especially as they were, of course, accompanied by comments. We heard some of the challenges of being there as well as a wonderful smorgasbord of activities. One woman had to go to hospital! She was full of gratitude for the care she received. I was particularly inspired by seeing the Quaker garden which was created and gifted. Somebody said it was great to have something physical to do as well as all the sitting, and the atmosphere in it was lovely: s/he could have stayed there all day.

After tea we divided into groups to consider some questions about what we had heard; by discussion, silent listening, worship sharing or art. Six of us, previously strangers to each other, used pastels together on 3 huge pieces of paper. When we talked about the

process one woman observed it had been a bit like being at YM! The first tentative explorations with each other; the outgoing and the holding back observing; a bit intimidated perhaps; settling in, building confidence and finding our own space and how best to work with the situation; discovering our own paths. It was a beautiful picture!

On the whole the session was, for me, very satisfying. I would, however, have liked some time to relate a little deeper and ask questions of the wonderful reporters. To go back to the start of the day: in our opening period of worship we had read a very moving "testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Alison Joan Gean Davis." I was very grateful and inspired.

The rest of the week-end was more business oriented and included getting into groups to explore our responses to the long term framework questions. Small groups are great, even though these were all larger than my home Meeting! (well that is great too) and there was some good stuff to send to Friends' House.

A report that particularly interested me was about a week-end held in Braemar for parents and children, particularly aimed at families who have no other children in their Meeting and to support children hoping to attend Summer Shindig for the first time. My home meeting had "supplied" one of the group of energetic (and I guess noisy) 9 year old boys. After an initial wariness he had really enjoyed it; his mother did too. It was a wonderful opportunity for connection: blessings on the organisers.

There was a long discussion following the report from the Community Justice network, particularly around prison visiting. The rules in Scotland make it hard for Quakers to be involved as we have to be specifically requested and this does not often happen; so no

multi denominational/faith support groups. Let's hope the working group can help things to change.

Our parliamentary liaison group had 32 applicants for the new parliamentary engagement post! Wow! The process is ongoing. It has

come at last. From 16th December we in Scotland will be able to apply to conduct marriages for same sex partners in exactly the same way as for those of opposite sex. With the 2 week process time this takes us to 31st December. Civil partnerships registered in Scotland will be able to have a Quaker conversion which will be backdated for them.

Post Referendum: our clerks attended a church of Scotland service of reconciliation in St. Giles cathedral in Edinburgh and spoke warmly of it.

SE Scotland AM brought a moving minute about the increase in militarisation especially in schools and there was interesting discussion.

An important part of our residential GMs is getting to know Friends from around the country. After the business (busyness) of Saturday a good number of us walked to an Indian restaurant for our evening meal. When we had eaten, a curtain was drawn across and we entertained ourselves with a ceilidh: a most unusual setting. A Friend then walked with me to Central Station so that was another friend made!

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Are we the chosen people?

Are you absolutely sure?

Graham Morton, Perth

I find troubling the extent to which (as I see and hear them) a growing number of people appear to be absolutely certain on a whole host of matters. Does that mean that they have the truth while I don't? Or that they are adventurous whereas I am timid?

Take one example: intervention in the conflict in and around Syria. Were you delighted by the vote in the House of Commons in August 2013 rejecting possible UK military action against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government to deter the use of chemical weapons? Were you thrilled to find that David Cameron had been defeated? I was dismayed by the extent (as I heard it) of triumphalist responses of "job done!". In the interim, I have heard with great regularity (and every justification) about the suffering of people in Palestine. But the expression which comes to mind when it comes to refugees in Syria and Iraq is "out of sight, out of mind".

Are you at one with the adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Center for Peace and Security who is adamant that the present action against the so-called Islamic State represents an appalling error of judgement? Interviewed by Cathy Newman on Channel 4 News on 20th January 2015, Michael Scheuer averred that a major benefit of non-intervention would have been that it would have left Sunnis and Shias fighting each other and "bleeding each other white". Mr Scheuer is a former CIA intelligence officer. Did you happen to see Channel 4 News on 5th February 2015, in particular the item on Yazidi women enslaved by Islamic State? What was your response?

I find myself increasingly at odds with the clamour for moral certainty. Thought for The Day on BBC Radio 4 by Vishvapani Blomfield (a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order) two days after the aforementioned House of Commons vote explored the

issues much more effectively than I could. Here is part:

I greatly respect my friends who refuse to be drawn into the conundrums posed by violence. Instead, they devote themselves to working for peace in themselves and the world. But I doubt the promise of a shortcut to moral certainty, Buddhist or otherwise. I also sense its irrelevance to those making far-reaching decisions in the midst of the world's troubling complexity.

For me, the same concerns applied when it came to the Scottish Referendum (and its aftermath). Take, for example, the posters which at one stage seemed to be attached to every lamp post in Airdrie, to the effect that independence would bring social justice "for all in Scotland".

A talk by Karine Polwart in early 2014 in Dunblane came to mind. She described interactions 20 years previously (when she was facilitating a weekly philosophical inquiry session) between 8-year-olds in Castlemilk Primary School about how a birthday cake should be divided up. It went along the following lines:

Alex: But Miss, everybody should just get the SAME size bit of birthday cake. It's no' FAIR if anybody gets a bigger bit.

Kyle: I DISAGREE wi Alex cause what if you're only wee and you dinnae NEED a big bit of cake? Like my wee sister Jemma she just gets a WEE bit of dinner cause she's only three. And my dad - he gets a bigger dinner 'cause he's a MAN.

Eilidh: I AGREE wi Kyle cause some people maybe need more food than other people. But it doesnae mean they're SPECIAL!

Louise: I DISAGREE with Eilidh cause when it's my birthday my mum says I AM special. And if it's your birthday cake then you should DEFINITELY get a bigger bit cause it's your birthday and you ARE special.

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Kyle: I AGREE wi Louise because I always get an extra bit of cake with loads of icing on it when it's my birthday. But what about the boy in the story's mum? She made the cake. I think MAYBE she should get a bigger bit too because she made it.

Eilidh: I DISAGREE with Kyle about the boy's mum getting a bigger bit of cake. Just because she made the cake doesn't mean it's HER cake.

Kyle says: I agree with Eilidh. It's NOT the mum's cake. She made it for the boy. But he's too WEE to cut the cake himself with a big sharp knife. It's only his mum who gets to cut it.

Had Scotland voted for independence in September 2014, would "a socially just Scotland for all" have been the outcome? What would that have meant in practice? Where else has that happened?

I never regarded myself as a supporter of Hosni Mubarak when he was Egyptian President but given the mutually incompatible aspirations of those demonstrating in the Tahrir Square protests in 2011, I was never convinced they would have a positive outcome. Part of my Referendum-related scepticism flowed from the width of the coalition supporting independence. It included many people with values very similar to my own. But what are the priorities of such highly influential (ie, with the Scottish Government) Yes supporters as Brian Souter (of Stagecoach), lifelong Tory John McGlynn, and Monaco tax exile Jim McColl (of Clyde Blowers)? Was the possibility of achieving much greater social justice a key reason why Ralph Topping (until recently CEO of bookmakers William Hill) was urging independence?

The vagueness of promises (as in the Scotland's Future White Paper) of more "fairness" arising from greater future prosperity in the event of independence reminded me of the claims made for the "trickle down economics" of Thatcherism in the 1980s.

The first referendum-related event I can remember attending was in April 2013. Dennis Canavan and Blair Jenkins (chair and CEO, respectively, of the Yes campaign) were the speakers. The principal message I heard was the extent of their contempt for "Westminster". It was warmly received by the vast majority of the (100 plus) audience. I am suspicious of any cause or group of people coming across to me as saying: "We're like this. They're like that. It's all their fault". That is my perspective whether "they" refers to immigrants, the European Union, the Tory Party or the UK. This (from "freelance community theologian" Ann Morisy) encapsulates many of my misgivings:

Throughout history there have been ideological and religious movements that have naively assumed that they are the ultra-virtuous group that can put an end to the repeating pattern of advantage and disadvantage. It is very tempting, particularly in dystopian times, to fall for an analysis that assumes virtue in some and malevolence and mischief in others. This is the route to scapegoating, which, like all bloodletting, may at first appear to bring relief.

Bothered and Bewildered: Enacting Hope in Troubled Times, 2009

My preference is for a very different course of action, one involving collaborating across boundaries in the interests of social justice and the common good. I was warmed when I listened online to the very different voices and organisations coming together in South Wales for the founding assembly of Cardiff Citizens and Vale of Glamorgan Citizens in October 2014. I love the emphasis it gives to listening and to "the other" - such as seeking to invite to live in their communities vulnerable people living in refugee camps in Syria/Iraq. Some tell me that Scotland is far ahead of anything of this kind. Really?

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That ("Citizens") approach has achieved a great deal already. The Living Wage Foundation originated with it. It's been rejected in Scotland (by, for example, the Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland). Were Quakers in Scotland party to these discussions?

Ann Morisy again: "a concern for the poor must avoid short-term political solutions". Is there a risk of "cheap grace" - of assuming that voting for independence would deliver justice? Many appear to equate "Yes" with being "truly Scottish", with being good and progressive. They are saying it with their words, their eyes and their tone of voice. There's an awful lot of absolute certainty about in Scotland in 2015.



FISCAF

Lynne Barty, Central Edinburgh

I have found the time spent at Fiscaf most rewarding. The job has evolved over the past two years in that STV now entrusts Fiscaf with disbursing grants from its annual Appeal, some £100,000, in line with its commitment towards supporting families and young people living in poverty.

2014 was the first year we administered the STV Appeal and we have been asked to do so again in 2015, giving us a much bigger budget and concomitant responsibilities. Only this month we had a meeting in Glasgow to discuss the forthcoming year and how we might best assess the applications we expect to receive. I supported the case for reverting to live visits as opposed to telephone interviews: we used to do this in my first six months. However this practice was abandoned last year. We have now decided to reinstate live visits for major grant applications although this will inevitably require a greater time commitment from those of us serving on the committee which remains small despite efforts to attract new members. We are conscious of having no representation from faiths other than Christianity except for one Buddhist - there are seven committee members at the moment of which two have only just joined this year. All of us are white, middle-aged or older! We also have a young, part-time

administrator who has been in post for about ten months and has recently usefully revised the application and assessment forms which are now available digitally. Her work is overseen by Iain Johnston, operations Director of FICS.

We meet four-five times a year in Glasgow for about 3 hours which essentially takes up most of a working day if one is travelling from Edinburgh. Before the assessment meetings each of us on average completes three assessments. Since travel to more remote areas of Scotland may be required this year to fulfil our decision to carry out face-to-face interviews for major grant applications, that will obviously add significantly to the time commitment.

"<http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund>"

awards grants over one-three years to faith-led initiatives designed to improve living conditions, social and community involvement for people in the poorest parts of the country as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. It does not specifically address inequalities in housing except for projects supporting homeless people to move into more permanent accommodation. Examples of awards taken from its website include:

Madrasa Zia Ul Quran

St. Andrew's Family Support Project, Dundee (1 video)

Fife Arabic Society

East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action (EACH) (1 video)

Open Space, Ruchazie (1 video)

Findlay Family Network, Glasgow (1 video)

Amina Muslim Women's Resouce Centre, Glasgow (1 video)

I would be happy to give my further thoughts about this dedicated group of individuals if required. Please spread the word to any projects or people who might be interested in applying or becoming involved.

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Poppies in Milngavie

Margaret Peacock

As Friends' representative on the Milngavie Association of Churches, my turn has come round every 8 years to lead the Remembrance Day service. Our services are all about personal remembrance, not about celebrating victory, and I have no hesitation in taking part.

The first time, the tannoy kept cutting in and out, and I couldn't see past the gangling 6' youths of the cadets. The second time it still didn't work as the wielder couldn't see me to point the directional receiver/transmitter. That year there was a new second ceremony on the 11th, (no tannoy) at which I got them to sing "Make me a channel of your peace," and got a hug afterwards from a bystander!

This last time there were **three** services! A temporary poppy garden was "planted" to accommodate individual poppy crosses, and I was designated as the "padre" to dedicate it! For the first time in Milngavie history, the tannoy worked!

There were 1428 poppies (and counting) **knitted** by the United Free church craft group and friends. These will be preserved for next year. Much more friendly than ceramic ones!



I drew heavily on quotations from war poems, and our concordance book came into its own, with its instances of "peace". Both the poems and the psalms (King James version) are full of quotations that I recognised, like Shakespeare!

"Let me hear the words of the Lord - are they not words of peace, peace to his people and his loyal servants and to all who turn and trust in him? Love and fidelity have come together; justice and peace join hands. Justice shall go in front of Him and the path before His feet shall be peace."

General Meeting for Scotland has recently appointed Mairi Campbell-Jack as Parliamentary Engagement Officer. The priorities for her work are set by General Meeting's Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, with the GM clerks, as follows:

1. General Election 2015
2. Militarisation in Scottish Society
3. Trident replacement
4. Economic justice, sustainability and peace

I don't know Mairi, so I asked her to introduce herself, and she obliged.

I have been asked to write a few words about myself, as a way of helping Quakers in Scotland get to know me a little better. Of course as this role, and indeed Quakers in Scotland are new to me, I hope that the process will work both ways and over the coming months I'll be able to get to know some of you a little better too. I was born in Inverness and brought up in the Black Isle, a daughter of the manse. After leaving school I lived in Surrey for a while (some called it London but it was only a hop skip and jump inside the M25). I then moved back to Scotland to come and live in Edinburgh where I studied Media and Cultural Studies.

After graduation I fell into working in Scottish politics through market research and found myself genuinely fascinated by how decisions that affected so many people's lives were made. Since then I have always worked either in or around the Scottish Parliament, as a Committee Assistant to the then Rural Affairs Committee; in political monitoring; or researching for one of Scotland's top law firms; then a PR firm. I also volunteered as a researcher for the Scottish Green Party.

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I live in Edinburgh, with my seven year-old daughter Milla, and I'm (hopefully) about to finish an MA in Creative Writing. I had a book of poetry published in 2010 and I'm currently working on several short stories and a novel, in which belief and policy making are unsurprisingly core themes.

I will be working 17.5 hours a week, with my core hours over Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I'm contactable at mairic@quaker.com @ScotPolQuaker. If any of you are also on twitter, please do follow!

So far my experience has been a bit of a whirlwind, but a real highlight was getting to see the Nobel Peace Prize while visiting the library in Friends House. I'm not sure my work will quite hit those dizzying heights but I am excited to be contributing to something real and hopefully lasting.

General Election

By now meetings should have received information on the *General Election 2015* and be aware of the *Quaker Vote General Election Guide*. I'd like to remind meetings that as well as the resources from Friends House, I am also up in Scotland and I'm able to offer assistance with any work that local or area meetings are doing on the *General Election*. Even if you don't feel that you need my help it would be great to know what people are doing so please keep in touch!

Militarisation in school

A major part of my work over the coming years will be on the concern around militarisation in schools. I am particularly interested in gathering narratives about Quaker experiences in school surrounding issues such as Remembrance Day, red poppies and armed forces visits or cadets.

I'd like to hear from Quakers of all ages as it would be great to get a picture of how this issues has affected people over the years. But

I would be particularly interested in gathering the experience of those currently in school or who have recently left. Experiences in college, nursery or other education institutions will also be of interest.

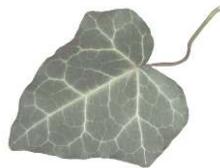
These stories will hopefully contribute to future work, however I cannot yet predict how they will be used as that depends partly on what I receive. Due to this I'd like to reassure people that their stories can be told to me anonymously and with any identifiers such as age, school etc removed. If you would prefer your story to be told by a parent or guardian that is also acceptable.

Peace Tax

As part of the wider work on militarisation I am also interested in exploring the idea of a "peace tax" and if work on this can be taken forward. I would be interested in hearing from Quakers who also have an interest or experience in this area.

Mairi Campbell-Jack

mairic@quaker.com 07419 991246 @ScotPolQuaker



Owing to the forthcoming retirement of the current postholder, *General Meeting for Scotland* is seeking to appoint someone to provide administrative support to the Meeting and its appointed officers, including supplying information to Friends and members of the public, maintaining records and producing the Book of Members and Attenders. The post is part-time, working from home, 8 hours a week, with 6 weeks paid holiday a year, and the current annual salary is £4,350. Further details and an application form are available from Robin Davis, Clerk to the Trustees of the *General Meeting* (address below) to whom completed forms should be returned by March 7; interviews will be held on March 25.

Robin Davis, Cathedral Cottage, The Cross, Dunblane,
Perthshire FK15 0AQ
robin.davis@phonecoop.coop

Faslane meetings for witness for peace 2015

All at 11-00 am

8 March, 12 April, 10 May, 14 June, 27 Sept, 8 Nov

Bring seats, comestibles and waterproofs.

Sat. 28 March - Scrap Trident Coalition Big Demo - Glasgow

Mon 13 April - Blockade Faslane North Gate

Non-violence training will be available.

Living Out Our Faith Report on Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House 7th February 2015

Jame Pearn, Kelso

Yearly Meeting (1-4 May) will mark the beginning of a new three-year arc on the theme 'Living out our faith in the world'. Chris Skidmore, YM clerk, outlined the thinking and discernment of Agenda Committee. Because Yearly Meeting will take place just before the General Election, they have anticipated that many of us will be weary of words, and of claims and counter-claims. There will be plenty of opportunity therefore to worship together, to turn to the inward teacher and to search out the underlying causes of our current situation. Chris drew parallels with the motivation of Friends a century ago to formulate the eight 'Foundations of a true social order', (see QFP 23.16). The outline timetable for Yearly Meeting has already been sent out and will include time to consider housing justice.

The need to think more deeply and more broadly was echoed in the next item. We heard from a group considering Quaker Values in Education. This has grown out of an increasing anxiety about the direction of changes in school education. The group held a conference at Woodbrooke and produced a statement. The background of the participants meant that the statement is primarily concerned with the maintained sector in England. I heard with interest and concern the ways in which children, parents and teachers may suffer because of decisions made by people with little or no experience in education. Militarisation of schools was mentioned, but in England it seems to be more pervasive than army cadets, or recruiting drives by the armed forces. Some English

academies are linked to arms companies, and there is a movement towards militaristic 'solutions' to behaviour problems. The group acknowledged that this was not an agreed public statement but a threshed account from the conference participants of the position they had reached. We heard ministry in response from Friends who are school governors, social workers and teachers: we were urged to try to find and encourage the positives as well. Other ministry suggested that we would be wise to avoid short-term reaction to the current political agenda but seek to root our responses in Quaker testimony.

Paul Parker, recording clerk, introduced our further consideration of membership. He reflected on the message in last year's Swarthmore lecture that this was not just a personal matter for each individual, but involved a two-way commitment between the Friend and the meeting; a willingness to submit to the discipline of Friends, and a recognition by the meeting that each of us is trying to serve God faithfully. Perhaps when one considers membership, it's good to ask not 'Can I live as a part of the Quaker community?' but 'Can I live without it?' We already have flexibility in membership procedures, which perhaps is not fully used by all meetings. We identified barriers that may present themselves for attenders: some are unable to commit themselves to a single Local or Area Meeting because of family, work or other obligations. We asked Quaker Life to look at this in particular.

Our Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) brought a response to the 50-page World Council of Churches document 'The Church, Towards a Common Vision'. On behalf of Yearly Meeting QCCIR liaises and responds so that Friends' views are represented to other churches and faiths. They emphasised that the churches want to know what we have to say, and our attitude might be to ask 'Is there anything we have that might help you?' We often take for granted what's special about Quakerism, forgetting that our practice of listening together

inwardly in stillness is one of our treasures that we might share more widely. Some Friends can find the relationship with other churches difficult and their theology a barrier to dialogue. I was struck by this sentence in the notes outlining their response: 'We acknowledge that we cannot argue that other Churches should recognise the sacramental life in our practice if we do not recognise it in theirs.' Some comments were concerned that the document went too far in using the theological language and concepts of the WCC document; and in doing so lost another of our treasures, that of plain and inclusive speaking. We united with the content and were grateful for their work, but asked them to look again at the language used.

The meeting concluded with hearing from the Church Government Advisory Group about their revision of the relevant part of Chapter 16 on Quaker Marriage Procedure. This is necessary to take into account recent changes in the law regarding same-sex marriage. I left feeling grateful, as ever, for the quiet, diligent, faithful work that so many Friends do on our behalf.



General Meeting for Scotland

7th March 2015 at 11 am in the Cosmos Community Centre, Abbey Walk, St Andrews

"Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes.

Elizabeth Watson 1980. QFP 22.63

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

In our main afternoon session, we will consider some of the issues faced by young people in our Meetings - the effect of changing patterns of family relationship with more single parents and re-marriages; peer group pressure and bullying linked with use of social media; and issues of self-image and sexuality. How can we help our young people navigate an increasingly complex and intrusive world?

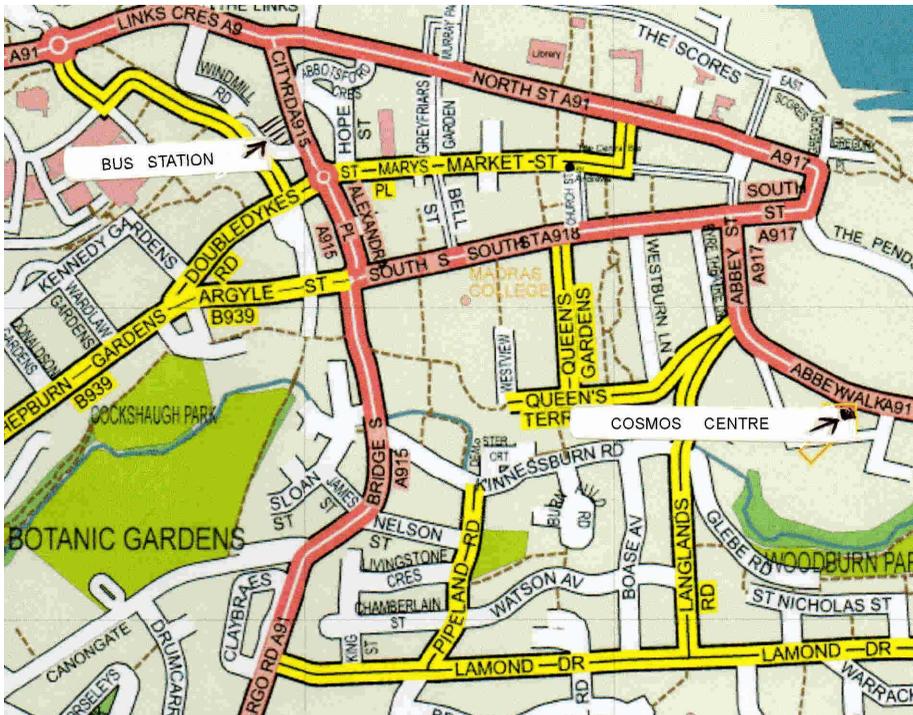
This session will be led by Madeleine Harding with assistance from Adwoa Bittle. It is not just intended for parents and grandparents - our Meetings should be communities in which young people feel safe and supported, and that concerns us all. The scope of the session is potentially so wide that we will need to focus on aspects which are of most concern to those present, and in particular on how Meetings can provide support to young people, their parents and grandparents.

**Directions to Cosmos Centre,
Abbey Walk, St Andrews KY16 9LB**



By Car: The approach on the A91 from Cupar continues straight into North Street, which at its far end has a U curve past the Cathedral turning into South Street. Abbey Walk is the first turning on the left. The Cosmos Centre is the white building on the right after the curve. There is ample parking space.

From the bus station: About a 15 minute walk through the town. Exit right into City Road and continue over the next junction, cross the road and take the next left through the West Port into South Street. Walk to the far end. Abbey Walk is the last turning on the right past the school and Queen's Gardens. Bridal shop on the corner. The Cosmos centre is the white building on the right after the curve.





General Meeting for Scotland

7th March 2015 at 11 am in the Cosmos Community Centre, Abbey Walk, St Andrews

Our gathering in March will start with tea and coffee from 10.30, and then Meeting for Worship for Business from 11.00 am.

Among the items of business in our morning session will be to note the appointment of Mairi Campbell-Jack as Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer and her work priorities for the current year; to consider the Annual Report of Trustees and Accounts for 2014; to consider the future of the GM Outreach Function Group; to consider representations made by the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network regarding the proposed commissioning of HMP Inverclyde; and matters arising from Meeting for Sufferings.

The afternoon session is described inside on page 22.

I do hope you will be able to join us in St Andrews for what promises to be an important and informative session.

Martin Burnell, Clerk

Book of Members and Attenders 2015

I hope very much that by the time you are reading this you will have been able to get hold of a copy of the new Book of Members and Attenders. Nothing ever stays the same however, and almost certainly there will be errors and late amendments, however carefully the copy has been proof-read both by me and by LM representatives.

If you spot an error, please let me know as soon as possible and - assuming the list of errors doesn't run to too many pages - my plan is to ask Margaret to publish an errata list (once and once only!) in the May edition of Scottish Friend.

Please email me on scotfriends@gmail.com or write to me at my address in the Book (i am fairly certain that's correct!)

Bronwen Currie

