

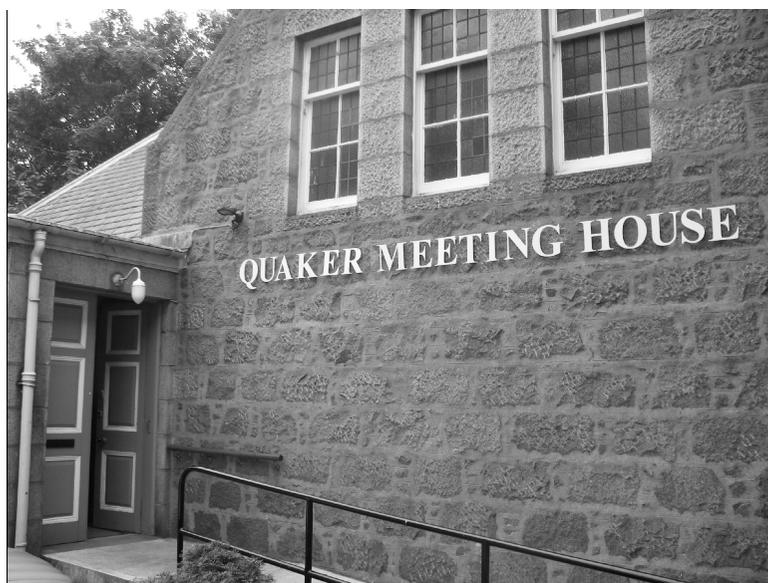


July
2007

Scottish Friend

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**General Meeting for Scotland was held in
Aberdeen Meeting House in June**

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

Many thanks to all who have made suggestions. Please go on sending me news, reports, thoughts and pictures. For the front cover I am particularly interested in photographs of your meeting places.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website 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@aol.com, to let Graham Marsden know.

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

Cover photograph provided by Nigel Dower.



Quakers and other churches and other faiths

Margaret Boland

As a Quaker, who do you turn to when you have a problem or want a Quaker viewpoint on ecumenical or interfaith issues?

Within BYM there is a central committee - Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR). GM Scotland has three representatives on it, Anne Davies of SE MM and Margaret Peacock and myself, both of WS MM.

The committee is available to answer questions, and has a list of speakers who are happy to come and talk to meetings. For both of these avenues, contact Marigold Bentley at Friends House (marigoldb@quaker.org.uk) Tel: 0207 663 1060

We have just completed the revision of leaflets: 'Organising a Meeting for Worship with those from other Churches and Faiths'; 'Local Churches Together' and its supplement 'Covenants and Constitutions'; 'Quakers and ecumenical occasions: The Eucharist'; and 'Quakers and encounters with other faiths'. There is a moratorium at the moment on publishing leaflets at Friends House which may catch these leaflets but members of the committee can give you the texts.

QCCIR issues a newsletter CIRcular which is sent to all meetings. If something interesting is happening in your area, ecumenically or by way of interfaith encounters, we would love to hear about it and to be able to spread the news.

Within Scotland, there is an ACTS associated ecumenical group, Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations in Scotland (CAIRS). I am the Quaker rep on CAIRS and CAIRS has an Education Officer, Andrew Sarle who can speak to meetings on interfaith questions.

John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust

Felicity Kelsall

We are 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”

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 from an overseer. Further information may be obtained by telephoning 01620 829 117. The completed form should be passed to the overseer, who will countersign it and forward it to the trustees to arrive by 31 March or 30 September. Applicants will normally hear the results of their application within 8 weeks of these deadlines.

Trust Annual Report 2006

Anne Miller, Convenor of trustees.

On the death of John Wigham, a legacy was left to The Society of Friends, Friends House, Edinburgh. Its purpose is stated above.

At South East Scotland Monthly Meeting, held on 28th June 2003, three Friends (Felicity Kelsall, Paul Kenny and Anne Miller) were appointed as Trustees of the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust.

The first applications were received in March 2004. Eight grants totalling £2,057 were made in 2004, but two of these totalling £800 were subsequently returned, due to ill health or other circumstances. Sixteen awards were made in 2005, and a further 10 in 2006, amounting to £7375.80 and £6466 respectively. The

applications have covered a variety of pleasures, with holidays and retreats, and attending events, such as courses, workshops and conferences, making up the majority of requests so far. Other awards include a computer and software for a person with disabilities, a motor-cycle licence training course, and a digital camera. One of the awards in 2005 was made to Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, which enabled 20 participants from the Urban Priority Areas congregations to meet together for reflection time, and also enabled the Scotland Lodging Mission (Opening Doors to a Brighter Future for Glasgow's Homeless) to bring some homeless people for an event in Dunblane. This arrangement proved so enriching that a further grant was made to enable 17 people from the congregation of the Castlemilk East Church, Glasgow, to enjoy a five-day summer holiday break at Scottish Churches House in June 2006.

Of the awards made, eleven have been to non-Quakers, and the rest to Quakers. Of the original 23 Quaker requests, eleven have come from members and attenders from SESMM, eight from members from West of Scotland MM, three from North of Scotland and one from East of Scotland. At the end of 2006, the fund stood at £32,436.

Those who have received grants of £100 or more reported back to the trustees within a few weeks of the use of their grants, which often provided the recipient with a life-enhancing experience. We received enormous pleasure from reading these accounts, and we give thanks to the memory of a generous and insightful benefactor, who has made these ventures possible for more than three-dozen people so far. We look forward to receiving more applications in 2007 both from Friends, and from non-Quakers who are a handshake away from Quakers.

Eliza Wigham



Andrew Farrar

Courtesy of the Friends of the National Portrait Gallery, London

At last Monthly Meeting, we heard that the Museums Committee of Edinburgh City Council wishes to commemorate the campaign to end the slave trade with a series of memorials in the city. Among these is a plaque to Eliza Wigham, a Friend who died in 1899. Who was Eliza Wigham?

The Wigham roots lie in Northumbria and the family were Quakers by the early 18th century. John Wigham tertius moved to Edinburgh in the early 1800s, married Jane Richardson and in 1819 set up home in South Gray Street. Eliza Wigham, born on 23 February 1820, was the youngest daughter of a surviving family of three brothers and three sisters. Her mother died when she was ten, as did a brother, whilst a sister died a year later. Eliza did not keep a diary and much of what is known about her comes from secondary sources.

Eliza's uncle, John Wigham junior, lived nearby in Salisbury Road. His home was a centre of much philanthropic and political discussion. It was here that Eliza's interests matured. The slave trade had been abolished 13 years before Eliza was born but it was still legal to own slaves. The ownership of slaves within Britain and its colonies was abolished by the Slavery Abolition Act 1833. The mercantile interests of Glasgow and Edinburgh meant the many Friends in Edinburgh Monthly Meeting, the fore-runner of both South East Scotland and West Scotland MMs, were involved in the abolition of slavery and other philanthropic work. In 1840, Eliza's father re-married, Jane Smeal of Glasgow. Jane was the secretary of the Glasgow Ladies Emancipation Society (GLES) and her brother, William, was the main spokesperson of the Glasgow anti-slavery movement. These connections introduced the young Eliza to the great radical issues of the day. The belief that all are equal in the sight of God drove the campaign against the purchase of slave produce. During this time the many groups founded the British & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS). Many women joined as auxiliaries as British society did not allow them to serve as officers or committee members. Though Quaker women were unrestricted from the social and theological constraints of the day and thus able to speak freely in public, they still had to conform to society constraints. The campaign to end slavery in the West Indies brought the British and American groups together. American society allowed women a place within an organisation. The newly formed American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) included men and women on its committees. Women in America came to link the issue of women's rights and the campaign against slavery. These issues created a rift in the BFASS. Eliza supported a society which had women as committee members.

Eliza's shift towards a policy of liberation, not just for slaves and women, but for all mankind brought her to other issues of the day, the Anti-Corn Law League, Chartism, temperance and other reforms. These became her work for the next forty years. She helped found and managed the Penny Savings Bank for the poor of Causeway Side, offering advice to the savers and counselling thrift. She followed this with the Women's Working Society which encouraged working-class women to make items of clothing during their meetings from material provided at a reduced price. She took an interest in Dean Bank House, founded 'to prevent neglected and destitute young girls from falling into crime', and in the summer would invite the girls to tea in her garden. She worked tirelessly for the rights of women and their position in society. In 1888, she became secretary of the women's suffrage society in Edinburgh. During all her life she was a staunch pacifist.

Eliza lived alone in Edinburgh following Jane Smeal's death, but following the death of her brother Henry who had moved to Dublin, she went in 1897 to live with her sister-in-law. Unfortunately her health deteriorated and she died on 3 November 1899. An obituary said of her that "in all the moral and social movements Eliza Wigham took a large share in Modern Athens, and her influence was more potent in securing their advancement than any other in the city."

Notes:

Acknowledgement must be made to Google and to Lives of Scottish Women by William W.J. Knox (Edinburgh University Press). Although Eliza Wigham never married, there are several members of our MM who are connected to her family. The John Wigham of John Wigham Enjoyment Fund was also related.

Scottish Methodist Synod - Falkirk

Maureen Anderson

I attended on behalf of Friends the Scottish Methodist Synod held in Falkirk on April 28th 2007. I had received papers in advance some 3 weeks earlier. Ministers of the Church had met the previous day; our Meeting was for ecumenical guests and representatives of their churches, in all around 100. Friends were among 6 or 7 guests.

The organisation was smooth and friendly. Everyone received a folder with yet more papers. Tea and coffee were available. The meeting started at 11am. The morning was given over to business; policies taken at national level were spelt out, discussed and voted on. After a lovely cold buffet, we assembled again. Two members were leaving the area and there were speeches and gifts. Following on this there was a long Communion service. The Synod finished around 4 pm.

That which stands out for me was the friendliness of the gathering. I had been asked to identify myself at the beginning of the meeting and folk came from different parts of the hall during breaks to speak to me. By the end of the day I felt I had indeed been welcomed into their fellowship.



Scottish Episcopal Synod - Edinburgh - 7-9 June

Anne Davies

The sessions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning were intense and we were provided with two dense books of background papers for the items covered. (I shall hold these for a month if anyone wishes to read them.)

As a complete newcomer I duly turned up to the opening service in St Mary's Cathedral where, after hymns, prayers and a sermon by the Primus ('First Among Equals') Bishop of Glasgow. Holy Eucharist was celebrated. I was alone, I think, in asking only for the Blessing at the altar.

We then retired to Palmerston Place Church (Church of Scotland), which was hired for the occasion, it being a more circular space and therefore conducive to business discussion.

I was greeted by a designated 'buddy', Father Gordon Fyfe from the Glasgow clergy who chummed me through the sessions and was very informative, friendly and helpful throughout. I was impressed by the very welcoming atmosphere and fascinated to find so many concerns which could well have been on any Quaker agenda. Far from being 'The Conservative Party at Prayer', I noted the informed and sometimes radical approaches brought to many of the topics which I will briefly touch on below.

A long debate was held on the new Anglican Communion Covenant which was eventually referred back to the Faith and Order Board. A topic familiar to all religious bodies was Child Protection and many of the procedures we are familiar with were in place. A new Marriage Liturgy was discussed but reached no agreement and was sent back for further thought.

The new Charity Regulations were carefully explained and the role of trustees. Finally on the business side of things we had a financial statement followed by a debate on the level of stipends (low), retirement and housing funds. We heard a passionate speech by the bishop of the West and Northern Isles proclaiming his mission to travel his diocese and proclaim the Word - Outreach Episcopalian style.

The interfaith session was led by Rabbi David Rose and the Imam from the Central Mosque in Edinburgh who held a Conversation on the Abrahamic Faiths which was warmly received. This was followed by a paper on the relation of the Church to people of other Faiths. A motion was passed requesting clergy to hold regular meetings with ministers from other faiths (sometimes called Fraternal) and to encourage support for Interfaith week each November.

The Episcopalians, like so many other churches, are facing the problem of falling numbers and we launched into a discussion on support for young people and in particular those training for the ministry. Many sources were identified including a Virtual Library in Glasgow that is far reaching and comprehensive, websites, financial support and the establishment of courses at Bangor University for years 1 and 4 for students engaged in study for the Ministry.

The Lambeth Conference was the subject of our next discussion, in particular the requirements for visitors from other countries and faiths. Hospitality was described as a) welcoming to homes, b) worship together, c) listening, d) telling our stories, e) experiencing Scotland, f) rests and relaxation. Quite helpful, I thought, and mentally added - find out about diet regulations.

Nearing the end now - one of our last sessions was on Terminator Technologies. A motion was prepared urging the Scottish Executive, the British Government and the E.C. to place a moratorium on the production of suicide seeds. It was decided to seek further information before wholeheartedly accepting this. Wind farms in Scotland and the Western Isles next occupied us. To a close vote it was decided to protest against the further siting of wind farms on the grounds of unsightliness, a deterrent to tourism. The increased height of the new turbines and the depth of excavation required to site them was another cause for concern. Earlier there was a session on arrangements to mark the end of the slave trade. In an address to the Synod it was stressed that slavery is still present today, referring to the shocking fact that 50% of these slaves are children.

We began and ended the sessions with worship. I thank General Meeting for asking me to represent it. I found the two and a half days mostly interesting and stimulating.

General Assembly of The Church of Scotland

Hugh McQuiston

The Assembly appeared very well organised and its procedures well controlled, as perhaps they should be after so many years' practice. It must still be very easy to become complacent and to let things be 'just as usual', but there was no sign of this kind of slackness in this Assembly.

Some of the formalities, like the bowing in deference to the Moderator, seemed to me to offend Christian principles. The bowing to the members of the royal family especially I found sat awkwardly with a Church which has no connection with the State - or am I a victim of my old-fashioned republican socialism, perhaps?

Some of you may know that I have a not-too-secret life as a fill-in organist, and I met many of the ministers for whom I have played, as well a friend whom I last met as a fellow Boy Scout in 1959, and who is now a minister of the Church of Scotland. To add further pleasure there was a minister from Ayr who shares my leisure activity of model aeroplanes.

The equivalent of documents in advance (the Blue Book & some supplements) supplied some weeks before the Assembly, was very good - logically laid out, making it easy enough to find the reports & subjects in which one had a particular interest. It became clear during some of the debates, however, that some who had come to pursue particular issues at the Assembly had quite failed to read the relevant reports in the Blue Book. Some did not even turn up until the Monday (Saturday morning was the start) and entirely missed the debates which they had specifically come to take part in. Some proposers of change were pushing changes which had already become Church policy - sometimes 25 years before. Speakers were constantly having to be referred by Committee Conveners to “....if you read page xyz of the report, you will see”. Quakers at business meetings would never do this, of course.

During many of the debates, speakers rising to a time for questions, indulged in what seemed like long, self congratulatory speeches, disguising as a question a long winded statement about how well they or their church was doing in some way. Later in the week the Moderator became noticeably less tolerant of this,

“Is this a question? Yes, or no? If no, *sit down!*” Quakers at business meetings would never do this, of course.

There was a well-enforced rule that those rising to speak had a maximum of 5 minutes. After 4 minutes a (loud) bell rang, and the speaker was expected to finish up and sit down within the remaining minute. The Moderator briskly interrupted those who attempted to continue. Quakers at business meetings would never do this, of course.

The subject matter during the week was wide ranging, and familiar to those pursuing social justice, ecumenical co-operation, prevention of arms proliferation etc., as well as “matters concerning the faith”. Most passion was raised and most hot air delivered, however, during the debates on ministers’ pay, manses, and property matters - all items concerned entirely with the internal structure & running of the organisation. Quakers at business meetings would never do this, of course.

All in all a very interesting week. It is much more relaxing to attend another denomination’s “Yearly Meeting” as one has no responsibility for the decisions made, and one does not suffer (or benefit) from them. I think the only really stressful part was finding that the Clerk to General Meeting was also attending (as an ACTS representative) and was seated (literally) looking over my shoulder for the first few days!

★★★★★

Scottish Churches Housing Action

John Foster

The Scottish Churches Housing Action (formerly the Scottish Churches Housing Agency) has been in existence for twelve and a half years. Many Friends in Scotland will be very much aware of the aims, objectives and activities of Churches Housing but there are many new Quakers in Scotland who know very little if anything about the organisation.

Scottish Housing covers the whole of Scotland from the far South-West of Dumfries and Galloway to the Shetland Isles. It is very much an ecumenical organisation with thirteen different 'Churches' being represented on the Board. These are: Associated Presbyterian Churches, Baptist Union of Scotland, Church of Scotland, Evangelical Alliance, Free Church of Scotland, Iona Community, Methodist Church in Scotland, Religious Society of Friends, Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, Salvation Army, Scottish Episcopal Church, United Free Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church. The Quaker member on the board is a GM appointment. With such a diverse set of different religious beliefs it could be expected that difficulties could arise - they don't. There is concern and a common understanding of the problems surrounding homelessness. There is a job to be done and that is what matters.

Quoting the objectives as set out in the Director's Report these are:

- * To act as an interdenominational Christian organisation seeking to assist the homeless and others in need in Scotland.
- * To encourage the practical support of housing projects by the Church agencies as an integral part of their outreach and pastoral ministry.

* To provide educational materials, training and advice at a local level and

* To provide an inventory of appropriate properties which may be suitable for development as housing and caring projects and, where appropriate, to provide specific development opportunities.

The last of these was the main reason for setting up Churches Housing in the first place. At first this did not happen but over the last two years a great deal has been achieved in this area. A large data-base has been developed of church properties that could be of value in being developed for housing and currently there are around 30 that look very promising.

In future editions of the Newsletter I will give more details of developments that are currently being undertaken and to keep you up to date with the latest news.

More information can be found at the web site www.churches-housing.org.

**Words by Elgin High Church to the tune of
“O little Town of Bethlehem”
Sung by Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children**

O broken town of Bethlehem
Your people long for peace,
But curfews, raids and barricades
Have brought them to their knees.
Yet still they strive for justice,
and still they make their stand.
Their hopes and fears echo down the years -
Come, heal this Holy Land.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
A royal refugee,
Your place of birth, now hell on earth
Through our complicity.
Innocents still suffer,
Their backs against the wall.
We see the curse, violence and worse,
And choose to ignore it all.

O holy streets of Bethlehem,
Deserted and destroyed.
Frightened faces fill sacred places
Pilgrims once enjoyed.
Yet in the midst of darkness
A hopeful beacon shines.
Future lies in humble sacrifice,
And not in guns and mines.

O holy star of Bethlehem,
Help us to watch and pray.
With love and light shine on the night.
Reveal the Kingdom's day.
Lord, dare us to be angels,
Your awesome truth to tell.
It must be heard - You are The Word,
Our lord Emmanuel.

Sent by June Braithwaite

Reflections from Yearly Meeting 2007 Alison Burnley

At Yearly Meeting this year we found that we were able to tidy up some more internal matters that had been before us at York (2005) and last year in London, following from the work of the RECAST group. Our Monthly Meetings are now going to be called Area Meetings - what is important is that all meetings have the same nomenclature - so we cannot have some monthly meetings deciding to keep the old title. The decision of what happens to the name of Meeting for Sufferings will be for another Yearly Meeting.

I always find the choice of the epistle or testimony that is read at the beginning of a session interesting and helpful. They are chosen to help us to focus on the matter before us. We had some good ones this year - one that was quoted in our Epistle reminded us to sit down, shut up and listen to God - wise words from a woman who had learnt this wisdom late in life. I also appreciated the Epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting held earlier in the year, which quoted Gandhi - to live the values we are trying to bring about.

We heard that MM treasurers are getting valuable help from the Stewardship committee on how to consolidate all the different accounts. Some are up to speed, some are struggling but all are appreciative of their help.

We were reminded by Simon Best that the under-19 programme was studying the same issues that we were; that we should listen to what they said and not concentrate on their age; it is one Yearly Meeting, not two. At quite a few sessions we were joined by some of the younger people and they contributed well. In 1668 Friends met 'to see each other's faces, to meet with openness and to meet in the things which are eternal'.

Jocelyn Burnell introduced the session on Equality, reminding us

that Testimonies come from love from God; not from fear, anger or guilt, and are about belief and guides us to what love requires of us. Equality is an understanding that there is that of God in everyone. Jocelyn's passion within her work is to get more women into science and to hold high positions. The assumption about equal pay has always been that it is the women who must change! We returned to this later on, with suggestions about how to be equal: include young people on the library committee; give the PM budget to the childrens committee; we may have a scribe for our deaf Friend but what about the notices?

There was minimal talk about racism. This was brought to our attention with an article in The Friend by a Friend from Philadelphia (for which I gave thanks).

How could we not have talked about racism with two topics this year - Equality and Inclusion - she was absolutely right and right to point it out to us.

We were reminded of how our white history affected black history - and we veer round this topic and we shouldn't. Are we too white, too middle class and too educated? I'm afraid from our performance at yearly meeting this year the answer is a resounding 'yes'.

Andrew Clark introduced the session on inclusion and again we were faced with how we Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting are seen. But we do do work at expressing love to both oppressed and oppressor. Sidney Bailey (worked at the Quaker United Nations Office in New York) advised us to identify the right thing that needs doing, do it in the right way and then pray for the right outcome. As Friends we listen to terrorists, military men and sex offenders. One of Saddam Hussein's henchmen wept as he was listened to when talking about his vision for his people.

We then went into a bit of self-praise - but one young friend spoke

of how being a Friend helped him to discern the feeling of the school council - and because he was accustomed to silence the 2-hour-long exams only held the horror of the exam, not the additional difficulty of the silence. We heard from lots of worthy people about the valuable work they are doing or have done, the essence of which was that very often they were driven by anger initially which was then tendered by love.

The old adage from St Paul 'speaking truth to power' can be seen as a bit arrogant. (how about 'seeking truth with power'?) Joyce Trotman (originally from Jamaica) pointed out many useful things considering we were talking about inclusion: we should be working for equality and inclusion here not abroad; we will not be free until the children of the children of the children of the children of slaves are not dispossessed. We returned to this later with talk of the erosion of our civil liberties. One young friend spoke as a researcher for an MP who gets lots of cards about animal rights, some about human rights but practically nothing about civil liberties. We need to be able to say why something is wrong.

Us older white-haired women are a huge asset because we are not seen as a threat! We could remember too, that for us prison is cheaper than an old folks home, but can we, should we, take the risk?

If the government introduces ID cards it is not for us that we need to be concerned but those on the margins of our society. We are asked to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable. How many pieces of information about us are 'they' going to put on the ID card? I have heard it could be 52 - what do they want-my shoe size?

We heard from Elsa Dicks, the retiring Recording Clerk, after 9 years of being in the 'best job in the world'. She spoke clearly and without fuss about the changes that had happened on her watch,

about the demonstrations against the Gulf War and for peace. She spoke movingly about the help they in Friends' House had been able to give to the 1,000 or so people who came for help and succour on July 7, 2005. They were given endless cups of tea, the use of landlines, and were grateful for the comfort they received and some have been to Meeting for Worship. But what Elsa remembers most about that day was the sound of the crackle of the anti-hypothermia blankets. Gillian Ashmore will be in post and Elsa wishes her well.

We heard from Rachel Carmichael, Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings and Gillian Waddilove, clerk of Yearly Meeting Trustees - about how they are working together and working out where the responsibilities lie. It is a bit of a juggling act and at the moment a bit hit and miss - but it is all coming together happily.

We heard from the redrafting group of some of the changes in the Church Government part of Quaker Faith and Practice. When it is done and printed it will be the definitive version for the time being!

My favourite bit of Yearly Meeting happens at the end. When we have sorted out our Epistle to Friends Everywhere we hear the minutes from the Under-19 programme. This is not to be missed even if it means getting home later. Only the 0 to 4's had theirs read by a member of the core team. All the others read their minutes themselves, clearly; they were interesting and very much to the point.

Summer Gathering Planning Group

We met in Kindrogan from 25th to the 27th May. This was our last meeting prior to the Summer Gathering in Stirling and we had a lot of work to get through.

Most members of the groups had never been to Kindrogan and for others like me it was a great pleasure to get back to this beautiful place and meet friends I had not seen for some time. Although the number of Scottish friends at Kindrogan was smaller than what I remember it nevertheless enhanced the week as it gave me an opportunity to spend the precious time I had, free from planning group affairs, to catch up with news from other parts of Scotland.

Kindrogan is a beautiful and peaceful setting where we were well cared and catered for. It was a long journey for some but worth the distance once we were there. I have no doubt the setting helped us to make considerable progress in the final planning of Summer Gathering. I really felt things came together over this weekend and I haven't stopped beavering away since.

The warmth of the welcome at Kindrogan always makes up for the fact that, to me, the place itself is always a few degrees cooler than I expect - but then it is 1000 feet up in the Perthshire hills. Meeting as a whole committee and in our subcommittee groups we made some attempt at final preparations for the Summer Gathering in Stirling, though we did acknowledge that it is the Quakers who are coming who will make the event what we hope it to be, an enriching community of Spirit to enrich us all. Some of us managed a breath of air in the grounds between the intensity of the meetings, a welcome break into the green outdoors.

Luisa Piluso, on behalf of the Summer Gathering Planning Group

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees - an Introduction

Beryl Milner

At Yearly Meeting in 2006, it was agreed to appoint a small body of Trustees for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), and I was one of the Friends appointed. I had been rather startled to be asked if I might be willing to serve. The stereotype of a trustee in my head was a man, in a suit, who regarded a balance sheet as light reading! This was a mistaken image, at least for BYM trustees! We are a group with fairly good gender balance, few suits, good geographical spread, and while some of us are more comfortable than others with balance sheets and the like, we can all cope with that aspect of our work.

Although appointed in May 2006, we did not take up our legal responsibilities until January 2007. The interval of time was valuable. We were able to do some background reading, to meet to become acquainted with the boundaries and the scope of our work, and to start to get to know each other.

Since January this year we have met on 3 occasions. Among other things, we have established our relationship with Management Meeting (the senior staff team for the centrally managed work). We have considered the future of Quaker Employment and Service Central Committee, and made new arrangements for their functions to be carried out. Once those arrangements are properly in place then that Central Committee will be laid down. We approved the Yearly Meeting accounts for 2006, as well as looking at various other financial matters. We appointed trustees to work with staff to revise the Committee Handbook.

We have more to do and more to learn too, and through all the doing and learning we are trying to remember to "keep it simple". We are shying away from multiple sub-committees, elaborate

reporting structures, indeed anything that might make the carrying out of the centrally managed work more difficult for the Friends who oversee it as committee members and for the staff. As YM 2006 minute 20 we ".....are, and will continue to be, a worshipping group of Friends who find it a natural and normal activity to seek the leadings of God's Spirit."

Our formal channel of communication with Friends in local meetings is through Meeting for Sufferings representatives who receive our minutes and hear both routine and particular reports at Meeting for Sufferings, from the Clerk to Trustees.

The three trustees who live in Scotland, myself, Mike Perks and Margaret Mortimer (both of South East Scotland MM) hope that at least one of us will be able to attend each GM, and will be happy to talk to you. We are also aiming to write news of trustees from time to time for Scottish Friend.

CLERK'S CORNER

Pamala McDougall

Local Elections

Congratulations to Robin Waterston of St Andrews meeting and Graham Marsden of Nairn meeting who were both successful in local council elections as Liberal Democrats. Both are now JPs. Suffice to note that Graham is GM Administrative Secretary and Robin is GM Assistant Clerk!

Church of Scotland General Assembly

I spent a very busy week in May as the ACTS representative at the Assembly, meeting up with our Friend Hugh McQuiston, GM rep. to compare notes and enjoy the social events. There were stimulating debates and interesting decisions and many

ecumenical friends to meet. There were a couple of memorable times for me. One was giving an address on "How Ecumenism has changed both me and the Religious Society of Friends" and the 2nd was attempting to explain Quakerism to the Duke of York who spotted my Q for Quaker badge at the Garden Party. Although he asked several probing questions and seemed genuinely interested in my replies, I felt he hadn't quite got the whole picture - when I mentioned pacifism he said with a smile "You are speaking to the wrong chap here" but after explaining we meet in silence for worship he exclaimed "Oh, I could do with some silence". I felt moved to send him a copy of *Advices and Queries* in a bit of royal outreach!

ACTS

It was a privilege to be appointed on the Search and Interview group for the General Secretary of ACTS to replace our Friend Kevin Franz, now General Secretary of QPSW. After thorough preparation and following strict procedures the group, ratified by the ACTS Forum, appointed Stephen Smyth who is now in post. Stephen is a Marist Brother from a Roman Catholic Order with a focus on education, and was for 7 years the Ecumenical Officer for Glasgow Churches Together. We wish Stephen every success and look forward to the contribution of his gifts and skills to ACTS.

Commemoration of the Slave Trade Act.

On June 16th at the David Livingston centre, Blantyre, there were over 400 present when your Clerk took part in a Service at the Open day arranged by ACTS and the National Trust for Scotland. The occasion was to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery Act and to collectively commit ourselves to racial justice and to address legacies of the slave trade. During the service representatives from ACTS member churches signed the agreed statement and your Clerk signed

on behalf of Quakers in Scotland. (full text on www.scotlandslavery.org.uk) The Statement, which was also signed by individuals present, is to be sent to Gordon Brown on his first day as Prime Minister. We heard several moving addresses and our feet were tapping to Glasgow Gospel Choir and the Hamilton Salvation Army Band. My only regret was the lack of the presence of other Quakers as our historical role in the Abolition movement was acknowledged.

Britain Yearly Meeting

My own reflections of BYM 2007 include satisfaction in the outcome of changes arising from RECAST, and the more thoughtful and knowledgeable contributions which led to the consequent decisions. GM for Scotland will remain the same but local meetings will need to decide on their new names as a result of the decision to phase out Preparative, Recognised and Notified Meetings. Monthly meetings will be known as Area meetings and will also need to decide on their full titles. One of the joys of BYM is meeting up with "old" friends and I managed to spend some time catching up with Friends who will be familiar to some of you; Emily and Jonathan Dale, Meg Hill and Kevin Franz among them.

Committee on Clerks

Just to mention that I am a member of this committee which exists to research, discern and recommend names for M for S clerks and assistant, BYM clerk and assistants and also Summer Gathering clerks. Robin Davis is also a member, so Scotland is quite well represented.

Report of GM held in Aberdeen on 9 June 2007

Angela Arnold

Imagine yourself as a Quaker slave owner: how would you justify keeping slaves? Not maybe a question we might have expected in the course of our afternoon topic of 'Quakers and Slavery' - weren't we supposed to have been the good guys, the ones who were opposed to the enslavement of our fellow human beings? Apparently not; or at least not at the outset.

Leading this session was Betty Hagglund from Hall Green meeting, Birmingham. Betty, a lecturer at Woodbrooke and a member of the Quaker Historical Society, introduced the topic by saying there were two ways of telling the story of Quakers and slavery. Yes, there was the well-known story of how we-the-good-guys fought against an institutionalised evil; but there was also the long history preceding that, much less glorious, full of failure and doubt and wrangling to be heard, wishing not to hear.

For much of the 17th and 18th century Quakers were deeply involved in slavery, owning them, trading in them, profiting from their labour. In 1692 the Isabella arrived in Philadelphia with a cargo of 150 African slaves. These were promptly bought up by Quakers to help clear the land in Pennsylvania, established only three years before. Not really surprising, given that Penn's own father owned slaves in England at the time. For the next half century many more slaves arrived. A group of Quaker merchants had possessions in the West Indies and made use of slave labour there as well. Yes, some Friends protested quite early on, and in 1696 Philadelphia Meeting urged Quakers to dissociate themselves from the slave trade, but it was not till the 1750s that these voices began to be heard.

What needs to be understood is that slavery was deeply embedded in society and all its doings. Slaves were not just on farms, but in

homes, in all sorts of trades, the sugar production industry, weaving and dyeing, operating furnaces... George Fox, when he visited Barbados in 1665, spoke out against slavery, but too many wealthy and weighty Friends were slave holders, their income dependant on free labour. Besides, slavery was legal; a major source of revenue; and wasn't it a good thing altogether to Christianise these heathens, provided one treated them well? You may like to try the self-justification experiment for yourselves, at this point!

After 1750, Quaker opinion finally changed. Reformers were no longer lone voices but began to unite. The main thrust of their argument was that slavery did harm to both sides. They pointed out that slaves were not free to respond to what God asked of them... so how would God allow such an arrangement; and the slave owner, no matter how benign, would be tempted by laziness, pride etc.

Foremost in the movement against slavery was John Woolman. His first stirrings of conscience occurred when at the age of twenty-three he was asked by the shop keeper to whom he had been apprenticed to write out a bill of sale for 'One Woman Slave' - about to be bought by another Quaker. He obeyed, but it troubled him. And he found that older Friends could not give him any guidance in the matter either. Not confrontational by nature, he gradually worked out his own way of protesting and making converts to the cause. He never blamed, he never accused - he simply lived his convictions openly, one might say pointedly. Thus for instance he refused to wear dyed cloth, consume sugar in any form, eat off or drink from anything silver plated...all the results of slave labour. When staying with Friends who kept slaves, he did not rail against them - he just made a point of paying those slaves for any work they did for him. The message came across loud and clear. And it was not just a message about theoretical right and wrong. Woolman made clear that what he was opposing was the whole interconnected economic web built on the basis of slavery, with all the many livelihoods that depended on it. With his

'eccentric' behaviour he pointed to every instance of the underlying wrong. He made visible to the sluggish imagination all that unseen, maybe far off, suffering.

There had been quite a few pamphlets speaking out against slavery already, but they had had little impact. When Woolman published his, he made sure he first consulted with other Friends, involved them - he wasn't on the fringes, he was right at the heart of Quaker society, despite his 'odd' behaviour. And opinion was shifting. At first the attitude was one of don't buy or sell slaves, but keep the ones you have and treat them well. Then, after John Woolman addressed Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, slave owning was no longer acceptable at all - no one was disowned as such, but if you kept slaves you were no longer allowed to participate in business meetings or to contribute financially to your meeting. An odd kind of punishment, you might say (!), but maybe the point was more to dissociate the meeting, and to make sure no tainted money was received.

In 1770 American Quakers went a step further and demanded that all Friends free their slaves. And in 1784 they began at last to petition government, to help escaped slaves...and as they say, the rest is history, that other, better known history.

Betty concluded her talk by quoting instances of present-day slavery. The five year olds weaving carpets in Nepal. The bonded labourers on banana plantations in Ecuador, suffering not just poor wages and intimidation but lethal pesticide exposure. The African American and Hispanic workers on chicken farms in the US, maltreated, subject to a punishing work schedule. The list goes on and on. And, as Betty asked us: aren't we all complicit in this, as consumers?

We ended our afternoon session with worship sharing, asking ourselves what John Woolman would do today, what we might have done in his place, what we can do now. Here are some of the

contributions we heard:

* Woolman would have looked for the Fair Trade label, and Ethical Investment.

* We should let others know why we (don't) consume what we do - we shouldn't be afraid of coming across as odd.

* In this globalised world, everything so complex and inter-connected, it's hard to know the nature or origin of anything, so it's quite difficult to disentangle ourselves from this web.

* Morality, like society, these days has become more 'impersonal': who do we personally know that suffers from enslavement, or who profits from it?

* As a Society we have a great shared awareness of today's issues; a momentum has built up (as it did then, over slavery) especially with regard to green issues. It needs a long time of just-knowing before this kind of shared concern 'takes off' and is finally acted on.

* Do we tackle these socio-political issues from a firm faith foundation? Do we test our actions and hold these questions in the light?

Active imagination is needed, not just the knowing of dry facts. It also needs constant decision-making, rather than just going with the flow of one's wishes.

Betty Hagglund's presentation served its purpose brilliantly: it made us rethink a too-familiar topic, helped us make the link to the present day in a new way, and has given us a much better understanding of the dynamics of 'engagement'.

During the business part of our GM we heard of Friends' deaths: Frank Bennett, Edythe Kift and Nan Foster; and of newly-joined Friends: Jonathan Parsons, Andree Beida-Ryan, Helen Nicholson and David Marshall-Ruff/Rough?? We appointed Margaret Peacock as the Meeting for Sufferings rep for GM Scotland - a new arrangement, and while on the one hand welcome, it also raised the question why rep numbers are rising instead of being reduced.

Alison Burnley gave us her reflections on BYM. She was impressed

by the Junior YM epistle, with its call to live our values and to 'sit down, shut up and listen to God'. Jocelyn Burnell's session on equality threw up the question why it is always women who are supposed to change in order to gain equal rights and representation - and why do we not give more responsibility to children...another workshop asked, in similar vein, why we don't pay enough attention to what young people are saying to us, rather than primarily noticing their age. Other sessions Alison attended dealt with racism; the transforming of anger 'before it can work'; 'seeking truth *with* power' (a subtly different take on or beloved 'speaking truth to power'); and civil liberties: there is far more general interest in promoting animal and human rights than in countering the insidious erosion of our civil liberties.

With Outreach Week taking place in September, we shared what was being done by way of preparation by the different MMs - or rather AMs: Area Meetings, as we must now call them (while PMs become LMs, Local Meetings). Our Admin Secretary Graham Marsden will facilitate the sharing of all these ideas. GM itself will ask the Media Function Group to organise something to be broadcast on national radio.

We had a short talk on the work of the Scottish Churches' Community Trust which channels money from the nine individual member churches to projects that are inter-church in nature, mostly work with the old and the young, like befriending and youth projects. The aim is to relieve poverty in Scotland, and the idea is that together the churches respond far better to the task than they would separately.

Several other items on the agenda, such as future GM dates/venues and an update on Summer Gathering, made sure we had a busy forenoon, and needless to say at the end of the afternoon session Aberdeen Friends fed us in style. All in all, a splendid 'day out', being nourished body and soul. If you have never been to a GM, why not give it a try!

General Meeting for Scotland

Glasgow Saturday 8th September 2007

"Our planet is seriously ill and we can feel the pain. We have been reminded of the many ways in which the future health of the earth is under threat as a result of our selfishness, ignorance and greed. Our earth needs attention, respect, love, care and prayer".

London Yearly Meeting 1988

Dear Friends,

Since the last edition we have had a General Election so times - and politicians - have changed. Our guest speaker in Glasgow will be Shiona Baird who until the May elections was the Green MSP for the North East. Shiona has farmed with her family at Auchterhouse, near Dundee, since 1976 although she began her career as a social worker in West Lothian. Her 18 years in the Green Party and wealth of experience at Holyrood led us to invite her to share her knowledge of Green issues and offer insights into the future of Greener living.

Glasgow friends will welcome us for coffee (Fairtrade!) from 10-15am and Meeting for Worship starts at 11am. Meeting for Worship for Business includes hearing about The Retreat in York, the China Group, Summer Gathering reports, and plans for Outreach Week.

As this will be my last GM as clerk before handing over the mantle to Robin Waterston (what's a mantle?), I do hope to see as many of you as possible. Please let Robin know of any attenders who intend to be present.

Your Friend, Pamala McDougall, Clerk to GM