

The Northern Quaker

Spring / Summer 2017

North Scotland Area Meeting



Inverness Masjid (Mosg Inbhir Nis) & The
Highlands Islamic Education and
Community Center

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Welcome to the latest edition of the Northern Quaker.

As you will notice, I have combined the Spring and Summer editions, partly due to my own commitments, but also the lack of “copy” (more later..). However, it does save on printing and postage and also gives you the opportunity to read several reports from the same meetings or committees.

It was interesting to discern in several reports (Orkney AM, April MfS, QLRC) the same disquiet I mentioned in my last edition about aging and dwindling membership which I feel should be a concern to all of us.

We are pleased to include contributions from newly appointed representatives (Lynden Easterbrook on QLRC) and those ending their tenure (Juli Salt on Northern Friends Peace Board). As with all our correspondents, we thank them for their contributions. However, we always welcome more “copy”, so if you have read a book, watched a play, attended a meeting, or anything that you think might be of interest to others, please send contributions for future editions in any form to myself: Harry Horsley, 11 Cottown of Balgownie, Aberdeen AB23 8JQ, harrydhorsley@gmail.com.

I hope you enjoy the edition; if you are receiving this in the printed edition, please consider if you might wish to switch to the email version which contains coloured photographs as well as a “clickable” contents list for easy navigation and hyperlinks in the various articles. If you wish for your name to be transferred from the print to the email list, please send the address to harrydhorsley@gmail.com.

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[Children and Young People Family day Friday 2 June 2017 10.30am–4.00pm, Friends House, London](#)

This free event is a great opportunity for children, with an accompanying adult, to visit Friends House and learn more about the work that goes on here. The day will include stories, talks, activities and worship. Come as a meeting excursion or a family day out and hear about Quaker peace and social justice work, visit the Library and the Quaker Centre with its bookshop and worship space. To book go to www.quaker.org.uk/events/family-day or contact cypadmin@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1013.

[What have you learned from the process of reading Quaker faith & practice?](#)

The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group invite feedback from all those who have been reading our current book – whether you have formed a group, read it alone, raced ahead or are taking it slowly. There is only one question: what have you learned from the process of reading Quaker faith & practice? Your comments will inform the process of discernment about whether it is time to revise our book of discipline, which Yearly Meeting will probably consider in 2018.

Please complete the form at:
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ReadingQfp or write to Michael Booth, Friends House, 173 Euston Rd, London NW12BJ.

[Northern Young Friends’ Summer Shindig Saturday 29th July to Saturday 5th August 2017](#)

Northern Young Friends’ Summer Shindig is a week-long residential event and is intended for young people who are connected with

the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). If your son/daughter will be between 11 and 16 years old on 30th June this year, then they are eligible to apply. The event is primarily for young people who live within our catchment area of Scotland General Meeting, Teesdale & Cleveland, Wensleydale & Swaledale, Northumbria, North Cumbria, West Cumbria and Kendal & Sedbergh Area Meetings, but we welcome youngsters from further afield if we have space.

There is an overall theme for the week and on three mornings there are sessions facilitated by guest speakers followed by discussions in small groups. The speakers can interpret the theme quite liberally, allowing their particular knowledge, experiences and style of presentation to bring the theme to life.

The programme for the week also includes activities, sports, a day trip, various entertainments, evening worship and unstructured free time.

Our experience is that, as the week progresses, young people develop friendships with strong foundations that last throughout the year and beyond. We are a community within which participants learn about honesty, trust and acceptance of themselves and others. We also have lots of fun!

One main aim of Summer Shindig is to give young people a view and experience of Friends as a whole. We seek to help develop in young people a fuller understanding of the Society of Friends, its beliefs and manner of worship.

This year we will be returning to Ackworth School in North Yorkshire. This has been a fantastic venue with plenty of space both indoors and out. It's also lovely to hold the event in a Quaker school.

Applications are taken on a first come first served basis but should be returned by 4th April at the latest. Queries about any matters regarding NYFSS should be sent to: Jen Hodson, 16 Glebe Place,

Burntisland, Fife, KY3 0ES, 07826298562,
summershindig@gmail.com

The cost for the event will be £300 for the first child and £285 for subsequent children in the same family (the same as last 5 years). If required, please tick the box relating to bursary help on the application form. It is important that cost does not prevent anyone from attending.

North Scotland Area Meeting February 18th 2017 held at Ness Bank Church Hall Inverness [^return to top](#)

(no one wanted to be the reporter, so the following are the minutes - Ed.)

Roll: Aberdeen: 6, Banchory 1, Forres: 8 Inverness: 10,
Lochaber & Lorn: 1, Orkney: 1

MINUTES

Reps: Aberdeen: Eva Deregowska; Ann Millar; Inverness: Oriole Hall, Orkney: Robert Wilson Forres: John Wragg and Anthony Buxton
Prevented: Con Tonge, Sila Collins-Walden

01/17 Our Friend Roger Quinn hoped the clerk might read QF & P 19:57 and we encourage Friends to do so. However our reading was from "The Friend" Feb 17 2017, Leadings & Seekings.

02/17 We record the death on Feb 5th 2017 of Keith Nicols, a former member of NSAM.

03/17 We appoint Oriole Hall as Assistant clerk for today.

04/17 Representatives to GM in Edinburgh

We appoint Juli Salt and Con Tonge to represent NSAM at GM in Edinburgh March 11th 2017

05/17 Area meeting trustees report

Eva Deregowska introduced the budget for 2017 and explained some of the figures. Some Friends have expressed reservations about some of the figures, particularly the sum suggested for an accountant and the AM donation to NFPB. We are reminded that the budget is provisional and can be revised. We hope that Trustees can revise these figures and give further explanation before AM in May .

06/17 Meeting for Sufferings

Jane Booth reported on Meeting for Sufferings December 3rd 2016 .

There was one item AMs were encouraged to consider: A request from Luton & Leighton AM regarding WW1 memorial meetings expressing the hope that WW1 commemoration services are multi-national and focus on reconciliation with a commitment to peace building.

MfS considered the minutes from AMs regarding QPSWCC's paper 'Towards a vision of a criminal justice system' and Cornwall AM's concern regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs. Meeting for Sufferings was not able to unite with the Cornwall AM minute.

The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group recommends that the church government part of QF&P be completely revised rather than updated piecemeal, as it has been since 1967. They recommend explanations of the core principals, as they feel that many members today do not have the background to understand why we do things as we do. More detailed material, such as current legal requirements, could be written in handbooks which can be updated more easily. The group is encouraged by the numbers taking part in the reading QF&P project, and will soon be asking for feedback.

Operational budget and plan for 2017 - the budget assumes a 10% increase in contributions as there has not been much response to the Treasurer's call for an increase from £2 million to £3 million. The finances are 'stable', although BYM is still drawing on its reserves to maintain its current level of activity. Hospitality income has increased. The Operational Plan and Summary have been approved by Trustees and are now available.

We understand that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation present funding of QUNO will come to an end and some funds from Switzerland and Norway have also been withdrawn. We hope QUNO can be supported from other areas.

Mary Dower reported on Meeting for Sufferings Feb 4th 2017

Mary mentioned how the home groups discussed how to report!. She reminded us that MfS is well reported in "The Friend". Quaker Housing Trust reported to MfS, they do support projects in Scotland

Mary was inspired by a report from Liz Birch of BYM Sustainability Group. Liz Burch was concerned how many Friends working on green issues feel unsupported by their Local Meeting. We are reminded to take action in love. MfS received a minute from Pendle Hill AM on fracking and also from General Meeting for Scotland about the spread of Militarisation in Schools. Her report is attached to these minutes.

07/17 Membership Matters – Application

We have received an application from Claudie Ruxton who attends Banchory LM. We appoint Mavis Jones s.c., whom failing Penny Selbie, and Jane Booth and ask them to support and help the applicant in preparation for this important step and for all three to report back to the Area Meeting when the time is right.

08/17 Nominations. Nominations committee brings forward the following names:

Assistant Treasurer for North Scotland Area Meeting (Jan 2017 - Dec 2019), ;Anthony Buxton

AM Clerk: Phyllida Sayles (Jan - Dec 2017)

Assistant AM Clerk: Robert Wilson until May 31st 2017. QPSW Conference March 2017: Martin Barker.

Children and Young People's Elder: Oriole Hall
January 2017 – Dec 2019.

We accept and appoint these names.

09/17 Elders & Overseers Nominations:

Es& Os bring forward the following names to serve for the next triennium from January 1st 2017 -December 31st 2019. Forres LM: John Wragg

Inverness : Eleanor Fairclough, Oriole Hall, John Melling
Westray and Papay Sandy McEwen and Mandy Manouvrier
Skye rep: Marian Burrell

We accept and appoint these names

10/17 Parliamentary Engagement Officer

Nigel Dower reminded us of the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer. This post has been funded partly by BYM, GM for Scotland and contributions from AM in Scotland. This post has been reviewed, BYM hope that the post will be continued.

11/17 Testimony to the Grace of God shown in the life of Helen Steven.

We agree that our clerk should liaise with West Scotland AM Friends to begin to write a testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Helen Steven.

12/17 Annual Tabular statement

Peter Heald presented the annual tabular statement, we have gained 2 members in 2016. We thank Peter for his work on our behalf.

13/17 Northern Friends Peace Board

Juli Salt spoke of the work of NFPB. She talked of the danger of modern computers used to trigger bombs, being out of the control of humans. She also told us about the work of Veterans for Peace. We thank Juli for her service and welcome William Purser as our new NFPB representative. Robert Wilson Spoke of the work of CND, CAAT , Commonweal and Conscience.

14/17 AM Residential at Pluscarden August 2017

The E/Os committee encourages the AM to invite Michael Elstub of the Veterans For Peace to lead the afternoon session at residential AM at Pluscarden in August. We accept this suggestion and ask Juli Salt to make arrangements with Michael Elstub.

15/17 AM May 6th 2017 Pickaquoy Leisure Centre

Robert Wilson told us of the new venue for Orkney LM and the AM preparations, and encourages us to attend.

16/17 We thank Inverness Friends for their hospitality today.

Signed, Phyllida Sayles, NSAM Clerk

North Scotland Area Meeting: Orkney, 6th May 2017 [^return to top](#)

In Orkney, the past is close to the surface and informs the present. The same could be said for Quakers. And both Quakers and the Orkney islands have an ageing population and lose a proportion of their young people as they grow up and move away. But unlike Quakers, Orkney also has an influx of new young people moving into

the islands. How could we become more vibrant as a community so that we can inspire potential new members of all ages? This was one of the issues we discussed in our Area Meeting in Kirkwall.

We arrived by land, sea and air, including a group from Papa Westray whose flight in their tiny aircraft was unfortunately delayed until the afternoon due to sea mist. Not an uncommon event in these northerly isles. We met in the bright new Pickaquoy Centre, with quite a sizeable group of children. It was lovely to have them with us during the initial Meeting for Worship before going to their own session on refugees and forced migration. We adults focussed on business, starting with bookkeeping and budgets. Amazingly, with only 132 members in North Scotland, we learned that we raised £20,000 for Britain Yearly Meeting last year.

The Quaker Life report highlighted the need for Quakers to respond to changes in society if we hope to stay relevant to younger generations and attract potential new members as our current community ages. This was followed by a discussion on the future of our Area Meeting, exploring similar themes. How can we maintain our current structures with so few of us, as we get older? How can we spend more of our time on spiritual matters, shared activities and action in the world? How can we focus less on procedures and more on being Quakers together? We are currently engaged in the Listening Project and we hope to look at these issues further in November. We recognised a need to pay attention to each other's concerns and to make any decisions slowly and carefully. Another discussion was on the future of Clerkship; we looked at how we could have a flexible and resilient structure without undue pressure on any individual Friend.

After lunch, we heard from Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB), where a particular concern was forced migration and the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. The meeting had discussed the

harassment of local asylum seekers who had been forced out of their homes, and they had written a statement of concern about this. The report ended with words inspired by Antonio Gramsci: "It's all very well having pessimism of the intellect but we must have optimism of the will."

Before closing the Meeting, we looked at possible accommodation at Feshiebridge for our residential summer weekend in 2019, and we agreed to make a provisional booking.

With the business over, we went out into the sunshine to do a series of group exercises from the Alternatives to Violence Project, including a listening exercise and a couple of games in which it became apparent, in case we didn't already know, that Quakers are independent-minded people (they didn't develop a rhythm when they clapped together) and are not averse to breaking the rules! After meeting for Worship on Sunday we had a report from the Children's Meeting. They had explored their theme of forced migration using stories and a map game which helped to bring the issue to life. The Papay children particularly enjoyed going swimming with the group. We learned that their Saturday night flight home was unable to land because of fog. After circling for an hour, they were returned to Kirkwall where they stayed overnight. I was struck by the complications of their journeys from island to island. While many of us had come further, we do not face the day to day difficulties of wind and weather.

After the weekend, a few Friends stayed on to explore Orkney further, and some of us met by chance at the Ring of Brodgar and stood and chatted in the wind and rain. The stone circle, now preserved for the public by Historic Scotland, is at least four thousand years old, and stands today as a symbol of the lives of Neolithic people.

And as for us... we are in a time of possible change for our Area

Meeting. What do we want to preserve? How will we choose to evolve? How can we sustain and enhance our spiritual identity and our presence in the world, the “Pearl of Great Price” that is our inclusive, cherishing and challenging community?

Lynden Easterbrook: Forres Meeting

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There was one item to bring back that AMs are encouraged to consider: a request from Luton & Leighton AM regarding WW1 memorial meetings expressing the hope that WW1 commemoration services are multi-national and focus on reconciliation with a commitment to peace-building. QCCIR encourages all AMs to be active in local Churches Together and interfaith networks along with e.g. the Royal British Legion to influence commemoration services towards reconciliation. The QCCIR e-cluster may be of help with ideas and resources.

MfS considered the minutes from AMs regarding QPSWCC's paper 'Towards a vision of a criminal justice system' and Cornwall AM's concern regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs.

The Criminal Justice paper was in general welcomed as representative of the Quaker view on the subject and helpful to those in our meetings considering what the criminal justice system should be like. One friend commented that it was full of well-meaning statements but no clear sense of priorities, and there were some questions about the intended audience and implications, but we were told that the intention was just to capture a vision of the criminal justice system we want to work towards.

We spent a long time over the decriminalisation of drugs issue. Very

many other AMs had also engaged with it in depth. It was acknowledged that it is an extremely complex issue, and although there was a lot of support for Cornwall AM, MfS was not able to unite with the concern. A number of AMs felt they did not know enough, but we were agreed that a humane and compassionate response is needed. It is hoped that Cornwall AM will do further work with QAAD and those AMs supporting the concern.

The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group recommends that the church government part of QF&P be completely revised rather than updated piecemeal, as it has been since 1967. They recommend explanations of the core principals, as they feel that many members today do not have the background to understand why we do things as we do. More detailed material, such as current legal requirements, could be written in handbooks which can be updated more easily. The group is encouraged by the numbers taking part in the reading QF&P project and will soon be asking for feedback.

Peter Ullathorne (Yearly Meeting Treasurer) and Ingrid Greenhow (Clerk of BYM Trustees) presented a summary of the operational budget and plan for 2017. The budget assumes a 10% increase in contributions as there has not been much response to the treasurer's call for an increase from £2 million to £3 million in voluntary contributions from Meetings and individuals. The finances are 'stable' and sufficiently robust to cope with uncertainty, although BYM is still drawing on its reserves to maintain its current level of activity. Hospitality income has increased some £300k on the previous year and investment income has done better than expected. The Operational Plan and Summary are have been approved by Trustees and are now available.

You may have been wondering whither BYM in Europe since Brexit. In her report from the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), our representative Elaine Green assured us that BYM (the largest

meeting in Europe and the owner of Quaker House in Brussels) is still very much wanted at the table. A revision of constitutional arrangements was begun before the referendum, and MfS agreed that two Friends will now represent BYM instead of a representative and alternate. QCEA's programme of work will focus on peace and human rights rather than more general lobbying and campaigning, increasingly following the QUNO model of quiet diplomacy. However, significant funding for QUNO from Switzerland, Norway and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Foundation is coming to an end. BYM Trustees have set up a working group to consider this.

We heard a report from Quaker Life Central Committee, who have been undergoing a thorough appraisal of what they are doing and how they are doing it. During this process they have developed a good relationship with BYM Trustees but this has highlighted the fact that they don't feel that they have a working relationship with MfS. Obviously it is harder for to build a relationship with a larger, more disparate group on the basis of one report a year, but Sufferings' Arrangement Group has been asked to consider how we can work better together.

Jane Booth, Banchory and Aberdeen Meetings.

Meeting for Sufferings 4 Feb 2017 [^return to top](#)

I'm the new alternate on Sufferings so I took Jane Booth's place at the latest meeting on Saturday 4th February. Lots had changed. We no longer meet in the small meeting house which is rather dominated by the sounds of cheerful worship of the Pentecostals using the large meeting house. Instead we use the smaller George Fox room on third floor. I was heartily relieved that the small meeting house had not been renamed!

Staff members had changed in the bookshop and the person

providing the sound equipment had changed, but I met the rep from East Scotland AM attending for her first time, even on her first visit to Friends House, and so felt I could be of use there. She wanted to repay me by prodding me every ten minutes to keep me awake but I explained it's better to let me sleep for 10 minutes and be fine for the rest of the meeting. Even if lost regarding the topic under discussion a Friend can always serve by holding the sense of worship. I'd long ago promised myself always to respond to what is needed rather than wait for others to do so. Something may need to be said at the right moment. To give you an example Friends are appointed to serve as elders, two each session. They are distinguished by green sashes. I once sat in a meeting that desperately needed eldering. We reps can be a bit too full of ourselves and too keen to get our piece heard when it has already been said, when we do not need to repeat. Or heaven for fend there can be times we disagree and start to contradict each other. The clerk can become lost. I know this from experience. It needs someone in that meeting to rise, wait to be called and then suggest we return to a worshipful silence. It is embarrassing if appointed elders are not doing their bit but better to rise and say one's bit and then apologise for treading on toes later. Mostly Friends are very tolerant and express thanks for the intervention.

(The day after Sufferings I was at Dorking meeting and explained why I was there to a relative newcomer I had not met before. She questioned the name. I was glad to explain how this time we had returned to the early roots and recorded the names of two Friends who had fallen foul of our courts. That is Ian Bray of Huddersfield meeting and Sam Walton of S London AM. Ian was arrested on 19 Nov with 14 others during a non-violent action against the expansion of Heathrow. He was fined and given a conditional discharge. Sam was arrested on 29 Jan for entering BAE systems Warton site to disarm war planes bound for Saudi Arabia. He's been released on bail.)

In view of recent political developments we agreed to release a statement reaffirming key Quaker (Christian) values of peace, love and unity. Our statement says there can be no peace without justice, no love without trust, and no unity without equality. Quote from AFSC

Our mid Triennium report on the recent work of Sufferings looms. We broke into groups to discuss this, including how to report in interesting ways to our AMs. Wales and Scotland reps met in one group but without the two reps from our General Meetings. We needed our wise GM rep Jane Pearn as one Scottish Friend was too dominant. I was landed with taking notes result I turned up late in the restaurant but was beautifully looked after despite the fact the food had all been cleared. How they deserve their award for hospitality.

Do you remember the Canterbury commitment from 2011? As a result guess what? soon after that BYM we established a group to take this concern forward. It has been renamed the Sustainability group. Liz Burch gave an excellent report but pointed out that we tend to leave this concern to the lone green Friend in our meeting. Have you noticed this? So they can become very lonely. We were reminded to do our green challenging in love. At lunchtime I met a Friend who said she was fed up of green issues. I suggested she turn it round in her mind and remind herself how much she had achieved. Yes we all need to change our habits but let's do this by loving encouragement of each other.

We were asked to fill in on a paper form whether our AM had divested from fossil fuels, a concern being overseen by QPSW. I was embarrassed not to know and asked Nigel asap only to be reassured we'd never held any. I suppose that's not surprising as there are no coal fields in North of Scotland so possibly the question had never

come up in the days our AM made investment decisions.

We heard two concerns from other meetings. One was Pendle Hills AM concern against fracking. Our minute said "Quakers call for a ban on new and intensive forms of fossil fuel extraction known as "unconventional" techniques, including fracking for shale gas and oil, and underground coal gasification. We also recommend that Area Meetings make this position known locally." The second was from General Meeting Scotland regarding the increasing militarisation of Scottish Schools with cadet forces. Our parliamentary liaison officer Mairi Campbell Jack has worked hard on this challenging the lack of information and seeking it out to back up our concern.

Pendle Hills Area Meeting is holding an anti-fracking meeting for worship on Sat 6 May. This starts at 2pm on top of Pendle Hill, but sadly it clashes with our residential AM in Orkney. It's a hard choice to make. I was keen to revisit Pendle hill and to support Friends there but naturally Orkney wins. See you there?

Mary Dower Aberdeen LM

Meeting for Sufferings April 1st 2017 [^return to top](#)

During ministry, one Friend summed up this meeting as being about the letter and the spirit. It's true that, although my heart and mind may have been prepared during an almost sleepless journey down on the seated 'sleeper', I wasn't really feeling particularly inspired about the agenda, which included Quaker Stewardship and Trustees reports, a terms of reference review and micro-changes to QF&P. It's all extremely necessary and worthwhile and I did my best with the papers, but I couldn't summon much enthusiasm.

Trustees report.

However, Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of BYM Trustees, can always be relied upon to bring the usually rather dry Trustees' reports to life. She even makes it sound like fun. They considered the recent favourable review of the Scottish Advocacy Pilot Project. Management Meeting will be considering options to continue supporting this for another 3 years, and will bring forward proposals in June to continue this 'really important piece of work'.

I mentioned in my last report that some of the key funding for QUNO was coming to an end. A maximum of £533,500 of legacy funding will be released for an additional three years to support their project on the Human Impacts of Climate Change, and the agreement of fundraising between BYM and QUNO will be altered to allow QUNO to approach potential donors in the UK.

One of the risks to the RsoF has been identified as our ageing and declining membership, and we heard a bit about Quaker Life's work to address this with various initiatives aimed at young adult friends, parents of young children, teens and those in their 30s and 40s.

Quaker Stewardship report

I had not really heard of the Quaker Stewardship Committee before receiving the papers for this meeting, despite receiving their 'Treasurers News' as treasurer of Banchory LM. The committee works mainly with AMs, looking after good governance and helping them produce proper annual reports and accounts which meet legal and charity requirements. It also provides training for treasurers and trustees. Many AMs find it hard to fill treasurer and especially trustee posts, and those in them can feel unsupported.

We considered the three questions put to us by the QSC: 1) What more can the QSC and AMs do to ensure that trustees and treasurers receive the support they need? 2) Would making wider central use of the information provided in trustees' annual reports

and accounts be a worthwhile expenditure of BYM's resources? and 3) How can QSC best prompt a wider conversation to ensure that BYM's governance structures are sustainable in the long term?

It was thought that QSC is doing a good job and is seen to be willing to work with Friends, however some thought that a more proactive approach is needed to engage more Friends about governance. Woodbrooke has proposed an online course in Financial Stewardship. Annual reports, which give a summary of the life of a meeting, can be very engaging and are sometimes a good means of outreach. There is no one solution to ensuring that BYM's governance is sustainable. Trustees are a legal requirement for charities and meetings with difficulties finding Friends able and willing to serve face a real risk. Some groups may find that that have to merge to fulfil requirements, but for others this may not be possible.

Area Meeting minutes

We received a concern from Brighouse West Yorkshire AM regarding vulnerable adults in the meeting. Their experience of supporting someone who became unable to take care of herself during a period of time as she became housebound, hospitalised and eventually resident in a care home until her death, while a privilege, was also a huge responsibility. In retrospect, they felt they made mistakes and there is no Quaker guidance about this matter. The minute was forwarded to Quaker Life to take this forward. North East Thames AM forwarded a statement about transgender and non-binary inclusion ("Facing turbulent times, Quakers in Britain seek a future where Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age.... all are welcomed and included" - from 'Our Faith in the Future', 2015). Welcoming and including transgender and non-binary people to Quakers seems obvious but what we might lack is understanding! One Friend asked what non-binary meant. He probably wasn't the only one who needed clarification -

it means someone who does not identify as either male or female. We can probably learn something from young Friends, as this is a live issue for them. Recording Clerk Paul Parker told us that the tabular statement will offer the options of 'male', 'female' and 'other' and encourages AMs to make it known that this will be available (whether to mean 'non-binary' or 'none-of-your-business'!)

Quaker World Relations Committee report
QWRC's purpose is to enrich understanding between Friends worldwide and engage Quakers in Britain with Quaker concerns around the globe. It maintains links with other YMs and the FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation) and encourages intervisitation (virtual or actual). The Canterbury Commitment means that relationships worldwide have to be balanced with sustainability, but travel is sometimes necessary. Last year it sent letters of upholding to other YMs when faced with challenging circumstances (Burundi, which experienced community violence after constitutional changes, and France, Belgium and Luxemburg, and Germany following acts of terrorism). Although not explicitly stated, the work described in the report is underpinned by 'Our Faith in the Future'. Looking forward, it hopes to connect with Friends in BYM knowledgeable about Friends in the Americas and Asia-West Pacific. Any member of BYM is welcome to join the QWRC network by emailing Marleen Schepers at marleens@quaker.org.uk.

As I travelled home, I reflected on my prior lack of enthusiasm about the agenda and felt very humbled by all the time and care that our trustees and treasurers take on our behalf. Whether or not we are potential trustee material ourselves, good stewardship of our resources and sustainable governance should be important to all of us. We should support our trustees and have a good understanding of what they do.

Jane Booth, Banchory and Aberdeen Meetings.

Area Meeting Listening Project [^return to top](#)

This project was facilitated by Anthony Buxton on 9th April, and elicited the following responses to the four questions:

- How do you connect with other Quakers/Friends?
- How do you feel about this?
- What would you like to change?
- How do you envisage the future of the community of Friends in North Scotland?

1. How do you connect with other Quakers/Friends?

Face book page of Quakers in Scotland; Telephone, write, visit and visited by; Attending GM, AM, & LM business meetings were I connect to Friends as well as be part of the business meeting. Being part of QAAD- spiritual friendships and annual meeting. Attend YM where there is a chance for deep conversations with people. Meeting for Worship locally. Being on a committee- get to know people better as in contact with more Friends- very valuable. A lot of talk about previous small group residential- family weekends- Quaker Woman's group- summer picnic- etc. where it is possible to get to know people because it is a small group. A real call for something like this again across those present.

2. How do you feel about this?

A number of older Friends feel isolated and this is overlooked as the focus is on the young. E & O linking is missing. Some infirm friends are only visited by one or two people and then there is a very well attended funeral! It is a privilege to share the last part of a life of a Friend. Visiting is missing- an opportunity for Meeting for Worship at home. Sending cards is one way of maintaining contact. Feeling that Elders and Overseers should be more open about sharing the

needs of individuals while recognising that there is a balance between intrusion and availability as well.

3. What would you like to change?

Need to know who has a need. Friends who no longer come but remain on our lists. Being on a list is not good enough, need to challenge membership when this is all that remains. Overseers responsibility and they are beginning to look at this.

Friends not knowing or experiencing what a gathered meeting is or understanding the depth of silence. How do we cherish this?

Greater need for intimacy amongst Friends. How far is being a Quaker central to your life- are other networks more important? Other issues in life present and given priority. Small f friends need to be aware of the way we act as Friends. In-reach and outreach - how do we sell ourselves? How do we make our mark on the world? Shrinking meetings do we need a recruitment drive?

Reticence of Friends- move to secular involvement rather than spiritual. Faith in Action... saying what it is about... No hierarchy- not told what to think, decisions by agreement thus a sense of community. Lack of younger people joining most new members are older generation. Many have no religious background and we need to teach this. More friends in North Scotland since I was a teenager.

4. How do you envisage the future of the community of Friends in North Scotland?

A Quaker umbrella. Having 4 meetings a year about right with one or two residential. A community- working together and getting to know each other. Issues of transport and isolation difficult. Use of technology- video conferencing should be considered. Telephone conferences alright for small groups but not AM. Make all meetings residential and support people to come. Agenda for meeting needs to be better balanced and not defined by a business agenda but by worship. We need mechanisms to include those who are absent. Perhaps we should visit the GM questions and apply them to AM

and LM. Some Quakers would not consider going to AM at all, others do not understand what it is about. Sitting for a long time makes me unquakerly. Needs to be broken up by something more interesting. Moving around to energise ourselves. Drop in or out of sessions. Standing when we speak. Everyone needs to be involved. Sometimes the clerk is master or mistress of the meeting and not the servant.

Quaker Life Representative Council: 21st – 23rd April 2017 Helping Seekers Find Quakers – Being Worth the Finding [^return to top](#)

How to describe the experience of being at my first Quaker Life Rep Council? It was a whirlwind, of meeting many of the 93 other reps and finding so many interesting people. A potter, bread-makers, writers, social workers, counsellors, teachers, Friends working with asylum seekers and refugees. The delight of finding that an Inverness Quaker was a Friend in Residence. The two magpies on the lawn promising joy, and the pair of Canada geese who had taken up residence in the labyrinth. There was noise and silence, confusion and laughter. I felt I was forever starting again, asking people where they were from, hearing about their Meetings. Someone sang their ministry in Meeting for Worship, and others softly joined in. And, in spite of all the warnings, I locked myself out of my room.

We had come together to discuss how Quakers can thrive in our modern society, and three keynote speakers focussed on different aspects. Alistair Fuller looked at demographics, showing how Quakers grew in number right through to the late 1960s, at which point children were an integral part of the Meeting. The overall number of worshipers, including attenders, continued to rise until 1993. But since then the count has decreased. The number of members has dropped, the number of children in membership has dropped, and the total number of children attending has dropped. There is a disconnect as fewer children grow up in a Quaker

Meeting, and there is a perceived danger of Quaker heritage being lost or diluted unless we become more visible and find ways to share our stories.

In wider society, people's understanding of rootedness and membership has changed, and with the exception of the Women's Institute, the Brownies and local Gyms, people are less likely to join organisations. In Quakers, we have the same number of Local Meetings as previously, and even more roles, increasing in complexity, but fewer people to take these on. Alistair argued that this is not sustainable; we need to look at what we can let go of, and what we need to embrace that is different.

He described what we offer as "A Pearl of great Price"; a cherishing and challenging community, and he urged us to become more freely and fully ourselves, being willing to experiment and fail if necessary, sharing our stories with others and becoming more active in our Meetings and in our communities.

Kevin Redpath described how his own Meeting approached outreach and inreach, concluding that good inreach inevitably becomes good outreach. They had a retreat at Charney Manor where they created a summer mandala together and dreamed into their future. They looked at their use of technology, ensuring their website was suitable for use on mobile phones. They organised a "Foodraising Concert" for their local food bank and provided a cooked lunch for Travellers at Glastonbury at Christmas. They advertised their Meeting with a picture of a circle of chairs, with the words "Have you tried the simple quiet of a Quaker Meeting?" They participated in the civic life of their community, and put on an exhibition of Quaker Art, serving cream teas. He summarised the broad areas they had focussed on: engaging in common tasks, interfaith work, expressing their creativity, engaging with their communities, and telling their stories.

Finally, Joannie Harrison talked about her work as a Quaker Hospital Chaplain, offering pastoral, spiritual and religious support to anyone who requested it. She worked alongside a Methodist, two Anglicans, a Catholic and a Muslim. She felt that while she offered less certainty than the ordained chaplains, she could meet the people's need for spiritual solace in a time of crisis in a society of many faiths and none. Sometimes her own faith was challenged, yet on other days she saw healing and sensed God's presence.

She gave group supervision to the other chaplains as her Quaker approach could include them all.

We were encouraged to look at what our own Meetings could do, inspired by these presentations.

We attended two workshops each, my first one was Telling Our Stories. It was simple and effective, and could be offered at a local level. Meetings could compile these stories and produce a booklet, or could repeat the exercise periodically for newcomers.

My second workshop was Tending the Garden of Your Soul, offering spiritually renewing exercises and resources. While this could be done in Local Meetings, it would require resources to be prepared in advance, and some bought.

In our final small group session I was struck by feedback from another workshop. The facilitator spoke of inviting new people in, and being prepared to change because they were now part of us. But then she went on to say "we will change before you come so that you will be welcome". The younger members of the council were very clear that social media is a part of their lives, and a group that does not embrace this will struggle to reach them.

Throughout the weekend, I met people who were utterly inspiring; in spite of their personal circumstances they were devoted to being active in the world and caring for others. I felt humbled and

privileged to be there with them.

The message of this Quaker Life Rep Council was clear and the effects of putting it into practice could be transformative. In the words of Alistair Fuller, “we are being called to be creative, imaginative, faithful, open... ..and hopeful.”

Lynden Easterbrook: Forres Meeting

The Work of Quaker Life [^return to top](#)

Before attending my first Quaker Life Rep Council I contacted Meetings in North Scotland for feedback. From the responses I received I sensed that I was not alone in having a very sketchy idea as to what Quaker Life is doing on our behalf, so having been to a presentation on their current work I shall do my best to give a fuller picture. Apologies to those who already know more than I do.

Quaker Life Central Committee manages staff, resources, outreach and the library at Friends House. They offer training, support and events. These include “Let’s Explore the Quaker Way of Life”, focussing on the Testimonies, a session that can be offered to Meetings, schools and other groups. On 2nd June they are hosting a free Families Day in Friends House.

We currently have a Children and Young People’s intern, Jethro, and they are recruiting for a new intern for 2017/18. Jethro has been working on peer facilitation with Young Friends; enabling and empowering young people is seen as essential to the life of our Meetings.

Supporting Elders and Overseers: Quaker Life offer support either in person or using the Quaker Life network to identify someone from a Meeting nearby who can help with conflict resolution, mental

health issues and other difficulties. They have produced the book “With a Tender Hand”.

Quaker Employers and Wardens: There will be three events this year, see www.quaker.org.uk/employers for more information.

End of Life issues: they have now published a leaflet, “Love and Loss” and are continuing to work on end of life issues.

Quaker Life Network works with Local Meetings, and have produced a guide for Quaker Chaplains in prisons, hospitals or on the street, and offer training and conferences for Quaker Chaplains.

The Library at Friends House contains the archive of Britain Yearly Meeting since the 17th Century, as well as works of art, rare books and tracts, and a collection of mainly 20th Century posters. It is open four days a week. They also have a Facebook page and are on Twitter and have a Blog. They have loaned posters to the Imperial War Museum for a Peace display which is on until August this year. There are Quaker Life Network clusters for local Records Custodians and Librarians. They are also working jointly with Woodbrooke to make more resources available online.

Helping People Find Quakers: There will be a Quaker Life presence at the Hay Book Festival this year where three Quaker authors are speaking. Tickets are £7.50 and they expect 250,000 people at the festival. They will also have a presence at GreenBelt festival, and are looking for offers of help there (email outreach@quaker.org.uk).

Quaker Life produce posters for Outreach Week, do online advertising and have a Twitter account [@knowmorequakers](https://twitter.com/knowmorequakers) and are on Instagram. They send out information packs to everyone enquiring about Quakers. In the first quarter of 2016 they sent out 200, in the same period in 2017 they sent out 800. Local Meetings can send for up to six packs at a time, and can order more whenever they are needed. They can provide speakers for events (contact via quakers.org.uk) and they will offer media training for radio

interviews etc. at Yearly Meeting Gathering.
And finally, Quaker Hoodies will be on sale soon.

Lynden Easterbrook, Forres Meeting

Northern Friends Peace Board in York 26th November 2016 [^return to top](#)

Global Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty; Janet Fenton from Edinburgh, a very experienced long time campaigner who really knows her stuff briefed us for an hour. The point I got – in the past potential nuclear attacks based on error and fear (like geese being mistaken for a missile), have in the past been stopped by a human double checking and saying that there was no missile. Nowadays we are even more super computer reliant – even more distancing that human element If you are reading this – well there is still hope – we are still here! I have included the minute of Janet's talk which says it better than I can!! It is worth reading. It is important.

Global Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

Janet Fenton has introduced the work that has been undertaken to set in motion the plan to establish a Global Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. She has expressed her gratitude for the process which has led to this. She has emphasised that this is about the destruction nuclear weapons are capable of doing to this planet and has asked us to bear in mind their enormous potential: today even a 'small exchange' would be 100 times greater than Hiroshima. She has pointed out that it is the countries which do not hold nuclear weapons that have been the source of attempts to control them. She has told us that the Scottish dimension is crucial but that this is essentially an international issue which our government is not addressing.

Janet listed for us the series of UN initiatives to ban or control nuclear weapons. Article 6 of the current Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed by nuclear states but has not advanced in any significant way: there are now nine nuclear states where there were five when the treaty was signed. She has pointed out to us that the only way this can be changed is to alter the perceptions of the people in power so that they can understand fully the threat of the very existence of these weapons, for example the huge risks of an accident the weapons pose, which is in fact increasing given the introduction of computer involvement in protective systems.

Janet has reminded us that nuclear weapons free zones do exist – in Africa, for example – but efforts towards the Middle East were scuppered by the US despite the efforts of Ban Ki Moon. She has made clear that emergency medical care would not be able to give any assistance in the case of a use of or accident involving a nuclear weapon and that chaos would result.

Janet has told us that three international conferences were called by non-nuclear countries looking at the possibility of an international treaty; these led to a resolution in the UN and subsequently open ended conferences and working groups drawing in civil society. Janet herself has attended as a representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, established after the Hague Conference held in 1915. She has exposed the fact that although the UK and other nuclear states have boycotted this process, individual diplomats did in fact attend.

Decisions were made by consensus and a resolution drawn up that recognised the security interests of nuclear weapon holding nations. Despite these efforts the Australian delegate moved for a vote; the original resolution was then carried in favour and was taken to the UN in New York.

Janet has demonstrated the view of the UK government when she told us that, in a debate which was not being recorded, the UK delegate attacked the resolution saying that the authors did not recognise 'You shall do no harm,' and claimed that the UK had democratically voted for continued holding of weapons. 123 states did in the end support the resolution with 38 mainly nuclear weapons states voting against.

Janet urged Friends to support further action on this by holding our parliamentarians to account: helping them to listen, to understand that the resolution is workable and to recognise the dangers of nuclear weaponry. Janet has listed questions that we can ask our MPs: about how we select our diplomats; why the UK did not enter negotiations on the issue; whether they will send someone willing to support the process on the 5th December; why Scotland's views are not represented. She has also urged us to talk to people and to get the issue into the press.

In answer to a question, Janet has enlarged on the risks involved in the very real possibility of an accident.

Veterans for Peace Michael Elstub from Settle Local Meeting and a member of Veterans for Peace UK (see <http://vfpuk.org/about/>) was the speaker. VfP was founded by Vietnam veterans who now have a seat in the UN and were invited into membership of the International Peace Bureau in Geneva. In 2011 a chapter was formed in the UK.

Michael showed us the Statement of Intent of VfP: this statement identified the UK as a prime driver for war and that war is not a solution to the problems of the world, and lists the actions designed to liberate the citizens of the UK from the consequences of the 'War System'. Friends are encouraged to draw on VfP members who are willing to speak to groups, particularly of young people and in schools, to provide a vital counterbalance to the view of the armed

services that is provided by those involved in publicity and recruitment.

To this end AM has agreed to have him as guest speaker on Saturday afternoon at Pluscarden area meeting in August.

My 3½ years as your rep on NFPB have come to an end – it has been quite a journey for me – literally and metaphorically. Thank you for the opportunity. I have learnt a great deal about our fellow Quakers and their involvement in peace work from Nottingham upwards, and thanks to NFPB, about many different groups working for peace – all interlinked and talking to each other. Our diversity and our commonalities, especially with regard to Peace Work. All of which is very enthusing and supportive to all our meetings.

We do seem to be challenged up here in that we have little going in the way of peace activities, unlike say Huddersfield, a city of sanctuary, active in working with asylum seekers and refugees and every which way for peace, with CO history going back to WW1, and socialism and the mills. We are different and I wonder which way you would see us go as NSAM, or individual LM's in our peace efforts?

NFPB is there always as an advisor and link with all sorts of Peace organisations. Taking over from me is William Purser, also from Forres LM, perhaps you would like to give your thoughts to him?

Wishing you all an interesting 2017

In peace

Juli Salt, Forres LM

Report on the work of the Parliamentary Liaison Group for General Meeting for Scotland 11th March 2017 [^return to top](#)

The Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Mairi Campbell-Jack has

been in post now for 2 years working 2.5 days per week. Four themes for Scottish advocacy work were discerned by GMS and the Parliamentary Liaison Group

- the Elections 2015 (Westminster) and 2016 (Holyrood),
- Trident replacement,
- Increasing militarisation activity and recruitment in schools
- Economic justice, sustainability and peace.

Of these four the elections have taken place and on Trident all the main churches in Scotland share the Quaker view so the focus for now is our continued work on militarism in schools and economic justice. The Petition which we have raised in the Scottish Parliament in partnership with Forces Watch has now had 3 hearings and after each the Petitions Committee has called for more views from a variety of bodies. The most recent hearing was on the 2nd March at which the members of the committee acknowledged the strength of supportive views sent in by, for example, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference, Young Scots for Independence, Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Scottish Parent-Teacher Council as well as individuals. The petition asks for: Transparency – for armed forces visits to schools be recorded; for parents to be informed of visits beforehand so that children can withdraw if they object and for guidance to be given around creating a balance in the classroom.

At this last hearing the committee unanimously decided to call the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney, for questioning and that they would hear a briefing from the MOD. At the same time as this work a second but separate issue has arisen which is the £50million set aside by the previous Chancellor to fund cadet forces in state schools “prioritising schools in less affluent areas”. This came to our notice in Scotland and we raised it through a minute from GM to MfS. At their meeting in February MfS

referred this concern to a number of Quaker bodies including QPSW Economic Justice: many of you will know about the very successful symposium which the PLFG and Mairi Campbell- Jack hosted in Edinburgh last year which drew a large and wide range of people together to talk about “Creating a Just Scotland: transforming our land and taxation policies”.

We are following this up with a working seminar towards the end of April with an invited group to thresh how we take this work forward particularly looking at some ideas raised by Richard Murphy, Quaker and tax specialist round Corporate Tax. One of the additional aspects of our advocacy work is letting Quakers know what is coming up around Quaker concerns in Westminster and Holyrood where we feel individual contact with local MPs and MSPs could be effective and we will do this from time to time via the GMS emailing list.

Joyce Taylor, Convenor Parliamentary Liaison Function Group.

The Parliamentary Liaison Function Group [return to top](#)

Some of you may not be aware that I am North Scotland AM's representative on General Meeting for Scotland's PLFG. I apologise about not keeping you all better informed - by the time I have struggled with my writer's block to prepare MfS reports it returns with a thus-far insurmountable vengeance when it comes to any other reports! There have, however, been some recent developments our AM should be aware of.

Our priorities for work are discerned by GM and the group itself. We were involved in the elections in 2015 and 2016, and the issue of Trident replacement. Currently, the main themes are:

- 1) Increased militarisation and recruitment in schools
- 2) Economic justice, sustainability and peace

In partnership with Forces Watch, we submitted a petition to the Scottish parliament last year calling for greater scrutiny, guidance and consultation on armed forces visits to schools in Scotland. This has now had four hearings, the last with Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney. He said he was 'happy to consider' Together Scotland's recommendation that the committee commission a Child Rights Impact Assessment about armed forces visits to schools in Scotland. A future meeting will hear evidence from COSLA and a briefing from the MoD.

Economic justice, sustainability and peace are huge topics and inextricably linked in complex ways. How can we get a handle on all this? I believe we have made a good start. Increased devolution for Scotland makes this a good time to consider what sort of a society we want and how to go about it. Last October the PLFG and our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Mairi Campbell-Jack, hosted an open symposium called 'Creating a Just Scotland: Transforming our Land and Taxation Policies'. The speakers were Richard Murphy on tax reform, Andy Wightman on land reform and Lesley Riddoch on Scandinavian economic models (there is an article about it in The Friend of 17th Nov. 2016). It was very informative and well-attended and was recently followed on 22nd April this year by a working seminar with invited participants from a wide range of interested groups (e.g. academia, Oxfam, Common Weal, Iona Community, Positive Money, AVP, Basic Income Campaign) to consider how to take things forward. Three main themes came from the discussion:

1) Changing (or adding to) the narrative - asking what sort of society we want, with what sort of values? Viewing tax not as a bad thing, but as our subscription to a better society, and seeing growth not just in terms of money, but in terms of better welfare, community, environment and so on.

2) Considering an unconditional basic income for every individual as a right of citizenship.

3) Better education about economics.

We will be discussing further steps at our next PLFG meeting in June. If anyone has any ideas or expertise, or wishes to engage with this in more depth please get in touch as I have more detailed reports available.

The Scottish Advocacy Pilot has been running for more than two years now. It's recent review concluded that it had already done worthwhile work, which continues in the right direction, and that it has increased both awareness of Scottish matters at Friends House and engagement of Scottish Friends (I apologise again for my writer's block, but I do hope that most of you are aware of at least some of what has been done). The review recommends that the work should be considered as core work for Quakers in Britain, should continue for at least another three years, and that we should consider increasing our Parliamentary Engagement Officer's hours from 2.5 to 3.5 days if required. The future and funding of the project is being considered by GM and BYM Trustees. Obviously there are financial implications for NSAM, but I feel that the project is well worth supporting and very exciting - could Scotland be a test-bed for radical reforms to bring about a fairer, more equal society?

Jane Booth, Banchory and Aberdeen Meetings.

Scottish Interfaith Week. 2016 [^return to top](#)

On Sunday November 20th members of Inverness interfaith group met by invitation at the local Mosque to celebrate Scottish Interfaith Week which took place between 13th-20th November.

Scottish Interfaith Week was established in 2004 as an opportunity for individuals and local faith groups to meet and to celebrate Scotland's diverse religious community. Promoting dialogue, understanding and co-operation between each other and developing bonds and trust, the Inverness Group meets regularly. We organize religious, social and educational events, annual picnics, faith sharing, music, dance and poetry events and are involved in social action initiatives, such as helping and supporting refugees.

Meetings usually take place in friend's homes and often with meal sharing. The group went on a "Pilgrimage" last year to Iona and another trip is planned for 2017. We work together to break down barriers and to provide a forum for discussion on faith issues and to promote faith work at local community events.

It was arranged that the local Interfaith group meet at Inverness Mosque on Sunday 20th November for a workshop on the theme "Religion and the Media". In view of recent global events it has become more important to maintain a positive relationship with the media. Insensitive media reporting has left some faith groups feeling threatened, particularly the Muslim community. Quakers too at one time came under attack and were once considered a threat to the state, many years ago of course! Quakers have always worked with other faiths and recognized the meaning and value of the teachings of other faiths. George Fox the founder of Quakerism quoted from the Qur'an' when writing to the King of Algiers about slavery. Mary Fisher visited Turkey to speak with Sultan Muhammad, John Woolman an American Quaker campaigned against slavery. William Penn spoke with Native Americans as being of equal value and in their own language.

In the workshop we had to discuss how religion is reported in the media. We were divided into groups and each group was given a different topic reported in a particular newspaper. We then had to

decide how accurate the article was, did it have a bias was it objective was it true or false. Some papers are more biased than others, of course! It was a very engaging discussion with many different views and opinions.

There has been a lot of misinformation, distorted information, fake news reporting linked to the rise of social media, in recent years. What can you believe? How difficult is it to believe what is written? How trustworthy are our politicians or do we prefer to listen to our faith leaders? Confusing!

We are living in a multi-faith Britain and as Quakers we must not only have an understanding of other faiths but to be seen as doing so. Many faith groups recognize the similarities as well as the diversity within faith groups and so it is all the more important to support religious equality.

As Quakers we have much in common with other faiths. We don't profess to have all the answers and indeed we have many more questions than answers. We do not believe we are the only path to the truth. Perhaps that's why we have survived for 350yrs.

As Inverness Friends we have been invited to the local Mosque many times and have always been made very welcome. There is a mixed group from various faiths including, Baha'i, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh as well as Quakers present. The Mosque is beautifully decorated with oriental rugs and a wood burning stove, just right for a winter evening. A wonderful selection of delicious food was available as well as good company.

Eleanor Fairclough and Sila Collins-Walden, Inverness L M

Inverness LM All Age Worship on Sunday December 18th. [^return to top](#)

Jean, one of our elders, one day put it to Friends at meeting that perhaps we should have an All Age Worship with a difference this year. A celebration with a seasonal theme? Music, poems, stories, songs, anything which Friends could contribute. She was soon inundated with offers of contributions!

Inverness local meeting had just recently moved to more suitable premises kindly offered to us by the L'arche community. Meeting is held in a modern building within the grounds of a lovely old house surrounded by trees. It's a warm and more comfortable space with toilet and kitchen facilities, but most importantly more space for our children. As a result we are now able to have a children's meeting twice a month. It's well attended too!

As I understand it Quakers didn't originally celebrate Christmas. However this was a simple celebration of Friends getting together for worship, fun, and food all supplied by Friends. As it was 3rd Sunday it was the children's meeting. It was appropriate for the season of joy and peace. Christmas doesn't have to be an extravagant affair. A simple celebration is so much more enjoyable.

Arrangements got underway. There was no programme as such, Friends just got busy on deciding what they wanted do. We have musicians, poets, writers and vocalists at meeting so we weren't short on talent. That's an understatement!

The Clerk did an introduction to meeting and it was decided to have a shorter MfW, lasting fifteen minutes. There was a variety of contributions, starting with John Lennon's CD "So this is Christmas (the war is over)" a protest song against the Vietnam War from 1971. We were given song sheets and everyone joined in.

All of the children took part. I was very much impressed by our very talented children! Emmett on the keyboard played a lovely tune "Blue Bird," brother and sister Rona and Angus L on accordion accompanied by their mother on clarinet played "Jingle Bells", "Merry Christmas" and Rona finished off with "Stornoway". Both children speak the Gaelic language too. Angus T on accordion played a medley of Christmas tunes. Mary, who is a Welsh speaker, read "Paham", by Hilma Lloyd Edwards. Alastair read his own poem "Crystal Diggers", a beautiful piece appreciating the timeless beauty of the earth and that appreciation is timeless in itself. Julia played on the accordion of a variety of Gaelic tunes. T. S. Eliot's poem "Journey of the Magi" was followed by "Little Drummer Boy" accompanied on the bodhran. There were other contributions from Friends so if I have left anyone out I apologize. The afternoon was finished off with a funny little poem "Snow Ball" recited by Jean.

In view of the global situation the world can seem a dark place at present but there is light and hope. We all have the capacity to feel joy. The celebrations at meeting transcended the generations. Meeting was packed out! As one Friend Julia put it; "It's my own understanding that everything we do is worship in the sense of that being an expression, an ongoing fashioning of how we see our relationship with God". Friends enjoyed our very lively meeting. As one attender put it: "It broke the ice. I spoke with Friends whom I hadn't spoken to before".

Advices & Queries 19: "Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognize the gifts they bring" ...We certainly had joy that day and recognized the gifts that Friends brought to meeting that day.

Sila Collins-Walden, Inverness LM.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Giving to North Scotland Area Meeting (Registered Charity Number SC017958) [^return to top](#)

(please note a previous version of the schedule contained a mistake in the figure required to support the work of AM. It should be £120 and not £170 as previously intimated – Ed)

Membership entails a financial commitment appropriate to a member's means, for without money neither the local meeting nor the wider structure can function. Quaker Faith and Practice 11.01

Friends in North Scotland Area Meeting uphold Quaker worship in 10 Local Meetings and meet 4 times a year as an area meeting. We have 132 members and 160 attenders.

We believe our faith is lived through action working with others to create a more just and peaceful world. Our testimonies to peace, equality, truth and simplicity encourage us to work for social justice, to support peacemakers and care for the environment. We can do this in many ways but contributing financially is important.

How will your money be used? Your contribution will support Quaker work carried out by your Local Meeting, Area Meeting, General Meeting for Scotland and the work of Britain Yearly Meeting here and throughout the world.

Area Meeting relies solely on contributions from individual members and attenders to finance its running costs and to meet its obligations to GM for Scotland and BYM. We ask you to support our work practically, prayerfully and financially. Some examples of how your contribution will be used:

Local Meetings:

- fund the hire of a venue for meeting for worship
- purchase books

- support children's work
- promote and support Quakers locally

Area Meeting:

- helps Friends attend conferences and training to strengthen our Quaker witness
- supports the work of GM for Scotland
- supports and funds the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer along with GM and BYM
- funds the newsletter and our website
- meets essential administrative costs of insurance, teleconferences, Friends travel

General Meeting for Scotland:

- 'has national responsibilities on behalf of Britain Yearly meeting to represent and advance the life and witness of Quakers in Scotland' QFP 5.03
- directs the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer to work on our behalf on the themes of increasing militarisation activity and recruitment in schools and economic justice, sustainability and peace.

Britain Yearly Meeting:

- works with and on behalf of all Quakers in Britain by supporting the Quaker community and speaking out in the world to promote our testimonies
- supports Quaker Living Wage Campaign
- organizes Yearly Meeting Gathering which this year will bring together around 2,000 Quakers at Warwick

- works with other faith based organisations to engage with decision makers and to get our message across to governments
- has arranged media interviews which have been used to reach millions of people to raise awareness of Quaker views on militarism and conscientious objection
- launched a new programme to explore how Quakers can make a difference to forced migration.

How can I contribute?

We realise that everyone’s circumstances are different. Some friends will be unable to contribute the amounts suggested, but we are grateful for all donations, regardless of size. Others will be able to contribute more, and we hope that they will do so.

If you wish to make a regular commitment please complete the contribution schedule indicating how your contribution should be allocated. If you do not tell us how to allocate your donation, the whole amount will go to North Scotland Area Meeting.

Some guidelines to help you in deciding what to give:

- your Local Meeting treasurer can tell you what your Local Meeting needs
- Area Meeting needs £120 per member to fund its work. This includes £14 per member to support the work of GM for Scotland, and £9 per member to fund the post of Parliamentary Engagement Worker.
- £11.8m is needed to fund Quaker work this year and BYM would like to raise £3m in contributions from Friends. This means asking for £225 per member to sustain current work and develop new work.

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can increase your donation by allowing us to claim back relevant tax through the Gift Aid Scheme. This allows us to claim 25p for every £1 donated.

For more information please ask: Derek McLean (Treasurer) 01856 852959 nsamtreasurer@gmail.com

Anthony Buxton (Assistant Treasurer) 01542 834542 nsamtreasurer@gmail.com

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) North Scotland Area Meeting Contribution Schedule 2017

Name

.....

I wish to contribute £.....per month / quarter / annum to be allocated as follows:

ToLocal Meeting £.....
 To North Scotland Area Meeting £.....
 To Britain Yearly Meeting £.....

I shall make my payment by:

- (Please indicate) Cheque
 Standing Order / BACS payment
 CAF Voucher/Standing Order

Please indicate:

- If you wish a receipt or acknowledgement
- If you would like a standing order mandate form
- If you would like bank details for BACS payment
- If you would like a gift aid declaration form

Cheques and CAF Vouchers should be made payable to North

Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

Please return this form and any donations to the Assistant Treasurer of North Scotland Area Meeting:

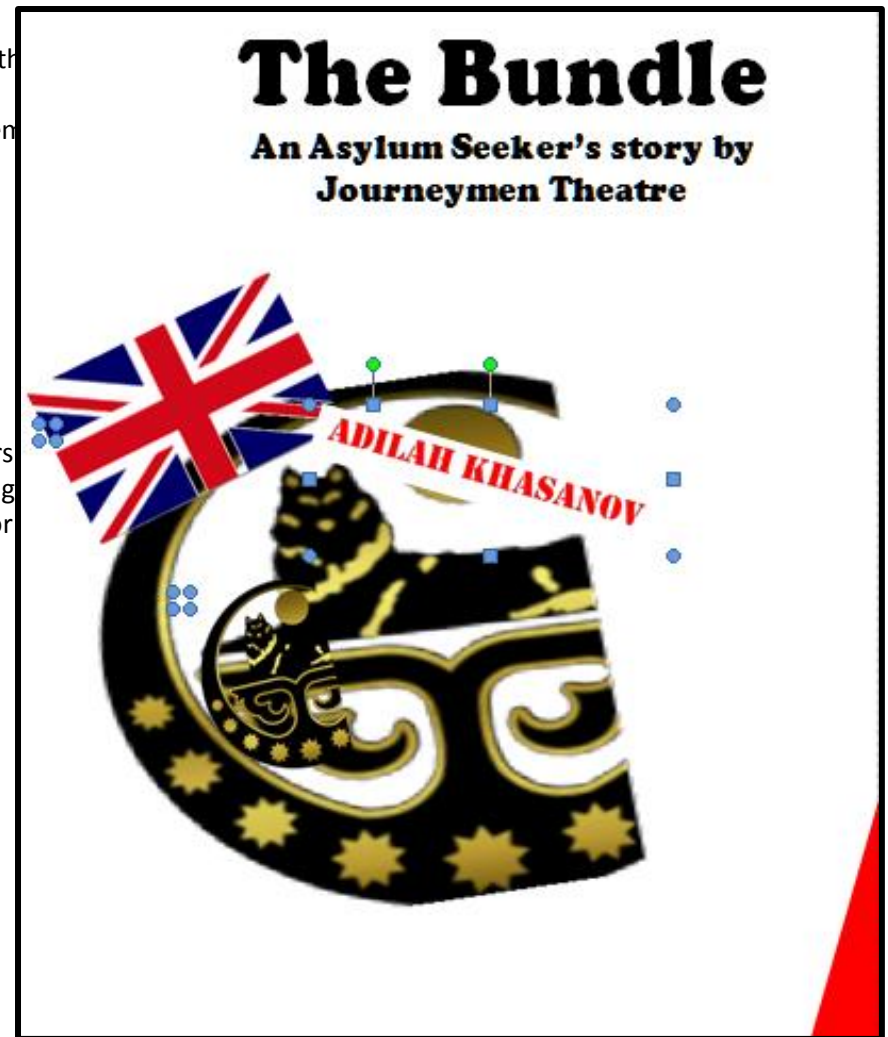
Anthony Buxton, 6 Reidhaven Crescent, Findochty, Nr. Buckie AB56 4QG email nsamtreasurer@gmail.com

Journeymen Theatre's two new short plays on urgent contemporary issues.

Come and see both plays on Thu 22 or Fri 23 June at 7.30pm Renfield St Stephens Centre 260 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4JP Advance tickets £10 (£8 for unwaged) from brownpapertickets.com/events/2928470

Tickets also on sale at the door. This event is supported by Glasgow Quakers Refugee Festival Scotland 2017. There will also be a photo exhibition: The Light That Pushes Me about the human capacity to give heart and soul to work for nonviolent change in the hardest circumstances.

The Bundle An Asylum Seeker's story by Journeymen Theatre




This Light that Pushes Me: Stories of African Peacebuilders

FEEDING THE DARKNESS

.....Shining a light onState
Sanctioned Torture....through Story,
Poem and Song.....

Q-CAT Quaker
Concern for the
Abolition of Torture

 A Performance by
journeymentheatre.com

