



August 2020

Scottish Friend



Peace Collage

Sila Collins-Walden ©



Welcome Friends to the August edition of the Scottish Friend. We are still in lockdown, Zooming away! Of course it's going to be Zooming with GM again too. With Elizabeth, Nicola and administrator Sue at the helm. My friend Karen who makes hats sent this to me as a gift, wouldn't accept payment!

Money will go to Refugees. Comments and suggestions would be welcomed. When sending in contributions, please note your LM. In Friendship, Sila

Editor, Scottish Friend: Sila Collins-Walden, Inverness LM

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Scottish Friend is distributed by Sue Proudlove

Please send articles as an **editable attachment** to silartist100@gmail.com or typed or hand-written to 27 Creag Dhubh Terrace, Inverness IV3 8QG to arrive five weeks before GM, i.e. by **26th September 2020**. If you submit **images**, please ensure that they are about 1Mb in size. Any captions provided with your images should be short!

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

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| <p>The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.</p> |
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Calling for General Meeting for Scotland
Saturday, 12th September, 2020
Elizabeth Allen, GM Clerk

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you all! I hope you are well and that you have enjoyed the best of our summer.

By now most of us will be used to a variety of virtual gatherings and GM in September is going to be another. We were looking forward to gathering in the newly refurbished Meeting House in Dundee but alas that pleasure will have to be deferred to another time.

Our next General Meeting will be on 12th September. It will be by Zoom and there will be two sessions, separated by a lunch break. The morning session will start with worship at 10.15 am and will finish at 12.00 noon. The afternoon session will start at 1.30 pm and finish about 3.00 pm.

I will send out details of how to join the Zoom meeting nearer the time.

We will be welcoming Sally Foster-Fulton from Christian Aid Scotland, who will speak to us about aspects of Christian Aid work and we will have the opportunity in small breakout groups to discuss questions set for us by Sally. There will be updates on the preparations for our Local Development Worker in Scotland and on the Scottish Parliamentary Advocacy post. We will also hear how our GM work continues during this time of Coronavirus restrictions, with updates on: our parliamentary engagement work; steps being taken to improve our communications with one another and to look at the practicalities of 'blended' meetings; and one of our Young Friends will tell us about the online Shindig held in August.

This is an opportunity to meet virtually with Friends from across Scotland. We worship together and in a spirit of worship we attend to our church affairs, concerning the spiritual life and witness of Quakers in Scotland. Please do come! All are welcome.

These are turbulent and uncertain times, and as we prepare to gather as Quakers in Scotland, I hope that we will hold in the Light the countless people across the world and in parts of our own nation, our brothers and sisters, who are suffering badly just now from natural and from man-made causes. We share a vision of a better world, one in which our testimonies flourish. The actions we take personally and collectively, now and in the future, can help move us towards this vision.

Papers and the draft agenda will be circulated about a week prior to GM. if you do not receive them, please ask Sue Proudlove scotfriends@gmail.com for a copy. If you have any questions, please contact me, your clerk, by email essallen@msn.com or telephone 01620 894834. ■



General Meeting Report June 13th 2020.

Katrina McCrea. Portobello and Musselburgh- South East.

General Meeting for Scotland, 13 June 2020 General Meeting was conducted virtually, using Zoom, and attracted 74 devices with 80 people taking part.

This was my first General Meeting and I was a little overwhelmed by the amount of papers, the length of the agenda and the fact that I probably would not know anyone there. I should not have worried.

Martin Burnell welcomed us as we joined the Meeting and gave us the essentials on how to communicate using Zoom. We then settled down for the Opening Worship.

Nicola Maharg read from Quaker Faith & Practice 24:49: a paragraph as true today as it was in 1986 : *People matter. In the end human rights are about people being treated and feeling like people who matter. We are reminded graphically of violations of human rights far away and near at hand. In ignorance or knowingly we all violate human rights. We are all involved in the exercise of power and the abuse of power. The multitude and complexity of the problems of oppression and injustice often seem to overwhelm us. We can do something. Friends are already working in a variety of ways: through international bodies, through voluntary organisations and by personal witness. Those who can give something of their lives to human rights require our support and we can look for opportunities to help those in need around us. At the international level we affirm our support of Friends World Committee for Consultation and other bodies in ensuring that the standards and ideals of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights are attained, that the world does not slip backwards. Above all we must take risks for God: look around us to the people who need help; listen to those who*

experience oppression; engage in the mutual process of liberation. London Yearly Meeting

Elizabeth Allen then took us quietly and efficiently through the Business at hand. 2021/22 Dates for General Meeting were amended and agreed.

Names brought forward from GM Nominations Committee were agreed.

Nigel Dower, the Treasurer, took us through the annual report and accounts for last year.

The new Local Development Worker (LDW) for Scotland is now likely to start in the first quarter of 2021. The four Area Meeting Clerks as well as the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are planning to meet soon to discuss what the LDW might do.

There were two items relating to GM Communications:

- GM agreed to take over the running of the 'Quakers in Scotland' Facebook page that volunteers have been supporting and managing thus far, and has asked the Nominations Committee to bring forward the names of two Friends to manage the Facebook page and two Friends to act as moderators ;
- To improve communication with and engagement of Friends, Attenders will, for a two-year trial period, be added to GM mailing lists.

We discussed three reports:

1)Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) Joyce Taylor presented the Group's report. Four points stood out for me:

- Members of the Group have been active in Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and in the Stop Climate Chaos UK coalition;
- Filling the Parliamentary Engagement Officer post has been postponed, as it was felt that with some staff being furloughed it did not seem appropriate to take on new staff;
- Nicola Sturgeon has responded to a letter regarding climate action and Green and Just recovery. The original letter and her

reply will be placed on the GM website soon;

- Individuals are encouraged to make submissions to the Scottish Government's Just Transition Commission consultation by the deadline of 30 June 2020. [See: <https://consult.gov.scot/just-transition-commission/just-transitioncommission-call-for-evidence/>]

2) West Scotland Area Meeting COP26 Hub Group COP 26 – the UN Conference on Climate Change – has been postponed to November next year on account of the pandemic. Martin Mansell updated us on the Hub Group, set up to co-ordinate Quaker activity around the conference, and on the new roles it is fulfilling now.

3) Report on the ways local and area meetings have maintained communications during lockdown This was a summary of the feedback received from AMs and LMs to a survey that the GM Communication Group circulated earlier this year. Joyce Taylor thanked all who had replied. Quoting Woodbrooke research, Joyce asked us to reflect on the statement: *“We have a chance now not simply to return to what we did before but to ‘make our own’, creatively and adventurously, what is revealed to us by the light and life we have found.”* Suggestions going forward included the possibilities of installing videoconferencing facilities in Meeting Houses and that perhaps some of the Jenny Auld legacy might help fund this.

An interesting and informative meeting and I am extremely glad I was there to be a part of it. Any misgivings I may have had were allayed by the warmth and concern of speakers and participants. The breakout session at the end was particularly helpful to me: full of encouragement and helpful suggestions on what to put in my report, as well as reflections on the morning and how we might blend technology with face-to-face meetings. ■

Meeting for Worship post CV19. Oriole Hall Inverness LM.

Although we may soon be given the opportunity to meet together for worship, that does not mean that we should or that we must do it as soon as possible. I believe that we must accept that in fact it may be many more months before this will be possible.

The health, safety and well being of every member of the Quaker community are paramount and it is unlikely to be possible to ensure this, until the level of the virus in society is greatly reduced.

The responsibilities for each meeting are: 1) to ensure we have conducted our own thorough risk assessment of the premises; 2) to ensure a safe environment of all those attending; 3) to achieve a safe environment to the standard of the landlord for those using the premises after us.

A meeting for worship could involve social distancing, separate entrances, wearing masks regulating the number of Friends attending, hand washing/sanitizing on entering and leaving the building, bringing our own drinks and books and ensuring that a thorough cleaning is carried out before and after Meeting. Is this what we really desire? We need to listen for the guidance of the spirit. Remember Quaker worship does not depend on buildings, sacred spaces or special times.

“true significance lies not in the grounds and buildings but in the people” Qf & P 10.08

On-line meetings are likely to remain at least part of our way of worship for the foreseeable future but we also need to be creative, find other ways of worshipping, gather on the fells, just as long as we are able to come together, always finding one another “in the things which are eternal, upholding and strengthening one another”. ■

Ibn Arabi teaches the Way of the Heart

Margaret Roy, Lanark - West

I have been studying with the Sufis of late, especially looking at the works of Ibn Arabi, one of their early masters. Ibn Arabi teaches the way of the Heart, as a means to union with God. I thought the following might be of interest to Quakers.

Before each of our sessions, we have been encouraged to sit in meditation on his *Carpet of Adab*. In this he tells us the method we must follow:

*To empty the heart of reflective thinking –
And we sit together with God on the carpet of
Adab and spiritual attentiveness and presence
and readiness to receive whatever comes to us
from Him –
So it is God who takes care of teaching us by
means of unveiling and spiritual realisation –
So when they have focused their hearts and
their spiritual aspirations on God and have truly
taken refuge with Him –
Giving up any reliance on the claims of
reflection and investigation and intellectual
results –
Then their hearts are purified and open.
Once they have this inner receptivity, God
manifests Himself to them, teaching them and
informing them through the direct vision of the
inner meanings of those (obscure scriptural)
words and reports, in a single instant.*

So great is the world and the journey that we cannot do this by ourselves but *if our hearts are focused and (our) spiritual aspirations are on God*, as Jesus says and Early Quakers believed, God himself will teach us. This is not by grace, as in Augustine or Martin Luther's theology. We have to make some

effort to clear the way. This emptying of the mind is called Kenosis and is seen by many as the first step to prayer. We must have given up reliance on the claims of reflection and investigation and intellectual results.

*when our hearts are purified and open...
they have this inner receptivity,
God manifests Himself to them
teaching them and informing them
through DIRECT VISION
of the inner meaning of these words and reports,
in a single instant.*

In the study of Ibn Arabi's KNOW THYSELF (subtitled *An explanation of the oneness of being*) we find there is nothing but God.

It is not that God is in everything (Pantheism or Panentheism) – “He is not in anything and no thing is in Him or coming out of Him. It is in this way that you should know Him and not through theoretical knowledge, reason, understanding or conjecture, nor with the senses, the external eye or internal sight or perception. NO ONE SEES HIM EXCEPT HIMSELF, NO ONE REACHES HIM EXCEPT HIMSELF AND NO ONE KNOWS HIM EXCEPT HIMSELF. HE KNOWS HIMSELF THROUGH HIMSELF AND HE SEES HIMSELF BY MEANS OF HIMSELF...NO ONE OTHER THAN HE SEES HIM.”

This is really interesting for Quakers and modern psychologists. The Head and the Heart work differently. The Head thinks; the Heart feels. It is very difficult for us Westerners to ‘feel’. We are inclined to link it too much with emotion. One of the Buddhist lamas explained it to me thus: when does an animal look at its feet? It doesn't need to because it has a sense of wholeness. Think of us doing Scottish Country Dancing where we keep looking to where our feet are. And imagine a cat, or dog, or cow, or horse . . .

that has four feet!!! We have lost this sense of feeling. We seek ONENESS and Unity but are not ourselves ONE.

When we have achieved this and learned to BE through the Heart a different level of consciousness will be open to us. It does not involve Duality or separation. It gives a new meaning to being 'one with Nature'. Early Quakers (*see William Tabor on The Mind of Christ in business meetings*) still saw the God out there (Duality) so saw the Light as separate and enlightening them. Now the *Inward Light* has become the *Inner Light* so today's Quakers accept their divinity but are still stuck in the Head; this becomes Ego, not the collective experience of the Heart.

Ibn Arabi: – *It is not that He enters into you or that you enter into Him, or that He comes out of you or you come out of Him. That does not mean that you have being and you are qualified by this or that attribute. What is meant is that you never were and never will be, whether through yourself or through Him or in Him or with Him. You have neither ceased to be nor are you existent. You are Him and He is you, without any of these imperfections. If you know your existence in this way, then you know God, and if not, then not .*

Ibn Arabi says through the heart. WHAT DOES HE MEAN?

We have to do something differently.

The mode of operation of the HEART energy is FEELING (not the western idea of emotion) and that this gives us a sense of WHOLENESS, ONENESS WITHIN OURSELVES. Today we sit in meditation, seeking that inner stillness. WE don't need to go through the theory. When we sense this it is the Heart opening which immediately opens to a unity with all, a oneness with God, when we are 'inside' and know, because now we see Him

because we are Him. IN Meeting, this is the gathering when we are of One Mind.

When you have done enough meditation you learn to 'see' differently and to 'be' different. When the Heart opens, love floods the being.

Ibn Arabi is teaching us to open the Heart, to experience through the Heart. ■



**Sent in by Sue Proudlove & Tony Wilkes,
Meeting House Managers, Edinburgh.**

Recently, we had a set of artworks installed on the Meeting House railings, which are part of the Black Lives Matter Mural Trail which now includes a number of sites in Edinburgh and in other Scottish cities.

Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House has become the latest site for artworks on the Black Lives Matter Mural Trail, a project which now involves sites in several Scottish cities. Scottish artists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are contributing works in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and the Meeting House is pleased to host a series of panels by young artist Ayo Adedeji. Ayo, who is currently studying art and animation, told us that this is the first time he's seen his work 'blown up' to a large scale and on display in public. Do come and admire them, and other installations nearby in the city, if you're in Edinburgh. For more about the BLM Mural Trail, visit <http://www.wezi.uk>, and you can see more of Ayo's work on **Instagram: @buludej**



Ayo Adedeji outside Quaker Meeting House Edinburgh. There are other displays of Ayo's work around Scottish cities.



More of Ayo's Black Lives Matter Mural Panels.



NEWS OF AN EXCITING PROJECT FROM THE FAR NORTH!

How a sideways view can help us look forward

Sent in by Tom Sayles, Oriole Hall, Ann and Alasdair Galbraith,
and everyone else from the Far North I may have missed out.

While the rest of the world seems to have been moving sideways during lockdown, Friends in the North of Scotland have been using their time to push forward and think ‘outside the box’. Led by Tom Sayles, of Caithness and Thurso Meeting together with some of the Area’s E & Os, an energetic group of friends have been creating a new website – **The North Scotland Quaker Notebook**.

“It really is remarkable just how many friends have been willing to dedicate their time. We can only hope that their enthusiasm now encourages others using the Notebook to be more active!” says Tom.

As part of the team we can confirm that the whole process has been fun, challenging and informative in equal measure. It is hoped that as time goes by more and more friends will be involved in its development and growth. The new Website aims to pose, and answer, the numerous questions many of us may have (but don’t like to admit to) about the Society of Friends, what it stands for, and how it operates locally and nationally.

The Notebook is made up of an extensive collection of short articles written by established Friends, newcomers to the Society and regular attenders alike - all from the North of Scotland Area. The editorial team were keen that the articles should be written by as wide a group of authors as possible, and that they should address all those topics that we thought we knew about but weren’t quite sure. It was also hoped that the responses should reflect a personal take on the Quakers as well as providing

factual information. The content aims to address three key areas:

- Factual information about how the Society works and is administered: how is the organization financed? ... what is Meeting for Sufferings and BYM? ... what is the role of the Clerk?
- The religious and spiritual views encompassed by the Quakers: do Quakers believe in god? ... is silent worship the same as meditation? ...do Quakers have a creed or doctrine?
- The thoughts and debates that constantly take place amongst Friends within the Society and make the Quakers the challenging, exciting and vibrant organization like no other 'religious' body.

The whole has been skillfully and professionally put together with beautiful illustrations where appropriate, making the site a joyful and exciting place to explore with nearly one hundred articles to view. It is hoped that it will attract positive feedback, new writing (especially from those new to the Quakers and younger participants), alternative takes on existing articles and an on-line forum for healthy debate, alternative views and personal expression. Most of all, however, we hope it might help attract new friends and attenders by demystifying much that goes on and is talked about within the Society.

If you are interested in being part of this exciting project or contributing, contact the Site Co-ordinator or editors. New articles will be vetted and edited according to the published editorial guidelines (see website).

use as a resource and recommend to those new to Quakers:
www.northscotlandquakernotebook.org

Website Coordinator: Editors: skyequakermeeting@outlook.com



Meeting Face-to-Face

Janet and Geoff Fairbairn, Lorn and Lochaber Meeting.

This is our first meeting together for Lochaber and Lorn meeting after lockdown. Since March we met individually in our own homes and at the same time choosing to be together in spirit instead of online meetings, many of us have very poor Internet connection and this seemed the simplest option for us.

However now that lockdown has eased we have had our first post-lockdown meeting in July which was held in Appin in a members garden Two metres apart We each bought along our own refreshments for lunch together after meeting. It was a glorious sunny day and it felt very peaceful and a safe way to start our cautious meeting together after the long lockdown period.



Zooming around the globe with Friends. Sila Collins-Walden Inverness LM.

The past few months whilst on "lockdown" (I prefer to call it a "retreat") I very much enjoyed the peace, the quiet and the silence, certainly didn't miss the noisy traffic. I found MfW via zoom a wonderful experience, worshipping with Friends I would most likely never have an opportunity to meet face to face. I have worshipped via zoom with Dublin Quakers at Eustace St, Thursday PM where they have poetry sessions every four weeks - the next session takes place in September and Inverness LM will be joining them again!. Poems can be written by Friends and some by their favourite poets, W B Yeats, John O'Donohue and others have been read out.



Labyrinth. Sadelle

I "travelled" to Putney in Vermont where I met up again with our Friend Sadelle, whom I had met when she came on a visit to Skye and Inverness where she held a zentangle workshop with Friends at both meetings, which we had all enjoyed very much. Sadelle was delighted that I had joined in MfW with her meeting. Putney opened up with songs before MfW, with Amazing Grace, and Will the Circle be Unbroken accompanied with music. It was very entertaining as we all joined in! I have been zooming MfW with Woodbrooke in Birmingham for some time now and have

come to know many Friends whom I know from visiting there. I had plans to visit Woodbrooke but because of Covid 19 plans were cancelled. I zoomed with Glenthorne Meeting, as well as with my local meeting.

One of the good things to come out of this Covid19 is that we as Friends have become more connected with one another. Having our AM and GM via zoom means that some Friends who may not usually attend can meet via zoom. With having breakout rooms (and as it's random you don't know who is going to be in your group) it's a nice surprise. It's an opportunity to gather with Friends to chat to, putting faces to the names we often see but don't talk with.

We had some great ministry from our NASAM, Diana from Forres gave us a rendition of John Greenleaf Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind". Singing ministry?

Zooming has lead to greater participation with Friends around the world enabling them to come together to meet in acts of worship. Most Friends fortunately have access to technology so Friends who cannot normally get to meeting because of living too far away or due to weather conditions preventing them from attending face to face. Friends with disabilities may find it suits them too, they don't have to leave home! Some Friends however, do find some difficulties, those with hearing impairment. So it would be helpful if Friends could show their face in the light so as to enable Friends to lip-read. Some older Friends have cataracts and find it a strain to see clearly. Some find it tiring sitting at the screen for too long so a shorter MfW is more suitable. Many Friends find it essential to keep in touch and also found it spiritually enriching too. ■

The Bible is a rich treasury of such experience and insight and is supremely important as the source of our knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is therefore unthinkable for Quakers to be divorced from the Bible. In fact because of the danger of individualism, Friends need biblical knowledge even more than do other Christians.

Quaker Life and Practice 1.94. L. Hugh Doncaster, 1963.

*Do you take part as often as you can in meeting for church affairs? Are you familiar enough with our church government to contribute to it's disciplined processes? Do you consider difficult questions with an informed mind as well as a generous loving spirit? Are you prepared to let your insights and personal wishes take their place alongside those of others or be set aside as the meeting seeks the right way forward? If you cannot attend uphold the meeting prayerfully. **Advices & Queries 15.***



Lace-cap



**Bryan G. Bowes: Colour Atlas of Trees and Woody Plants -
CRC press -Taylor and Francis Group ISBN: 978-0-367-47398-3**

An appreciation from Margaret Peacock. Milngavie-West.

Bryan's book shares his enjoyment of his extensive collection of photographs. He prefaces it with "Trees and why we love them." The cover shows the head of a cycad - a living fossil - as an invitation to open the book. You can flick through the lovely pictures or read the informative text and look up the citations.

He starts with a brief excursion through the geological periods to the huge variety of present-day trees, and moves on to their anatomy:- roots can be above ground; trunks can be contorted; leaves can be needles; flowers can be catkins or cones. Bryan captures growths so strange that I would almost hesitate to call them trees!

Preceding fascinating pictures, a section on general anatomy starts with impressive micrographs, accurately stained to show the specialised cells that illustrate why the trees are the way they are.

Focusing on roots we see their exuberant contortions after wind or water have removed some of the soil. They can indeed start from high up the tree, making curtains, but still fulfil their function of taking in water and nutrients from the ground, and anchoring the tree.

In the section on leaves, Bryan avoids the cliché of brilliant autumn colours, concentrating on shapes and function. He calls them the "Sugar factories", absorbing ingredients and energy. Pictures show how they adapt to their surroundings in often surprising ways, partly illustrated by micrographs. Here is another cycad!

Reproduction usually implies seeds, but often the tree doesn't

bother with them, and just puts out another shoot. Sexual reproduction depends on pollination, between cones or flowers or parts of the same flower, or between single-sex trees. Bryan's photographs show some familiar fruits - the results of successful pollination.

Trees can grow in extremely surprising environments, or respond to damage, and Bryan has captured a fascinating selection of such oddities. And I particularly like the inclusion of the almost-local fossil tree stumps in Glasgow's Victoria Park.

The final section might be described as lateral thinking. What could you do with a tree? Could you improve on forty ideas? ■



POET'S CORNER

Sometimes I Radiate by Jennifer Gray

I want to leap,
feet first,
into a glorious pile of
words.

Run my hands through them
and throw them up
like a pile of crisp autumn leaves
on a sunlit day.

Short sharp words
and luxurious long ones,
humble and grand words.
I want to smell them
and taste them
and hear their sounds.

They dance
in the sunlight
then fall together
a picture on a page.

Jennifer was a recipient of support from the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust which enabled her to purchase a laptop to use in her writing class.



Poem

Les Derbyshire

Did you ever listen

To the silence?

"What an odd thing", you say,

"Surely silence is ... well, silence."

Let me ask again.

Did you ever listen,

Really listen,

To the silence?

Not just the empty space

Left behind

When the radio's switched off

Or the jet has flown on by,

The baby's cry is satisfied,

The final note is sung.

"But isn't that the point?", you ask,

"When all is said and done

There's nothing left to hear?"

Let me tell you how it is.

I'm sitting on a hillside terrace

In among the olive trees

The warmth of the sun
Filtering through the leaves,
The gentlest of breezes
Cooling a little, the air.
And the earth, it seems, is expectant,
Poised,
Waiting
Lest a sound be missed.
The silence so deep
I can hear time passing,
The earth breathing.

Somewhere a little way off
An olive falls from the tree.
And bounces
And drops again
Into the dry leaves that carpet the earth
And I hear each crisp second of its fall.

On a distant hill
A father and his son
Harvest almonds.

As they work
Their carefree calls
Float on the air.

And the silence is not broken.

The day drifts on
And the sun dips behind the mountain.
The air is as soft as velvet.

Somewhere below me,
In the valley,
Among the dark trees
A bird settles into the dusk.
She mutters to herself
And the mountains hear her.

The vibrant, living silence
That fills the air
Reaches deep inside me.
Draws out from my mind
The busy noise that would stop me hearing

The quiet of the world.

When you encounter it,

Take time to listen,

Really listen,

To the silence.

Quakers

By Sean Dunne, Cork Meeting

Silence takes over the room
as if gathered for a sign, they dispatch
Business and let the moments pass.
On tables, in bowls, flowers bud
Like phrases about to be said.
Outside, their acre of graves
Shows names and dates loike the flat
Covers of shut files. Terraces close
Around them, dogs restless in yards,
Children at windows capitulating birds.

■

Kenneth Steven on his time at Pluscarden



I go back often in my mind to the time of the gathering at Pluscarden. It's always a daunting privilege to be asked to act as writer in residence: you're the outsider, coming in to a group that knows itself. I felt welcomed: more than that, I felt completely brought in to the circle. I'd longed to experience Pluscarden: it felt almost like somewhere in rural

France at the end of that long, dry summer. It's the first time in my life I've heard owls talking to each other along a valley. The spirit of peace was profound; the conversation easy and genuine. Inevitably there was talk of Helen and Ellen: the sharing of stories, the sharing of laughter. During lockdown I've been writing as much as possible on the Isle of Seil, at the home I share with my partner Kristina. I've been working on new Hebridean seascapes too: having the time to paint during the summer months has been special, and I had my first virtual



One of Kenneth's Paintings

exhibition a few weeks ago. I hope to have a second before the autumn. Oriole Hall did a wonderful thing in contacting as many Friends as

possible concerning a special offer I created for one of my books, and I'm so grateful to her for her kindness. I decided to offer

signed copies of my short story collection 'Winter Tales': each just £10 including postage. I still have a few copies here at the house on Seil, together with a few copies of my volume of poems 'Iona' (from which I read at Pluscarden), so please send me an email if you'd value one or other or both. Write me an email too if you'd value being on my mailing list: I send out sporadic round robins concerning new books, readings and retreats.

Blessings and all best wishes, Kenneth Steven

www.kennethsteven.co.uk ; info@kennethsteven.co.uk



This Evil Thing

Sent in by Andrew Collins, Aberdeen North

In November 2018, Aberdeen meeting hosted a performance by Michael Mears of his one-man play, This Evil Thing, about conscientious objectors in the first world war. The play was put on in Dyce, which was appropriate as some of the action takes place in a quarry in Dyce where the men were sent to work

Just over 100 years ago, British conscientious objectors were locked down in this country against their will because of the 'virus' it was feared they were spreading - the virus of pacifism and anti-militarism.

Now as we are all locked down against our will for several weeks, Michael Mears, has made a home movie version of his acclaimed solo stage play THIS EVIL THING. Using just his iPhone and its 'movie' features and using every available corner of his two-bedroom flat in SW London, Michael has recreated his performance of all 52 roles (some with only 1 line, granted) as well as performing all the roles within a film crew!

It was an impressive performance. Michael has now produced a home-movie version, and I thought it might be appropriate to include this in the next issue of Scottish Friend.

Now in 1 easy click: THIS EVIL THING: the lockdown rendering of this compelling drama can be seen online at

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLctnbV - mfzu_ZF5xxN9VtzTXEP2mAfem



Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemoration.

Sila Collins-Walden and Eleanor Fairclough Inverness L M.

It was 75 years ago on August 6th at 8.15am that the United States dropped a bomb on the city of Hiroshima and three days later dropped another bomb on the city of Nagasaki-killing over 200,000 people in both cities.

A most cruel bomb, made by the USA and dropped by the USA. Thousands later died of radiation sickness. There are those who still suffer today from the effects of the atrocity that befell those cities 75 years ago.

Robert Oppenheimer, 'father of the atomic bomb', whilst watching the testing of the first atomic bomb on July 16th 1945, quoted "Now I am become Death, destroyer of worlds", from the Bhagavad Gita.

Considering the devastation that those two bombs have caused, just think what a nuclear arms race could cause? It was thought that nothing would grow again in that place. It did recover. There is now a Peace Park, an advocate for world peace with the iconic Genbaku Tower which still stands. There is a peace ceremony to remember the victims and to remind us of the horrors of Nuclear War.

Every year Inverness LM meet with other peace groups, including, Justice not War and Women in Black, we gather at the fisher-man's hut at Ness Islands, Inverness to hold a commemoration of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We sail a peace dove, made by Jim and his wife Geri who attend every year without fail, considering they are well into their 80's. We hold a ceremony at the waterside where the dove is placed in the river Ness, along with messages of peace and hope on paper (all bio-degradable material.) We usually have a speaker to recite a verse or read something such

as a poem related to this ceremony. Our local Green MSP John Finnie has joined with us on occasions. After the ceremony we all gather for a picnic pot-luck lunch at the river side. We often have passers-by join with us in the ceremony. Of course this year it couldn't be held because of Covid19 but it was not forgotten. There were other groups in the area who also held a commemoration for August 6th 1945. ■



PHOTO GALLERY - PICTURES FROM THE PAST



Inverness Discussion Group



Inverness
Women in Black
Campaign, 2016



Friends' picnic,
Ness Islands



Sila in the park with the children.

Hiroshima
Commemoration
with John Finnie,
Green MSP in
attendance at
Inverness.



☺ Request.

Dear Friends,

Please when sending in contributions for publication can you send them as attachments as stated on page 2 of the magazine? Please don't include them in the body of the email. Photo images must also be sent as attachments. This would simplify the life of your editor enormously. In addition, please note that articles must be *editable* – not Read-only. This is so that your editor can *edit* your contributions. Hand-written contributions continue to be acceptable, of course, and the editor's gofer will be chained to his desk to transcribe them.

Please note that the editor has no wish to change the sense of what you write, but the magazine needs to conform to a house style. For example, the more astute among you will have noticed that the magazine is in A5 size. Almost all contributions come as A4.

The only textual emendations your editor is likely to make is where you have confused 'less' with 'fewer', or 'amount' with 'number' or where you are flummoxed by the correct placement of apostrophes – and your editor does not like this modern disdain for the use of hyphens! (this won't of course apply to clever Quakers!!)

In Peace and friendship, (with a little Frustration) ✨

Sila, Editor.