



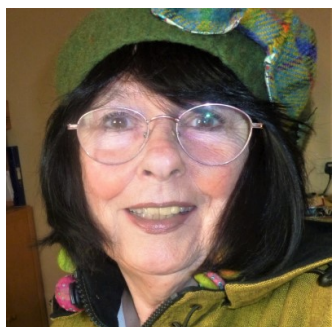
February 2021

Scottish Friend



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Into the Light



Welcome Friends to the February 2021 edition of the Scottish Friend. A Peaceful and Joyous New year to you. 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. 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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Brian Walden

Scottish Friend is distributed by Sue Proudlove

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| 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, ie, by 8th May 2021 . If you submit images , please ensure that they are about 1Mb in size. Any captions provided with your images should be short! |
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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, 6th March, 2021
Elizabeth Allen, GM Clerk

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you all! I hope you are well.



The last time we met in person was March, 2020. This March, we should have been meeting in the north. Coming from North Berwick, I would have to have travelled to our meeting place the evening before, and to have stayed over night. For me, this would have given the meeting a sense of occasion and an opportunity to spend a little time in another part of the Quaker map of Scotland.

Zoom is certainly much cheaper and more time efficient but I do miss the fellowship of our face-to-face meetings.

Our next General Meeting will be on 6th March. It will be by Zoom. We will start with worship at 10.15 am, break for lunch from 12.00 noon to 1.00 pm, and our afternoon session will finish at 2.30 pm. I will send out details of how to join nearer the time.

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, and matters concerning the spiritual life and witness of Quakers in Scotland. Please do come! All are welcome.

We will have a full agenda. Our Friends from North Scotland Area Meeting have asked for greater cooperation across area meetings in Scotland and have suggested we consider amalgamating the Scottish area meeting charities into one legal body. Area Meetings have been consulted about this proposal and

at GM we will try to discern the way forward. The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Andrew Tomlinson, have been very busy of late and we will hear about our Quaker advocacy work in Scotland. We will also hear more about the Local Development Worker. The post holder is due to start in April.



There is a varied tapestry of churches and faiths in Scotland and we are part of that picture and are represented on several ecumenical and interfaith bodies. We will hear from our representatives about their experience and what they have learned from it.

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. ■

Participation in Meeting Church Affairs

Are your meetings for church affairs held in loving dependence upon the spirit of God, and are they vigilant in the discharge of their duties?....Do you individually take your right share in the attendance and service of these meetings so that the burden may not rest upon a few?

Quaker Faith & Practice. 3.08.

General Meeting for Scotland Report, 1 November 2020

Robin Waterston. St Andrews East.

Friends from across Scotland gathered together by zoom for General Meeting for Scotland. In opening worship, there was ministry on what we have lost from the pandemic, and what we have gained. The theme of how we adapt to the new situation recurred throughout the morning.

We heard a report from Joyce Taylor on the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group. The major news is that the new staff member, Andrew Tomlinson, has started his work. One of his early tasks will be to map the various bodies, sometimes overlapping, working on aspects of climate change and a Just and Green Recovery, and where Quaker input and energy can best be focussed. Planning for COP 26 to be held in Glasgow next November is already well under way. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is being incorporated into Scottish law, and Quakers have submitted comments about military visits to schools. We call for more scrutiny of such visits, which are seen as thinly veiled recruitment drives. The submission states “As Quakers we challenge the promotion of war and violence in schools and instead seek to promote education rooted in positive peace and justice.”

Our treasurer, Nigel Dower, presented financial estimates for 2021. He said that making predictions was hard this year. So many uncertainties exist, but he expects that most business meetings will continue to be held by zoom and this produces savings. On the other hand, those Meetings which depend on revenue from property lettings have seen a drop in income, and will continue to do so.

We discussed the way we communicate, both in our local Meetings, and within and across our four Area Meetings. The use of Zoom has become widespread, and some Meetings are

experimenting with “blended” worship, where some meet physically and others join remotely. In some ways, Zoom or an alternative platform can be more inclusive, but in other ways they can be limiting. And not everywhere has a good broadband connection. It was agreed that we need more time to reflect on this and learn from each other’s experiences, and so a special session of GM will be held to consider it (by zoom). We will hope to have input from Young Friends and perhaps Woodbrooke.

From April, Scottish Friends are to have the services of one of the new Local Development Workers, to be appointed by BYM. This will aim to provide “Meeting centred support” across the whole of Scotland. The overall purpose will be to support Friends to live faithfully, working collaboratively, building skills and reaching out in challenging times. With our geographical area so large, this will be a demanding task. It is envisaged that there will be an initial process of listening and assessment to help the worker to form priorities and realistic goals. We divided into smaller groups to discuss how this support might help us thrive.

Overall, it was a varied and thoughtful meeting. Our Clerk, Elizabeth Allen, guided us efficiently through the business. Underlying it all was the recognition of the hard times that so many of us, Quakers and in wider society, are facing. And also a willingness to adapt our practices in the light of the new realities. We were urged to give “equality of esteem” to different forms of worship, new and old. ■

Parliamentary Engagement in Scotland.

Joyce Taylor (Convenor of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group) .

2021 is a big year for political engagement in Scotland with the Holyrood elections in May and COP26 to be held in Glasgow in November.

The Parliamentary Engagement Group (PEWG) has nine members with representatives from each area meeting. We see our role as *“drawing spirituality out into the political world, to testify to that of God in the community and environment around us”* (A. Mackintosh).

Our vision, shared with Quaker Peace and Social witness (QPSW) is of a peaceful and sustainable future built on just relationships between people and with the earth. Our work is rooted in our testimony to Peace, Equality, Truth and Integrity, Simplicity and Sustainability. The PEWG Position Statement is at: <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/parliamentary-engagement> and click on the Document section to download.

Andrew Tomlinson, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO) has been in post for just over three months and has brought knowledge, energy, focus and a great network of contacts to the job so we are in a good position to maximize the Quaker presence round advocacy at this important time. Through Andrew we have strong links to BYM’s advocacy team in Friends House too and so we can tap into and build on Quaker advocacy at Westminster to enhance the overall Quaker effort. There is much to do and individual Quakers and local meetings can also make a really important contribution.

The priorities for the work of both Andrew and the PEWG are discerned by General Meeting for Scotland and at the moment these are: The global climate and ecological emergency; economic justice; peace building. We are also flexible so that we can respond to opportunities as they arise, for example the work happening in Scotland on Human Rights.

The global climate and ecological emergency: Quakers in Scotland are working closely with two other umbrella organisations – Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) of which we are a member and Just and Green Recovery (led by Friends of the Earth). Members of the PEWG attend meetings of the SCCS coalition as well as their committees on Policy and Advocacy and the Public Campaigns Group.

The Scottish Government holds consultations on draft bills, their plans and their strategies and we have responded to some of these both as Quakers in Scotland and as members of the coalitions. Most recently the PEWG sent a response to the Scottish Government Third Land Use Strategy asking for a reframing of the questions of land use away from one where natural resources are viewed as assets to be exploited for the benefit of humans to one which recognises land and waters as sacred and holding intrinsic value. This reframing is vital in shaping how we understand and interact with the natural world. Information about Climate Emergency work can be found here: <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/climate-change>

COP 26: the PEWG has a representative on the Hub Group which is co-ordinating what is taking place in Glasgow and in the Meeting House. We are also represented on the Interfaith Group for COP 26. A space for COP 26 information on the Quakers in Scotland website is being created under the Climate Emergency section of the Quakers in Scotland website <https://www.quakerscotland.org/> to keep everyone informed.

The Holyrood Election: Andrew is working with other churches through an ecumenical group to produce materials for individuals and local meetings to use in the run up to the May election. These will include material for hustings and briefing papers on issues such as green recovery from the pandemic, climate emergency, mental health, poverty, education, refugees, social care and devolution. Members of the PEWEG and Andrew have been meeting all the political parties to talk about things Quakers would like to see in their manifestos. Andrew has also been meeting individual MSPs – Ross Greer, Sarah Boyack, Fin Carson to exchange views particularly on the climate emergency.

Human Rights: an independent task force set up by the Scottish Government is currently consulting about a potential new Human Rights law for Scotland which hopes to enshrine in law rights which we have lost as a result of withdrawing from the EU. To enable Friends in Scotland to engage with this consultation, Andrew set up a workshop and representatives from each area meeting were invited to attend. Fourteen friends attended and after watching a short video about what the proposed legislation was about we had a lively discussion about the advantages and shortcomings of a human rights approach to address citizens' needs. We agreed that rights are important and spoke about examples where Quakers have fought for rights being established such as the ending of slavery; rights of conscientious objectors; and more recently the recognition of equal marriage. However we also agreed that just having rights is not sufficient; rights need to be underpinned by understanding, accountability and resources for them to be fulfilled. You can find the Quaker submission in Documents at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/rights>

What can individual Quakers and local meetings do?

Keep informed: If there is something in particular that you feel strongly about find out more about it and what the issues are. For example there are many climate events and webinars you can take part in run by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland – one advantage of the Covid situation is the open access we now have to these without travel. Keep an eye on the Quakers in Scotland website where the PEWG posts in News and Our Work summarise what the PEWG and others are doing and opportunities for you to take action.

Get involved: Back in 2011, BYM issued the life-changing Canterbury Commitment, urging Friends to take up the challenge of responding to the crisis of climate change. It said: *‘We encourage local and area meetings to practise speaking truth to power at local level by establishing relationships with all sections of local communities, including politicians, businesses and schools, to encourage positive attitudes to sustainability.* Right now Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is running a campaign asking the Scottish Government to strengthen its commitments in its recently published draft Climate Change Plan. They want the individuals that belong to the over 50 organisations which are part of SCCS to take action. This is potentially 1.7 million people and could have a real impact. You can find the action here <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/campaign/climatechangeplan/>

Make your voice heard by writing to your local MP and your MSPs. They do listen to their constituents and they need to know what issues matter to voters particularly in the run up to an election so we have to keep the pressure on them and make them accountable for party policy and for promises they have made. Think about what you and your meeting can do in the run up to the Scottish Parliament Elections.

Keep the PEWG and PEO informed of what you are doing and also share stories of local action. Do tell the PEWG about MSPs who might be interested in dialogue with us. You can find the names of everyone on the PEWG on the Quakers in Scotland website:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/parliamentary-engagement> and you will find our emails in the Book of members and attenders. The email for Andrew Tomlinson, the Parliamentary Engagement Officer is on the website ■



It's not about Patriarchy, as such.
Margaret Roy. Lanark West.

It is about how we see that of God in everyone, not why but how.

It is about exploring the structures in our society that lead to a culture of violence and exploitation. Why is it focussed on women? John Lennon, who would have 80 in the week I wrote this, said: women are the niggars of the world. Ouch! *I was told not to tell you that.* I should explain that he used the N word to refer to the dispossessed and disempowered, the downtrodden. As well as Black Lives Matter, we need to look at modern slavery and not forget the white underclass in our society whose fears of abandonment give rise to much race hatred, or in Scotland to the fable of the rich powerful English. I remember being shocked when my father told me they stole a sheep from the farmer's field in 1926, because they were starving. 50 years later, in our village, there was still discord between the 'dirty scum' that were miners and the 'sleekit farmers with their hidden wealth'. It is all about the fear of loss and not being heard - the world over and in so many different times.

So what about the how? It is not enough to be sweet and smiling to others, to use grand words. Our behaviour needs to reflect those words or we are hypocrites. Our Quaker structures are admirable and I doubt if they could be improved upon. Perhaps my lack of vision? However, I do notice that they are worn away by interpretation. One of my *bête noirs* is the term 'gathered meeting' which once meant unity in the presence of the divine but now seems to have morphed into a gathering of those of 'like mind' when the phrase means of the same opinion. We live a lot

in our thoughts. When I first came to Quakers the gathered meeting was the expectation. Now it is a rarity and how can you explain it to those who are stuck in the three dimensional consciousness of the thinking mind, of the intellectualism of the Ego? This is the core that separates us from those early Quakers who formed our structures as Friends and it perpetuates the separation into individuals that creates the yearning for wholeness or belonging that drives much of our society.

Our values are not a list but a way of life.

In West Scotland, our violence against women concern was stymied by an inability to articulate what was wrong. We peddled so softly to ensure it was not women against men in a blame game. Maybe we should have peddled harder because this year the UN 16 days action as not even mentioned on Women's Hour. Through our work, we were able to say Patriarchy was a system of status that controlled resources and lead to an unequal society that was unjust and exploitive. Can any amount of redistribution of wealth make us equal? Miki Kashtan, introduced to us by Véréne Nicolas, speaks of a transformation to value human needs as the key to a different underlying structure. She speaks of the power of 'soft qualities to transform patriarchy' – feelings, sensitivity, tenderness and warm, things that humanise . An underlying premise is that trauma has arisen in response to scarcity – this is of course a broad generalisation of her work.

As I stated above, Quakers have the structures to facilitate equality in our meetings but it does not happen in many ways. And what does equality really mean? The same people are on committee after committee and it is usually the same people who

go to business meetings, and the same people who stand to speak. In one meeting I attend I expect the same six men to rise to speak and I know the subject is not over until they all have their say. Are they wise men? Of course they are and without them the coherency to our values, our identity, might go. But . . . Quakerism has changed much since my early days, so much so that after a break for work I almost did not recognise it so toddled off to Woodbrooke and other courses to test my faith and commitment. There they said folks learned about Quakerism by going to business meetings. My local meeting was one of those that did not have business meetings as such and when I went to Area Meeting attendance was roughly 5% at telephone meetings and 10% at face to face meetings. It has increased quite a bit since then and with Zoom meetings many more can attend representing all 12 of our local meetings in West Scotland, but . . many do not recognise that they belong to Area Meeting and it does not figure high on the attention of local meetings. Some might report on it. So who makes the decisions? And how does the vast majority learn the 'Quaker way'? That must come down to the Elders. Whilst I admire the work done by Glasgow Meeting elders in the last few years to deepen our worship and 'behaviour' during meeting, it lays a great burden on the shoulders of those in smaller meetings where there may be few 'experienced Friends'. As I have gone around visiting local meetings, I am aware of much variation that is not always due to individual difference but to lack of experience. And much of this allows such a watering down and secular re-interpretation of our words. A recent study of *Advises & Queries* made me realise that although the wording was OK there was something missing. It took me a while to realise that the Soul was missing. What opened the

Heart? How did people experience the Light where the experience was lost in the debate of was there a God and what kind.

I want to change things.

We need to reconnect. In such a chaotic world that is broken with so many lost souls searching for meaning, the Quaker way has much to offer as it grounds us in community and tests our concerns while supporting. The key is connection and a sense of belonging. Why do so many go to Quaker Meeting for Worship? What do they do in Meeting for Worship? Many do not have the ability to go beyond the ego mind to enter the Silence, many are escapees from more formal 'churches' who feel Quakers will support them in their search for meaning. How do such individuals meet with the community? No wonder it is difficult to fill roles when there is so much difference. But welcome! If we are all seekers , welcome, but do respect that we have come a long way as Quakers and have much to offer. We are not without discipline.

We are well skilled in our outer activism, possibly to the detriment of inner work. Older Friends are drifting away – *it is not the same any more, they say*. We need to connect to each other in these deep places of the Heart. This is not new or more up-to-date. Coming down from Head Office there are suggestions, and committees, and even development officers. Does our structure need change or is it our attitude? What do we expect of it and how is it fulfilling that expectation? How do we live our ethos? When did Monthly Meeting become Area Meeting and just how much business do we need to consume? How much business needs to be done locally? How much can be hived off to

General Meeting that sometimes rivals Area Meeting for topics to cover. Surely Monthly Meeting started as a means to support individual practitioners of the Quaker way. What support do they need now?

Another of my *bête noirs* is pseudo-psychology. As we have become more secularised and dropped the God language, we seem to have replaced it with borrowings from other disciplines, sometimes not fully understanding and sometimes taking out of context. It is easier to look 'out there' so our activism has rescued us. If we turn inwards, we seem to have lost that critical factor that enables an objective look at ourselves. And this is so essential to growth.

If all this is an assessment, how do we translate it into change?

This is an enormous topic of which I am sure many have thoughts. I believe the key is to look at a participatory society, one that includes everyone. One of the main factors facilitating this is communication. As Quakers today, our main media is through reports of which there are a great many, too many for most of us to follow avidly. And it takes much skill to engage these with the Heart. Attempts degenerate into sentimentality and emotionality. The Ego is bound by three dimensions so that to trans these is death and that is scary. The Dark Night of the Soul. Not trauma but challenge.

How do we turn our attention to the silent majority? They have so much experience and skills. We need to give space and listen. We need to learn to walk the Quaker Way. ■

A Quaker “Knees-Up” Jean Thompson Inverness LM.



A few years ago I thought that our Inverness Meeting needed more “Get-Togethers”. We already had a picnic in the summer but needed something to celebrate around Christmas time.

My first thoughts were to have a traditional celebration, but some members didn’t want to celebrate Christmas as such, So the idea evolved into a seasonal gathering, Usually in early December, when all ages could come together with their individual contributions. Then, as I am known in my Meeting for my habit of joking, I once called it our Quaker Knees-Up – and it stuck! You should have seen the disbelief on my twelve-year-old grand-daughter Rona's face when I asked her if she would like to play her instrument at our Quaker Knees-Up! But it brings us all together these events. We have found out that so many Friends have wonderful gifts and talents to share.

This year, of course, it had to be on Zoom. As I could only see four people at a time on my tablet I was afraid that I would miss someone out! – I did have a list but invited anyone else to offer their contributions.

We began at 2.30 on Sunday December 13th and there was a wonderful mix of contributions. Lovely poems, inspiring poems, funny poems. The reading by Oriole" Oh Miss I don't want to be Joseph" from one of the Nativity Poems by Gervase Phinn a retired schools inspector. (Very funny! Then my funny story about a parrot – Oh I do wish I could deliver the punch line without everyone missing the joke!

We had musicians – definitely not me! My grandchildren Angus and Rona on the tin whistle and accordion accompanied by their mother Jacquie. The mother and daughter team, Amanda played a reel on her violin, Elizabeth on the piano, the Little Drummer Boy.

Pam recited: The Cataract of Lodore by English poet Robert Southey that he wrote for his children. The author creates a descriptive poem evoking the sound and feel of water.

Valerie with her funny piece by Spike Milligan, he's always good for a laugh!

Eleanor read out An Irish Blessing from the Book of prayer.

Then we were introduced to two new members, from Bristol, Helen and Luke, Helen played the flute. There was a lot of drama when Clunie's recording of her piano playing via her phone "A Midwinters Tale" it was supposed to come with a twist then someone rang her during the recording, we had to improvise for a few minutes. We never did get to know about the twist!

We ended with the peaceful soft sounds of a Tongue Drum (steel drum) played by Sila. I drew the meeting to a close as is usual at out meeting with the Namaste. It really is the Religious Society of Friends! ■

Do you welcome the diversity of culture, language and expressions of faith in our yearly meeting and in the world community of Friends? Seek to increase your understanding and to gain from this rich heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. Uphold your own and other yearly meetings in your prayers.

Advices & queries.No 16.

Francis Camfield's Trust

Peter Kennedy, East Scotland.

Francis Camfield's Trust is a Quaker trust fund that exists for *"the benefit of poor Friends (Quakers)"*. Its purpose is to *"support individual Friends in need engaged in witnessing to Christian and Quaker testimonies"*.

Its benefactor, Francis Camfield, (circa 1678-1708), was one of the early Quakers who was involved the setting up of Meeting for Sufferings. Camfield was one of the Friends who gave a loyal address to Charles II, where he addressed the monarch about the persecution of Friends and Charles 'appeared seriously affected with our complaint and sufferings'. Later, in 1701 addressed William III, and the following year, Queen Anne. Francis Camfield, contributed to various writings. A confidant of George Fox, Camfield ministered at Fox's funeral and features in some of Fox's epistles, where, when visiting Virginia, Fox speaks about Francis Camfield's plantation.

Francis Camfield made his living as a merchant and grocer in London. He also owned various rental properties in England and also in the United States.

Part of Camfield's legacy is the trust which benefits Quakers today. In 1693, he purchased Green Farm, Old Leake, Lincolnshire, as an investment and left it in the hands of trustees to provide for his widow in her lifetime and thereafter for needy Friends. The Farm is let to a tenant, and through the sale of land in the 1950s, and the income received from rent, revenue is used to provide for grants.

The trust supports individual Friends; Quaker Meetings and other bodies. General Meeting for Scotland and all four of the Scottish Area Meetings have received support from the Trust.

Trustees are however keen to receive requests, in confidence, for support from individual Friends (both members or attenders).

The Trust aims to support individual Friends in need engaged in witnessing to Christian and Quaker testimonies. This is usually in the form of help with travel and other costs to Friends in the course of their ministry, rather than education or training costs.

Two of the current Trustees, Peter Kennedy, East Scotland; and Daphne Wassermann, West Scotland, live in Scotland. We hold meetings in March (our AGM), June, September and December. Applications should be made via the Co-clerk:

Gillian Waddilove, The Hollies, Priory Road, Wolston, Coventry CV8 3FX Tel. 02476 554255

or via email: francis.camfield.trust@gmail.com ■



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POETS' CORNER

Free Pens by Connie Wanek

My mother knew the value of free pens.
She kept them in cups and drawers
and her motto (one of her mottos) was
Why would you ever spend a penny on a pen?
Long after they dried up, she kept their little bodies
because each reminded her of an event,
perhaps the Home Show, 1981, El Paso, or the time
she considered assisted living (the salesman
gave away expensive blue pens, so nice
she stole a second one for me)
during Dad's last years.
Besides, sometimes if you shake a dead pen
hard enough, it starts to write again.

(Sent in by Sarah Rowbotham)



November

Alastair Simmons Inverness LM.

The leaves are gone now
shred torn in the gutter,
Memories of last summer
And golden October days
Diminishing light and Atlantic night gales
The rain falls hard and cold
Clinging to branches bare,
Poppies red in the mist
Heavy with gunpowder and bonfire odour,
Only the moon rising on wet slate roofs
To announce that winter has finally arrived

The Lockdown Gardener
by Lysana Robinson

“Stay home” Nicola commanded.
So I did. And that was fine by me.
As the weeks passed time, no longer linear,
misbehaved and muddled itself into a soup.

Yet in the garden, time behaved itself.
Seeds were sown, they germinated and grew.
They were potted up and watered.
Taken care of lovingly each day,
Then with gratitude, eaten.

The grass grew, prompting me to mow.
Cyclical events bringing reassurance.
So I pottered, aimlessly it seemed,
Doing this for a while, then that.

One day, without any forethought,
I moved the Buddha, then a stone.
Then another stone, as if playing chess,
There seemed to be rules.

Rules of symmetry, rules of balance.
“Who’s plan is this? Surely not mine.”
Suddenly it dawned upon me.
“Yes, perhaps it is my plan.”

Deep within my love of nature,
Lying hidden all my life was
my yearning to create a garden.
So I surrendered and allowed it to take form.

At the edges, the tended order
of the Buddha garden
meets indigenous wildflowers,
refugee plants and established trees.

I treasure the ordered
and the haphazard
in my long-held dream
as it becomes physical reality.

My life's meandering path,
through so many detours,
has brought me here at last.
"Thank you so much, COVID-19."

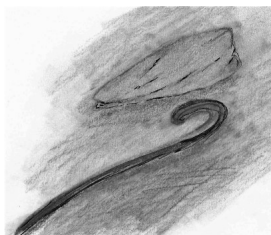
August 2020



AN OLD CAP

By Suzanne Hayes
Dublin Quakers.

Wellington boot weather on the hill today
A cloak of mist hangs like a shroud
Stones on the path laid bare
Clay washed away by heavy rain
Wary of a tumble
The uneven path slows me
I spy an old tweed cap perched on a post
Well worn and perhaps well loved
I think of you
You were fond of your cap
You wore it, strolling with your trusty walking stick
Which moved in rhythm with your step
A companion, never a weapon
Your cap, a useful accessory for saluting others
Accompanied by a cheerful greeting
Never hurried or impatient
A protection from the elements when on the bike
Up and down to your beloved 40ft.
What would you have made of the female presence there?
I like to think you would embrace it
Despite the need to cover up
And join your daughter for an icy plunge
Come rain or shine



Forty Years Quaking in the Isles 1981 - 2021

Jill Slee Blackadder. Shetland.

Several religions have been represented in Shetland over the centuries. Many, including different Christian denominations are still present. A relatively recent one is the Society of Friends, better known as Quakers . Initially they met informally in each other's homes, gaining official registered Meeting-for-Worship status in 1981. Shetland Quakers had been looking forward to celebrating their 40 years of regular worship in the islands in 2021, but Covid-19 has put paid to this, and disrupted scheduled meetings during 2020.

However, Quakers have visited Shetland before, at various times through history, particularly in response to times of sudden hardship. For example, after the Gloup disaster of July 1881, they supported fishing communities by providing food and clothing, and helping fund safety improvements for fishing boats.

Quakers living in Shetland today are scattered from Unst to Dunrossness, from Sandness to Scalloway. Over the years they have developed close ties with Norway Quakers, having represented British Quakers at several Norwegian Yearly Meetings. Responsibility for National and International Quaker work is shared between members from different Quaker Meetings throughout Britain, in which Shetland has played its part.

Quakers are known for their silent worship, believing that all are equal before God. They have no priest or minister figure, as God speaks directly to those who learn to listen in a collective silence. From the silence, anyone present may feel a prompting, an inner leading from God, to share a thought or perhaps a reading. Out of this quiet reflection comes a determination to act. Their Peace Testimony underpins a widespread pacifism and during both

World Wars, Quakers ran the Friends Ambulance Unit, transporting injured soldiers to safety from behind the lines.

Quakers have long been activists for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. They were instrumental in the abolition of slavery, reform of prisons and mental health care, the right to affirm in court, and pioneering ethical business practices. Quakers internationally are involved in working with refugees, among the homeless, accompanying Palestinians to work through the hostile blockades, and conflict resolution both abroad and the U.K. in schools and communities.

Over the last forty years, local activities have included fund-raising for peace and international aid projects, starting up the Shetland “One World Week” event, which ran for several years in the 1980s and 90s, organizing A.V.P. (Alternatives to Violence) workshops and campaigning for Shetland to get Fair Trade status. Quakers supported the Shetland campaign against the Gulf War and have periodically shown films on peace and non-violence.

More recently, they supported the campaign for Shetland to declare a climate emergency. As numbers grew, Meetings were held at the Freefield Centre in Lerwick, and after this was closed, the Salvation Army shared their premises for years, until refurbishment plans saw Quakers move to the Stanley Hill Hall, which has become the regular venue, until the Covid invasion forced these to close.

Normally, Quaker Meetings for Worship take place monthly on the second Sunday and also on a Wednesday lunch time in the Gilbert Bain Hospital Sanctuary. There are also occasional meetings on the last Sunday of the month, usually in someone’s home. Some Shetland Quakers join by Zoom with Friends in Orkney and the North of Scotland, as well as several individuals, currently living abroad. Members and attenders can also take

part in various different Quaker “Zoom” gatherings, across the country. Before long and as the pandemic allows, they hope to find a way to meet again, continuing their 40 years of Quaker worship in Shetland.

However, the fortieth celebration hasn’t been forgotten. Shetland Quakers spring-cleaned the beautiful, but derelict Gillaburn chapel for celebrating their 25th anniversary and had a meeting for worship inside it, followed by a summer party. They will be dreaming up something equally special this time, for their fortieth, once they can safely meet together again !

For more information, phone 01595 880 308. ■



Meditative Garden

Wales and the Marches, Moving Forward Together

Lesley Richards Convenor Symud Ymlaen

Four separate fingers and a thumb kept warm by a single glove, this was the image used to explain the recommendation of the Symud Ymlaen (Moving Forward) group to Meeting of Friends in Wales.

In 2019 there was growing concern in Wales and the Marches about the difficulties of finding Friends to fill roles, particularly roles like trustees. It was felt that too great a proportion of Friends time was spent keeping the show on the road, leaving too little for spiritual nurture, outreach, witness etc. Meeting of Friends in Wales facilitated the setting up of a group of representatives from each of the four Area Meetings and Meeting of Friends in Wales; appointing me, as someone outside the region, as convener in February 2020.

We reported after six months work. Our suggestion was that the five separate charities should merge into one, keeping the other functions of the four Area Meetings and Meeting of Friends in Wales unchanged – the four fingers and a thumb in a single glove. It is agreed that this is the direction of travel and the Symud Ymlaen group is now tasked with the detailed work to make this possible. As a first step in this new 2021 triennium, the four Area Meetings are sharing trustees. For example, three of the trustees of South Wales are also trustees of another Area Meeting; one with Mid Wales, one Southern Marches and one with North Wales. They are discovering that there are subtly different expectations about how things should work. Already there have been small shifts in some Area Meeting

procedures which have freed up a little more time for spiritual matters. This sharing requires trust, but it offers fantastic opportunities to support and learn from each other.

Working out the details won't be easy. The Quaker boundaries are very different from the national boundary (unlike in Scotland.) This means that Meeting of Friends in Wales isn't where all the Friends in the four Area Meetings come together, we need to find a way round this. Some Area Meetings own lots of properties, some very few. There are all kinds of delicate questions about old meeting houses and burial grounds (I'm sure you recognise this scenario!) The Symud Ymlaen process will need to provide the momentum to tidy up tricky details and overcome, largely unspoken, cultural divides within and between Area Meetings. But it has already taken a small step to relieve pressure on Area Meeting trustees by sharing experience.

I see a growing trust and understanding between the role holders in different Area Meetings. As the advantages of sharing experience become more widely felt, I believe Friends will move from giving tentative approval to widespread welcome to this process. The aim is to reset the balance towards all the sorts of things that are the reasons why you and I are Quakers. ■

Dates for Meetings at Faslane, 2021
Alison Burnley

The dates for this year's Meetings for Worship for Witness for Peace at Faslane are as follows:

14 March 18 April 16 May
27 June, 26 September (possibly joined by Northern Friends
Peace Board)
10 October 14 November

As it is thought that March and April may not be possible in the current climate – and May and June are by no means certain – October has been included.

Remember we meet at the North Gate. Bring something to sit on, weather-proof clothing, and something to eat before returning home.

All meetings start at 11am



Wild Garden by Lysana