



October 2018

# Scottish Friend



Terpsichore Sculpture, Bournville  
photo: Sila Collins-Walden



Welcome to the October edition of the Scottish Friend. Comments and suggestions would be welcomed. When sending in contributions, please note your LM.

In Friendship,  
Sila

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Please send articles as an **editable attachment** to [silartist100@gmail.com](mailto: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 **2 February 2019**. 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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*Published by Quakers in Scotland, 01382 730 842  
quakerscotland.org.uk (British website: quaker.org.uk).  
Printed on recycled paper by  
Print Force, Milngavie, 0141 956 1052.*

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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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## General Meeting for Scotland, 15 September 2018

Joyce Taylor

*“Hope for the future, joy in the present, enjoyment in the company of friends...”*

That was one Friend’s reflection in worship at the end of an energetic and engaging General Meeting for Scotland in September, held in Glasgow.

During opening worship we heard an extract from the Testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Marjorie Farquharson. We heard of her service to Amnesty International particularly in Moscow and her service to the Religious Society of Friends. “To Marjorie, the signs of divine grace were in peace building, equality, simplicity and truth. The impact of these gifts, radiating through Marjorie’s own life, was to make many people in difficult, unjust circumstances feel supported, regenerated, inspired and strengthened. But Marjorie also knew how much she owed to the divine grace she experienced in the blessings and love of others.” Her approach to service was summed up by a quote from William Dewsbury *“If anyone has received any good or benefit through this vessel, give God the glory; I’ll have none, I’ll have none. I’ll have none.”*

The minute of a meeting held in Perth to consider North Scotland Area Meeting concerns, was read and the decision made to continue discernment on this issue at GM in March 2019

Ten young people who attended Shindig this summer shared their thoughts, insights and observations. We heard about activities, worship and the feeling of being part of a different kind of family from the loving homes they come from. The effect of the Shindig experience was described thus: “it grows confidence”, “you learn a lot about yourself and your friends”, “meeting for worship helps me get my thoughts in order”, “it makes us excited to grow up as Quakers – it solidifies my faith”, “there is no pressure to be what you are not”, “you can just be a kid”, “staff are supportive, kind and helpful” “we look up to the staff and want to be them”. “at the end you are just buzzing to be back”. The theme this year was Building Bridges and young friends

learned about people across the world, about borders and how they developed over time, about reaching out and conflict resolution. A quote from “an old Quaker” at the top of our agenda reminded us that a journey begun at Shindig can build an important bridge to later Quaker engagement.

The Parliamentary Engagement Group (PEWG) gave an update on the different strands of their work. The Petitions Committee has produced a report on the evidence heard during the progress of the petition calling for transparency about military visits to schools. The report has produced a rather weak response from John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education, but the PEWG has been invited to come back on this. Meanwhile the group is looking at where Peace Education can find a place in the Curriculum for Excellence and has a meeting soon with Education Scotland. Ellis Brooks from QPSW at Friends House who has been involved in this kind of work in England, will also attend.

The Scottish Government are consulting on their plan to put the UN Rights of the Child at the heart of Government policy. It felt right that the Quaker response should reflect what children think so Mairi Campbell-Jack, Parliamentary Engagement Officer, led the young people in their own session looking at the consultation questions and their reflections will be included in the PEWG response.

We then came to the consider where the advocacy work in Scotland should be directed in relation to the concern about Economic Justice which came out of Yearly Meeting in 2015 and was discerned as a priority by General Meeting when the Parliamentary Engagement Group was set up. It is an area which could go in many possible directions. Through a process of looking at different aspects of inequality and ways of addressing this, the PEWG felt that one focus could be round land reform. They felt strongly that they needed Scottish Friends to be engaged in discerning if this was the right focus for their work and being clear about what Quakers might bring from a faith perspective which would be different from political parties or

lobbying groups. They invited Alastair MacIntosh, author of *Soil and Soul*, land reform activist and Quaker to speak to the meeting. Alastair spoke eloquently about there being two aspects in the approach to land reform– the practical and the spiritual and that the two cannot be separated. He suggested caution in the pursuit of the practical and suggested that the Quaker focus may be greater on the spiritual. There is a possible platform with other churches to speak about the theology of land reform and we should speak to the highest level of government as Quakers about the spiritual underpinnings in advocating land reform. He spoke of his experiences of land buyout and how bringing land into community ownership can open up painful conflicts among local inhabitants. Do Quakers have a role here with their understanding of discernment, their experience of meetings for clearness and their work in conflict resolution? What bridges can we build? Friends felt both energised and challenged by what Alastair had to say and it was agreed that further discernment at the next GM in Perth would be the right way forward.

The afternoon began with a report from Huw Lloyd Richards our representative on Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). ACTS has been through difficult times in recent years and following a report by THEOS consultants, a working group was set up to find a way forward. Huw is a member of this group. Their proposal that ACTS evolves to become the Scottish Christian Forum was the subject of a recent two day meeting with constituent churches and invited churches looking to reach agreement on the principles and practicalities. Further work is needed to clarify financial and constitutional questions. Having a Quaker presence in ACTS appeared to have helped enable churches to work in new ways, tackle difficult issues and come to agreement. The meeting was grateful for this bridge building work.

Later in the afternoon we welcomed members of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation who were holding their Executive Meeting in Glasgow. As they each introduced themselves we could hear the

rich variety of nationalities and countries represented; the Friend working in Cambridge but originally from Italy; the Friend in Oslo who is originally English; the Friend in Germany but originally from Croatia. Their work is to connect different Yearly Meetings, different Quaker worshipping groups and Friends of all ages - in other words, building bridges. We welcomed their affirmation that Brexit or no Brexit we will remain in Europe.

**The day ended in worship together with our European friends and our young people. We reflected that the theme of bridge building with which we had started the day had resonated in so many ways with Quaker work throughout the meeting. ■**

## **Experiments in Quaker Governance**

### **Martin Burnell**

*Martin Burnell is Clerk to General Meeting Trustees and a member of BYM Quaker Stewardship Committee*

**M**y aim in this article is to look at why Quakers adopted their distinctive approach to organising the affairs of the Society, to consider some of the factors placing strain on our traditional business structures and to explore how far we can make the conduct of Quaker business less onerous while adhering to our religious insights. I hope this will provide a context for the wider discussion of the concerns raised by North Scotland Area Meeting which is planned for General Meeting next March. The following is the personal view of one Friend.

## **The religious basis of our approach to governance**

The insight of the early Quakers was there was no need for an appointed priest or minister to interpret the will of God. Any individual is potentially capable of discerning that will. However, as human beings we are fallible, so it was necessary that individual discernment should be tested against the discernment, initially of other Friends within the Meeting, and beyond that, of Friends from a wider area.

Decisions on membership, management of finances and in most cases management of property, have always been taken at a level above the individual Meeting. This arrangement provides support to individual Meetings and avoids the danger of an individual Meeting falling under the sway of one charismatic Friend and going off at a tangent. Major decisions of policy have to be agreed by the whole Yearly Meeting.

One consequence of the Quaker opposition to an appointed clergy, is that it is necessary to find ordinary Friends from within the Meeting to serve in particular roles such as Clerk and Treasurer. However, such appointments are for a limited time, and while they recognise that individuals may have particular skills, this does not imply any spiritual superiority. Quakers have always thought it important to manage their own affairs and not to entrust these to officials or clergy appointed on a permanent basis. Governance is seen as the collective, spiritual exercise of all Quakers.

Quaker structures are not set in stone. Originally there were two levels between individual Meetings and Meeting for Sufferings - Monthly Meeting and Quarterly Meeting. Now in most cases there is only a single level - Area Meeting. General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales have been given some decision-making responsibilities in relation to matters unique to Scotland and Wales, though neither body is currently authorised



to manage membership, finance or property on behalf of its constituent Area Meetings.

Over the years, Area Meetings have divided and combined as population has shifted - it is a question of what works rather than some rigid principle. There is a certain minimum size below which an Area Meeting may lack the resources in terms of people and finance to be a viable unit. Conversely, if an Area Meeting covers too large a geographical area, its viability may be affected by the practical difficulty of Friends meeting together. Often the adequacy of transport links is an important factor.

What is clear from experience is that neither the process of Area Meetings splitting nor combining is something that can be accomplished without, in most cases, years of discussion and a good deal of anguish. The Quaker process for discerning the right way forward is normally slow - the Society of Friends is not like a business where the chief executive and board can impose overnight a new structure which they consider to be more efficient.

### **Pressures on our existing structures**

One undoubted pressure comes from the increased degree of Government regulation of charities, but it is important not to exaggerate this. We have always had to find Friends to act as AM Treasurer and as Clerk to the AM Finance and Property Committee. The Society of Friends from its early days has been recognised legally as a charity, with the benefits and responsibilities that confers.

What changed in 2006 was the introduction of a requirement that all charities in Scotland and larger charities in England and Wales register with the charity regulator. Along with this went a requirement for charities to submit accounts in a particular form and to have clearly stated aims on which they would report each year. Quakers have always prided themselves on keeping clear

accounts and records of their decisions, but the job of the Treasurer is now seen by some as more exacting due to these reporting requirements.

Charities have always been run by trustees, but prior to 2006, the Society of Friends regarded all members of the Area Meeting as its trustees, since decisions were taken by Area Meeting in session. The law now requires us to appoint named individuals as trustees - part of the general Government tightening up of the way charities are run.

Legally, a charity can look anywhere to find suitable people to be trustees and can bring in experts from outside if the terms of the trust allow this. However, Quakers wanted to stick as closely as possible to the religious principles behind Quaker decision-making and to the concept that governance is the collective responsibility of all Members. BYM therefore decided that trustees should be Members normally drawn from the Meeting that appointed them, and that those posts should be for a fixed duration, just like the posts of Clerk and Treasurer.

n special circumstances an Area Meeting may appoint a member of another Area Meeting as trustee, but in general *"trustees must be well-grounded in the life and concerns of the meeting for which they act. Their own business meetings are held in a spirit of worship and they are full participants in the meetings for worship for business of the meeting that appointed them."* QF&P 15.07.

It is important to realise that the legal requirement to appoint trustees stems from the existence of the charity. The reason we have 5 main trustee bodies in Scotland is because we have 5 defined area organisational units registered as charities. Trustees have a responsibility to safeguard the particular interests of the charity they serve and to ensure that decisions are legal and in conformity with the charity's objectives.

While it might be legally possible for the same group of people to act as trustees for two different Area Meetings, this would inevitably weaken the close relationship between the trustee body and the Area Meeting envisaged in Quaker Faith and Practice, since the trustees could not all be full participants of the same meeting for worship for business. The interests of the two Area Meetings might sometimes be at odds. This could be particularly problematic if General Meeting and an Area Meeting shared the same trustees, since one body finances the other.

If two Area Meetings merged and became a single charity, then the close link between the trustee body and the meeting for worship for business could be maintained. As already mentioned, the process of combining is not straightforward, particularly if there is property or other assets which one of the merging Area Meetings regards as its own, and geographical spread may also be an issue.

## **Demographic pressures**

Overall membership within the Society has been gradually declining for many years, although this is not true for every Area Meeting. Although we have no figures, there is a perception that the average age of members is increasing. Retirement is occurring later while life expectancy is no longer increasing. There are fewer Quaker couples and more cases where only one partner is a Friend. There are now many alternative ways in which Friends can use their spare time, and so participating in Quaker business may be given a lower priority than in the past.

## **What is the scope for easing these pressures?**

Over the years, various Area Meetings have experimented with ways to make the conduct of Quaker business less burdensome.

These experiments have included reducing the frequency of Area Meetings; delegating routine actions between meetings to a committee; using telephone conferencing; having more written reports and only discussing these in Area Meeting if a decision is required; and making more time available for informal interaction and learning.

There are also many cases where Area Meetings have delegated local finances to a Local Meeting, although the Area Meeting remains ultimately responsible and has to submit consolidated accounts to the charity regulator. There are examples of small local meetings sharing a treasurer. In some cases, professional help has been sought with accounting tasks, just as Area Meetings from time to time use the services of professional architects or surveyors. Employing such assistance does not mean that responsibility has been handed over - the Area Meeting and its trustees are still ultimately responsible for the conduct of the charity.

There have also always been exceptions to the Quaker structures described above, although these exceptions all relate to the management of property rather than to the responsibility for managing Area Meeting finances, membership etc. For historical reasons all Meeting Houses in London were managed by Six Weeks Meeting (now the London Quakers Property Trust). This means that London Area Meetings do not have the same control over property as other Area Meetings do.

Some individual Meeting Houses are managed by a Trust separate to the Area Meeting (normally where the property was originally donated by an individual Friend). Within Scotland, it would seem that the first step in simplifying the management of property should be to merge such individual trusts with the Area Meeting before contemplating the establishment of a single property trust for the whole of Scotland.

The Simpler Meetings Project is aiming to help Trustees by producing model documents and procedures and advice is also available to them from the Quaker Stewardship Committee. Training courses are available to those first becoming trustees or treasurers. All of this is designed to make taking on such responsibility seem less daunting. There may be ways to simplify the tasks of elders and overseers and to assist the nominations process.

Finally, there are some Area Meetings within the Yearly Meeting which have very few members but have inherited Meeting Houses with complex management needs. There are 18 Area Meetings with less than 200 Members and Attenders. In some of these cases, merging with a neighbouring Area Meeting may be the best option, although this must be balanced with the disadvantages of too wide a geographical spread.

## **Conclusion**

Quaker structures are not cast in stone, but the very nature of the Quaker business method means that changes do not come quickly. In the long run, we probably do need to reduce the number of Area Meetings within BYM, but Friends within merging Area Meetings need to be convinced that is the right course of action. It is a lot easier for an individual Area Meeting to reform the way it conducts its business. In all this we need to ensure we stay true to the religious principles governing our business methods while complying with the law. ■

## **Report on Meeting held in Perth, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

### **Adwoa Bittle**

A desire to listen, pray and discern brought 37 Friends from across Scotland to Perth on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018. This meeting was called following minute 9 of GM June 2018. We met to move forward on the issues and thinking that began in NSAM 3 years ago. NSAM has worked hard and long on this. The Listening Project that they undertook is a model example of an AM getting off it's back-side and working hard to meet all its members and attenders, to find out who they are and what their Quakerism means to them.

There are many background papers that have been attached to various GM minutes since November 2017. If you can't source them and would like to please get in touch with your GM clerk. [adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk)

We welcomed Paul Parker, our Recording Clerk, and Jonathan Carmichael, the staff member at Friends House tasked with working on the Simpler Meetings Project. Jonathan introduced himself and made it clear he was there to listen and see where he might be able to provide support in the future.

We began the day noting our main reason for being at the meeting and/or what we wished the meeting to achieve - details of the Sticky Notes produced during this exercise can be had from Sila Collins-Walden [silartist100@gmail.com](mailto:silartist100@gmail.com) for those interested. With an aim to be gentle with ourselves we settled again to be led by Paul Parker, into an exercise of Threshing.

Paul began with helping us to think carefully about No.27 from our Advices and queries. Live Adventurously...We were encouraged to think about how we could find our gifts and to then find how we could use these gifts in the service of God. He talked of not throwing the baby out with the bath water. He then

described a framework that he would use to help us focus for discernment through the day.

On a large sheet he drew 4 boxes and wrote the following in them.

Pressure for change	Capacity for Change
Clear Shared Vision	A plan – what now?

Paul talked of how change can be painful, difficult and create conflict, of how some people like it but some hate it. It can create uncertainty and suspicions. But all of this needs to be named, thought about and talked about in a respectful way.

Pressure for change = what is sitting there meaning we just can't go on the way it is?
--

Paul talked about the timeliness of this with the revision of our Book of Discipline beginning to happen. He spoke of the weight of some of our structures on small Meetings. He spoke of finding the principles behind the reasons why we do the things we do. How can we do some of them more simply? We were asked to consider that, if change is going to happen, and work, it will need positivity, hope, trust, worship and prayer. That Scotland is a good place for this as we do have people willing to travel to do this community building, thinking and encouragement of engagement.

We worked until lunch on the pressures for change box. We did this through Creative Listening. I had been going to type up all that was said but that does not feel correct. I can give a flavour.

Here follows notes on some issues raised.

Friends feel disconnected and don't get involved  
Need to sustain our meetings and worshipping groups  
Area meeting doesn't feel relevant  
No shared projects – Friends witnessing through other churches  
Quakers evolve and question things  
Learn from/work with other churches  
Shortage of names/finding service for people  
'Mystique'  
Demographic change – single Quaker households  
Need to build community  
Egocentric -> eco-centric  
Caring for one another

This was followed by:

Joining us together / combined visions / Spiritual purpose

Are all posts essential? Is all business essential?  
We are not alone with this!  
Opportunities of new technology  
Changing work patterns/pressures on time  
Ageing membership  
Want others / young people to have the chance to be Quakers /  
Outreach  
The structures may not be the real issue  
Being part of our local community  
Exciting new ways of being a meeting  
Need for explicit coordination by GM?  
It's possible to do work in a less burdensome way? -> joyful use of  
gifts

I can say that the feeling in the room was one of great stillness, respect, honesty and true listening. I am honoured to have been there.

Paul summed up the sharing by saying that there was



- some unity on the need for change
- there were voices heard from all parts of Scotland
- the words echoed the experiences felt by many Friends across BYM
- that other faith communities were clearly part of our experience which isn't so obvious in other parts of BYM
- that there was lots of hope

Then we had lunch. It was a lovely lunch. Thank you.

After lunch we settled again to consider:

What is the heart of Scottish Quakerism like?  
 What are the bare essentials?  
 What is at our core?

Paul reminded us that not one size fits all. That there are reasons why Quakers do things the way they do but with the principles firmly in place we can adjust the structures to fit each circumstance.

So, we wrote down what we thought were the true essentials that we need to look after:

Worship/spiritual growth  
 People/community (growth and involvement)  
 Connectedness – internal- external  
 How we take decisions (business method)  
 Compliance (£, property, data protection)  
 Leadings- work we are led to do together  
 Outreach  
 Remember that not one size fits all

Next, we thought about what resources and gifts we had to work with and utilise. We have:

God  
 Property – 7 FMHs  
 Burial grounds  
 Investment properties  
 Cash - money in the bank  
 Contributors  
 Investments - Investments with charitable purposes  
 People- staff  
 Serving / involved Friends - Not yet involved Friends  
 Dependants / beneficiaries including family members  
 Skills / Gifts / Service of different people  
 Reputation / Truth  
 Our methodology  
 Testimony/connectedness/joy  
 Our capacity for knowing we can be gathered and how this can  
 happen  
 Openness to Leading  
 Our decision-making processes / business method

Next we thought about our structures. We have:

General Meeting  
 Trustees and treasurer, Committees, Clerks, Yps  
 4 area meetings  
 Trustees and treasurer, Clerks, Committees, Elders and  
 Overseers, Yps  
 Local meetings  
 Trustees and Treasurer, Clerks, CYPs, Committees, etc.  
 2 property trusts  
 Shindig  
 John Wigam Enjoyment Trust  
 Participation in Yearly Meeting activity

When we got here we were getting tired, It was time to go our different ways. We felt it important to try to form a minute that

could be taken to GM on the 15<sup>th</sup> in Glasgow. We felt it important to have some actions to show a way ahead. These are;

1. To hold another meeting
2. To invite Paul and Jonathan to join us again
3. Not to have small meetings trying to move forward, it feels like a Scotland-wide discussion that we should rightly take together.
4. Our clerks to produce a minute then a full report.

The minute we agreed follows

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?
--

There is not unity of understanding or unity of vision, yet. However, we did really listen to each other and to God.

We said at the beginning that if we needed another meeting we would have one. We know we need another meeting. We are clear that we want this meeting to be similar to this one in that anyone across Scotland that is interested should come. We would like to invite Paul Parker and Jonathan Carmichael to the meeting. This meeting needs to be in a bigger venue and have really clear documents in advance.

Thank you to Alyson Buchan and Maureen Lambie for all the behind the scenes work with chairs, food, welcoming and more. Without you we could not have had the meeting that we did. Thank you to Robert Wilson for looking out for everyone and especially for all the badge work that you do. Thank you to all that came. So many people with such long and expensive travel.

Since the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> we have found that March the 9<sup>th</sup> is a good date for Paul and Jonathan to return. It is the date set aside for GM to be held in Glasgow. At GM we minuted:

#### **Minute 5 Minute from meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> Sept on NSAM concerns**

In minute 9 Of General Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the clerk was asked to convene and clerk a meeting with Paul Parker our Recording Clerk to include Scottish AM trustees, GM Trustees, Clerks to AM and GM Nominations Committees and those in GM who feel invested in this concern. All those who would like to be invited to this meeting were invited to contact [adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk)

That meeting took place on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September in Perth. There were 37 Friends present. The list of names is attached to these minutes so that you can find a Quaker near you with whom to talk to about the meeting, if you wish.

Our clerk has read the minute from that meeting. We are grateful for all the energy that is going into this work. We are happy to endorse the suggestion that GM on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019, to be held in Glasgow, will be dedicated to the next steps of discernment on this matter. We are glad that Paul Parker and Jonathan Carmichael will be able to attend to continue to share in and help lead this discernment with GMS. We ask that the minute from that meeting be sent to Paul and Jonathan and be attached to these minutes.

People who attended on 13<sup>th</sup> September

Martin Burnell, Robin Davis, Paul Parker, Jonathan Carmichael, Adwoa Bittle, Kate Arnot, Diana Brockbank, Anthony and Sue Buxton, Margaret Morton, Jacqueline Noltingk, Rachel Frith, Margaret Roy, David Sanders, Robert Thompson, Pamala McDougall, David James, Sarah Brown, Marion Sharkey, John Philips, Robin Waterston, Tom and Phyllida Sayles, Maureen

Lambie, Pam Apted, Daphne Wassermann, Robert Wilson, Michael Hutchison, Gisela Creed, Alyson Buchan, Nigel Dower, Alistair and Gill Reid, Constance Tonge, Mike Shilson, Joyce Taylor, Leslie Stevenson

So now, dear Friends, I suggest we wait. Creative waiting. Using Prayer and Worship that allows God to move amongst us. Learning from what Alastair McIntosh said at GM about Quakers knowing how to build community and about how we know how to be true to the Spirit. I really hope we can wait in trust and love until March 9<sup>th</sup>. ■

## **Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees: a brief report**

### **Hilary Patrick**

**F**or the past two and a half years I have been the representative of General Meeting on the coordinating group of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR). This brief report highlights some of the group's work and outlines what I see my role to be.

SFAR was set up in 2015 to help faith groups in Scotland support and advocate for asylum seekers and refugees. The project was initiated by the Church of Scotland and is funded by them until at least 2020. It employs a full time co-ordinator (David Bradwell) and a part time administrator.

### **Breadth of work**

Because of the expertise David Bradwell has obtained, he can operate at national (UK and Scotland), international and local levels. For example, he has been made a member of the European

Churches' Commission on Migrants in Europe, which lobbies for the rights of migrants and respect for international obligations. He is currently meeting with the Church of Sweden to discuss interfaith responses. Together we have written letters on the appalling situation of migrants in Greece and have heard of the work of the Mediterranean Hope project in Lampedusa and of those advocating for people displaced from the Calais camps.

At a national level we have responded to government consultations, most importantly the 'New Scots' strategy, which aims to support refugees' integration in Scotland.

Locally, SFAR has established an Edinburgh 'Weekend Club', (based on a project run by Interfaith Glasgow) providing a social space for refugees and their children. We support and participate in the annual Refugee Festival and were part of the Scotland Welcomes Refugees Gathering in Glasgow earlier this year. David has spoken to many local groups seeking to respond to the needs of refugees, and remains available to do this.

### **Our meetings**

We alternate between two types of meetings, the business meeting, and a wider meeting to which outside speakers are invited (Positive Action on Housing and the Refugee Survival Trust, for example). Other members of the various faith groups are invited to attend these wider meetings. So far the one person to do so has been a Quaker. It is very interesting (and inspiring) to hear from those working in the field, and I will continue to publicise these meetings to Friends.

### **My role**

My involvement with SFAR has been on the basis of my interest, not my experience. I see my role, therefore, to be as helpful on the steering group as I can and to share information with other Quakers in Scotland. This might be a call to action, or details of organisations seeking funds. I have a (very) small mailing group to whom I send out SFAR newsletters and other information.

(More members would be very welcome.) If I consider a matter is of national importance, I send it out through the GM mailing, but I do not send out all the information I receive, on the basis that it would overwhelm Friends.

## **Conclusion**

Refugees are probably less in the headlines than they have been. But Friends will not need reminding of the issues, which can seem overwhelming. SFAR gives us the chance to do something, and can open doors for us to do more when the opportunity arises.

## **What you could do**

5. Check out the very informative SFAR website [www.sfar.org.uk](http://www.sfar.org.uk)
6. Sign up for their newsletter. Email [dbradwell@churchofsotland.org.uk](mailto:dbradwell@churchofsotland.org.uk)
7. Join my mailing list. You may unsubscribe at any time! [hilaryjpatrick@gmail.com](mailto:hilaryjpatrick@gmail.com)
8. Invite David Bradwell to talk to your Meeting (perhaps jointly with other faith groups in your area).
9. Consider whether your Meeting could become a 'Sanctuary Meeting' <http://quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration>
10. Contact me if you think there are things SFAR should be doing. ■

**Meeting for Sufferings.**  
**Michael Shilson, Mull and Iona West.**

I found Meeting for sufferings on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 in Quaker House, London, both enlightening and challenging. I think the day could be summarised by *“What is the role of Quakers in today’s world?”*

I was drawn to *Advice and queries* page 16:

**41. Try to live simply..... and Be patterns, be examples .....**  
George Fox, 1656

The minutes can be read at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>

I will focus on some of the main points from the 21 items covered on the agenda.

1. During the day, we were joined by **Young Quakers** (under 18 yrs), who were having a parallel meeting on the theme “Diversity and Inclusion”. Before they departed for their own days activities, (though joining us again at lunch and the end of the day) we shared in small groups, what Quaker qualities we valued. It was interesting to discover from young Quakers: *“What is a stereotype Quaker?”* and how they thought they as young Quakers differed. Unfortunately one 15-year-old boy came away from the day with the impression that he couldn’t be a Quaker as he didn’t believe in God. This has generated a lot of discussion on the Facebook page “Quaker Renewal UK”.

2. A realisation of the huge remit for the **Trustees** and their role in deciding issues on behalf of Quakers. Though the underlying message from the meeting was gratitude to, and support for, the Trustees, there was some concern over the delegation of responsibility and governance given to the Trustees.

3. The reaffirmation of the **ethical investment policy**, and not supporting companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.



4. **Vibrancy in Meetings** pilot project; this involved engaging with 100 local meeting in 18 area meeting (though none in Scotland): focusing on ways of *nurturing and nourishing the Spirit in Meetings*.

5. A very clear and concise presentation by Edwina Peary on **Diversity and Inclusion**. Her remit is “*to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings.*” (YM 2017 minute 38). She identified that *all divisions are made by people, and so can be broken down*.

The responses she has received so far have emphasised the desire to be inclusive.

What barriers have been experienced?

Even welcoming questions can be interpreted as categorising, and “being put in a box”.

So how can our Meetings to be more available and welcoming? Some points for discussion were: language use (specifically Quaker jargon), style of worship, lack of visibility (Meeting location and time), Quaker business method.

She felt it is too early to come up with a finite definition of *diversity*, but gave a list of what it can encompass.

6. **Sustainability**. There should be a pragmatic approach to climate change. It can seem - and indeed is - quite daunting to think about what contribution we can make as individuals to such a global problem. **Can we make any difference?**

It’s acknowledged that there is still a lack of structural and inspirational leadership and direction, but there is much to celebrate in the progress from the various meetings.

In early September Paul Parker (Recording Clerk BYM) met Claire Perry, Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth. (<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/working-with-the-government-on-climate-policy>).

He says: *"I came away from our meeting sensing that, more than ever, the time is now for Quakers to make our voices heard. This is for two reasons:*

*1. There's genuine political ambition to lead on climate change. We have a clear sense that Claire Perry and her colleagues understand the gravity of the climate crisis we face, and that only ambitious action will avert it. In talking about a net-zero emissions target, the government are not short of vision. But encouragement, creative ideas and pressure must come from outside government if they are to do what's needed.*

*2. Government care what people of faith think about climate change. After all, we are a good marker of what citizens engaged in building a better world expect of our government. As faith groups, we're not party political, but we do care about policy. What's more, from Quakers, to Jews, to Muslims, national and local faith communities are working together to cut emissions. This experience informs our responses.*

### **What can Quakers do?**

The minister encouraged faith groups to "use our lobbying power". Many Quakers are already talking to their MPs about climate change in writing and in person. (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability/climate-justice-1>) Perhaps you can do the same. "Briefings for Friends" outlines questions to raise with MPs, but we needn't be policy experts. What matters is that we use our Quaker voice to call on the government to build a truly sustainable economy."

This encouragement is endorsed by Lindsey Fielder Cook, Representative for Climate Change, Quaker United Nations Office.

*"What I can say is that my work at the international level speaks from a genuine core because of Quakers in Britain and other countries who seek to embrace a sustainability lifestyle as critical for personal witness alongside political engagement..*

*In my experience, British Quakers are at the forefront of this; you are an inspiration to my work.”*

So, I felt it was a productive day, despite the extensive agenda not being fully covered. However, I did find the time spent (over 4 hours) in reading the preparation material (72 pages) considerable and some of it difficult to comprehend. ■



World Without Torture  
(Installation at Woodbrooke)

Church of Scotland Guild Annual Gathering,  
Caird Hall, Dundee Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.  
Mary Woodward

The Church of Scotland Guild used to be known as ‘the women’s guild’ but is now open to men. It gathers once a year in Dundee – a good central point for the whole of Scotland – and this year was the beginning of a new strategy: *One journey, many roads.*

The day itself was *Seeking the Way*: my first taste of this was at Dundee station, where I asked the woman opposite me, who was wearing a scarlet Church of Scotland teeshirt, if she could guide me to the Caird Hall. She did, though she seemed slightly reluctant to engage in conversation. Arriving at the hall I tried to find where to sit, saying “I’m the Quaker” - and was a little surprised by the lukewarm responses I received which were very unlike the warm and enthusiastic responses which greeted the same announcement at the Episcopal Synod in June...

I made my way through a veritable scrum of people and discovered that there were names on the tip-up bits of some of the seats in the reserved section, and found mine. I was feeling rather isolated in a sea of chat, and was greatly relieved when someone sat beside me and introduced herself as Jean Richardson of the Mothers’ Union. She was a very welcome companion in what might otherwise have seemed a party to which I’d been invited but not allowed to eat the cake or join in the games.

The day contained much enthusiastic singing of hymns, many of which I couldn’t sing, either because I didn’t know them or simply wouldn’t sing their words. Some well-kent tunes were pressed into service, including *ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon* and *ar hyd y nos. Will your anchor hold?* nearly raised the roof, and I was delighted to see Quakers creep in unexpectedly with *Dear*

*Lord and father of mankind's* tune being used for the final hymn. Malawian Mabel Sitchali invited us to join her in singing some of her native songs: it was glorious music, but not easy to pick up. There was also the delight of hearing one of my favourite, decidedly loony, organ pieces at the end of the day, sending me dancing out of the hall.

Inserted between the hymns was the business of the day, which included interesting addresses from Susan Brown, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and Tamsin Dingwall, the newly-elected Moderator of the National Youth Assembly, both of whom were very lively, committed Christians with a capital C. There were presentations about the six newly-chosen projects the church would support over the next three years:-

*Journeying Together* aims to empower young mothers in Zambia by teaching them parenting and living skills, building their self-esteem, and helping them challenge gender injustice. *The Sailors' Society*, the oldest seafaring charity in the world, aims to offer spiritual, practical, social and mental support to seafarers. *Malawi Fruits* helps people in the third poorest country in the world, providing irrigation pumps and enabling the growing of cash crops that provide much-needed income. *Crossreach* works with people of all ages across Scotland and aims to develop new initiatives to tackle isolation and loneliness. *Seema's Project* works with street children and the children of sex workers in the red light area of Pune [near Mumbai] and the *Boys' Brigade* wants to create growth in faith among its youth leaders, be more visible in the local community, and enable its young members to grow in themselves and be heard.

Thank goodness for Jean, or I would have felt very isolated the whole day. At lunchtime we were left to find our own way to one of the local churches offering space to sit and tea/ coffee. Our hosts were pleasant enough [but busy], while the ladies who joined us at our table would, I think, have remained in silence or

maybe talked only to their own companions had not Jean and I engaged them in conversation - which did eventually get everyone talking as a group. Maybe everyone else was overwhelmed by the vastness of the day, and clinging on to their own tiny rafts in the vast rolling sea of people?

Towards the end of our lunch I did get asked about Quakers by one pair of the ladies at our table, and on my way out, when I had a look inside the church, I had another invitation to explain us to one of the ladies who was greeting visitors to the church. I wasn't able to stay long, but gave her one of the yellow Q cards which most fortuitously was in my purse: she seemed really interested, saying she knew nothing about us, and I would have liked to stay longer...

Apart from hearing about the new projects, the emphasis seemed to be on getting more people to join the Guild, rather in the sense of fishermen going out with their nets to catch more members than of going out to explore the ocean and react to what's there. There were mostly women on the 'top table' [apart from Ian Whyte, the general secretary]; a lot of in-jokes that the audience appreciated; and lots and lots and lots of Jesus - he even comes first in the ending of prayers - 'through JC, the father and the spirit' rather than 'in the name of the father, son and spirit'.

On my way out I was waylaid by a camera crew wanting to know my reactions to the day, asking me if I had found the day inspiring: in all conscience I couldn't say 'yes'. I think I found it depressing that a large group of people so obviously uplifted by their version of religion and so enthusiastically supportive of their new projects could be so unwelcoming and uninterested in their visitors. Maybe they are extremely welcoming towards people who they think might want to join them? A great pity: I felt very warmly towards the piskies after my time at their Synod earlier this year, and look forward to future encounters. I hope

my next encounter with the Church of Scotland will be more positive. ■

*Ps. having encountered Pamala McDougall the following day and told her of my underwhelm, she expressed great surprise and suggested that maybe the administration had been experiencing problems, as she had always been made most welcome...*



The Gazebo, Woodbrooke.

**International Peace Day September 21<sup>st</sup>.  
Sila Collins-Walden, Inverness LM.**

**I**nverness Friends gathered around at the Edith Cavell Memorial at the Ness Islands Inverness on September 21<sup>st</sup> to lay a wreath of red and white poppies to commemorate all those who have suffered and died as a result of war. As International Peace Day occurred on a weekday, which was a school day our children from local meeting were unable to attend as they usually do. It was just a few Friends and two other members from local peace groups that were in attendance.

We normally lay the wreath mid September and it is left on the Cavell Memorial until a day before Remembrance Sunday November 11th. Then it has to be removed, as requested by the British Legion. Just recently Friends have been in consultation with the local branch of the British Legion who were happy for Friends to lay our wreath of red and white poppies and to leave it there before and until after the ceremony. However the head office of the British Legion in Edinburgh were not in agreement. As Friends were not happy about being part of a militaristic ceremony that takes place each year we decided to place our wreath on the Cavell Memorial on International Peace Day instead. September 21<sup>st</sup> falls on a Saturday next year and our children will no doubt will be in attendance as usual. We really did miss the children this year. During the wreath laying two American tourists approached us Caroline and Bruce and spoke with us about the the day and listened to the reading of the verse. We gave them each a white poppy which they readily accepted and then went on the their way.

**Eleanor Fairclough Inverness LM read out this verse written by Oriole Hall of Inverness LM:**

“Friends, we come together today to lay this wreath to remember all those all over the world who have died in war or because of war, the tortured, the innocent, the starving and the exiled, the imprisoned, the oppressed and the disappeared.



We pray that we, men, women and children may become true makers of peace.

May we see the people of the world as our brothers and sisters, as one community.

May all injustice, violence and oppression give way to fairness, gentleness and compassion as we pray for the day when war is abolished as a way of resolving conflict.”



## Calling for General Meeting for Scotland Saturday November 17<sup>th</sup>

Dear Friends,

Please do come to Perth for General Meeting! Usually around 50 Quakers from across Scotland meet to worship, discern, share food and build community. Come and be part of it. In Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow, at our last three GMs, a group of young people met alongside and with us. They would like to meet up again in Perth. We have been thinking about the best way to enable Young People to be part of GM. I am afraid that we cannot, at this point, look after children under 11 years of age. There are not enough volunteers. However, we can easily accommodate Shindig age YPs. Please see guideline below.

General Meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> November at the **AK Bell Library** in Perth. 17 York Place, PH2 8EB. The library is within easy walking distance of both train and bus stations. Car parking will be tricky. We will meet in the theatre which is accessed by a door to the right of the main entrance. Tea and coffee will be available from 10:30 with Meeting for Worship starting at 11 am. Lunch will be at 1pm. A soup and sandwich lunch will be provided with vegetarian and gluten free options. If your dietary needs extend beyond this, please could you bring something that would suit you. We hope to finish with tea and coffee and of course, cakes at 4:30.

The business in the morning will contain continued discernment on our Parliamentary Engagement priorities. Papers in relation to this, the agenda and other documents in advance will be circulated roughly a week prior to GM. If you do not receive them by 8<sup>th</sup> November, please email [scotfriends@gmail.com](mailto:scotfriends@gmail.com) Reading the papers beforehand helps to prepare the heart and mind. Please ensure that YPs attending have a chance to read the papers too.

During the Worship in the afternoon session we will be considering our budget. Smile! I remember attending a GM in Edinburgh years ago where this discernment was so powerful. What we decide to do with our money is so important. Do we have our priorities right? Our treasurer will present a draft budget and list of organisations to support, which have been considered by trustees and recommended by them. GM itself approves them. It is for GM to decide whether to make some adjustments, for instance how much support to give organisations. But Friends should be aware that this is a balanced budget (i.e. receipts and expenses are expected to be more or less the same), so that unless we decided to increase the AM contributions, or we decided to use some of the Jenny Auld legacy for some special project/form of witness, we cannot add any major items of expenditure. Such additions may be better discerned at future meetings.

We will also hear an update from Huw Lloyd Richards on the ACTS review proceedings. Huw is a member of the Working Group tasked with finding the ways forward for ACTS, he will share their concerns and, since they also relate to our membership and financial contributions to ACTS then his role in representing GM is also implicated. This may lead to decisions on ways forward for GM in relation to our Ecumenical responsibilities.

Please do come. All decisions made are in your name and if you are not there, well what can I say!

Please remember to bring a packed lunch if you have special dietary needs

If you have any questions or need anything please contact me, your clerk, at [adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk) or 07854 177 450.

Adwoa Bittle

## **Guidelines for YP involvement at GMS**

1 Parents do not need to come to GM with their 11yrs+ YPs so long as they make arrangements for travel with a local Friend or with the clerk.

2 Parents need to agree that they are responsible for their YPs and discuss these guidelines with them

3 YPs and their parents should set up their own check-in system for the day, either with another adult they know who will be at GM, or via the YP's own mobile as contact system. As a backup, a volunteer adult will give their mobile number to the YPs and take their numbers, for those who choose to go out round Perth after lunch 1.30 - 4.00 (for this GM this will be Johanna Quinney. Hopefully advance notice of who this will be will be available prior to each GM)

4 YPs will be invited/expected to be in GM session from 11 am until lunch after which they can have free time to explore the main areas of the city we are in (the agenda will be set with YP involvement)

5 They must stay in groups of no less than three. 11- and 12-year-olds must be in groups with older YPs

6 If the YPs do not wish to have free time out with GM in groups they must attend the GM session in the afternoon from 2 – 4:30. Please could they have books to read or something to draw quietly, if necessary. Not a screen.

**LM Clerks PLEASE pass this on to young people and their parents in your Meeting.**