

Tayside Quaker

Vol 43 No 2 April 2019



Inspiration at the bus stop

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Closing date for the next edition is Saturday 13 July 2019

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East Scotland Area Meeting

Scottish charity number SC0020698

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Inspiration at the bus stop



Margaret Berwick writes:

Gandhi waiting for the bus has become something of a tourist attraction in Bottomcraig (near Balmerino, Fife).

A local artist, who prefers to remain anonymous, chose this figure less for his spiritual inspiration than because the 'lotus' position avoided the challenge of drawing seated legs. However, Gandhi and his quotations are the cause of much interest and discussion among bus passengers and it is not unknown for drivers new to the route to stop for him.

**“Whatever you do
will be insignificant,
but it is very important
that you do it.”**

Mahatma Gandhi

East Scotland Area Meeting, Perth, 18 May 2019

Dear Friends,

The next Area Meeting will take place in Perth on Saturday 18 May, at 11 am with refreshments available from 10.30 am. All are welcome. The venue is the Subud Centre, 7 St. Leonards Bank, Perth PH2 8EB. Limited parking is available at the centre with other parking nearby. Soup will be provided at lunchtime, but please bring your own sandwiches to supplement this.

The main item in the morning will be to hear from two of the young people currently on the Peacemaker Placement programme organised by Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Jo Jukes and Zain Hussein will describe the work they do with the campaign bodies they are part of, and how they became part of all this. We had a visit 2 years ago from their predecessors in the programme and it was most inspiring hearing them.

In the afternoon, we will consider the recent work of Meeting for Sufferings, led by Robert Thompson. This is our primary link with the wider body of Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting, and the work carried out on our behalf. We will also hear a report from our Trustees who work away behind the scenes to ensure we are carrying out essential procedures properly. We will consider various membership matters, and some nominations business. It will be an interesting and varied day.

Please come, and do encourage others who may not be regular participants at Area Meeting. It is a good opportunity to meet Quakers from other parts of our area. Attenders are very welcome.

In friendship,

Robin Waterston

Clerk

East of Scotland Area Meeting (AM), 16 February 2019

Dundee

Over twenty Friends gathered at the Central Baptist Church Halls in Dundee, our opening reading was Advices and Queries 39:

“Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive. Be discriminating when choosing means of entertainment and information. Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation or games of chance.”

We were pleased to welcome Alison Mather, Director of Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD), to tell us about their work.

The charity has a long history dating back to 1870 when it was established as the Friends Temperance Union; in present times QAAD seeks to reflect the wide range of perspectives that exist within the fields of substance misuse and gambling.

QAAD’s work focuses on education, prevention and support, addressing the needs both of those experiencing addiction and those described as ‘close others’. QAAD supports young Friends and participated in the recent conference on mental health and young people. Alison described a multi-generational gap when understanding the needs of young people in these changing times and reminded us of the complex issues around the decriminalisation of drugs and the need to avoid simplistic solutions.

Alison read a moving account by a mother whose son was struggling with drug addiction and described the pain and turmoil it causes. Those with addictions are from all walks of life and those suffering and recovering from addiction walk amongst us; these issues touch many people, including those within our own community and we heard touching accounts from Friends present of the difficulties and challenges faced.

Those 'close others' are affected at a very deep level, including loss of trust, anxiety, isolation, financial loss and the disruption to lives that addiction can cause.



Alison Mather, director of QAAD, with Robin Waterston

Alison described how gambling has changed in recent years with the popularisation of lotteries, the availability of gaming machines and the introduction of online gambling available around the clock. Debt can easily build up without families being aware of it, sometimes only learning of the problem when debt collectors arrive at their door. The gambling industry makes a huge amount of profit, with only a tiny proportion given to support those suffering from addiction.

We were challenged to consider how both as individuals and as meetings we can be more supportive and open to Friends who disclose their own problems or those of someone close to them and we were reminded that there is still a degree of stigma and embarrassment over addiction.

More information about QAAD can be found on their website:

www.quad.org and within their excellent newsletter QAADRANT.

Bill Edgar, Clerk to the Dundee Friends' Property Trust (DFPT) was able to update us on the ambitious plans to renovate the ground floor and basement of 9 Whitehall Crescent to restore it as a Meeting House. The plans have been developed over a long period of discernment in conjunction with Dundee Local Meeting and will provide the opportunity to make full use of a central location and present an accessible face to the public and other community groups.

The proposed plans will provide an accessible meeting room for worship on the ground floor, with a lift to the basement kitchen and toilet. At a later stage the Trust will, if resources permit, convert one or more of the upper floors of the building to accommodation which can be let to those in housing need. There are already two flats on the third and fourth floor, one of which is let to a refugee family.

Dundee Friends will need to raise an estimated £175,000 to complete the works; £50,000 can be provided by DFPT, the rest will be sought from grants and fundraising endeavours, including a local and national appeal. Already ideas for fund-raising are taking shape with a pop-up shop, dance workshop and recipe book planned and any further ideas for fundraising would be very welcome.

Just as early Friends faced the future with faith and optimism to grow the Quaker community in Dundee, so present Friends are also embracing change as they begin a new chapter in their history.

Martin Pippard was able to update us on the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG). Martin described how deep thought

and discernment had gone into considering the priorities for the group. The links between the effects of climate change and economic justice came through strongly when thinking about the kind of world we want to live in and leave for future generations. A fundamental respect for the rights of all of us to be here and share in the world's resources and recognition of the need for careful stewardship of the land rather than potentially exploitative land ownership led to questions about how to encourage fairer access to resources including tax justice and land reform.

The government is due to come to a decision concerning the Petitions Committee's recommendations on military presence in schools in spring 2019. The need for a child's rights and welfare impact assessment was also emphasised in the response to the Scottish Government's consultation on mainstreaming children's rights in Scotland. The PEWG is also involved with the development of an evaluation of the work of the Scottish Advocacy Project.

PEWG is presently legacy funded and it is hoped that this valuable work could be considered as part of the core budget of BYM.

We considered the project on Inclusion and Diversity being led by Edwina Peart and the BYM survey currently taking place. Some concern was expressed about the nature of the survey and where it will take us and whether this approach fairly reflects Quaker values. The phrase "If you treasure it, you measure it" has been used, one Friend preferred the phrase "If you treasure it, you nurture it".

Pam Apted

Assistant clerk

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

(Advices and Queries 34)

General Meeting for Scotland, Saturday 9 March, Glasgow

On a wet and blustery day over seventy Friends from across Scotland gathered at Glasgow Meeting House. While the rugby teams of Scotland and Wales were battling it out at Murrayfield we met in a more friendly fashion, our task being no less challenging, namely to address the question:

How do we liberate ourselves to focus on spiritual growth, community building and witness in the world?

This concern was originally raised by North Scotland Area Meeting (NSAM), concerning the very real difficulty in finding people to fill essential roles. Much work and discernment has been done, including a Listening Project carried out by NSAM, to seek the views of Friends. Discussions have been held, including those last year with Paul Parker, Recording Clerk and Jonathan Carmichael, coordinator of the Simpler Meetings Project.

We were pleased to welcome back Paul Parker and Jonathan Carmichael, as well as Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke and Chloe Staley, an intern working with Paul.

Our opening worship started with a reading from the publication 'Our faith in the future'. It hopes for...

"...a future where Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age. All are heard, valued and supported both in our needs and our leadings. Everyone's contribution is accepted according to their gifts and resources. All are welcomed and included. There are clear and effective ways of working together on shared concerns. Fellowship and fun strengthen the bonds between us, enhancing a loving community."

Paul Parker advised that the difficulties faced by NSAM are not uncommon; society is changing, and we are having to adapt to new challenges. There are changes in demographics, in people's working

patterns, in the decrease of families worshipping together and the increase in single Quakers in households. There are more complex regulations and issues with the use of technology and more challenges for young adult friends trying to stay connected.

Conversations about change are going on across the country and Paul urged us to:

“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? ...”. Advices and Queries 27.

Living adventurously can be scary, but exciting too; Paul encouraged us to be open to change and to avoid the ‘Quakerly art of squashing’ (in the nicest possible way!).

We need to understand our past and value our Quaker heritage, we need to consider why we do what we do, what is it about our structures and discipline that have worked well for Quakers? What can we do differently, what should remain the same? Early Friends were driven, bold and courageous, can we be too?

Coming to Meeting for Worship can have a transforming effect on our actions. We are challenged and called to account; being a Quaker has never been easy.

We were reminded of the practice of coppicing, where young tree stems are repeatedly cut down, leaving the living tree stump; new growth emerges and is ready to be harvested again, whilst the heart of the tree remains alive.

There have, for example, been new shoots with the resurgence of new groups of young people, with gatherings that do not always look like traditional Quaker Meetings. We can learn from each other; young people often have to manage with a quick turn over of staff – what can that teach us?

What are our gifts? Here in Scotland we have a strong sense of community, we are willing to travel great distances to be with one another, we have close friendships and good relationships with other faiths, we have a passion for great causes and a history and tradition that people respect; we can build on this.

We were reminded of the joy that service can bring, the opportunities for growth it can offer. Nominations can be exciting, but Friends do not always need to wait to be asked. Sometimes we fear that we won't be up to a task only to discover that it brings unexpected joy and new openings.

Jonathan Carmichael, working on the Simpler Meetings Project acknowledged that there was a huge variety in the way different meetings do things. Friends can have perceptions of barriers to innovation that are at times unfounded; we need at times to find creative ways to solve issues.

Jonathan presented us with a 'Menu for change' a list of possibilities area meetings and local meetings could use in response to pressures on them and their role holders. There are no easy solutions but central was the need to invest in our communities, through learning, understanding and sharing, including fun activities and shared projects. (An excellent example of this being a new publication from West Scotland Quakers titled 'The things which are eternal', where they speak personally about Prayer, Quaker discipline and the testimony of Simplicity.)

It was clear how much Friends valued Woodbrooke. Sandra Berry described how Woodbrooke was originally set up as a one-year experiment, realising from the beginning that many people would not be able to travel there and therefore setting up correspondence courses. Now it offers many different ways to access learning, including on-line courses. One of the most popular of the Woodbrooke-on-the-Road courses is 'What can we do with what we have got?'

How we move forward is a discussion that will be on-going, it was clear that we care deeply about our meetings and our worshipping communities; we were reminded of Quaker Faith and Practice 10.11:

“It was said of early Christians, ‘Behold, how they love one another’. Could this be equally said of us?... Our extreme busyness and the pressure and tension of modern life make it at once more necessary and at the same time more difficult that our meetings should become living and loving communities.”

(June Ellis, 1986)

Travelling home, I passed a couple arm-in-arm, he wearing a Scottish scarf, she a Welsh one, laughing, still friends ...

Pam Apted

Meeting for Sufferings, 2 February 2019

(During the opening worship we heard Advices and Queries 37 and 38 and part of Quaker Faith and Practice 19.32.)

The main item on the agenda of the February Meeting was further consideration of Southern Marches Area Meeting’s concern about a Quaker response to a ‘post-truth world’, which is defined as:

‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief’.

The clerk of Southern Marches spoke to the concern and emphasised that this is not a new problem. She reminded us that *‘lies can fly right round the world, while the truth is putting its boots on’*, one of many versions of a saying that dates back to at least to 1787. What has changed, she said, is that people are now indifferent to lies and she quoted an interviewee who had said,

“I’m not interested in facts. I know what I believe.”

Meeting for Sufferings received 42 minutes from Area Meetings replying to the question – “Do we want to commit resources to this concern?”

This was discussed at our Area Meeting on 18 August and our response was that although we shared the concern, we would not support diversion of resources from other Quaker work to this issue, and this was the decision of Meeting for Sufferings.

We were also reminded that staff are working with other civil society organisations to continue to challenge the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 and other regulations which limit the ability of civil society to speak truth to power. (I have a list of 20 organisations encouraging truth and integrity. If you would like a copy, contact me: alysonbuchan@gmail.com)

Because of my interest in our nominations procedures, the report of Central Nominations Committee caught my attention. We have appointed 24 people to work on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and the group is multi-dimensional in age, geography, gender, language and skills – six of the 24 are under 30. We have also appointed 5 new Trustees – three of them under 35 including the new Britain Yearly Meeting treasurer.

The Court and Prison Register reported the progress of the Stansted 15. You will remember that they were accused under an Act which can carry a life sentence. This concerned us all because of the threat to peaceful protest in this country and we were relieved to hear that they have not been given a custodial sentence.

Sustainability remains a major concern and there were two reports in the Scottish Friends Newsletter about a recent conference. A group is being set up tasked with reporting back to Meeting for Sufferings at least once a year, to prevent the issue getting lost.

And finally, an emotional plea from four Area Meetings that we recognise and record the deaths of at least 265 Friends who died in the first World War, including many who served within the military establishment. A record of these deaths will be created in the Friends House Library and we ask Friends to forward any names to be recorded on this list to the Recording clerk.

You can read the full minutes, and the minutes of the 42 Area Meetings at:
<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>

Alyson Buchan

Meeting for Sufferings, 6 April 2019

A cold and sunny day saw around eighty Friends gather in the lovely Sarah Fell room at Friends House. As usual, a full and busy agenda was introduced by our Clerk, Anne Ullathorne. In between the business items of appointments, recognised bodies (three new ones - the Mount School, York, Green Olive Trust and Quaker Music Trust) and discussion around the Court and Prison Register came lengthy reports and discussion on Diversity and Inclusion and Vibrancy in Meetings.

Diversity and Inclusion

Edwina Peart gave her second report to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in her role as Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator. She discussed the findings of a Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) wide survey (around 1600 responded) and a report back from a national gathering held at Woodbrooke in January of this year. Edwina shared some reflections on ethnicity, gender and class. Further work is to be done on analysing results and the subject will be considered at Yearly Meeting in May.

Vibrancy in Meetings

MfS heard reports from Friends involved in the Vibrancy in Meeting pilot programme. The programme is a joint initiative between BYM and Woodbrooke. The pilot schemes have been evaluated by the National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO). The programme has been tasked with looking at the challenges of declining and ageing membership, demand on role holders and possible disconnect between local and national work. The NCVO evaluation was very positive and BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees will consider the future of the programme at their meeting in June.

Friends may be interested in viewing a short film at

www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/vibrancy-in-meetings/

Appointments

Robert Thompson, East Scotland Area Meeting has been appointed to serve on Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, 6 April 2019 to 31 December 2021.

Full minutes can be viewed on the BYM website and reports will appear over two weeks in The Friend.

Robert Thompson

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Spring conference The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire, 22 – 24 March 2019

I was privileged to be able to attend this conference as the representative for the East of Scotland. I did not know what to expect as this was my first experience of Quaker Conferences; however, I found it stimulating, challenging, informative and supportive, also exhausting as it was a very full programme. However the little spare time allowed exploration of the beautiful grounds of The Hayes which is a Christian Centre. The centre provided us with three excellent cooked meals a day and very comfortable accommodation.

The two themes of the weekend were climate change and Palestine.

Climate change workshop

The climate change workshop was clear that first of all we have to acknowledge the reality of climate change and its consequences, that consumerism and capitalism rely on convincing people of what they want rather than need and that there is no quick fix. Fossil fuels result in high levels of pollution leading to health implications, especially for children and those involved in mining in third world countries where environmental controls are poor, non-existent or ignored. Although prohibited in Scotland, fracking is

happening in England. Concern was shared about the destruction of natural carbon sinks provided by forests such as the Amazon Basin by their gradual erosion by large scale mono-culture.

What we can do in our homes and lives? We can we use less fossil fuels by changing to an ethical supplier and turning down our heating. We can buy Fairtrade and organic products and more seasonal and locally produced foods, so reducing air-miles, and perhaps grow our own, organically. We can become involved in local campaigns and issue raising groups.

Making change happen in Palestine workshop

I found myself drawn to the workshop on Palestine and the 'Meet the Staff' session. This relates to my own history of being brought up in London in an area with many Jewish families and a Jewish school friend with whom I am still in contact. As a student I visited Israel and worked on a kibbutz in the Negev Desert, and saw people who had concentration camp numbers tattooed on their arms. Thus, it is a great personal sadness to see how Palestinians are treated in a land they have lived in for centuries.

We learned of the work of the EAPPI – The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.

Ecumenical Accompaniers are invited by local churches to witness and accompany vulnerable communities and individuals; they live with local communities, participate in daily activities and give voice to local groups working non-violently for peace.

Their presence helps deter violence from the Israeli military and armed settler groups and documents human rights abuses through eyewitness accounts. Examples include accompanying Palestinian children to school through Israeli checkpoints and being present when a Palestinian farmer who was harvesting his olives and who would have been harassed otherwise.

The most distressing film for me was of a Palestinian family in Jerusalem who were informed that they did not have proper planning permission for their house and were required to obtain it within six months. They duly applied and, of course, it did not come through. Pictures of their daughters' bedroom

with twin beds covered with children's duvets and then a pile of bricks after demolition were distressing.

Three percent of Arab planning applications are granted.

However, within the Israeli population there are many groups who oppose the present Israeli government policy and actively work on behalf of the Palestinian cause. Examples are ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions) and B'SELEM, a human rights organisation.

Quaker conciliation work

Here we learned more about the 'under the radar' work that is being carried out in various parts of the world. This long-term work is happening in Nagaland in India, Kenya and a third country too sensitive to mention.

Keynote speech

The keynote speech at the Conference was given by Nim Njuguna, originally from Kenya, an ex-Baptist minister, now a psychotherapist and Quaker. His speech focussed on the importance of not ignoring the differences between people but embracing and valuing them, whether ethnic, gender, sexuality, race. We are good at avoiding difference and good at being 'nice'. Shared meaning can come out of meeting 'difference'. However, he omitted to mention class which seemed to many of us an unusual omission particularly when Quakers generally are well educated and predominately middle class.

We had one evening free in which there was a choice of films. I went to the screening of *Pride* which if you have not seen it, please track it down. Based on true events it restores faith in human beings!

Finally, thank you to the East of Scotland Area Meeting for giving me the opportunity to attend the QPSW Spring Conference.

Sue Hunt

Northern Friends Peace Board News

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) continues to be active. In January, in seeking truth to power, NFPB submitted a response to The House of Lords International Relations Committee which recently requested evidence on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and nuclear disarmament. Northern Friends Peace Board submitted evidence and I can send a copy to anyone who would like one. The Scottish CND submission to the committee is online at <https://janetsabernik.wordpress.com/> which is the personal website of three campaigners in Scotland, two of whom, Janet Fenton and David Mackenzie have a long and continuing history of activism.

The responses are too long to reproduce here but it is revealing to see the range and insight of the questions that this House of Lords Committee were asking:

1. What is your valuation of the current level of risk?
2. Ahead of the 2020 Review conference of the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT), what are the biggest challenges facing global nuclear diplomacy?
 - a. To what extent do states view the NPT as relevant?
 - b. What are the prospects for the other components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)?
 - c. How important are these agreements to the wider rules-based international order?
 - d. To what extent does the existence of three armed states outside the NPT (India, Pakistan and Israel) destabilise the overall regime?
 - e. What prospects are there for a Middle East WMD (weapon of mass destruction) free zone?
3. To what extent will the United States withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, as well as US efforts to achieve the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, affect the wider nuclear non–proliferation regime?

4. To what extent and why are existing nuclear arms agreements being challenged, particularly the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), and what prospect is there for further such agreements? What prospects are there of progress in negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty?
5. What effect will nuclear renewal programmes have on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime? To what extent could technological developments - including in missile capabilities, warhead strength and verification – undermine existing non-proliferation and arms control agreements?
6. To what extent will technological developments, both directly relating to nuclear weapons and in the wider defence and security sphere, affect nuclear diplomacy?
7. If it were to enter into force, how would the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons (the Ban Treaty) affect efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and bring about disarmament?
8. What are the policies of other P5 countries (China, France, Russia and USA) and the UK's other partners on the Non-Proliferation treaty and on nuclear weapons more generally? How effective has the P5 process been, and what role will it have in the future?
9. How effective a role has the UK played in global nuclear diplomacy in recent years? How could the UK more effectively engage on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament? What should the UK government's priorities be ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference?

At the beginning of March NFPB met in Liverpool and were made very welcome in their well-equipped and modern city centre Meeting House.

Part of the day was taken up with business and finance items; that was followed by the members forum where board members highlighted what had been or was about to take place in their areas, something that I always find both inspiring and exciting.

In the afternoon we considered this paper that had been circulated in advance. We did not reach a single conclusion, but the act of reflection was valuable.

In these turbulent times: some reflections ahead

Eighteen months ago, during Quaker week, posters and other materials were encouraging people in 'turbulent times' to 'be a Quaker'. We are still in turbulent times...

- The UK's political system at the national level seems stretched to breaking point. Civil discourse on Brexit is fraught with difficulties, so deep are divisions across society.
- Our Defence Secretary envisions a post-Brexit UK role in the world that has 'enhanced lethality', whilst we export some of that lethality to regions mired in horrific armed conflict and pour millions in the ultimate lethality, nuclear weapons.
- Climate change is reaching a critical point and the economy that drives so much of that is also driving ever deeper divisions between rich and poor.
- In our towns and cities, the growing numbers of people sleeping on once-busy shopping streets is just one visible indication of the damage caused by politics of austerity and an economic system that is not working.
- And those not regarded as belonging sufficiently firmly on these shores struggle with the stress of not knowing, or needing to prove, their right to even be here.

Alongside and within this, movements of positive change are happening...

- from the international nuclear weapons ban treaty, to nonviolent rebellion against inertia on climate change;
- from civil society groups at all levels to international networks;
- from politicians to ordinary citizens, old and young, seeking and developing new ways of doing politics, of making change happen, of caring for one another, of defining ourselves in relation to one another and in relation to the planet.

So, to be a Quaker in such times.... What does love require of us?

- How can we be both prophets and reconcilers? We can speak out about our convictions and take sides against the causes of injustice on the one hand, whilst on the other hand being ready to listen and to promote better understanding.
- Does recognising that of God in everyone require us to engage with those with whom we most passionately disagree? What opportunities and skills do we have for doing some of the bridge-building that will be needed?
- Does moving beyond our current limitations demand we rethink who sits at the 'Quaker table', or indeed whether we need a table at all?
- How do we acknowledge both our power and our weakness in creating change? Who needs support? What can we do together?
- In turbulent times, what role can we play in promoting and supporting nonviolent approaches to bringing about the changes that are needed?

Lastly, a date for your diary:

September 2019 The Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair comes to London, Quakers are supporting the Roots of Resistance protest movement (<https://rootsofresistance.org.uk/>)

Peter Cheer

Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.

(Advices and Queries 28)

Cycle against torture 2019

Friends around the UK are getting involved in supporting *Cycle Against Torture 2019*, a cycle ride from Hastings to Edinburgh, taking place in July and being organised by a team from the charity's Edinburgh support group, including us - Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett, two Friends from St Andrews Meeting.



From 2008-2017 we lived in Cornwall where we took part in Freedom from Torture's holiday hosting scheme (as have other Tayside Friends). Through the scheme, we met remarkable individuals from Sri Lanka, Iraq, Turkey and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and through continued friendships over a decade or so, we've increasingly appreciated the value of Freedom from Torture's careful, professional work. People who, due to the damage they have suffered and survived, at first appeared reserved, extremely weary and fragile, have re-emerged as their full, independent

selves. Inspired by these individuals we did a 2-person cycle ride for Freedom from Torture around Devon and Cornwall in 2016, linking Quaker meetings in the two counties, and received tremendous support for the charity from Cornwall and Devon Friends. Now we're finding that Friends from Brighton to Birmingham and from Oxford to Hexham are pitching in with support for this much bigger enterprise, a 19-stage relay ride with events to raise funds and awareness along the way. The ride also aims to strengthen links between supporters around the country and with the Freedom from Torture clinical Centres in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle and Glasgow. All these centres are doing fantastic work for survivors of Torture, as many Friends are aware, but they are held back from doing more by their limited funds.

The ride is in 19 stages, and for each stage there will be a group of up to 8 riders plus 2 leaders. Carolyn and Richard will be riding only 3 of the complete stages but will be following the ride as support team, and collaborating at various stopping points with Friends who are organising a welcome meal, help with luggage, overnight accommodation or ... cake! We're delighted that the Quaker theatre company 'Journeymen Theatre' will perform their remarkable play 'Feeding the Darkness' at two Meeting Houses – Oxford on 6 July and Birmingham Bull Street (11 July).

The highlights of the final Scottish stages, as we cycle from Glasgow to Edinburgh, will be an Open Day at the Glasgow Freedom from Torture Centre on Friday 26 July, and a celebratory finish with a welcome meal at the Sikh Temple in Leith!

You can support Richard and Carolyn or other participants, on the JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/companyteams/cycle2019>

For full information on the ride please see <https://edinburghfft.org/cycle2019/> or contact the organisers on cyclefft2019@gmail.com

Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett

Holocaust Memorial event in St Andrews

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) was marked in St Andrews on 30 January, to allow returning students to participate. It was an early evening event supported by the University's chaplaincy team and organised by the student Interfaith Group.

Quaker chaplain *Barbara Davey* writes:

We met by the harbour on a cold clear night. As we gathered together in a circle, each of us was given a lantern to hold. It was an occasion of words, silence and music with contributions from many faiths and philosophies of life, and I was particularly moved by the range of young voices heard. Their common thread was the need to uphold our shared humanity and stand alongside those who are persecuted.

I offered a short reflection, and a poem written in German and English, based on a song composed in Theresienstadt by Ilse Weber. At the close of the evening we walked in silence under the bright stars along the harbour wall to the end of the pier and back.

Conscience Matters

Conscience Matters is a new exhibition at the National War Museum, Edinburgh Castle. It runs from 8 March 2019 to 26 January 2020. It is the result of a major research project into conscientious objectors in Britain led by the University of Edinburgh.

The exhibition explores the little-known story of British conscientious objectors of the Second World War through paintings, poems, letters, music and speeches.

The exhibition includes two items from the time when Peter Tennant (who was a member of West Scotland Area Meeting) was in China with the Friends Ambulance Unit.

Alison Burnley from South Edinburgh Meeting writes that it is possible to visit this special exhibition without paying the full cost of visiting the castle. Contact Dorothy Kidd, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary History at the museum, at d.kidd@nms.ac.uk allowing several days' notice, and giving the date you plan to go and the names of those going.

Soul, Silence and Song

This weekend offers the freedom to sing with others in simple rounds, harmonies and melodies for all. The beautiful environment around Glenthorne will be at our disposal, weather permitting. There will also be periods of guided meditation or time for quiet reflection. No need to be able to read music or have any previous experience of singing.

Led by Meri Goad (St Andrews Local Meeting)

The course starts Friday 26 July, 5.30pm and finishes Sunday 28 July, 12.30pm, 2019.

Glenthorne Quaker Guest House and Conference Centre, Grasmere,
The Lake District

Full details from: Tel/Fax: 01539 435389;

info@glenthorne.org; Website www.glenthorne.org

Opposing War memorial, Edinburgh



Quakers in Scotland are partners in the Opposing War Memorial Steering Committee, which has been offered a site for a memorial to Conscientious Objectors and all who oppose war in Princes St Gardens, a World Heritage Site. Situated in the midst of eight war memorials and beneath Edinburgh Castle and the National War Memorial, the Opposing War Memorial will suggest a better way to resolve conflicts than through war.

Over £37000 has been raised so far towards the memorial. If you would like to contribute go to

<https://opposingwarmemorial.wordpress.com/donate/>

Climate: “On this earth, there is what deserves life.”

Our planet is seriously ill, and we can feel the pain. We have been reminded of the many ways in which the future health of the earth is under threat ... “Our earth needs attention, respect, love, care and prayer”. (*London Yearly Meeting 1988, Quaker Faith and Practice 25.02*)

We all belong to and are part of this our planet earth. We step on its rocks and till its soil, we expect it to nurture our lives, to give and support life from one generation to the next. Our responsibility is to nourish and care, for if there is to be a future for humankind, both are intertwined and inseparable. If there is another planet earth in the universe it has yet to be found – do we care enough?

There was a time when we did not know the effects of our actions; now ignorance can no longer be offered as an excuse – complacency is the current danger. Some people live so much in the here and now that denial becomes their default position. Scientists continually warn of consequences of inaction. There are already numerous signs of climatic change, chaotic weather conditions, economic crisis, and political instability and while people and some governments acknowledge the scale of the problem, climate change consequences have not become the necessary priority needed to effectively put in place measures that could have a meaningful impact. Each one of us contributes still, in one way or another, to climate contamination. Many people and organisations already do attempt to reduce the impact of life style on hastening the drift to an apocalyptic future, the ultimate result of no action or not enough action.

To quote Janet Galbraith, “The two qualities which are most important to children of today are hope and imagination. Hope to believe they can change the world they live in and imagination to find ways to do so.” Young people protesting against inaction in particular see the threat to

their future of heat, contaminated air, the devastation of rising sea levels; they are our children, our grandchildren.

How can we reduce consumption of power and reduce our contaminating emissions? Retired electrical engineer Rodney Birks suggests that every home in the country could benefit and save on energy bills and at the same time reduce CO₂ entering the atmosphere by the simple measure of replacing light bulbs with low energy LEDs. They used to be expensive but are now much cheaper and more easily available. LEDs are 10 times more efficient and with improved lighting quality. It would save nearly £2bn of energy bills for Britain's 25million homes; the energy saved at peak times equates to the output of three power stations the size of Hinckley Point C – all by changing light bulbs.

For a really depressing read try “The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future” by David Wallace Wells. The first line reads, “It is worse, much worse, than you think”.

It is hard to find a positive note on which to end so, I fall back on the truthful but old cliché “Great oaks from little acorns grow”. Or, return to the title at the top of the page, “On this earth, there is what deserves life”, a quotation from Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, writing while reflecting on his homeland but equally applicable to our relationship with our homeland earth.

Jill Marshall

We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God’s continuing creation.

(Advices and Queries 42)

“Being Together” Away day, 30th June 2019

The Bield, Blackruthven House, near Perth

St Andrews Friends invite you to join them for this spiritual refreshment day. This is an all-age event. The day will be structured to combine being together with friends, exploring and responding to The Bield’s beautiful grounds.

The day will start at 10am and finish at 5pm. Cost per adult is £32, children under 16 free.

Registration is required to firm up numbers with The Bield by May 12th.

Registration form available from Pam Brunt 01334 474129 or by email: pambrunt128@gmail.com



News from Local Meetings

Perth

I am the new Perth Correspondent for Tayside Quaker. I have been a member of Perth Meeting for 40 years during which time we have met in six different rented locations, but the Subud House where we now meet is easily the best. We have been there for 12 years. Our numbers fluctuate but we have gradually increased from two to four in 1979 to an average of twelve to fifteen at Meeting for Worship at present. Many long-standing members of our meeting have moved away and others find that they can no longer attend as frequently as they would like. As we age, it becomes more difficult to travel long distances – and most of us do not live in Perth. Margaret Berwick is affected by changes in her bus service on Sundays, Maureen Lambie is trying to clear a house she's lived in for 50 years to downsize and rather a lot of us have increased our commitment to looking after grandchildren at weekends. In fact, our children's meeting is unusual I think, because the regular five and the occasional two are all the grandchildren of members of the meeting ranging in age from one to eleven years old. Some of us replace our physical presence by sitting in stillness in our own homes at 11.00am when there is a meeting in Perth. I know that two members of our meeting who find it difficult to attend now link to online worship at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/> But we also have some new attenders and three of them are already doing the jobs that are necessary to maintain a meeting that doesn't own its own premises.

We are also seeing less of two of our younger friends, only in their early 50s. Johanna Babbs and Jerry Evans are about to leave us again for the next leg of their round the world cycle trip – this time limited to 90 days because of Brexit. If you are not linked to their blog, I recommend it. When you are past long distance travelling, it's wonderful to experience it second hand through Johanna's eyes.

Adwoa Bittle finishes three years as the Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland in December. Her youth and energy have brought a new dimension to General Meeting which is the inclusion of young Quakers. Like all Quaker appointments Adwoa has found the experience sometimes stressful, but also enjoyable. In fact, in my experience, the more you enjoy your appointment, the more time you give to it.

She has now taken on a more demanding role and is therefore unable to come to our meeting regularly. She has been nominated as the second Assistant Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting and her three-year appointment begins in May. She is already doing work towards that appointment and this year, we have seen less of her because she has been going to London at weekends as the Assistant Clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, planning the business sessions at this year's gathering in May. In May 2020 she will sit at the table of Britain Yearly Meeting alongside the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. After three years she is likely to be appointed Assistant clerk and eventually clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting in May 2026. This is both exciting and terrifying and she may appear to be stressed when we see her. When she is in our meeting, we will all uphold and support her and help her in any way we can. I look forward to having her back in 2029, but without people like her, Quakers in Britain would not exist.

Alyson Buchan

St Andrews

Meeting with Willie Rennie MSP held at St Andrews Meeting House

22 March 2019 chaired by Joyce Taylor

Willie Rennie noted that there is robust debate in the chamber but that personally he avoided divisive argument outside the chamber. A "good" aspect of Brexit is the breakup of tribal loyalties. It was, however, important to recognise that MSPs are voted in on Manifestos and have to represent these commitments and that this will result in robust disagreement. One thing that

Liberal Democrats had learned from their time in coalition was that promises made, must be kept.

Members from QASTA (Quaker Action St Andrews) had identified the following topics with questions given to Willie beforehand.

Global heating

Robin Waterston introduced this topic, noting that climate change is recognised as an immediate emergency. The dangers are now better understood and also critically by young people whose future is most affected. Unprecedented changes are now required and cooperation between political parties is central. We face a global emergency.

Willie Rennie responded by noting the Liberal Democrat opposition to fracking (in support of the Scottish Government), their opposition to cuts in air passenger duty and to the expansion of Heathrow. He went on to say how difficult it is to separate people from their cars and that the very use of cars is central to many voters' sense of independence and critical in rural areas, this is a reality and also people in general do not see the connection between car use and global warming. The key issue is to turn policy responses from negative prohibitions and constraints into a positive narrative of sustainability and potential for cross party working.

Public Finance

Richard Raggett presented three questions:

- Faced with cuts in local government income, what services do you protect?
- How do you raise revenue by taxation whilst also making cuts?
- How can Local Government be adequately funded?

Willie Rennie responded, noting the Liberal Democrat commitments to early years education, funding for disadvantaged pupils and mental health services. All these were investments in the future. He noted the Burns Report and the lack of action on the transfer of resources away from acute medicine towards primary care, and the major challenges posed by need for social care. He felt this was a huge lost opportunity. He went on to comment that tax increases need to be introduced slowly otherwise it was counterproductive in creating a

positive public perception of the link between higher taxation and social investment and its effects.

Arms Sales

Jill Marshall introduced this topic noting that the firm Raytheon was in receipt of public money. Willie Rennie's response was that defence industries are treated in the same way by Scottish Enterprise as other industries in respect of their job generation and attracting inward investment. He believed in good defences. He stated that arms sales were another matter and agreed we needed a strong arms sales policy and the matter of arms sales to regimes committing humanitarian crimes was a serious issue which was disappointing in view of the many areas of conflict being supplied with arms from the UK.

Robin Waterston spoke to the issue of nuclear weapons asking how credible a policy of a “minimum nuclear deterrent” is, given that the weapons can “never be used” (this was challenged by one participant) and costly to maintain. Willie Rennie rejects unilateral disarmament. He noted that he is not optimistic about progress under the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Children and Protection from Assault

Willie Rennie confirmed that the Liberal Democrats supported this bill and that Alex Cole-Hamilton, Liberal Democrat and Quaker, was on the Equality and Human Rights Committee. The newspaper report that day about restraint of children in schools was discussed and he agreed the need for training on matter of restraint practices but that some forms of restraint must be available.

He supports the raising of the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years and was critical of the current rise from 8 to 12 years.

On early education he felt that progress was being made but that the biggest issue was staffing and the effect of the UK policy on limiting education.

Immigration

Willie Rennie noted his support for immigration particularly for the staffing of social care services, for nurseries, for the hotel and tourism industry and for education. He noted that there are already large numbers of EU citizens

working and living in Fife: 1,100 households have an EU citizen and 20% of staff and 10% of students in the University are EU citizens. Applying for settled status is an unnecessary practical complexity.

Local Issues

Willie Rennie was optimistic that GP “out of hours” services would improve, that the HMO (houses in multiple occupation) policy in the town of St Andrews would be reviewed, that the NE Fife schools’ budget would be enhanced, that the new site for Madras College would be successful and cycle lanes would be further developed.

This is a summary of the full report prepared by Huw Lloyd-Richards, St Andrews. A full electronic report can be sent on request to Busa Cochrane-Muir at lekbusa@gmail.com

Tragedy in Gaza

On Sunday 17 March some Friends travelled to Edinburgh to hear a range of speakers on the subject “Tragedy in Gaza”. This focused on looking at Britain's Legacy, Scotland's Role and the Balfour Project Beyond the Declaration. STEPS student, Dr Nahil Alrumi was one of the panellists and she spoke about healthcare in Gaza and the constraints of being able to access medicines and treatments. She was able to paint a very vivid picture of the day to day situations experienced.

The Balfour Project was created by British citizens to inform people of this country about Britain's record in Palestine before and during its mandate. The main aims are to:

- 1. Acknowledge** its historical responsibilities in the Holy Land through the Balfour Declaration to the British Mandate and today.
- 2. Support** Palestinians and Israelis in building a peaceful future based on equal rights, justice and security for all.
- 3. Work** for British Government recognition of the State of Palestine.

Buša Cochrane-Muir

Discoveries Evenings

In February as part of our Discoveries evenings, about 20 of us met at Pam and Robin's home to hear Robin Waterston talk about the wonder of numbers. Numbers are all around us and sometimes they can make us nervous. But they contain unexpected surprises and mysteries, accessible without a need for special knowledge or skill. Robin gently explained what he finds so fascinating about this sphere of knowledge. Can numbers be counted? Are they real? What are his two favourite numbers? How are they connected? What's the connection to Quakerism? This was the introductory invitation.

Robin's love and enthusiasm for this topic carried (some) of us into realms we had not explored before and really stretched our minds and imagination.

He covered natural, negative, even and rational numbers, helping us to see them in a new way. Robin then tackled infinity and real numbers before leading us into the mysteries of transcendental numbers.

We came away talking – it was a great evening.

Elizabeth Crosby

In March we met at Liz and Brian Crosby's home to hear Brian share with us “The Friend I Never Met” about the life and talents of Leonard Cohen.

His work explored religion, art, politics, isolation, sexuality and romantic relations. He received many awards for his poetry, novels and songs throughout a long and productive career. Many will be familiar with his famous song “Hallelujah”. The song is the subject of the book “The Holy or the Broken” 2012 by Alan Light.

Brian had produced insight into the person which gave us a much more informed picture of his life and times through music, poetry and comments from Leonard Cohen himself.

Although I was familiar with some of Cohen's music I left, as I am sure others did, with a much richer knowledge which has led me to explore more fully this quite remarkable man.

Buša Cochrane-Muir

Meetings for Worship

**Dundee: Wederburn Room, The Steeple Church, Nethergate, Dundee
DD1 4DG (adjacent to the Overgate Centre).**

Sundays 11.00 am

St Andrews Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews KY16 9HL

Sundays 10.30 am

Children's Meeting - each Sunday during school terms

Enquiries: Genevieve Orr (01333 360396)

Midweek Meeting, Thursdays 1.15 – 1.45pm

Perth: The Subud Centre, 7 St Leonard's Bank, Perth PH2 8EB

Second and last Sundays of each month 11.00 am

Children's Meeting usually last Sunday of each month

Children's contact: Anneke Kraakman (07746 117 762)

East of Scotland Area Meeting

Saturday 18 May 2019, *Perth*

Saturday 17 August 2019, *St Andrews*

Saturday 30 November 2019, *Dundee*

General Meeting for Scotland

8 June 2019, *South East Scotland*

14 September 2019, *North Scotland*

16 November 2019, *East Scotland (Perth)*

7 March 2020, *South East Scotland*