

# West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

August 2020

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## Clerk's Letter, August 2020

*How do we face all the very real, terrible things that happen in our world and still have hope?*

***Well, sometimes things arrive without prompting. When the same message comes at you from different sources in the same period, you need to listen! I used to work with Harvey Gillman, whom some of you may know as a Quaker author and speaker. We keep in touch through Facebook and two of his recent messages (given with permission) follow.***

*When I need hope, I go into the garden to watch things grow.*

*And I offer a haiku:*

*Not a mistranslation  
How are you? he asked.  
Dum spiro, spero, I wrote.  
While I hope, I breathe.*

*I liked the turning around of the more familiar “while I breathe I hope”.*

*Harvey was at a Zoom group the other day, where the following quotation was given. Wow!!*

*“Be reckless when it comes to affairs of the heart...*

*What I really mean ... is be passionate, fall madly in love with life. Be passionate about some part of the natural and/or human worlds and take risks on its behalf, no matter how vulnerable they make you. No one ever died saying, “I’m sure glad for the self-centered, self-serving and self-protective life I lived.”*

*Offer yourself to the world — your energies, your gifts, your visions, your heart — with open-hearted generosity. But understand that when you live that way you will soon learn how little you know and how easy it is to fail.”*

*“To grow in love and service, you — I, all of us — must value ignorance as much as knowledge and failure as much as success... Clinging to what you already know and do well is the path to an un-lived life. So, cultivate beginner’s mind, walk straight into your not-knowing, and take the risk of failing and falling again and again, then getting up again and again to learn — that’s the path to a life lived large, in service of love, truth, and justice.”*

*- Parker Palmer, calling for living with wholeheartedness*

*Then the third message on hope came from the Swarthmore Lecture by Tom Shakespeare.*

*“There is this idea that hope - or enthusiasm - is a renewable resource. It's something we work to build and grow and maintain. I like that idea. It is a practice. Everyone is a vessel for God to work with.*

*I hope I can recognise all this ministry in my life.*

**Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow**

## Report on Area Meeting, held by Zoom Monday 8 June

I think we are all becoming accomplished “Zoomers” now, so as we gathered on the evening of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> there was a fair amount of playing with backgrounds and general hilarity. We soon re-discovered our sensible sobriety though and settled down for worship, during which several more Friends joined us. By the time we began our business we had 34 Friends present, on this occasion representing all 12 of our Local Meetings, a feat I don’t think I can recall since I started attending West Scotland AMs.

We began our business by remembering Gill Brookes, from Glasgow Meeting, who died in May at the age of almost 90. She was remembered as a “natural” overseer who had a special gift for welcoming newcomers, and provided kindness, hospitality and support within Glasgow Meeting and beyond. We also remembered (John) David Bell, formerly of Glasgow Meeting, and the family of Kate Mowatt, from Arran, both of whom died recently.

We received an application for membership and appointed visitors (who may well visit by Zoom) and then moved on to another very significant item in our business - that of Nominations.

We began by making a small number of appointments to take us up to the end of the year, and then, as we are approaching the start of a new triennium, we considered the need to fill a very great number of posts from January 2021. Some of these will be reappointments, but all Local Meetings will be circulated with Offers of Service forms and asked to think about what service Friends can give. LMs will also be asked to bring forward names to serve as Elders and Overseers. In the meantime, Bronwen Currie’s request to lay down the role of Clerk of Trustees in order to focus on treasurership was accepted, and Clare Phillips was appointed as Clerk to the end of this year. Trustees are working to bring forward a name to serve as Clerk from January 2021.

The next item on the Agenda was the Annual Report and Accounts for 2019, which had already been approved by Trustees. Owing to unexpectedly low demands on our general funds in 2019 our financial situation is reasonably healthy, but this pattern may not continue in future years. We need to keep a constant eye on ways to maintain our level of giving and of income, and one suggestion which came from the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers was that of using Easyfundraising, whereby a proportion of what you spend online with a variety of retail outlets goes to the charity of your choice. For a number of reasons, several Friends were unhappy with this suggestion, so it was not taken up just now.

We then turned to the climate emergency and considered a paper prepared by Martin Mansell. We understand the need to work towards a just and sustainable economy as we come out of the pandemic, but it is difficult just now to see how to do this. What can we do at AM level, and how much is dependent upon us as individuals to make personal changes and share them in our local communities? We need to support Britain Yearly Meeting in its work with other organisations behind the scenes. There was some optimism expressed, and we were asked to take the matter back to our Local Meetings for more consideration. A further Zoom meeting will also be set up in which we can thresh out our thought and ideas.

Finally we considered dates and venues for our meetings in 2021, in the hope that we will be able to meet in person by then, but also with the proviso that a number of Friends will still want to join by video-conference, and therefore any potential venues will need sufficient broadband provision to allow for this.

We closed the meeting with our thanks to the Clerk for his patient but very efficient clerking (as always!), which allowed us to complete our business only a very few minutes outside the hoped-for end-time of 9.00pm.

**Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura**

## **West Scotland Area Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### **Meeting for Business by Video Conference**

#### **65/20 The climate emergency**

It feels right at this time to bring back to our agenda our response to the Climate emergency and consider our response to climate justice. A paper has been circulated in advance, written by Martin Mansell, from the General Meeting for Scotland Parliamentary Engagement Working Group. Some Friends took part in the online Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) seminar on Quakers and Climate Justice on 28<sup>th</sup> May and a PowerPoint summary is available from the clerk.

We are being asked to consider the how the climate emergency is linked to the issues minuted by Yearly Meeting in 2011 (minute 23):

“The global economic system is posited on continued expansion and growth, and in pursuit of growth it is often unjust, violent and destructive ... we need to ask the question whether this system is so broken that we must urgently work with others of faith and good will to put in its place a different system in which our testimonies can flourish.”

Martin Mansell has spoken of how difficult it is in the present situation to gain focus on the climate emergency, at a time when governments are spending a lot of resources on maintaining the economy during the pandemic. We need to work

towards a just and sustainable economy coming out of the pandemic, and this is urgent.

What is it appropriate to do at West Scotland AM level and the whole of Scotland? Friends in Local Meetings are continuing to work locally. We continue to circulate opportunities to take part in related webinars or read useful documents. As we come out of the pandemic restrictions, are we going to behave as we did before, or are we changing our behaviour in favour of the planet? We ask Local Meetings to consider this question and report back.

We will also set up a threshing meeting to allow further consideration of ideas coming forward. We are encouraged by the work being done at Britain Yearly Meeting level, including that being done quietly behind the scenes. We need to witness as Friends more widely. Some of us are optimistic at the opportunities coming forward. There is likelihood of change being possible.

*Michael J Hutchinson*

Clerk, West Scotland Area Meeting

**To clerks and correspondents of Local Quaker Meetings in WSAM**

**Dear Friends,**

**The climate emergency and Building Back Better**

**You may have noticed from the minute from Area Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June that Local Meetings were asked to give some consideration to the question “As we come out of the pandemic restrictions, are we going to behave as we did before, or are we changing our behaviour in favour of the planet?”**

**It is clear that people are making connections between climate emergency, the economy and social justice. The Build Back Better campaign is something Friends are backing and may help you in this discussion I attach the minute, plus information from Friends House on Build Back Better (see the link in Quake! of 11 June).**

**Not all Local Meetings may be able or wish to discuss this question, so we will have an online Zoom consideration too for those individuals who may wish to take part.**

**With good wishes, Michael Hutchinson, Clerk, West Scotland Area Meeting**

## Report : Meeting for Sufferings, 06.06.2020

This was my first attendance at Meeting for Sufferings since Feb 2019. Ed Tyler our MfS alternate Representative has been ably attending during the lead up to and following my op' for a hip replacement. This zoom meeting was for me a welcome and gentle re-entry back into the meeting, as I could be virtually present without the need to travel or negotiate myself in London. However, for the Arrangement Group it must have been a huge challenge to organise over 100 of us on the zoom platform while discerning how best to serve the meeting's agenda within our allotted time. We had all been offered excellent induction slots where we could practise sometime during the previous week the protocols of the zoom meeting. With calm and thoughtful efficiency they had created an undistracted space so that when the time came we could focus on the issues brought before us.

During the opening worship we heard 19:61 of QF&P

*'The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures forever, and is the same and never changes.'*

Margaret Fell

Early business was dealt with swiftly, appointments were approved and Muswell Hill Friend Kim Harrison was remembered in the Prison and Court Register for action with Greenpeace at BP headquarters.

The report from Trustees showed us how much work has been underway just to keep abreast of developments due to covid-19. Caroline Nurse clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting trustees said they also needed further guidance to look forward. The BYM treasurer, Linda Batten gave a financial review of 2019 'which had ended much as expected.' Generous legacies had been donated which will help towards funding the forthcoming Local Development workers. Clerks from Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness central committees will be attending the next trustee meeting creating more opportunities to discern the way forward for BYM in both witness and worship. Linda referred to the ongoing financial impact of the loss of income from the Quiet Company (formerly Friends House Hospitality Ltd.) As our charitable expenditure outweighs our expected income there's a need for Friends' long term giving to increase. She went on to say that 'A positive consequence of the pandemic is that we have rapidly developed ways of working that are - in some cases - more effective and efficient than what we were doing before.' There is a question that the 5 annual MfS will be reduced to 4 but there was some disquiet expressed by several Friends and a Friend from Scotland was anxious that with

fewer Meetings, more time would be spent listening to reports than in discernment.

In the second session of the morning Clare Scott Booth, Yearly Meeting clerk, spoke about her sadness that Yearly Meeting Gathering could not be held this year and that this will be for the first time in 352 years. A recommendation has been made for a virtual YM almost certainly via Zoom with the suggested date of 15th November 2020. The Meeting is proposed to last about two and a half hours, it will be open to all Friends but will need to be booked beforehand as the numbers will be capped at 1000. She said ‘Our Yearly Meeting will be experimental, and there may be much that discomferts us. I hope and pray that we will also find new growth, and that it will be an occasion when ‘we can open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year, as formerly it used to be.’

Representatives broke out into breakout groups and we discussed ‘How is the truth prospering in our Meetings?’

Responses from these sessions will be shared at a later date.

We had covered a lot of ground in the two and half hours we were together, the technical achievement of doing so on a first try with such a large body of Friends was a testament to the care and co-operation of everyone involved in creating this innovative experiment.

**Barbara Robinson, Glasgow**

(with the help from The Friend and minutes from Meeting.)

## Nominations

### **Serving our local and area meeting: those offers of service forms**

I find some of those faced with these “offers of service forms” have been a little bewildered. What is being asked of me? How do know if I have what is required? I don’t want to travel at the moment: does that disqualify me from offering to serve?

When we come to Meeting for Worship, we are all equal in the sight of God, and those who uphold the silence but rarely give vocal ministry are as much fulfilling a role as those who stand and speak. In the same way we are all responsible for both our Local and our Area Meeting and how they are run. At a local level, this may be by agreeing to handle the correspondence, to organise rotas for welcoming people to Meetings for Worship, to look after the book collection, to host Zoom meetings, to keep the local meeting website up to date - does it say we are not meeting in that community centre at present, for

example? Every one of the dozen worshipping groups and local meetings in West Scotland is faced with finding Friends to serve in such roles from January 2021. And so is the Area Meeting itself.

Even if you return a form which says simply “I am ready to serve in any way that is helpful but am willing to trust in others’ discernment of the gifts I may bring”, that will be fine. One way to tackle such issues is to talk to another Friend who may be able to suggest where your strengths lie. If you really can’t help out at the moment, please say. But send in your form!

By July 31st if you can. Our Nominations Committee intends to meet on August 11th in time to give a report on progress to the Area Meeting scheduled for August 22nd.

**Robin Davis, Dunblane**

## Reflections on the 'Red Book' Conducting our Quaker business

The right conduct of our meetings for church affairs depends upon all coming to them in an active, seeking spirit, not with minds already made up on a particular course of action... but open minds are not empty minds, nor uncritically receptive: the service of the meeting calls for knowledge of facts, often painstakingly acquired, and the ability to estimate their relevance and importance. This demands that we shall be ready to listen to others carefully... trying always to discern the truth in what they have to offer!

Successful spirit-led organisations seem to have three factors in common: they all have a clear purpose that everyone understands and supports; shared values, which are a criterion for joining the organisation; and the decision-making process always includes a point of ‘not knowing’ and the opportunity for everyone to contribute.

This enables decisions to be weighed against the purpose and values of the organisation, and helps everyone get behind them.

According to Quaker faith & practice, our processes in Britain Yearly Meeting seem to fit this mould well. We have a clear purpose: seeking to follow 'the promptings of love and truth in [our] hearts' individually and collectively. We also have carefully designed structures in which we can all play our part, and decisions are based on letting go of our personal will and waiting for the leadings of the Spirit together in worship.

Gil George, an American Friend, contrasts Quaker decision-making (at its best) with hierarchy, in that it brings people together rather than dividing them in many ways. How we do things is more important than what we actually decide.

### Quaker Faith & Practice 3.05

\ However, experience suggests that in practice it doesn't always work like this. Do we always prepare well enough for Business Meetings? Do we sometimes rush through too much business in our Meetings without letting the Meeting settle regularly? Are we always open to new Light and willing to allow the Spirit to guide us rather than a persuasive speaker? Do our committees take time to build the kind of spiritual fellowship that allows difficult questions to be addressed and deep discernment to take place? Sometimes the way we present matters and use jargon makes it hard for newcomers to understand, let alone play their proper part.

// 15 good practice for a meeting to have a clear view of the tasks that need to be accomplished on its behalf... so that both the meeting and the Friend appointed understand the commitment.

### Quaker Faith & Practice 3.23

To work well together in our Quaker organisations we need to have the right information and we need to know what our part to play is. Just as in a building, the materials for each part of the structure (bricks, beams, pipes) needs to have the right qualities for its particular role (strength, flexibility, weight), so we need to understand what the role of each Quaker appointment or committee is, what qualities are needed and where it fits in the whole.

It is a responsibility of a Christian community to enable its members to discover what their gifts are and to develop and exercise them to the glory of God.

### Quaker Faith & Practice 3.22

The general advice on nominations in Quaker Faith & Practice paragraphs 3.22 to 3.25 is excellent. Regular reference to it can be really helpful to remind nominations committees of the considerations that need to be borne in mind. Not only do they need to find Friends to run the various parts of the Society, but also to try to help Friends grow through service.

Having clear job descriptions that set out the role and demands of the work, and also the skills and experience sought, are particularly helpful for nominations committees which are trying to be bold and inclusive or when seeking advice about Friends who are not known personally to the committee.

All too often, though, we are vague or inconsistent about what we are asking people to do. This can lead to many different kinds of problems further down the line. It is well worth investing the time in being clear at the outset. This is only fair on those taking on the task.

Be bold; welcome the chance to give opportunities to younger Friends and to those more recently arrived, and encourage those who underestimate their own potential for service.

### Quaker Faith & Practice 3.25

There is sometimes a tension between finding people with the necessary experience and time to fill particular roles and using the nominations process to draw in newer or younger Friends, to help them grow through the role. We need to allow for the fact that some committee members will not be able to do as much as others, and that inexperienced Friends may have a steep learning curve. This may be an argument to make some committees larger than might otherwise be needed, or for sharing the work in other ways.

From time to time nominations committees may need to go back to their parent body (for example, the Area Meeting) to clarify what needs doing, or if they cannot find anyone to do a job. This can open up a useful consideration of overall priorities; our time may indeed be a greater constraint than money. If we can't find Friends to do a particular role, perhaps it should not be done? Alternatively, the Meeting might decide that something else should cease or be simplified instead.

Across the Society we hear of difficulties in filling key roles such as clerks, treasurers and trustees. We usually find a way around this, but it's often at the expense of some over-burdened Friends. Are we failing in our duty to one another?

Looking at the wider picture, the number of Quakers has fallen by nearly a quarter in the last twenty years, but the numbers of Local and Area Meetings have only fallen by about four per cent. So, a greater proportion of members must now be treasurers or clerks, and on top of that we have introduced a new tier of Area Meeting trustees.

In contrast, we have reduced the size of Meeting for Sufferings and some central committees. These have a key role in connecting local Friends with our central work and with each other, in building understanding of Quaker processes and structures. Are we making right use of the carefully balanced machinery set out in Quaker Faith & Practice. Are we spending enough time and effort to make decisions in right ordering, or are secular values of speed and efficiency undermining our religious practice and sometimes preventing us from coming into unity?

Perhaps we should think further about some of these matters. As a community, are we trying to do too much, or spending our time appropriately? For example, we could substantially reduce the number of Area Meetings or combine some of their functions if we wanted. We could also try to be more ready to lay down groups or projects that have run out of steam, and let go of burdensome properties.

Perhaps from time to time we should pause from new initiatives, and instead prioritise reflection, learning, and spiritual nourishment? We might find it difficult to come off our busy treadmill, but we might emerge clearer about how Love and Truth are leading us.

**Linda Murgatroyd, Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting**

*Reproduced from* The Friend, 25 August 2017

## Revising Quaker Faith & Practice

*Woodbrooke is supporting the process of revising Quaker Faith & Practice, Britain Yearly Meeting's book of discipline.*

**Be part of the shared journey of revising *Quaker Faith & Practice*."**

**Explore the revision of our book of discipline, with open hearts and minds, alongside members of the Revision Committee.**

These sessions will give an opportunity to find out about the work of the committee, engage with the process and think together about the work going forward. When it appointed the committee, Meeting for Sufferings asked them to be *prayerful, joyful, creative and bold* in the revision and those words have inspired these sessions.

[Prayerfully Revising Quaker Faith & Practice](#)

Tuesday 28 July (19:30-21:00)

[Joyfully revising Quaker Faith & Practice](#)

Tuesday 11 August (14:30-16:00)

[Creatively revising Quaker Faith & Practice](#)

Tuesday 25 August (19:30-21:00)

[Boldly revising Quaker Faith & Practice](#)

Tuesday 8 September (14:30-16:00)

**All times are UK time**

We will work in a variety of ways across the four sessions – join us for all or come to the one that most appeals to you.

[Find out more about the revision of Quaker Faith & Practice on the Quakers in Britain website.](#)

### **Duty of Reading**

**The advices and queries are intended for use in our meetings, for private devotion and reflection, as a challenge and inspiration to us as Friends in our personal lives and in our life as a religious community, and as a concise expression of our faith and practice readily available to enquirers and the wider world. *From Advices & Queries, history.***

## PRESS RELEASE

### Open to new Light: an invitation from Britain Yearly Meeting's Book of Discipline Revision Committee

At Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath your revision committee planned to invite you to draw, paint or write something for inclusion in a hard copy book [*Our Book – Bath 2020*] which would contribute to our ongoing work. The postponement of YMG has inspired us to invite you to contribute to an electronic version of this book, which will be used in our work in the coming months and years.

We hope that this project will not only inform our continuing work of revision, but also encourage Friends to engage in deep, rich, Spirit-filled conversations among themselves.

Contribute by...

- *Sharing passages from Quaker faith & practice that are significant to you using words, pictures, and/or videos.*
- *Telling us what you'd like to see in the next book by completing this sentence: "My own Quaker faith & practice would..."*
- *Recording yourself reading or talking about passages and sections from Quaker faith & practice that support or challenge you.*

Your contributions can be uploaded directly onto the website [www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonevlight](http://www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonevlight) and will be posted after moderation by the committee.

We welcome contributions from Quakers of all backgrounds, of all ages, and from all religious perspectives within Britain Yearly Meeting. It would help us if you could let us know your Quaker Local or Area Meeting, or Quaker body to whom you are attached, as well as giving us your name.

You can also contribute by emailing your submissions to [opentonevlight@quaker.org.uk](mailto:opentonevlight@quaker.org.uk) or sending them by post to Quakers in Britain, Book of Discipline Revision Committee (Open to New Light), 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

Open to New Light is running concurrently with four Woodbrooke sessions on revising *Quaker faith & practice* – [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/revising-quaker-faith-practice](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/revising-quaker-faith-practice)

Jessica Hubbard-Bailey and Mary Woodward  
Co-convenors Engaging with Friends subgroup  
Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Woodbrooke  
to offer  
Swarthmore  
Lecture  
on line

Woodbrooke is delighted to announce that the **2020 Swarthmore Lecture; *Openings to the infinite ocean: A Friendly Offering of Hope* by Tom Shakespeare, will be live-streamed on Saturday 1 August at 19:30 (BST).**

See the Woodbrooke website at [woodbrooke.org.uk/Swarthmore](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/Swarthmore).

**Saturday 1 August at 19:30 (BST)** and repeated on **Sunday 2 August at 15:00 (BST)**

and it will be available on Woodbrooke's YouTube channel from then onwards, alongside previous lectures.

**Follow-up Question and Answer session** with Tom via Zoom at 19:30-20:30 (BST) **Monday 3 August** and **Wednesday 5 August**.

These sessions are free but require registration in advance via the Woodbrooke website. These sessions will be the same, and we ask people to only sign up to one slot so we can accommodate as many people as possible.

The Swarthmore Lecture Committee and Tom felt that despite Yearly Meeting Gathering being postponed the message of the lecture is still hugely relevant to our current times and we are excited to be able to offer it as an online lecture.

In the lecture, Tom will ask how we face all the very real, terrible things that happen in our world and still have hope. How did Friends in the past have hope in dark times and how can we have it today? He will reflect on the nature of hope, our reasons to hope, and how we can preach hope through the way we live our lives.

**Book available** from 3 August, via the Quaker Centre Bookshop website. There will be an e-book option for those wanting to read it immediately, or you will be able to order print copies which will be sent out before the end of the month.

**Four online sessions in September and October** Tom will be leading these alongside Woodbrooke tutor Mark Russ. They will focus on different themes of the lecture. These can also be booked on the Woodbrooke website.

*Exploring the Swarthmore Lecture: Openings to the Infinite Ocean:*

- Letting your life preach: Quakerism and hope – Tuesday 22 September at 19:30-21:00 (BST)
- Faith, hope and love: Biblical sources for hope – Tuesday 29 September at 19:30-21:00 (BST)
- We have no time but this present time: finding stories of hope – Tuesday 6 October at 19:30-21:00 (BST)
- Optimism of the will: what is required of us? – Tuesday 13 October at 19:30-21:00 (BST)

Full details about the lecture and all the surrounding offers are on the Swarthmore Lecture page of the Woodbrooke website, the page will be updated throughout July and August.

## The Swarthmore Lecture

Further information:

**Tom Shakespeare** is Professor of Disability Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He has worshipped at Newcastle, Geneva, Norwich, Wymondham, and Westminster Quaker Meetings. He is a social scientist and bioethicist who has worked particularly on disability and on genetics. His books include *Disability Rights and Wrongs*, *Genetic Politics*, and *Disability – the Basics*. He has been involved in the disability rights movement for more than 30 years and has been involved in the arts for nearly as long. He currently broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 4.

**The Swarthmore Lecture** runs for approximately 1 hour starting at 19:30 (BST) on Saturday 1 August 2020. The lecture is given as ministry arising from and returning to, a short period of worship. The lecture will be live captioned.

The Lecture takes place each year during Britain Yearly Meeting. It is an important part of Woodbrooke's learning programme and has a key place in the life of Quakers in Britain. The lecture has two key purposes: to interpret to Quakers their message and mission, and to make the wider public aware of the spirit, the aims, and fundamental principles of Friends.

The Swarthmore Lecture is funded by Woodbrooke, donate to the cost of this year's lecture and future lectures at [woodbrooke.org.uk/donate](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/donate)

- A virtual Yearly Meeting session will be held on Sunday 15 November 2020, further information about this will be announced in due course at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)
- The planned Salter Lecture, organised by the Quaker Socialist Society, with Nozizwe Madlala Routledge will now take place at Yearly Meeting Gather 2021. On 16 November Woodbrooke tutor Stuart Masters will deliver a 'Salter Seminar' on the roots of Quaker Social Testimony, this event is offered in partnership with the [Quaker Socialist Society](http://www.quakersocialistsociety.org).

**Can you walk on water? You have done no better than a straw. Can you fly in the air? You have done no better than a bluebottle. Conquer your heart; then you may become somebody. Ansari of Heart**



# Quakers in Scotland

## Submission to 2021 election manifestos

This paper is sent on behalf of [Quakers in Scotland](#). It is informed by the Quaker concern for equality and care for the earth, and by our current work on climate justice. Quakers seek to live in accordance with our core values of equality, peace, simplicity, truth and integrity. Led by our experience that there is something of God in all people, we are saddened by, and deplore the vast inequalities that currently exist in Scottish and UK society as well as globally. We believe it is the duty of government to address the climate and inequality crises, and speak plainly and honestly about the scale of the economic transformation required, and about what this means for high-carbon industries such as oil and gas and aviation. We ask you to provide moral leadership to build trust between government and citizens.

### Policy principles

Our faith leads us to support groups such as [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) in their calls for action to tackle the economic, inequality and climate crises.

Tackling these crises must underpin all policy decisions. Public concern about climate change has reached a record high, and scores of leading global companies are calling for governments to use their [economic recovery plans](#) to support decarbonisation and long-term economic resilience.

We acknowledge that there are immediate problems to tackle across the board from education to housing, taxation to transport. Economic recovery is vital and will be on everyone's minds, but we must do more than return to the previous economic situation. Policies to address economic recession can and must contribute to putting Scotland on the path to net-zero carbon by 2045 (and the interim 2030 target). More than that, they will put us on the path to a more sustainable, fairer society. This will require all Scottish government departments to work together to provide coherent reforms and regulation.

We would like to suggest **four policy principles** for your manifesto in relation to a just transition. We follow this with some specific policy asks.

1. Poorer people in our society have been hit hardest by COVID-19 crisis, the recession, and climate impacts of air pollution. The rescue and recovery must prioritise improving the circumstances of the poor and vulnerable.
2. Scotland, along with all developed nations, has an obligation to support and fund poorer nations in slowing and adapting to climate change. Poorer nations are most affected by global heating and yet contributed least to the crisis.
3. Emphasise that it is not just about carbon emissions. Sustainable agriculture is vital. The UN has stated that the planet is probably on its last 60 years of harvests as we know them.
4. Meeting the climate emergency will be a 25-year process through the life of five parliaments. We would like to see a general cross-party consensus that would enable consistent climate policy to be maintained over a long period.

## Policy asks

We would like to suggest **eight policies** that will help address **our priorities** and those of many other voters.

- 1. Support people out of the recession:** Phase out investment in fossil fuels and military, and increase investment in environment- and nature-friendly industries. Ensure any COVID19 financial rescue packages for companies are granted on strict conditions that put people and planet first.
- 2. Tackle fuel poverty:** Make all homes energy efficient by 2030 and introduce a world-leading renewable electricity system, including local and district systems. This would also provide greater resilience in times of global crisis, and bring the benefits of public and community ownership.
- 3. Healthier and safer communities:** Invest in cycling and walking infrastructure and public transport, and bringing forward the phasing-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030.
- 4. Maintain Scotland's landscape:** Set world-leading targets for nature's restoration in environmental and agricultural legislation. Investing in a nature recovery network that can provide safe habitats for the 11% of species at risk of extinction in Scotland.
- 5. Address inequality created by land ownership in Scotland:** Introduce a land tax. Fulfil our major global responsibility in caring for our peatland, which are so important for carbon sequestration. We welcome the amount of tree planting that has taken place in Scotland but are concerned that this may be done at the expense of peatland – even shallow peat if tree planting incentives are wrongly applied.
- 6. A sustainable fishing industry:** Protecting Scotland's marine carbon stores will maintain unique eco-systems and improve the health of our oceans.
- 7. Strengthen Scotland's reputation for quality produce:** Post-Brexit regulations and support can ensure UK supply chains aren't destroying the planet; provide greater opportunity for jobs in the rural economy; and guarantee that all food imports will meet the same legal environment, food safety and animal welfare standards as food that is produced in the EU.
- 8. Reduce waste:** A circular economy, high rates of recycling, reuse and repair will bring economic opportunities and innovation to businesses.

## Conclusion

We understand that these crises place enormous demands on our elected politicians and government systems and structures. Politicians cannot do it all themselves. We as citizens, the electorate, must be in broad agreement with the major changes needed. We understand that it is a 25 year project, and mistakes will be made along the way,

but we must start now and keep going. We believe that Scotland has the skills and resources to meet these crises with confidence.

### **Appendix: Barriers to change**

The climate emergency has not featured as a major election issue despite the fundamental threat it is already bringing to our societies. Meeting this threat requires revolutionary change in our society, our day-to-day way of life. We recognise that our elected representatives are faced with an enormous and complex task. There is no choice about it. The time for tweaking targets is over. We ask:

- Do you believe that action to meet the climate emergency is obligatory for our country's future?
- Do you believe that the public is ready to accept the changes required?
- What is stopping you put the climate and ecological emergency centre stage, front page?
- What is stopping you put forward firm policy actions to start in 2021 (e.g. pilot district heating schemes and house-retro-fitting schemes)?
- How can we help you foster broad-based desire for change?

## **REPORT OF MEETING WITH LISA CAMERON MP 20 July 2020 by Zoom By Daphne Wassermann**

Eight Glasgow Friends and one from Dumfries met with Lisa Cameron, MP for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow. She had responded to a mailing from Britain Yearly Meeting offering MPs the opportunity to meet with local Quakers to discuss Build Back Better.

Also on the call was Lisa's office manager, Roberta Kiro Singh.

Lisa had responded to the BYM call because of her interests in religious matters and mental health. She works in the NHS as a clinical psychologist and is the SNP's spokesperson on mental health. She is a committed Christian and this influences her work.

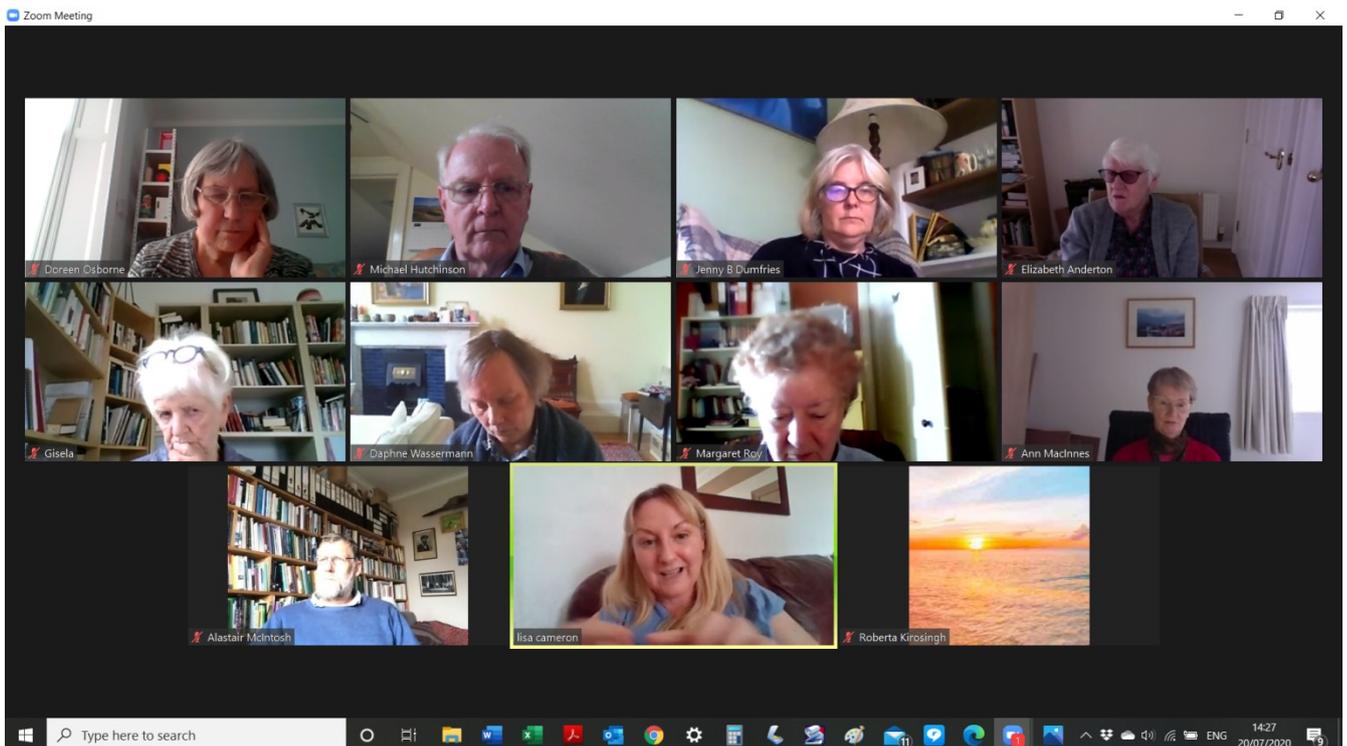
Michael Hutchinson introduced Quakers, emphasising the spiritual basis for our actions and testimonies.

Lisa responded that Build Back Better resonates across parties. She herself is involved in a variety of cross-party groups including the Freedom of Religious Belief Committee and a group looking at health and inequality during COVID. Issues of inequality, poverty and mental health are linked and there is a need to promote well-being holistically.

We welcomed the Christian and spiritual basis of Lisa's work who also noted that multi-faith groups have been at the forefront supporting vulnerable people during the current crisis. There is interest in continuing the community work after the crisis. It was suggested that a network of groups in different places could be formed to share ideas on how to take this forward.

Alastair McIntosh explained Quakers' history of impartiality and work in conflict and reconciliation. Meetings for clearness, mediation and conflict resolution could help at COP26 in bringing parties together. Lisa will be reaching out to different faith groups over the summer recess and would welcome discussion on how to use these techniques to explore different perspectives.

If you would like fuller notes of the meeting, please contact Daphne Wassermann ([daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com](mailto:daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com)).





Scottish Charity Number SC011234

## It's time to Build Back Better for a safe and just future

'Normal' was failing millions of people. Olivia Hanks looks at ways to get involved in the campaign to #BuildBackBetter from the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is vital that those of us with a vision of a society founded on peace, justice and equality work together.

Even as the Covid-19 lockdown rules are loosened, I am hearing many people say they believe things will never get 'back to normal'. Of course, we all crave a 'normal' where we can see our friends and family, and where key workers can do their jobs without fearing for their lives. But 'normal' was a state of affairs that was failing millions of people.

The people who have been put at risk without their consent during the pandemic include many of those who were already suffering under an economic system based on exploitation: Black and Asian people, disabled people, migrants with no recourse to public funds, and people in low-paid and precarious work. A report from Public Health England confirmed last week that incidence of Covid-19 and risk of death are both higher among Black and minority ethnic people and people in deprived areas.

These are the same people who tend to suffer first and worst in all disasters.

### Addressing deep and long-standing challenges

Many business owners and some MPs are clamouring for a return to 'business as usual'; but it is increasingly evident that we are in for a long and deep recession, and that the economic tools of the old days will not pull us out. It is extremely discouraging to see the government failing to convey any kind of vision for how we will address the deep and longstanding challenges highlighted by the pandemic: inequality and falling quality of life, systemic racism, ecological breakdown, and the future of work. It is more vital than ever that those of us with a vision of a society founded on peace, justice and equality work together to fill that gap.

A recent poll for the RSA found that just 9% of people want things to go back to the way they were before this crisis. This is a watershed moment. And it is heartening to see movements coming together at last: environmental organisations making common cause with groups working for workers' rights, racial justice, and public ownership. It is happening tragically late, but it is happening.

## The Build Back Better campaign

It is happening partly under the banner of Build Back Better, which Quakers in Britain is pleased to be co-launching today. Build Back Better is bringing together trade unions, health workers, youth organisations, green NGOs and others to call for a green and just recovery from the pandemic. According to the campaign's core principles that means: an economy that meets everyone's basic needs, where public services are funded and protected; rapid action to cut carbon emissions to zero in a way that tackles inequality, creates jobs and improves people's lives; an overhaul of the financial system; and a commitment to global solidarity.

Quakers I have spoken to about Build Back Better have been enthusiastic, feeling that it brings together issues that we have been working on for many years, from the Sanctuary Everywhere programme to our work on climate justice. We look forward to working with allies in the peace movement to ensure the campaign also fully includes the need to foster peace and address the root causes of violent conflict.

## Get involved

As part of my role in the Economics & Sustainability team, I will be working with Build Back Better on bringing in more faith-based organisations and engaging with governments. As the campaign evolves, there should be lots of ways for individual Friends and meetings to get involved too – here are a few to start with:

### 1. Show your support

If you use Twitter, please tweet about the campaign and say what #BuildBackBetter means to you. Please tag @BritishQuakers and @BuildBckBetter. For a more low-tech way to spread the word, you could put a poster in your window (there's one you can download, or design your own!), or just tell your family and friends about the campaign (from at least two metres away, of course).

### 2. Learn more

As part of the QPSW Summer Series we're running an online workshop, Build Back Better: it's time for a new economy, on Tuesday 16 June. We'll introduce the Build Back Better campaign, and have plenty of time to talk in small groups about issues that particularly interest you, as we explore a Quaker vision of 'better'.

Build Back Better is also running a series of webinars looking at different aspects of a green and just recovery. More details on webinars are available on the campaign's website.

You might also like to look at this [statement by the COP26 Coalition about Covid-19 and the climate crisis](#), which Quakers in Britain has signed.

### 3. Connect with others

Interested in how we Build Back Better? Why not hold an online meeting with others in your community to introduce the campaign and explore ideas for action? This could be with your local Quaker meeting, or you might want to bring in other faith groups or local community organisations. It's always best to try to find out what others are doing, and work together if you can. Build Back Better is producing a guide to working with others which might help you.

### 4. Create political pressure

As the campaign develops, it will be important to show decision-makers the strength of support. This aspect of the work is still being developed – there will be tools available to help you engage with your MP and council, so watch this space for more!

**"Every Thursday, people around the world wear black as a symbol of strength and courage, representing our solidarity with victims and survivors of violence, and calling for a world without rape and violence."**

Christian Aid works with Rev Phumzile Mabizela from South Africa. She encourages many communities and churches to engage with 'Thursdays in Black'. She recognises that tackling harmful theology is important if the world is to be changed. **She speaks very strongly about how genuine faith is distorted when is it used to support any abuse of power between men and women.**

'Most religious teachings have encouraged maintenance of traditional male and female roles...gender equality is critical to development. The empowerment of women transforms societies, as it unlocks the potential of half the world's population.

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**We affect one another and all nature by the disposition of our hearts . . . In opening our hearts to God and letting God's compassion take hold of us in the ways in which we relate to others and to the world around us, we can bring life to people and to nature . . .**

## THE SILENCING OF WOMEN

In a religious society in which many roles are fulfilled by women, this may seem an irrelevant issue. After all these days any woman can stand up to minister and Quakers were foremost amongst many in allowing women to first preach then enter the ministry. So we must be looking at deeper issues.

What do women have to do to speak? Margaret Thatcher and others took lessons to enable a deep and more masculine and therefore authoritative voice. Angela Merkel and Hilary Clinton are often seen in practical and plain trouser suits. Not for them hitting the headlines with what they were wearing. And I wonder how much time they spend on their make-up or hair styles? Whether we like it or not, men rule.

So, are women really silenced?

I was in a Quaker meeting of four women and three men, clerks of various functions. One woman on children's stuff was OKed – don't have much to say on that; another stated plainly she did not yet understand her role – no attempt was made to help her; another, just an assistant, was actually silenced so the real clerk could speak first - but we didn't get back to her. It was a successful, hard working and relevant meeting but . . . At another Quaker meeting a report concerning women's activities was left off the agenda then, despite the main theme of the morning being on inclusivity, was shunted from the before lunch slot to be called finally for two minutes at the very end of the day. When attention was drawn to this, feelings were so strong that a 'healing meeting' had to be held. During the UN 16 days of action on Violence against Women, we collected bras and panties for *Smalls for All* (a charity helping African women). Half a bin bag was collected from Quakers, three bin bags bursting full from my Qi Gong class. Women seem to notice other women's needs I draw as a conclusion.

When we present *Violence against Women* as an example of injustice and inequality, it is seen as just one more issue amongst many. When is a concern not an issue?

We wanted to call our concern *Womenspeak*. When women speak, what do they say? Is it just about inequality and injustice? Are our voices raised in complaint, notice me? Notice me may be the crux of the matter. The nagging wife and the mother-in-law are to be laughed at. Older women are invisible. See how the Guild and the World Day of Prayer, amongst others, have dropped the appellation 'Women's from their name *so as not to exclude men*??? I well remember living in a Quaker community of 14, eight of whom were men who created a terrible rumpus when the women decided to form a women's group, as we did in those early days of Women's Lib when there were many issues to mull over. And now, having fought for our bit of space, we are asked to give it up to the trans people so they can use ladies loos, and you will note that the stumbling block is said to be the older women! To bring our subject up at Area Meeting, there had to be a separate meeting because . . . some might be upset, such strong feelings could be roused! *It will be on 19<sup>th</sup> September. I wonder how many will turn up?*

What is this fear of letting loose the dragon? Worse than the nagging wife is the Banshee, or even Medusa. Mary is both a Virgin and a Whore. Mothers are eulogised for their unconditional love, all accepting, unjudging. The unobtainable. Are women feared psychologically because the reality of the separation is too painful?

This has been a very difficult concern to bring to awareness. Even given that this virus has demonstrated that those we rely on most, key workers especially in the caring professions (NO they are NOT professions, only prostitutes are the oldest 'profession) and we have realised that the backbone of our society is in fact the lowest paid workers whom we could not do without. At that time many vowed their values would change. Fat chance, most now realise despondently. When the lockdown ends, it is expected that many women will carry the brunt as in the hospitality industries. Also, it was pointed out to me that during the lockdown it is many women who have had to give up their work to keep the home together. It appears that few men are interested in home schooling. And sad to mention that the usual two per week of deaths from domestic violence have spiralled during lockdown, mainly women of course.

There are so many examples of women's inequality and injustice in our society and countless groups fighting the cause. We do not need any more. What Quakers have to offer is much more difficult. Women's values are not just about domesticity or children. It is about a creative society in which all are valued, where exploitation of the individual and the earth is unthinkable, where status is not about possessions, where the mode is co-operation not competition. You know you agree, so what do we do with the feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, of impotence to make a difference. Is activism the only road, or even the psychologically healthy one?

We have an Area Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September. I would like to ask the following questions:

How do we feel silenced as women?  
What are the structure that preclude an equal and just society for all?  
What is misogyny?

I need some strong women and some very creative thinkers to come on board. Let us meet with the determination to work in the Light, to hold the strong feelings invoked to see a clearer road ahead.

**Margaret Roy, Glasgow**



# Fox and Cromwell

(A conversation)

Fox he says to Cromwell, a vision late I see,  
The Lord has spoken silent: says, I might speak with thee.  
Thy sword must stay in scabbard, and thou shalt smite no more,  
The task which thou art bent upon, is but the Devil's chore.  
'Tis Joshua's sword thee carries, in service to the Lord !

Young children thou hast slaughtered,  
In England and abroad.  
I now beseech thee, brother,  
Lay down thy bloody sword.  
'Tis Joshua's sword thee carries, in service to the Lord !

Cromwell lifts the Scriptures,  
And holds them high aloft.  
Hast thou not read these lessons George,  
Sent from heaven above ?  
'Tis Joshua's sword I carry, in service to the Lord !

Justice will not serve, my Friend, for those  
Who will not learn.  
A place in Heaven waits for me  
Which I shall truly earn.  
'Tis Joshua's sword I carry, in service to the Lord !

If fail we in these duties, what shall the Earth become ?  
I lead a heavenly army, to tune of fife and drum.  
The cause I serve is righteous, 'tis thou my Friend art blind,  
Thy vision doth deceive thee, though still I find thee kind.  
'Tis Joshua's sword I carry, in service to the Lord !

So leave with thine dissenters  
To seek the peaceful Way,  
But God's work ever waits for me,  
Upon this Sabbath day.  
'Tis Joshua's sword I carry, in service to the Lord !

W. J. B.

George Fox (the founder of Quakerism) opposed Oliver Cromwell and his Parliamentary army during England's Civil War. At one stage, we are told, Cromwell was reduced to tears by George's peaceful ministry. Some early Quakers did serve in the Puritan army, but were later dismissed for refusing to salute their officers. Today (three-hundred and sixty years later) the world is threatened with nuclear conflict, and Israeli officers read extracts from 'Joshua' to inspire its young conscripts before attacking the citizens of Gaza.

*Thoughts to ponder*

If it is right that we should show love and compassion for people, surely it is right that we should extend our love and compassion to

animals, who can feel fear and experience pain in much the same way as humans.

They may not be able to speak, but we can certainly see the fear in their eyes and demeanor. I feel that being a vegetarian is a natural progression from being a pacifist and a Quaker. **Vera Haley**



**Dinner Mum?**

**Coming. Patience!**

## **A LITTLE SPARROW**

I heard a little cheep. Was it there or was it not? Where did it come from? Eventually I tracked it down to a little ball of fluff behind the couch. As I gathered it up, it became silent, looking at . . . it did not meet me eye. How could it tell where my centre was?

It cheeped but its mouth did not open. The sound came from its little chest, its beating heart calling to its own. Its beak seemed glued shut. It was not asking for food. Could I have fed it and nurtured it?

Its little wings were perfect but it could not yet fly. It sat in my hand silent until I took it outside. Here was life. It cheeped and cheeped in the surrounding green world.

I put it on the bird table. Its little legs could not yet grasp the 'branches' but it used its wings to crawl along the bird table, quite lively but . . . too near the rood of the shed where the cat would catch it again. Where to take it? Where did it belong? There are two groups of sparrows nearby. I took it to the nearest busg which alas had beenpruned so . . . did it fall through the branches? I could not see it. Oh dear! MY PRAYER. Sparrow are communal birds. Another flew into the bush. Would they hear it and tend to their own? I prayed to the Great Angels that they could facilitate this.

Yet that little bird is still in my heart.

What of the little birds of humanity? Where do they belong? How do we look after our own? **Margaret Roy**



## **That of God in Everyone**

Sometimes we can find the divine if only we can be silent and wait. This is my experience of connecting with it in a very unexpected place.

It was a hot dusty day in Scotland. My job working for a charity for people with learning disabilities meant I was visiting several houses throughout the day. I was helping a range of people with learning disabilities fill in their benefit forms. Making my way to my last call I was feeling tired and ready for home. Checking on my last client I noted she was profoundly disabled with no ability to talk, walk, or see but could hear. I would need a member of staff to be present to help fill in the forms. On arrival at the group home I was greeted by a rather harassed member of staff who was obviously dealing with other people in the house. "I won't be a moment. Jane is in there. She likes having her arm stroked" with this information I was ushered into a room with a diminutive person sitting in a wheelchair.

I announced my presence and sat down in a chair very close to Jane. Stroking her arm seemed to be the only way of communicating so that's what I did. Slowly I was embraced in a great sense of calm, all the stress of the day disappeared. It was an amazing shared spiritual experience. I have attended Quaker Meetings in many places and times, this moment on a hot dusty day, with this companion, was one of them.

After about 10 minutes the staff member appeared, and we completed the forms. Some days later I met with the chief executive of the care provider for Jane and remarked upon my experience of peace and calm with her. "Yes "she said" It's a pity you can't bottle it."

It taught me everyone can contribute if given the opportunity.

**Gill Reid, Ayrshire**

### **Be prepared to get crazy**

We could make the case that we modern Westerners have not experienced and understood such things as the shamanic world view which incorporates an awareness of multiple realities that are accessible and easily navigated by the experienced shaman. To us, a journey to the lower world can only be compared to something we already accept or at least have some exposure to, such as Jung's concept of active imagination or visualization. But to the shaman and his culture, the lower and upper worlds are key shamanic concepts, and are as real as what they call the middle world – our only recognized reality in the west.

**Richard Bartlett**

From Perth Local Meeting

## **Hiroshima**

**6 August 1945**



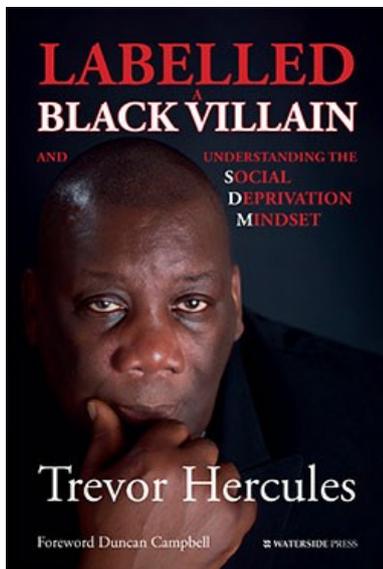
**Never again**

## Book Reviews

**Labelled a Black Villain: and Understanding the Social Deprivation Mindset. By Trevor Hercules, (Waterside Press, 232 pp.) ISBN 9781909976696, £19.95.**

For much of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people working in criminal justice were encouraged to take an ‘evidence-based’ approach. Heavily pushed in New Labour's reforms of the youth justice system, its fortunes have declined as evidence-based practice produced evidence of unintended consequences. These included vast numbers of young people being sucked into an increasingly muscular and punitive youth justice system. Many of them ended up locked up. Too many of them were black.

In the political confusion that followed the deflation of New Labour’s neo-liberal project (precipitated by the 2007/8 banking crisis) the focus on ‘What Works’ has been replaced by something closer to an indifferent ‘What Ever’. The political instincts of Conservatism that replaced New Labour have never been propelled by an interest in evidence and into the gaps vacated by the collapse of faith in evidence-based practice has strolled ‘experience-based practice’. Trevor Hercules is an advocate of this and his experiences couldn’t be more vital even if there is little compelling evidence that they can do more than provide him with a means of making a valuable contribution to society by helping some young people avoid the worst that society can throw at them. And there’s no harm in that.



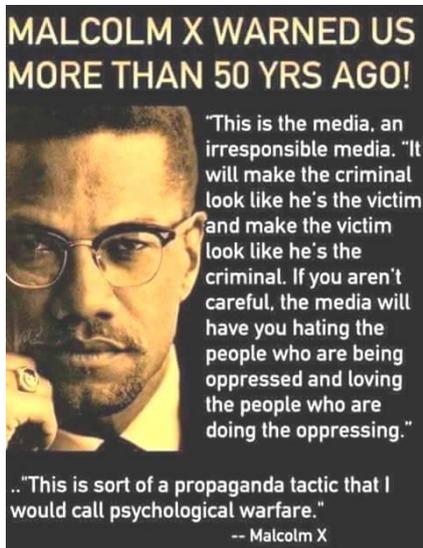
Trevor’s book offers rich insights into prison life, police practice and black lives when that really matters. As the police killing of George Floyd and other events in the USA rekindle radical anti-racist activism, his account of doing seven years and more in prison during the 1970s and 1990s when police racism was as routine as it was widely denied, is invaluable. As vivid and disturbing as his first-hand account is, it is made all the more compelling by his assertion at the beginning of the book that “Prisons in Britain are far worse places than they were when I was there”.

If you’ve never been in prison or read Mike Fitzgerald’s *Prisoners In Revolt* you may not realise just how chilling that remark is. The bulk of Hercules account of his seven years inside corresponds roughly with the period covered in Fitzgerald’s book, the 1970s. Hercules is a key figure in an insurrection at HMP Gartree that Fitzgerald’s group, Protection of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP) had supported. His description of those events come close to the end of the first section of his book and form the first hint of his turn towards self-rehabilitation. He is eventually released from that sentence in 1981. Although he is candid about his later return to prison to serve other sentences, his first experiences are what this book is about.



He was released from his prison a year before I was sent to mine and although our two experiences of life and imprisonment are very different, there was much in his book that struck a chord. We are not much different in age, but my imprisonment was short and singular. His was long and repeated. I am white, he is black. We have both worked with young people to help keep them out of trouble and find better lives

for themselves. There were points of connection that snapped across the differences that divide our biographies; my background white and middle-class, his working class and black, his descriptions of slopping out, his encounters with black radical politics, his respect for political perspectives and wise counsel offered by Irish republican prisoners in British jails about the political nature of his personal predicaments as a black prisoner in a white man's system.



If the slogan Black Lives Matter means anything it means that white people need to read books like this about lives not like theirs. Hercules makes repeated reference to the black consciousness movements of the 1960s and 70s and its well-known advocates in the form of George Jackson and Angela Davis. This, to me, is one of the least satisfying parts of the book because although he says in describing his 'Rebellion' phase, "We need to breed our own Angela Davises, Malcolm Xs, George Jacksons, Huey P Newton, Eldridge Cleavers, Rap Browns..." he rarely speaks of their work in detail or of the collective political structures and activists that emerged in the UK in organisations

like *Race Today* and the Institute of Race Relations. However, as he readily concedes his activities remained more toward the criminal end of the political spectrum than the revolutionary and it is no basis to dismiss the force of his testimony. This book cannot claim to be up there with George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* in the pantheon of black prison literature, but it deserves its place in the canon of autodidact black radicalism (Johnson and Lubin 2017).

The book closes with a turn toward theory and outlines Hercules attempt to synthesise his experiences of growing up in Britain where endemic racism structured his life opportunities and personal horizons. He adopts the acronym SDM as a shorthand for his ideas about how social deprivation and structural alienation are internalised by today's young black people in a 'mindset' that propels them down the pathways he describes himself travelling in the first part of the book. 'Understanding the Social Deprivation Mindset' is the subtitle of the book and the programme of intervention he has designed for work with young people at risk of making a life like his own. Criminologists will identify in Hercules' work an original formulation of Loic Wacquant's work on advanced marginality. They will recognise the 'deadly

sympiosis' of ghetto and prison life he draws in painful personal detail and they will see how SDM implicitly refers to Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field.

At one stage in his prison life, Hercules began an Open University course in social science but it was disrupted by a prison move. He ruefully remarks as he sets out his SDM framework that he has heard of something called 'convict criminology' and speculates on whether his blend of personal experience and critical analysis qualifies him as one. In many ways it does, but as someone who works for The Open University and labours under the label of convict criminology (Earle and Davies 2020), I wish he had been able to pursue his studies. Perhaps he will and the 30 pages dedicated to theory and action at the end of the book will be expanded in his next book to adequately complement the depth of experience he brings to the subject.

Hercules mentions the pivotal role of the white Conservative MP Justine Greening in endorsing and enabling his approach. Given the social wreckage that Conservative governments have visited on the criminal justice system and black communities, I would counsel wariness about the value of placing any faith in such personal encouragement. I do not doubt the good intentions of Ms Greening but the favours within her gift are as much a part of the problem as SDMs may be among black communities.

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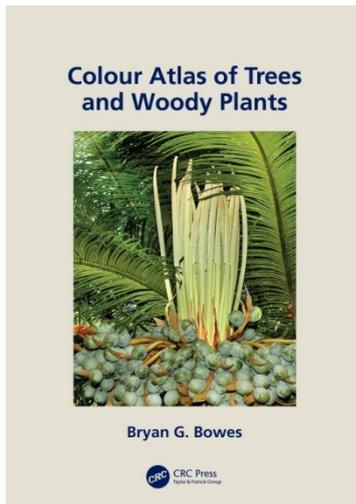
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**Reviewer:** Dr Rod Earle is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care at The Open University. He is the author of *Convict Criminology - Inside and Out*, 2016, Policy Press.

## WHITE PRIVILEGE

Glasgow Meeting elders organised three sessions to explore this theme of white privilege – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August. 30 people were able to attend one of these. The approach was through telling our stories. The sessions were lead by three presentation, from Bob Mandeville of Milngavie, Zem Moffat and Helen Minnis of Glasgow. All three of these presentation will shortly be available for others to use and a full report will be ready for Area Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. *Editor reporting*.



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

### **An appreciation from Margaret Peacock**

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

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

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

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

In the section on leaves, Bryan avoids the cliché of brilliant autumn colours, concentrating on shapes and function. He calls them the "Sugar factories", absorbing ingredients and energy. Pictures show how they adapt to their surroundings in often surprising ways, partly illustrated by micrographs. Here is another cycad! Reproduction usually implies seeds, but often the tree doesn't bother with them, and just puts out another shoot. Sexual reproduction depends on pollination, between cones or flowers or parts of the same flower, or between single-sex trees. Bryan's photographs show some familiar fruits - the results of successful pollination. Trees can grow in extremely surprising environments, or respond to damage, and Bryan has captured a fascinating selection of such oddities. And I particularly like the inclusion of the almost-local fossil tree stumps in Glasgow's Victoria Park.

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

## The Gift of Zoom

Covid-19 has had a devastating impact for many – loss of loved ones, loss of long-term health, loss of income, loss of businesses, deep uncertainty about the future. But I think it has also brought us a gift, in the form of Zoom. And I, for one, am a whole-hearted convert.

Many had doubts or suspicions about Zoom – or any form of virtual Meeting. How could worshipping on a tablet, phone or PC replace the gathered meeting of Friends physically present? Maybe it can't, but it can add a dimension to our Quaker life together which many of us had never dreamed of. Here in the scattered west of the Area Meeting we have found huge joy in small, fragile Meetings being able to join together for worship. For a few weeks now Arran, Islay & Jura, and Argyll Friends have been joining each others' Meetings for Worship, creating a varying worshipping group of between eight and twelve Friends. We have had vocal ministry, have shared our thoughts over a virtual cuppa, and have got to know each other better. Now joined by Mull & Iona Friends, we have set out a programme for worship for every Sunday of the month, with each meeting taking responsibility for one of the Sundays.

There are downsides of course. Meeting in this way does not give us the opportunity for outreach. And it excludes those who are adamant that they do not want to meet virtually, or who do not have the technology (though of course Zoom also works extremely well by landline).

For me, the benefits far outweigh the negatives. In worship, usually with my eyes closed, I find no difference in the way I join in the spirit with those I have greeted on-screen from the way I would do if they were in the room with me. I "feel" them in the same way, I move in my mind from one to another upholding them in the same way, I hold that sense of us all drawn and gathered together in the same way. And there are real positives: since we are muted other than when offering vocal ministry, there is no distraction from a tickly cough, a squeaky chair, or someone having a loud phone conversation on the street outside. And the converse of our lack of outreach is the number of attenders who have started attending Meeting regularly because they do not have to travel, including one I know rather well who has applied for membership as a result (not from any of the above LMs I should add).

In addition to the benefits for our small Meetings, Zoom and other virtual platforms have made available a wealth of opportunities that many of us facing ferries and long journeys to the cities would otherwise have missed. Just this week I have taken part in a Woodbrooke session on revising our Books of Discipline, a very moving memorial Meeting for a much-loved Friend (involving 98 Friends around the world, including the US and New Zealand), and listened to the Swarthmore Lecture.

This was meant to be a few lines about what we in the west of the Area Meeting are doing. Sorry Friends – I got carried away with my Zoom-enthusiasm. I have no

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from  
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doubt that in time we will resume our face-to-face Meetings, but whilst many of us are concerned about our vulnerability, or at least the potential for our infecting others who are at-risk, this is not going to happen soon. And even when it does, I think many of us will want to continue with our larger Zoom meetings too. Zoom has given us something new, and I for one won't want to give that up.

**Bronwen Curie, Islay & Jura**

### **Getting back together in Wigtown**

Like many Local Meetings, Wigtown have been urgently considering how to continue Meeting for Worship during the Covid19 pandemic and while our own Meeting House has been closed. For some weeks we have been holding shortened Zoom-based Meetings for Worship on Thursdays but have been acutely aware that many Wigtown Friends and Attenders have not been able to participate in this. We therefore formed a small working party of Ian Macdonald (MH premises committee), Tony Ellis (Elder and Trustee) and Chris Baldry (Clerk) to look at options which would not only enable Meetings to continue but which might re-include those Friends and attenders who have not been able to Zoom.

We eventually focused on three potential pathways to re-establishing MfW:

- a) Garden meetings. While several Friends have gardens large enough to enable appropriate physical spacing, the Clerk reported no enthusiasm for this proposal following his emailed request for responses. The weather for July has not been conducive to outdoor meeting and we felt that as we get into the Autumn this will become even less viable.
- b) Re-opening our Meeting House. It was clear that, maintaining the stipulated social distance, we could only accommodate a maximum of 4 or 5 Friends in the Meeting Room. A staggered Meeting might be possible, with one group in the morning and another in the afternoon; this would require setting up a 'booking' system. However, an extensive cleaning regime would be required irrespective of how many or few Friends were present. We also appreciated that, given the confined space in the MH and particularly the corridors, some Friends may still not wish to enter the building and so we felt that for the immediate future the practical challenges to re-opening remained too great.
- c) Temporary use of alternative premises. For Quakers, unlike other faith groups, the Meeting is not the building but is wherever we can gather together as a community. What became Wigtown Local Meeting was originally based in the Newton Stewart Day Centre. This has a very spacious room, designed to be used by the elderly, and is maintained to NHS standards. Although closed at present it is expected that the building will re-open fairly soon once they have completed their own risk assessments; preliminary enquiries indicate that they would be very amenable to our use of the building on Sundays. In addition, the building has an internet connection so it would be possible to set up a blended meeting which would include a Zoom-based presence for those unable to, or who are uneasy about, physically attending.

We therefore concluded that the best route to re-establishing a Meeting for Worship which is as inclusive of all Friends and attenders as possible would be to establish a blended MfW in Newton Stewart Day Centre, (while continuing to maintain our own closed Meeting House to meet insurance requirements). We also felt that we should see this as an opportunity for both experimenting with new ways of gathering together and for raising our profile above the immediate Wigtown location.

This proposal has been emailed to all Wigtown Friends and Attenders for comments and revisions; if Friends support the suggestion and Trustees are agreeable, we could commence a physical and blended MfW by the beginning of September.

**Chris Baldry, Wigtown**

### **Castle Douglas**

We met again for the first time after lockdown. The local garden centre seemed a good idea as we managed to keep one metre apart. Unfortunately we found out we needed to be two metres apart so we are looking for another place. Hopefully we will find one soon as it was good to meet up with old Friends.

### **Lanark Meeting**

Here is Lanark Meeting in the grounds of Wiston Lodge.



## Absent Friends

I have the sad task of informing Friends that Edna Locke has been assessed as cognitively impaired.

For some weeks she had ideas of moving out of the care home where she now lives, but her daughter tells me that she is now likely to remain there.

She is now in Cheltenham.

### Jane Mitchell, Argyll



Difference is the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth, and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity.” —

[John Hume](#)

Not a Quaker but someone who did much to promote peace in Ireland and was greatly respected by Irish Quakers John Hume KCSG (18 January 1937 – 3 August 2020) served as the second Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) from 1979 to 2001. A native of Derry, he was a founding member of the SDLP, and was co-recipient of the 1998

Nobel Peace Prize with David Trimble. He also served as a Member of the European Parliament and a Member of the UK Parliament, as well as a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

## **Swarthmoor Hall Spiritual Support Group**

There will be a one-hour zoom MfW on 27 August at 11am (in place of the in-person two hour MfW) and if anyone is interested, email

[swarthmoorhallspiritual@gmail.com](mailto:swarthmoorhallspiritual@gmail.com) to ask for details. **Helen Meads & Bill Shaw**

**on behalf of the Swarthmoor Hall Spiritual Support Group**

**Rex Ambler, Helen Meads David Oliver, Bill Shaw, Rob Straughton and Susie Tombs**

### **Hold in the Light**

Alastair McIver and Nuala Watts after Alastair's father died.

Martin Mansell – now home and out of hospital after a stroke.

All those especially teachers as we enter a new phase of action against the Covid 19

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Currently all dates are subject to review because of the Corona virus instructions.**

<b>1 – 7<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<b>YEARLY MEETING GATHERING Bath POSTPONED</b>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> August</b>	<b>Area Meeting Lochgilphead</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>GENERAL MEETING DUNDEE</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>Proposed date of Special Area Meeting on Legacy of Patriarchy</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Area Meeting Ayr</b>
<b>9 – 19<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>COP26 Glasgow POSTPONED</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>GENERAL MEETING Glasgow</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>	<b>Area Meeting Glasgow</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>

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**The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions for the next issue of WSQN is 15th September. Copy should be send in Word format only to the editors Alastair McIver or Margaret Roy**