

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

January 2019

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Clerk's letter December 2018

Someone on one of our Quaker hillwalks told me how as a nursery worker he'd been asked by a little girl of about four 'Where did the earth come from and who built it? This was closely followed by 'And where did they stand whilst they built it?' A girl to watch obviously. Good serious questions, but how to start answering them!?

It has led me to reflect a bit on our human condition. We all build our own earth, in the sense that our interpretation and understanding of the earth, life and the universe comes from our senses and the understanding formed from our experiences through life.

*And where did we stand when we built it? Some of us have no problem with this, it is solid ground and their world picture is fine. Others of us have found it more like standing on nothing much and puzzling to interpret where we are. One such was Isaac Penington (1616-1679) who wrote (see Quaker *Faith Practice* 19:14, bearing in mind the language he used was of the time): At last, after all my distresses, wanderings and sore travails, I met with some writings of this people called Quakers... After some doubt he found what he needed to stand on and his conclusion was 'But some may desire to know what I have at last met with. I answer, 'I have met with the Seed'.*

Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied and inquire no further.' This resonates, that rather than a fixed reality and fixed views we have a life that grows and changes, that adapts to where it is. It can be hard to let go of things we took for granted and are part of our inheritance, yet the Quaker experience is that we have to let go of everything to be able to enter the still centre we seek for in meeting for worship.

Discernment is the word we use when facing new experience and new decisions in life. It works through what we find in the still centre, and from experience of the 'seed'. Again, it works by letting things go in order to find new direction. Open to new light.

At present we all very conscious of the need to find a new place to stand in to build a new earth. One that is sustainable and peaceful. It is our task.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow



Report of Area Meeting in Ayr, 13th October

Heavy rain and a yellow weather warning prevented Friends from the south and from Argyll and the islands from attending Area Meeting on 13 October. Those of us who made it were greeted not only with refreshments but also with home grown apples.

We signed a card for Margaret Boland who was in hospital.

Minutes of the meeting will have been circulated so this is my personal view of the day.

Post-Truth

In the morning we spent about 50 minutes following up on the issue of a Quaker response to a post-truth world. This has been considered previously. With modern means of communication, opinions based on emotion rather than fact can circulate very rapidly.

We all have a tendency to read or listen to sources that we expect to agree with (The Friend, the Guardian, BBC?). Maybe we should be more adventurous.

If we don't speak out when we see mis-information we may be perceived to be colluding with it. It is easier to get the ear of MSPs than MPs or the Government.

The media are often superficial. We are grounded in a quiet place from where we can go out into the world.

We have limited resources so need to act and speak out where we will have the greatest impact. This may be in quiet circles or in support of our traditional testimonies such as to peace and equality.

What do young adult friends think? Can we work with other faith groups to be true to ourselves and God? Truth and facts should be complementary.

The Meeting did not discern that there was a Concern (in the official Quaker sense) against post-truth itself but that it was part of following the truth in all our areas of witness.

Notices – Central Nominations

Gill Reid of Ayrshire Meeting, who is also Clerk of Central Nominations Committee, spoke of the need for Friends from a variety of backgrounds to help with the review of our Book of Discipline. Friends on Nominations Committee don't know everyone in the country so if someone phones you up to ask about a possible nominee, please be helpful.

In the afternoon

After lunch (4 kinds of soup!) we accepted Louise McKeown of Mull and Iona Meeting into membership.

At the end of this year Tim Denvir will step down as Assistant Clerk and will join Area Meeting Trustees. Martin Mansell and Ed Tyler are on the Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group.

Dates and venues for area meetings in 2019 were confirmed.

Our treasurer, Margaret Morton, reported on our finances to date in 2018 and proposed a budget for 2019. We have various legacy funds. Margaret suggested that the legacies from Margaret Giles and Barbara Organ should be merged. It has been agreed previously that these should be used for support of our spiritual life, travel and strengthening community. The legacies from Jean Laurie and Jenny Auld have already been earmarked for Glasgow Meeting House and these could be merged. Margaret suggested that any surplus above £30,000 in the Buildings Reserve and amounts in the general reserves greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ of annual expenditure should be added to a designated Glasgow Meeting House fund.

Martin Mansell updated us on the activities of the Parliamentary Liaison group. They are following up previous work on militarisation in schools, visits by the armed forces and provision of alternative peace education materials. Please let Martin know what is happening at schools that you know about. The group is also considering a new focus on land ownership. This will be discussed at General Meeting in Perth on November 17th so please go along to this.

Douglas Shaw reported on the work of the Northern Friends Peace Board, which extends as far south as Lincolnshire! Militarisation in schools is being addressed by the Board. The UN ban on nuclear weapons received virtually no publicity in the mainstream press – why? Post traumatic stress disorder is common in drone pilots – the “fire and forget” mentality doesn’t seem to work completely. Plans are in hand for action at the 2019 arms fair in London. Douglas noted that NFPB was one of the few Quaker bodies outside Friends House with a paid staff member.

Friends are encouraged to complete the survey for Woodbrooke. They particularly welcome responses from those who haven’t ever been there – why not?

South East Scotland Area Meeting failed to arrange an Enquirers’ day in 2018 so will do so in 2019. This means that West Scotland will organise one in 2020.

Finally the Clerk gave advance notice of an event for this area meeting at Swarthmore Hall in Cumbria in October 2019. More details will follow.

.....and so to tea..... excellent and very welcome before a wet journey home.

Daphne Wasserman, Glasgow

Report of Area Meeting by phone conference

3 December 2018

Around 25 Friends gathered by phone for Area Meeting on 3 December, and on this occasion 11 out of our 12 Local Meetings were represented, from Mull in the north to Wigtown, Dumfries and Castle Douglas in the south, showing the great value of phone AMs in bringing so many of us together. We also had a visitor with us - Michael Booth from Friends House, for whom this was the first experience of a phone AM and of such a large number of people taking part in a phone conference. He hopes it is a method which might be useful to the Books of Discipline Revision Committee.

We dealt first with deaths and membership matters, first remembering Chris Newell who, though having moved south to Rochdale several years ago, still cherished his ties with Scotland and received Scottish Friends Newsletter regularly. He was remembered with love and affection as a former Clerk and Elder in Castle Douglas. We then welcomed three transfers into West Scotland from English AMs, of Jane Essex, Maxwell Graham and Jay Wilkinson, but sadly agreed to the transfer out of Patrick Bealey to Hampshire and Islands AM.

We then moved to the main item on our agenda, that of children and young people in the Area Meeting. Two of our LMs, Glasgow and Dunblane, have substantial numbers of children, but in all of our smaller Meetings there are either no children at all, or the children of just one family. We need to encourage ways of bringing these children together, and feel that encouraging and supporting such efforts is one of the most important functions of our Children's Advocate. Gatherings such as 'Westerly Friends', General Meeting, Summer Shindig and Link Weekends were all mentioned, and there was discussion of the use of apps such as WhatsApp (already in use) and Zoom for enabling contact. There was a warm welcome to the idea of arranging a day workshop for children's committees and the Children's Advocate based on the BYM document "Growing an All-age Community".

The other main items on the agenda were the budget for 2019 and a report from Nominations Committee. The budget had been revised slightly since the one presented in October. It now included a line for the Westerly Friends Gathering, though this should pay for itself and be cost-neutral, and also allowed for the possibility of an increased quota being requested by General Meeting. Since the treasurer had previously underestimated the amount of interest likely to be received from the Ecology Building Society, the budget allowed for this, and the balanced budget was

welcomed. Nominations brought forward a number of names to serve: as elder in Glasgow (Zem Moffat), trustees (Claire Phillips and Wendy Reynolds) and as shadow membership clerk to Lindesay Burton (Ruth Bacon), and these Friends were all duly appointed. Unfortunately no names could be brought forward to serve as deputy registering officer, second assistant AM clerk, or as a trustee from Glasgow Meeting, and Nominations Committee continues to search.

Area Meeting received the report from trustees which set out in broad terms what they had been dealing with on our behalf over the past year. We then agreed to send both Mary Troup and Nuala Watt, both of Glasgow Meeting, to the all-age outreach conference “Growing our All-age Community” at High Leigh in February, and also, for this year, to continue paying out of our legacy funds for the support and maintenance of Glasgow Meeting website, though this will be reviewed next year.

Finally we expressed our thanks to the retiring assistant clerk, Tim Denvir, who has served since 2013, and parted, to meet again in Glasgow on 12 January, when we hope to welcome Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke.

Bronwen Currie, Islay and Jura

Meeting for sufferings on Saturday 6th October, 2018 in Friends House, London

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

What follows is a joint report from Mike Shilson, Alternate for General Meeting for Scotland, and Ed Tyler, Alternate for West Scotland Area Meeting.

Mike Shilson, Mull & Iona:

Young Quakers

During the day we were joined by **Young Quakers** (under 18 yrs) who were having a parallel meeting on the theme “Diversity and Inclusion”.

It was interesting to discover from them “***What is a stereotypical Quaker?***” - and how they thought they (as young Quakers) differed from this.

Unfortunately one 15-year-old boy came away from the day with the impression that

he couldn't be a Quaker as he didn't believe in God. This has generated a lot of discussion on the Facebook page "Quaker Renewal UK".

Note from Ed: we agreed to create four reserved places for young adult Friends under the age of 35. This would be on an experimental basis until Yearly Meeting 2021 and would be followed by a review. This should result in us finally having more young members of MfS.

Vibrancy in Meetings

This is an on-going pilot project. It is being carried out by staff engaging with 100 local meetings in 18 area meetings (though none in Scotland), focusing on ways of *nurturing and nourishing the Spirit in Meetings*.

Diversity and Inclusion

We heard a very clear and concise presentation by Edwina Peart. Her remit is "to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings." (YM 2017 minute 38). She identified that all divisions are made by people, and so can be broken down.

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

What barriers have been experienced?

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

So how can our Meetings to be more available and welcoming?

Some points for discussion were: language use (specifically Quaker jargon), style of worship, lack of visibility (Meeting location and time), Quaker business method.

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

Sustainability

There should be a pragmatic approach to climate change.

It is daunting to think about what contribution we can make as individuals to such a global problem. **Can we make any difference?**

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

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

"What I can say is that my work at the international level speaks from a genuine core because of Quakers in Britain and other countries who seek to embrace a

sustainability lifestyle as critical for personal witness alongside political engagement.

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

Ed Tyler, Argyll:

I came away from the meeting thinking that it is a matter of urgency for us to become a “**Simpler Church**” (the need for a simpler structure was raised during the Meeting).

At the moment BYM consists of a plethora of bodies and committees. This may be seen as a good thing in that it creates wider involvement in decision-making, plus checks and balances in the system. I appreciate that we need good communication between staff, trustees and volunteers, and between the local and the national.

However, I am becoming concerned that the sheer number and variety of groups is resulting in a kind of paralysis. Whenever a proposal is made it has to be looked at by so many committees, each with its own set of (sometimes overlapping) remits. Even then, as a proposal progresses, some people feel that they are not being consulted. Personally, I think that the system has become too cumbersome and complicated.

Given the current situation, we should trust in and uphold each other, and consider in what ways we can simplify our structures.

Residential Meeting for Sufferings 23rd - 25th November 2018 - Woodbrooke

We were over a hundred representatives from all corners of the UK - trying to follow a way of life that still has aspirations for radical action. We are being asked to move closer to our Canterbury commitment and to attempt to reduce our carbon footprint. How this is to be achieved is a mystery to many of us... The hope is that Woodbrooke will play a part in helping us to envision what being a 'net zero' meeting might be like and to motivate us to move in that direction. Liz Burch, Clerk of Sustainability Group, spoke from the heart when she recalled first taking on that responsibility and subsequently learning in greater depth the inevitable challenges of climate change. Serving as clerk of this group has changed her as a person which reminded us how service can be at the core of our spiritual practice and community.

Although I was saddened by our decision to lay down the Sustainability Group I think it is a necessary decision for the development of the next stage to be undertaken by Friends House in tandem with Woodbrooke.

Earlier in the week Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk and our senior employee, had announced to the media another concern which had caused a considerable storm. We would not be investing in Israeli companies that benefitted from work carried out in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (not that we ever have). Because of the response by the spokesperson from The Board of Deputies of British Jews several national newspapers had run with the story and Paul Parker was invited to speak in our defence on Radio 4's The Today programme. Which he did superbly. However my own feelings were conflicted. I would be more comfortable if we were helping to build bridges rather than being punitive.

We heard 4 reports from Central and Standing Committees :

Quaker Life Central Committee, the life of local meetings including outreach, eldership and oversight and current work on gender diversity. Their new paper will be available online shortly.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations, about their study on the changing face of faith.

Quaker World Relations Committee. Each report gave a full account of their work funded and carried out on our behalf and supported by employees from Friends House. These reports can be read online and all of them are of interest. The four committees are accountable to Yearly Meeting via BYM Trustees, each committee has a representative on MfS.

These committees *determine priorities, and monitor, and evaluate the work within their areas of responsibility* They do this in line with the long-term framework, 'Our Faith in the Future'.

We also heard Reports from 8 BYM representatives attending European Y.M Ifound them all to be hugely informative and inspiring. I quote from our Friend Ruth Clements McQuaid's report on the Ireland Y.M. :

"I was challenged in a presentation about Quaker service to 'seek out nothing but the Light in one another' which pushed me way beyond the limits I had placed around 'there is that of God in everyone'. I reflected that this is a challenge - to release my own inner light to shine out and meet the light in others. How can I do this? 'By endeavouring not to be held back by fear'."

Gisela Creed's report on The Swedish Y.M. was also quoted by the Clerk as an example of why it is so necessary for us to send our representatives to keep links open with our closest European neighbours.

I urge Friends to read online the reports and minutes on sustainability, on the nominations process, how our Clerks for BYM and MfS are found and nurtured and the many items I've not covered for this short report.

I very much appreciate being given this opportunity of attending MfS which is both daunting and rewarding. The ministries from the floor were in many cases deeply moving and always pertinent. The thoughtful organisation creating a still clear space for us to listen to the Spirit. I do encourage Friends to consider being open to serving on a Central Committee.

Barbara Robinson, Glasgow

British Yearly Meeting Sustainability Gathering Swanwick, 19-21 October 2018

We gathered in Derbyshire a few days after the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report** came out. It makes for stark reading, saying that in order to stay within 1.5°C warming we have a narrow window of 12, possibly 20, years in which global human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, which have been fairly constant for decades, have to fall to zero. How should we as Quakers respond to this?

Seven themes emerged during the weekend and were reported back to us at the end. We share them with you below.

1. The need to be **joyful**. To see the changes we make as positive opportunities to explore the new, have fun and be joyful, rather than talking negatively or making people feel guilty.
2. We have heard of the importance of **envisioning the world we want**; of speaking it into being, for example working out what a zero carbon Society of Friends would really look like. Rather than looking at what we should not be doing, we should rejoice in what we will be doing.
3. The **importance of sharing stories**; we have heard inspiring stories of individuals who are letting their lives speak and are leading others to follow their example; we have heard examples of inspiring actions by Meetings. We often do not know the change that flows from our own simple acts. Sharing inspires others and fosters new cultural norms.
4. We have been challenged to reflect upon whether our role is to 'Bridge the Gap' or to 'Inhabit the Gap'.

5. We have been challenged by the concept of **exceptionalism**; the incomprehension that what we apply to others should also apply to us. Our species, our country and us as individuals fall prey to this. How often do we make excuses? Do we understand where this approach comes from in our culture and are we prepared to address this in ourselves and our society?
6. We seek to **engage spiritually**, to deepen our relationship with others we inhabit this world with. We know we must campaign and make practical changes in the ways we live our lives, yet have we fallen out of the right relationship with that which is sacred?

In Quaker Faith and Practice 24.13 Marian Fox, wrote 100 years ago “I remembered the familiar words about William Penn’s sword – and it seemed clear to me that if William Penn had given it up from self-interest or cowardice, or for any reason short of the ‘witness of God in his own soul’, he would have been wrong.

7. We often heard of the importance of **acting from and through love**. Whilst at times we are angry or afraid, we must ensure the bedrock of our action is love, the power of love. Remember Advices and Queries 28 "Attend to what love requires of you."
8. Finally, **Connection**. There are many opportunities to strengthen our connections with others. With those with whom we share common journeys but perhaps equally importantly with those we don't. We need to be able to listen and seek to understand what motivates others as well as communicating clearly our own message.

What to do next (in Scotland)?

BYM has formally advocated the 1.5°C limit, and in our Canterbury Commitment we committed ourselves to making the changes, but we are not sure that – collectively - we realise the enormity and the urgency of the task.

Quaker Stewardship Committee have asked Meetings to provide information about the carbon emissions of their meetings (or other similar information). We hope this is not seen as an extra chore but as an opportunity to engage the wider Quaker community in the issue of climate change.

We have considered how Quakers in Scotland could move forward on this using a simple common approach and suggest the following steps:

- a) **measure our current emissions related to our meeting houses.** We have already developed a simple methodology which has been used for Glasgow Meeting and hope to extend this to all Scottish Meeting Houses (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Wigtown, Aberdeen and Dundee)
- b) **measure the travel footprint for these meetings;** again, we have developed a simple questionnaire for Glasgow Meeting
- c) **roll out the travel footprint for all other meetings.**

Referring back to theme 2, “**working out what a zero carbon Society of Friends would really look like**”, we consider the three above steps to be Scotland’s initial contribution to this task.

Meeting for Sufferings needs support – now – to begin the process. We in Scotland have a unique opportunity to be an example to the rest of BYM – let’s grab it.

Martin Mansell, Glasgow, and Ed Tyler, Argyll

SUSTAINABILITY? - Nae bother, the scientists will save us!
Facts taken from an article by John Naish, comments added by your editor.

Fake volcanic explosions from a Harvard engineering team part funded by Bill Gates.

Clouds ejected from volcanoes can lower the temperature 0.9 degrees for up to 18 months. Mount Pinatubo in the Phillipines threw up 20 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere. This could be achieved sending an airship 12 miles up to deposit 1 kg of chalk.

Cost \$3million

Side effects: Piers Foster of Leeds University fears 4.1 billion people could be affected by changes in rain patterns, i.e drought and famine. [Where are you Katya?](#)

Move the Earth simple. We are already working on schemes to protect us from stray asteroids by deflecting them. We can use them to shove the Earth a bit further over! Greg Laughlin of Yale University. Critics from the Journal of Astrophysics and Space Science commented that unfortunately that could separate us from our Moon and its effects on tides, etc.

Cost would disappear in our military budget!

Breed tiny humans This one from Oxford University, Dr Rebecca Roache. Humans could be bioengineered to be smaller and allergic to meat and dairy (so disposing of the need for cows that produce 100kg of methane gas per year). And if babies were produced with light-reflecting eyes like cats we would need less lighting. From the journal of [Ethics, Police and Environment](#). ‘Tiny cateyed vegans’.

A wall around the Antarctic to separate the glaciers from the warmer ocean waters. This one from Michael Wolovick of Princeton University writing in *The Cryosphere*. Cost *catastrophic!*

White paint on all our buildings especially the roofs this would reflect sunlight, significant amounts of solar energy, states researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California. It may give a great boost to the manufacturer of sunglasses! Allied to this might be a scheme to cover the Arctic in white plastic, or even fill the oceans with ‘foamy, white froth of “microbubbles”’. This could be produced by ‘dams, reservoirs and ocean-going ships’.

Cost It uses more energy in production creating even more greenhouse gases.

Sun glasses for the Earth! Roger Angel of Arizona University would launch trillions of reflective plastic lenses one million miles into space to reduce 2% of the sun’s rays. It would involve ‘producing 20 millions tons of lenses and blasting them from an enormous cannon (with a barrel 0.6 mile across)’.

Cost ‘*a few trillion dollars*’. What a good use for all that extra plastic!

Australia could cull 1.2 million wild camels that each produce 45kg methane gas, the equivalent of 1.1 tons of carbon dioxide.

1.1 tons X 1.2 millions camels = how many more cars could we have???

A Quaker answer?

- 1) Turn your heating down two degrees and buy a wooly jumper, and wear it.*
- 2) Buy less ‘stuff’ and save all that energy de-cluttering.*

SUSTAINABILITY – New Years’ Resolutions

“This’ll see me oot”, my aunt used to say meaning she won’t waste her pension on buying new clothes. Now I’m almost 70, that is good advice so I’m determined to buy no new clothes this year.

But it’s more than that.

Washing clothes made from artificial fibres releases plastic fibres, especially acrylics but also polyesters and even polyester/cotton mixtures. Thinner than a human hair, these fibres can be absorbed by ‘the tiniest of animals’. Deadlier than plastic pellets, they account for 1/3 of all the plastics in the oceans. So, if you have to wash this stuff, it is recommended that you put it into a mesh laundry bag, but

Washing/ironing clothes can produce 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon/year – more than aviation
Too cold for fig leaves in Scotland here are some tips to cut your clothes’ carbon footprint:

Fill the washing machine,

Wash at 30°C (and put in some vinegar if you are worried about the build up of bacteria in the machine!)

Soak clothes to cut down on energy used.

No tumble dryer? – put clothes on a rack overnight in whichever room you have heated that evening.

NEVER BELIEVE YOU ARE POWERLESS

See New Scientist 24/2/18, Dirty Laundry. Sandrine Ceurstamont quote from Water & Resources Action Programme, UK

PS. My aunt also taught me to fold and store clothes so they do not need ironed!!!

Your Editor

Memorial in Edinburgh to Conscientious Objectors and all who oppose war

A Memorial is to be erected in Edinburgh to Conscientious Objectors and all who oppose war.

Conscientious objection and opposition to War is a significant part of Scotland's history. 80,000 people marched to oppose the First World War in Glasgow in 1914. There were nearly 20,000 COs in Britain – 1434 in Scotland - yet they are scarcely recognised in public spaces. There are memorials to COs in London and other places but not yet in Edinburgh.

Civil society groups, faith groups and educators came together to make sure the voices of those who refused to fight are heard in Scotland's capital city. A CO Memorial in Princes St Gardens will ensure that this history is recognised in a site that is visited by millions of people.

To donate to the Memorial visit <https://chuffed.org/project/opposing-war-memorial>

Also Friends can see and share the video on Facebook

using: <https://www.facebook.com/edinpeaceandjusticecentre/videos/272985409993155/>

We have already raised over £19,000 to complete the first phase of the project. We need to raise £149,000 more for technical drawings, fabrication and installation of the sculpture. **We hope to raise a total of £59,000 from individual donations** and the rest from grants.

Alternatively you can donate by Bank Transfer (and save Card processing fees) to:

Bank of Scotland Account Name: Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre
Account: 00207018 / Sort Code: 80-11-30 Be sure to use Reference: Opposing War

If donating by Bank transfer, please email admin@peaceandjustice.org.uk

News from Northern Friends Peace Board

Networking for a change

This autumn has been a typically busy time for networking. NFPB was the host organisation for the October meeting of the **Network of Christian Peace Organisations**, with Manchester Meeting House providing the venue for a lively and productive crossdenominational meeting. In November a number of NFPB members played an active part in the QPSW

Activists' Gathering, taking place this year in Lancaster. Exploring both the challenges and building hope, the gathering was a chance to reflect and plan for action arising from our testimonies to peace, equality, sustainability and truth.

Later in November, NFPB was represented at the Annual Peace and Service Consultation of FWCC EMES*.

Meeting at Bad Pyrmont in Germany, this year's gathering provided space for joint thinking on specific issues such as arms trade campaigning and trauma, as well as for stepping back and considering how we plan and develop our work both responsively and strategically. It was good to have an opportunity to meet with European Friends at this challenging time.

* Friends World Committee for Consultation, Europe and Middle-East Section

ROOTS OF RESISTANCE A number of NFPB members are linking up with Friends across the country in response to an invitation from "Roots of Resistance". This is a grassroots network of Quakers across the UK who are building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response to the **DSEI** (Defence and Security Equipment International) arms fair, which takes place in London in September 2019. For more information - <https://rootsofresistance.org.uk>.

Religion a la Albert Schweitzer

'Each morning, going down to the hospital, I am aware that I enjoy the inestimable privilege of being able to do good toward my fellow man and preserve human lives, at the same moment where so many men are obliged, in order to fulfil their patriotic duty, to do evil towards others and to kill. This feeling supports me in all my fatigue.'

.....
Taken from Albert Schweitzer's book. 'On the Edge of the Primeval Forest' which was written during the carnage we know as the First World War. Schweitzer coined the phrase 'Reverence for Life' and this theme is repeated in everything he did, and in everything he ever wrote. Schweitzer was not a Quaker but he took the antiseptics discovered by the scientist, and Quaker, Joseph Lister, to the suffering people of the Congo. His original hospital at Lambarerne is now a museum dedicated to his memory. Joseph Lister himself was of course 'outed' by the Society of Friends for 'marrying out'. Quakers have not ALWAYS been the tolerant group of people that they are today. God is Love. *Sent in by Bill Bingham, Glasgow.*

Report from Ecumenical and Interfaith Co-ordinator

December 2018

Myself and Liz Anderton have been very busy attending *some* of the ecumenical and Interfaith events that have been happening around the city since our appointment. The first event was a photographic exhibition called “Faithful Lives” at St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral in September. The exhibition featured scenes from various faith communities involved in everyday or special occasions and showed how often different faiths show similar approaches to, for instance, sharing and giving food, caring for the elderly and vulnerable, community action, and song and worship.

Quakers were featured in 3 photographs based around our participation at the Summer LGBT Pride event. Also featured were members of St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral. Cranhill Parish Church, the Sikh community, the Salvation Army, Hindu Mandir, Brahma Khumaris, The Glasgow Unitarian Church, Giffnock Synagogue, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow and the Glasgow Muslim community.

The main events were connected to Scottish Interfaith Week from 11-18 November. There were over 100 events all over Scotland. Theme for the week was “Connecting Generations.” There were Quaker representatives in 4 main events during the week: the first on Remembrance Sunday at Gartnethill Jewish Archive Centre and focusing on the often over-looked contributions of the Jewish and Sikh communities in World War One. The second was the inaugural event of Glasgow LGBT+ Interfaith Network (GLIN) which featured performances, writing and artwork from LGBTQ individuals reflecting on their experience of the intersectionality of Faith and sexuality/Gender. It was a well-attended event with a diverse group of people. In the end I led the participants in a rendition of the Quaker round “Building Bridges” which has now become the unofficial anthem for Interfaith Glasgow! This event wasn’t the first of its kind – last year we had 2 successful events involving Quakers, Metropolitan Community church, Quest (LGBT Catholics) and Scottish Federation of Pagans at the Meeting House. But GLIN has plans to meet monthly at different venues of faith groups and other venues to build a network of understanding around these issues. (See GLIN facebook page for details.)

The other events we attended were the Civil Reception at City Halls where we learnt more about the great work of Interfaith Glasgow and more chances to network, And the Interfaith Family Fun Day at Hillhead Primary School where Quakers had a stall and the task of encouraging participants decorating leaves on the Peace Tree – a great fun event- and me and my Jewish friend Scott brought things to close with “Building Bridges”! Last week we joined the MCC carol service at Ibrox Parish Church

There is lot more I could add but I hope this gives a flavour of the sort of work we are involved in and keep an eye out for opportunities to join with others in building those bridges of understanding.

Derek Read, Glasgow – Ecumenical and Interfaith Co-ordinator

Building Bridges

Building bridges between our divisions
I reach out to you - as you reach out to me
With all of our voices and all of our visions
Together we can make such a sweet harmony

Helen Minnis on Our trip to the Mosque

A group of us went to the Ahmadiyya Mosque to take part in their Peace Day. We were made very welcome, treated to fantastic food and great company. It was fascinating to read the texts made available, speak to members of the mosque and to realise the resonances with Quaker thinking. This was most apparent in the Ahmadiyya belief that we must focus most of all on peace and that true understanding and acceptance between people of the world, regardless of religious beliefs, is key to achieving this.

And in Paisley The first-ever was wonderful. Well worth £6. I got mehndi of course. I attended a (unexpectedly) multifaith puja, Christian and Hindu, where both Jesus and Krishna were invoked for blessing the dancers and the performance today. I tried my feet at a little Bollywood dancing and ate delicious samosa chat with (after Avi's homemade) the yummiest chai ever. The best pieces were: 1) a beautiful kathak (classical dance) performed by famous artist Sonia Chandaria-Tillu, dressed in white, peacock blue and turquoise, whose pirouettes were breath-taking; 2) the dances invoking and in praise of Shiva (vibrant), Lord Ganesha (the littlest student dancers, all girls, were so cute) and Jesus (wow, the first of its kind, apparently, and there is a mudra for Christ on the Cross); 3) A Mother's Pride, a poignant piece about a child who grows up to be a soldier and is killed in WW1, where the little girls finish by carrying out red and white poppies from a field; 4) a lively taiko-led bharatnatyam (classical dance), a fusion of sounds and movement which reminded me of both Maori chants and First Nations jingle dances. Fantastic event.
(O-taiko is the enormous booming Japanese festival drum.) **Linda Haggerstone**

Poem by Jelaluddin Rumi

*I looked for myself, but my self was gone.
The boundaries of my being
had disappeared in the sea.
Waves broke. Awareness rose again.
And a voice returned me to myself.
It always happens like this.*

*Sea turns on itself and foams,
and with every foaming bit
another body, another being takes form.
And when the sea sends word,
each foaming body
melts back to ocean-breath.*

An Extract from St Andrew's Day 'State of the Nation' Lecture

St Giles Cathedral Edinburgh, 30 November 2018

Alastair McIntosh

The hubris that drives climate change and poverty, is a word that has its origin in the Greek, *hybris*, meaning violence.

Violence is what happens when we lead an egotistical life, a life that overrides relationship or has never had the chance or known how to build it. Violence is the product of being, for whatever reason, self-centred instead of being centred selves.

It means we're all complicit – me too - if not with specific violence, then with structural violence as part of the normalised fabric of society. When a people or peoples have been historically colonised, politically disenfranchised, stripped of their land, pushed by whatever galling reason - climate change, war, or multiple forms of destitution - to become migrants to a stranger's country.... When they're cast from early childhood into a race of competitive achievement, when they become cogs in the machine, where the social class system, or sexism, or racism, or any other manifestation of the domination system never gave to each an equal running start ... in all these situations, people have been shaped by violence.

If not to body, then to soul.

As a Glasgow addict said to me, "Heroin took away my pain, Alastair, but it also took away my soul."

The resulting spiral of violence, if not broken, leads to massive denial and psychological complicity in the very systems that we all deplore. These are variations on the Stockholm Syndrome. If you can't beat them, you can but join them. How do we transform such structural evil, rooted as it is not just out there in "the system", but running through the psyches of every one of us?

Saint Giles and Saint Andrew are patterns and examples. Their lives reveal a God whose name is life, and not just any old life, but life as love made manifest. Andrew's ambassadorial roles - with his brother Peter, with visiting "Greeks" or foreigners, and with the feeding of the five thousand - shows us what it means to recreate relationships.

To rekindle true community.

Because the cross of Christ ... the willingness to fully face the world, but not retaliate in kind ... *the cross absorbs the violence of the world*. Jesus called out violence, in all its hollow bankruptcy. Peter and Andrew too, each crucified; and Andrew with his nonviolence, seen as being Christ-like in medieval Europe.

As one of our folks in Govan, a guy called Livvy, a street theologian, put it to me: “Hell cannot hold such love as this.”

A love that stands outside of space and time.

A life to which the resurrection is intrinsic, because such life is rooted in the very fabric of eternity.

Hell cannot hold such love as this.

That, is the State of the Nation, to which Saint Andrew calls us in our time.

The full lecture with a link to the audio can be found on my website at

<https://goo.gl/GR2y8U>

Spiritual Discernment

This is the fourth in the series of ‘Seeking to know one another in the things which are eternal’ interviews. Below, five West of Scotland Friends describe their experiences, thoughts and feelings on the topic of Spiritual Discernment.

‘Spiritual discernment lies at the heart of Quaker spirituality and practice,’ says Patricia Loring in Pendlehill Pamphlet 305 *Spiritual Discernment: the context and goal of clearness committees*.

These interviews take this quote as the starting point for understanding what Spiritual Discernment means to these Friends. Also included below is the set of prompts used as part of these interviews so that other Friends can use them for self-reflection or to discuss with others.

Again, I’m really grateful for the time Friends take to do this. The next topic is ‘God’, followed by the testimony ‘Truth and Integrity’.

Sheila Semple

Prompts for Spiritual Discernment

‘Spiritual discernment lies at the heart of Quaker spirituality and practice.’ Patricia Loring in Pendlehill Pamphlet 305 *Spiritual Discernment: the context and goal of clearness committees*.

- What does spiritual discernment mean to you?
- Do you agree with the quote above? If so, where have you seen it in practice amongst Friends? Where does it work well?
- In what ways do you exercise spiritual discernment in your life?
- What makes discernment ‘spiritual’? Are there other kinds of discernment?
- Is discernment the same as judgement?
- What tests do you use to be as clear as you can that your discernment is a true leading?
- What is easy about spiritual discernment? And what are the challenges?
- How have you developed/ learned to recognise spiritual discernment? Can it be taught? If so, how could this be done?

Spiritual Discernment by Daphne Wassermann

Most decisions that I make seem to come from my head or my heart. What to get at Sainsbury's or what caused the valve to fail. When to visit family and what charities to support.

But I can identify two occasions when I have felt the need to seek spiritual guidance on more difficult or significant matters, a special time when I felt a particular leading.

About 30 years ago I was dissatisfied in my work and looking for a way forward. I took this to Meeting for Worship and laid it before God and waited. Eventually the way forward became clear and I moved employment to use my engineering knowledge and experience in expert witness work. Later, this led to training as a mediator, initially for technical/construction disputes. However, most of my work as a mediator has been in employment disputes or as a volunteer in the small claims courts.

Last year I was asked to be Clerk of Glasgow Local Meeting. My first reaction was 'no', as I expect most people's would be. Then I thought about it. I am in the process of retiring from paid work and do a nominal one day a week. So I have more time. My husband doesn't come to Meeting so I asked him if he was willing to forego Sunday lunch with me ten times a year. He agreed. I thought and listened and realised that this was a leading for me. Topped up by the on-line Woodbrooke course in the autumn (very useful) and well briefed by our previous Clerks.

Clerking a business meeting is about listening within that quiet space that is similar to Meeting for Worship, waiting to see if everyone has said what they want to say, weighing it up then distilling different bits of what people have said into a coherent minute to help the meeting move forward. Sometimes business meetings (for example at General Meeting for Scotland) have felt like a really spiritual experience but at other times when matters are practical and mundane, they don't depend so much on deep spiritual discernment.

I don't feel that I'm a very spiritual person. Being in Meeting for Worship is really valuable. The discipline of sitting still and centring down helps to put things in perspective. For example, I was considering whether I should go down to the arms trade protest in London; but I realised that, no, it was not the thing for me to do. So it is not just the huge decisions, there is a spiritual component in smaller things, too.

Early Friends spoke about having '*a stop in their mind*'. When I was working with Babcock I was asked to do a job relating to a nuclear-powered submarine. I said that I would rather not work on a defence contract, it would be contrary to all the Quaker principles I believed in. This was accepted. Judgement is intellectual; discernment has an element of waiting for inspiration to come from outside. I'm not sure how I would define 'God', but something external comes to you from somewhere else. I think the

‘waiting’ element is very Quakerly, to be able to realise that this is not the right time. The way I would test a leading is to make sure I feel the same the next day, the next month... it can take a while. It needs time and space to let it sink in and to make sure it’s right. (I might also do that with judgement.)

I was brought up a Quaker, by Quaker parents, so there’s never been a period in my life when I didn’t go to Meeting regularly. I’ve grown up with it, sitting still and waiting. You can be told techniques for centring down, but you have to practise it yourself and to have the belief that, if you wait long enough, an answer will come.

Spiritual Discernment by Ann Kerr

The dictionary gives: ‘discriminating, acute judgement, distinguishing by the eye or understanding; also, a perceptive judgement.’ In Quaker-speak, discernment should be spirit-led.

I couldn’t say I’m looking for ‘the will of God’. I’m comfortable with ‘God’ but also with ‘or whatever’. ‘The will of God’ has overtones of a personified God – I have enormous respect for a friend who ‘walks with Jesus’ but I’m most comfortable with ‘standing in the Light’. It’s about examining yourself and waiting, perhaps with others, seeking that presence, being gathered in the spirit, I can’t quite pin it down. It’s waiting, being in tune with the things that matter and the people I love and trust.

In business meetings it’s waiting for the sense of the meeting to emerge. As Clerk I was listening carefully to everyone, even if at first it doesn’t make sense. Not just those ministering but everyone, looking for signs of assent or Friends who seem uncomfortable. I would wait to see if the possibly uncomfortable Friend wants to speak, if not, they might have decided what they had to say was not needed, or it might come through when considering the draft minute. There are a handful of Friends who can perceive what is underlying the meeting that day and articulate it. That ability is critical to discernment in our Meetings. The Clerk needs to wait prayerfully, to have any information to hand that might be useful, to listen... and sometimes a decision just comes. Challenges to discernment in a Meeting for Worship for Business come when people are not able to stand back from self or there seem to be time pressures or feeling things need to be done in certain ways. These don’t make discernment impossible, but can interrupt and delay it.

I’ve only recently properly noticed ‘walking’ in George Fox’s words about ‘walking cheerfully over the world.’ I love walking and do it a great deal, and it links to discernment in that it’s tuning in, being part of creation; it’s a quality of attention, walking enables me to let go, just as you would in a meeting. That same letting go is part of discernment, a letting go of self. And the deep attention is not just in your head. You have to put the intellectual at the service of the spiritual.

Contemporary life is fraught: we're encouraged to look for 'the causes of war' in our own lives, but it's such a complex world, even when shopping for basic necessities. It's making as much of a discerned judgement as you can, be open to the Light, waiting for information, perhaps from sources that might surprise you.

When I've regretted a decision, it's been where I've felt under pressure to make a decision quickly. If you're still and silent, the openness and the waiting that is prayerful are more likely.

Discernment is always challenging, it requires practice.

Spiritual Discernment by Sally Beamish

Spiritual discernment for me relates to decision making; something I've struggled with more than anything else, since I was young.

When I was 6 I was given the choice of a puppy or a rabbit. I chose the rabbit and almost immediately regretted it. Maybe this started a tendency to look back and regret my decisions; and I became afraid of deciding. But in fact I wasn't given enough information to choose. I didn't realise that a puppy would be more fun, or that the rabbit would be vicious! Of course I was lucky to be offered a pet at all, but sometimes choices are too much for small children.

Our lives are a series of choosings. It's a mistake to think there is only one path that might be taken; you make the path yourself, and if you walk looking over your shoulder, you will trip.

But it's quite different in my work as a composer. That involves constant choices, and I don't look back and say 'I wish I hadn't'. When I'm writing music I have to be open; to listen and wait. I'm a channel, and it doesn't feel like my decision. And I don't feel the need to decide absolutely how a piece should be performed. I enjoy the individuality of performers, and it's really exciting when something new emerges. As a musician you're searching for truth all the time, whether by creating music, or by recreating it. There is truth in a note played perfectly in tune. As a composer, I can usually tell when I'm being untruthful. Recently, I added some fast passages to a piece I was writing. I thought there should be some there, because people might expect them. But it was a relief when I accepted that this was simply a slow piece, and took out the gratuitous fast music. It felt more truthful. Teaching composition is about helping students to discern their individual truth - even though it's not your own path. It's important to enable them to go the way they need to.

People have different truths. There's the need for constant questioning of the inner and the external world to identify what is untrue. According to Socrates, 'The unexamined life is not worth living.'

Discernment is a process of discovery, of weighing up. But allowing instinct or intuition to govern choices, or to look for 'signs' can be dangerous. Sometimes all

discernment means is just waiting, listening, to see if something becomes more or less important, standing in the Light and letting it shine on the path to find truth. It takes practice, and learning from mistakes.

A Quaker business meeting is a good example. An issue is brought up, several people give their thoughts; they listen, wait - and discernment emerges. The path can simply reveal itself.

In Meeting for Worship there was a point when I gave ministry nearly every week for about a year. I was thinking aloud. But then I started to discern when to speak; and I became quieter. My Quaker aunt once told me: ‘Don’t speak unless you feel the quaking; and if you feel the quaking, you need to speak.’

I was an Elder for a year or so at Glasgow Meeting. Elders’ meetings have a very loving dynamic; upholding the community of Quakers, while empathising with their various needs, even when there are difficulties and conflicts. It was very instructive. It showed the wonderful care and love you experience when the group has the best interests of the community at heart. Discernment can be taught, and I think we could really help children by encouraging them to be confident in what feels right to them: to learn to stand in the Light and not to be swayed or cajoled by other people (within the bounds of social politeness!). To learn to gather information and then wait for the right path to reveal itself.

And then to take the chosen path without looking back, wondering, regretting. Maybe that rabbit would have been less vicious if I had embraced my choice!

Spiritual Discernment by Alan James

Spiritual discernment is not so much a procedure as a property, enabling one to find what is most truly right for oneself, or to help others find what is truly right for them. When we’re faced with choices, with the grace of God we may sense at a very deep level what is *most* right, which may be very different from what our surface mind thinks. Everything in the universe has its *dharma*, that which is most right for it. Each of us needs to find our own true *dharma*.

Discernment isn’t judgement, in a sense it’s the opposite. We’re constantly pressured into having opinions and making judgements, we need to stand back from these: the discipline of discernment begins with *not judging*. I can think of times (very often, actually!) when I’ve done what I thought was right and things have gone pear-shaped; we must accept we are all fallible, the harder our surface selves try, the more likely we are to go wrong.

Keats’s phrase ‘*negative capability*’ describes for me what needs to be cultivated if we are to acquire discernment: ‘*when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without an irritable reaching after fact and reason*’.

We need to wait for those leadings that truly come from the centre. If it's gone on for a time in a quiet persistent way, it's more likely to be a true leading - for me anyway, it's not generally something that happens dramatically at a point in time, it's a gentle but persistent knocking at the door. It comes more and more into my consciousness and I know I have to think again and maybe go in a different direction. But occasionally it can give me a sudden push, for example when I was moved to pray when I hadn't done so for many years. At a time when I wasn't aware of any apparent reason, I suddenly found myself on my knees, thinking '*Why am I doing this? Why am I here? I have to make changes in my life. I need to find a way of prayer.*' That led me eventually to worship as a Quaker.

The reason why I'm a Quaker and go on being one is that, for me, the practice of silent waiting in Meeting for Worship, and in times of inward retirement at home, is the best way to maintain inner silence and get beneath the surface, to the still centre. I see spiritual discernment revealed in the lives and personalities of Friends, a very deep spirituality evidenced in their lives, in what they do and say - and don't say. But I've known it in people of other traditions too.

Spiritual discernment should be at the heart of Quaker practice, part of a life centred in whatever we understand by 'God'. Letting go and letting God work *ought* to be easy, doing nothing *ought* to be easy... but it's not. Friends in particular have an enormous sense that we've got to put the world to rights, we find it very hard to let go.

But I believe that, with the grace of God, discernment can be developed. It can't be taught as such, it has to grow out of a life centred on inward receptivity, inner leadings, letting go of our surface judgements. If we can develop that, and make it part of our practice, then our decisions are more likely to be close to the Light.

Spiritual Discernment by Bronwen Currie

Words I would use about spiritual discernment are listening, waiting, waiting in the Light, feeling, being led, letting it become clear. It's being pushed and prodded by something beyond, deeper than me, something you 'know experimentally'. It's not a rational thing, it tugs me and pushes me, I have to just sit with it sometimes. It's what happens in Meeting for Worship, listening with my spiritual ears open to what's inside me and what's coming from others. It calls me to be better than I am, perhaps to do things I don't think I'm going to be able to do.

Some years ago I was being pushed and tugged, I felt a call or leading to offer myself as an ecumenical accompanier in Israel/Palestine. It kept landing on my lap. In prayer, in worship, in silence it was there. I was just putting it aside and it was affecting my spiritual life, only when I turned to look at it could I cope with it. It can come out of nothing. I'm not a traveller, had no particular interest in the Middle East.

It came at me and I was profoundly uncomfortable. I realised I had to test it so applied, thinking, ‘If it’s not a leading I’ll get knocked back’, and I was totally honest in my application. It was something I needed to do because I was not going to have any peace unless I offered myself. So was it a true leading? At the checkpoint where I was greeting and being greeted by Palestinians crossing the Wall, at Women in Black silent vigils when I stood alongside Israeli ladies in West Jerusalem protesting the occupation, I knew I was doing accompaniment, it felt moving, profound, I really felt I was right to be there.

I’d like to say in ordinary life I do it all the time, but I don’t! Every day I make multiple decisions but don’t spend enough time reflecting, praying. If it’s something deeper I will let it sit and ferment, giving it time, ‘using the power of the Spirit on it’ (Quaker Faith and Practice).

The key thing is taking myself out of it, it’s getting past ‘Me’, what I want and think to what’s being asked of me, that’s the challenge. When discernment doesn’t happen, whether it’s individually or in Meeting, it’s when the ‘Me’ is in the way. If we’re listening to what we think is best, we’re not listening to others or being led.

Spiritual discernment should be at the heart of our business method. I remember some 20 years ago in South East Scotland a request for a Meeting for Worship for affirmation of the partnership of two gay Friends. The process was a special Local Meeting, a threshing meeting organised by elders. That showed Quaker spiritual discernment at its best, listening deeply, reflecting, doing our utmost to put aside pre-conceptions, and the way we’d been brought up.

Thing can go wrong. Quaker Faith and Practice 20.08 speaks about only being able to do what we do ‘unto God’ if we have ‘prayed’ about it. And it’s not always going to be successful, we can’t change the world, we can’t bring peace despite trying for centuries. We are led towards these issues, but we can’t change them.

I don’t think that spiritual discernment can be taught, but I think it can be learnt. Life experience can teach us to be patient and to reflect. And we can learn by listening to the experiences of others and by sharing ours. Is spiritual discernment easy? Is faith easy? Is trust easy? No, it’s not! It takes patience, time and humility; really, really listening. And taking the ‘Me’ out of it. There’s something non-rational about it, that’s what makes it spiritual. Judgement is rational, it lists the pros and cons. Spiritual discernment is seeking something beyond the human and the everyday in this decision.

Our problem is not to be rid of fear but rather to harness and master it. Martin Luther King Jr

Even with the most deeply held differences, treating the other person with respect and as a fellow human being is always a good first step towards greater understanding

Elizabeth Regina

Book Review: *To Tame the Hydra: undermining the culture of violence.* Adam Curle, Jon Carpenter 1999

Adam Curle wrote this book in 1998 at the age of 83, after a distinguished career in education towards the end of his career setting up the School of Peace Studies at Bradford University. As an innovator in communicating, he ‘worked endlessly in a dozen war zones’ including South Africa, Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, former Yugoslavia, and Ireland. He is the author of 12 books on peacework paying attention to education and communication.

This book seemed to hit the nail on the head for me. Working on the Violence against Women campaign, and having previously worked with the ‘peace movement’, I had become frustrated at the big scale operations to counter militarism in its many shades - ‘counter’ by its very nature using the tools of the Devil himself. I feared it came down to repetitive outbreaks of power politics fuelled by greed for status and wealth but creating greater imbalance of power and inequality and injustice. Of course, I put it down to Patriarchy – only partly true and very shorthand. As Curle points out in the book, it seemed as if you cut off one head only for the Hydra to grow another.

Adam Curle states in a nutshell:

*The chief characteristics of this emerging world is the interconnectedness of the destructive forces ,the interwoven and increasingly interacting world-wide forces of economic, political and military power: **a global culture of violence**. This situation, I believe, requires a shift in our ideas of peace.*

*There will, of course, always be a need for peace-making methods of mediation, negotiation, reconciliation and the like. We also need, however, to understand and learn to **withstand** and to **transform** within ourselves and our own societies the attitudes and activities out of which the culture of violence develops.*

How do we get to the bottom of it all to be effective peacemakers? He has answers. His answers bring together some of the most innovative thinking from some world leaders in ‘personal development’. He put the human back into relationships between individuals, and nations, seeing violence arising out of fear and frustrated expectation. The answer being happiness – it sounds a bit like he has been speaking to the Dalai Lama. He says there are two types of happiness: Immediate gratification of ‘paltry desires’ or that vivid active force the is ‘an inseparable part of our great inner resource of wisdom, courage and compassion.’ The religious bit of the *Religious Society of Friends*’ roots us in spirituality.

How to take this into the public affairs of nations? Does it come down to integrity in public affairs or, for example, re Sustainability, are we really prepared to have a social conscience, like John Woolman to take only what we need? ‘The Hydra is largely a product of globalisation, of the greater human community’. The lethal tangle includes debt, greed, growth and extravagance. But WE are its other side.

This book is well worth a read as it touches on some of our current Quaker difficulties.

Margaret Roy, Lanark

Dunblane Meeting Remembering Maris Armfield 7.11.1954 - 24.6.2018

Maris spent many years, from her youth onwards, searching for a form of worship and faith that sat comfortably with her. She and her husband Leonard began to attend Dunblane Meeting in 2010 - Maris had found her spiritual home. She began to participate fully in the Dunblane Quaker community and was accepted into membership at West Scotland Area Meeting on December 1st, 2014.

Maris was born at Rutherglen but spent the bulk of her childhood and youth in Wishaw. Her parents met in Nairobi where her father was working as a pharmacist: her German mother had gone to Nairobi to be reunited with her own father, who had left Germany in 1938. In 1975 Maris met and married Peter Dibbs, an Australian, and they emigrated to Australia three days after Maris' 21st birthday. After that marriage failed she met and married Leonard Armfield in 1983.

Maris had a very successful teaching career, in primary schools in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs. She taught in classrooms as well as being a specialist in Art and Music. Maris left full-time teaching to study for a BA while teaching piano from home. On returning to Scotland in 1993 she continued with her BA and then went on to do an MPhil and a PhD at Glasgow University. Maris lectured and tutored in Art History on a part time basis for a number of years.

Within Dunblane Quaker Meeting Maris' gifts were immediately recognised and appreciated and she was appointed as an Overseer in March 2015. However, she discovered that other commitments did not permit her to give as much attention as she wished to this role - she always set herself very high standards - and so was released in December 2015. Maris' insightful spoken ministry offered one Christmas, about how receiving is every bit as important as giving - where to receive with grace is to offer back a gift to the giver - has stayed with us as a vital truth.

In recent years, afflicted by motor neurone disease, and a form of dementia, Maris still came to Meeting in Dunblane, even when the condition was well advanced, but always with a smile and a ready and warm embrace.

On Maris' death, she was buried in Strowan Woodland Cemetery in a funeral conducted in the manner of Friends. Friends came from Dunblane and Glasgow to join Len, members of her family, friends and colleagues.

The Grace of God shone through Maris, a quiet, gentle, caring soul, friendly to all, extremely intelligent but never one to show off her learning. She was full of wonder at the world of nature and the creativity of artists and musicians. She was a lovely person whom we miss very much.

News from Local Meetings

An ENORMOUS thank you to everyone who donated to my 10 mile Glasgow Culture Crawl walk on Friday night in aid of the Maggie's Centre at Gartnaval in memory of Marion Fairweather. It was a great night - the weather was kind, the participants cheery and chatty and the stewards all very encouraging. Food, drink and music at various venues sustained us en route. At the Maggie's Centre at the start we were invited to write our reason for walking on leaf shaped pieces of paper and then these 'WhyIWALK' leaves were hung on a beautiful cherry blossom tree sculpture at the Garment Factory, our second to last venue stop. We also enjoyed reading the story boards and seeing the portraits of some of the many people who had used the Maggie's Centre during the year. Quakers in Glasgow and elsewhere pledged £465 including gift aid on my Just Giving site and others donated £142 at Meeting for Worship giving a total of £607. A real tribute to Marion's impact in her all too short life. Thank you Friends.

Sarah Brown, Glasgow Meeting

Thanks also to Glasgow and Ayrshire Meetings for the underwear we collected for Smalls for All. It will soon find its way to Africa to improve the quality and dignity of life amongst some African women.

Violence against Women campaign.

Argyll

At the meeting in Lochgilphead on 25 November, the trial of Zoom threw up a few problems, but we have learned from this. It is good if people can take part without travelling. The new hall is very satisfactory. We have now stopped meeting regularly in Tarbert.

Dumfries

The meeting has a monthly learning session. In September Jenny Agnew choose *Compassion in Action by Ram Dass*. Compassion in Action

'Compassion begins with ourselves. When we are kind and caring toward ourselves, we are nurturing our spiritual growth and cultivating compassion for others. Gandhi, whose life was committed to the relief of suffering for others, understood this; he said,

"I believe in the essential unity of all people and for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one person gains spiritually, the whole world gains, and if one person falls, the whole world falls to that extent."

What we have to give is who we are; when we are kind and forgiving toward ourselves, we are more relaxed and happy and better able to be loving toward others. Compassionate action is a path on which we grow in awareness and insight. As we grow, we become purer instruments for change. We become hollow reeds for the healing music of life.'

Mirabai Bush Dumfries Meeting

Wigtown

As part of the Wigtown Book Festival which took place from 21st to 30th September this year, Wigtown Meeting agreed to sponsor an exhibition of miniature books in the Meeting House.

These are beautiful hand-crafted books which have a long history in the world of book printing. All the books in the exhibition were under 75mm, quite a rare event. Jim Brogan, president of the Miniature Book Society and in holiday from USA, opened the exhibition.

Starting from the Winter newsletter, there will be a series of interviews with Wigtown Friends as to how and why they came to attend a Quaker meeting. First up was Patience Atkinson. A short quote would read:

Patience's bad experience of religion at school, prompted her to find her *own* way into spirituality and the Quakers, (w-ho) with no formal set of beliefs were suitable for her. Although confirmed into the Church of England and expected to believe in the Nicene Creed, she couldn't ever say it with sincerity . "I don't like being told what to do and although it is hard having to think for yourself, as is the case with Quakers, it's the way I want to be".

Another interesting article in the Wigtown newsletter is from the librarian Jannette Walkingshaw who is looking at crime novels including Quakers. One example is Jan de Hartog's *The Peaceable Kingdom* that begins with George Fox riding across the sands of Morecambe Bay to visit Swarthmore.

Lanark

The annual carol singing was held on 16th December. We were joined by Friends from Milngavie, South Edinburgh, Musselburgh and Portobello Meetings to belt out numbers such as *Jingle tills, Jingle tills* as well as the more traditional numbers. Afterwards we shared friendship with one of Wiston Lodge's rich and wholesome Christmas dinners.

Sadly, only two days later, Isa+bella wife of David Rees died. A few of us were able to join him for a requiem mass at St. John's church in Blackwood.

Events of Quaker Interest

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) is a welcoming, exciting and thought provoking event for young people born between 1.9.2000 and 31.8.2003. Whether you have recently discovered Quakerism or have been a Quaker all your life, JYM offers everyone the opportunity to meet new people, make friends through social activities and engage with spiritual practices and ideas. The event is run by people your age, who are supported by a team of adults.

When and where: 12 - 15 April 2019, Northants

Interested? please contact JYM rep. Ed Tyler on tyleward@gmail.com or text on 07799 898369.

The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic

We are privileged to have a Sufi teacher come once a month to teach this. The Aramaic language has multiple more meanings than the version we have translated from the Greek in the King James Bible. In the Sufi tradition there is a little 'chanting' and movement but nothing to frighten off anyone!

Our second meeting is on **13th January at 2pm** in Glasgow Friends Meeting House. If you haven't been before, you are still welcome.

Subsequent dates are 10th February, 17th March, 14th April, 12th May, 9th June.
Contact Margaret Roy.

Patterns and examples: deep roots for strong communities

This is a Woodbrooke event aimed at all role holders (but that could be you next year), children and young people aged 6 to 18. This will be an opportunity to meet Friends, make friends, share ideas and worries, develop your skills and build our Quaker communities.

16th March at Glasgow Quaker Meeting House Cost depending on age £10 or £20.

To book, visit: forms.quaker.org.uk/patterns-and-examples

Healing Group in Glasgow Meeting House, 13 January 2019 at 1pm

During the winter months the Healing Group meets on the second Sunday of the month at 1pm in the Library after Meeting for Worship. This is an open group and anyone interested is welcome to attend.

We begin with a short period of silence which is followed by a led meditation. A notebook is kept in the library for those in need of healing and the names are then read out along with any other names which come to mind during the session.

Hillwalks in 2019 Details from Daphne Wassermann

The following dates have been selected for the first half of 2019:

19 January, 23 February, 23 March, 4 May, 1 June, starting with Bed Ledi that was postponed from December due to bad weather.

Newcomers Lunch Sunday 27th January

We'd like to invite anyone who is fairly new to Glasgow Meeting, maybe having attended for the first time in the last year, to an informal lunch after Meeting for Worship on Sunday 27th January. It's an opportunity to meet others new to the Meeting and for Overseers to introduce themselves and answer any questions you may have about Glasgow Meeting or Quakers in general. Please come if you can.

Mary Cox on behalf of Overseers

Sharing Experience Saturday 16 February in Glasgow Quaker Meeting House

We are glad to be welcoming facilitators from the Quakers Sharing Experience team to this event in February and invite Friends and attenders from across the Area Meeting to take part.

The Quakers Sharing Experience website is

<http://www.quakerssharingexperience.com/>. Here is a quote from this website which explains more about the aims and approach of these events.

Quakers Sharing Experience is a new kind of half-day workshop, tried and tested in meetings across the UK. It offers us the opportunity to tell our stories and know our fellow Quakers in depth - the kind of depth that can help us learn not only about other people, but about ourselves.

Quakers Sharing Experience helps us to listen to one another. What do we think? What do we believe? What is important to us?

Facilitated by teams of seasoned Friends, Quakers Sharing Experience has the potential to bring Quaker communities together in mutual understanding. It provides opportunities for sharing, for listening and, above all, for knowing one another in that which is eternal.

The facilitators will be Lea Cowin from Worcester LM, Cath Dyer from Polmont LM, and Claire Broadhurst from Dundee LM.

Here are some practical details:

- The event will start with lunch at 12 o'clock (soup, tea and coffee will be provided; participants should bring their own sandwiches).
- The session will commence at 12.45 finishing at 4.15 with tea and coffee. It would be good if possible to stay for this as it allows participants to continue 'getting to know one another in that which is eternal.' There will also be a 10 minute break in the afternoon for refreshments.
- The cost would be £10 each, but no-one should be prevented from coming on the grounds of finance: when applying just raise the issue then.
- Glasgow Friends will be able to provide accommodation for anyone who is travelling from a distance and needs to stay over.

We will need a minimum of 12 participants, but could have up to 28. It would be ideal to have confirmed an interest in this ***by the end of January*** so that we can be sure that the minimum number has been met. Please don't leave it till the last minute!

For more information and/or to take up a place, contact Sheila Semple, Glasgow Meeting Sheila.semple@btinternet.com (preferable) or 07778117247

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
West Scotland Area Meeting
(Scottish Charity No: SC011234)

Your Financial Contribution in 2019

Please consider what you can give to support Quakers in 2019. Our running costs depend on the financial contributions of members and attenders. We appreciate that everyone's circumstances are different and are grateful for all donations, regardless of their size or frequency.

In the past, we have been asked to provide some guidance about what is required to sustain Quakers at local, area and national level. Some Friends will be able to contribute the suggested amounts while, for others, this will not be possible. We hope that Friends will contribute what they can and those who are able to give more will do so.

Through donating to West Scotland Area Meeting, you can support your local Meeting for Worship and the wider administration of the Society. In doing so, you are helping to maintain our spiritual and social witness in the local community and the wider world.

There are three parts of the Quaker community that depend on you for support:

Your Local Meeting

Consider first what it costs to maintain your Local Meeting for Worship: the cost of accommodation and your local Quaker activities. There are twelve local meetings in West Scotland and their needs will vary considerably. Your Local Meeting Treasurer will be able to advise you about running costs and expenses of your local Quaker Meeting.

West Scotland Area Meeting

Your Local Meeting is part of West Scotland Area Meeting, the registered charity that undertakes administration on behalf of Local Meetings in the West of Scotland. All its work is done by volunteers. It looks after membership matters; produces a newsletter; supports attendance at conferences and training events; and provides

insurance cover for all Local Meetings. Along with other Area Meetings in Scotland, it funds General Meeting for Scotland. It also makes donations, which are reviewed annually, to other Quaker charities. West Scotland Area Meeting needs at least £110 from every member to cover its costs in 2019.

Britain Yearly Meeting

You are also asked to bear in mind the central work of the Society which is the responsibility of Britain Yearly Meeting. As well as providing essential support, networking, co-ordination and publicity, it promotes Quaker concerns and values throughout our country and in the wider world. You will find more details about what it does at the website *Quakers in Britain* and in the free quarterly magazine *Quaker News*.

Britain Yearly Meeting has advised us that it needs about £225 from every member to carry out its work in 2019. However, West Scotland Area Meeting makes an annual donation to Britain Yearly Meeting on behalf of its members, amounting to almost £25 per member (included in the £110 mentioned above). Local Meetings throughout West Scotland may also decide to make a direct donation from their own funds

GIFT AID

If you are a taxpayer, you can increase your donation by allowing us to claim back relevant tax from HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) through the Gift Aid Scheme. This will add 25% to the value of your donation.

However, be warned. You must have paid enough tax to cover your Gift Aid, otherwise you will be liable to pay back HMRC for the amount wrongly claimed. If your circumstances change and you are no longer a tax payer, or if you have other queries about Gift Aid, please contact: Margaret Morton, Treasurer: West Scotland Area Meeting. Phone: 0141 889 2865 or Email: margmor@btopenworld.com

**West Scotland Area Meeting
CONTRIBUTION SCHEDULE 2019**

You can make separate donations directly to your Local Meeting, to West Scotland Area Meeting and to Britain Yearly Meeting. However, you may find it more convenient to contribute to all these bodies through West Scotland Area Meeting, using this form.

You are asked to specify how your donation should be allocated and we will pass on your money in accordance with your wishes. If you do not specify how you wish your money to be allocated, the whole amount will go to Area Meeting.

Name

In 2019 my contribution will be £ per month / quarter / year

I wish my contribution to be allocated in this way:

..... Local Meeting £
(insert name)

West Scotland Area Meeting £
.....

Britain Yearly Meeting £
.....

Ways to Pay

- By Cheque or CAF Voucher

Cheques and CAF Vouchers should be made payable to **Religious Society of Friends West Scotland Area Meeting** and sent, along with this completed schedule, to our Assistant Treasurer, Helen McLean, at the address below.

- By Standing Order

To set up a new Standing Order, you must make arrangements with your bank.
Please tick here for a Standing Order Form to take to your bank and send this completed schedule to our Assistant Treasurer, Helen McLean at the address below.

To change an existing Standing Order, you need to make the necessary arrangements with your bank – we cannot do this on your behalf. Please also return this completed schedule to our Assistant Treasurer, Helen McLean, at the address below, so that we know of your changes and the new allocation.

- By Bank transfer

Please contact our Assistant Treasurer, Helen McLean, at the address below, for bank details.

Gift Aid

If you wish to set up Gift Aid, please contact our Assistant Treasurer at the address below for a Gift Aid Form. For queries or cancellation of Gift Aid contact our Treasurer at the address overleaf.

Please return this schedule to:

Helen McLean

Assistant Treasurer

West Scotland Area Meeting

12A Sheean Drive, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8DH

Email: hm920346@gmail.com

Helen will be able to help you with any enquiries about your donation

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12 th January	Area Meeting in Glasgow 11am – 4pm
9 th March	GENERAL MEETING Glasgow
11 th March	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
15-17 March	Westerly Friends' Gathering in Crianlarich.
13 th April	Area Meeting in Dumfries 11am – 4pm
8 th June	GENERAL MEETING South East
10 th June	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
24 th August	Area Meeting in Tarbert, Kintyre, Argyll 11am – 4pm
14 th September	GENERAL MEETING North
12 th October	Area Meeting in Dunblane 11am – 4pm
16 th November	GENERAL MEETING Perth
2 nd December	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
11 th January 2020	Area Meeting in Glasgow 11am – 4pm

West Scotland Area Meeting is to be held at Glasgow Quaker Meeting House, on 12th January 2019. 11:30 1m to 4pm. In the afternoon Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke will talk to us on the theme “ Where we are going: a challenge for Friends?! What I've learned about Quakers”. This should be very stimulating – all are welcome to attend.

Hold in the light

David Rees who lost his beloved wife Isabella on 18th December

Susan, wife of Malcolm Crosby, who has been in hospital, now at home recovering.

West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93

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 1st March
Copy should be send in Word format to the editors Alastair McIver or Margaret Roy**