

# WSQN

- Connecting local meetings



**January 2025**

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The contemplative life must provide an area, a space of liberty, of silence, in which possibilities are allowed to surface and new choices – beyond routine choice – become manifest. It should create a new experience of time, not a stopgap, stillness, but as *temps vierge* – not a blank to be filled or an untouched space to be conquered and violated, but a space that can enjoy its own possibilities and hopes – and its own presence to itself. One's own time. But not dominated by one's own ego and its demands. Hence open to *others* – *compassionate* time, rooted in the sense of common illusion and its criticism of it. **Thomas Merton**

The contemplative life has nothing to tell you except to reassure you and say that if you dare to penetrate your own silence and dare to advance without fear into the solitude of your own heart and risk the sharing of that solitude with the lonely other who seeks God through you and with you, then you will truly recover the light and the capacity to understand what is beyond words and beyond explanation because it is too close to be explained: it is the intimate union in the depths of your heart, of God's spirit and your own innermost self, so that you and He are in truth One Spirit.

**Thomas Merton**

# West Scotland Area Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> October in Ayrshire.

Edited from Minutes

28 people attended an extended Area Meeting hosted by Ayrshire AM. Some arrived from far-flung areas to enjoy a meal together on the previous evening, and stayed for a 'ceilidh' on the Saturday evening.

The business involved an application for membership from Mary Robinson of Arran and a report on a membership visit to Willoughby Densham. Alas, Anne MacArthur has resigned her membership.

Whilst other changes to roles can be found on the web site NOMS drew attention to the difficulties in finding members to fill roles!

The Treasurer reported that we are more than healthy financially but are holding our excess funding for the present "in the light of unknown costs which may be incurred in the potential creation of a new Quakers in Scotland body". And Bronwen reminded us of the availability of the Spiritual, Nurture, Community and Witness Fund that could be more used.

Re news from Local Meetings:

Ayrshire reported the death of Peter Christy. Also they had carried out three 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday visits, 2 to Arran and one to Millport.

Dunblane considered themselves 'lively' with 7 learning group meetings on a range of topics. There have been many shared lunches and even a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. The Meeting has been experimenting with a shared approach to clerking.

Lanark has yet again played host to E and SE Area Meetings at Wiston Lodge.

The minutes note that BYM has set up a group to review central structures. Their web site gives opportunities to comment on the subject.

Quakers in Scotland: 2 papers were presented. There is much to consider here and the minute recorded:

'We are excited to welcome a new step in the ever-evolving history of Quaker practice, and to see what the future might hold for Scottish Quakers. We welcome the opportunities the proposal would provide to join together in a community and for business'.

# **West Scotland Area Meeting (AM) by Zoom, 2 Dec 2024**

**a personal view Jane Mitchell, Argyll**

About 18 Friends from nine of our twelve Local Meetings met online.

We welcomed Mary Robinson (Arran meeting) into membership, and learned that Lindsay and Paul Burton have moved into SE Scotland AM. They will be missed, as they have given a great deal of service to our AM.

We were informed of the death in Glasgow on 28 November of Catherine Brown (nee Braithwaite), formerly of Arran meeting.

We heard a report on the Sunday evening online meeting, which has been a Recognised Meeting since March 2022. This provides a much valued worshipping group for Friends over a wide area, from North Scotland to France. It has a core of about 20 regular participants, meeting each week, usually in silence, with a short discussion group afterwards on the second Sunday of each month.

Margaret Roy reported on the work of the gender-based violence group. Friends were moved when she read the names of 107 women (a disproportionate number - 24 - of them from Scotland) who had been killed by their intimate partners in one year.

Laura McMurtrie reported on the failure to hold an event for Enquirers last year, and offered ideas about how to make information available to new enquirers. A small group was appointed to take this on.

We heard that North Scotland with Zoe Prosser is designing a leaflet for newcomers and were asked whether we should follow suit.

Elaine Millar made a report on Meeting for Sufferings, in which she drew attention to the use of the terms “apartheid” and “genocide” in reporting on Gaza. These terms had been ratified as appropriate by Amnesty International.

## **Meeting for Sufferings 5 October 2024, Report to WSAM.**

**Elaine Millar, Representative.**

This was the first meeting of the new triennium. It will also be the last triennium: Meeting for Sufferings will be laid down in May 2026, when we move to the new model of a ‘Continuing Yearly Meeting’ (CYM). The good news is that all Friends - members and attenders - will be eligible to attend CYM but be reassured that a system of representation and reporting to and fro’ will remain between Area Meetings (AM) and CYM.

This report offers a flavour of our discernment – for the full agenda, minutes and papers, please go to the Quakers in Britain website [Papers and minutes | Quakers in Britain](#).

This time last year we were at our residential when news came of the Hamas-led attack on Israel. Our proceedings this time began with a statement, the last sentence of which reads:

*“For Quakers there are times for words and times for silence. At this time of pain, let our mouths be silent and let our hearts fill with love for all those suffering and for all those with the power to bring about true and lasting peace.”*

For the full statement see ([October 7, one year on: a Quaker statement | Quakers in Britain](#))

### **Israel and Palestine: language around the conflict**

In June the tension relating to the possibility of Quakers in Britain officially adopting language to describe the conflict - specifically the words ‘apartheid’ and ‘genocide’ – was presented and it was explained how such potentially triggering terms might act to undermine the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). We asked Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) to undertake further discernment, and they reported back.

Our parallel roles as prophets – naming truthfully what we witness - and as reconcilers – working to build peace - are both vital, but to hold them in balance presents a sensitive challenge. However, the recommendation from QPSWCC is that we align with the International Court of Justice rulings that the term apartheid is an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine and that there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza.

**Action point.** This decision heightens our awareness of the importance of continuing to forge and nurture interfaith relations in the face of rising tensions within UK communities, and we recognise more resources might be needed to support such work.

### **New ways of belonging: becoming a member through routes other than Area Meeting**

Quaker Central Life Committee (QCLC) reported back their recommendation that non-geographical membership options be developed within Britain Yearly Meeting’s (BYM) existing structures. Examples of groups where Friends are involved in Quaker worship and work, other than via AMs, are Woodbrooke, Young Friends General Meeting Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRB). During our discernment we affirmed that BYM is a church, as are AMs, but this is not so for QRB which operate more as interest groups and groups championing specific concerns, meaning it might not be appropriate for Quaker membership to happen through all of these. We also noted there would be

responsibilities, such as safeguarding that go hand in hand with holding authority for membership. We agree in principle with the QLCC recommendation, asking them to develop concrete proposals to bring to Yearly Meeting (YM) as to how non-geographical membership might be achieved.

### **Reparations: progress report**

The Reparations Working Group (RWG) have already helped a number of AMs in England, such as Central Bristol, Lancaster and Westminster begin their own reparations work. They are also working with Woodbrooke to develop a course about this and liaising with Local Development Workers. (See [Progress on reparations | Quakers in Britain](#))

RWG are ready and keen to share with their findings so far about British Quaker involvement in transatlantic chattel slavery, colonialism, and economic exploitation.

**Action point.** They invite engagement with AMs and can be contacted by email at [equity@quaker.org.uk](mailto:equity@quaker.org.uk).

### **Marriage Declaration Wording**

In December 2023 the Book of Discipline Revision Committee requested consideration of two specific phrases, 'with God's help' and 'with divine assistance', knowing the inclusion of these two terms cause some couples to opt for a civil ceremony, when they had hoped to have a Quaker wedding, because one or both cannot make such a declaration and remain true to themselves.

This brought responses (3 from central bodies, 35 from AMs - drawing also from many local meetings - 11 from individuals). We minuted, 'We are clear that marriage, in Quaker understanding, is a commitment of the couple held in the Light witnessed by the supporting meeting', and decided a working group, care of QLCC will be formed to work further on a possible third choice of wording.

### **Group to Review Central Structures (GRCS)**

GRCS's wide consultation with Friends regarding the two questions below finished on 13 October:

1. 'What are your hopes for how a single central committee might turn discernment into action?'
2. 'What are your concerns about how a single central committee might operate in the proposed structure?'

Responses will be drawn together, and a formal proposal submitted to YM in 2025.

# Meeting for Sufferings 7 December 2024, Report to General Meeting.

Elaine Millar, Representative.

This report offers a flavour of our discernment – for the full agenda, minutes and papers, please go to the Quakers in Britain website [Papers and minutes | Quakers in Britain](#).

We began with so-called ‘routine items’ to be taken on draft minute:

- **Updating the Prison and Court Register:** this item was the original purpose of Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), recording the names of Friends who, witnessing to their belief, pay the high price of imprisonment: it happened in the mid-1600s and increasingly it is happening again today. So, there is NOTHING routine about this!

The increasing erosion of a citizen’s right to peacefully protest will be considered in the future by MfS    See papers, pages 12-16.

- **Spirit-led employment practices:** this item originated in a concern from 2021 and progressed through the MfS process, the result being a resource in the form of ‘Advices & Queries’ for employers seeking to incorporate Quaker testimony into their employment practice. It is highly recommended as a useful tool for all employers.    See papers, Pages 17 -25.

**The process for registering Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRB):** an advisory group set up after our June meeting reported back with a recommendation to properly review the process for registering and re-registering QRB, which we accepted. It was emphasised that a ‘tick-box’ system is not good enough and that QRB must recognise their accountability to Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), including where there could be potential risk of reputational damage.    See papers, pages 26 – 32.

**The Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC):** reported back, emphasising its role is to reflect and describe Quaker practice, rather than provide direction. To this end it has decided to no longer seek feedback on sample draft text in 2025, but instead invite Friends to engage with the stage that will inform the text yet to come.

**OUR TASK:** as Area Meetings (AM), Local Meetings (LM) and individual Friends we are invited to:

- Use the exercise ‘Reflecting on Advices and Queries’ (attached to this report) and feedback to the committee.

Also to:



- pray for and uphold the Committee
- look at the webpage <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice>.
- contribute to an online creative project “Open to New Light”  
<https://padlet.com/bdrc/OpenToNewLight>
- share ideas, including inspirational and helpful pieces of writing, via an online form (<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/>), or emailing [qfp@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qfp@quaker.org.uk), or writing to Friends House.
- engage with the social media accounts via Revising Quaker faith & practice pages on facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/revisingqfpz>  
instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/revisingqfp>  
twitter – <https://www.twitter.com/revisingqfp>

See papers, pages 33-40.

**Appointment of Attenders for Quaker Service:** in October 2023, we discerned that nominations need not be dependent on role holders being in formal membership. Central Nominations Committee were advised they may bring names of attenders as well as members for all roles appointed by MfS (with the exception of BYM Trustees), recognising that we seek the right person to serve. To extend this principle to LM, AM and General Meeting (GM) roles we recommend to YM that amendments should be made to permit Friends not in formal membership to be appointed – this will come before YM for discernment in May 2025. However, legal advice will be taken to clarify any implications for attenders taking on roles as trustees, where being in formal membership affords legal protection.

It is recognised that this is just the latest step in our discernment journey and that there is further work to be done on the spiritual meaning of membership.

See papers, pages 46-49 (Also pages 50-53 Annex provided by Michael Hutchinson and expanded by Michael Booth and subsequently updated June 2023).

**Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC):** reported back.

**OUR TASK:** We are asked, how can we encourage Friends and meetings to respond to the spiritual call from the World Plenary Meeting 2024, and engage further with its three themes:

- Ubuntu (meaning humanity, sometimes translated as, "I am because you are")

- Care for Creation.
- Healing Historical Injustices.

See papers, pages 54-56.

## **Book of Discipline Revision Committee**

### ***An extract from The Friend report on MfS***

Rosie Carnall, co-clerk, gave the annual report to MfS said . . . being part of the group was ‘a remarkable experience’ full of ‘challenge, spirit and growth’. Another aspect of the work was ‘to look to the future and intuit a book that will be useful in decades to come. Ours is a fast changing world and it can be challenging to look ahead.

The annual report set out a timeline for 2025 and said DSRC was confident that it was on track to present a first draft of the book to Yearly Meeting in 2027. ‘We have adopted detailed project plans and timelines for the phases of work up to 2030’.

‘As a committee we need to ask how the (book) . . . can be simple, flexible and accessible, while conveying the beauty, challenge, risk and joy of our experience’, said Rosie. ‘What ‘fancy tricks’ might Friend be willing to relinquish’ in order to welcome more diversity?

The group was in the middle of the process, said Catherine Brewer, co-clerk of DSRC. ‘We need to reassess all the work we have done so far. How does it fit together? Are there gaps, duplication? . . . It can feel daunting’, she added, asking Friends to uphold them.

Rather than sharing the topics separately, the clerks said they preferred for Friends to view the first draft as a whole, to see how it all fits together. ‘This is a collaborative process,’ emphasised Rosie. Liking it to preparing a meal, she said: ‘We’re spending a long time preparing this book . . . We hope you will enjoy it when it comes to the table. Not every passage will speak to you but we want everyone to . . . find the sustenance they need.’

In ministry, one Friend said they were grateful for ‘the huge amount of work’ but said: ‘My anxiety is around if we can do it step by step (by sharing further draft texts) and bring people with us . . . then we will end up with a better first draft’. She asked them to say more about possible forms of engagement.

Mentioning statistics from The Future of British Quakerism Conference, that ‘twenty per cent of (Quakers) consider themselves non-theist, another Friend asked for the revised book to ‘explicitly acknowledge’ this variety of theological voices.

Rosie said that ‘variety of experience’ was ‘at the core of our work’, and the groups has been appointed ‘as a diverse committee . . . That’s part of our thoughts in asking you to be willing to see the whole draft.’ The text will use a range of terms for God, but Friends will only get a picture of the overall coherence if they see it all together.

BSRC was also liaising with groups including Quaker Disability Group, Quaker Rainbow, the Black, Brown and People of Colour Fellowship, Young Friends General Meeting, and the Nontheist Friends Network.

The final draft minute encouraged Friends to share the group’s exercises with their Meetings, and ‘engage with the work of BDRC.’

## **Local Developments Officer      Summer-Autumn 2024**

**Précis of Report by Zoe Prosser Our Local Development Officer**

**Laura McMurtrie WSAM.**

Zoe has produced an interesting and comprehensive report about her work in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year covering Summer-Autumn of 2024. Her entire report is available for those who wish to read it.

It is full of interesting information and links to resources on a wide range of topics. Due to the pressure of space in the newsletter it is only possible to precis the report and flag its invaluable content in brief outline. Friends will find it a go to resource well beyond 2024/25.

Zoe starts her report very aptly with a quote from Octavia Butler from the Parable of the Sower, which is a powerful work of fiction. ‘All that you touch is change. All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is change. God is change’. I think many of us would relate to this particularly at this time in our planet’s history.

Zoe then shares some of the changes going on in her own life before unpacking a very busy quarter which included a trip to Friends in Orkney and Shetland via Inverness. Amongst other things they discussed the changes proposed through our continuing work of the Quakers in Scotland co-ordinating group and the possible impact of those changes on small dispersed and island communities.

She informs that North Scotland Area Meeting answered the concerns and turmoil of the world by thinking more formally and about what their responses as Quakers should/might be. Supported and facilitated by Woodbrooke they held a workshop ‘to consider how to face the current situation of the world with unexpected resilience and creative power.’

Zoe reminds us that her work programme for this year was co-designed with Quakers across Scotland reminds us of what these were and then outlines

progress across all these areas of work. She then points to where we can learn more about those work areas and where we can find resources to understand what is going on beyond Scotland for example in Peace Building initiatives and in Safeguarding.

Zoe's work programme has included the following areas of support and development:

Expanding role holder networks.

Supporting Quaker community building

Pointing the way to information, resources and materials

Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.

In conversation with Friends around the country Zoe then asks us to think about whether we need more formal mechanisms through regular discussion about BYM minutes.

She reports positive work with Quaker Life's Youth Development worker, learn more about the What is the Quaker Way and there is a whole section of Quakers in the news- all positive!

Zoe then highlights opportunities for Quakers to get more involved in aspects of Quaker concerns including Scottish Interfaith work (this is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the initiative), Peace Building, Europe and the Middle East. She informs us of the range of support grants available for initiatives and how to access these and then leaves us with her Web page access information.

**To contact Zoe:**

See her webpage and interview video on our Quakers in Scotland website. To visit the page, please go to <https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

Email address is [zoep@quaker.org.uk](mailto:zoep@quaker.org.uk)

Website address is <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for->

# Quaker Concerns

## Climate Change and Sustainability

### Making sense of COP29

Doreen Osborne, Glasgow

The outcome of COP29 has been widely reported as disappointing or, in the words of Greta Thunberg 'a complete disaster'. But we greatly benefited from hearing the inside story from Ben Richards at this week's meeting. A huge thanks to Ben, who persisted, despite our technical glitches, with a very informative presentation.

He set this COP in context within the history of international attempts to tackle climate change from 1992 in Rio, supported by Margaret Thatcher! And an account of what else is going on besides the main plenary sessions: at any one time about 50 or 60 tracks are in progress, for example groups of countries with a common interest or countries working on a common theme and sessions reporting on the scientific findings. There is so much more to a COP than the final communique. The talk was recorded and we'll put the link on WhatsApp in due course, but in the meantime, here are a few points I found particularly interesting:

- Using voluntary emissions cuts under the Paris agreement of 2015 seems to inhibit progress but the previous method, under the Kyoto agreement of 1997, of imposed targets with punitive sanctions for not complying failed. Some major countries e.g. US did not sign up and Canada, for example, signed up and then changed its mind.
- The key to a successful COP is intensive diplomacy in the years preceding it. This one suffered from the overhang of the US election and not enough was done. Paris involved 3-4 years of work and Glasgow (hampered by Covid) 18 months
- Over 1000 fossil fuel lobbyists there. Only three countries had more delegates
- COP29 is the middle of a troika: COP28 was the first global stocktake of where we are after the Paris agreement and COP30 is to focus on the new national commitment to emissions cuts but also needs to sort. COP29 was supposed to sort out the finance to ensure countries in the Global South can avoid the high emissions history of the Global North, considering Mitigation, Adaptation and Loss and Damage. £1.3 trillion pa by 2035 is the minimum needed. If that seems a lot consider the sums spent on defence (£2.4 tr) and fossil fuel subsidies (£7 tr) and remember the US spent £4.5 tr on Covid and the billionaires among them have £12.7tr.

His view was that COP29 only just managed to preserve the progress made at COP28. And a big push is needed now from us to help our politicians push forward with the diplomacy needed.

### **Effects of climate change**

Southern African countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe – have been hit by the worst drought in a century as ‘an unprecedented El Nino induced a dry spell when the rainy season was disrupted. And losing more than half the harvest in some countries. The World Food Programme has stated that 27 million people are affected , including 21 million children suffering from malnutrition.

## **Peace and Reconciliation**

### **Northern Friends Peace Board- Update from their latest bulletin.**

Full details of the ongoing work of the Board can be found at their main website [nfb.org.uk](http://nfb.org.uk) from which this short summary is lifted.

Of immediate note is the next meeting of the Board and interested Friends which will be held online on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January. No times are published on the website but details including the Zoom link are available from [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org). This would be a good opportunity for Friends wishing to know more and or become more closely involved in the work of the Peace Board.

The first full meeting of the year will be a hybrid meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2025 in Nottingham and online from 1-4 Pm Details of joining instructions for zoom participants is available at [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org).

There are reports on the situation regarding Ukraine/Russia Peace and Climate Change Justice, The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and links to a wide range of resources for much greater detail and in depth analysis on these and other topics that the Board is engaged with.

There is an interesting Book Review by Steven Waling on a book by Paul Rogers and Judith Large called The Insecurity Trap. The book deals with the links between Climate Change, neo liberal economics, and heavy armaments production. However, it doesn't end with that analysis but points the way to how a paradigm shift might be achieved. It is available from The Quaker Book Shop.

Resources from NFPB are extensive. This is the equivalent of a sound bite due to space constraints in the Newsletter.

**Laura McMurtrie, Ayrshire**

## Gender-based Violence

### The facts are stacking up

‘An average of 140 women and girls were killed by a partner or family member per day last year, the UN reported.’ *From The Herald 26/11/2024.* It continued, ‘Globally an intimate partner or family member was responsible for the deaths of approximately 51,100 women and girls during 2023, an increase from an estimated 48,800 victims in 2022, UN Women and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime said.’ It mentioned that the increase was possible due to more data being available. The highest number . . . was in Africa – with an estimated 21,700 victims in 2023 . . . 2.9 victims per 100,000 people. Oceania 1.6 per 100,000 and in the Americas 1.5 per 100,000.

In UK of over 100 homicides, 55 were in Scotland and of these 24 were women by intimate partners. Of the 107 women killed in domestic violence incidents in UK, the 24 in Scotland are inordinately high considering the percentage of Scotland in UK population figures.

### Organisations you could work with

The White Ribbon Campaign is one of the most positive in approach re giving lists of possible actions. It works by building communities, holding policymakers accountable, campaigning for greater awareness and educating young people. [Whiteribbon.org.uk](http://Whiteribbon.org.uk)

Beyond Equality works with boys and men to help engage with creating safer communities, preventing gender-based violence and creating gender equality. [Beyondequality.org](http://Beyondequality.org)

Good Men Project is an online hub sharing information and helping people participate in the conversations around masculinity and the way men’s roles are changing in modern life. [goodmenproject.com](http://goodmenproject.com)



### Afghanistan

Horror of horrors, the Taliban in Afghanistan have now decreed that women cannot train as midwives, **or practice** as one. And of course men do not train as midwives and anyway families would not allow men to attend to their women folks. **Result?** Women in Afghanistan will have to give birth with no medical aid. 'A woman dies every two hours giving birth in Afghanistan'.

A spokeswoman was not short of blaming Western allies for the situation because they back the Taliban and she asks us to contact our own governments in protest and to inform.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, Richard Bennett, the UN special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, backed calls to codify gender apartheid there as a crime under international law, defining what was happening as 'a profound rejection of the humanity of women and girls' based on their sex alone. *From Guardian Weekly 22/11/2024*

## **And in Scotland . . .**

The Equally Safe in Schools initiative of the Scottish Government, five years down the line, has been taken up by only 116 of possibly 361 state-funded secondary schools. And that at a time when one in five teenage girls had been sexually assaulted and three out of five had endured some form of sexual harassment (*Poll by The Sunday Post*).

'At least 37% of the 14,484 sexual crimes reported in 2023-24 related to a victim under 18, while 95% of rapes and attempted rapes, and 87% of sexual assaults had female victims.'

**A piece of good news?** One of the current story lines of the popular soap River City, set in West Scotland, is about a domestic abuse situation between two married males. Domestic Abuse does not only refer to women and children.



## **Gisele Pelicot**

How could we close without mentioning this brave woman and the situation in France?

'Statistics from the Institute of Public Policies suggests that over 10 years there were more than 400,000 cases of sexual violence in France, 86% of which resulted in no action and only 13% in conviction. There are about 700,000 cases of domestic abuse each year, only 27% ending in conviction.' *From the Guardian Weekly*. In the case of Gisele Pelicot her husband drugged her and allowed 70 men to 'rape' her. He has been sentenced to 20 years whilst 50 of the men identified have been sentenced to up to 9 years. More recently 15 of these have appealed.

**What Is rape?** ' . . . digital penetration, vaginal penetration, oral penetration, anal penetration, sexual touching . . .' It was all on video watched in open court. 'Why didn't one of the men go to the police and spare her the decade long abuse that could have killed her?' 'Not one of them came out of the house to say there was a woman in danger'.

So many questions and I am sparing you most of the gory detail.

**What is the difference between domestic abuse and domestic violence?**

**What is rape?**

## **Sudan – the forgotten war:**

### **The Work of the Women's Refugee Council**

*"One of the things I learned from the war is that you can plan for your life, and in a second, everything can change and [you have to] start to build everything from scratch. If you start from a zero point and fail, try again, fail and try again, but never give up because if you stopped, only you will lose! ... Whatever bad situation you are in, don't stop. Try your best to continue in any way."*

These words from Ayesha, a 24-year-old university student, reflect the courage and resilience of women of Sudan in the face of the conflict that is tearing Sudan apart.

In war, the stories of women are often unheard and underreported. Recognizing the importance of listening to women to ensure they can drive their own solutions and influence peace efforts, the Women's Refugee Commission teamed up with the Sudan Family Planning Association and the Gender in Emergencies Group to

talk to internally displaced women in Sudan and refugee women in Chad, Egypt, and Uganda.

(The report) . . . shows that women of Sudan are brave, resilient, and already leading the response to this crisis. (*in their booklet*) You'll learn about 22 women, from 18 to 70+ years old, who despite repeated forced displacement and the challenges that brings, continue to dream of and work for a return to normal life and a safe and peaceful future.

### **Mama A, Elderly Woman**

Mama A. is now in a shelter in Damazin. She got married in 1961 AD and lived in Madinah. She has three daughters and two sons, all of whom are university graduates. She was living with her family in Madinah, her sisters' families were around her, and her family was safe.

She said, "I had a severe visual impairment, and I could not move my legs without the help of my children.

"We were under the tree in our house yard when we heard heavy shooting, bullets and shells. My son said we should get out of the city. As soon as we were about to get into the car, a man came to us and said get out of the car. My son said to him, 'My mother is blind and can't move unless we carry her.' Then I heard the sound of a gun being loaded and I said to them, 'Get me out and let him take the car.' My son helped me out of the car and sat me down on a chair in the street.

"After they took the car, the son told me that they took the car and many things from the house. He left me with the house residents and went to hire a truck to take us all.

"Thank God, they were able to lift me into the larger vehicle and we traveled for a long time until we reached SingalN Singa, where we rented a house. The attack happened there, we were forced to flee to Damazin and ended up staying in a shelter."

### **H.H., Pregnant While Fleeing**



I am H.H., 38 years old, married, thank God. Before the war, I lived in Bahri, in the Kadro area, and I had seven children. My husband was self-employed (whitewasher).

I was pregnant when the war broke out and we moved to the White Nile. I didn't know anyone there. We rode a lorry, and for three days on the road I had labor pains. I gave birth in the street and had a hemorrhage. I was taken to

Al-Qatana Hospital. The lorry owner and the people traveling with us were waiting for me to give birth. I left the hospital and continued with them to Kosti.

When we arrived in Kosti, we were received in a shelter center in Abu Sharif, Ezz El-Din Center. I had a little girl who suffered from severe anemia. Before the war in Khartoum, she used to get blood. Now I don't have money for movement and treatment.

After the war and childbirth, I fell ill and was diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure. The newborn girl suffered from a hole in her heart that was discovered in one of the follow-ups at the mobile clinic inside the shelter center. Now she has been transferred to the Kosti Cardiac Center, and she needs an operation. The girl is now one year old. I hope to be funded so that I can start a business project that will allow me to provide treatment, food, clothing, and a visit to a cardiologist.

### **Anonymous, 19-Year-Old University Student**

I am 19 years old. I used to live in Mayo district, in Madani. Thank God, we were living in comfort; my father and brothers were working, and I was studying at the university.

On the day of the attack, we heard gunfire and ran out of our houses. They deceived us, saying the army had repelled the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). We returned home, and then we learned that the army had left the city, and the RSF filled the city. We couldn't leave our house for three very difficult days.

After that, my father said we should leave the city, so we walked 45 kilometers on foot from Madani to Al-Shokaba. Then we got on a Dafar Jambo and traveled a few kilometers. Then the Janjaweed stopped us at a checkpoint, got the men and the youth out, made them stand, insulted them, beat them, humiliated them, and made them lie on the ground, telling them to stand and sit down, and they whipped them.

We were in the truck, they came in, searched us, and stole our cell phones and our money. There was an elderly woman who had a gold bracelet on her wrist; they took it from her. I was wearing a niqab, and a Janjaweed came and took off my niqab and insisted on searching me. He said that I was carrying something. He touched my chest from the inside and started feeling my body in a bad way. I was terrified and cried saying, "I am not carrying anything." He told me, "Shut up, you (bad word). I can search you more than that."

When I kept quiet, a man came and said, "Okay, let's go. They have nothing." After the ordeal, we arrived in Sennar. We had two days of rest with our family, but we were afraid we wouldn't be safe in Sennar, so we moved again to Damazin.

Now, thank God, we live in a shelter, and my brothers and father work in agriculture.

**Female Genital Mutilation** UNicef found that, in Chad refugee camps, 87% of Sudanese women between 14 and 49 had been 'cut'. This is the highest rate in the world. In Chad the figure is 34.1%

# A Meditation on the Inner Neighbour

by Neil Douglas Klotz, *from The Hidden Gospel, Quest Books, 2001*

Allow yourself a brief moment to breathe easily and naturally into the deepest place inside you. Bring into your focused awareness all the love that you can breathe in at this moment, using the spark of whatever feels most sacred to you in your life. This need not be something religious. It can be whatever has created a sense of illuminating space in your life. With this feeling riding on your breath, place your hands over your heart for a few moments and open to this love.

Then move your hands and the feeling of your breathing to your belly. Offer some unconditional love to your naphsha (*life/soul, being*), the awakening community of life within.

Then after some moments, move your hands gently to your head and offer this support to your whole nervous system and to your instinctive self, the part of you that maintains the body.

Then relax your hands and arms, and breathe in and out as much life energy as you can at this moment, combined with compassionate love.

Finally, open a channel to your naphsha and offer this sense of unconditional life and love to all the parts of your being that feel separate or unfamiliar. Don't force this blessing, but simply offer it with respect and without any expectations to the "nearest stranger" within you.

As you complete the meditation, lengthen the feeling of your breathing to include those in your outer life and outer community: friends, family, neighbours, and all beings. Give thanks for all of these faces of diversity in your life.

# The Power of Silence

## Three Quakers Share Personal Stories of Discovery

Such was the title and subheading of an event at which three Glasgow Friends, Mark Coleman, Alastair McIntosh and Nuala Watt, spoke at Scottish Interfaith Week in the St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life & Art on 11<sup>th</sup> November. It was attended by some thirty people. Many were already Friends, or moving in Quaker circles: but how far might the ripples from such small outreach events extend, and what insight might they reveal as to the value of organising them?

One view of that question is expressed in the following email that Alastair received from Rick Visser, a Colorado poet, artist and photographer. They had met at an event in Glasgow in 2011 where Rick had spoken about the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky's understanding of "inner necessity" as the spiritual grounding and purpose of art (see Item 7 at <https://bit.ly/Kandinsky-Govan>). Rick's email came to Alastair out of the blue and he has kindly agreed to our sharing this lightly edited version.

*Dear Alastair: — It's been some time since we've been in touch. As I recall, it was before the pandemic which brought us real challenges, and last year my wife of 58 years passed away. She had multiple sclerosis for 32 years. It's taken me some time to begin to rebalance my life. We were married all our adult lives.*

*I recently, and somewhat surprisingly, turned my attention to the Quakers and I began attending the Boulder Friends Meeting about a month ago. This led me to your web site where I noticed that you and two others from Glasgow Quaker Meeting would be speaking this past Monday. So, I contacted Linda Haggerstone who kindly forwarded me the recording once it was ready. I know you have many demands on your time so I will be brief:*

1. *The idea of joining the Friends came to me suddenly and somewhat auspiciously. It was a rather sudden "convincement." I had been practicing Buddhism very seriously (I was on staff at a small Buddhist "Shedra"). But the current world situation, and particularly Gaza, brought me to a nearly unbearable state of mind specifically related to the immense suffering being inflicted upon the Palestinians and their country. It was the "pager bombs" that really put me over the edge. To me, this was a most cynical and evil plot. Over the top.*

2. Then, while reading in a book on the philosophy of power by [Byung-chull Han](#), I came upon the following passage and immediately thought of the Quakers: "Religion at its roots is *deeply peaceful*. It is *friendliness*." (P. 57) Yes, I thought, yes, this is its essence. My mind went immediately to the Quakers. And as was

said in the recording, “You don’t become a Quaker, you discover that you *are* a Quaker.” This is what it felt like to me. It felt like home.

3. And I only realized this morning, after “sleeping on” what was said, why this was so for me. Indeed, the recording clarified my whole life’s journey. The apple was ready to fall from the tree and just needed a little nudge. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I received many signs that this was the next step for me. Your talk was one of them. Its content and timing were perfect.

And here is the poem:

### *Journey of Fire*

When I woke up this morning, I found myself  
smiling, up and up, and as light as down.  
Who is moving these feet? Are they even mine?  
Who cut the rope that bound me to that old post,  
freed me from its grimpen grip  
and pitched me into this shining fire?  
What is this fire? Is it the fire of hell?  
The eternal infernal? *Il forno, il forno?*

Who cut the rope that bound me to that old post,  
freed me from its grimpen grip  
and pitched me into this shining fire?  
What is this fire? Is it the fire of hell?  
The eternal infernal? *Il forno, il forno?*

Amused, He said: “No, no, no!”  
“It is my refining fire; there is none other.  
Let it burn within you—blue as blue.  
You wanted a heart of gold, didn’t you?  
That is your journey. Yours is a journey of fire:  
pure gold seeking pure gold.

Live simply: do what is right,  
care for the widow, the orphan, the poor,  
the stranger in your midst--and stay low.

**Rick Visser, 14 Dec 2024.**

# Some Thoughts on Prayer.

From Kate Edie and Laura at Ayrshire Meeting

***Background material which helped inform our discussion on Wednesday evening 20<sup>th</sup> November.***

Prayer throughout history and across all cultures

There is evidence of prayer in all cultures and at all points throughout history.

The type of prayer reflects the relationship between the people within the culture and the Deity or Deities being prayed to and the nature of humankind and the nature of the Deity.

The Aboriginal Australians have the longest continuous spiritual belief system backed by archaeological evidence of 60,000 years of a belief which is summed up by all the responsibilities and mutual obligations of Caring for Country. Land is sacred and is a gift from the Creator and the Spiritual World, time is not linear but circular and past and present interact with one another. We should only take what we need and leave all that is in the world in at least as good a state as when we arrived in the world. When we kill and eat animals the animals should be given gratitude. We are profoundly part of the natural world order as is the spiritual world. Prayers are about these relationships and gratitude for our place in the cosmos.

First Americans in what is now the US and Canada had a similar philosophy regarding taking only what we need and praying in thankfulness for it. They also believed in a Wise spirit who could be called upon for help and for wisdom and was to be praised and admired.

See for example: Oh, great spirit whose voice I hear in the wind and whose breath give life to all the world-hear me- I come before you etc. This is a beautiful prayer which recognises the vast difference between the Spirit and Man but the love and connection also between man and the Great Spirit.

See also The Kesh Temple Hymn 26<sup>th</sup>c BC which is purportedly the oldest work of literature in the world written on a Sumerian tablet. It is a hymn of praise.

Egyptian Pyramid text of the same period as the Kesh Temple hymn. And consists of spells and incantations addressed to the gods.

Gayatri Mantra – Hinduism's most representative prayer

Ghandi in our modern era says, 'Prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and therefore prayer must be the very core of the life of man'.

We see examples of prayer in all times across Africa, the Middle East Asia Europe and as above in Australia and the Americas.

Examples of non-belief in supreme being or prayer past and present

Until very recently there were few examples of individuals and cultures not believing in a God or gods and of praying to them.

Buddhism is a more complex religion to unpack re prayer and a supreme being. Adherents do not practice prayer or belief in a supreme being but practice meditation and enlightenment and becoming one with the ultimate reality.

In more recent times atheists and atheist cultures have eschewed supreme beings and prayer and religion generally for example communist Russia and Maoist China.

Agnostic and Humanist beliefs are also God sceptics or unbelieving in a supreme being and the practice of prayer.

In the West we have been greatly influenced by Judaism Christianity and in modern times by Islam.

There is a very interesting map of religions (and what their main features are) in Prayer Traditions in Africa the Middle East and Central Asia – A Journey Through the Library of Congress. Well worth a look if interested.

Currently in the UK almost all religions are represented as is atheism agnosticism and Humanism about praise of the supreme being.

### ***Types of Prayer***

There are various types of prayer depending upon the belief system. These include **Praise Help Healing Guidance Affirmation**

Prayer and its efficacy have also been the subject of study and the complexities of this are apparent in the results.

We discussed much of the above.

We then discussed the development of prayer in the Quaker tradition from mainstream Christianity to a pluralist view of prayer at the present time and speculated about the next iteration of Faith and Practice and what it might say about prayer.

We discussed our views of prayer and shared our personal experiences of prayer and particularly healing prayer. We exchanged further thoughts the next day about being prayed for and the impact of this and praying for others.

We thought that Friends might like an outline of what the evening had covered so agreed to send this out for information.



# Guardian of the Forest

*A short story on U Tube illustrates something different to imagine.*

*How could the world and our relationship with to the Earth be different?*

*How could we go beyond ego consciousness when most of our current models are wrapped in an older model of mysticism?*

**Edited Margaret Roy**

A boy was a loner who escaped into the forest. His school mates called him weird.

One day he heard a whimpering and when he looked into the undergrowth he saw a black wolf cub caught in a trap. Unexpectedly the wolf cub did not rush away into the forest when released. It watched him with golden yellow eyes. Even when he went home and days after he felt something was watching him from the forest. Shortly afterwards, there was a furore in the village as many animal tracks were found alongside the farms. Wolves were suspected. As men went out with guns he feared for the wolf cub. And the animals were behaving strangely. A girl from the school had seen him going off into the forest and one day she followed him. He went to the spot where he had released the wolf cub which by now he had befriended. The animals also seemed to come to this spot, e.g. herds of deer.

Meanwhile he had started to have strange spells of weakness and dizziness that the girl helped him relate to the time he had started to go to that spot! When his mother caught him in one of these 'fits', she send him to the doctor. Now this doctor had seen these symptoms before . . . in his grandmother, and he had kept a diary. In the diary there were the signs that he was seeing (?in his dreams) and the two recognized in the forest and the pattern made by the birds in the air(the girl obviously went to the doctor with him).

*Fantasy? A nice story? Well, what happened next does sounds like a fairy story except . . . I had an experience. When Lanark Meeting met in New Lanark, I used to go afterwards for a walk up the Clyde Gorge and sit down by the river to listen to the water and the birds. On one occasion, I was 'gathered' up by the trees. I thought I was falling asleep but no. My brain waves seemed to change and while fully conscious and aware, I seemed to go deeper into a trance-like state where I was very conscious that I was taken over by the trees (!) into their world which was deeply calm and very heavy and primordial. It was not unlike a gathered Quaker meeting. I was left with the thought that humans could do what they liked but the nature world of the trees would survive and even thrive.*

Thus, I recognise what the boy was experiencing. He describes communicating with the wolf cub. When the villagers had a meeting, they blamed the wolves and wanted to kill them but the tracks were not of wolves. The wolf cub told him terrible things were happening to their environment – polluted rivers, etc. He managed to convey this to the villagers, backed up by the strange behaviour of

the animals. Well, they listened and started to work on their environment. Soon other stories flooded in of similar situations of dogs appearing as 'guides' to uncover unsavoury aspects of the environment in other locations. It became a movement.

*True or false? The reason I am bringing this story to you is because it tells of humans in closer contact, even part, of the ecosystem. As the boy became sicker when he came into contact with the wolf, he had to learn, or was told, this happened to humans as they learned to tune in, not just to animal consciousness, but to the spirit of Nature, and Life. As I said above, it is like being gathered in a Quaker meeting and, as the Early Quakers told, it is a powerful experience that can shake you or, as William Tabor voices it, it is listening into the mind of Christ.. . which he describes as taking over. However, in reality, it is submitting the ego mind to the greater consciousness. A frightening experience or, as the mystics of old called it, a little death! And just maybe this is the future.*

## **Joining the River: West Scotland Quaker Healing Group**

'Prayer, then, is communion, whether it takes the form of petition, intercession, thanksgiving, or whether it be just the quiet unveiling of the heart to a trusted friend, the outpouring of the soul to the one who is nearest of all.'

William Littleboy, 1937. Quaker Faith & Practice 2.34

It's said that we can never join the river in the same place twice. I like the idea of leaving the riverbank and joining the river, of being borne along and gently absorbed by it. The river in our Quaker healing group is often mentioned as we settle into quiet worship; it's a way of explaining to ourselves that at any time of the day someone, somewhere in the world is meditating or praying. In fact, most likely thousands of people of many faiths and none are simply being still and opening their hearts. We are slipping into a place of global and timeless consciousness alongside others which is very like meeting for worship. There is little ceremony about it as 'we join with others in expectant waiting' (Advices & Queries, 1.02).

This place is also known theologically as *Kairos* which is more to do with 'right timing' and thus of past, present and future meeting, rather than *chronos* - the right time according to the clock. When I first felt this 'right timing' in communion at a Catholic mass I was struck by its visceral familiarity to a gathered Quaker meeting for worship; a hush deeper than a physical silence covered the worshippers there, of which I, a Quaker amongst Catholics, was no less a part.

All of this I have learned gradually since our two year old son's illness over thirty years ago. At that time he was hospitalised and so ill we were not sure he would survive. As any parent knows this is the worst pain. We had much practical support and loving prayers from Friends immediately, in particular Glasgow Friends and those who were members of the Friends Fellowship of Healing. We were new to this idea of being added to a Quaker healing list but welcomed it. The family was upheld and, even amidst the agony, experienced moments of unconditional and unexpected peace. Our son recovered over the next few months, and as parents we gradually recovered what was lost - confidence that, as much as some things visit us out of the blue, the same can just as inexplicably disappear. But each of us was fundamentally changed in being upheld.

Thus life is not all plain; it can be furrowed and harrowing and hard, the most difficult bits, often invisible to others, when we are down so deep that we cannot see or feel the warmth of the Light. Some suffering we carry the whole of our lives. But it is easier when we help in 'bearing one another's burdens' (QFP 29.02) and, where-ever we find ourselves standing alone on the bank, join the river and 'know' once again 'the place for the first time' (T S Eliot 'Four Quartets', 1943).

West Scotland Quaker Healing Group meets on Zoom for an hour at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month. We start with a brief fifteen minute catch-up, followed by half hour healing meeting for worship during which, after a short centring visualisation, we say the names (only) of those we wish to hold in the Light into silent worship.



During the last fifteen minutes of reflection, we have often observed that in 'praying one for another' (Issac Pennington 1667, QFP 10.01) we ourselves also benefit, and leave more peacefully than we arrived.

All are welcome. Please contact Nicola Maharg if you would like to be included in the Zoom invitations or if you want to know more about Friends Fellowship of Healing: [nicola.james53@gmail.com](mailto:nicola.james53@gmail.com)

## BOOK REVIEW:

### The Kindness of Presence

Revisiting the Bible with an Open Heart and Mind BY PETER M PARR Published by  
The Kindlers Donald Holmes, Milngavie

This small book is both powerful and thought-provoking. It deals with the interpretation of God's love for today's Quakers. It acknowledges that those who worship with Quakers are not always acquainted with the Bible and seeks to explain the teachings of the Holy Spirit. A summary of the book states "This book is about presence and kindness. Its reflections, prayers and meditations are reminders of God's presence and unconditional loving kindness." It also invites the reader to be a loving presence in the world.

As someone who reads the Bible on a daily basis, it gives a different understanding of the Scriptures for today's Quakers. It uses inclusive language throughout and helps you to understand other Friends and their different viewpoints.

It speaks extensively throughout of God's loving presence in the world and encourages the reader to reflect that love. The prayers and meditations in the book help the reader to understand what God is saying and how to put the words into action.

It closes with this prayer:

Perfect Love  
In You we live  
In You we move  
In You we have our being  
Your Love surrounds us.  
Your care and protection is with us always.  
Your healing Light shines upon us and emanates  
from the core of our Being.  
Let us live in Your Presence  
And share Your Love with the world.  
Amen

The writer encourages us to use this prayer as a way of holding someone who is unwell or facing challenges in their life in the Light.

# Treasure Islands: tax havens and the men who stole the world

Nicolas Staxson (2011); (2026 Post-Brexit edition with New Panama Papers

Chapter

Sheila McGoran

After reading this book, I didn't know whether to feel totally depressed and bury my head in the sand and try to forget all about it, or to join the fight by helping to raise awareness (in my own extremely limited way) of the fact that the Offshore System consists of havens against democracies that help rich people, companies and countries stay on top for no good political or economic reason. Unless you are very rich, you are losing! Of all the reviews I have seen, the Evening Standard is the one that most strikes a chord: 'Staxson comes as close to anyone ever has in getting to the crux of the tax haven conundrum which is the attempt to answer the question: why are they tolerated?'

If you have Netflix, 'The Spider's Web: Britain's Second Empire' (2017 is a documentary that shows how Britain transformed from a colonial power into a global financial power and provides a helpful background to the major part Britain plays in the Offshore System. Of course, the world moves on, and although I haven't done further research, I am sure the Offshore World will have moved on since 2016/17 too!

Here are some what I hope are useful facts, phrases and comments from the book or film that might help anyone not familiar with 'Offshore' to understand its all encompassing complexity. Figures are from the 2016 publication. This review focus on Britain although many other havens exist such as **Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Republic of Ireland and The United States.**

**Transfer pricing** refers to the prices of goods and services exchanged between companies under common control. **Transfer Mispricing** refers to the trade between related parties at prices meant to manipulate markets or to deceive tax authorities. It is a type of fraud or tax evasion. Banana companies doing \$750,000,000 worth of business in Britain pay, for instance, something like \$235,000 in tax between them, i.e. less than a top-ranked footballer's earnings. Rough translation: "we don't currently pay US taxes because we do transfer pricing, via tax havens". Multinationals generally find it hard to use offshore to cut their taxes to zero since governments take countermeasures, but it is a battle they (governments) are losing.

At the time of writing the book, Staxson postulated that the world contains: 60 **secrecy jurisdictions** organized by four groups:

1. **European havens**
2. **City of London/ British Zone**
3. **US**

#### 4. 'oddbods' such as Somali; Uruguay

Britain's havens are **The City** - its **offshore network** has three main layers : **two inner rings 1) Britain's Crown Dependences of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man; 2)Its Overseas territories** such as **the Cayman Islands** – these are substantially controlled by Britain and combine futuristic offshore finance with medieval politics. **3) the outer ring** is a more diverse ring of havens like **Hong Kong** which are outside Britain's direct control but never-the- less have strong historic and current links to the country and **the City of London**. This British grouping overall accounts for well over a third of all international bank assets; with the **City of London**, the total is almost a half.

'The Spider's Web' Netflix documentary gives further information, as does Staxton's book. If we examine next ring of the Spider's Web briefly, we find that the **three Crown Dependences** in the inner ring are substantially controlled and supported by Britain but have enough independence to allow Britain to say: 'There is nothing we can do' when other countries complain of abuses run out of these havens. They channel very large amounts of finance up to the city of London, e..g. in the second quarter of 2009 the UK received net financing of US\$332.5 billion just from its three Crown Dependences. (Jersey promotional literature actually states that 'Jersey represents an extension of the City of London'). *Tax Analysis* publication estimated conservatively in 2007 that the Crown Dependences hosted about US \$1 trillion of potentially tax evading assets. So tax evaded on those assets alone are likely to be around \$30 billion per year – three times Britain's then aid budget.

The third outer ring of the British spider's web includes Hong Kong, Singapore, the Bahamas, Dubai and Ireland. These countries are fully independent though deeply connected to the **City of London**. Many other similar havens exist and new ones continue to emerge.

..... *Editor: I have cut a chunk out of the paper but can supply it in full to those interested.*

So what to Do?

Staxson asserts that all is not lost, however, and proposes a ten point plan to tackle the **offshore system** in earnest. His proposals are given below although my thoughts are 'how do you stop a Behemoth in its tracks?'

## **Staxson's ten point plan**

- 1. Lift the veil of silence and ignorance and spread the message (financial reform)**
- 2. Compile blacklists of countries etc that are havens, i.e. pursue transparency**
- 3. Prioritise the needs of developing countries, make the construction of serious offshore defences a mass movement – help countries improve their tax systems**
- 4. Confront the British spider's web and expose the role of USA as an offshore jurisdiction in its own right that causes harm both inside and outside the US**
- 5. Reform on shore tax systems – endless possibilities exist here**
- 6. Develop leadership and unilateral action, e.g the Patriot Act of US after 9/11 that inserted stronger money laundering provisions that have worked well**
- 7. Tackle the intermediaries and private users of offshore**
- 8. Rethink corporate responsibility so the obligations as well as the privileges are preserved and enhanced**
- 9. Re-evaluate corruption so insiders can no longer abuse the common good in secrecy and with impunity**
- 10. Change the culture – although this is probably the most difficult thing to do a culture change is more likely to come about as points 1 – 9 above are attempted.**

So the onus is on us all to keep talking about **TREASURE ISLANDS!**

## **2024 Reith Lectures by Dr. Gwen Artess, Forensic Psychiatrist**

Her subject was Violence of which she asked four questions. In our changing world where the war is in the midst of our communities as increasing violence, these lectures provoke deep thought and you can be sure they will be discussed in Quaker circles frequently in the coming months. You will still be able to get them on online, even get the transcripts.

Her four questions were:

Is violence normal?

Is there such a thing as evil?

Does trauma cause violence?

Can people violent to others really change their mind?

No spoilers but you can see how relevant this is to much Quaker work, especially peace and reconciliation, abolition of prisons and restorative justice in the community, and gender-based violence.

Where does our support for Alternatives to Violence Project fit in?

**Thoughts please for next newsletter before 15<sup>th</sup> March.**

## Learning Opportunities

On **Saturday 15 February 2025** in Glasgow Meeting House, and blended across the Area Meeting, Ben Pink Dandelion speaking on 'Essentials of Quakerism'. This is a day organised by Woodbrooke, the Quaker Study Centre.

On Saturday **22 March 2025**, also in Glasgow Meeting House and blended, the Kindlers will run a day on the topic of 'What Does Love Require of Us?: Quaker promptings towards love in action'. The Kindlers are a Quaker group; they have produced a booklet based on this topic.

Then on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April the Kindlers will run a further session on 'Listening'

Then in May and June, there will be a complementary course to *Listening* entitled *Talking Cheerfully*. This course will be from Woodbrooke. Date to be announced.

### Woodbrooke's 2025 programme

Woodbrooke, Britain's Quaker Studies Centre, have some wonderful courses. Do have a look and see if anything appeals to you. You can find the information about their upcoming events here –

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>

### Discovering Quakers website

The Discovering Quakers website is run by Friends who want to encourage those who might find a home in Quakers to attend and try out meetings. It is full of articles, blogs, posts, videos and podcasts, and you can also join online events organised by the group. To find out more, please visit their website

<https://discoveringquakers.org.uk/>

**Rising Up!**, the newsletter for Young Adult Quakers - See the Spring 2024 edition here - <https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=a2065014ac>.

You can subscribe to this newsletter here <https://quaker.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=60726d085b>.



## **EXPERIMENT WITH LIGHT RETREAT**

**1 February in Glasgow Meeting House      9am for 9.30 start. Finishing 4.30pm**

An all day event will take place in the meeting house on 1st February. Places are limited by the nature of the event so please respond soon to Margaret Roy at [margaret.roy@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.roy@btinternet.com).

\*The Experiment with Light\* is a Quaker recognised organisation using the words of George Fox to lead us deeper into experience of the light. Rex Ambler construed it after studying what it was that inspired such deep commitment from early Friends. On the retreat we will have four sessions of meditation followed in each case by creative listening in small groups of 3. It is an opportunity to spent the day in reflection on a Quaker theme.

There will be no cost on the day except for a donation towards a simple lunch and towards heating of the meeting house.

## **Quaker Universalist Group**

**Women's Spiritual Journey April 25 -27<sup>th</sup>**

**At High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddeston, HERTS and on line.**

Topics to include: Women and the Divine, Women and Quakers, Women and Spiritual Thinking, Women Mystics and Art, Women as activists from different cultures.

### **New Year's Resolutions?**

To really listen to the other - which means with an open heart free of personal agenda.

Not to judge but to expand your understanding putting yourself in another's shoes.

# Local Meetings

## Report from Castle Douglas LM.

Eight Castle Douglas and Wigtown Friends braved appalling weather to attend a special meeting in Castle Douglas on Sunday 20 October 2024 to discern the way forward due to declining numbers. The next meeting of Castle Douglas and Wigtown Friends, this time with two Friends from Dumfries and Zoe Prosser, Local Development Worker for Scotland took place on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December.

As our usual Bowlers' Hall venue was unavailable, we gathered at Threave Rovers Football Club. Sixteen sat down to worship, after which Zoe led workshop sessions before and after lunch to help us explore the next stage in discerning our future. Those who stayed for the workshop agreed it to be a constructive and loving meeting. It was felt that we have plenty of ideas for the way forward and have reasons to be hopeful.

We note that whilst some of us in our cluster find Zoom Meetings insufficient, for others it can be a lifeline.

For Castle Douglas Friends, it remains valid to say as previously reported in the last newsletter

‘Numbers in the room remain small. .... ‘On the plus side, individuals remain close as personal f(F)riends and some of us attend other Quaker gatherings such as WSAM by zoom, WSAM online worship on Sunday evenings, or make the effort (usually with a joyful return) to support events arranged by neighbouring Quakers such as SESAM Building Community weekend at Wiston Lodge in September and Ayrshire’s extended Area Meeting in October.”

Since then, Castle Douglas LM have decided on a change of venue, time of day, and frequency of their Meetings for Worship. Starting Sunday 5 January for a trial period, these will be monthly, on the first of the month on Sunday afternoon sometime between 2pm and 5pm at the Gordon Memorial Hall, St Andrews Street (next to St. Ninian's Episcopal Church) in Castle Douglas. **Eddie Phoenix**

## Dumfries Meeting

On the Sunday closest to Christmas Day, 15 Friends (including 3 visitors) gathered at Dumfries for Meeting for Worship, followed by coffee and conversations with a seasonal theme. Friends had been invited to share something, if they wished – a reading/poem/song/memory/music etc related to Christmas, something we had been in a habit of doing BC (Before COVID).

Appropriate and well received seasonal ministry was given during worship, then over coffee, mince pies and stollen, conversation was non-stop! New contacts were made, and friendships deepened and enriched. In fact, it was almost necessary to interrupt the conversations to share the Christmas contributions which Friends had brought along.

Contributions were rich and varied, from the serious to the lighthearted, evoking laughter and 'almost' tears. We were reminded how emotions are somehow heightened at this time of year. And our sharing concluded with the singing of 'The Holly and the Ivy', to a lesser known tune, but we all soon picked up the chorus.

From my own point of view, this meeting was joyful, relaxed and inclusive. And in much the same way as we felt our relationship with the late Jim Behan demonstrated that our meeting, (notwithstanding its recent revised ethos and structural organization), is working in a spiritual sense, so this Christmas meeting showed once again that Dumfries Meeting is working, and working well.

Of course, those old enough to remember Mandy Rice Davies, might remark that well, 'She would (say that) wouldn't she!' **Jan Lethbridge, Dumfries**

## **Glasgow Meeting**

Glasgow Meeting continues to meet in person and on line every Sunday, 11 am and Wednesdays at 12. Noon.

Sadly long term member Catherine Brown died before Christmas.

Discussion Groups will start in January with the first topic being Ben Pink Dandelion's Swarthmoor Lecture. Meetings will then proceed monthly and reflect on the courses run by the AM Learning Group – see above.

Everyone across Area Meeting is welcome to join in. More information will be sent out soon but if you wish to register an interest please contact Kate Philbrick.

[katephilbrick2@gmail.com](mailto:katephilbrick2@gmail.com) or 18 Turnberry Road, G11 5AJ

## **Monday Quaker Community**

We meet by Zoom only, from 5.15 to 6pm. From 5.15 to 5.40 we share something of what is happening in our lives, from 5.40 to 6pm we have Meeting for Worship,

and during that time we may hold friends known to us in the Light. All are welcome!

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82940579290?  
pwd=BtxJ1ol51dNYtmKX25r87PeoljEbMU.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82940579290?pwd=BtxJ1ol51dNYtmKX25r87PeoljEbMU.1)

Meeting ID: 829 4057 9290

Passcode: 214455

To join the mailing list, please contact Sheila Semple at  
[Sheila.semple@btinternet.com](mailto:Sheila.semple@btinternet.com)

## **Quaker Walks**

The next date is **Friday 24 January**.

The destination is yet to be decided. If you have ideas please contact Daphne Wasserman.

Future dates are likely to be Saturdays 1 and 29 March.

If you would like to join this walk or wish to be added to the mailing list, please contact Daphne Wassermann - [daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com](mailto:daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com)

**Evils which have struck their roots deep in the fabric of human society are often accepted, even by the best minds, as part of the providential ordering of life. They lurk unsuspected in the system of things until men of keen vision and heroic of heart drag them into the light, or until their insolent power visibly threatens human welfare.**

***William Charles Braithwaite, 1919 QF&P 23.05***



Dunblane Meeting  
celebrated

Margaret Boland's  
90<sup>th</sup>

birthday with fifty  
friends and

family at a ceilidh  
with live

music on 21  
September 2024.



## **Other Meetings for Worship**

### **Time for Stillness**

**Every Tuesday, 8.00 to 8.30am**

A reminder that Time for Stillness (T4S) is every Tuesday morning 7.50am for an 8am start. It is a lovely way to start your day, gathering with f/Friends in Stillness.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88234938362?pwd=sy9Pa9GevLFHTTxTlkpb0gfwvxjC5y.1>

Meeting ID: 882 3493 8362      Passcode: 916844

### **Deepening Spirituality**

**Early morning meeting at 10am on first and third of each month, i.e. 5 and 19 January, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March.**

We meet on the first and third Sundays of the month at 10am for a silent half hour then chat and discuss.

Open to all.      Any queries contact Margaret Roy.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7613798296?pwd=enZDWS9iRHNHUIIZR2dBb3N2YjBoZz09>

Meeting ID: 761 379 8296      Passcode: EwLWed

### **Sunday evening Area Meeting for Worship (Zoom only)**

The meeting is open from 7.15pm to give time to say hello and settle in. The worship starts at 7.30pm for half an hour after which there is time for chat.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85320172452?pwd=Y21aXNuHocwL3LOZb4CmPHR9i87wXe.1>

Meeting ID: 853 2017 2452      Passcode: 563890

If anyone has any difficulties please call Kate Gulliver on her mobile 07596 725387.

## **Young Friends Monday Night Epilogues**

**6 and 20 January**

Aged teen to 35ish? Please join us in person on alternate Mondays from 6pm in the Meeting House, Elizabeth Fry room, for a potluck or bring and share dinner. Please no nuts due to allergies. Followed by a worship in person and online at 7:30pm - 8:00pm.

Otherwise join us at 7:30-8:00pm in person at the Meeting House and online for our regular, fortnightly epilogue worship.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88133736587?pwd=dFZGNXpaSFhhUis4Ti8vcGJiYlVEQT09>

Meeting ID: 881 3373 6587      Passcode: 623455

Organising WhatsApp group for this community:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KjASIZWGM0xJ8SK7oDvz10>

## **Quakers in Europe Prayer Group**

**Saturdays 08:30 to 9.30 am**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88555071012?  
pwd=WWRyT1Z0U1ZtMitvRnlyY0FwYVU3QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88555071012?pwd=WWRyT1Z0U1ZtMitvRnlyY0FwYVU3QT09)

Meeting ID: 885 5507 1012      Passcode: 421947

Further information from Mary Troup, [marytroup2001@gmail.com](mailto:marytroup2001@gmail.com) or 07776146265

## **Experiment with light**

**Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm**

All are welcome but if you have not been before you may need an introduction to the process. Contact [margaret.roy@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.roy@btinternet.com)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86968437459?pwd=FVJVsdR3wvzscJo4FUllXrmoAwkeXa.1>

Meeting ID: 869 6843 7459      Passcode: 88176

**Note that the link has changed from the previous one.**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

18 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Area Meeting	Glasgow and Milngavie
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Area Meeting	by Zoom
26 <sup>th</sup> April	Area Meeting	Dumfries,
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Area Meeting	by Zoom
23 <sup>rd</sup> August	Area Meeting	Argyll
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Area Meeting	Ayrshire
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Area Meeting	by Zoom



## Hold in the Light

Muriel Robertson has now been moved into a care home.

Bob Williamson is in a care home.

Peter Morton is out of hospital and recovering.

*There is a meeting of Friends Fellowship of Healing on first Monday of each month.*

*Contact Nicola on <[nicola.james53@gmail.com](mailto:nicola.james53@gmail.com)>*

***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 or the next issue of WSQN is 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

**Contributions are welcome. Articles no more than 1000 words should be send in Word format only to the editor at [margaret.roy@btinternet.com](mailto:margaret.roy@btinternet.com).**

**Helps for this issue are Laura McMurtie and Edie Phoenix, and of course our proof reader Ruth Bacon.**

**We are still looking for a distribution editor who will deal with sending out the hard copies.**