

wsqn

- Connecting local meetings



Picasso

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17th January Martin Luther King Jun. Day in USA

‘And there is a deep longing for the bread of love. Everybody wishes to love and be loved. He who feels that he is not loved feels that he does not count. Much has happened in the modern world to make men feel that they do not belong. Living in a world that has become oppressively impersonal, many of us have come to feel that we are little more than numbers.’

Loving your enemies: ‘the first reason is fairly obvious. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. So when Jesus says “Love your enemies”, he is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies – or else?’

. . . hate scars the soul and distorts the personality. Mindful that hate is an evil and dangerous force, we too often think of what it does to the person hated. This is understandable, for hate does irreparable damage to its victims. . . but there is another side which we must never overlook. Hate is just as injurious to the person who hates. Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man’s sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false, and the false with the true.’

‘A third reason why we should love our enemies is that love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity. By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power.’



Martin Luther King from *Strength to Love*.

Report on Area Meeting on Saturday 7th October

Alastair Reid

The highlight of the meeting was an inspiring report on the Peace at the Heart of Scottish Schools Exhibition by Mary Troup. The video that Mary introduced featured the musical and dance performance of the pupils at Oakgrove Primary in their own version of “Wangari’s Trees of Peace”. This is the tale of the Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai, who famously said: “when we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and seeds of hope. We also secure the future of our children”.

Our Treasurer presented her report and the draft budget for 2024 which anticipates a small deficit. We agreed to change the signatories on our bank and savings accounts. We also agreed to change the criteria for the Spiritual Nurture, Community and Witness Fund (previously the Organ/Giles Legacy Fund) so that the life and witness of Quakers, especially young Friends can be further supported.

We discussed the 2024 priorities for our Local Development Worker, Zoe Prosser, which will be further discussed at the subsequent General Meeting for Scotland.

Our Area Meeting Nominations Committee has been busy in finding Friends to serve on a number of posts for the next 3 years. They have not found enough people to fill all the posts but are nearly there. The Committee has a hard task and where possible we are trying to phase appointments so that anyone keen to serve will not have to wait long. We thank all those Friends who have served on our behalf over the past three years.

We were delighted to hear about Terri Sutherland’s interesting spiritual journey and we accepted her into membership of this Area Meeting.

We hear about the progress of all our meetings over the full year. This time Ayrshire and Dunblane reported to us. Both are doing well and are arranging a variety of study sessions.

Because of the large numbers and variety of emails that clerks and other Friends receive, we asked meetings, clerks, elders and pastoral care Friends to consider ways to streamline and improve how we do this. A number of Friends have not found ways to cope with the excess emails and some now delete most without reading. During the run up to COP26, I was receiving up to 50 emails a day, so I welcome any streamlining!

This was my last meeting as Area Meeting Clerk. I am now passing over the task to Kate Gulliver who will bring boundless energy and new ways of working.

I have twice been Area Meeting Clerk – first in South East Scotland and now in West Scotland. Each appointment has brought new areas of interest and fresh areas of challenge. as every Area Meeting has different strengths and weaknesses. I hope you will support our new Area Meeting clerking team. The amount of work behind the scenes is considerably more than you would expect. For instance Area Meeting Clerks also have regular meetings on a Scotland and also a UK wide basis which lead to other meetings, papers and actions etc.

Luckily we had had experience of Zoom in our Area Meeting for several years before the lockdown from COVID. This enabled us to continue meeting at a reasonable level. However as Clerk I have had to spend many days helping meetings cope better with the new technology as well as dealing personally with Friends who had both technical and spiritual problems. Now most Friends are able to cope but some may still need assistance from time to time as the technology is always changing. Most Friends accept that we will continue to meet together in a blended (online and physically in person) fashion in some way. It is good to see Friends coming back to Meetings in person. Our embracing new technology means our widespread Area Meeting is now able to run meetings for business and study groups wherever we are located and can offer new ways of staying in contact and developing our spiritual life. A number of Friends join our meetings from around the world on a regular basis. Woodbrooke now offers a wide range of meetings on line or in person and I hope Friends will look at the new courses. Our purchase or access to equipment and our growing experience of running Meetings online and blended is leading us to the next phase of change. Kate is already busy working up ways we can more effectively meet together and you can expect to hear from her in due course.

If we know how to create the energy of love, understanding, compassion and beauty, then we can contribute a lot to the world.

Meeting for Sufferings Combined Report 1 July, 6–8 October & 2 December 2023

Elaine Millar, Dunblane, alternate representative

I begin with an apology: I missed the deadline to submit a report on July's Meeting for Sufferings (MfS). Then, the latest meeting on 2 December came soon after our residential meeting in October. So, I have decided to report across all three occasions. This is a practical solution, but not the best way to be a representative. At the residential weekend in Leeds, I saw how other reps work and realise there has been inadequate two-way communication between West Scotland Area Meeting (WSAM) and MfS, for which I am sorry for my part. Friends, I better understand how MfS requires AMs, and Local Meetings (LMs) to consider specific matters, such that when I attend MfS on behalf of WSAM, I take with me a sense of how to represent you (ideally in the form of a minute) and, in turn, must report back to highlight our next tasks. It strikes me this chain of discernment represents the "quiet processes and small circles in which vital and transforming events take place" (Rufus Jones).

My report could be titled, 'tying up loose ends' because all three meetings have carried over unfinished business, except that with Quakers the journey of our discernment is often more about detangling crossed wires than any neat tying up – and so it proves in all three meetings. Equally, this is a progress report, for there is always progress, no matter how slow. For two meetings I was in residence, for one online, but all are 'in person', bringing all of ourselves.

We begin in worship and remain so throughout, the discipline of the Quaker business method evident in steering and holding us, and at times it feels profound. The ideal is when much of the worship is silent and ministry is once-spoken, meaning it does not draw echoing ministry, because it was well said the first time. When we stray, an elder usually steers us back to attentive, open listening. I recognise anew this conduct is the blueprint for all our business meetings at YM, MfS, GM, AM and LM.

The papers for MfS are on the Quakers in Britain website [Papers and minutes | Quakers in Britain](#): do sift through to find what interests you.

Here are the main points and new tasks from our meetings:

- **Quakers in Wales report** might help inform ongoing discernment regarding Options for Scotland. Ministry followed about the importance

of 'taking a risk: I find myself wondering, can this equally be phrased, 'making a leap of faith'?

- **Membership** is an ongoing item and Max Kirk from Quaker Life reported about new ways of belonging. There are 162 pages of responses sent in from AMs, LMs and individual Friends, all threshing what it means to be a member - a process which will continue and in time be brought to YM. The context within which this issue initially came to MfS was whether attenders can be nominated for central roles, the question arising, not because we are short of role holders, but because names that occurred were then found to be attenders, so not currently eligible. Our discernment brought clarity, that we must trust our nominations process to bring forward the right names, regardless of membership status, and in future this will also be reflected for nominations at LM and AM level.
- **The Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC)** reported back, and we were asked to consider the declaration of marriage.
 - We agreed that pronouns other than he/she, her/him may be substituted.
 - **OUR TASK:** to discern whether use of terms, 'with God's help' or 'through divine assistance' must be said and whether the couple must make the same declaration. Friends, we have until the end of August 2024 to offer individual, LM, AM and GM feedback to MfS, before a recommendation is given to YM.
- **The report from BYM Trustees** explained why the accounts were late to the charity commission, due to a combination of factors including the introduction of a new accounting system and turnover of staff. There is no issue with financial health or any wrong doing – so less worrying, more embarrassing!
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is close to being finalised, which clarifies the relationships and responsibilities between the charities of AMs GMs and YM. MfS recommend each charity signs up to the MoU, once completed, although there will be no compulsion to do so.
- **The group reviewing YM and MfS** propose that MfS becomes part of a 'continuing YM', carrying out the work of the Society between our annual meetings, and we agree this way forward, although the details of how this will look and be worked out constitutionally require much further discernment.
- **Ecocide** – the wilful or negligent destruction of the earth – is considered and whether BYM might formally align with Stop Ecocide International

(SEI) to campaign to make it an international crime. The report by Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) agree our testimonies align with SEI and concur with a need for urgent action, but include drawbacks to criminalisation. MfS encourage concerned Friends, LMs and AMs to continue liaising with the QPSW Faith in Action team looking at the legal implications of criminalisation and develop links, including with SEI to inform continuing discernment.

- **AM minutes were received** and we are encouraged to explore and support these, including lobbying MPs (see suggested template letters in papers):
 - **Sudan lurching towards civil war** – AMs and other church leaders are called to offer support to Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.
 - **Modern-day slavery** – take action with MPs and government to address forced labour, low wages, poor conditions that amount to enslavement.
 - **Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences (Order of Life Restriction OLR in Scotland)** – calling for the abolition of indeterminate prison sentences, the impact of which lead to mental illness, family breakup

Book of Discipline

Extract from The Friend, 8th December 2023

Meeting for Sufferings Nov/Dec session – around 100 Friends met on Saturday (sixty or so of them on line) for a more typical Meeting. Business began with the more usual nominations work

The Meeting then heard from two co-clerks to the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. Michael Phipps and Catherine Brewer gave a short introduction to their work on the new Book of Discipline. The Committee was planning on delivering a new draft to Yearly Meeting 2027, which would mean copies being available to Friends by the end of 2026. This schedule was ‘demanding’ but ‘achievable’, said Michael. It did mean that the next two to three years would be focussed on writing, so Committee members would be less able to accept invitations to discuss their work. The release of more sample texts was being considered.

One Friend offered a theological response, quoting Karl Barth (‘One cannot speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice). God’s voice would speak loudly, said the Friend. Will Quakers be able to hear it?

Another Friend thanked the Committee, acknowledging its 'mammoth' task. They were glad to hear that children and young people were being included. Another wanted clarification on some of the words the clerks has used to describe different parts of their output: 'core', 'supplementary', 'constitutional', and 'spiritual'.

'Core' was what went into the book, said Michael, and ought to last for a generation. 'Supplementary' was material that changed more frequently – a distinction had been made by Yearly Meeting. The Committee understood that its task was to reflect 'our spiritual approach to the way we do things' but hadn't yet taken a view on whether the book should be split into two (one volume of anthology and another of governance or constitution).

Michael also thanked Friends on their feedback on the Committee's first drafts, which had looked at marriage. These had thrown up some specific questions, however, and Committee members needed advice from MfS on how to proceed. The first was on the use of pronouns: should these be more inclusive, more than 'he' and 'she'? The second dealt with God-language. Michael Booth, BYM staff link to the Committee, reminded Friends of current Quaker marriage procedures and language. These required participants to speak of 'God's help' or 'divine assistance'. This was the only place in *Quaker faith & practice* where such declarations were mandated, said Michael. Had these requirements become a creed?

Representatives heard of Quakers who had decided *not* to get married in the manner of Friends precisely because their testimony of truth meant they were unable to honestly use words like 'God' and 'divine'. This did seem wrong, said one Friend, but a registering officer present said that marriage language did contain a spiritual element. If 'God' were to be removed, she hoped the spiritual nature of the enterprise could be expressed in another way.

Another Friend pointed out that if a Meeting for Clearness on the relationship had already been held, then its spiritual nature would already have been established. It may therefore not need to be repeated in a marriage procedure.

'We are but witnesses' said one representative. Relationships should be reciprocal, but not necessarily identical.

Another Friend had a warning: there was a bigger topic behind this discussion. Our contemplative tradition was 'crap without words', she said. What we understood in the Spirit was not always answerable to language.

Friends agreed that the number of pronouns should be widened, and began a process of confrontation with AMs and General Meetings on the God language.

Mary Woodward writes a personal account of taking part in the Committee – see The Scottish Friend.

An Extract on the Inward Light

Taken from A Quaker Ecology, Meditations on the Future of Friends, by Cherice Bock

The understanding of the Inward Light that is sometimes communicated by Friends can prop up a hierarchical egoic worldview within Quakerism, where we think of each person as an individual connecting with the Light, and we think of ourselves as human beings as special in our ability to access that Light compared to other species. By expanding our understanding of the Light from one of personal experience to an ecosystem model, where the Light connects to all other life, we become participants in the co-labour of life-making. We move from a world view of trying to dominate and control the world around us to one of partnership and collaboration, working together across the *oikumene*, the global household.

An egoic understanding of the Inward Light can easily become competitive, where my understanding of the Light must 'win' by controlling or dominating, by convincing you of my authority to interpret the Light, or simply by being my interpretation that is disconnected from your's or from its real world impacts. This sounds to me, however, quite similar to the *kosmos*, the worldly authorities who did not recognise the incarnation of the Divine Light, who tried to control Jesus and the interpretation of scripture in ways that kept in place the status quo of their religious and political systems to privilege themselves. Our appeals to the guidance of the Inward Light, when practiced from this egoic perspective, can end up in the same place: reproducing systems of white supremacy, overuse of natural resources, and competitive economic models that only benefit a few.

An ecotheology of Light reminds us of our relatedness to one another and to the rest of creation. It also emphasizes humility: we are a species that can respond to the Light, but we are not the only one. An ecotheology of Light reorients us from the *kosmos* emphasis on order, expressed harmfully through requirements of uniformity, to an emphasis on diversity. In an ecosystem, all parts are needed, and each species and individual within that ecosystem contributes a piece that could not be contributed by anyone else. The *kosmos* model creates acres and acres of single monocrops and replicates strip mills across the country and world with the same stores; it creates factories where the machine parts, as well as human workers, are interchangeable. It creates 'law and order', where the laws perpetuate the status quo, and 'order' is the *Pax Romana*, the government sanctioned violent quelling of resistance. The ecotheology of Light celebrates biodiversity and creativity. It is flexible and adaptive, resilient in the face of change, and works with the planet's natural cycles of more and less light, as well as different ecosystem successional stages in the case of the storm, volcano, or other natural occurrence. Within this model, each individual relies on the others in the ecosystem to nourish one another

as we process the Light in different ways. We go through seasons and cycles, we are open to birth and death, we participate in periods of growth and decomposition, we recognise our own and our community's limits, and we live within them with gratitude and flourishing.

As Jesus' rejections of the harmful interpretations of the religious leaders of his day did not mean he was saying 'anything goes'. An ecotheology of Light points us back to the life-giving laws that sustain us, that help us to live as a community. These laws look different in each context – each individual grow differently and is formed by their geographic location. The amount of light (*from the sun*) each receives is different based on where they are on the planet and the actions of other individuals around them. Ecosystems are always changing and growing; there is no such thing as eternal stasis or equilibrium – ecosystems are living and dynamic. The natural laws create space for unique ways of flourishing to occur and for diversity to emerge in all its glory.

Cherice Bock is a recorded Quaker minister and a member of North Valley Friends in Oregon.

LAMPLIGHTER PRAYER FOR THE DEDICATION OF A NEW LIGHT

With thanks to Wellesley Tudor Pole, and “the Silent Minute”

*I kindle this little light on the earth plane
I dedicate it to the service of the Spirit.
I guard and cherish this flame
As a living symbol of the reality of the Powers of Light
May the Beings of higher worlds see this Flame
And kindle its counterpart on the ethereal plane
May this ethereal light be a channel for the inflow
Of the healing powers of the Spirit
May the love of Christ permeate this building
And protect it, warming the hearts and enlightening
The understanding of all who live and enter it.
May the being whom we know as Michael
Standard Bearer of the Christ
Wielder of the Sword of Light,
Use this offering, linking it with all those
Who have lit the Light.
May peace and healing spread through the world,
And the regions of the borderland . AMEN*

AI - artificial intelligence

Laura MacMurtie & Margaret Roy

The speed of AI development is like nothing before experienced in human history in terms of technical development and in terms of its implication of the social political economic and cultural structures of our human society. The subject is engendering much fear but is this real?



Whilst it has the potential to solve some of the Big Wicked issues like climate change inequality (interplanetary exploration) it is in the hands of humans should will this happen. So, how might AI dehumanize us?

ART If AI is helping to create newspaper content? Could mean the end of freedom and human expression? Where might it lead for

creators/writers and artists?

If AI can write novels as good as human writers, how would we know the difference?

What if we could no longer differentiate between algorithms and authentic human expression across all the fields of human artistic endeavour and expression.

How would we know if all those artistic platforms were taken over by A.I.

Algorithms result from all that data collected when you make choices on line. One effect is that you may now be presented with suggestions as to your 'favourite', e.g. films, books. The fear is that your choice is removed from you, or limited by the algorithm. Of course there are benefits, e.g. in health where information can be rapidly assimilated to identify patterns of ill health to enable diagnosis and treatment.

However, regards Art that is supposed to reveal our souls and help bring humanity together, does this mean our wings are clipped and we becomes more monochrome?.

Thus, should A.I. be banned for artistic use? If so, how to police it?

POLITICS Political is about wielding power and influencing our lifestyle and society.

Mainstream media already use algorithms to manipulate groupthink. How might manipulation occur including gaining trust in truth telling and then lying on big ticket issues. The fear is how we might be manipulated unknowingly and then how we might lose sight of truth. A.I. might even become the arbiter of truth. Think of our current concerns re fake news and its consequences. Some might point to COVID vaccination reporting here. Google users are spied on all the time by the US government through data purchase. The governments of Europe and our own are probably doing the same.

There are many examples: CJ Hopkins satirist in Germany under investigation, Kit Klarenberg detained at Luton airport, Roger Waters and his performances and Julian Assange, FBI and The African People's Socialist Party, Craig Murray blogger (he was the diplomat who blew the whistle on Uzbekistan) jailed for contempt of court over jigsaw identification.

Then there is censorship on Facebook and Twitter.

It is believed that Government manipulation of social media now rife. This is a concern as use of social media is so important to our younger generation. Where do they get their news?

Other fears may concern an AI arms race. Is it a matter of time before AI is used as population manipulation and surveillance. I think it is already happening for example in China with Uighurs and possibly in the West Bank with Palestinians and certainly was used in Hong Kong. Some postulate a whole global population manipulation on an unprecedented scale.

And what about AI currency? And whistle blowers and anonymity.

WARFARE This is scary when drones replace boots on the ground. Where might ethics come in when we have no immediate contact with the horrors and reality of war – mind you, if might cut down instances of rape as a weapon of war. Fantasy? Already the US has robot dogs with guns. Other recent examples can be seen in Palestine and Ukraine – see the recent bombing of the Pizza place in Ukraine.

PRIVACY A.I. could be listening to your conversations (my comment – already is Alexa does all the time unless you switch it off and is it switched off?) A.I. doesn't need to be self-aware (point of singularity) it just needs 'bad' people to control it.

COST TO THE PLANET I was recently asked to be a hub to gather and pass on info on 'smart' TVs, washing machines, etc. I would be paid for this but when I looked into it it involved staging posts between my house and the others. These would be transmitting on a frequency similar to microwaves which were capable of frying local insects and would ultimately require 20,000 lower level satellites to function –

Margaret Roy interjects, see review of The Struggle for a Human Future, 5G, Augmented Reality and the Internet of Things, Jeremy Naydler, **in WSQN Oct 2021**

It doesn't need to be like this but Artificial Intelligence is in the hands of only a few very rich individuals so concentrating of power in too few hands. Our argument, or criteria, must be eco- culture, a society based on relationship to include the earth. Humanness is about relationship and belonging, and love. How do these values merge with the new technology? It boils down to who do we trust with this power and the checks and balances which are in place and for whose benefits.

Quaker Concerns

Climate Change and Sustainability

COP 28

Clare Phillips, Castle Douglas

The 28th United Nations Climate Change meeting (officially Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC) commonly abbreviated to COP28 took place from 30 November to 13 December in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The following link to a BBC News Report provides an excellent summary of facts about the event, its context and what was achieved

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-67143989>

It's easy to be cynical about the fact that the President of COP28 was Sultan al-Jaber, Chief Executive of UAE's state owned oil company. He has been accused of using the event as an opportunity to strike new deals to produce and supply fossil fuels which he denies.

It's easy to be cynical about the fact that the conference was opened by King Charles given the wealth of royalty and the fact that the UK prime minister has approved new gas, oil and even coal production.

On the other hand, here's a link to a statement by Zaki Mamdoo co-ordinator of a broad-based campaign to prevent the financing of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline #StopEACOP who was present at COP28 and therefore had the chance to 'speak truth to power'

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/350/WhctKKZPGSnffrbZSbLxvZwbmjrdnIjqHscmPNGGFKHfhFvRIJmJQXRzkpgFnQGMfjDHvPL>

This extract from her online report gives you a flavour of her experience: -

It's been a rollercoaster of emotions and intensive period of activity. COP28 has been unlike anything I've experienced before. The setting is surreal — Dubai is a place built on the profits of oil and the exploitation of migrant labour, and it's here of all places where we're advocating for a complete and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels. Pure irony, right?

The proximity that ordinary people like me have to some of the world's most powerful people in a space like this can be disorienting to say the least! Last week, I crossed paths with Patrick Pouyanné — the CEO of the oil company behind EACOP, Total Energies. [I could not resist this opportunity to confront him with the fact that seven Ugandan student activists remain imprisoned for peacefully protesting the East African Crude Oil Pipeline \(EACOP\).](#)

Unbelievably, after insisting Pouyanne give comment on the arrest of the students and Total's involvement in the bullying and intimidation faced by communities and activists who resist EACOP, I managed to secure a commitment from him to call for the release of the seven students, who were arrested on November 24th and since then moved to a maximum-security prison.

As Quakers we often set out to bring people together in the belief that there is good in everyone and therefore peace and justice must be possible. You could say we look for nuggets of gold in the rubble of wars and man-made environmental devastation. Many others, like Zaki, like those working to establish 'loss and damage' funds to aid countries worst affected while the rest got rich trashing the planet, seem to be on a similar journey.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a diverse coalition of over 60 civil society organisations (including Quakers in Scotland) campaigning together on climate change in Scotland. SCCS organised the Day of Action outside the Scottish Parliament on 9 December as one of over 200 such events taking place around the world.

Despite the weather (it rained a lot and we got very wet) many people came with banners and placards to hear the live music and listen to the speakers. It was inspiring to see a good turnout with many Quakers there, a number of whom were from WSAM. There was even a glimpse of our banner on BBC reporting Scotland that evening. As part of this event Quakers in Scotland and Christian Aid organised a silent vigil 'for people of all faiths and none, to uphold communities around the world who are bearing the brunt of climate breakdown and... policymakers in Scotland.'



Day of Action for COP 28 – Rise up!

Climate Café in Glasgow

Keep up-to-date with our news by checking the Climate Cafe Google Drive
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1G98-18PHbhGg2hNAa0nyx98SgNXY4DK-?usp=drive_link Just click or copy and paste the link.

Please contact glasgowquakers.climatecafe@gmail.com

QUAKER CONCERN OVER POPULATION NEWSLETTER 13

AUTUMN 2023

An Analysis of Three Decades of Increasing Carbon Emissions: The Weight of the P Factor

It was good to join with American Friends from the QEW Population Working Group to discuss an academic paper “An Analysis of Three Decades of Increasing Carbon Emissions and The Weight of the P Factor” by Lucia Tamburino and Giangiacomo Bravo from Växjö, Sweden and Philip Cafaro of Colorado State University, USA which looks at the relationship between increasing carbon emissions and population.

The total environmental impact of the population has been based on multiplying the number of people by the individual environmental impact of each person in the population. The impact of an individual can be determined by considering their available resources and the technology available to mitigate the environmental impact of their lifestyles. The paper considers the common perception that when considering carbon emissions population is less important than other drivers such as technology or affluence. This gives the impression that as most population increase is in poor countries with low individual environmental impact scores there is little significant consequence on sustainability of increasing population size.

Using World Bank data the authors examined the relationship between

population changes over 3 decades and carbon emissions in all countries. They grouped countries into low income, lower middle income, upper middle income and high income countries. Total emissions were highest in the upper middle income countries (51% of global emissions) and lowest in the low income countries (0.6% of global emissions). Upper middle income countries had the highest per capita increase in carbon emissions. The rate of increase in per capita carbon emissions is greatest in the upper and lower middle income groups and lowest in the high income countries. Low income countries have around 8% of the world's population.

Analysis is complicated by considerable differences within countries and by richer countries having carbon emitting manufacturing done in poorer countries. The analysis does not mention the carbon emissions associated with transporting goods around the world, maybe because it too difficult to assess. Low income countries are at greatest risk of environmental change as population increase determines land use with consequent deforestation of rain forests and expansion of subsistence agriculture. Population growth in low income countries is one of the barriers to increasing per capita income. Escaping poverty is a key element of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with an inevitable

consequence that per capital carbon emissions will rise. Maintaining or reducing population size is essential for the sustainability of the whole global population.

Martin Schweiger, Leeds Meeting

Why blame the poor?

A recurring response when we speak of population growth is to point out that the present crisis is caused by consumption, and that those in the developing world are not responsible for that. This is often expressed as 'why do you want to blame the poor, or people of colour, for something that we in the developed world are responsible for?' and this is sometimes accompanied with an accusation of racism.

It is perfectly true that the huge bulk of consumption takes place in the developed world.

However, those in the developing countries would like, perfectly reasonably, to partake in the level of consumption that the developed world does. But if the whole world consumed at the rate of the developed world it would require the resources of three planets to support us.

If justice were done, and the world's wealth was evenly shared, we would all live at a level slightly below the present level of Botswana. Imagine yourself to be a candidate for election. How would you set about convincing the public that a cut in consumption to that level was necessary? It couldn't be done in a democracy. And if it took a

quarter of a century to achieve that, the world

population would have grown from 8 billion to about ten billion in the same time: so we would need to make a further reduction to compensate. This means that as things stand the undeveloped world has no possibility to reach the levels of consumption we enjoy in the developed world. So we are compelled to consider population growth. Whether we could make it safely through the bottle neck, I don't know. Our tool would be enablement, and this would have to be worldwide. It would be necessary to confront all those forces that conspire to encourage growth of population. This includes religious bodies, Catholic and Evangelical: populist governments: growth economics: social conventions: pressure from relatives. We would need to make contraception available world-wide, free and without question, and we need the education to go with it. We also need to make abortion available on demand.

Experience shows that such measures actually reduce the frequency of abortion. Experience also shows that women welcome the possibility to not be baby producing machines. That would be a start, but we need to go much further.

Roger Plenty, Nailsworth Meeting

Difficult Questions Over Population.

This booklet is still available for £3.50 (£5 incl UK postage). From

jmrr57@outlook.com

The Recognition of this group, Quaker Concern Over Population, has been reviewed by Meeting for Sufferings and will be reconsidered in the future.

Peace

Peace at the Heart

Laura McMurtrie, Ayrshire

This short article is based on a Zoom conversation which Mary and I had in December and Mary's own reflections on the performance referenced below.

I had a very interesting conversation in December with Mary Troup when we talked about the development of the ideas that led to the, Wangari's Trees of Peace Performance at the Scottish Parliament on International Peace Day (September 21st, 2023).



I wanted to try to get a better understanding of how a class of primary 5/6 children could be supported, enabled, and empowered, to co-write, produce and then perform in the Scottish parliament to an audience that included

SMP's. An audience that was apparently moved to tears by the children's performance.

So, to start with we talked about the environment which Mary was working within and the role of peace education. Mary is a storyteller and musician who is working in a primary school in Glasgow supporting the school and the children to think about how to contribute to learning about and then practising citizenship which supports peace and a widely drawn perspective of justice.

We acknowledged that there is a significant commitment to peace and justice and to climate justice, in particular, within the Scottish Education system at the present time and so the whole project was realised within this context.

The Peace at the Heart Project, an education Programme developed by Quakers, has helped to reinforce the vital role that peace education has in creating supportive environments that promote peace at all sorts of levels. Developing the conditions for sustainable peace increasingly involves the way we use the physical environment. Developing and creating a real commitment to looking after the

welfare our world is therefore a vital part of the work of both Peace at the Heart and the citizenship sustainability and peace agenda in the curriculum.

We then talked the about how young people can learn about and contribute to peace initiatives climate justice and sustainability. What platforms they can use to develop their voices and how the performing arts can offer a different range of opportunities to develop self-confident voices.

I was interested in hearing about what is needed to translate the aspirations and words on the page into reality. What I learned was that what is required are inspiring skilled enablers and teachers to encourage the talents and develop the self confidence of our young people. So, working collaboratively, with the school head, the class teacher, young musicians and the children Mary and this team achieved a wonderful end product in terms of the performance. However more than that a class of confident well informed young people who are now school role models was developed through the co-creation of this performance.

Mary is a highly experienced and skilled storyteller and musician who also had a long career in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. As such she has a well-developed network of contacts and is very used to collaborative ventures. This unique combination of experience and skills and her commitment to nurture expression in young people were vital ingredients for the project.

Mary stressed the collaborative nature of the whole venture which is impressive. The enthusiasm of the head, the commitment of the class teacher and the way children really engaged were crucial as were Mary's unique skills which she was at great pains not to in any way highlight (sorry to mention this Mary).

So what follows is how the project was developed from Mary's perspective.

Wangari's Trees of Peace-Reflections on a Performance

Quakers' Advices and Queries 19 asks us how we share our deepest beliefs with children and young people, whilst leaving them free to develop as the Spirit of their God may lead them to. How do we share insights with them and learn from them? Recent outreach work to develop a performance piece retelling the story of Wangari's Trees of Peace, inspired by Jeanette Winter's book required a collaborative approach, based on mutual respect between teachers, musicians and primary school children to identify the main issues in the story and to explore their significance for us today.

Wangari's Trees of Peace tells the story of Wangari Maathai's response to deforestation in her homeland of Kenya and her work with women to establish the Green Belt Movement in Africa. The performance was created between January and September 2023 and as stated above was performed on the International Peace Day at the Scottish Parliament.

The journey of making this performance challenged the children to enter and re-enter the story to re-enact it and to become at one with it. They really took ownership of the story and demonstrated their passion about the issues they were exploring.

The ensemble performance aimed to demonstrate the power of story and music to reinforce children's understanding of world events, the importance of living adventurously, and the potential impact of acts of courage, carried out together, to achieve lasting peace and climate justice. It highlighted the importance of ensuring that children's voices are heard recognising their ability to contribute effectively to the debate on world peace and climate justice.

Values underpinning the event reflected the children's right to take part in cultural and creative activities, to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, to live peacefully and to protect the environment. Further to this it embraced Sustainable Development Goal 16: 'to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development'. It emphasised Wangari Maathai's message -never give up hope. This is so important for our work for peace and climate justice in the world today and it celebrated the challenge she made in her acceptance speech for the Nobel peace Prize in 2004.

'We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds and, in this process, to heal our own- indeed to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.'

Reflections from the audience bear witness to the impact. They said 'I felt very moved and blessed to be there. What a wonder to see the children pulling off such an extraordinary feat, and to produce something so powerful'.

Testament indeed to children's ability to use the tools of music and drama to tell challenging stories, to highlight key messages, and to call for peace and climate justice in our time.

I found Mary's enthusiasm for working with our young people, helping them find their voices, and supporting them to develop the skills necessary to confidently express those voices really inspiring. Her own skills are reflected in the remarkable way these young people developed through the collaboration. Thank you for letting us explore a bit behind the performance curtain and for your wonderful work particularly with the children.

'We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds and, in this process, to heal our own- indeed to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.'



Week of Action on the Right to Conscientious Objection and update on Yurii Sheliashenko, Ukraine conscientious objector currently under house arrest.

WSQN reported previously on Yurii Sheliashenko's case and as far as we know, there is no significant change. He regularly posts updates on social media ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter/x](#)). It seems that despite regularly having hearings scheduled, officials are intentionally delaying his case. The CO group of the Peace and Service Network has been considering, based on his request, a broader approach to advocating to other officials in Ukraine rather than just the prosecutor in his case.

During the Week of Action on the Right to Conscientious Objection (4–10 December 2023) Quakers in Britain joined other faith and civil society groups calling on the Russian and Ukrainian governments to respect the rights of conscientious objectors.

The #ObjectWar Campaign, an alliance that includes many Quaker partners, organised a week of actions in several countries around Europe on behalf of conscientious objectors.

The campaign's demand is that the right to conscientious objection be respected in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus – all three of whom are currently persecuting conscientious objectors.

In Britain, Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW), the Fellowship of Reconciliation and War Resisters' International organised two actions in support of the campaign.

Although the week of action is over, we can still ask our MP to contact the Foreign Secretary David Cameron, calling upon him to raise concerns about the rights of conscientious objectors in Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Belarus at a diplomatic level.

Israel/Palestine

Quake of 28th December carries news of Quaker thought and action on this issue. Access through the BYM website. An extract:

A reminder of Quakers in Britain work on Palestine and Israel

Quakers in Britain manages [EAPPI UK & Ireland](#) which is the UK and Ireland office of the international Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. This programme sends trained human rights monitors to provide a protective presence in Palestine and accompany Palestinians and Israelis working nonviolently for peace. The programme advocates in the UK and Ireland on human rights abuses. Our monitors witness and advocate for a future in which the military occupation of Palestine (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza) has ended and both Israelis and Palestinians enjoy a just peace with freedom, dignity and security based on international law.

Extracted from December Report NFPB meetings

Northern Friends Peace Board members met in Edinburgh (and online) on 26 September, and will be meeting again in Bolton on 2 December. At our September meeting, we heard updates of peace activities in Scotland, including those of the groups Secure Scotland and Peace and Justice Scotland, now in shared premises in Edinburgh. The Peace at the Heart exhibition put together by Quakers in Britain had been launched at the Parliament in Edinburgh that week and Ellis Brooks from QPSW gave an account of that work.

At the other end of the British Isles, NFPB members had been active with Quaker Roots witnessing against the DSEI arms fair in London. Friends who had been part of that witness shared their experiences and learning. NFPB had helped host an online Meeting for Worship at the time of the witness, which was well attended and appreciated by those online and those taking an active part in the witness.

NFPB members joined Friends in Meetings for worship and witness for peace the following morning at Faslane and in Princess Street Gardens in Edinburgh.

At our December meeting we shall be considering responses to the war in Palestine and Israel, and also looking ahead to different ways of holding our meetings in 2024. We shall be looking at a wider mix of hybrid, regional, and online-only meeting opportunities in order to enable fuller participation by all our members and reach a wider group of Friends.

Palestine and Israel In the week after the outbreak of violent hostilities in Israel and Gaza, NFPB joined with other members of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations in writing open letter to the Foreign Secretary, then James Cleverley. The letter called for a ceasefire, humanitarian corridors and urgent action to address the roots of the conflict and to work for a sustainable and just peace.

The letter (<https://nfpb.org.uk/ncpo-gaza-oct23>) said, in part:

We are deeply saddened by the continued violence in the region and urge you work for dialogue and de-escalation. We ask you to support measures for the immediate protection of civilians including a ceasefire, adherence by all parties to international law, and the UN's call for humanitarian corridors.

Long held concerns about land, peace and security have not been prioritised by the international community. The only way to break the cycle of violence and build a lasting peace is to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza and create conditions of justice, equality and peace for all Israelis and Palestinians.

As people of faith, we stand against the Islamophobia and antisemitism many individuals in this country may face as a result of violence in the Middle East. We will do what we can to de-escalate these tensions.

We ask you to avoid supporting polarised arguments and apportioning blame. We ask you to support measures that do not rely on military security but instead build a lasting peace based on justice and equality for all.

NFPB has also included a significant number of links to resources in two issues of our Peace Round-up, which are available to download via:

<https://nfpb.org.uk/resources/publicity-information-outreach/#peace-round-up>

Quaker Community Justice Network

Report (2) to Justice Interest Group/ Quakers in Criminal Justice for 9th November 2023

on the work of The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

From: Mike Nellis, Scottish rep on the Justice Interest Group/QICJ

Since the last report to QICJ in June 2023 the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (SQCJN) and its associated Working Group has continued to be busy. The Network has continued to meet online monthly as far as possible, tho' finding a time that suits everyone has not always been easy. We have not had any outside speakers in the past five months, usually managing to find topics and issues to discuss among ourselves. One member of the Network left, another joined. One member of the five-strong Working Group left: a new person will join soon.

The Working Group had organised a multi-faith day-long retreat on May 10th 2023 (on which feedback is now available) for Scottish Prison Service Chaplains at Glasgow MH. It was called "Time for Self and Soul Care". 22 chaplains attended. The day was organised around collective and small group discussions. The chaplains unburdened a lot, feedback was extremely positive and they indicated that they would like to repeat the experience.

Friend **David Turner**, the founder and convener of the original Scottish Quaker Criminal Justice Network in the 1990s passed away at age 93. He had not been a member of this later Network, but in one of our meetings fond memories were shared of him.

The Working Group organised discussions in each of the Area Meetings in Scotland around the theme of community justice, sometimes tinged with abolition, just to get a sense of where Friends are in terms of reflection on penal issues. These have been helpful.

One member of the Working Group, with strong links to the Community Justice section of Glasgow City Council (which does outreach to faith groups) has been seeking to arrange for people sentenced to Unpaid Work to serve some of their hours on a Quaker-run landscaping/gardening project in North Glasgow. This is in process.

Sadly, as a result of the Scottish Government withdrawing financial support, and Glasgow City Council facing severe across-the-board budget cuts, the renowned and longstanding 2!8 Centre (an intensive support service mostly for women released from prison) is closing down. One of our Network members works there. Turning Point, the third sector organisation who ran it, could not run the service on the reduced monies the Council offered. The Working Group is responding to this but

the Centre is unlikely to be saved, although a lower cost project for the same client group may possibly replace it.

The Working Party will shortly look at the use of Orders of Lifelong Restriction (OLRs) in Scotland to see what points of comparison might be made with IPPs in England and Wales

At our most recent Network meeting it was agreed that we would explore the issue of prison abolition more deeply. We sense an appetite for this in GM, based in part on cautious interest generated among Friends by the refection day we had previously organised in March 2022 on Trauma, Justice and Imprisonment – which had raised the issue of abolition. A small group has been set up to organise a day event, probably in Spring 2024, and beyond that we may take the abolition issue back to GM.

Digital Justice and Policing in Scotland

Mike Nellis. Glasgow

I have been attending annual “digital justice” conferences in Scotland for more than a decade. Their purpose, using a mix of government, agency and tech company speakers (and some academics), is to demonstrate the ways in which new digital technologies are impacting on the operation of the criminal justice system, and to signal what’s next. They are mostly targeted on the rising generation of managers and practitioners employed in this new digital milieu, and on interested parties like myself. Although there are usually 200+ attendees, dissenting voices are not expected from the audience: they are there to familiarise themselves with upcoming alterations to their roles and skillsets.

“Digital Justice” is just one of a suite of annual conferences showcasing the high-tech future of all Scottish public services: there are other day-long events focussed on fintech, education, health and social care, cybersecurity as well as periodic “Summits” which brings all the themes together. “Transformation” and “modernisation” are the upbeat watchwords of all these gatherings, and the allure of “smart” technological innovation becomes so exclusively definitive of “the future” that considerations of social justice and moral progress are brushed aside.

England and Wales have hosted equivalent annual events over the same period, usually dubbed *Modernising Justice*. Between them, they have given me a strong sense of the interests that “digital justice” elevates, and those it suppresses, and on whose terms new futures are being built. What both sets of conferences have in common is commercial sponsorship by the companies already providing services, or aspiring to win contracts, and their exhibitor stands are as invariably illuminating as the lectures and workshops about what’s coming next

The most recent Digital Justice event in Scotland, in November 2023, focussed specifically on policing - still the pacesetter for tech innovation in criminal

justice, although courts and prosecution services are catching up. It began with an overview of current digital strategies and capabilities, and signalled the vital importance of pre-emptively applying ethics to technological innovation – something at which Scotland is not, in fact, bad – although it is everywhere easier said than done.

An Assistant Chief of Police from Miami, Florida was the event's star speaker. He entertainingly explained how and why his force had implemented public space facial recognition systems across the city, and gave examples of how it has been effective. Unlike the UK, Miami police had had no external regulatory framework to consider when they opted to utilise facial recognition: it was an operational police matter whose ethics they had to work out on their own, without oversight, whilst knowing that some US city authorities had already banned this intrusive technology outright.

Scotland does not currently use facial recognition technologies. England and Wales piloted schemes some years ago in London and South Wales, but although both were severely criticised for generating too many false positives, and for significant ethical failings, other police forces are keen to deploy it, and the Home Office is insisting they do. Thus far, the government's own independent (and internationally renowned) Biometrics Commissioner and the Surveillance Camera Commissioner have strongly discouraged this. The Home Office, in response, plans to abolish both posts during this current Parliament, shifting some of their former responsibilities to the already overburdened Information (data protection) Commissioner. This will stymie in-house (if not all) resistance to facial recognition technology but also, we were told at the conference, weaken the national standards hitherto applied to CCTV in England and Wales, potentially deregulating its use across its 43 police forces, thereby reducing its public and judicial legitimacy.

Advancing commercial technology in public services entails chipping away at established regulatory processes to enable cost-efficient innovation, or the early capture of regulatory endeavours by companies so they can limit anticipated future restrictions. Scotland generally fares better than England and Wales in applying precautionary principles, but doesn't buck all trends. All its Digital Justice conferences have at some point given the floor to a tech company speaker who tries to jolt policy forward, promising not only dazzling "upgrades" but "next generation" technologies which will solve even more organisational problems (including those arising from earlier technologies). Even as Police Scotland (belatedly?) adopts body-worn cameras, a messianic champion of "artificial intelligence" (AI) explained in November that the health, wellbeing and performance of sadly over-stressed police officers might well be enhanced via wearable devices monitoring their mood, heart and respiratory rates.

AI – the automation of administrative processes, swifter assessment and assisted decision-making - is everywhere in debates on digital justice now. A decade ago – when using CD Roms to supply courts with CCTV evidence was a key conference topic - AI was the remotest of pipedreams. The rolling process of digital change has no obvious endpoint but various sorts of automation will alter access and delivery in public services, without necessarily improving them on the ground, if vital human skills are allowed to atrophy. Agencies can access ethical expertise on their “digital journeys”, but I’m not convinced that the personal and political implications of “invasive technification”, as one sage observer has called all this, are properly appreciated.

Now that 80% of all criminal investigations in the UK have a digital element, and 90% of that element concerns mobile phones, it is reassuring that new software reduces the time taken to extract evidentiary data from accused’s, victim’s and witnesses phones to days or hours, rather than the weeks it took with first generation machines, which had required their confiscation by police. Furthermore, data can now be extracted selectively, with consent, according to what is relevant, rather than subjecting victims of alleged sexual offences to a full “digital strip search”, *downloading everything from their phone, no matter how private*, because all or nothing was once the only technical option. This had deterred victims from either pressing charges or continuing cases.

Such is needful progress, but if “digital” is the preferred answer to enduring questions of crime and punishment, what was the question, who asked it - and why now?

Gender-based Violence

Report on GBV Questionnaire carried out by WSAM GBV Concern Group Pete Clarke, Glasgow

Background and Ethical Statement

A questionnaire aimed at assessing the knowledge of Gender-based Violence, GBV, amongst members and attendees was carried out during the summer of 2023 and ended on September 1st. It was distributed via local meetings both by e mail and in hard copy. Responses were invited by both means, (the latter being by postal service).

A total of 46 responses represented 10.3% of the 445 members and attenders.

Responses were submitted and held anonymously both in electronic and hard copy form by Pete Clarke and were destroyed upon collation. No communication with

responders or local meetings was undertaken. The results of the collation can be found in appendix 1 below.

Although the questionnaire was a multi choice format, some textual responses were given by responders. Where appropriate, these have been integrated into the narrative of the report.

Narrative report

It was apparent from the returns that many responders (91%) claimed to know what the term GBV meant. Whilst this was encouraging, responses were to reveal a set of particular assumptions that underpinned this claim. Of significance was that 87% of responders believed that GBV took place 'mainly in the home', although 20% indicated that GBV can take place in public places. It could be argued that this indicates a correlation of GBV with domestic violence, which would indicate a narrow view of what GBV means and where it happens. This assumption might be confirmed by the large number of responses which identified women as the 'main' victims, (82%).

There was support for this view in terms of 98% of responses indicating that GBV was mainly carried out by 'relations', but this was qualified by indicating that 46% of GBV is also carried out by 'strangers' and 'work colleagues'. Overall, answers to questions 1, 2 and 6 seem to indicate that an overemphasis on domestic violence carried out by men in an understanding of GBV.

A large majority recognised that 'transsexual' (Transgender) individuals can be the victims of GBV (84%), though the questionnaire did not give the opportunity to identify where such attacks took place.

There was an over emphasis on women being the victims of violence by 'strangers', (40%), demonstrating a lack of knowledge in terms of the violent victimisation of men by 'strangers', particularly regarding street crime and 'public places'.

Responses showed that there was an understanding that children can be the victims of GBV, (91%), though the questionnaire did not give the opportunity to identify 'where and by whom' such attacks were made. Responses showed the belief that GBV did not have to have a sexual element to it, (80%).

In conclusion, it can be said that the returns demonstrated an emphasis on domestic violence as an understanding of GBV. It was clear from the returns that there is more information required in terms of GBV as 'street violence', and 'where and by whom' children and transgender individuals may be victimised.

Appendix 1 Table of responses received.

Q	response	response	response	response
1	Yes 42 (91%)	No 1 (2%)	don't know (7%)	
2	Men 1 (2%)	Women 38 (82%)	Both 9 (20%)	Don't know
3	Home 40 (87%)	Public 9 (20%)	Don't know 4 (9%)	
4	Yes 19 (42%)	No 5 (11%)	Don't know 20 (42%)	
5	Yes 39 (84%)	no	Don't know 7 (15%)	
6	Strangers 11 (22%)	Relations 45 (98%)	Work colleagues 12 (24%)	Friends 7 (13%)
7	Men 35 (75%)	Women 3 (7%)	Both equally 1(2%)	
8	Men13 (29%)	Women 19 (40%)	Both 9 (20%)	Don't know 5 (11%)
9	Yes 42 (91%)	no	Don't know 3 (7%)	
10	Yes 2 (4%)	No 37 (80%)	Don't know 7 (9%)	

Appendix 2 The questions used in the questionnaire

1. Do you know what the term 'gender-based violence' (GBV) means?
Yes No Don't know
2. Who are the main victims of GBV? (You can choose more than one)
Men Women Both Don't know
3. Does GBV take place mainly? (You can choose more than one)
In the home In public places Don't know
4. Is GBV a recognised offence?
Yes No Don't know
5. Can transsexuals be victims of GBV?
Yes No Don't know
6. Who is GBV mainly carried out by? (You can choose more than one)
Strangers Relations Work Colleagues Friends
7. Who is GBV mainly carried out by? (You can choose more than one)
Men Women Both equally
8. Who is more likely to be a victim of any type of violent crime by strangers? (You can choose more than one)
Men women both don't know
9. Can children be victims of GBV?
Yes No Don't know
10. Does GBV need to have a sexual element to be classed as such?
Yes No Don't know

Are Men naturally Violent?

Margaret Roy

I read *Testosterone* with the question in my head, are men naturally violent? Whilst I learned much about how the hormone affects men and women to give that extra oomph, and is the stimulant in animal reproduction, the ending was that men may have more testosterone but how they use it is culturally determined. Through all our work on Gender-based Violence, one issue stands out and that is how to tackle the violent underpinning of our society. Apart from AVP (Alternatives to Violence), the group that I believe has more of a handle on this is the White Ribbon Campaign.

The campaign states that ‘the great majority of men are not violent – and we oppose the violent behavior and attitudes which cause so much suffering on our society. Yet often we do not know what to do and so we stand aside or say nothing.

‘There are often sensitive issues, and every situation is different – so there is no one-size-fits-all response which would be right for every situation. But we can set out some ideas that can help you in playing your part:

You can: check your own behavior.

You can: speak up.

You can: be a good influence on those around you.

You can: use your economic muscle.

You can: see the bigger picture.’

Join the Campaign and wear the white ribbon.

THE 2023 CAMPAIGN

Theme: ChangeTheStory **into 2024** *and leave VAWG in the past*

ChangeTheStory was an important message for us all this year, with November 2023 being one year since the [Istanbul Convention](#) came into force in the UK. The Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive legal framework that exists to tackle violence against women and girls. It sets *minimum* standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women. Importantly for White Ribbon UK, one of the pillars of the Convention focuses on the importance of violence prevention. The Convention calls for social and cultural change, engaging individuals, and especially men and boys, to actively prevent harmful attitudes and behaviours that lead to and perpetuate violence against women and girls. In your workplaces and community, you have brought what this means to life by starting conversations about the root causes of gender-based violence and encouraging reflection and active allyship amongst men.

Announcement Oslo, 6 October 2023

“Zan – Zendegi – Azadi”

“Woman – Life – Freedom”

THE
NOBEL
PEACE
PRIZE

[The Norwegian Nobel Committee](#) has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2023 to Narges Mohammadi for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all. Her brave struggle has come with tremendous personal costs. Altogether, the regime has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times, and sentenced her to a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes. Ms Mohammadi is still in prison as I speak.

In September 2022 a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Jina Amini, was killed while in the custody of the Iranian morality police. Her killing triggered the largest political demonstrations against Iran’s theocratic regime since it came to power in 1979. Under the slogan “Woman – Life – Freedom”, hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part in peaceful protests against the authorities’ brutality and oppression of women. The regime cracked down hard on the protests: more than 500 demonstrators were killed. Thousands were injured, including many who were blinded by rubber bullets fired by the police. At least 20 000 people were arrested and held in regime custody.

The motto adopted by the demonstrators – “Woman – Life – Freedom” – suitably expresses the dedication and work of Narges Mohammadi.

Woman. She fights for women against systematic discrimination and oppression.

Life. She supports women’s struggle for the right to live full and dignified lives. This struggle across Iran has been met with persecution, imprisonment, torture and even death.

Freedom. She fights for freedom of expression and the right of independence, and against rules requiring women to remain out of sight and to cover their bodies. The freedom demands expressed by demonstrators apply not only to women, but to the entire population.

In the 1990s, as a young physics student, Narges Mohammadi was already distinguishing herself as an advocate for equality and women’s rights. After concluding her studies, she worked as an engineer as well as a columnist in various reform-minded newspapers. In 2003 she became involved with the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Tehran, an organisation founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate [Shirin Ebadi](#). In 2011 Ms Mohammadi was arrested for the first time and sentenced to many years of imprisonment for her efforts to assist incarcerated activists and their families.

Two years later, after her release on bail, Ms Mohammadi immersed herself in a campaign against use of the death penalty. Iran has long been among the countries that execute the highest proportion of their inhabitants annually. Just since January 2022, more than 860 prisoners have been punished by death in Iran.

Her activism against the death penalty led to the re-arrest of Ms Mohammadi in 2015, and to a sentence of additional years behind walls. Upon her return to prison, she began

opposing the regime's systematic use of torture and sexualised violence against political prisoners, especially women, that is practised in Iranian prisons.

Last year's wave of protests became known to the political prisoners held inside the notorious Evin prison in Tehran. Once again, Ms Mohammadi assumed leadership. From prison she expressed support for the demonstrators and organised solidarity actions among her fellow inmates. The prison authorities responded by imposing even stricter conditions. Ms Mohammadi was prohibited from receiving calls and visitors. She nevertheless managed to smuggle out an article which the New York Times published on the one-year anniversary of Mahsa Jina Amini's killing. The message was: "The more of us they lock up, the stronger we become." From captivity, Ms Mohammadi has helped to ensure that the protests have not ebbed out.

Narges Mohammadi is a woman, a human rights advocate, and a freedom fighter. In awarding her this year's Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to honour her courageous fight for human rights, freedom, and democracy in Iran. This year's Peace Prize also recognises the hundreds of thousands of people who, in the preceding year, have demonstrated against the theocratic regime's policies of discrimination and oppression targeting women. Only by embracing equal rights for all can the world achieve the fraternity between nations that Alfred Nobel sought to promote. The award to Narges Mohammadi follows a long tradition in which the Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the Peace Prize to those working to advance social justice, human rights, and democracy. These are important preconditions for lasting peace.

Victimhood is socially divisive and personally diminishing.

Denigration is the handmaiden of discrimination.

Most men are not powerful, and some men are vulnerable.

Do we need a Ministry for Men, asked Women's Hour BBC 4

And they reviewed a book called *The Empathy Gap: Male disadvantages and the mechanisms of their neglect*, by William Collins. The book supposes that male dominance is illusory when senior positions (are) still occupied (mainly) by men – politicians, professors, consultants, high court judges.

- but 'It is not these men who bring down the average male longevity or populate the prisons or swell the ranks of the under-educated. The intersection of men-plus-deprivation is a more virulent combination even than women-plus-deprivation . . .' He examines the result of the myth in detail as it affects males today. In the main their place as protectors and breadwinners is redundant. Many are lost and suicide rates are high. Amid masses of statistics, he reviews the Equality Act that attempts to balance the male/female position. Does it make more room for the female but leave the position of the male silent?

A synopsis of the book's suppositions was sent out to some male members of our AM for comment. If you have not received this and wish to be included contact Margaret.roy@btinternet.com.

Book Reviews

Testosterone: The Story of the Hormone and Dominates and Divides Us by Carole Hooven (Octopus Books 2021)

A Personal Reading

Clare Phillips, Castle Douglas

I studied psychology in the 1970s and ended up in social work. But that first degree was a BSc and my best subject at school, the only one I ever won a prize for, was biology with chemistry a close second. My subsidiary subjects at university included human physiology.

Reading this book reignited some of the excitement I felt on first learning about genetics and later, how gender is established, including the role of hormones as influencers of embryonic tissue.

My undergraduate dissertation concerned sex differences in human behaviour but by that final year (1973) I'd discovered feminism, politics, sociology and relativism and was less proud to call myself a 'scientist'. In some ways I regret that now.

What I appreciated most about **Testosterone** was the way the author digs down into the complex biology of mammalian gender to draw the conclusion, backed up by evidence from research, that *Masculinity and femininity don't always come in the packages we expect (p53)*. But she doesn't use the science to defend a political position or take sides in what we've come to call 'culture wars'.

Hooven describes how hormones like testosterone (the one most closely associated with maleness which she abbreviates to **T**) '*fit into receptors rather like keys in a lock and 'open the door' to all sorts of changes. If the lock is broken then the key is useless.*' She applies the lock analogy to the case of one of her students she calls Jenny who also became interested in how hormones work as a result of being born with a rare departure from the way sexual development usually proceeds, sometimes referred to as being 'intersex.' Hooven goes on to explain how Jenny's condition came about using another domestic analogy:

To understand how a male and a female, who have nearly identical genes, can have vastly different body plans, imagine getting ready to bake some cookies...(p55)

On page 61, Hooven asserts: *before grad school I believed XX and XY chromosomes defined maleness and femaleness. But that's not how it works....*

The book took me a long time to finish because the subject is very complex and the science is very detailed. But I enjoyed the author's skill in presenting it as 'a scientific mystery story' (Daniel Gilbert from his review on the cover) and how she used the device of a recipe to explain various outcomes.

I won't 'spoil' the author's mystery about how testosterone specifically influences masculinity but to give other readers an inkling I will end this brief review with a quote from the final page (p260) on which Hooven discusses her young son's transition through puberty:

My hope is that Griffin will live in a world where men and women have complete freedom to choose careers or lifestyles, no matter how stereotypically male or female. He could be a dancer, an engineer.... or a stay-at-home dad; he could paint his toenails or take up martial arts (these are not mutually exclusive).... Becoming a man is a beautiful thing. But – like every man – my son should enjoy his T responsibly.

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer Ed Tyler, Argyll

Seldom have I come across a book that continues to move me so profoundly, as if it is causing something deep within me to stir. I've always experienced a deep connection with nature, but it's been a series of solitary epiphanies, encounters I've been shy about sharing as I live in a materialistic, secular, extractivist culture. Being a Quaker helps enormously, but in reading Kimmerer I come across cultures that are the exact opposite.

Kimmerer unites two worlds: that of modern science and that of ancient cultural tradition (one that has survived for thousands of years). So often the two have been in conflict, with the one being partly responsible for the destruction of the other. But, in the person of Robin Wall Kimmerer and her writing, the two come together and are healed.

Robin's day job is that of university lecturer and botanist, but she's also one of the Potawatami people, displaced and separated from their Homeland by being forced to move to various reservations. Yet these scattered groups are now coming together once more, reunited at their Gathering of Nations.

Braiding Sweetgrass is about keeping alive the ethical bonds between human and non-human, bonds which industrial "civilisation" broke. They are summed up in a single word: "reciprocity." Plants and animals need us as much as we need them: we are together on this unique and amazing world. They supply us with food and we supply them with our thanks, our rituals, our sensitivity and creativity, taking care not to take too much, thereby enriching and nurturing the Lifeweb.

"Reciprocity" in this sense means so much more than a "reciprocal" arrangement between two parties. In essence we are talking of a spiritual binding that holds us together and enables us to flourish as a society. In the epilogue she describes a dance ceremony at which a bowl of berries is offered up, symbolising the mutuality between human and nature. For the berries need us as much as we need them: we

feast on them and plant them in new places because they are so delicious, thus ensuring their spread.

Each chapter is a revelation and points to how we can act differently, not feeling guilty but enriched and empowered, for what she is talking about is not something passive but intensely active. In one chapter she talks about the need to engage, even if it means stumping up to a boring council meeting which you're sure isn't going anywhere. "Just show up" is her dictum.

The book has huge range and scope. One chapter is about her daily home life (raking out her garden pond and reflecting on her daughters growing up), whilst another sets out the "The Words That Come Before All Else". This extraordinary peroration to Nature starts the school week for the pupils of the Onondaga nation, existing in a kind of parallel universe alongside the schools of the US state, where pupils recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kimmerer is the wisest, sanest person I know. I warmly commend this book. If you yearn for a better world, where cultures of gratitude and abundance grow and flourish and those of scarcity and extractivism wither, you need look no further. Braiding Sweetgrass is a primer, a manual, for us to go about co-creating the former instead of sitting on our hands and railing against the latter.

She ends with a call for us "to honor our responsibilities for all we have been given, for all we have taken." It's our turn now, long overdue, to give our gifts "of mind, hands, heart, voice and vision all offered up on behalf of the earth. Whatever our gift, we are called on to give it and to dance for the renewal of the world."

Hear, here, now!

Some Poems of Bill Bingham

Bill , is a member of Glasgow Meeting. Formerly he was a member and elder of the Church of Scotland. At over 80 he has seen a lot of the world. His special interest in Thomas Merton comes about because with Thich Nhat Hanh, two men of different faiths, they expressed such harmony.

Rumours of war ? New God's, New Priests

Across the bustling city buildings standing still
once on Sunday mornings pews of people did they fill
but now with broken windows and grass that's overgrown
they stand in dereliction forgotten and forlorn.

New gods have been appointed, Ecstasy and Crack,
opium of the masses now leave their dreadful track
upon the lives of youngsters looking for a thrill
to give their lives some colour they swallow fruits that kill.

What on earth is happening? how have we lost our way?
people mock the old Book's cry, "Like sheep you've gone astray".
We grab at life's brief pleasures to keep smiling for a while
but little do we understand the seeds we plant are vile.

We look around and wonder where can we find a cure?
the pulpits are deserted of men who were quite sure.
Prophetic voice is stilled again as in the days gone by
and on expensive couches as patients now we lie.

Your mother fed you dearie on food that was not right
just listen to my counsel and soon you'll feel alright
you're just a little under stress life's pressures have caught up
I've told you what your problem is would I sell you a pup?

Upon my door you'll clearly see a highly polished plaque,
It's made of brass, and shining bright says nothing do I lack.
I've learned the skills of life my friend, from tutors Jung, and Freud,
you'll read my client's tales of woe in journal and tabloid.

The rich and famous come to me I treat them over years,
I listen to their troubles and wipe away their tears.
They write me cheques for millions I hurry to my banks,
at Mammon's gilded alter I offer grateful thanks.

Sechs Soldaten

I walked thru' snows of Germany, the year was '57
The battles they were over, and peace restored by heaven.
I stopped by carved headstone, soldaten there were six,
Gunther, Franz, and Willem, Uri, Gert, and Fritz.

I passed the little chapel, as music soft and low,
crept gently thru' the village, and o'er the fields of snow.
They sang of Holy evening, that heralded the Dove,
of peace on earth and joyfulness, the Shepherd and his Love.

So why were mother's weeping across the Fatherland?
and what had brought me conscript, to Deutschland's ancient land?
Soldaten too I pondered, sent from 'cross the sea.
my name was not on headstone, so far as I could see.

Too late I'd missed the conflict, newborn in '38
my uniform was British, I wore it rather late.
A letter came to beckon, my youth of seventeen,
to answer call of nation, like those whose names I'd seen.

Carved upon the headstone in little Degerndorf,
the home of Fritz and Gunther, I took my beret off.

What pain we cause each other, what grief do mothers bare,
he Darkness it still beckons, the hell and the despair.

I left that German village, the year was '59
the Queen had sent a letter, that said I'd done my time.
What hand was on the tiller, that sent me 'cross the sea?
what fate now sent me homeward, returned to mother's knee?

I often ask these questions, whilst walking in the snow,
why are we so embattled with forces we don't know?
We struggle for existence, we kill our fellow men,
a King now sends his letters, and off we go again !

The Cedar Trees of Lebanon

The cedar trees of Lebanon look on in deep despair,
they stand as silent witness to all that happens there.
For centuries we've killed and maimed the one who is our brother;
the broken child, the murdered son, distress in heart of mother.

The buildings of the people fall, their dreams are broken too;
the Son of Songs is silenced, so what are we to do?
The scream of deadly rockets violate the land
where prophets with great wisdom spake of lion and of lamb.

'Tis man who lives with wanton ways, though sometimes he will pray
for guidance from the Heavenly Realm on killing fields this day.
The warship and the flying bomb explode amongst the throng
the babies new of planet Earth distressed by 'right' and 'wrong'.

The warlike sons of Gilgamesh, truly scorn the Way
they have no time for peaceful plans to halt this dark affray
The Source of Life's offended, by carnage in the land
Old Commandment's soon forgot while blood seeps thru the sand.

How long, how long, will men be blind, with hatred of their neighbour
who do not share their darkened schemes, what bloodlust do they savour?
Will war bring peace to humankind? it never has before;
resentment built o'er centuries still knocks on every door.

When, oh when will angst-filled man come truly to his senses?
'tis such who kill and rob and cheat, and dig unholy trenches.
The buildings fall and people too, Oh, what on Earth is fair?
The cedar trees of Lebanon look on in deep despair.

The Christ called out the empire-builders, he also called out the stone-throwers of
faux religion.

The Western Front

Quiet fields, that once knew war
where flowers bloom, and skylarks soar
oh brother man what have we done?
To Mother Earth, 'neath Father Sun?

We took up arms to serve our God
seeing not that path we trod.
would lead to slaughter man to man,
(T'was cruel Cain, devised this plan !).

The Christ he spake of peace on earth,
and so they sang of Saviours birth.
but Jesus' words became obscure,
"Just heal the sick, and feed the poor!"

Instead the sword, they girded on
The minstrel too forgot his song.
Our young men fell (they died in vain)
unless we learn thru' tears and pain

that loving neighbour, was the Plan,
of he who claimed, The Son of Man.
He found no place to lay his head,
the Roman scaffold, killed him dead.

Yet still the killing fields resound
with mortar bomb machine-gun's sound
they rattled and they sang of death
thru' blackened trees, and mangled earth.

Some mothers wept, (and brides did too),
and children went, without a shoe.
Some father's cried and poets yet,
who sent their sons and live regret.

Great Kipling, too bewailed his 'Jack',
(His loving son did not come back)
from Flanders field where poppies bloom,
in summer morn one hour from noon.

Black, Gay, U.S.A.

Black and gay in U.S.A.
was not a choice I made this day,
but when I pass thru history's gate
I find some reasons for my fate.
It seems conditions do apply
(I didn't fall down from the sky).

From Africa as slave I came
to enter into life's old game
where people toil and sweat to live
yet find that they have much to give
by learning how the game is played.

It isn't nice to be enslaved
by brother man with paler skin
and slightly varied sexual whim.
We're each created different see?
But we are meant to live life free
of faulty judgements made in past.
Discrimination does not last.
when telling what the Lord decrees
of black men brought from overseas.

Poets, songsters, strong of will,
who tell false 'masters' not to kill.
but read their Scriptures care-full-y
'bout such men brought o'er the sea
to serve as labour in the field
f rich men lost to Caesar's gold,
who's greed in stories now is told;
on dreadful monument and plaque
with cruel scars on negro's back.

Protest we will with silent walk
while with your guns our lives you stalk,
for truth and justice is the aim
of all who witnessed Jesus pain
when hung to death on Calvary's tree
with his desire to set men free.

Black, gay, USA is written in recognition the life and work of the black, gay, Quaker activist Bayard Rustin who is credited with proposing the 100,000 Man March on Washington D.C. as part of the Civil Rights Campaign in America. Rustin worked closely with Martin Luther King but seems not to have been given the recognition due to him.

The Fine-feathered Helmet (In memory of a veteran)

The band played loud as we marched along
and we all joined in with a rousing song.
Then a man by the roadside beckoned to me
"Where are you off to young man?" said he.
"Why to war!" said I with a laugh and a grin
with my fine-feathered helmet strapped to my chin.

"To war?" Said the man with a look of despair
"And what do you think you will find, once you're there?"
"Why sir, glory and honour adventures to tell
of how we all charged through the shot and the shell.
Our Captain has told us that we'll surely win!"
with my fine-feathered helmet strapped to my chin.

"And what you suppose of the one who's your foe?"
Said the man by the roadside with eyes cast down low
"Why he is the enemy sir." I replied
"Who must be defeated right soundly." I cried.
The man shook his head, and said, "Where, to begin?"
with my fine-feathered helmet strapped to my chin.

"I once was a soldier like you are my son
and I too went to war with the fife and the drum,
but when it was over I looked all around
and suddenly there in the carnage I found
my brother lay dying so pale and so thin
With his fine-feathered helmet strapped to his chin."

"Your Captain's have told you a lie my young man,
there's no-one victorious nor who gives a damn
once your life-blood's been shed in some fanciful cause
and so I would tell you to think and to pause
'fore going this road with the band and it's din
and that fine-feathered helmet strapped to your chin".

The Fine Feathered Helmet was prompted by a story told to me as a youth by a badly wounded veteran of Dunkirk. As a boy he had paraded with the Boy's Brigade carrying a wooden rifle as was customary for the Brigade at the time. As his Company marched through the streets of Lanark, an old man kept pace with the boys as they marched through this old historic Scottish town. From the pavement the old man shouted a warning. "They are training you for war!" he declared. The boys laughed and mocked the old man. I often wonder if the gentle-man on the pavement was perhaps a member of Lanark Quaker Meeting? or is it really just "Onward Christian Soldiers" after all?

Learning

Advices and Queries 5. Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the Bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the ways of God. As you learn from others, can you in turn give freely from what you have gained? While respecting the experiences and opinions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have found and what you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to a greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.

Learning Group

WSAM Elders have set up a learning group. So far, many have joined small study groups in person and on-line to look at Stuart Masters course on the Five Waymarkers of Quakers. If you have missed this, look out for the next course that will be on the Four Doors (to Quaker Meeting) from William Tabor's Pendlehill booklet. Other up-coming possibilities may be a book study of the new book on Isaac Pennington, or Parker Palmer's *A Hidden Wholeness*.

A good place here to mention that there will also be a one day retreat in the summer with the Experiment with Light (run by the Experiment with Light Group).

Suggestions are welcome. Send to Sheila Semple on sheila.semple@btinternet.com.

Mull and Iona Quaker Meeting's study group

Mull and Iona Friends mostly gather to worship using zoom, this has led us to be a community that is ironically not bounded by the shores of the names of our home islands. We incorporate Friends who often worship with other meetings and churches.

When lockdown forced us all to be more creative in finding social solutions we began with a weekly meeting blether, this soon developed into a study group, and it is now in its third series.

We learnt that we are more able to give the time during the winter months so our programme now begins in November and finishes in the spring, meeting mostly fortnightly in the evening.

We are thoroughly enabled and motivated by Seth and Liz our facilitators, and our topics from Quaker poetry to Faith and Practice of Friends around the world. Between 8 and 15 friends join us.

We gave consideration to opening the group to wider Friends but felt that we have become such a close community of remote Friends that extending it could make the community and trust more fragile. That said we are looking at how we can share our experience and some of our way of working in a shared session.

Gathering together to learn is a valuable experience, it benefits us socially and enriches our worship.

Rob Claxton-Ingham

Ayrshire Meeting hosted a Woodbrooke event with Ben Pink Dandelion

The History of the Quaker Way took place on five Wednesday evenings starting on 22nd November. Ayrshire Meeting were kind enough to open this event to other members of Area Meeting.

Ben spoke of five periods that overlapped and were a little different in the UK and USA.

1. The Early period 1647/52 – 1660 took place in a changing world of which Quakers were in the centre. In Britain this was the time of the English Civil War and religious reformation. Fox, Fell, Naylor, Burrough, the Valiant 60.

2. Restoration Quakerism 1660 – 1690 was a time of the Restoration of the Monarchy when much persecution lead Quakers to be more 'pragmatic' to survive. Barclay, Penn, Elders of Balby

3, Quietism 1690s – 1830s the society takes shape and many of today's traditions formed. Perfectionism, the Day of Visitation, Convincement, marriage only within, Quaker dress and speech. Minutes, 'with God against the world'. Great Quaker centre in Aberdeen. *Wheting your appetite. This was a very active period though based on silent worship when God spoke to any and men and women were equal as ministers.*

4. 19th century Evangelicals from 1830s-1890s in UK. Liberals 1890s – 1950s but 1870s marks the end of a single Quakerism as UK separates from America and now there are many different expressions of Quakerism – Quietism carries on through Wilburite and Conservative Traditions. Evangelism of various types forms the vast Majority of Quakerism worldwide today. 1830s also marked the end of the idea of Quakerism as the one true church. Not able to enter the professions in England and Wales we see the rise of trade and commercialism in Rowntrees, Cadbury's Fry, Clarke's shoes, and of course banking. 1850 you can now have a gravestone. 1861 plain dress and speech is dropped. . Last bonnet wearer noted in 1933. There are three main divisions in the US – Gurneyites, Hichsites and Wilburites. Many abscond to Methodists.

Summer schools are set up. The Swarthmoor lecture is first given in 1908.

5. Liberal from 1950s on. Puncheon states that Quakers never again become a mass movement. Still dissenting groups in England, i.e. Fritchley retains much of old customs and beliefs, rejoined BYM only in 1968. Liberals on the whole are modest and see no conflict between Science and Religion. Accountability now moves from the Meeting to the individual. The Blue Book arrives in 1959. Together with *Church Government*, the *Book of Christian discipline of London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends* is approved in 1959. The Peace Testimony may have started with an appeal to Charles II but does not reach its present format until 1997.

And so much more. This is quite an inadequate sample of very detailed lectures that were clearly presented. They can but inspire further reading. Thank you Ayrshire for opening your learning space.

Margaret Roy

A Potted History of Friends in Glasgow

Did you know that Glasgow Friend's first property (other than a burial ground) was obtained in 1695, though its location is unknown and that its burial ground in Partick is still accessible? What follows is a wee potted history of Glasgow meeting. Our archivist Paul Burton and I hope you enjoy it!

In the seventeenth century, Scotland was divided geographically into two Quarterly Meetings, centred on Aberdeen and Edinburgh, with the dividing line being roughly that of the River Tay. Aberdeen meeting was made up initially of Kinmuck, Old Meldrum, Aberdeen, Ury, Stonehaven and Montrose and Edinburgh meeting drew from Edinburgh, Glassford and Lessuden (St. Boswells, in the Borders): Hamilton, Glasgow, Linlithgow and Kelso were added later

Between 1717 and 1730, the prominent English Quaker Thomas Story visited Scotland and held very successful meetings both with Friends and in public, although one meeting in Glasgow was disturbed by the unruly behaviour of some college students!

By the end of the 17th Century, there were possibly no more than a handful of Glasgow Friends, just enough to fit into a room in an unnamed inn with some visitors¹, and the Meeting House in Stirling Square had been sold by 1791, the proceeds of over £300 going, ironically, towards the cost of the new Meeting House in Edinburgh, located next to the Pleasance burial ground.² Glasgow was not to have another Meeting House until 1815, when one was built in what is now North Portland Street (in one account, Marwick states it was built in 1804,³ which may be a mis-reading, but his *Short history of Friends in Scotland* gives the later date⁴.

In 1865 Margaret Ann Thompson arrived in Glasgow from Leicester Monthly Meeting with her parents John and Emma and her six siblings. John was a biscuit manufacturer and had come north to work with Gray, Dunn and Co.. Margaret may have been quite young at the time of the move, because 17 years later she married Robert Bird, a successful solicitor (the law firm of Bird & Bird still exists) and she may have been the cause of Robert's joining the Society, as he is recorded as becoming a member by convincement in October 1883.⁵ Margaret's sister Lucy Ellen married Thomas Smeal in 1894, establishing yet another family inter-connection. Along with

the other factors described earlier, the steady stream of new arrivals did much to sustain the revitalisation of the Scottish Society during the nineteenth century.

As indicated earlier, there had also been a major change in the geographic distribution of Scottish Friends, who by the end of the century were concentrated south of the Tay and specifically in two Meetings: of the 344 *members* recorded in 1899, 142 were in Glasgow and 44 in Edinburgh.⁶ Glasgow's position as the largest Meeting was not to be challenged until well into the twentieth century, but its growth is all the more remarkable in light of its almost complete disappearance at the end of the eighteenth century.

Elizabeth Fry's visits to Scotland in 1818, 1834 and 1838 stimulated interest in, and concern for, prison reform and brought about, for example, the formation of a committee of Quaker women in Glasgow to visit the women held in Duke Street Prison.⁷

Glasgow sold the North Portland Street building in 1921 and, despite growing numbers, used rented accommodation until 1944 when 16 Newton Terrace, previously a private residence, was bought. By the 1980s this too was proving inadequate (and expensive to maintain), and the present building in Elmbank Crescent was opened in 1993. For many years our current building had a resident warden and despite its accessibility challenges, it continues to allow a far greater degree of Outreach and space for Quaker activities than Newton Terrace did. And ironically, some of you may know that it was formerly used as the Royal Artillery Club, leading one Friend to suggest that 'Ploughshares House' would be an appropriate name for its new role!

Paul and I hope you have enjoyed this little potted history of Glasgow Meeting. And may we begin this year in confidence of our past as we meet the challenges of our future!

Zemirah Moffat, Glasgow

1. W.F.Miller, 'Old Glasgow Meeting Houses', *Journal of Friends Historical Society* 12 (1) 1915, p6
2. Field, *Glimpses of Early Friends in Scotland*, p.32.
3. W.H.Marwick, 'Friends in nineteenth Century Scotland', *Journal of Friends Historical Society* 46, 1954, p.15
4. Marwick, *A short history of Friends in Scotland*, p.15
5. *Alphabetical list of members of Edinburgh Two Months Meeting*, p.46
6. Religious Society of Friends General Meeting, *List of attenders and members of Meetings 1899*.
7. Burnet, *The rise, progress and decline of the Quaker movement in Scotland*, p.339; H.M.Williams, 'Elizabeth Fry in Scotland', *Friends Quarterly* July, 1948, pp.181-188

News from Local Meetings

Glasgow

Glasgow Meeting is flourishing. Since lockdown we have welcomed so many newcomers that it is difficult to keep track of them. Many of them are younger people but all ages have joined us and some are playing a full part, now on committees and helping with tasks in the Meeting.

We continue with our usual Sunday Meeting for worship (blended, one hour) and Wednesday (blended, half an hour followed by lunch). There is a children's meeting every Sunday and we had a very successful all-age worship recently.

In addition we have a half hour Time for Stillness at 8am on Tuesdays, at present on Zoom only. Experiment with Light continues on Wednesdays at 2pm also Zoom only. Mary Troup invites us to the Quakers in Europe prayer group on Saturday mornings and Margaret Roy to the Deepening Spirituality on Sunday mornings. Some Friends also join the Sunday evening Area Meeting worship.

We held Meeting for Worship outside Faslane Naval base six times. We are usually joined by Wilhemeen from the Peace Camp and sometimes others. Edinburgh Friends find it more difficult to get over now but we were glad to be joined by Friends from Dunblane Meeting in September.

There is a thriving Young Friends group that meets fortnightly, now on Monday evenings, for an epilogue. Once a month this is preceded by a pot luck supper.

During the year we have held pot-luck lunches for everyone and lunches specifically for newcomers. We also have lunch before our Local Meeting for Business on the first Sunday of each month.

A group of us continued to help with community gardening at a site in Maryhill where Stephen Koepplinger has developed a labyrinth, flower bed and orchard. This is in abeyance over the winter.

The Climate Café meets monthly in the Meeting House and provides interested Friends with information on other climate matters.

Quaker walks have continued approximately monthly, some flatter and some more hilly. This provides a further opportunity to get to know each other and we are joined by friends and family members.

Lindesay Burton continues to circulate information by email and our COM (communications, outreach, media) committee is active on social media. We issue a monthly newsletter and keep our website up to date.

On the last Sunday of each month we hold a special collection for a charity, chosen in turn by members of the Meeting.

Our strategy group is continuing to consider the future development of our building and a feasibility study covering use of the top floor and disabled access is expected shortly. This will go to Trustees and Area Meeting. In the meantime we have had the building re-roofed as there was serious water ingress on various occasions.

Daphne Wassermann

Dumfries

From Dumfries newsletter

Dear Dumfries Friends- as some of you know I have had a very difficult year with a bereavement followed by worsening ME. There were periods where I didn't feel able to drive or attend Meeting for Worship at all

I'd like to share with you something that has really helped. I have been attending the Zoom online Meeting for Worship which is every Sunday, opening at 7.15 for brief chat and worship starting at 7.30 for half an hour. People can minister if they wish. Afterwards Friends can chat for half an hour. It is open to all members and attenders of West of Scotland Area Meeting and hosted by Kate Gulliver and often eldred by Michael Hutchinson. There are usually 8 or so people and it is very friendly.

Some of those attending are too unwell or disabled to attend their local physical MfW. The illness/disability may be temporary or more-long lasting. For some their local meeting is just too far away. For some it is a nice way to meet other Quakers from different parts of the Area Meeting. There are some people that attend most weeks and others who come and go. I have found it really good getting to know new people. I've especially enjoyed meeting people from the islands and hearing a little about island life. When I have been unable to attend Dumfries and CD meetings it has given me a lifeline to our Quaker community, both spiritually and socially. I know not everyone likes or can cope with Zoom meetings. However, for those of you that can tolerate Zoom- I do urge you to use this if you feel isolated, are too unwell to attend physical meeting or would like to meet Quakers from further afield. Although it is great to see our friends physically (in the room), I find Zoom MfW can be surprisingly spiritually uplifting.

There are similar Zoom meetings organised by Woodbrooke and Friends House and many other Quaker groupings. A friend of mine has attended South Africa MfW via Zoom!

Penny Lilley

Living adventurously in Dunblane meeting

It is nearing the end of the triennium and our nominations group have not been able to bring forward a name for either clerk or assistant clerk – indeed we have not had an assistant clerk for the past two years. So what should we do? Well, we have had a rota for assistant clerk for the past year and that has worked reasonably well so we thought we might try that for clerk. Fortunately six Friends with experience of clerking have come forward to make up the rota – each serving for two months rather than three years. It will be an experiment but hopefully one that will work and who knows what this might lead to. Meanwhile our present clerk will continue as correspondence clerk to give some continuity.

Susan Mitchell

South West Scotland Cluster Meeting

October 29, 2023 A DIALOGUE - LOVE - PEACE Frances Duncan

Friends from the three Quaker Meetings in the Cluster - Dumfries, Castle Douglas and Wigtown - met at Castle Douglas on the 5th Sunday of October to share a Meeting for Worship.

After an initial time of silence, a friend spoke about their concern over polarisation of views when political eruptions break out. It is their opinion that DIALOGUE between people is important, and that aligning with one side or another without any DIALOGUE between people is extremely unhelpful.

As the Meeting progressed we listened to further contributions .

One friend spoke about the importance of LOVE - basic to Christianity and we heard about the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the formation of the PEACE Studies department at Bradford University.

Among us was a friend who had taken a degree in PEACE Studies at Bradford. They spoke to me about the contents of the degree programme. Students are taught about the background of various political schisms that have occurred throughout the world, and also the fact that few societies exist without political unrest of some kind. The

degree focuses on more than PEACE between groups and nations and in societies. The development of inner PEACE within individuals and group members is encouraged, to help people on a personal basis.

The lyrics of the song 'War' describe a 'crying out' that has appealed to many since it was first recorded in 1969. I believe that the words of the last verse will resonate with many Quakers.

WAR

*Peace, love and understanding, tell me
Is there no place for them today?*

*They say we must fight for to keep our freedom
But Lord knows there's got to be a better way.*

Songwriters Barrett Strong/Norman Whitfield. Original recording by Temptations.

Peter Morton

Mull and Iona

Language and Friends

As clerk of a local meeting seldom do I find myself communicating with people that are not involved with Quakers, but recently I was asked to write to someone on behalf of the Meeting. I used our letterhead for the letter. The person I was writing to is a Gaelic speaker and English is a second language to her.

Mull has two Gaelic medium schools, many learners of Gaelic, and it's use is growing. The only reason it is less widely spoken is because of external interference and politics. Gaelic is the indigenous language of this area.

I felt uncomfortable writing to this person and the discomfort still sits with me. I am learning to speak Gaelic, as are others in our meeting. The discomfort I feel is about how we show ourselves as a Meeting.

Socially and professionally I have engaged with people from many different linguistic backgrounds, and have always used the medium of English because that has been the indigenous language, but here it isn't, it is the language forced on many and brought in by folk like me.

Our letterhead is in English, should we make it bilingual? Does it matter. Do other Friends have any experience of this? How have you dealt with it? Or what do you think we should do?

Rob Claxton-Ingham

Additional Meetings for Worship

Time for Stillness

Every Tuesday, 8.00 to 8.30am

This is on Zoom only at present.

Friends and visitors are welcome to join us on Zoom, 7.50am for an 8am start. After 30 minutes stillness, there is time for some conversation.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84827220311?pwd=ESsbnvJlkQgeuWh9PWkM76UoTnuCKs.1>

Meeting ID: 848 2722 0311

Passcode: 123456

Note that this link is not listed on the Meeting Zoom website but should still work.

Deepening Spirituality

Early morning meeting at 10am on Sundays 7 and 21 January

This is a half hour space for those who want a deeper connection with the divine, God/Jesus, the God of your Heart. In the full half hour of silence, our experience is that we can go deeper in our connection. One Friend will give a brief introduction to set the tone and there is time afterwards to share thoughts and experiences, and still get to your usual MfW at 11am.

Any queries contact Margaret Roy.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7613798296?pwd=enZDWS9iRHNHUIZR2dBb3N2YjBoZz09>

Meeting ID: 761 379 8296

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://zoom.us/j/5493321030?pwd=YnVDMnpKZEhXcTZYUmNadHorN3MrUT09>

Meeting ID: 549 332 1030

Password: 650206

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

Young Friends Monday Night Epilogue

8 and 22 January at 07:30 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88133736587?pwd=dFZGNXpaSFhhUis4Ti8vcGJiYIVEQT09>

Meeting ID: 881 3373 6587

Passcode: 623455

This style of worship is inspired by regular epilogues held at the residential gatherings of Young Friends General Meeting the community for Quakers in Britain aged 18 - 35, find out more here: <https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/>

Experiment with light

Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86735884524?pwd=WIFJNHRQd1NPTGNsVmE5QmkyTFVBZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 3588 4524

Passcode: 139515

Quakers in Europe Prayer Group

Saturdays 08:30 to 9.30 am

For details contact Mary Troup, marytroup2001@gmail.com or 07776146265

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

13 th January 2024	Area Meeting	Glasgow and Milngavie
4 th March	Area Meeting	by Zoom
20 th April	Area Meeting	South Cluster: Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Wigtown
3 rd June	Area Meeting	by Zoom
17 th August	Area Meeting	West Cluster: Ayrshire, Argyll, Arran, Islay & Jura, Mull & Iona
5 th October	Area Meeting	East Cluster Dunblane and Lanark



Hold in the Light

In these very difficult times our healing ministry has never been more important.

How much time do you set aside in the Light to hold friends, neighbours and your Meeting, and others. Do not feel you cannot make a difference. It takes only 25 of us, five minutes before Meeting, to create more peace in the world.

There is a meeting of Friends Fellowship of Healing on first Monday of each Month. Next Meeting is 5th February, 7.30.

Contact nicola.james53@gmail.com to add names.

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions or the next issue of WSQN is 15th March 2024

And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not sent in articles over 1000 words in Word format only to the editor at margaret.roy@btinternet.com.

Helpers 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.