

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

July 2018

Clerk's Letter	p. 2
Report on Area Meeting 11 th June	p. 3
Britain Yearly Meeting	p. 4
Who was Thomas Kelly?	p. 6
Militarism in Schools	p. 7
Allanton Peace Sanctuary	p. 9
Northern Friend Peace Board	p.12
People Power Wins	p.13
Violence Against Women Concern	p.13
Engender	p.14
Interfaith Women's Get-together	p.15
Thomas Group – A Day of Prayer	p.16
Quaker Week	p.18
Seeking to know one another in the things that are eternal	p.19
A Sufi Prayer by Hazrat Inayat Khan	p.25
Book Review – Jesus, the Teacher Within	p.26
NEW BOOKS in Glasgow Library	p.27
Quaker Gallivanterers at Wigtown	p.28
Islay – Kindness, hospitality and a ship wreck	p.29
What would you write to Donald Trump?	p.30
A Story	p.31

Clerk's Letter, July 2018

I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.' Isaac Newton.

This quotation is one I use often for reflection. I find there is a lot think about it in it. I like the water's edge scene in my mind's eye, based on numerous forays on beaches. Like many, I have the evidence about the house in little saucers or on their own: special pebbles and shells found and prized.

I find the image helps as a discipline, to put everyday life in perspective. Am I distracting myself to avoid exploring deeper reality? Am I open enough to seeing further? There are times when it is necessary even to be distracted and to enjoy the pebbles we find in life, but we need to get back to that deepness we meet in worship. I like the idea of an 'ocean' of truth – one never ceases from exploring its depths. It is reminder that our view is always partial, and we should remain open to new insight.

Another way to describe truth was first given me through the 1977 Swarthmore Lecture (given each year at Yearly Meeting). This was Damaris Parker-Rhodes' Truth: a path and not a possession. The book is well worth a read. Damaris was fun and anarchistic, blowing through us nice and organised and ordered Quakers like a tropical storm. I believe she diverted from the lecture text agreed with the grave Lecture Committee and launched off at exciting unagreed tangents. It was certainly riveting. It is a good lesson for me now as I find myself on a Quaker body with responsibility for that same Committee, and Damaris is there in my mind when we approve its direction, asking awkward questions.

The idea of truth as a path, rather than something we can own, allows us to take what we find more in the context of where we are at any one time, treating it as provisional to what may come further along the path. This can be another discipline, to let go of ownership of what we discover but use it as a tool to help us where we are, expecting new light to come as we progress.

*These somewhat tangled metaphors still help me. Damaris taught me to see life as a journey and Newton that truth is unfinished – the ocean is so vast and has unplumbed depths. We have to let go of the desire for certainty, and our Quaker discipline teaches that by the waiting in silence and listening. To listen you have to stop being preoccupied with what's inside and look outwards. This isn't new, or even just Quaker. I think of the English mystical book from the 14th century: *The Cloude of Unknowyng*. It describes how to be courageous enough to surrender one's mind and ego to the realm of "unknowing", at which point one may begin to glimpse the nature of 'God'. What George Fox and others called 'letting go'.*

Michael Hutchison, Glasgow

Area Meeting by Telephone -11 June 2018

Around 30 Friends gathered by phone for Area Meeting on Monday 11 June. Some of us had had some technical hitches which necessitated leaving and rejoining the conference a few times, but generally speaking the technology worked well and we covered a lot of ground, expertly clerked as usual.

After the pre-call period of worship, the welcome and the roll-call, we settled into a good half-hour of what is always my favourite bit of Area Meeting - membership matters. We listened to four moving accounts of spiritual journeys and explorations - all different and all inspiring, and we learn so much from hearing of the lives of others - and as a result welcomed into membership Wendy Reynolds, Anne Macarthur, Ursula Edge and Kathryn Allan. And supporters were appointed to meet with yet another applicant. I cannot help feeling that West Scotland is bucking the national trend when it comes to membership numbers.

We moved on to news of conferences and events, and learned of the opportunity for two teenage Friends to attend a Young Quakers Participation Day in October, meeting alongside Meeting for Sufferings. It will require a bit of traveling, but we know how inspiring participants have found such days, and hope that Nominations will manage to come up with a couple of names to attend. We were reminded by Daphne Wassermann at the same time that the Francis Camfield Trust is always very eager to help with costs to enable young Friends to attend such events.

We then heard from Martin Mansell, who is our representative on the GM Parliamentary Engagement Group, of the report from the Scottish Parliament relating to our concerns about militarisation in schools. Our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Mairi Campbell-Jack, together with ForcesWatch, has worked very hard on this and both groups are pleased with the recommendations of the report (<https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/PPC/2018/6/4/PE1603--Ensuring-greater-scrutiny--guidance-and-consultation-on-armed-forces-visits-to-schools-in-Scotland#Introduction>). The Scottish Government now have two months in which to respond to this report, and of course this may give us further opportunities for advocacy.

The proposed revision of Quaker Faith & Practice had been the major topic at Yearly Meeting in May, and will be again at General Meeting in Inverness this month. The process to start a revision has been approved, and Central Nominations Committee are now looking for 24 Friends to form a Revision Committee. If this is something you

feel you could contribute to, or if you know someone else who you think has something to offer (and you've checked that they are willing!) then go to <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service> and get in touch.

We considered the report of the BYM Sustainability Review Group and heard more of the issues involved from Martin Mansell. We look forward to hearing more in August, after a meeting to be held in July to discern how this concern can be taken forward to a new level.

Our Treasurer, Margaret Morton, told us of a sum of nearly £2,500 passed to Area Meeting by Dunblane LM following the closure of a Shared Interest account, and Dunblane Friends are to be asked how they would like this sum to be used. Margaret also raised the issue of the costs of taking part in AM by phone, which all fall to the participants and can be quite considerable. It was pointed out that Friends appointed by their Local Meetings could claim the costs back from AM, and we are encouraged to do so. Meanwhile, our technology group, with advice from Alastair Reid who has experience of products used by other Quaker committees, will explore alternatives to PowwowNow.

Lastly we heard from Hervey Gibson of a proposed visit to Glasgow by a young South African named Nico, and of Hervey's trip back to visit Friends in Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting, and we asked the Clerk to provide him with a traveling minute and a letter of greetings from West Scotland Friends.

All that accomplished, and we were still only just a few minutes past our scheduled end time of 9.00pm!

Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura

Britain Yearly Meeting 2018

Having gone to Yearly Meetings off and on for the last forty-odd years, I find them very special gatherings, extremely well organised yet never the same twice running. The weather was hot and sunny, unusually for a Yearly Meeting held in early May, and was well attended. As ever, I met old Friends and met new ones, had long conversations and enjoyed meals together. Scots, especially from West Scotland, made a special effort to be there, though of course some younger ones were prevented as the external school examinations were about to begin.

This YM was different in that we were being asked to consider making a decision that could lead us to a period of intense scrutiny of the Society's theological position. It became clear that this revision of Quaker Faith and Practice would require us, not only to revise this anthology of Quaker writings and agree the most suitable form in which to publish it, but impel us to face some difficult questions of faith and identity. I thought Friends in the main sessions were generally good at upholding the clerks and observing the discipline of Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs. The settling into silence of a large gathering such as this is one of the amazing moments of every Yearly Meeting. These days the pattern of clerking is more informal, and less remote than in some earlier years, though the standard of clerking remains an example to us all. Elders and the staff provide wonderful support, as does the Arrangements Committee, which keeps an eye on how things are going.

Was it worth spending so much time on the one item of business? I felt the Agenda Committee took a risk with this as ministry could have easily have become repetitive and banal, but when the decision was taken we all felt it was, to use the well-known phrase, "in right ordering" . The next few years will be interesting times for us.

I went to only one of the extra special group meetings (the Friends Historical Society) but as almost everyone who was at Yearly Meeting, I also went to the Swarthmore Lecture, though I found it below standard and not the best advertisement for the Society, being poorly presented and with little profound content. Finally, I volunteered for eldering and for door-keeping. It is worth considering such opportunities as they give you a chance to feel even more part of the gathered meeting. Go next year.

Robin Davis, Dunblane

My impressions of my first Britain Yearly Meeting

I attended my first Quaker Meeting about 18 year ago.

That I only attended my first BYM this year is something of a puzzle to me, now that I have been.

It turned out not to have been the plunge I had anticipated. I felt it was easy and gentle and I felt upheld mightily by the process and my Friends from my Local and Area Meetings.

I do remember anticipating that I would be badgered into doing things and overwhelmed by the enormity of what Friends are up to in Britain and in the world at large.

In the event I was not badgered into over-committing myself but nevertheless hugely impressed, by the dedication of countless hours by countless people to the task of steering the ship that is BYM.

One of the things that struck me was that our community, like all communities I have ever known, is beset with conflict. Friends though have conflict resolution skills which are second to none! They also have the experience of ‘holding in the Light’ which is so central.

I encountered mourning from some and joyous recognition by others concerning the idea that theist and non-theist could be members.

What has remained with me is that I was in the right place and ready for BYM this year. Ready to show up and stand up and take my space in the great circle of Quakers who attended.

One of the many things that delighted me about BYM was the way the staff worked as a team. All I met were obviously committed to being there for us in many tangible ways: There was always a warm welcome to every query at the front desk, they may have felt inundated but it didn’t show. When QDEG wanted to try out the lift to the stage a few staff members came over to help us and see that it worked properly and encourage us. When one meeting was hugely oversubscribed and more chairs were required staff communicated well and sorted the problem out without any fuss. Staff in the bookshop, cafe and restaurant were so helpful and friendly despite the numbers and the heat. Everyone was kind and seemed genuinely pleased to be there!

This ethos among a staff team is commendable and so rare nowadays. I certainly appreciated it!

Mary Kennedy, Glasgow

Who was Thomas Kelly?

Thomas R. Kelly wrote one of the most treasured of Quaker books, *A Testament to Devotion*. In *Quaker, faith & practice*, he is quoted more often than James Naylor, Francis Howgill, and many other Quaker worthies, yet Thomas Kelly is a modern Quaker. Born 4th June 1893 in south-western Ohio, he was alive until 1941, i.e. he knew the first and second world wars that so challenged Quaker principles. Born into a Quaker family he attended a Quaker school and college. His first interest was science, especially chemistry which he taught in several colleges. He seemed to move around a bit. At Haverford ‘he came under the spell of Rufus Jones. . . he sensed . . . a search for truth in which his religious hunger and his passion for science might both be given their due.’ During the First World War, he went to England to work with German prisoners of war. With his wife Lael, he spent 15 months in Berlin between the wars helping to reorganize the international centres that fed German children. Back in USA he was invited in 1924 to join the staff at Pendle Hill where he taught a philosophy

course entitled *The Quest for Reality*. The Second World War found him with the American Friends Service Committee.

You will find a more detailed biography as an introduction to the edition of *A Testament of Devotion*, available in the Glasgow Library, or on the bookshelves of many Friends! Here are some quotes that might help us through these troubled times:

In worship we have our neighbours to right and left, before and behind, yet the Eternal Presence is over all and beneath all. Worship does not consist in achieving a mental state of concentrated isolation from one's fellows. But in the depth of common worship it is as if we found our separate lives were all one life, within whom we live and move and have our being. QF&P 2.36

The light for which the world longs is already shining. It is shining into the darkness, but the darkness does not apprehend it. It is shining into the darkness but the darkness is not overcoming it. It is shining in many a soul, and already the new order has begun within the kingdom of the heart. It is shining in many a small group and creating a heavenly-earthly fellowship of children of the light. It will always shine and lead many into the world of need, that they may bear it up into the heart of God. QF&P 26.62

Margaret Roy, Lanark

Militarism in Schools

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group achieves some success.

Over the last three years the PEWG has been working on a petition to the Scottish Parliament which seeks to provide guidance and monitoring of visits to schools by the armed forces, so that there is more balanced and realistic information presented to children, which takes account of the unique nature of armed forces careers and that parents should be consulted about whether they are happy for their child to take part such visits. The Petitions Committee finally reported on 4th June and we were pleased that their recommendations mostly addressed our concerns.

The Committee recommended that:

- the Scottish government carries out a child rights and wellbeing assessment in relation to armed forces visits to schools to ensure that content provided across all visit types is appropriate for the agreed purpose and information resources are available which allow a balance of views and that this is not solely a question of

balance provided in presentations by the armed forces but more widely within the curriculum.

- information about armed forces visits to schools should be collected and published by the Ministry of Defence on an ongoing basis.
- that the issue of consultation on participation in armed forces visits to schools should be included in the child rights and wellbeing impact assessment.

The government is required to respond to the report within two months.

The issue of balance in the curriculum is welcome as it provides an opening for the work that the PEWG is undertaking to ensure that peace education is included in the curriculum (see below). We are hoping to meet with Education Scotland to look at how the Curriculum for Excellence could accommodate peace education. Members of the PEWG have gathered information on what Quakers are doing elsewhere in the UK including the work of Peacemakers in the W. Midlands and Wales and the recently launched Peace Week materials from QPSW. We would welcome contact with any Quakers involved in schools to share their experience. However, it is not the function of the PEWG to produce materials for use in schools but to influence government and education policy in Scotland.

We obtained considerable media coverage about the Petitions Committee report including large articles in the Herald, The Scotsman and the National as well as on Radio Scotland.

On a related issue we asked Ross Greer MSP to table a number of questions on our behalf about a MOD announcement referring to a cadet force being introduced to a Scottish state school funded by the LIBOR fines. John Swinney finally replied that the announcement referred to Albyn School, an independent school in Aberdeen. He said that Scottish Government policy remains that for publicly funded schools, any links with Cadets will be community-based Cadet Units which work with a number of state secondary schools and local authorities, rather than UK Government model where the school ‘hosts’ a Cadet Unit which does not contribute to the curriculum. There are currently nine Cadet Units operating in Scotland, and this could potentially increase, up to a maximum of twelve. £500,000 LIBOR funding was allocated to support the Scottish Cadet Forces and this is due to come to an end in 2020.

We are continuing work on our other priorities– economic justice and Land Value Tax. In September we look forward to asking for GM's help in discerning the guidance of the Spirit in the work we are proposing and to finding ways in which meetings and individuals can support our work.

Martin Mansell, Glasgow

It is always easier to fight for one's principles than to live by them. Alfred Adler

Allanton Peace Sanctuary and the 'Peace Prevails' programme for schools

My friend Glenda Thornton works at Allanton World Peace Sanctuary, north of Dumfries. She trains teachers in Scotland and the rest of the UK to lead classes in peace education. I decided to interview her so that Friends can learn about her work. I thought it was particularly appropriate now given many Scottish Quakers' unease about military activities in schools and our desire for some peace education to balance it.

Allanton World Peace Sanctuary, near Dumfries is the European Sanctuary of the World Peace Prayer Society. The Society was founded in 1955 by the Japanese teacher, philosopher and poet, Masahisa Goi (1916-1980) who dedicated his life to peace and humanity. Following the devastation of the Second World War, Mr Goi looked for a way to bring peace to all people, and the prayer and affirmation **May Peace Prevail on Earth** came to him, in a moment of great inspiration. He realised that these words express the common wish of all humanity, transcending all boundaries of race, religion and politics. He envisioned that their gentle, yet powerful effect, would activate global peace consciousness.

Penny- Can you tell me a bit more about the history of the Peace Prayer Society and it's centre at Allanton?

Glenda- Since that early inception we have just celebrated 30 years of the World Peace Prayer Society, 25 years of the Society in Munich, Germany, and 20 years at the Allanton Peace Sanctuary in Dumfries and Galloway. There are 4 centres of the Society, in the USA, Germany, Allanton and Japan.

The Society spreads it's message through Peace Poles of which there are 250,000, across every country in the world. Each Peace Pole has "May Peace Prevail on Earth", inscribed in several different languages on it. In Peace Prayer Society ceremonies around the world, participants use all the flags of the world that are recognised by the United Nations. The Society members believe that through our thoughts, words and actions we make a difference to others and the world. We use the symbolism of the flag ceremony to send peace to all the countries of the world.

Penny- I have taken part in the flag ceremony at Allanton and found it profoundly moving and powerful. Penny- how long have you been employed by and part of the Peace Prayer Society and what is your job?

Glenda- I have been at Allanton for about 18 years. We have a lot of groups staying here, particularly refugees who come through organisations like the Red Cross, and other groups from around the world. Although we all work together to look after groups at the centre, my specialist area is education.

In 2001 we had a lot of peace educators at our Peace Festival and after discussion with them I started the specific peace education programme in 2004. I wanted children to understand what peace actually meant for themselves personally- to experience "May

Peace Prevail on Earth”, and to help achieve that. To reach as many children as possible I trained teachers to run the programme. It needed to be part of the curriculum and fulfil certain areas so that teachers would deliver it as part of their everyday work. It needed to be simple and have lesson plans and resources.

The original “May Peace Prevail on Earth” school programme consisted of lesson plan books and I trained the teachers in a one day, face to face, training session.

Three or four years ago I decided that in order to reach further children, nationally and internationally an online teachers course needed to be developed. I managed to get some Lottery money to do a pilot scheme using Lockerbie Primary School as guinea pigs. The programme is for primary schools initially but I am developing it for secondary schools as well.

The new online form of the “Peace Prevails” programme works like this- there need to be 3 teachers from a school who work on the programme together. If the school is a small village school I will teach teachers from a cluster of schools. The teachers discuss between themselves and fill in a template which they feedback to me so I know they have really engaged with the programme. Once they have worked their way through the whole programme and their feedback has been good they become licensed to use it in their school. Once they are licensed they can utilise the programme throughout the whole school.

At present there are two parts to the programme- one for 5-7 year olds and one for 8-11 year olds. Many schools in the UK have used Glenda’s programme. It would be great if more Scottish schools took it up. Are there any Quaker Primary School teachers who could use it in their schools? Below is a small summary of the programme and the lovely mandala image that is used.

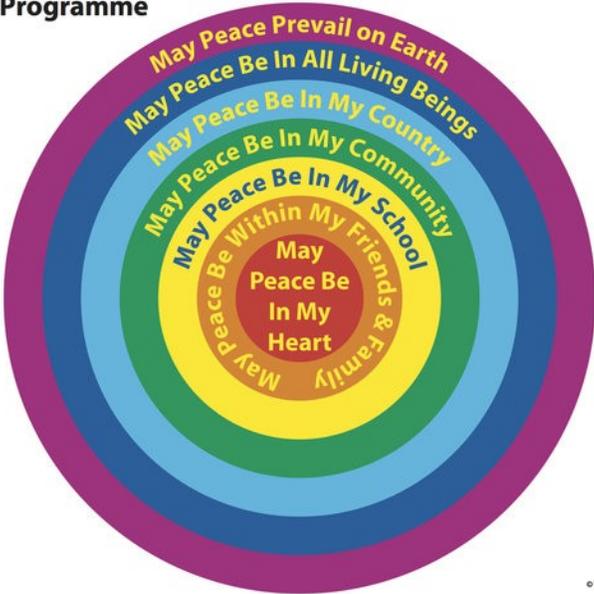
5 – 7 Programme	
Lessons 1 - 4	May Peace be in my Heart
Lesson 5	May Peace be within my Friends
Lesson 6	May Peace be within my Family
Lesson 7	May Peace be in my School
Lesson 8	May Peace be in my Community
Review Lesson	

8 – 11 Programme	
Lesson 1 - 2	May Peace be in my Heart
Lesson 3	May Peace be within my Friends and Family
Lesson 4	May Peace be in my School
Lesson 5	May Peace be in my Community
Lesson 6	May Peace be in my School
Lesson 7	May Peace be in All Living Beings

Lesson 8	May Peace Prevail on Earth
Review Lesson	

Glenda showed me the programme online. You can get an impression of it at- www.peaceprevails.education and looking at the Peace Prevails Schools Programme and the Teacher Training programme handouts.

**'May Peace Prevail on Earth'
Schools Programme**



© The World Peace Prayer Society, Scotland

Penny Lilley, Castle Douglas



Northern Friends Peace Board

Met at Glasgow Meeting House on 23rd June

Our meeting was held against the background of the Glasgow Arms Fair which was being held next week: some members took part in the morning die-in and demonstration the Buchanan Galleries before the Meeting.

NFPB read out and added their statement on this event to the one already distributed by Glasgow Friends.

Janet Fenton updated us about Nuclear Weapons matters including the work of ICAN (International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons), Christian CND and the initiative “Acting in Good Faith”, “Britannia Waives the Rules”, and reminded us of the International Rally and protest at Faslane on 22 September and how we can best support it.

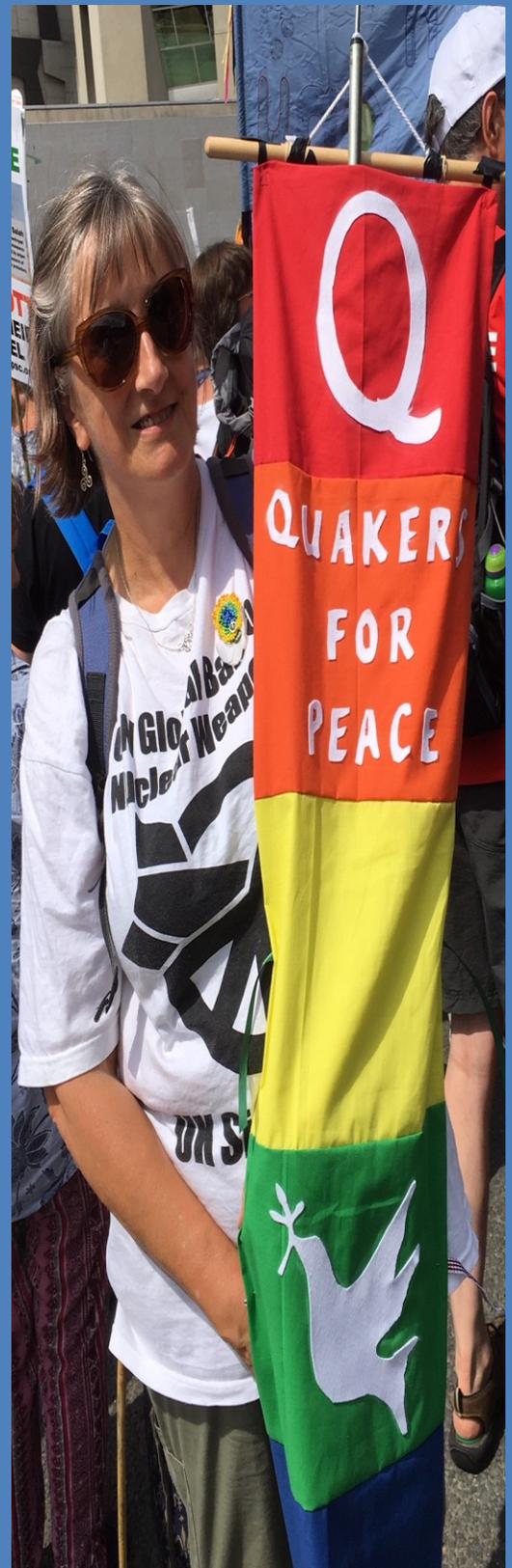
“Rethinking Security” is a follow-on to our work on “Sustainable Security” and is a growing area of work for NFPB. We are planning a Conference in Scotland next year and are offering workshops for Meetings also.

Mairi Campbell Jack gave us an update on her Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Work; a petition from Quakers and Forces Watch was submitted to the Scottish Parliament regarding school visits by the Armed Forces. It is hoped that there will be a Child’s Rights Impact assessment in the near future.

Also Scottish CND have set up a charity called Peace Education Scotland.

We spent time in considering the issue of Identity and Peace and felt that the contributions showed that this conversation should be taken further. We thank May Alice Mansell and Glasgow Friends for their hospitality.

Douglas Shaw, Lanark



People Power Wins

Friends, as well as many other groups, protested to Glasgow City Council about the The Undersea Defence Technology 2018 event which recently visited Glasgow. Around 200 protestors assembled outside the SEEC on June 26th, the first day of the event and faced some 60 police (including 6 mounted police) whose main role seemed to be to prevent the delegates from being inconvenienced. A number of councillors spoke in support of the demonstration and a few days later we heard that the City Council will no longer allow such events to take place on Council facilities. We noted that the event was sponsored by Glasgow Life an ‘arms length’ body of the City Council, which according to its objectives is “a charitable organisation whose mission is stated as ‘to inspire the city’s citizens and visitors to lead richer and more active lives through culture, sport and learning.



Violence Against Women Concern

A Threshing Meeting on violence against women took place at Glasgow Meeting House on 15th July. The aim was to consider the work that has been taking place over the last few months, led by Kate Arnot, Mary Kennedy and Margaret Roy, and to discern ways forward. This earlier work has involved Scottish and international Friends and has included meetings on specific issues including Women and Power, Underage Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.

Ten Friends were present: several from Glasgow as well as Friends from Milngavie, Castle Douglas and Polmont Local Meetings. Feelings expressed about violence against women – and about our Quaker position on this – were many and varied but there was an overall sense that the process has been an empowering one. As well as feelings of horror, anger and frustration at the continued violence suffered by women across the world, as well as locally, there were also feelings of hope. There is a recognition that change is possible and the current public/media appetite for talking more openly about gender- and family-based violence gives us an opportunity to move forward.

We recognise that there is a specific Quaker role that arises from our Peace Testimony and our Quaker stance against violence in all its forms. We feel a need for self-education and for an attitude of openness, lack of judgement and offering of sanctuary to those experiencing family- and gender-based- violence. There may be opportunities within our Quaker structures, as well as alongside other groups with more experience of working in this area, to make positive changes. We have not previously been specific, in our Quaker writings, about violence against women, nor have we said much about this on our social media platforms. Future meetings will consider these leadings and how they might be put into practice.

Helen Minnis, Glasgow

Engender

On Wednesday 27th June I headed off to Edinburgh for a celebration of 25 years of Engender in the Garden Room at the Parliament at Holyrood.

Engender's vision is to secure social and economic equality for all groups of women in Scotland. To this end Engender are engaged in advocating for feminist policies and politics. Here in Scotland we are seeing achievements in both directions under Nicola Sturgeon, our First Minister who delivered a moving speech at the celebrations.

Engender calls for :

'women's unpaid care work to be counted and recognised....clever, bold, imaginative women in our Scottish Parliament, in council chambers and around boardroom tables....women given the freedom to make their communities a better place....universal childcare; a media full of women's voices; a safe, dry, comfortable place for every woman and her children to sleep at night; and women with enough money in their pockets to buy the things they need for themselves and their families'

In their recent Gender Matters Road Map sub-titled Towards women's equality in Scotland, Engender looked at 10 areas :

1. Care
2. Education and training
3. Employment and labour market
4. Health
5. Media, arts and sports
6. Politics and public life
7. Public space
8. Social security
9. Violence against women
10. Women's rights and fair economy.

The Road Map provides policy makers with recommendations presented in stages representing a linear progression of policy formation and implementation leading up to 2030. It urges that action for women's equality should not be undertaken without consulting a wide range of women's and equality organisations. Women face inequality in all areas of Scottish life, and so the policy solutions must also be cross-cutting. In short Engender wants a good life for all Scotland's women.

Engender is all about collaboration with Scotland's women to work out how to move this agenda forward.

For more information:

Engender, 1a Haddington Place, Edinburgh, EH7 4AE. 0131 558 9596
info@engender.org.uk www.engender.org.uk Twitter: @EngenderScot
Facebook: /engender

Mary Kennedy, Glasgow

Interfaith Women's Get Together in Glasgow

My children taught me the value and importance of creativity. Those precious first images and objects, produced with such intensity, are treasured to this day.

So it was fun for me to release my inner child at a recent gathering organised jointly by Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow. The Women's Get Together, celebrating all that we have in common, and remembering Jo Cox, was held at the Interfaith Scotland's HQ in Glasgow.

Over thirty women of many faiths gathered for a relaxed informal time of fellowship together, centred on some simple art activities. Two of these were faith based: a Hindu

‘Diya’ lamp, traditionally placed around homes, temples and other buildings at the time of the Divali Festival; and a Sikh ‘Kalgi’, similar to a brooch originally worn by kings. The 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and his son wore Kalgis on their turbans, as the turban is equivalent to a crown for a Sikh. Nowadays it is worn by a Sikh groom at his wedding. Other activities included stone painting, glass painting, card making and colouring.

Most participants came from the Glasgow area, and included some refugees, but two of us travelled up from the Dumfries area and a few came through from Edinburgh. The room was buzzing with easy conversation, (no structured discussions or heavy theology), throughout the activities, and we all enjoyed lunch together before departing.

I was reminded of how much I have enjoyed ‘Appleseed’ sessions at Woodbrooke and Yearly Meeting Gatherings over the years, where simple art activities form the responses to talks and presentations. But I found none at Coventry last year and I think there is only one in this year’s Woodbrooke programme, so perhaps it’s popularity is waning.

Jan Lethbridge, Dumfries



Thomas Group: A Day of Prayer

A small group of us met at Glasgow Meeting House on 26th May following up our last study on Kenosis (emptying the self before engaging with the Divine). On this

occasion, only four local meetings were represented – we thought the glorious weather had encouraged others to seek the blessing of the Sun.

After our silence, Alastair Reid led us off with a consideration of the Lord's Prayer as containing many aspects of Judaic prayer, in particular we recognised the Kaddish, the mourning prayer. Jews believed their prayers should include three elements: Loving praise, gratitude and thanksgiving, reverence – 'a Jew would not rush into god's presence treating him as if he was a man'. They also recognised their imperfection before the Divine. As usual Alastair provided us with ample handouts that included looking at Matthew's version of the prayer that Jesus taught from a Jewish perspective. A key aspect of this prayer was the underlying economic and political factors affecting Jewish peasants during the Roman occupation of Israel.

Bob Mandeville joined in bringing in the Aramaic original language of Jesus and how this gives a very different psychological context or relationship to our world. We were aided by the work of Neil Douglas-Kloitz re the Aramaic translation. We compared the Luke and Matthew versions. In Judaism the name is never mentioned so Jesus does not speak of God in some gospels. Hence Abba or Abwoon.

The morning was summed up with a short video of John Dominic Crossan on prayer. It was a rich environment in which we shared our experiences.

After lunch Margaret Roy spoke of different levels of consciousness from a Buddhist and psychological perspective. We did an exercise using sound to feel a different perspective, talking afterwards of the use of sound in church, in Gregorian chant and how organ music can rise up the stone columns of some cathedrals.

Phillida Ball then led us into centring prayer, giving us its history and her experience. The four Rs: Resist no thought, Retain no thought, React to no thought, Return ever so gently to the sacred word. Intention is everything. In centring prayer you choose a word to repeat that grounds you and brings your wandering mind back to centre. Mention was made of the True and False Self.

We finished with a short video clip of Richard Rohr on centring prayer. Daily (weekly or monthly) meditations from him can be obtained from meditations@cac.org.

We went home renewed.

Margaret Roy, Lanark Meeting

A book of postcards with suggestions is available through publications@quaker.org.uk Here are some

Materials 6 enquirers packs can be sent free of charge to your meeting. These include

- Advices & queries
- The Quaker Way leaflet
- A concertina leaflet exploring Quaker values
- ‘Getting ready for Quaker worship’
- Being a Quaker by Geoffrey Durham

Other materials include

- ‘I am a Quaker and this is why’ produced by and for young people
- ‘Who are the Quakers – an info pack request card
- Gold business-shaped cards with 6 answers to the question ‘What do Quakers say’
- Exhibition materials – buy or hire.

Ideas

Host a speaker. Set up a talk. List of speakers available at speakers@quaker.org.uk

Invite to a film – contact Alastair Fuller, Head of Ministry & Outreach

alistair@quaker.org.uk

Spotlight on food poverty, sustainability.

Telling your story on local media.

Facebook – for support see www.facebook.com/groups/ QLNSocialMediaCluster

An afternoon tea party.

Spiritual Hospitality – commit to meeting up with at least one enquirer or interested friend who shares Quaker values and/or an interest in community or spiritual searching.

Need help? Ideas or support?

Contact our Outreach team -

Rosalind Mitchell, Nuala Watt, Mary Kennedy, Tina Cunningham, and Paul Burton.

QUAKER WEEK

OCTOBER 2018

Some ideas for
action]

Seeking to know one another in the things which are eternal

This edition of West Scotland Quaker News continues the series of interviews with a number of Friends. The first set of interviews was on Prayer; this time a different group of Friends discuss their experiences, beliefs and thoughts on Quaker Discipline. In addition to the interviews, there is an introduction by Gill Reid to provide a context for considering Quaker Discipline. And the prompts provided to help these Friends consider the topic are also included, to let each of us reflect on our own experiences of Quaker Discipline.

Thanks to all the Friends involved. I am still looking for volunteers for future topics. The next one is Simplicity, to be followed by Spiritual Discernment. Please let me know if you would like to contribute, or to suggest topics.

Sheila Semple, Glasgow Quaker Meeting

Prompts for Quaker Discipline

- What does the phrase ‘Quaker Discipline’ mean to you?
- What is specifically Quaker about it?
- Quaker Faith and Practice is subtitled *The Book of Christian Discipline*. Do you see Christian discipline the same as Quaker discipline?
- How does it play out in your life, what is your personal discipline?
- How have you learned it/been taught it?
- Which bits are easy? Which most difficult?
- Which most important?
- Do you have an image or phrase that helps you make sense of Quaker discipline?
- Have you observed Quaker discipline in practice in individuals or in Meetings? What happened? Did it work as you would have expected?
- How can Quaker discipline be explained and encouraged?

Quaker Discipline – an introduction by Gill Reid

Discipline is not a word we use much nowadays, but it does have a special meaning in our Quaker experience.

Quaker Faith and Practice is subtitled *The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. We are going to revise this book over the next few years, I wonder if we will change this subtitle. In this book 11.08 talks about nurturing our shared beliefs, testimonies and spiritual discipline.

Despite the fact we like to give the impression anything goes in the Society of Friends we do have rules in our religious community – our discipline. This discipline applies at both a personal and corporate level.

Here are some examples of Discipline in our Meetings for Worship: -

- Ministering usually only once
- Making sure we don't repeat what others have said in a different way.
- Leaving gaps to reflect on what is said before making a contribution.
- Making sure Meeting for worship is not a discussion group.
- Valuing and respecting every contribution.

and of course we have Elders to make sure we keep to our discipline.

Our Meetings for Business also follow the disciplines we have in our Meeting for Worship. Here we rely on the clerk to help us in our discernment (see Clerks in Quaker Faith and Practice (3.13).

Here are some examples of discipline in our Meetings for Business

- Respect the clerk.
- Don't repeat what others have said.
- Leave space to reflect on contributions
- Not voting on decisions

This discipline allows the spirit to move in the Meeting either for business or worship. We try and move forward in unity – extremely hard to do.

What about personal discipline as a Quaker? Well we have Advices and Queries to help us. Looking at the front of this we find the postscript to an epistle to 'the brethren in the north' issued by a meeting of elders at Balby, 1656

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Hopefully all this helps to give Quakers a reflective

Quaker Discipline by Gill Reid

People are not used to the word discipline, particularly when used by Quakers. We don't help by not explaining it, not giving people information on Quaker discipline. I learnt about it over a long period of time, first in Cambridge meeting which was heavy with 'weighty Friends', and by observing how they dealt with things. I also read the 1959 version of what is now called Quaker Faith and Practice from cover to cover. I have been to Yearly Meeting a lot. Yearly Meeting in York 2009 was a powerful experience for me. It was there we united to support same sex marriage. At first it seemed as if it would not be supported, I wasn't sure how it would go, we all needed to

listen carefully, but something happened... the meeting was kind of electric. Discipline really helped us come to a decision. It was helped by outstanding clerking. No matter whether it's Yearly Meeting or Local Meeting, we do rely on our clerks for discipline. At Yearly Meeting, if the clerk stands up we all have to wait and listen to what they say!

I'm currently clerk of Central Nominations Committee (which finds Friends to serve in many different roles in the Society). I'm having to work hard to apply discipline as a clerk. There are two elders who help to support the clerk, they had to say recently (twice!) '*The clerk's trying to write a minute!*' to get a supportive silence. I'm very much relying on those around me on the committee to help as in life I rely on others to help me with discipline in my life.

I've used the discipline outwith the Society, with people with learning disabilities. Writing a minute *at the time* helped because they didn't have to try to remember afterwards, everyone had agreed it.

In Meeting for Worship you can be very aware of something going wrong in meeting, and it's good if you know there are certain Friends present that you can rely on to hold the Meeting. In one Meeting we had someone with mental health problems, who ministered on and off throughout the worship, but the meeting held its discipline. At another Meeting, someone wanted to speak throughout on animal welfare. In this case, elders had to intervene. It requires skill and tact, but they need to do it on occasions otherwise the meeting loses its sense of the spirit.

If we give the impression that people can think what they like then that's sad. The Society has some quite strong rules, there's a degree of flexibility, but there are clear rules. I get a bit stuck trying to know what we are doing together in meeting if I am using the silence to communicate with something Other, and others, perhaps atheist, are not. It is the *Religious* Society of Friends.

I try to apply the same reflective thought to what I do generally. Not that I am very good at it, but it means I try not to make hasty decisions. I find that being a Quaker gives me a reflective, spiritual and prayerful discipline in my life.

Quaker Discipline - Pete Stuart

There are some words that we use that may startle non-Quakers. I mean words like Overseer or Sufferings, for instance. Discipline is also one of those words. I was told very early on that we use it to mean 'Discipleship'. Quaker Discipline then, is about living life as a faithful Quaker. Committing ourselves to Quaker values (Truth, Peace, Social Justice, Simplicity and more recently Sustainably) and observing Quaker processes in Worship and in Decision-making.

Let me say, at this point something about how I bumped into Quakers. I am an Anglo-Indian. I grew up in India and was brought up (nominally) in the Anglican tradition. It

was a very literal understanding of the bible that was pressed on me and in due course, in my late teens, I rejected it and saw myself as non-religious for the next thirty or more years.

I was in my fifties when I first met Quakers. I'd known about Friends and, in particular, about their campaigning for Peace. Then a colleague told me that she had been to a Quaker wedding and that it had been an 'odd affair'. No Minister to conduct the service. Just silence and then the couple stood up and married each other. I was intrigued. This was like no religion I'd ever known and I decided to learn more. I contacted Friends House and requested an Information Pack

I thought that much of what I read in the pack, meshed with my thinking; particularly the Testimonies. I thought that a Religion that did not impose a creed on members was revolutionary. I was still a bit sceptical about the notion of waiting in silence to try and make a connection with God or the Divine. But Quakers were saying that they had an 'experiential' approach to religion so I thought I would experiment. I began attending Glasgow Meeting and gradually this became important in my life.

I found Meeting for Worship (at its best) to be wonderful. It allowed me respite in troubling times. It also made me realise that I was on a spiritual journey and it helped with my journeying. I began reading widely on spiritual matters; Quaker texts but also authors like Karen Armstrong and Marcus Borg who offered me different ways of thinking about Christianity.

Speaking personally, I take the idea of Quakerism being a non-credal Religious Society very seriously. I want us to be as inclusive as we can be but I would like those who worship with us to be respectful of our traditions. I believe that Quakerism can be transformative. It has certainly transformed me.

Quaker Discipline by Mary Alice Mansell

Quaker discipline for me is primarily about listening, even if I am naturally a talker. You can only hear what you have ears to hear. I'm always trying to listen to hear what the planet needs of me, what people, and me, need. Sometimes the spirit of life comes up through the earth to me, right up through my feet through my body, as if I am a tree with roots growing out of my feet down into the earth. This was confirmed to me when I became a Quaker, my exploration of Quaker discipline was to uplift the important things I had discovered, where the energy of the world is, for me God is in every living thing, and God is diminished by our destruction of it.

I largely found Quaker discipline myself, though I did have a bit of teaching in Harare meeting. I've often thought we don't have enough teaching, just getting numbers turning up on a Sunday does not make a good meeting; meeting for worship is really hard work! We are not very good at telling or exposing that discipline. We can offer any number of events to explain it, but these won't get to everyone. We have to keep plugging away, and not get upset if people don't like it, say 'I didn't realise *this* was what it was, I don't like it'. Recently meeting for worship (in Glasgow) has become deeper, and that's a reflection of Quaker discipline being properly ordered.

It's easier to explain what we do than what we are, what underlies it. It's what drives us to the doing that is really important, it comes from the experience of the worship, exploring it, *constantly* working on it.

I like the word discipline, though I didn't as a child. The only kind of discipline is self discipline, it's what you impose on yourself until it becomes second nature, it's habituating yourself to doing the right thing, and that will be different for each individual. As a generation we're a bit reluctant to think about discipline. Richard Sennett (in *The Craftsman*) wrote that it takes 10,000 hours to become expert in any field, craft, skill, and no doubt becoming a proper Quaker too, you keep plugging away and hope for the best.

Quaker Discipline by Derek Read

It's Quaker processes and the idea of discernment, trying to sense when we've made a decision and when people's voices still need to be heard. I'm thinking first of business meetings, but it involves your whole life, that's where I struggle, have I got an ordered life?

That quote from *Quaker Faith and Practice* (20.06) has meant a lot to me in the past: *'Some among us have a clear sense... There are others who live in a state of uncertainty... Please be patient, those of you who have found a rock to stand on, with those of us who haven't... we live on the wave's edge...'* That was very much a feature of my past, not so much now, the application of Quaker discipline means I've got more of a rock, sitting in silence and just being led. I'm learning to live on my own now, and to sit in silence on my own at home.

I've had problems with my spoken ministry, been eldered a number of times! Sometimes it's been right and sometimes I felt a bit aggrieved! But I've learned from it. I'm questioning myself more. Is this ministry? Can I sit on it or express it differently? I can now be aware of when I really have been touched by Spirit or when it's just empty words. An instance is where I spoke at the end of quite a busy meeting

recently... and even when I was speaking I thought, 'Why are you **saying** that??!' It's different from the times when I feel impelled to be on my feet, especially when my ministry is short, a distillation of the meeting. I'm getting better, I've learned by example, I'm trying to be more simple. And I'm learning why elders are there.

I've really learned about Quaker discipline from committees, Outreach and especially Nominations, rooting it in a period of silence and then the business and being together in it. In Nominations sometimes the name of someone who might serve in a particular role came to you and you didn't know where from.

We need to talk about it more, about discipline, people think it's a hard word, discipline, but it can be gentle, loving and affirming. How can we live in harmony with ourselves and with the world? Some people don't understand, I'd say, 'We are part of an ever evolving tradition that questions and is not bound by creeds or dogma but on a faith that responds to the world around us and our innermost being. It might not speak to your condition but it works for us.'

I can see Quaker discipline in how certain people live their lives, they're imbued with Quaker values, not in a pious way, there's a glow about them.

Quaker Discipline Michael Hutchinson

When I think of 'Quaker Discipline', I think of joy. I've found it to be a liberating framework for living. If I were to try to describe it I would borrow from Isaac Pennington (*Qfp* 19.14): 'I have met with the Seed. Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied and inquire no further'.

It is all about stirring, growing, learning, experiencing, not being finished... In other words it is about finding a framework for living, not only for oneself but, even more importantly, for community. To me it describes the way our communal Quaker experience over the years has discovered what it is to help us humans to find a way to live together that works. But it demands attention to the process: that is what we call discipleship.

I like the explanation in the *Quaker faith & practice* introduction:

'Discipline is not now a popular word. It has overtones of enforcement and correction but its roots lie in ideas of learning and discipleship. Discipline in our yearly meeting consists for the most part of advice and counsel, the encouragement of self-questioning, of hearing each other in humility and love.' This is exemplified by our *Advices &*

Queries – the asking of questions and giving guidance from collective experience. Taken together they give a powerful world view and on how to get there.

From this spiritual approach (the Discipline) and experience comes our ways of doing things that are based in the Quaker understanding of the light within and the respect for all, which informs our structures and organisation. Our church government is what we agree works and agree to do together if we are faithful to it: the interdependence of faith and practice. If we experience that there is *'that of God'* in each, the result is a profound respect for others. You can't kill others, be superior to them, but care for them, treat them with respect, be open to new experience and encourage ways of living together that fulfil. The testimonies are an expression of it, a result. Also, it is the way we make decisions together and organise our structures to work against the accumulation of power and prejudice through waiting, cultivating listening, being prepared to be mistaken and open to new light. Quakerism isn't about individual fulfilment alone it is about learning how to live together.

So to me it is about cultivating an attitude, of learning to live in the moment. A process for living. I try to listen, not to rush, to look and read, and being gentle with self. It doesn't just come; you learn it through experience. The crucial thing is building community that practices the fundamentals: listening, caring, and also challenging (which need not be confrontational). Finding that seed.

Khatum - a Sufi prayer from Hazrat Khan, 1882-1927

Oh Thou, Who art the Perfection of Love,
Harmony and Beauty,
The Lord of heaven and earth,
Open our hearts, that we may hear Thy voice,
Which constantly cometh from within.
Disclose to us Thy Divine Light,
Which is hidden in our souls,
That we may know and understand life better.
Most Merciful and Compassionate God,
Give us Thy great Goodness;
Teach us Thy loving Forgiveness;
Raise us above the distinctions
And differences which divide;
Send us the Peace of Thy Divine Spirit,
And unite us all in Thy Perfect Being.
Amin.

Jesus: The Teacher Within Us. Lawrence Freeman

(Reissued 2013 SCM Press)

When I first saw the title of this book, I was reminded of early Quakers who would commonly refer to Jesus as “the inner teacher”. George Fox, in his sermon on Firbank Fell (1652), directed his audience to look to Christ as “their Teacher to instruct them ...and their Prophet to open divine mysteries” so that they might know the spirit of God in themselves and come to lead their lives in accordance with divine inspiration.

Again and again, I saw parallels in this book with the religious experience of Friends who, for centuries, saw Jesus as central to their spiritual life and worship. The author, Laurence Freeman, believes that the rediscovery of spirituality is essential for the revival of the Christian church. Coming from a Catholic tradition, he says:

“Christianity is more than a belief system. More than an institution. More than a morality. More than a culture. It is also spiritual growth and development and necessitates a kind of contemplation that touches all aspects of reality (the physical and the spiritual world).”

At this deeply spiritual level, Christianity has much in common with other faiths, particularly eastern religions like Buddhism. Interestingly, the foreword to this book was written by the Dalai Lama, who talks of the importance of the disciplined practice of prayer and meditation in bringing about inner transformation and leading us to better lives. Just as Buddhists look to the life of Buddha, Christians can find in Jesus an embodiment of love, compassion, generosity, patience and forgiveness. In meditation, they can take the example of Jesus Christ to focus the mind and develop a calm and concentrated way into meditation.

We live today in an individualistic, rapidly paced and noisy world; and there is consequently a deep-seated need for stillness, contemplation and reflection, both for individuals and for society at large. In the mystical tradition, calmness and self-knowledge is a necessary pre-condition for spiritual progress. Loss of personal ego is at the core of meditative practice. This has been the experience of the early Christian mystics like St Catherine, Meister Eckhardt or the unknown author of the *The Cloud of Unknowing*, as it is for contemporary contemplatives such as John Main or Thomas Merton.

Meditation is a route to spiritual transformation. Contemplation of the Scriptures can be an introduction to meditation, as in the practice of *Lectio Divina*. Laurence Freeman challenges his readers to consider the meaning of Christ’s life and death and to see Him

as a *guru*, or spiritual guide, who calls people to make their own personal discovery of the truth of spiritual knowledge. One of the practices of meditation that was advocated by John Main starts with a mantra “*Come Lord*” or “*Maranatha*” (in Aramaic). Through invoking the person of Jesus, we can move through layers of consciousness to union with God, and also with our fellow human beings. This practice - or indeed any form of meditation - requires the discipline of letting go the self and so becoming part of a greater spiritual reality.

All religions, says the author, share three basic elements: a liberating experience of truth, enlightenment or awakening; a tradition that interprets this formative experience; and a set of rituals or symbolism that derive from this. The danger is that the spiritual essence, which is at the heart of the church or faith group, can be lost or overlaid or overshadowed by external forms and distractions. Could this be true for Quakers, I wonder?

Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk, steeped in the tradition of Catholic mysticism, and is the Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation. To a Quaker, some of his theological perceptions might appear a little unfamiliar or even controversial. But anyone on a spiritual journey would find many aspects of this work enriching. It is a book to be dipped into and pondered over. It could even provide new insights into recognising the things that are eternal.

Margaret Morton, Glasgow

NEW BOOKS IN GLASGOW MEETING LIBRARY

Burns, Christine (ed.) *Trans Britain: our journey from the shadows.* Unbound
2018 372p. S/BUR

Hirsch, Afrua *Brit(ish): on race, identity and belonging.* Cape 2018 367p. S/HIR

Le Fanu, James *Too many pills: how too much medicine is endangering our health and what we can do about it.* Little, Brown 2018 303p. S/LEF

Fitzharris, Lindsey
The butchering art: Joseph Lister's quest to transform the grisly world of Victorian medicine. Allen Lane 2017 286p. B/LIS

In case anyone is unsure, Joseph Lister was an Edinburgh Quaker until he was disowned for marrying out!

Librarian, Paul Burton will send books at cost of postage. paulburton@btinternet.com

Quaker Gallivanterers at Wigtown

It was a delight to attend Wigtown Quaker Meeting on 8th July and help swell their numbers. The Quaker Gallivanterers come from several Meetings but assemble on Sundays every now and then during the year just to potter and enjoy company. It grew out of a LGBT group but we've expanded definitions of diversity to include everyone! Wigtown is a lovely place to spend time with its bookshops and cafés. We also celebrated Patience's 70th birthday! The next meeting is in Musselburgh. Contact Jarom on jarom@protonmail.com

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow



People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought, which they seldom use. Soeren Kierkegaard

Islay – kindness and hospitality and a ship wreck

The Inner Hebridean island of Islay has a long history of seafaring, and recent archaeological studies show that in prehistory early peoples arrived as the Ice Age glaciers receded. These people can only have reached the island using boats of some kind, to make camp and hunt on Islay's shores 12,500 years before present day. Ever since, as well as successful fishing and trading and travel by sea, shipwrecks and wars have reached our coast. Sometimes there was the loss of many lives, and always both survivors and the dead had kind and compassionate treatment from island people. This is an island known for its hospitality, and not only because of all the malt whisky produced here!

In April 1847, the Irish Emigrant ship 'Exmouth of Newcastle' which sailed from the Port of Derry bound for Quebec was wrecked on Islay's coast in a dreadful storm. All 248 passengers and all but three of the crew were lost. The ship was destroyed, and 108 bodies were recovered. Those washed ashore were buried above the shoreline at a nearby, lovely bay of Traigh Bhan by Islay people; local farm workers and other labourers. As well as pity for those losing their lives while trying to escape famine in Ireland, what a terrible experience it would have been for the local people, dealing with the remains of many strangers in the aftermath of the wreck. This event was commemorated in 2000 by island people, and by then UK Consul General of Ireland, Daniel Mulhall, with others related to the Irish people lost in the 'Exmouth'.

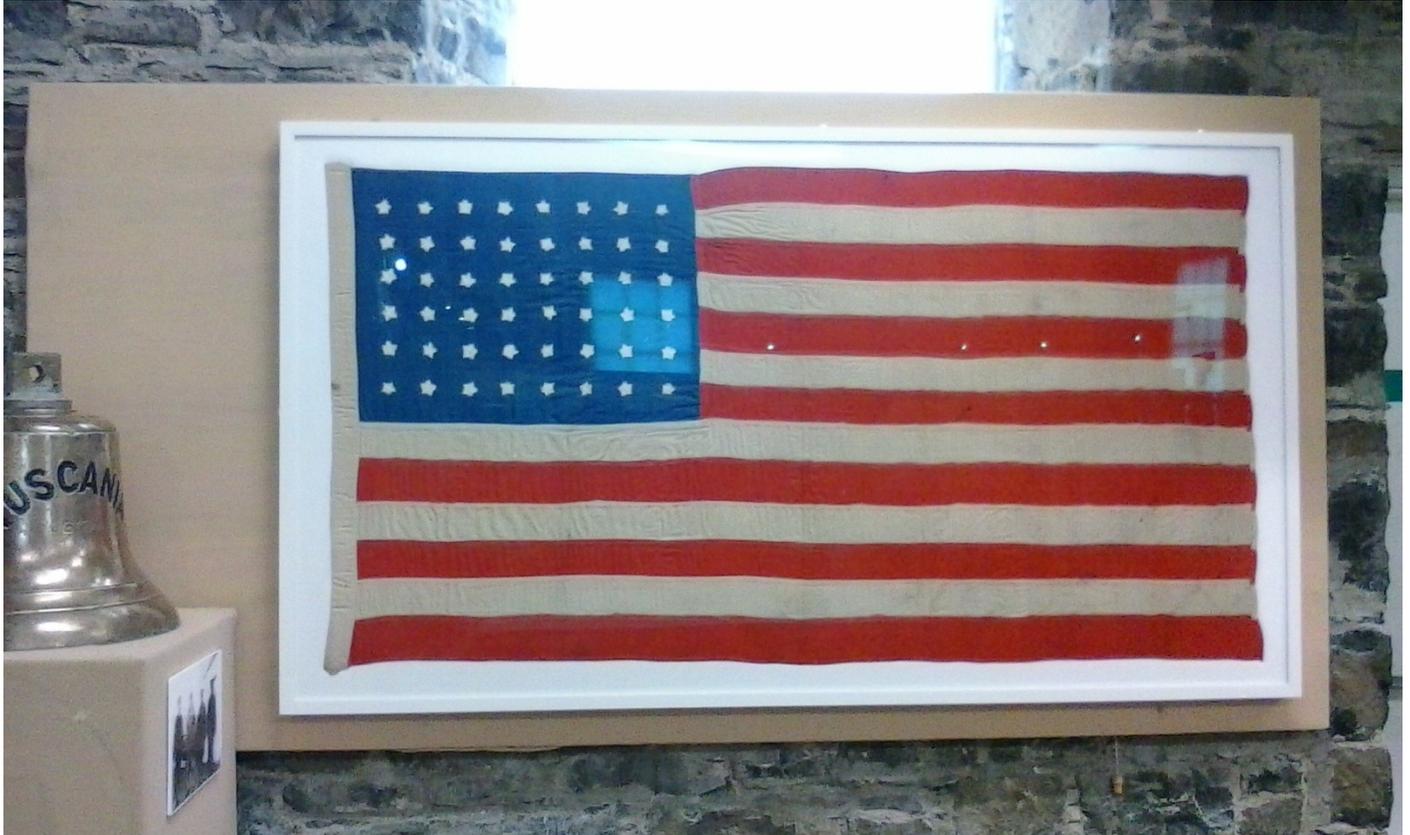
Recently in Islay there was commemoration of lives lost at sea in wartime near our island shores. The World War One shipwrecks of the 'Tuscania' troopship which was torpedoed and sank near Islay's Mull of Oa with the loss of 200 lives in February 1918, and later that same year the US troopship 'Otranto' holed by another convoy ship and sank in a storm off the west coast of Islay with the loss of about 500 lives. Both ships sank and the soldiers they carried were lost, a total of nearly 700 washed ashore in Islay, where the island's population at that time was about 6000 and which had already lost about 150 local men to the war.

The island in 1918 had no electricity, no service flights and few motor vehicles. The one resident policeman with three constables had to try and identify, record and see to burials of the many dead, most of whom were US servicemen from the ships. As always, local people helped with kindness where they could. A poignant and moving story from the time is that, lacking a United States Stars and Stripes flag for the burial services of the 'Tuscania' soldiers, local women got together and overnight, using what fabrics they had, copied a photo and hand-stitched a flag for use during the servicemen's memorials. This handmade flag still exists, and is currently on loan to

the Museum of Islay Life in Port Charlotte, Islay from the Smithsonian in Washington DC.

Susan Campbell, Islay & Jura Local Meeting

Photos; Eileen MacKenzie, Museum of Islay Life



If you were to write to Donald Trump, what would you say?

Dear Donald,

Hopefully you arrives back safely from Europe.

Thankyou for challenging orthodox political procedure and the status quo.

Thankyou for championing the interests and needs of the ordinary worker which is often lost in the capitalist domination system. However, I can't lose sight of your own role there as possessor of more than you need. Your fellow American, John Woolman, stated that to own anything you do not need is an act of war! I share that difficulty in taking more than my fair share and feeling happily very comfortable with that. Jesus is reputed to have said, the poor are always with you. You are in a better position than I am to create the structures that eliminate poverty and promote equality and justice. I wish you strength in that.

You have expressed great pride in being of Scottish ancestry. As another of Jock Tamson's bairns, bless you! Our great Celtic tradition has much to offer this difficult world. No one owns the land but we are all its stewards to take what we need whilst honouring the gifts of the Earth. In North America there is an ancient tradition of harmony with nature. Your native people I believe also honour the feminine. We have our Great Goddess, Bride, who awakes the sensitive soul through poetry. Our culture values kinship and personal relationship and hospitality. I am sorry your recent visit here did not honour the stranger in our midst. You have done a few things that shocked us.

It must be difficult to hold the balance between the big guys and the little ones, and you are new to the job. But the good heart will triumph and I wait with bated breath and faith to see how your fresh vision and lack of stuffiness and antiquated regimen will create new opportunities to rebalance our attitude to the Earth and sustainability, and to the feminine. Your wife has shown a caring side interested in the little people. The caring side can be difficult for big men but I am sure together you promise a new future.

Can you do better?

Margaret Roy, Lanark

A STORY

Hello wee bee.

What's that stuff? Said the wasp. You're covered in it.

I've been visiting my flowers, said the bee, and these are all their precious gifts.

Lots of bits of blossom.

You're festooned, said the wasp, and you smell. What a pong!

Ah! That's perfume, said the bee. Is it not a goodly odour. It's the scent of the fairies.

Phew! Said the wasp. Those fairies are a silly lot. They dance and sing even when it rains.

They're my friends, said the bee. They look after the flowers.

And what do you do visiting all those flowers?

Are you not exhausted? You fly for miles.

They need me, said the bee.

I carry messages between them and they give me nectar for my queen and her babies.

I'd rather have a jam tart, said the wasp.

Look, here come some jolly humans. I'll go and see what's on offer.

Wasps have smooth slick hair but bees are all fuzzy so the pollen from so many different flowers sticks to them.

**WEST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING DATES AND VENUES 2017-18
2018**

25 August (Saturday) Tarbert, Argyll

13 October (Saturday) Ayr

3 December (Monday) by telephone conference

2019

12 January (Saturday) Glasgow

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND DATES

15th September 2018 West – Glasgow

17th November 2018 East

9th March 2019 West – Glasgow

Hold in the Light

***Patrick Bealey has moved south to be nearer to his family. We wish him well.
Muriel Robertson continues to improve and we miss her visits to other meetings.***

Please use this space to hold each other in the Light.

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

Someone to write book reviews and dig into our history would relieve you of reading Margaret Roy's efforts!