

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

March 2019

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Clerk's letter

I see you.

I had a blind friend to whom I would, without thinking, call out "see you!" as we said goodbye. But actually, it wasn't taken amiss, and he said it back. Seeing in that sense isn't all about eyesight. It is about sensitivity and awareness. We can "see" through many of our senses. I was reminded of this when coming across this quotation from the 1994 Central & Southern Africa Yearly Meeting Richard Gush Lecture by Guy Butler:

"Africans have a greeting that means 'I see you.' It is profoundly important to grasp what is meant. In South Africa we have noticed or watched each other for centuries; we have not seen each other. Seeing a person, in that salutation, means what is called eyeball to eyeball contact; recognising the presence of a person, not a white man or a black man or a plumber or a doctor, but someone as alive and as self-aware and as vulnerable as you are. I see you. The time for overlooking each other has gone; also of some having the monopoly of overseeing others. We must see each other."

I spend a little time in Northern Ireland every year, and during the Troubles I was made aware of another type of 'seeing'. People would ask another person's surname, or what school they had attended, in order to work out what section of the sectarian divide they were in. This was about seeking safety with one's own kind and type-casting others and if we think we are superior to that we may be fooling ourselves. As an experiment I watched myself go into town on the bus and how I reacted to people I came across there or in the street as I walked on to Meeting. I was making instant judgements on almost everyone: their dress sense, their age, their annoying (to me) little habits, etc., etc. This was more so if I was grumpy, I noticed. It was salutary.

But I shouldn't beat myself up about this. It is a normal reaction of all of us as our brains assess, often subconsciously, those we meet and react with. Our brains have different levels of seeing and interpreting the world, but being human means being able to rise above the automatic, defensive and unthinking judgements of others. The listening, waiting and silence in our meetings is in some way all about this – 'seeing' in a wider and whole sense – seeing the bigger picture if you like, and developing empathy. We had a powerful meeting for worship recently where we came very aware of how difficult it is to break out of negative judgements on people like Shamina Begum, the Islamic State young woman being refused re-entry back to Britain. But we also realised that our whole faith teaches us how to open our hearts and live in the way that meets with all. We can do it, actually. We must reach out even where there are difficulties and wrong-doing, as we can all find ways to see that God in all.

See you.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

Report on Area Meeting, Glasgow 12th January

Roughly 25 people were present in the morning session.

We heard a wonderful testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Jim Anderton who died a year ago. He grew up in London, a schoolboy during the war, and was largely self-educated and a great reader. He became a printer and a socialist. A youth trip to the Channel Islands began his love of the outdoors. He moved into the teaching of printing and did a degree. He encountered Quaker Social Action and began being involved in the *Talking Friend*, a service for Friends with visual disabilities. He was a man of many interests and talents; running, photography, birds, playing the cello. He served the AM as Clerk and Elder and Overseer.

We received the annual Tabular Statement; the number of members of the AM is fairly static (226 members and 217 attenders on our books).

There is a difficulty in finding Friends from Glasgow to serve as trustees; this matter is part of a concern of North Scotland AM being addressed at the General Meeting in Glasgow to be held on 9 March. We need also a Friend to become Assistant Clerk with a view to becoming Clerk later.

One item of business was that two Friends should make the annual check of the marriage register. For a moment we thought the register could not be accessed, but a key was found, so this job could be done! (There were no marriages in the manner of Friends in West Scotland AM in 2018.)

The afternoon session was a presentation by our guest Sandra Berry, the Director of Woodbrooke since 2010. Her background is in software engineering. She outlined her pre-Woodbrooke career and then listed some the contradictions she had experienced from Friends; for example, those who thought the placing of a garden to make people aware of torture was not appropriate in the peaceful Woodbrooke grounds. Woodbrooke arranges two weekly meetings for worship on line; one of these is early morning to allow New Zealand Friends to join conveniently.

In the discussion the point was made that Woodbrooke is a long way for Scots to travel. Could there be more put on in Scotland? By the way, there will be a meeting, Patterns and Examples, in Glasgow on 16 March for role-holders. This is a Woodbrooke event.

Jane Mitchell, Argyll

Young must err, old age may.

Old German saying.

Parliamentary Engagement – Year in Review. 2018

Contact: Mairi Campbell-Jack, The Melting Pot, Thorn House, Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH22PR. mairic@quaker.org.uk, @scotpolquaker, 07419991246, www.quakerscotland.org.

Ongoing parliamentary and government engagement

Parliamentary petition – the Public Petitions Committee of The Scottish Parliament published a report into our petition, which has now been responded to by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, John Swinney. We asked the committee for further details to flesh out the Government’s response, and they have agreed to contact the Government about this. This was reported in Commonsense, The Scotsman, The Telegraph, The National, and The Herald.

Parliamentary briefings – we have sent three briefings to MSPs this year for them to consider when preparing for debates, one on the UN International Day of Peace, another on the planned CO memorial in Princes St Gardens, and another on Leadership in Human Rights.

Briefings on the GMS website

Parliamentary motions - Mairi worked with an EAPPI volunteer and staff at Friends House on the wording of a motion tabled by Alison Johnstone MSP celebrating the 73rd year of Human Rights Accompaniers travelling to Israel/Palestine.

Government consultations - Mairi Campbell-Jack and Ellis Brooks (QPSW Peace Education Worker) also worked together to respond to the Scottish Government Consultation on mainstreaming children’s rights in Scotland. Mairi consulted with young Quakers at General Meeting for Scotland to make sure their views were included. Young Quakers also requested that Mairi assist them with a response to the Equal Protection from Assault Bill, which currently has an open call for evidence. At the request of members, Mairi also formulated a Quakers in Scotland response to the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act.

Economic Justice

A **threshing event** was held on universal basic income earlier in the year, for Quakers in Scotland. Mairi helped organise with members of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG).

Mairi has been in **contact with other organisations** who are also interested in Land Value Tax to assess who may be possible partners to work with in the future.

A sold-out audience at the EIBF **Parliamentary Engagement – Year in Review. 2018**

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The PEWG has initiated and is cultivating what we hope will be a **fruitful relationship** with the Edinburgh International Book Festival, which this year saw us succeed in bringing a debate on UBI to the festival.

Other work

Friends House - Mairi has also engaged with colleagues at Friends House to train them on Scotland's different social, cultural and political history, and will be continuing this training with other colleagues in 2019

SNP Conference - Joyce Taylor and Mairi Campbell-Jack attended SNP conference where they met with Ruth McGuire MSP, convener of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee at The Scottish Parliament and Stewart Stevenson MSP (left), former Minister and member of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. They also attended a fringe on progressive foreign policy for Scotland.

Peace education - Mairi Campbell-Jack, Joyce Taylor and Ellis Brooks met with staff of Education Scotland, to talk about the opportunities for peace education within the Scottish school system. Ellis noted there were more opportunities and openness to this approach north of the border.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) - The PEWG has a new representative for the North. Mairi does not hold a secretariat function for this group information can be received from each area representative, or through the regular reports in the General Meeting for Scotland minutes.

- Joyce Taylor (Convener)
- William Purser (North)
- Rosemary Hartill (South East)
- Ed Tyler (West)
- Martin Mansell (West)
- Martin Pippard (East)
- Phil Lucas (Scottish Churches)

Northern Friends Peace Board

NFPB meet in Liverpool on 2nd March. After worship and items of business, Ann Bettys outlined the current plans for the Roots of Resistance action and other Friends spoke about preparations in different parts of the North. It is hoped that a thousand people will be there on the Faith Day on Tuesday 3rd September for a Meeting for Worship. A Tapestry and singing are also part. **Rootsofresistance.org.uk**

Philip Austin has reported on current involvement with the Rethinking Security project. There are leaflets available and a recently produced parliamentary briefing that it is hoped Friends and others can send to MPs, with covering personal letters. A day Seminar called Secure Scotland is to take place in Allanton shortly. Contact Janet Fenton.

James Naylor, 1618 - 1660

James Naylor was one of our earliest Quakers, initially a colleague of George Fox and one of the Valiant 60. He wrote 34% of all early Quaker texts – more than Fox or any other Quaker at the time. Yet, so many Quakers now only of him through *that* incident when he was shunned by many Friends for many years. His writings are most inspiring, even today. So who was he?

Born a farmer near Wakefield in Yorkshire, at the outbreak of the First Civil War he left his farm in the care of his wife and daughters to enlist in the New Model Army of Cromwell where he was quartermaster in John Lambert's regiment of horse and where he became known a gifted *extempore* preacher. On being called to Quakers he spend time at Swarthmoor Hall, 1652, then preached in the northern counties, 1653 – 54 In June 1655, he went to London to join with Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough. He quickly became the most prominent of the Quaker preachers in London.

According to one biographer, Vera Massey, he made himself available for many hours despite ill health (he left the army possibly because of TB). However, a group that included Martha Simmonds looked to him for support in a doctrinal dispute with Howgill and Burrough. Apparently he collapsed under the strain of the dispute and lay trembling and quaking for several days in a spiritual crisis. Thus Massey claims he was not in best frame of mind when induced to enter Bristol riding a donkey in enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, *the incident*. Massey's work is excellent for the historical background and that she uses many of the original correspondence to illustrate the relationships.

He was accused of blasphemy and taken to Parliament in London where he was sentenced to 365 lashes, to have his tongue bored and his brow branded with a B. Then he was returned to Bristol to receive more lashes before being flung into prison. It was here the infamous meeting with Fox took place where he was asked to kiss Fox's foot. Quakers as a whole shunned him thereafter although he was reinstated to the group in London but died after being mugged while on a journey to his home.

His writing live on to encapsulate much of what is the core of Quakerism. When I first joined Glasgow Meeting in the early 70s, the following words were frequently ministered:

There is a spirit which I feel delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for

its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life." QF&P 19.12

And QFP 21.65 has I know been very dear to many of us in Glasgow meeting:
"Art thou in Darkness? Mind it not for if though dost it will fill the more, but stand still and act not, and wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee. Art thou wounded in conscience? Feed not there, but abide in the Light which leads to Grace and Truth, which teaches to deny, and puts off the weight, and removes the cause and brings saving health to Light."

The first part of this has been made into a chant beautifully by Paulette Meier - referred to as "Timeless Quaker Wisdom in plainsong."

The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBttRzEo6m0>.

You can read some of his writings in QFP: 19.09, 19.11, 19.12, 20.21 and 21.65

For further study see Stuart Masters, a senior tutor at Woodbrooke. He will be running a webinar on early Quakers from 7th April to 13th May.

Margaret Roy, Lanark

NEW BOOKS IN GLASGOW MEETING LIBRARY

- | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|------------------|
| Saunders, George | Fox 8 | Bloomsbury 2018 | unpaged L/SAU |
| Newman, Cathy | <i>Bloody brilliant women: the pioneers, revolutionaries and geniuses in your history teacher forgot to mention.</i> | Collins 2018 | 376p. S/NEW |
| Johnson, Maureen (ed.) | <i>How I resist: activism and hope for a new generation.</i> | Wednesday Books | 2018 201p. P/JOH |
| Angell, Stephen and Dandelion, Pink (eds.) | <i>The Cambridge companion to Quakerism.</i> | Cambridge U.P. | 2018 393p. Q/ANG |
| Black, Alexandra <i>et al.</i> | <i>Feminism is ...</i> | Penguin Random House | 2019 160p. S/BLA |
| Green, Robert | <i>Security without nuclear deterrence.</i> | Aston Media | 2010 272p. |
| Johnson, Maureen (ed.) | <i>How I resist: activism and hope for a new generation.</i> | Wednesday Books | 2018 201p. P/JOH |
| Murphy, Andrew | <i>William Penn: a life</i> | Oxford U.P. | 2019 460p. B/PEN |
| Newman, Cathy | <i>Bloody brilliant women: the pioneers, revolutionaries and geniuses in your history teacher forgot to mention.</i> | Collins 2018 | 376p. S/NEW |

Librarian, Paul Burton will sent books at cost of postage. paulfburton@btinternet.com

Seeking to know one another in the things which are eternal - God

This is the fifth in the series of interviews with Friends in the West of Scotland. You will see that the prompt questions used as a basis of these interviews are also included, to encourage you, or your meeting, to consider experiences, thoughts and feelings about God. The next topic is Truth and Integrity. As I've said before, I hope you will consider whether you are a Friend who would wish to contribute to this.

Thanks to these five Friends who've shared their experiences so openly.

Sheila Semple

Prompt questions on God

- What does the word 'God' mean to you at the moment?
- Are there other words you would use for this concept?
- Has your perception of what God is, or might be, changed over time?
- If you have had experiences of God how have these shown themselves?
- If you have not had such experiences, does this matter to you as a Quaker?
- How does a concept or experience of God relate to what you do in worship, in the community of Friends, in your service in the world?
- If you have no such concept or experience of God, how does this relate to what you do in worship, in the community of Friends, in your service in the world?
- How do you explain to others, within and outwith the Religious Society of Friends, what the role of God, as you perceive it, is in Quakerism?
- There was some press publicity in 2018 at the time of Yearly Meeting that Quakers were going to 'ditch God'. What is your response to that?
- Any other thoughts?

God by Bob Mandeville

I am a birthright Quaker Attender (although now an elder/member) with both my parents frequently going to Seekers Conferences. My great-grandfather was one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, and as a result of these evangelical roots I truly wanted to believe in God. But I was also my mother's child with a Scottish humanist, socially-aware scientific scepticism of anything that could not be demonstrated - inwardly I was at war with myself.

My father was eldered so often because of his extended preaching ministries (not unlike some of the preaching of early Friends!) and no Quaker meeting would accept him into membership. After the age of eight I became

increasingly reluctant to go to Meeting because I was so mortally embarrassed by him.

God was so nebulous to me from childhood that although I was having insecurity nightmares, night after night, of plunging over a cliff and tumbling endlessly into the black void dreading the inevitable hard landing, God was never there to catch me.

As a teenager, I clung to the Lord's Prayer, the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Romans but my scientific bent meant that I lost my faith and called myself an agnostic.

Finally, in my thirties, I took the words of Jesus literally when he says, first, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and secondly, ask, and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. I could not see any possibility of me loving God as I had no concept of what I was supposed to love therefore seeking the grace for granting me the impossible had to be my prayer. And so, over the next seven years or so whenever I remembered, I prayed for the grace to love the impossible.

The first revelation to me was a definition of Love - it was given to my mind that this was the conspiracy (con-spire = breathing together) of joy that Jesus felt when, surrounded by the perils of the world, the Holy Spirit breathed into him a feeling expressing the love that is tested for its purity by its two-way nature - as we are loved so we love.

Out of the blue in February 1984, while contemplating Julian of Norwich's vision of the universe sitting like a hazelnut in the palm of God, in Friends Meeting at Newton Terrace I had two separate, overwhelming and extraordinary experiences that culminated in the single word "Now" being revealed to me. This single word has united my warring nature and has acted as a galvanising and empowering force for my whole life as this is the missing concept in all of scientific and mathematical philosophy (going back to the Babylonians!) - but also, as the poster from Friends House says, "The time is Now and Now is sacred."

These experiences are absolutely real to me, to this day.

To my way of thinking the word "God" is deeply misleading, conjuring up visions either of a wooden/bronze mannikin in a temple or of a bearded elderly skyman. The manifestation or image that I actually use is from the Isha Hindu Upanishad which opens with "All that moves in this moving universe." I do use the word 'God' in conversation - anything else sounds an affectation - but it seems to me to be a verb, not a noun, about movement and fluidity. The part that is available to me is the "Holy Breath/Spirit, - The Helper" although in classic terms this does not represent "The Father" but is what Jesus says we should turn to.

The Quakers represent my nature perfectly - the bringing together of the Seeker tradition (the Fells) with the charismatic Christian tradition (Fox) - with the

tolerance to accept that we are all on our own paths journeying in our own ways with many truths coming from many other deep traditions. I fully accept that there are many agnostics in our meetings and I have a great respect for their integrity but I think that it is right that I am allowed to speak of my own personal experiences. As Jesus was found in Bethlehem either through personal experience, as the shepherds did, or through knowledge, as the Magi did, so I feel now that we should find Jesus in the modern world through knowledge and/or personal experience.

Many times every day I do feel the closeness of the love that surrounds us and a returning love welling up within me - if that is God then I am very happy to be part of it.

God by Gisela Creed

I was brought up in a well-grounded Protestant household in Germany during and after the Second World War. We lived with my grandfather, who was the local minister; traditional Christian values, the church year and parish were fundamental parts of my life. I had great respect for my loving and generous family; it was an ideal, secure childhood, even though my father died in the war and post war conditions were harsh for the adults.

Doubt began as I grew up, I remember during confirmation classes, doubting whether this God existed, feeling that religious language, communion, reciting the creed, etc. seemed empty. But I loved being part of this community, the church music, the serene liturgy and especially liked the organist, so I was persuaded to be confirmed. I respected what some of the church people *did*, especially around peace and reconciliation.

The world started to open up when, in my late teens, I became more interested in philosophy and began to take part in international work camps. This opened my eyes to some of the great needs in this post war world as well as racial, social, cultural and religious difference and made me think about where I could find my place.

Idealism took hold, wanting to improve the world! It seemed to me then that this was "God" calling me, now I would describe it in Quaker language as "stirrings of love and truth deep in my heart" or simply trying to take responsibility for shaping this world. From early on, I also appreciated art, marvelling at the wonder and beauty of great paintings, music, sculpture, poetry and nature, and would have described this then as something to do with the "divine". Nowadays I am still deeply moved by the same things including being with good friends, walking up mountains, Quaker meeting, but when you ask me about feeling a sense of 'presence', I don't really know what you mean. It's just a real, here-and-now, and wonderfully *human* feeling. I married into a lovely Quaker family and eventually became a member, appreciating the values

expressed in the testimonies, the emphasis on listening and learning and the freedom to express one's self.

If asked, I'd describe myself first as a Quaker and secondly as a non-theist, who probably thinks the same as everyone else in meeting, though 'God' as a divine presence is not involved in it. Centring down for me involves getting rid of ego, to be still, to listen, to 'embrace' people who are there and grapple with some of my and the world's problems that are currently stirring me. I also try and make time for thankfulness and reflection. A helpful shorthand is **A**we (wonder), **C**ompassion, **T**hankfulness and **S**elf-Examination (**ACTS**) (adopted from a talk given by Michael Wright in 2013) I find it useful to hold on to these elements of structure, especially when centring is difficult.

Meeting for me is like a beautiful collaborative experiment, sometimes it moves me, often it raises questions, makes me to think of new ways and possibilities, and encourages me to respect the attributes of "God" as human values of love, justice, wisdom, beauty, integrity and compassion.

It doesn't bother me when people describe their experience as literally God-related. I appreciate all different takes, and for myself 'translate' this "God" of others into a metaphor or poetic expression, creating a concept for a meaningful, moral framework for human lives. But I hope that there is room for all of us.

I am really proud of Quakers being such an inclusive society where questions and uncertainty are welcomed. We are fortunate with our sound Quaker structures and discipline which at the same time are adaptable to living and helpful in everyday life.

Quaker Faith and Practice 20.06 sums it up:

'Please be patient, those of you who have found a rock to stand on, with those of us who haven't and with those of us who are *not even looking for one*. We live on the wave's edge, where sea, sand and sky are all mixed up together; we are tossed head over heels in the surf, catching only occasional glimpses of any fixed horizon. Some of us stay there from choice because it is exciting, and it *feels like the right place to be.*'

God by Lorraine Beaman

I prayed as a young girl, I prayed upwards but I didn't really feel anything. I always had a distant hope something was there. But as I grew up in my teens, twenties, thirties I came to think that it was the biggest load of rubbish, like believing in ghosts!

I remember the date, I literally went down on my knees and prayed. My life was very painful and difficult, I knew my soul was dying, and this power touched it. I used self-help books (one Buddhist) about cutting off your anxiety,

I was trying to get to the times when there was a blankness and I could shut my mind off – and I remember hearing within, ‘It’s ok, Lorraine, I’m coming for you.’ There was no special feeling with it. Every night I spoke to God, ‘Dear God, here I am, you see my life.’ I became more truthful, responsible for my decisions and sensed some sort of peace. Then two members of the Baptist Church came to the door, I had never read the Bible and I started at page 1 and worked through it. And I was baptised.

Then I heard God’s voice through the words of the minister: ‘Choose today, do you want a new life?’ I was pushed up on my feet, my whole body trembled, my spine felt as if it had become liquid... all of a sudden I knew the truth, that I can’t say in words. I was so flabbergasted. There WAS a God. I got my freedom. To say I was joyful is putting it mildly, every cell in my body was affected.

I was converted... I encountered... I was transformed absolutely and totally within by a supernatural power I could not control. Usually you know what has caused you to think or feel in a particular way, but not this. I could never deny in my mind and my body the experiences I have had that are of the supernatural. I’ve had dry times, of course, but I still believe that if you have encountered God, if God has brought himself to you, God will stay with you. There is a reason he has come through your life, the whole teaching is Love, he will not leave you. You always know at the back of your soul, you know you’re God’s child, you will never be lost again.

That first encounter with God was 19 years ago, and at one point when anyone said anything derogatory about God I felt a physical jarring, it was the only word I had for this supernatural power, the word was so sacred. But the word ‘God’ does not mean so much to me now, I recognise God, Allah or other words for the deity can cause so much friction, depending on how others interpret them.

I admire people who don’t have profound experiences. If mine had been mediocre, it wouldn’t have gone deep. I’d have given up after 2 years. I’ve never had to work to quietly develop a deep faith.

I tried to stay as close as I could to God, but being in the Baptist church was taking me away from that: I saw criticisms of other faiths, sometimes negative judgements of others within the church. I wanted to be still and speak to and about God, but for me the Baptists were too structured and I was getting distracted from God. I definitely felt I found God within the stillness, before I knew about Quakers.

As Quakers it seems to me that we all gather with others in the hope of the presence of God. We must gather, the more we gather, the more power in God is raised. When it’s a deep silence it’s a real re-nourishing, it brings things into focus and gives you the courage to bring it all into your everyday life.

When we get to that point when we are aware of being in the presence of God it doesn't last though we would want it, it's fleeting. I'm so aware now of life going through everything, the earth itself is breathing, every single thing, every cell of your body, strives for life, strives for joy. That connection that's within, that energy that connects us to that huge power... God touches you for that love, that love in life. I'm always being reminded to pass on what I was freely given, I remember this as my purpose.

God by Margaret Peacock

God is a person. I talk to him. I say 'Him' because I've been brought up that way, and have no mental picture, whereas I do of 'She'. God is definitely not inside me, I'm not a person who buys into 'that of God in everyone'... every person has got something good in them, but you can't make God into some kind of homunculus that lives inside your brain. He does not inhabit any of our four – or even eleven - dimensions. He does not play any of our games and cannot be described. To him all our times are now, and all places here.

A recent thought was that some Quakers call God by other names: 'God is love and light and life and joy and...' But it's the wrong way round to think "Love is God", or "Light is God". These are his gifts. He invented them all.

He has/is energy. Every now and again it pushes into our dimension and can be recognised, sometimes by a quality of silence – a holy place – a gathered Meeting – some music – a painting - holy Bible. 'Holy' to me now means possessing energy, perhaps like an electrostatic charge that you can feel, touch and share. Cosmology says that energy existed before the Big Bang. Brian Cox's recent programme pictured this turbulent energy generating a universe every time its value gets low enough! I enjoy the parallel thought at the beginning of Genesis: '*And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*'

I have little memory of what I thought about God as a Quaker child, except that I thought of God and Christ as the same thing, and Jesus as the man. Later when I thought about it, it seemed that the universe is too big for anybody to have created it, so I became an atheist. Eventually I thought my bible-based friends might be on to something, so I gave God a try, emotionally abandoning "truth", but I was always a Quaker among Church of England people – like a vegetarian among meat eaters. My Christian friends quoted '*no man cometh unto the father except by me.*' I proved that that's rubbish.

In Meeting for Worship I look round and say to God. 'Please be with us' and I may ask this on behalf of each person. Or I might remember the early Friend Francis Howgill's words '*The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net*' and picture that. I am disappointed when Meeting veers too far

towards social outrage, and remember a comment on a Friend's ministries towards the end of Meetings: "*He always brings us back to God*".

In 1998 at Lochgilphead Meeting something happened and I wrote it down immediately after:

My usual words at the start, 'Please be with us...'

And suddenly, shockingly, You are

Standing there, invisible, between me and the window, extinguishing all words.

You want me to do something.

I would do anything – even go to the lions – I hope it's not too difficult

Someone is speaking.

Now someone else – don't they know words have been extinguished?

Meeting has ended. Superficial conversation, hiding tears

What is it you want?

I have never found out. The tears remain. He wasn't filling the room with presence, he was an invisible person...God, not Jesus. The Quaker painting "The presence in the midst" shows Jesus, but otherwise is a parallel concept.

I think the report in the press last year that Quakers were preparing to 'ditch God' got us very wrong: we are the *Religious Society of Friends*. But inasmuch as it got it right, I am distressed. Some Friends say "We all have precious experiences in Meeting, so we don't need to name ourselves theists and non-theists." You can't know what other Friends find. But I think it comes from God, whether they perceive it as such or not.

My heroes are Brother Lawrence and Julian of Norwich. Brother Lawrence went out into the world, ordered supplies, worked in the kitchen... and was aware he was as close to God doing these things as if at the high altar. Julian of Norwich's description of the nature of God was of love; in him she found no anger, however long she looked, and concluded:

'And I saw full surely that ere he made us he loved us. Which love was never slacked, nor ever shall be. And in this love he hath done all his works, and in this love he hath made all things profitable to us; and in this love our life is everlasting.'

God by Robin Davis

I *do* use the word God. It's difficult to put it into words, there's a limit to our understanding, it's over and beyond us, we are insignificant in creation, and 'God' is shorthand for what is beyond us.

My understanding of God has evolved, of course it has, I've never (except perhaps as a child) thought of God as an old man in the sky. I've never fully understood the Christian doctrine of the trinity as God, Son and Holy Ghost... though I have sometimes had the sense of Jesus as more than a prophet.

I was born into a family where my father was non-conformist (though not practising) while my mother was brought up an Anglican... and so was I. I joined and enjoyed the community... and the services to some extent. But I most appreciated the early morning service based on prayer. Friends were not totally foreign to my experience because my father taught music at Sidcot Friends School.

I've not had any experience of God such as a Damascene conversion nor any near-death experiences that seem to give people a sense of God. But I have had times when I've felt urges to do something. I thought these were leadings from God at the time, and on reflection I felt it could be nothing other. And in a crisis I have felt upheld. I would probably call this God. It's beyond our ken. In Meeting for Worship I find, when truly gathered (or when I feel it, perhaps not everyone does) there is something wonderful out there, and I value that.

The phrase 'seeking the will of God' means less to me than it used to... I'd replace it with 'discerning what I am being guided to do'.

I don't actually go along with 'there's that of God in everyone'. There may be parts of all people that are good and loving but I don't think that whatever God is is actually inside us in any sense at all.

I have some difficulty in accepting into membership those who don't believe there is something beyond them. Religion is a human creation, but we are all humans, therefore all we do, all our thoughts are human, but religion is accepting that there is something else, something that transcends, if that makes any sense.

As Quakers we have discovered a way to open ourselves up to God. But although I do enjoy countryside and have memories of extraordinary experiences, I would not have said I found God in them or called them religious. I think I probably felt that same sense of 'presence' in the morning Anglican services when I was younger, but I don't feel it the same any more, partly because of the words that go along with it.

I know many Friends have difficulty with God, as they perceive the word. But I am of those who is very definite that I belong to a religious society. We are an expression of something more than liberal values; life is more than just us.

Silence

Not merely an absence of noise, Real Silence begins when a reasonable being withdraws from the noise in order to find peace and order in his inner sanctuary.

Peter Minard



WOODBROOKE

QUAKER STUDY CENTRE

Woodbrooke is many things to many people, founded in 1903 it was the vision of George Cadbury and John Wilhelm Rowntree who saw a need amongst Friends for a ‘permanent settlement’ with a mission to **‘foster a vital Friends’ ministry’**. Cadbury donated his house, nowadays situated in beautiful landscaped gardens and close by the model village of Bourneville which is a testament to Quaker industrial practice. Since then Woodbrooke College has evolved and grown beyond the walls and boundaries of the place in which it are still based and rooted.

It is possible to study for a degree at Woodbrooke. It has a fine library. It supports Quakerism throughout Britain (and abroad) through courses on Eldership, Overseership, for Treasurers, Trustees and other Quaker roles. Equipping for Ministry allows Friends to study more deeply their spiritual commitment.

There may be courses for 20 or many more; there may be over 100 people in residence (60 bedrooms and 9 meeting rooms) the atmosphere is Quaker-like still - meeting for worship is held six days of the week and epilogue every evening both of which are open to everyone. There is Quaker silence at mealtimes and a constant Quaker presence at is maintained by Friends in Residence who uphold the worship and help provide our ministry of hospitality.

Today, as well as running courses at the Quaker study centre in Selly Oak, Birmingham, through Woodbrooke –on-the-Road it reaches out to many local meetings with a wide variety of stimulating courses. Other venues include Swarthmoor Hall in the Lake District former home of Margaret Fell, an historic building which might be considered the original home of Quakerism.

Although the ways of offering Quaker learning have changed, on line courses and webinars, the original vision remains the same. The mission today is still fostering a vital Friends’ ministry. Encouraging and enabling ministry is at the core of this Quaker approach to learning, whether that ministry is faith, witness, love or service.

Quaker Spirituality course

Having been an attender at Glasgow meeting since spring 2018, and intending to ask for membership this year, I was led to join a Woodbrooke course on 'Quaker Spirituality' which was delivered on line over 6 weeks. Led by Stuart Masters it offered a history, insight and explanation of Quaker and individual spirituality.

As a regular attender at Wednesday meetings in Glasgow I had grown comfortable with the format of worship, lunch and 'experiment with light'. Worship was though a continuing mystery to me – is silence enough? Should my mind be empty or alert? What am I waiting for?

Now for many 'experienced' Quakers, the answers may be obvious, but for a 'new boy' it was becoming a bit of a barrier – I needed to learn about 'worship' – enter Woodbrooke!

As someone who had had a life time of struggle with the idea of 'worship' and 'god language', Quakers had been a revelation. Tolerance, diversity and it being OK to not be 'certain' about things was a great relief and gave a feeling of a spiritual 'coming home'. Quaker testimonies and the expectation of them that their inward guidance and subsequent life transformation is to be revealed outwardly in the lives of the individual, the community and members also helped me understand what it was to be a Quaker...but what was I expecting, or what was expected of me, in this silence of worship?

The course was very enlightening. I quickly identified that my own 'searching' had led me to meeting and that in many ways I had to re imagine 'worship'. Instead of that hierarchical worship of a god as 'being', worship needed me to, (through the stillness of my body and mind), open myself to the fullness of the Light. This way the 'still small voice' may offer me leadings which I can discern and understand and most importantly help me be a Quaker in the big world.

Put better than I ever could, (my) 'Spiritual development is about getting in touch with the deep parts of life – valuing the experiences of awe and wonder, of hurt and sorrow, relationships with other people and the natural world, and coming to an understanding of what is meant [to me] by the term 'God'. (Francis Cattermole).

So, a great course useful for a 'new boy', but as the list of attenders showed, also useful to experienced and knowledgeable Quakers from all over the world. If you get the chance to attend, (either as an individual, or as a small group), one of these Woodbrooke courses – take that chance.

Pete Clarke, Glasgow

Quakers Sharing Experience

At Glasgow Meeting House on 16th February 2019.

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

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

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

Mary writes: I have to admit that I was a bit hesitant about taking part in the exercise of “Quakers Sharing Experience”. I knew it was to be a half-day workshop to give us the opportunity to tell our stories and get to know each other better. That sounded fine, but how was it to be organised, and anyway I am not very good at telling my personal story. Now I am really glad I went, and only wish I had taken a few notes.

We had two facilitators and they led us through a really well-prepared and organised session. In groups of three or four we started by being given one minute to introduce ourselves to our group. Then one member from each group moved on to join the next group to consider another question. So it went on, the time allowed for each member to speak increasing gradually up to four minutes. This may sound a bit regimented, but it gave everyone a chance to speak (and listen) to a good number of people. I only wish I could remember all the topics we were given (some of which were spiritual and some secular). I know that one was to describe the most moving meeting we had attended, when I immediately thought of the business meeting to decide whether to sell our much-loved meeting house on Sauchiehall Street.

Even if I can't remember precisely the subjects we considered, I know that I got to speak with a lot of Friends whom I really did not know well. I think we all left with a feeling of belonging to a really close-knit group, and with gratitude for the opportunity to “meet together and know one another in that which is eternal”.

Mary Latham, Glasgow

See the home page www.quakerssharingexperience.com

Towards a Quaker Orchestra ?

One of my favourite treats is going to listen to the very wonderful R.S.N.O. I so much admire the individual skills and talents of each of the accomplished players who make up this marvellous group of musicians.

As I watch and listen, I'm sometimes tempted to think of the orchestra as something akin to a Quaker Meeting, and have been considering what each of these phenomenal 'gatherings' might have in common.

Quakers have different skills and talents and it is very important that their 'contribution to the music' is harmonious and mindful although sometimes (let's be honest) this is not always the case. So how can it be made better?

As I observe the members of the R.N.S.O. I take note of three things. Each member knows exactly what his or her instrument is capable of and has spent many years of 'Practice' in honing these skills. The next thing I notice is that each member always keeps their eyes on the 'Score', and (most importantly perhaps) also on the 'Conductor'. The result ? a Glorious Concert!

However, there is one thing more that I observe in these R.S.N.O. concerts. Never do I hear the string section criticising the woodwind section. Never do I hear the brass section criticising the percussion section, and never does the woodwind section criticise the pianist. Each member of the 'Orchestra' knows what his job is and does not presume to tell anyone else how to play their instrument or how to interpret the 'Music'.

Further observations tell me that Quakers come in a variety of shades of opinion and so perhaps can be open to learning something from the R.N.S.O. To me this means that each Quaker should know their instrument (personality) well. It also seems important that Quakers keep their eyes on the 'Score' (Quaker Faith and Practice) and should be open (in quiet contemplation) to the directions of the 'Conductor' ie., God as they perceive Him / Her / It / to be. Clearly each has their own interpretation of this phenomenon, which is sometimes expressed vocally.

It occurs to me also that all Quakers should be hesitant to presume that their 'instrument' alone is the most important one and that the little tinkling triangle (the one that's rarely heard) doesn't really matter so much in the 'Glorious Concert' that many mature 'listeners' today recognise as contemporary Quakerism.

According to the Christ-figure we are Children of The Creation and we each matter very much indeed. "Are not five sparrows sold for tuppence in the market ? of how much more value therefore are you?" It's not really an intellectual stretch Friends, but it does take quite a lot of 'Practice', and (hopefully) we can yet learn from our mistakes. Killing people in the name of God is the biggest mistake human beings have ever made and it was never, ever, on the agenda of Yeshua of Nazareth.

Bill Bingham, Glasgow

Poems by Clare Phillips

Quaker Football

*Although we were eleven at Meeting
it would never work. No-one willing
to attack or even defend. Worse still
goalies that step aside to encourage
the balls in with a wave and a smile.*

*Discreet handshakes at open and close
of play, no hugs or shouts or swearing
everyone earning a modest wage, no
expensive transfers. Too much random
dribbling and the ball passed only*

*when the Spirit moves;
long gaps between kicks
with respect for the other side.
As for fans, they would all be sober,
no lager louts or mile high skirmishes
on cheap flights to rival EU countries,
no Russian oligarchs competing to
buy our club, managers and coaches
trained in non-violent direct action
would ensure peaceful prosperity.
So why did this even occur to me?*

Ministry of the Tulips

In Meeting, rich today and silent, tulips opened.
At the base of each bloom an indigo star
five anthers like little furred bananas
hugging one spiked pistil cross, the
mixed palette of leaf and petals
peach, moss-green, mauve, like bruised
skin as it heals. I imagined, centering down
I had launched a kite of kindness to fly above us
and tears of grief or compassion
dropped to the floor between friends
as doves of love and peace on the tablecloth
lifted to fly with the kite. Rafters became
branches.

Worship isn't always like this but when it is,
grateful
quiet Meetings heal us and at the deepest
point
like the tulips, our warmed hearts may open
as one, at its Centre the pistil cross.

Book Review: Feeling Heard, Hearing Others, Rob Foxcroft

Anchorite Books, 2018 ISBN 978-1-9164098-0-4

Robert Foxcroft is one of those people known to you by their effects on others, but whom you have never met. Such people's felt presence is passed on - it extends further and is far deeper than their reputation; indeed in Foxcroft, who is both piano teacher and focussing facilitator, his presence reverberates in the people he has met through their own ability to listen well and play deeply. In its Quaker form this listening might be understood as 'turning to the Light' and is described by George Fox as 'attending to what love requires of us'.

Foxcroft began his working life as a stane dyker. It was perhaps the respectful response to the innate form of things, in building a wall according to the stones' natural shape and order, that was an early indicator of his approach to the subject of 'feeling heard' and 'hearing others'. His reputation as a piano teacher comes not just from the necessary self-discipline of musicianship, but also from respectful attending to what lies within the pupil so that their playing takes on its own particular form and strength. A wall is built to last, but with stones particular to that place and time.

Apart from Quakers, Foxcroft's greatest influences have been the work of two twentieth century listeners: first, Carl Rogers, the person centred educationalist and psychologist. Second, Eugene Gendlin. 'Gene', a colleague of Rogers, developed focussing: 'a quality of engaged accepting attention that attends to the 'felt sense' - a researched-based technique that facilitates change' (Cornell, 2005). Thus the three listening contexts: Quaker worship, person centred therapy and focussing are united in this book as Foxcroft explains how 'feeling' can be 'heard' and 'hearing' can be 'felt' The three forms of listening are seamed throughout with Foxcroft's own poems.

Foxcroft's layering of ideas continues as the three listening modes are considered in three further sections: principles (what is listening?), practice (about listening to ourselves and each other) and people (stories about people who love to listen). I found this layering hard to grasp. But then listening is not about grasping I suppose. Rather it is about opening, allowing truth to speak. Some books are the result of dictation to order, others more poetic, allowing a natural order to dictate to us. Thus Foxcroft's book is the latter in *being* exactly what listening is – layered and multi-layered, cumulative.

Foxcroft asks us to ask ourselves a key question learned in focussing: 'What is standing between me and empathy, acceptance and being present?' In the process we may notice themes that recur which thus become helpful 'symbols

of [our] transformation'. In meeting for worship, staying with and accepting our resistance helps it to soften and sometimes for a third solution to emerge. He tackles the thorny subject of 'the inner critic' that creeps into most listening and advises us not to shy away from it, but to observe our 'inner workings of resistance' in order for it to shift.

At the end of the book Foxcroft asks about 'the politics of giving therapy away.' Therapists, focussing facilitators and music teachers charge for their professional services, but the service Friends offer in meeting is just that – the ancient practice of offering our service for sharing in community. Foxcroft himself then makes an offering to the reader: a suggested focussing workshop timetable along with plentiful exercises. This is a gift of material from thirty years of practice, no less precious for being freely given.

Immediately after reading Foxcroft's book I began another, not unconnected. 'The Cut Out Girl' is the biography of a Dutch Jewish child evacuee, Lein. After the Second World War Lein was arbitrarily 'cut out' from the life of the same foster mother who had shielded her from the Nazis whilst the rest of her family perished in the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was a rejection as shocking as it was puzzling to the young Lein.

The foster mother's grandson, Bart van Es, recently traced Lein now in her eighties.

His was a quest to hear the story of the foster girl who vanished from his grandmother's family. Van Es listened to, recorded and wrote up Lein's many layered memories and in the process, not only Lein, but Van Es and even Van Es's step-daughter were reconciled. Reading Foxcroft and Van Es so close together meant that the two books merged in my mind in one place - of acceptance and reconciliation through 'feeling heard, hearing others'. How extraordinarily our lives' variant stones are stacked: the books we read, the people we meet all form the way we sit alongside. How sound is the wall that has spaces for the winds of the Spirit to blow through it. It cannot be blown down. Thanks be to the promptings of authors such as Foxcroft and Van Es who not only earnestly 'hear others', but have the application to record the manner and truth of it, so that it may be written in our hearts also. Pass it on.

Available from the author: rob@robfoxcroft.com/book £20.00 (+ P & P).

Nicola James Maharg, West Scotland Area Meeting

International Women's Day 8th March

My old boss sends me a card or message every year to remind me of this. I confess it was not high on my agenda until I got involved with the UN 16 days action on Violence against Women when I began to realise how bad things were for so many women, even in this country, still. This year it made me ask myself where have we got to? I realised Feminism has changed and the issues have changed. And many like me are still with an old stereotype!

So, let's start with this one. It's difficult to say exactly when International Women's Day began. Its roots can be traced to 1908, when 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding voting rights, better pay and shorter working hours. In 1910, a woman called Clara Zetkin – leader of the 'women's office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany – tabled the idea of an International Women's Day. She suggested that every country should celebrate women on one day every year to push for their demands. A conference of more than 100 women from 17 countries agreed to her suggestion and International Women's Day was formed. In 1911, it was celebrated for the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on March 19. In 1913, it was decided to transfer the date to March 8, and it has been celebrated on that day ever since. The United Nations only recognised it as a special day in 1975, but ever since has created a theme each year for the celebration. This year it is: **Balance for Better: better the balance, better the world.**

Why do we still celebrate it?

Simply, because the original aim – to achieve full gender equality for women in the world – has still not been realised. A gender pay gap persists across the globe and women are still not present in equal numbers in business or politics. Figures show that globally, women's education, health and violence towards women is still worse than that of men. And according to the World Economic Forum, the gender gap won't close until 2186. On International Women's Day, women across the world come together to force the world to recognise these inequalities – while also celebrating the achievements of women who have overcome these barriers. According to a 2017 report by the World Economic Forum, it could still take another 100 years before the global equality gap between men and women disappears entirely.

Although it is very real, and we white middle class elitists feel too comfortable to get off our perch, I remember this as the Socialist feminist angle. I was part of the first Reclaim the Night 'marches' around Soho. The police were friendly and we had good fun in the sex shops 'innocently' asking *What is this for?* The second 'march' was an entirely different matter. The Socialist Feminists were out in force. **The agenda changed.** No longer *when we enter in the game we're*

gonna change the goddam rules. The initial vision was lost and we were **fighting** for equal pay, equal opportunity, freedom to *work*, to have childcare and more child friendly hours. We were working within a capitalist patriarchal society with the same rules, playing the same game. Well, on the whole, women in the western world *are* better off for it. At least expectations are different now even if there are lots of corners that still need swept.

There is more to it than equal pay, etc. Women in 243 countries are still classed as second class citizens without the vote. In many countries women cannot leave home without a male escort. If raped, in some countries, a woman has to marry her rapist. In some, she cannot show her face. In others female babies are either aborted or killed. Female Genital Mutilation is rife in a large part of the world. *So what percentage of women are 'free'?*

In the 60s, freed by the Pill and a more liberal society, some women thought they had sexual freedom only to realise she was still being passed around the men! In our own society misogyny is a subtle, hidden force. Helena Kennedy's book *Eve was Shamed* exposed how British justice is unjust to women. The stereotype does not aid her in court. Her crimes are seldom violent yet she is imprisoned – a male answer to male violence. Put in prison, her family also suffer. Thankfully Scotland is way ahead in creating smaller, more local units where she can be integrated into the community, and continue to support her family.

In the western world hypersexualisation is now prevalent. With the internet and pornography, this has lead to a different exploitation in which little toddlers are dressed in pink bras, teenagers are encouraged to spread their legs in the belief they are sexually mancipated (that word starts with 'man'), each night women are mutilated, murdered and sexually abused in countless TV dramas, and the male dominated world of pornography fails to recognise the reciprocity of sex, making unrealistic expectations on women (*have you heard of 'roasting'?*) that fails to develop equality in relationships. Western women are oppressed in a different way!

We are so 'emancipated' in Scotland that during a (Women's)World Day or Prayer a group of 40+ women were addressed by the only man in the room, or the (Women's) Guild now has male head because . . . we openly include men too in the name of gender equality.

Side-by-Side *for gender justice* works through Faith Leaders in many countries in Africa and South America. With them, I attended a recent Cross Party meeting in Holyrood on development, it was emphasised that development agencies seldom take in religion as a factor when in fact these faith leaders are often *the* leaders in their communities. Side-by-Side was asked to the meeting because it recognised that poverty usually links with women and their status.

There is a fragile area as to when western women could support their sisters in countries where women issues are difficult. *I have not started speaking of the special situations of women refugees!* The World Council of Churches has a campaign **Thursdays in Black**. People are asked to wear black on Thursdays in recognition of how rape and violence particularly against women is now a major feature in the many on-going wars ('local conflicts') – more recently the government of Zimbabwe instructed its soldiers to rape. In handing out leaflets to folks outside Central Station in Glasgow, we became fiercely aware of our hypocrisy. After some research we re-drafted the leaflet to show the statistics for sexual crime in Scotland, including how 43% of 10,273 in 2016-17 were perpetrated on under 18 year olds.

There are so many groups involved in Scotland – Zero tolerance, Rape Crisis, Women's Aid, CoS Integrity, Engender – is this also a concern for Quakers in Scotland? Some of us think YES because, going back to our origins, Women's Liberation is about how we play the game. This means more than tackling sexist language. Yes, we need to tackle how women are more vulnerable to poverty – the pregnancy trap into poverty is still there today for many young women, as social workers know well. Quakers have something special to give in how we handle our affairs, how we relate to people as unique and inherently valuable. It is in our life-style *which is so difficult to articulate* as it is not a set of rules but a daily dialogue with the Light. Each day is uniquely creative.

But, if it is to be put into words, the men's White Ribbon Campaign relates it to everyday behaviour as *to see, to hear, to notice*.

Margaret Roy, Lanark

For International Women's Day, A Celebration - Story Café Special: Artemisia Gentileschi

We're thrilled to have a rare self-portrait by the most celebrated female artist of the Italian Baroque – Artemisia Gentileschi – on display at the Library from Thursday 7th March to Tuesday 19th March.

Glasgow Women's Library is the only Accredited Museum in the UK dedicated to women's lives, histories and achievements, with a lending library, archive collections and innovative programmes of public events & learning opportunities.

Glasgow Women's Library is proud to be an Art Fund Museum of the Year 2018 Finalist

23 Landressy Street
Glasgow
Glasgow City
G40 1BP
United Kingdom

Telephone: 0141 550 2267

Email: info@womenslibrary.org.uk

Find us on [Facebook](#) or follow [@womenslibrary on Twitter](#)

Spiritual or Energy Healing

On Saturday, 2nd March, Arran and Glasgow Meetings planned to hold a healing Day. The Healers from Glasgow were due to come to me on Arran as they do most years but this time five Members and Attenders from Arran Meeting wanted to come too. Alas, the weather forecast was enough to make it obvious that there would be no ferries that afternoon so we decided to go ahead in our respective areas. Nicola McHarg had the Glasgow group to her house in Fintry and I had the Arran Friends here, at Dippin House.

Both groups had a good day, joining in spirit for a while at one o'clock before our shared lunches.

I told my group the story of how George and I had become Spiritual or Energy Healers and how astonished I was, and still am, that I should be in this position! After this we had a very interesting discussion about "energy" in all its forms and everyone had fascinating stories to tell. After lunch we had a Meeting for Worship for Distant healing where we all dropped the names of people that we knew who were in need of healing into the silence. One of our Friends stayed on for "hands-on" healing, which usually isn't hands on at all as we work mainly in the energy field a few inches from the body. It was a very positive and rewarding day.

I do not know if there are any more Healing groups in Scotland but if there are it would be good to be in touch.

For those of you who are interested The Friends Fellowship of Healing, which was founded in 1935, holds conferences, workshops, training courses and retreats, mainly at Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Telephone: 01342 832105. They publish a booklet, 'Towards Wholeness', three times a year.

I trained with the National Federation of Spiritual Healers first and then took the Quaker course. George did the same before me and went on to become a course tutor.

Energy Healing is such and incredibly simple and straightforward way of channelling healing - it is what we all do naturally when we comfort a child or adult but done with intent.

Judith Baines, Arran

And what was Glasgow Group up to? Playing with colours:-



Opportunities for action

Climate Change

Meeting with John Finnie MSP On Sunday 31 March John Finnie will attend Meeting for Worship in Glasgow and will then lead a discussion on the Greens' proposal for a Climate Emergency Bill. Further details from Martin Mansell (mamansell69@gmail.com). We invite Friends from other Local Meetings to join Glasgow Friends for this.

*John is also the author of the proposed **Equal Protection from Assault Bill**, which removes the right of parents to physically chastise their child.*

from Mairi Campbell-Jack, our parliamentary engagement officer: The Scottish Parliament is set to debate the Climate Change (Emission Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill within the coming weeks. I have constructed a pro-forma letter for Friends to use and edit as they wish to write to their MSPs about this important debate. You can find the details of your representatives at the following link <https://www.parliament.scot/msps.aspx>

Dear xxxx,

My name is xxxx and I live in xxxxx, and as my representative in the Scottish Parliament I am writing to you about the upcoming debate on the Climate Change (Emission Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. I write as a Quaker concerned that climate change is a huge threat to the sustainability of the Earth's ecosystems and will exacerbate social and economic injustice around the world.

The recent Special Report by UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that we must maintain global warming to within 1.5 °C to avoid climate breakdown. To play its part, the Scotland must achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the very latest. This requires bold policy change and leadership across all of our economic sectors, remembering that this target would also drive investment in green jobs, better services, clean air and more energy-efficient homes.

We can rightly celebrate the progress in cutting emissions from our energy sector. However, we believe we must now see urgent progress in emissions reduction across all economic sectors to ensure Scotland plays its part in averting climate breakdown, and shows leadership on the international stage in this issue.

We also echo the aims of campaign groups like Stop Climate Chaos and suggest that MSPs support the following in the Bill.

1. A net-zero emissions target for 2050 at the very latest, with regular and ambitious interim targets

2. Measures to ensure that future finance budgets are consistent with our climate targets

3. New policies to cut emissions from buildings and agriculture as soon as possible. We believe these will help drive investment in tackling fuel poverty, and sustainable agriculture.

As my representative I hope that you will carefully consider the Bill, and the chance it gives Scotland to act decisively on climate change.

Sustainability

Swap Market

Some of you will hopefully know about Southside's new Swap Market. A place where you can exchange skills for things and vice-versa.

It really is a great initiative and is proving very popular and useful with those of us who are outwith the money economy and/or have uneasy relationships with it!

Do check it out if you are in the area and consider offering a skill yourself. On the fourth Saturday of each month I'll be giving 20min Clutter Clearing Consultations - first ones this coming Saturday - and am hoping to book in for a massage in return!

Here's their address and weblink: Swap Market, 423 Victoria Road, G42 8RW <http://swapmarket.info/>

More info from Zem Moffat

Penington Co-Housing is interested in buying the ground floor flats of the Shawbridge development, on Shawbridge Street, South Glasgow.

The Sales Office will be on site from mid to late April/May, 2019. She will have details of the properties and prices then, possibly a two bedroomed flat be in £170-180K range at present. More details to come.

This is an opportunity to create the first senior cohousing project in Scotland. Please tell anyone you know who may be interested. Penington is looking for more members who wish to be part of this cohousing group.

www.pencohousing.org.uk; email:- pencohousing@gmail.com ,

Facebook:-peningtoncohousing, Twitter:- PenCoHo.

EMES

some more news from around the section:

1. Coalition for work for psychotrauma and peace

The latest newsletter from the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and

Peace is now available here: <https://www.cwwpp.org/monthly-reports.html>

2. Update from Quaker Voluntary Action:

In this cold winter weather it's perhaps time to start thinking ahead to the summer! Quaker Voluntary Action has a number of working retreats taking place which you can take part in.

Details of these opportunities can be found on the website at <http://qva.org.uk/retreats/>. Bursaries are available for all our working retreats - please do ask.

You might also be interested in reading reflections on recent working retreats, now up on our new blog: <http://qva.org.uk/blog/> (There's also a wonderful poem by Anneke Kraakman inspired by our Swarthmoor Hall working retreat last autumn, entitled 'This Earth is a Garden'.)

3. QCEA are hiring a Peace Programme Assistant

The Quaker Council for European Affairs is seeking a Peace Programme Assistant to support the implementation of our Peace Programme. The role involves support to research and advocacy projects, cooperation with civil society partners and supporting the organisation of diplomatic work at the Quaker House and other venues in Europe. More details:

<http://www.qcea.org/home/involved/vacancies/?fbclid=IwAR2utQ6pc2HTFYWH1kJIM5-drBLUpY7FEGz4dNPzBy5ISMa0NaftivHllz>

4. Church & Peace

In the run-up to the European Parliament elections in May 2019, a broad alliance of 74 organisations and institutions from nine European countries is calling for the rescue of the European peace project. Among the signatories is Church and Peace as well as many peace movement associations, churches and church organisations, the aid agencies Misereor and Bread for the World and the environmental organisation Greenpeace. The alliance criticizes the European Union's plans to invest billions in arms research and military cooperation with third countries. The EU must not arm states that wage war or violate human rights. The promotion of peace and human rights must not fall victim to defence against flight and migration.

In view of the large number of violent conflicts, the signatories demand that the EU invest more in nonviolent conflict management.

Everyone in the European Union is invited to sign the appeal at www.savethepeaceproject.eu before the elections are held from 23 to 26 May 2019. You can find further the full text of the appeal, a list of the 74 signatories and background info on the requests in the attached press release or online at:

<https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2019/02/04/save-the-european-peace-project/>.

Please sign the appeal and distribute it:

- Promote the appeal with your own PRESS RELEASE using the attached text!
- Invite further supporters to become a SIGNATORY ONLINE at www.savethepeaceproject.eu!
- Use the campaign logo and the Hashtags #peaceproject #europarl #eu for distribution on SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS or your website.

We are encouraged by the positive response of organisations to the call "Save the Peace Project Europe".

FWCC-EMES

www.fwccemes.org

emes@fwccemes.org

Scottish Charity number: SC 036528

Opportunities for Younger Friends

Young People's Programme at Yearly Meeting

24–27 May, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts

Reminder to book on to the Young People's Programme (YPP) at Yearly Meeting. YPP is a residential event for 11- to 15-year-olds (those born between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2007). It helps young Friends to engage with Yearly Meeting topics, explore their faith and practice, whilst including space for building community and taking part in fun activities.

Please book at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/children-and-young-people-1 by 22 March 2019

Aleks Zawadzka, cypadmin@quaker.org.uk, 0207 663 1013

Children's Programme at Yearly Meeting

25–27 May, Friends House, London

The children's programme is for those under 11 years old (those born after 1st September 2007) attending Yearly Meeting 2019. Sessions will run on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday, mornings and afternoons. A session for 5-11 year-olds is also available during the Swarthmore Lecture on the Saturday evening.

Full information and booking forms are on the Yearly Meeting's children and young people's page:

www.quaker.org.uk/ym/children-and-young-people-1

Aleks Zawadzka, cypadmin@quaker.org.uk, 0207 663 1013

Summer Shindig

Information for Young People

Northern Young Friends' Summer Shindig is an event for 11-16 year olds from across Scotland and the North of England. It's a chance for you to live together with friends for a week in a Quaker environment. It's a spiritual adventure with fun, games and laughter thrown in!

This year we are going back to Ackworth School in Yorkshire where there will be new adventures to be had!

What will happen in the week?

We have a theme each year which will be explored by visiting speakers, and we'll have discussion groups in which you consider the issues raised (and loads of other stuff). We will also explore the theme in a less formal way, through drama, art, craft, cookery, worship and games. There will be free time where you can explore the site, chat to your friends or go for a swim in the pool. In the evenings there is Radio A-worth, where you get your opportunity to show off your talents (or lack of them if recent staff sketches are any indication!).

On Wednesday, we leave the site for a day trip. You will either go to Lightwater Valley to brave the roller coasters and feed the ducks, or to York to explore the sights. All 11 year olds and 12 year olds will go to Lightwater Valley and young people aged 13 to 16 will have a choice whether they go to York or Lightwater Valley. This choice will need to be made in the main set of application forms in May.

New to Shindig?

Many people going away from home for the first time can feel nervous, especially if they don't know anyone. You will soon make friends – we have a first timers supper on the first night where you will meet other people who are new. You will also be part of a family group and discussion group, each with two staff members attached, to help you get to know the ropes and meet people. And remember that about **one in four young friends at summer shindig will be there for the first time**. The only down side of it all is that you will have to go home at the end. However you will leave with many great memories and new friends.

<p style="text-align: center;">Scottish Friends Family Weekend – Pitlochry Youth Hostel May 31st – June 2nd 2019</p>
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We are planning another event for Quaker families in Scotland (**note we have moved from October to May**). It is an opportunity for adults to relax and be

together, and for the children and young people to get to know each other before moving on to Summer Shindig and link weekends. Younger children also get to know each other and form important friendships. We are beginning to plan the programme on the theme of the rights of children and young people.

The Pitlochry Youth Hostel in Pitlochry offers accommodation in family rooms for 52 people. The cost for the weekend (including accommodation for the 2 nights and food) is:

Under 3 years of age – free

Children & young people aged 4-17 years of age - £40.00

Adults - £60.00

We have tried to keep the price down but please do not be put off by the cost of the weekend, as we are able to offer bursary help. Please contact Madeleine Harding if you need some financial help with this event. There are a few options we can apply for.

The hostel is self-catering so we will prepare and eat meals as a community.

The weekend is open to all families with children of any age accompanied by one or more adults. However, we encourage and will give priority to families with children between the ages of 9 and 11. The weekend will help them to connect with their peers in preparation for Summer Shindig. Places will be allotted on a first come first served basis.

There will be an organised programme for children and young people of all ages for some of the weekend. There will be times when we are all together and some time for families to chill out on their own. Children and young people are the responsibility of their accompanying adults except when they are part of the organised programme. Please contact us if you are able and would like to volunteer in any way with the programme planning or facilitation.

We are looking forward to a weekend of sharing, being together as families, relaxing, having fun and remembering our Quaker values through some periods of worship together.

The weekend is organised with the support of Scotland General Meeting

If you would like to come to this event please fill out an application form and send it to:

Madeleine Harding, 23c Stanley Road, Edinburgh, EH6 4SE

Tel:07990 683746

Email: madinleith@gmail.com

Payment should be made as soon as possible with a cheque **PAYABLE TO**

Religious Society of Friends: Scotland GM and sent to:

Nigel Dower 16 Ellon Road, Aberdeen AB12 5YR email: n.dower@abdn.ac.uk

News from Local Meetings

The future of Glasgow Meeting House

You are invited to join Glasgow Friends on **Sunday 7 April** at 1pm to discuss proposals for the future of the Meeting House in Glasgow. This follows our Meeting for Worship at 11am and lunch will be provided for those attending. Background documents will be circulated in advance. These will review the work carried out over the last five years, our visioning process, architects' proposals and report of the funding group. For copies please contact Martin Mansell (mamansell69@gmail.com) or Daphne Wassermann (lm@aquarius1000.plus.com).

Lanark Tree Planting at Wiston Lodge on Sunday 7th April.

Previously organised by members of Glasgow Meeting, Lanark Meeting has taken responsibility for this annual event. The All Age Meeting for worship will be followed by a vegetarian lunch before we spend an hour out in the grounds tree planting. This year, as well as planting trees which will be provided, it would be good to underplant them with insect friendly shrubs and other plants. This has always been a good occasion and Lanark hopes some of you will be able to come.....

We start with our Meeting for Worship at 10.30 am. And hopefully will be joined by folks from other Area Meetings.

Lunch will be at 1pm. If you have other dietary needs please contact Meg Bereford meg.bereford@gn.apn.org And let her know you are coming re numbers for lunch.

Mull & Iona

March Diary

Meeting for Worship:

Sunday 3rd March at 2:00 pm in Salen Church Hall.

Saturday 9th March at 11.00am in An Roth, Craignure

Friday 15th March at 11.00am in Glen Iosal, Breadalbane Street, Tobermory

Tuesday 26th March at 12:30pm in Salen Church Hall (followed by a bring and share lunch)

Glasgow East End Meeting 7 pm, Monday 18 March

At the Reidvale Neighbourhood Centre, 13 Whitevale St, Dennistoun, G31 1QW
We usually meet on the 3rd floor for half an hour of worship – visitors welcome and refreshments provided.

Strollers Get-Together

Tuesday 12 March 10.30

The Strollers Group hasn't met for some time and we will meeting together in the tea room on the ground floor of Kelvingrove Museum at 10.30 on Tuesday 12 March. If you would like a chat, and perhaps a short stroll, please join us. Contact Margaret Morton (0141 889 2865 or margmor@btopenworld.com)

Other Spiritual Opportunities

Residential Pilgrimage at Swarthmoor Hall, Cumbria

The Learning Group and Glasgow Elders are arranging a residential Pilgrimage to the 'cradle of Quakerism' at Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria. A provisional booking for 13 Friends staying 4 nights has been made for **13-17 October 2019**. We are seeking the names of Friends interested in participating, before we move on with planning and costing now. Please contact Michael Hutchinson on 0141 770 7865 or mjhriddrie@btinternet.com

This trip would be as a retreat/pilgrimage. The aim would be to strengthen bonds within the meeting and provide opportunity to learn more and experience the beginnings of Quakerism in the 1652 country. It can be a life changing experience and many feel closer to their faith and experience on visiting the sites.

Patterns and Examples 16 March 2019

This Woodbrooke course is coming to Glasgow Meeting House.

It course is designed for anyone who holds a role in local or area meeting. *“Join us for a day of inspiration, support and refreshment with plenty of opportunities to share ideas and worship together.”*

The cost is £20 for the day (£10 for 6-17 year olds). To book, go to forms.quaker.org.uk/patterns-and-examples.

Lord's Prayer in Aramaic

The fourth session will take place on 17th March at 2pm in Glasgow Meeting House. Contact Margaret Roy for details 01899 220931.

The Music of Silence Spring Renewal Retreat with Saki Lee

April 5th - 7th 2019 at Allanton Sanctuary, SW Scotland DG2 0RY

*"The flute of infinite is played without ceasing, and its sound is love." Kabir :
mystic poet*

During this retreat we shall tune ourselves as instruments of the divine through silence, sacred songs, the Dances of Universal Peace, and Sufi practices with breath, light and sacred sound. Our closure will include an informal Universal Worship with participants sharing in it.

Included in the retreat costs are all vegetarian meal and shared rooms.

Early bird price: £230.00 for all beds(Allanton increased & changed their pricing)if paid before Feb 21st Late Booking: £245.00 if paid after Feb 21st.

To book contact: Anna/Latifa Nur: anna.keith.ja@gmail.com Tel: 01387 740230

Day Conference: Nan Shepherd: Saturday 6 April 2019, 10am-5pm.

The Spiritual, Ecopoetic and Geopoetic Vision in her Life and Writings.

Sanctuary, Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EL.
Organised by Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace, EICSP,
Scottish Charity, SC038996, www.eicsp.org

Experiment with Light

There are many groups throughout the country. For more information and to download lectures and meditation, and the journal, contact the website at www.experiment-with-light.org. Note there is an open group in Glasgow on Wednesdays at 2pm after lunch and Meeting for Worship. All are welcome.

Events:

21 - 24 June 2019 Retreat at Swarthmoor Hall, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0JQ

Tel: +44 (0) 1229 583 204

With Helen Meads, Andrea Freeman & Maggie Owen See courses at

www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk

30th August – 1st September at Glenthorne Quaker Centre Easedale Road, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9QH, Tel: +44 (0) 15394 35389

With Angela Greenwood, Diana Lampen & Lesley McCourt

See www.glenthorne.org/events/

To read more, see the special retreats edition of the Journal: <http://www.experiment-with-light.org.uk/ewlnlret.pdf>.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

9 th March	GENERAL MEETING Glasgow
11 th March	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
15-17 March	Westerly Friends' Gathering in Crianlarich.
24 th March	Meeting for Worship at Faslane And future dates are 14 th April, 19 th May, 16 th June
13 th April	Area Meeting in Dumfries 11am – 4pm
8 th June	GENERAL MEETING South East
10 th June	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
24 th August	Area Meeting in Tarbert, Kintyre, Argyll 11am – 4pm
14 th September	GENERAL MEETING North
12 th October	Area Meeting in Dunblane 11am – 4pm
16 th November	GENERAL MEETING Perth
2 nd December	Area Meeting by telephone 7 – 9pm
11 th January 2020	Area Meeting in Glasgow 11am – 4pm

Hold in the light

Dumfries Meeting that has experienced a death and where another is ill.
Derek Read who is recovering from a visit to hospital.
Sheila Semple and her husband, Rex, who has been in hospital

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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 31st May

Copy should be send in Word format to the editors Alastair McIver or Margaret Roy