

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

October 2016

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Clerk's Letter

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.

Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

I've been reflecting on these two statements. The first, its origin somewhat obscure, I often hear when we are asked to think about the need of all for support and encouragement. We don't know the half of what people are trying to grapple with in life. The second statement, from George Fox, is often heard too as the state we could be in as we travel through life.

Quaker faith & practice 19.32 helped me reflect further. George Fox's language needs some thinking about – how would he have said these things today, I wonder?

Reading George Fox's letter in 19.32, which ends with this phrase, does make it clear though that 'walking cheerfully' is not an instruction, but an end result of how we live. 'THEN you will come to walk cheerfully...' he says. The meaning of the word 'cheerfully' may have changed and was not so narrow as we use it these days – rather akin to bonhomie. It had resonance of walking with confidence, looking outward and answering to others.

George describes the way we get to be being cheerful: by opening ourselves to the transforming nature of the spirit and living the consequences. The nature of letting the spirit work in us is to be open ourselves, become 'valiant for Truth upon earth' and live what we call the testimonies – ways of life that are consequences of our religious understandings of the value and worth of all, and of the creation. But I suspect it also requires coming to terms with ourselves first, which may be the battle referred to in the other statement. We are expected to 'love our neighbour as ourselves' and the emphasis seems to be on loving our neighbour. But actually, I've always found it is harder to love ourselves. That may be the hard battle being fought by everyone. But there does seem to be a progression: find and value yourself, be open to the spirit and act out the consequences and then we'll find we are walking cheerfully. And of course that can be a continual process we have to go through again and again. So the two statements do link: we can be kind to each other and help each other get to be walking cheerfully. And the world will become transformed.

.....And this is the word of the Lord God to you all, and a charge to you all in the presence of the living God: be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow Meeting

Report on Area Meeting, Tarbert August 2016

Some 25 Friends and attenders gathered in the youth annex of the Tarbert Village Hall for August Area Meeting, coming from two island LMs, from as far south as Ayr and as far east as Dunblane. The village hall is a new venue, but one which seemed to meet with much approval, with its open and accessible kitchen and french windows onto a pleasant garden for some lunchtime fresh air, so we hope to return next year.

Our youngest attender, Emily, aged two, was welcomed by the clerk and provided some very enjoyable moments with her discovery of the biscuits and also a talking rocket (this is the venue for the after-school club!). We hope this will be the first of many Friends' gatherings for Emily.

Our first main item was membership, and we were pleased to welcome into membership Aileen Maxwell of Dunblane Meeting. We also considered how to deal with an application from a young West Scotland Friend currently living and working in the south of England, and two Friends were appointed to work with her.

Probably our longest and most challenging item of business concerned the matter of the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust's somewhat controversial decision to donate £50,000 to Alastair Carmichael MP towards his court costs, following the case against him for misrepresenting the truth brought by four Orkney voters. We were not of one mind on the issue: some felt that a number of banks and multinational companies also have Quaker roots and that the business of the JRRT, which has no formal links to Quakers, was none of our business; others felt that the JRRT should cease to mention its Quaker heritage; some felt that the heritage of "liberalism and Quakerism" needed to be teased apart as they are not one and the same thing; and some felt that punishment, which Alastair Carmichael has undoubtedly suffered, can be combined with kindness to bring about a change of heart and behaviour. After much ministry and reflection we took a break for lunch, preceded by a change of mood whilst we listened to Derek Read's very moving poem about the funeral of our dear Friend Jeny Faulkner, and remembered her.

After lunch we returned to the matter of the JRRT and were presented by our Clerk with a very helpful minute which drew out a concern which had been bubbling under the surface of all our earlier contributions – that of truth and integrity in public affairs – or rather the loss of it, most recently exemplified in the

referendum on the EU. The minute will be sent to the Recording Clerk and to the Clerk of QPSW, and following their response we will discern how to take this forward.

We then considered the 2015 accounts, which had already been approved by our Trustees, and were encouraged by our Treasurer, Kate Gulliver, to see them as the story of what we do and a celebration of what we have achieved – which includes holding Meeting for Worship on a regular basis in 17 different locations across West Scotland. We also considered the spending of the legacy funds which have been left to us by Barbara Organ, Jean Laurie and Margaret Giles, and amended the categories under which the Barbara Organ legacy can be spent in order to free up the Jean Laurie bequest to support Glasgow Meeting House, which is a key asset of the Area Meeting.

After approving a number of nominations – including Margaret Roy as Assistant AM Clerk, Kate Philbrick and Michael Hutchinson as Elders and Lorraine Beaman as Overseer – and agreeing dates and venues for Area Meeting in 2017, Arran Friends left to catch their boat and we closed with tea and farewells, to meet again in Ayrshire in October.

Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura LM

CREATING A JUST SCOTLAND

Transforming our land and taxation policies

Scottish Quakers are committed to seeking a just society in which resources are shared more equitably. We are not alone; many others share this vision. The time seems right to join with others and call for change.

The Scottish Parliament has recently had devolved to it considerable autonomy with regard to taxation and economic affairs and is looking, especially in the circumstances following ‘Brexit’, for still greater powers, either through the development of greater federal devolution or, if that does not emerge, through independence. While there are radical elements within the Holyrood parliament and Scottish society at large calling for the creation of a more socially and economically just society, these are working against an instinctive conservatism and against those stakeholders with money, land and power who do not wish to see change. If such change is not initiated in Scotland at this critical time, when

doors are wide open, there is the risk of traditional power bases uniting with inertia and caution to prevent change.

Mairi Campbell-Jack, Scottish Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer and the General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group have arranged a symposium on tackling inequalities in Scottish society. By agreement it is part of the Independent and Radical Book Fair in Edinburgh. The event will bring together a range of concerned parties including Scottish Quakers, other churches and faith communities, and local organisations working on economic justice.

Sally Foster-Fulton, head of Christian Aid in Scotland and former chair of the Church of Scotland Church and Society Council is the chairperson.

There are three speakers:

- **Richard Murphy**, well known academic political economist, who has proposed a radical reform of our taxation system in books such as ‘The Joy of Tax’ and has been a significant influence on current Labour Party thinking.
- **Lesley Riddoch**, journalist, author of ‘Blossom - what Scotland needs to flourish’. Influential in making links between Scottish politicians and Nordic countries, with a view to learning lessons from their economic and political systems.
- **Andy Wightman** MSP, advocate of land ownership reform in Scotland, author of ‘Scotland - Land and Power: The Agenda for Land Reform’ etc.

We hope to unite voices in Scottish church and secular society to lobby for radical change in Scottish taxation and land ownership policies, to create greater equality of opportunity. The symposium will provide an opportunity to clarify how best we can work together for these changes.

Elizabeth Allen

(Convenor, General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group)

Creating A Just Scotland - Transforming our land and taxation policies'

Saturday, 29th October, 10.00 am to 11.50 am

Out of the Blue Drill Hall, 36 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh, EH6 8RG

Admission Free – no ticket required

John Woolman, the Tailor of Mount Holly

Born in New Jersey in 1720, John Woolman renounced wealth to follow the simple profession of tailoring. He was recognisable in his undyed white suits - he felt the dye hid dirt and he professed cleanliness and purity! “*There is a principle that is pure placed in the human mind.*” He travelled widely in the ministry speaking out on slavery so making fellow Quakers feel most uncomfortable for indulging in an economy that relied on slavery and the possession of wealth.

“ . . . *I saw that a humble man, with the Blessing of the Lord, might live on a little, and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving; but that commonly with an increase of wealth, the desire for wealth increased.*” And so he avoided employment that would have been profitable.

“*May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions*” – QF&P 23.16. Even during the First World War, John Woolman’s words guided Friends. See also 20.55 and 23.14 in the same vein. “ . . . *turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love*”.

John Woolman was perhaps the first Quaker to object to taxes when the money was applied to purposes of war: “*To refuse the active payment of a Tax which our Society generally paid, was exceedingly disagreeable; but to do a thing contrary to my Conscience appeared yet more dreadful.*”

His concern for slavery led him to journey much in the ministry, even to London: “*Conduct is more convincing than language.*”

“ . . . *acting contrary to present outward interest, from a motive of divine love, and in regard to Truth and Righteousness, and thereby incurring the resentment of people, opens the way to a treasure which is better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men.*”

“That he may have more sympathy with slaves, he lived less well than they. Flesh would not stand his treatment; it melted from him. He was left thin and anaemic, with large burning eyes.’*

‘This slender slip of a fellow, gentle to look at, has a persuasive way of talking. His mind works clearly, and his judgments come from some coherent, vigorous faith.’*

His concern for the environment is reflected in his well-known quotation:

“*to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.*”

And finally:

“The place of prayer is a precious habitation: . . I saw this habitation to be safe, to be inwardly quiet, when there was great stirrings and commotions in the world.” QF&P 20.10 See also QF&P 2.57 on his experience of ministry.

Quotation from *The Tailor of Mount Holly: John Woolman* by F.V. Motley, Friends Book Centre

Quaker Faith & Practice Chap 8 and 28

First, we were drawn to Christine Davis words in 8.01 – *in our Quaker work, are we sure that our decision-making is rooted in prayer and thought, those dual basis of all our actions? And as Friends with a responsibility for overseeing one another’s faithfulness, how often do we stop and hold in the Light the people who are acting on our behalf? How often do we stop to think how much research and information gathering is behind their actions? Too often I fear we jump to judgement. Both the work and its oversight have to be rooted in the silence of worship.*

We do not always know who the Friends are who serve us. Our work is contained in our structures. Yet, while as a group, we felt the need for a good structure, it was necessary to transcend this rather than discard it. Without structures and practices, we can go round in circles. In 8.24 Beth Allen states ‘*I don’t want to be part of a well-run charity, I want to be part of a religious group, a church*’. We debated, what is a religion. *Prayer and thought and silence of worship* are concepts that seem at the heart of Quakerism but what do they mean?

Quakers come from so many different backgrounds and beliefs – without structures it is hard not to go into anarchy. We had difficulty describing what a Quaker was! Language can’t explain the inner and outer experience. If we get too bound up in language trying to explain ourselves, we lose the spirit of sharing. We listen to each other. Beliefs are not what hold us together, it is our silence and looking for the divine spark within the other. There is goodness in everyone. Why is that the case? All of us are part good and part bad. Unfortunately in some the darkness has been fed. It does not have to be like that. It could have been different. Natural goodness is a Quaker belief. We value that within the other. We are seekers, as were Quakers at the start, and persecuted then because we saw ‘Christianity’ as a transformative religion.

How do others see us? In Interfaith one admired how we write minutes as they happen. Our business is rooted in worship where we come together in something beyond ourselves. Richard Holloway apparently describes Quakers as the conscience of Christianity.

How Alternatives to Violence Project helped me get my life back on track!

I probably hadn't been listening too well the day I heard about the charity which helped me get my life straightened out , because when I turned up for the workshop it wasn't at all what I had expected.

I heard the 'Violence' word and thought it was a self-defence course.

I hadn't bargained for it being 16 hours long and it was expensive too. In those days 15 years ago £50.00 now it costs £95.00..... but only if you can afford it AVP never turn people away because they can't afford to pay!

I was working at the time and it was over the weekend, so I signed up.

I had been frightened of other people's violence most of my life and thought it might help me defend myself.

At the workshop I met a lassie about my own age and we got talking. We shared our personal stories and she told me she was a Big Issue vendor.

We came from very different backgrounds. We both had histories of abuse and mental illness. Both of us were in recovery and learning how to handle conflict in our lives.

16 hours suddenly seemed far too short and £50.00 too little to repay the healing which was coming from listening and being heard!

Over the years I went to workshops as often as I could. My full time work in health brought me into daily contact with families stressed by mental and physical illness, poverty, domestic violence, addictions and homelessness. My own family life brought it's own difficulties too and at times I needed the safe community of AVP people to help me find healing, new perspectives and tools to carry on.

For a long time I was happy to be a participant. I also thought I should try and give something back for all the help I had had over the years, so just before I retired from work I bit the bullet, and trained as a facilitator.

Within a couple of years I had been rushed into the Neurosurgical Unit at the Southern General for emergency brain surgery. A year later after two ops I was in

recovery again. Partially hearing, with balance problems and learning to live with the uncertainty of the tumour that caused the problem growing back. The skills I had learnt from the workshops and the friends I had made in the AVP community and among Quakers, my spiritual community, helped me through it all and with a huge amount of support from family and friends I got back on my feet.

It took time to get my confidence back too.

One milestone was feeling able to help run workshops in HMP Addiewell again. I needed to ask my fellow facilitators to bear with me, my biggest fears were that I would miss something someone said or fall asleep in the workshop.

We agreed a deadline for planning each evening of 10.00 so I could get enough sleep....I never had problems falling asleep. The Lead facilitator woke me with a cuppa each morning, A kindness I will not forget!

I told the prisoners in our introduction that if they spoke to me on my left side I wouldn't hear them and that it wasn't that I was being ignorant, I asked them to touch me on the shoulder if they couldn't get my attention.

Everything became easier when I was clear what I needed. Now with more than 20 prison and community workshops done I have my confidence back....I am still nervousas I say if I wasn't a bit nervous, I wouldn't be taking it seriously enough!

Mary Kennedy, Glasgow Meeting

Books New to Glasgow Meeting Library

- Paxton, George *Nonviolent resistance to the Nazis.* Youcaxto 2016 244p P/PAX
Millington, Mary *A common woman: one Greenham woman's personal account.* Mary Millington [2016] unpage P/MIL
Smith, Dan *The state of the world atlas.* 9th ed. New Internationalist 2013
 144p S/SMI
Manousos, Anthony *Quakers and the interfaith movement: a handbook for peacemakers.* Quaker Universalist Fellowship 2013
 262p P/MAN
Edmunds, Malcolm *Our wonderful world and what we can learn from it.* York Publishing Services 2016 136p. S/EDM
Taylor, Graham *Ada Salter: pioneer of ethical socialism.* Lawrence & Wishart 2016
 298p .S/TAY

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

Instrument of Grace

This article has been prompted by two things. The first is reading the Quaker Faith and Practice chapter on Close Relationships for our discussion group, and finding big gaps in it from my experience. I found the chapter had a narrow, perhaps traditional, view of close relationships and did not reflect my reality: as a wife-carer; as a SQIF (single Quaker in a family); as a step-mother (and step-step grandmother!); as a friend (as an only child, friends are central), and, of course, with companion animals. In all these roles, God speaks to me and through me. How to live the life of the spirit in *these* close relationships? There was little or no writing on this in Quaker Faith and Practice. Perhaps I should try writing about my own experience?

And then I remembered encountering in a book the quotation ‘A dog is an instrument of grace’ (I’ve been unable to track down where the quote came from), and this has been my starting point. So here is my account of how a companion animal, my dog Rosie, with whom I have one of my closest relationships, helps me to live the life of the Spirit.

She helps me to focus on the moment. Her world is vividly present to her, ‘what a dog is looking at, a dog is thinking about’. As she takes time to examine the smells in a tuft of grass or a paving stone, I have learned to lift myself out of my irritation at having to pause (when I have so many important things to do, I think) and to look around at my world and to have a moment of silence to touch the God within. And when I sit to have times of quiet worship, she joins me, circling carefully on my lap to become a neat roundness of sleeping dog; and I, too, circle in spirit, to settle quietly and gently into stillness and awareness of the divine.

I thought I was very open and accepting. But she will approach people I might be polite to but be wary of. Groups of young men smoking outside a pub, clearly having taken, in Glasgow terms, ‘a good swally’, respond to her, patting her and searching their pockets for a treat. Anyone who steps out of line is told ‘Hi, you, stop that, you’ll frighten the wee dug!’ I’ve had many conversations with ‘down and outs’ in the park, some of them incoherent, certainly, but a good number remembering the love there is between a pet and a human, and how that accepting love has been so important in making life worth living. When I take her late at night into the wee park close to my home for her bedtime toilet there are often teenagers, noisy and aggressive-sounding. Tail wagging, off she goes towards them... she has never been disappointed. She looks for, and expects to find, That of Dog in everyone.

She glorifies God the creator, being complete in her dog-ness.

It’s like having your very own David Attenborough nature programme in your home. Watching her, and learning how she perceives and reacts to her world, I am

filled with wonder that a creature of a different species is sharing our life. I've always found the idea that we should praise God a very difficult one... why should we have to keep telling the deity how wonderful He/She is? But I sometimes feel overflowing with praise and thankfulness to the creator of this wee brown dog. She senses distress and need. When I fell, bruising my face badly, she bounded on to the bed as usual, planning to give me loving licks on my face. She stopped in her tracks, approached gently, and sniffed my face all over...I remember the feeling of her whiskers touching my skin, gently, gently... Then she licked my hand instead and curled up, wedging herself hard against my side. I cannot explain the comfort I got from her presence. Rex, my husband, fell in the house, fracturing uncountable numbers of ribs and could not get up. Rosie licked him and lay with him until I returned. Another time, a friend whose husband had died that day arrived: Rosie jumped up beside her and lay with her head on her lap, very still. And again, when we were visiting a dying friend who loved dogs, she jumped on the bed, licked his face, and snuggled into his side... and was there when he died.

When you are older, unless you have young grandchildren, playfulness is difficult to express. Rosie releases that joy and playfulness for me.

And she is changing my attitudes, gradually. All my life I have eaten meat and I still continue to do so (remembering the usual ethical things about it being free-range, the importance of animal welfare etc). But animals in the fields look at me now with Rosie's eyes and I am finding it more and more difficult to continue in the way I am living.

I may have given the impression that this is a perfect being! But she is a dog and in particular a terrier. Despite all my efforts to convince her, she does not believe that the peace testimony applies to (some) small dogs, especially other terriers! But that is her nature.

Between us there is an unconditional love, and where love is, God is. We rejoice and are glad to see each other after time apart. She is friend and companion to me, to both of us.

Sheila Semple, Glasgow Meeting

The truly abundant heart is already whole. It embraces our world with all its joy and fear, gain and loss, nobility and selfishness. It even embraces death.

Jack Kornfield *The Wise Heart*

SATURDAY 26th November next mini-conference of Bible Study/Thomas Group on Spirit, Spontaneity and Creativity.	More detail to follow from Margaret Morton or Margaret Roy.
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Militarism in Schools – Something You Can Do

Writing to MP's may seem to be rather a waste of time and writing to local councils may seem to be even more so. But, having listened to Sam Walton from QPSW and Mairi Campbell-Jack, our Parliamentary Liaison Officer talk about the growing problem of military visits to schools, I thought I would have a go at finding out what is happening in Renfrewshire. The result was a reply from the Education Officer which, while non-committal, at least made them aware of the issue and led to a meeting with her and my local councillor who was very sympathetic. It also led to an opportunity for QPSW to send peace material to the Education Officer which she promised to circulate to all schools in Renfrewshire.

I give below the email I sent and part of the replies I received. I hope this might encourage you to have a go yourself to your own council. If possible, get your councillor on your side.

I am writing to express my concern at the visits of representatives of the armed forces to schools and to inquire whether this practice is permitted in Renfrewshire. The concern is that the school visits, although ostensibly for other purposes, are often used for recruitment.

The UK is the only country in Europe that recruits 16 year olds into the army; most countries do not recruit anyone under 18. Such young people are obviously influenced by the glamorous image of warfare presented by the armed forces and unless this is balanced by a discussion of the realities of the violence and suffering of war they may commit themselves to a life which they may regret and may cause lasting psychological harm.

There is evidence that there are proportionately higher number of visits to schools in Scotland than the rest of the UK and also a disproportionately higher number of visits to schools in areas of deprivation where pupils may be more attracted by the employment prospects. Some schools rely on the army for all outdoor physical education experience.

Could you let me know what the policy in Renfrewshire is towards visits by the armed forces to schools and whether there is any complementary discussion of the alternatives to military service.

kind regards

Reply from Renfrewshire Council Education Officer

I have contacted all head teachers across Renfrewshire to gather information on what happens within our schools. The armed forces do take part in career weeks and in world of work weeks in some primary and secondary schools. The armed forces are invited along with other career representatives and talk with children and young people about their jobs. This is not a promotion or indeed a recruitment exercise. The purpose of their involvement is about giving our young people an insight into the different career paths that they may choose to follow in the future. In some other schools the armed forces may be involved in talking with our young people about their experiences in war if the class are studying World War topics. These talks are very carefully planned and monitored by the class teacher. In November some schools have visits from the British Legion to speak about the Poppy Appeal.

I also received this reply from the Head of Schools in Renfrewshire:

"I can confirm that schools do not routinely invite the armed services to come into schools. Such visits are, indeed, very rare. I can also confirm that schools in Renfrewshire do not use the army to support outdoor physical education.

Schools work closely together to ensure an appropriate range of voices are heard across ethical issues. This helps our young people to develop resilience and a broader understanding of the world around them.

I should also note that we have a number of military families living in the Renfrewshire area with children attending our schools. As such we must be careful about how we approach such issues. We would never wish to undervalue their role.

Finally, I would note that all schools are involved in Remembrance activities, Holocaust Memorial Day and the like which help to develop a better understanding of the issues which war raises in our world.

As such it would not be our intention to formalise the current position but to ask all head teachers to respond appropriately in their local circumstances."

Martin Mansell, Glasgow Meeting

You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.
Maya Angelou

Regenerating Children's Meeting – regenerating Meeting

"Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care."

Advices and Queries, 19

I am the only current member of the Children's Committee who was also on the Committee during the last triennium and, with falling attendance at Children's Meeting, it seemed a good time to set down some thoughts about where we have been and where we are going in upholding our responsibility to the children in our care.

In 1682 a group of Quaker children in Bristol, mainly aged 10 to 12 years of age, upheld their Meeting, while their parents were in prison, despite beatings and threats from the authorities. Currently, in Glasgow meeting, we often have only one, two or no children and rarely a stable group attending meeting. Because it is Young Friends who will take us into the future, this is not just a threat for our children, but also for ourselves and for the future of the Society as a whole. How can we, in 2016, uphold the children and ensure that our Meeting continues to thrive?

My own children have become the confident, creative young people they are in large part, I believe, through being upheld by our wonderful Quaker community. I notice that they have a secure knowledge of their right to speak truth to power while doing their best to "answer that of God in everyone" - qualities many of their peers do not have. I have no doubt that what they call their "Quakerships" – genuine friendships with Friends as diverse as Liz Anderton, Gisela Creed and Mark Coleman – have instilled these values in them in a way we could not have achieved unsupported as parents.

When I look back, we could easily have missed this deep enrichment of our family. When my now 19 year old daughter Ellie was a toddler, the Children's Meeting was run by a rota of volunteer friends. Although this usually worked, we would sometimes come to meeting to discover that a volunteer hadn't turned up. This was stressful for me as a working mother of young children because, instead of the hour of gathered silence I had been anticipating, I might end up running some impromptu activity for not only my own child but also other children. All children prefer predictability and Ellie began to refuse to come to meeting so we began to make a cycle ride to the swimming pool in Bishopbriggs our usual Sunday morning activity. We may well have stopped attending meeting altogether had not the decision been made to engage a paid Children's Worker. The wonderful Lutfa Al Hussein- a gentle Somalian refugee with an uncanny knack

with young children- took up this post. Ellie fell in love with Lutfa and, although the Children’s Meeting still required a rota of volunteers to contribute their ideas and their presence, we were able from then to make Meeting for Worship a regular part of our weekly routine.

Over the last 4 years, the Children’s Committee has put into action a Visioning process. In a series of workshops facilitated by Ruth Clements McQuaid, we considered the ways Children’s Meeting could nurture our children and help them develop Quaker values. Out of this work grew much more concrete plans for a regular annual programme of activities and an increased use of the materials designed for young people available from Friend’s House and Woodbrooke. Our current Children’s Workers, Fatemeh and Alastair, (both also incredibly gentle and creative people), have taken forward these ideas. There is an annual programme which covers a series of topics such as “our emotions”.

Over this time period, unfortunately, our Children’s Meeting has shrunk so that fewer children attend at any one time – although there are still occasional “bulges”, including one week in which 14 children turned up! We still tend to have a larger group of children “coming out of the woodwork” for exciting community activities such as the Christmas Play, the Christmas Panto and Ice Cream Sundays.

In August, we held a meal for parents and Children’s Committee members to consider why we might be experiencing this decline in numbers and I have tried to list, below, the challenges that were identified in that very productive meeting:

Demographics: At the moment, there are few families attending the Meeting with children in the pre-school or primary school age range. This may, of course, change at any moment and we have heard that two additional families with a total of six children in this age group are likely to begin attending soon.

Safeguarding: in the Children’s Committee, we are all of one mind that our children must be protected when in the Meeting and that we need to follow the tried and tested recommendations of the Central Registry Body Scotland regarding this. Some of us have the perception that we may have “gone overboard” with Safeguarding in the past, however. For example, during the previous triennium of the Children’s Committee, we decided that we could no longer make general announcements in meeting for “Willing Helpers” to volunteer alongside Fatemeh or Alastair. We now have a very small list of such helpers and it has become increasingly difficult to manage the rota. I am glad to say that I think we are beginning to find a better balance between regulations and common sense and we have decided to go back to more active and open ways of encouraging volunteers.

Disconnect: There is a perception among us that a disconnect has emerged between our children and the wider meeting. This is perhaps partly due to the layout of the meeting with the Children’s Meeting two floors below the main

Meeting but is undoubtedly also due to our recent inability to fully engage the whole Meeting with the children and vice versa. Many, if not most, of the Members of our Meeting don't know the children.

New plans

To try and address this, we would like to engage every member and attender of the meeting with the children. There are two ways that adults can do this:

- By being a “Willing Helper”. These are members or attenders who are happy to be called upon from time to time to take part in the rota for looking after the children along with one of the Children’s Workers. The Children’s Worker will already have an activity planned, so the role of the Willing Helper is an easy one – simply to enjoy being with the children and helping out with whatever activities are scheduled for that day. Willing Helpers are asked to provide us with two references.

And/Or

- By offering a one off “share your gifts” session. These will be planned in advance, alongside the Children’s Workers, and will usually occur on either the **first or third Sunday of the month**. No specific checks or references are required for this role as “gift-sharers” will work alongside both a Children’s Worker and a Willing Helper. Examples of recent sessions like this include Jim Anderton inviting the children to ask him questions about himself and his life and Diana Armstrong doing a drumming session with the children. Because every Quaker has individual gifts, these sessions will be as varied as the Quakers in the Meeting.

We have also decided to take measures to try and make our Children’s Meeting and its activities more visible to the whole meeting, and also to our wider Glasgow community:

- The fact that we have a Children’s Meeting will be displayed clearly on the Glasgow Quaker Meeting website and we will display a poster from Friends House also giving this information
- Our monthly programme will also go on the website as will information about any special events (e.g. Ice Cream Sunday, trips etc.)
- We will make more regular announcements in meeting and in Elmbank Events or by email when we are looking for volunteers or have special events
- We will hold regular all age worship but, unlike in the past, we will introduce particular routines and rituals around this (which we will devise with the help of the children) so that these become cherished special occasions.

- We will ask every member of the meeting to take part in at least one Children's Meeting every couple of years in which they can share a "gift".

What the current Children's Meeting will offer

- **Every week:** A Children's Worker (currently Fatemeh or Alisdair, both of whom have full PVG for this post, references and more than two years of experience) and a Willing Helper who will have given two references working to a pre-planned programme that has grown out of our Visioning process.
- **Every month:** the programme will be displayed on the Glasgow Quaker Meeting website and in Elmbank Events
- **Every first and third Sunday:** "Share your gifts" or other special sessions (such as trips or Ice Cream Sunday)

Thanks to our Visioning process and the careful planning of our wonderful Children's Workers, we now have a vibrant programme that helps our children develop Quaker values and take their full part in the Meeting. Speaking for myself, it is a real pleasure to spend time with the children and to experience their gifts. I hope we can find ways of encouraging more children to come along and more adults to spend time with them.

Helen Minnis, Glasgow Meeting

Friends' Fellowship of Healing Group in Glasgow Meeting

Some 20 years ago, a few Friends in Glasgow Quaker Meeting started to gather in an intercessory group for prayer for healing. We invited Leonora Dobson of the FFH Committee to come up from Derbyshire to hold a workshop for us and give some direction as to how we might proceed. From that time, we have continued to meet regularly, in varying numbers and at different intervals but never giving up on the enterprise.

There are about 70 similar groups attached to Quaker Meetings up and down the country. We have all developed our own ways of working. Some engage in "hands-on" spiritual healing and those of us who follow this path have had approved training and are members of (and insured by) the Quaker Spiritual Healers. Most of us practise 'absent' or 'distant' healing, where we receive names of any F(f)riends who need any kind of physical, mental or emotional support and hold them in the Light.

We maintain a book, kept in the library of Glasgow Meeting House, in which any one may enter the name of a person in need of our help. We need no details of the person's condition: just the name will suffice. We trust that the Spirit knows our needs better than we do ourselves. We do not pretend to be in the miracle business - although we know from experience that these can happen - but we are well assured that people derive benefit from knowing that they are being upheld in prayer. A few of us meet together in the library at 7.45 for 8.00pm on the last Monday of each month. As in any Quaker Meeting, all are welcome.

Muriel Robertson, Convenor

Animals are not Freight



Phillida with members of the Edinburgh CIWF group 29/08/2016

On 29th August 2016 I joined an event in Edinburgh called 'Animals are not Freight' which was the first global day of action which took place in about 30 countries around the world to oppose long distance live transport of farm animals. This marked the 20th anniversary of the biggest disaster in live animal transportation when nearly 700,000 sheep burned or drowned to death when a livestock vessel burst into flames in the Indian Ocean. It was carrying sheep on a 16 day journey from Australia to Jordan when it caught fire and sank.

This event was co-ordinated by Compassion in Live Farming (CIWF) an organisation which was started by a British farmer, the late Peter Roberts, 49 years ago. CIWF now has representatives in other countries around the world.

Live animal transportation is a world-wide trade and every year about 2 million farm animals are exported from the EU every year. The animals are often overcrowded, experience extremes of temperature from very hot to freezing conditions, exhaustion, hunger and dehydration. Slaughter is often carried out

inhumanely especially when animals are exported from Europe to countries outside EU as they leave behind all the legal protection they once received. This means they can face terrible abuse during transportation and at the time of slaughter and many animals are injured and die during transportation.

‘Animals are not Freight’ is just one of CIWF’s campaigns trying to improve the lives of countless farm animals affected by modern factory farming practices. Some of their latest campaigns is to try to outlaw caging of rabbits (330 million farmed in Europe where 99 per cent are caged) and caging of small quail birds. (140 million quail birds in Europe are intensively farmed for their meat and eggs in cages and crowded sheds.)

My interest and care about our treatment of animals predates my becoming a Quaker, (about 5 years ago) and I have been a supporter of CIWF for about 25 years. I was brought up in a Quaker household where both my mother and grandmother are or were both vegetarians at a time when it was more unusual to be so in the UK. From early beginnings, I believe Quakers have been one of the most vocal of the many religious traditions in the world in expressing the need to respect and value all beings.

As John Woolman said in 1772, “*I was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator and learns to exercise true justice and goodness not only toward all men but also toward the brute creation....to say we love God... and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature...was a contradiction in itself.*”

QF&P 25.05

And this expression for the care of all beings is I think reflected in our Quaker values of caring for all creation, sustainability, social responsibility, peace and the relief of suffering.

During its existence CIWF has had some real campaign victories within the EU. For example, the narrow veal crate is now banned across Europe from 2007, the gradual reduction of hens being kept in cages, narrow stalls for pregnant sows are now prohibited after the first 4 weeks of pregnancy and in 1997 animals were legally recognised as sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and discomfort. This fundamental agreement now underpins and paves the way for all future improvements to farm animal welfare in Europe and hopefully by influencing some changes in attitudes to the care of farm animals worldwide. However, the scale of the problem and the inhumane treatment of farm animals is clearly enormous and usually hidden from most of us, involving and being controlled by multinationals and the global food industry. Animals have no voice so they need us to speak for them. **Phillida Ball, Glasgow Meeting**

Soul of WoMen European Launch International Conference, Dumfries Scotland

By: The Fuji Declaration



The Soul of WoMen Global Campaign was launched as a first anniversary celebration and initiative of the Fuji Declaration to encourage women and men the world over to bring sustainable and harmonious balance to the world by embracing feminine principles and wisdom. The grand celebration took place in May at Fuji Sanctuary during the Symphony of Peace Prayers event attended by over 10,000 people who came to support the initiative. Like minded supporters in over 100 countries signed on to the campaign to say YES to the principles of activating the divine feminine qualities within the hearts of women and men in all walks of life.

Four months later, the Soul of WoMen initiative was launched in Europe with an international conference held at the Allanton Sanctuary in Dumfries. A group of six speakers inspired the participants to engage in deep listening and open conversation on various topics related to gender balance and equality. The conference was designed to engage every participant as an active co-creator in exploring the day to day issues and themes around gender balance, equality and finding a harmonious balance between the masculine and feminine.

Dr. Jude Curriwan, international author, healer and cosmologist, who attended the May launch of Soul of WoMen in Japan opened the discussions by reminding us

that we are all connected at the source and the importance of recognizing the oneness of the human spirit. In demonstrating the need to find balance between masculine and feminine qualities Jude inspired us with the quote, “two pillars are needed to hold up the sky”.

Her presentation was followed by John Nicholls, Director at LGBT Youth Scotland, who shared his experiences working in the field with youth who are raising questions around gender equality, gender fluidity and defining the identity between being masculine and feminine. These two speakers sparked further questions and dialogue as 110 participants sat in groups to share what was emerging at the moment. The results from each of the discussion sessions were posted and shared on the Soul of WoMen Visions board.

The second group discussion took place after two more presentation made by Asma Khalifa, youth peace activist from Libya who won the Luxembourg Peace Prize this year and Mhairi Black, the youngest member of the UK House of Commons. Unfortunately Asma was not granted a visa for travel so her message was read by Claire Henderson coordinator of the Conference. Asma’s message was all about the need to find that inner peace in order to bring outer peace to the world which in the end leads to balance between all expressions of life both masculine and feminine.

Mhairi Black was a passionate dynamic speaker who completely enthralled the participants by speaking about her direct experience serving in a male dominated UK House of Commons. She was only 20 when she was elected and gave us such hope on how powerful each of us could be in bringing about a more balanced sustainable society. Does gender balance in political parties itself become part of the problem when people define themselves by gender?

To close the Conference the group hosts who facilitated each of the breakaway dialogue groups shared the highlights from the deep discussions that took place.

The day ended with extreme optimism and unanimous feedback to return again for further engagement on this timely topic and to continue building on the energies that were created during the Conference. It was a tremendous success and participants left with the feeling that they were now part of an emerging Soul of WoMen movement.

Attended by Alison Rimell and Margaret Roy



Hold in the Light

One new member spoke of her amazement as to how much and how freely Quakers give their service. In each meeting you know who they are. Hold them in the light.

A Gentle, Quiet Quaker Lady – Joyce Minnis

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Joyce Minnis was brought up by parents who did not join but behaved as Quakers. Her mother was convinced the Church of England had caused all the difficulties of her childhood, the misery of poverty and unemployment. Its influence was so dominant. Her grandfather was leader in Adult Schools Movement and her father continued with this involvement. Her parents lived a very religious life, running youth groups for Quakers in the 1930s. They took in refugees and evacuees, elderly relatives and Dutch children towards the end of the war during which her father drove an ambulance.

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Joyce became a member of the Society of Friends when she attended Edinburgh University – but she joined her home Meeting in Huddersfield. She studied history before doing post-graduate studies in social work. As a probation officer she covered North Lanarkshire, working with youngsters and women and their families. At that time Thomas Kelly's Testament to Devotion was a great support at times of difficulty.

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When Joyce got married, there were problems in the family because her husband was black and an Episcopalian, who expected her to follow suit. Her mother was frightened for her because Eddie was black. When Eddie visited Huddersfield one time he did not understand what a sacrifice it was for her mother to get up early to go to the Church of England service with him. Joyce preferred to continue with her Quakerism after an experience in a church in Edinburgh when the service was about lay members not being able to understand the Bible as they had not been trained. She found it difficult to see how then the disciples coped. However, when she got married in Glasgow Meeting House, all the family attended. She was very moved when a timid aunt got up at the end, crossed the room and kissed her and Eddie whom she did not know at all. Where did she get the strength? It was the bravest thing anyone did. Joyce was always close to her family.

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After their marriage it was their intention to move to the Bahamas to live, but Eddie could not get a job there – he was too black and too honest. Much later he would be called there to serve on a Commission of Enquiry looking into corruption in the Public Services, something he had studied for a Ph.D., which he sacrificed when Natalie became very serious ill for a number of years, when Helen was a baby. Three months promised in Nassau at the end of his life became five years. It took a terrible toll on his health. Joyce did not go to the

Bahamas with Eddie as she was involved with Vera Long in her long illness and death.

With Morag Falls, Joyce started the social work course at what was then Paisley Technical College, now the University of the West of Scotland. She also worked as a volunteer for Barnado's chairing their Placement Panel amongst other things. Throughout her working life she always felt her Quakerism carried her through, especially when worrying about the potential outcomes, knowing how easy it would be to be for the clients to choose not go ahead with anything they were working on together. She found it very helpful sitting quietly with a Friend at times of real stress. At times of uncertainty in her own life it was hard to make decisions in her working life. Joyce always used to say *talk truth to power with love* and she did, to her students and clients. '*It did not work unless you say things exactly as they were, but you have to try to get the time right or it could be a disaster. It comes a bit easier with experience*'.

' You don't always understand why things work until you do them wrong and then eventually you learn why what you are taught works. It is half way through your career that people really understand why social work works. ' In the late 70s when she went to Paisley she says you couldn't teach it unless you had got to grips with it yourself.

'There are always things to learn. You have to live with ignorance and be open to transformation.'

Tribute to Margaret Giles

Margaret Giles and her husband Philip came to Quakers in mid-life after their children had left home, joining West Scotland Area Meeting in 1980. The Society of Friends offered a home for their quiet spirituality, unencumbered by ritual and tradition. Margaret was a Quaker Universalist and an emphasis on a personal relationship with God appealed to her. She understood that spirituality is about people and the relationship between people and about the relationship we have with the world around us.

In gathering memories and impressions of Margaret, the word most often used is 'quiet'. So she was 'consistent, quiet and reliable', 'quietly efficient' as treasurer of Dunblane Meeting, or blessed with 'quiet loyalty and steadfastness'. But of course quiet does not mean downtrodden, and she would equally often talk at length about her painting, her interest in current affairs or her latest adventure by bus to destinations on the West Coast.

She also served faithfully and responsibly as an Overseer, and both she and Philip actively supported the Society at all levels. Coming from a maths and physics background, her attention to detail and keen memory meant she was a source of knowledge on how things were done—advice given, when requested, in a quiet but firm voice.

For some 40 years she worked regularly at the Oxfam shop in Stirling, a long and faithful stretch by any measure. She used to say that she was in charge of the Bible section, but that while she often sold Cooks' Bibles or Golfers' Bibles, she very rarely sold Bible Bibles! At the time of her death, she was also treasurer of a Forth Valley U3A project providing Cultural Activities in Care Homes (CACH) 'Courageous' would be another of those adjectives well made to describe Margaret. Courage, and a stoical strength and perseverance in the face of the loss of their daughter, aged only 3, in the face of her own encounter with cancer, and in the face of Philip's terrible last illness.

Margaret had been an active walker, cyclist and gardener—very active—but latterly her strength and mobility left her and instead of bustling round with others arranging the setting up of our Meeting, she would sit down and form the still centre.

Matthew 25.23 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant' aptly describes Margaret.

Margaret Boland and Crawford Logan

Next Area Meeting is to be held in Ayr on Saturday 8 October from 11:30-16:00 at the Church Hall, St Leonard's Parish Church, St. Leonards Rd, Ayr KA7 2PT.

We will be looking at Quakers and Climate Change. Following that Area Meeting meets by telephone conference on Monday evening 5 December.

Children welcome, please let us know if you are bringing children so suitable arrangements can be made.

Transport to and from Ayr station can be provided, please let us know what time your trains arrive and depart. Contact Howard Bartlem 01292 475019 email

howardbartlem@yahoo.co.uk

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The deadline for contributions for the next issue of WSQN is 12th November 2016

Copy should be send in Word to the editors

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