

*West Scotland
Quaker News
October 2014*

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

From the Editor: My apologies for the late appearance of the current issue of our Newsletter: over the last few months I have had various problems with my 6-year-old computer and finally decided that an up to date model would be the answer. But not entirely! - the new wireless mouse/computer set-up on it is not working properly and in addition I have not been able (or competent enough) to transfer preparatory work carried out on my old computer to the new one. How great it would be to belong to the digital savy younger generation



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The deadline for the next issue of West of Scotland Quaker News is 7th November. Copy should be sent to the editor Bryan Bowes at botany64@waitrose.com or by post to 3 West Chapelton Lane,

Clerk's Letter

This summer I and some friends were in Germany, touring and enjoying the country and the people. In Bamberg one morning, as we left our hotel, I noticed these bronze plaques in the cobbles beneath our feet.

Here had lived Berthold and Ida Katz and, presumably their son, Ernst. At some point in 1943 they had been taken from their home here and deported to Auschwitz and then murdered. After that I noticed that in several towns and cities we visited there were these little memorials outside places – often many in one small street. I learned that they are called stolpersteine, i.e. "stumbling blocks". And of course they commemorate victims of the Holocaust. These individual memorials are to me much more poignant and immediate than the bigger monuments to the tragedy. One can think that here, where I was now, people arrived and took away other people to kill them. They had become non-human scapegoats. The vast majority commemorate Jews, but other victims, included Sinti and Romani people (also called gypsies), gays, Jehovah's Witnesses and non-white people, as well as opponents of the Nazi regime.

It is easy to identify with the victims, but also to step outside any personal responsibility. This was in another country at another time and we don't do that sort of thing here of course. But there are other ways of demonising, disregarding and writing off those we don't agree with or who threaten our security or identity. It is all around us. Eternal vigilance is required.

Michael Hutchinson (*Glasgow Meeting*)



Area Meeting at Tarbert, Argyll, on Saturday 23 August

It's always a joy to go to Area Meeting at Tarbert, now something of an August tradition in West Scotland. Not only is Tarbert a lovely spot, the journey there and back takes us through some spectacular scenery. Tarbert is also a convenient rendezvous for Friends travelling by ferry from Islay, Arran and the Cowal peninsula, giving this particular meeting a rather special atmosphere. As Michael Hutchison, our clerk, remarked "it feels like being on holiday".

As usual, we received a warm welcome and great hospitality from Argyll Friends, although Edna and Bobby Locke were sadly prevented from being with us. I was pleased to meet up with Bronwen Currie from Islay, newly returned from her spell in Palestine as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme. Our Friends from Arran made a significant contribution to the day by bringing with them the World War One Exhibition, prepared by Quaker Service Memorial Trust, about Quaker Service during and after the war. This exhibition had been on display in Arran earlier in August. It is clearly set out and very informative, and hopefully will be seen again at Area Meeting in Ayr in October.

The reading from Quaker Faith and Practice (12.01) about loving and caring for each other seemed particularly appropriate, as one of the first items of business was the Testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Billy Johnston. Billy was a cherished member of Argyll Meeting, as well as East Kilbride and Glasgow; he was inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him.

We were pleased to welcome Patience Atkinson of Wigtown Meeting into membership, to accept the transfer to Glasgow of Roger Chapman, and to send good wishes to Elizabeth Allen, our previous Area Meeting Clerk, in her move to South East Scotland.

As well as dealing with membership matters, one of Area Meeting's functions is to nurture our Quaker community. It was interesting to have some personal anecdotes and reflections from the recent Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath, which had been attended by about thirty Friends from West Scotland. Peter Tyler, from Argyll Meeting, spoke about attending Junior Yearly Meeting and the novelty of feeling part of a large group of young Quakers. Kate Gulliver, our Treasurer, in presenting the 2013 Annual Report and Accounts, rightly reminded us that local meetings throughout West Scotland are part of a much wider Quaker family.

For me, there were two quite challenging items of business, both quite different: one concerned our witness in the world, the other our internal organisation. We considered a paper prepared by the clerk on prison chaplains and visitors, a subject that has not been much discussed by this Area Meeting in recent years. We also had before us a paper prepared by the Stewardship Committee on Revitalising Area Meetings – an ongoing topic with us - which will be sent out to local meetings for consideration.

Finally, we were reminded that our next meeting will be a new venture – a community gathering, involving all age groups, meeting in Ayr on Saturday 11 October. This is another chance to get to know each other a little better!

Campaign against Trident renewal

We believe that no one has the right to use [nuclear] weapons in his defence or to ask another person to use them on his behalf. To rely on the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is faithless; to use them is a sin. Meeting for Sufferings, 1955. 24:4, QFP

With a General Election set for 2015, now is when the policies that decide whether Britain replaces its Trident nuclear weapons are being set. If we don't want a new generation of nuclear weapons, we need to influence those policies. Now is an auspicious time to write to your MP. We hope the Trident Briefing PDF (from www.quaker.org.uk/dont-replace-trident) will be useful and a copy of a draft letter for your MP is also available there.

Britain's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The UK's submarine-based nuclear weapons system, Trident, is expected to remain operational until 2028. In March 2007 MPs voted to replace it in order to continue the UK's nuclear capacity into the 2060s. The 'Initial Gate' decision to begin procuring parts for the new submarines was made in May 2011. However, the 'Main Gate' decision – whether to proceed with a Trident replacement – will be made in 2016, after the 2015 general election.

The campaign pack from Quaker Peace & Social Witness is a resource for Friends and non-Friends concerned about the presence of nuclear weapons in the UK and elsewhere in our world. It consists of: 1. A background briefing on Trident nuclear weapons 2. Taking action: some things we can all do to try to persuade the government to abandon the replacement of Trident and promote a nuclear weapons-free UK 3. Making paper cranes: a resource aimed at children and young people. QPSW is working with others in the peace movement to ensure that this important issue is subject to a full and open public debate, and that the arguments in favour of disarmament and non-proliferation are heard loud and clear. *Editor:* Information extracted from www.quaker.org.uk/dont-replace-trident: For more information contact QPSW Peace & Disarmament Programme, disarm@quaker.org.uk or 020

We say NO to Trident: Faslane September 2014





The Peace Testimony

As the first of a series of considerations of different testimonies, Friends in Glasgow met on International Peace Day, September 21st to consider the Peace Testimony.

Five Friends gave personal examples of how they worked for peace.

Mary Alice Mansell opened with a description of Meetings for Worship at Faslane which have been held about six times a year since 1997. In these Meetings she has experienced very deep worship in a variety of weather conditions. Perhaps the presence of well-dressed peaceful protesters is more influential than a rowdy ill-kempt crowd.

Mary Millington described how she came to Quakers and was immediately struck by the historic peace testimony originally presented by Margaret Fell to King Charles II.

‘All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.’

Mary's involvement with active campaigning increased gradually until she joined the women protesting against Cruise missiles at Greenham Common. When these missiles were removed she came to Scotland and is active in supporting the Faslane Peace Camp in their activities. From active campaigning we moved to more individual ways of working for a more peaceful world.

Daphne Wassermann explained how her work as an engineering expert witness in litigation led her to explore less adversarial methods of conflict resolution and she trained as a commercial mediator. The principles of mediation such as respect for the individual parties and the search for a consensual solution fit well with Quaker methods of doing business. She has been involved in workplace mediations and voluntary mediations over small claims in Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The latter have involved some unusual disputes and helped individuals to find more peaceful solutions to their disputes.

Martin Mansell spoke of his work running AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) workshops in prisons and in the community in Scotland. He has now been involved in 40 or 50 of these. Two or three facilitators work with 8 to 10 participants from Friday evening to Sunday. They explore issues of violence and anger. The experience can be transforming for the participants who may never have known an alternative to 'fight or flight'. The third way, of non-aggressively resisting violence or aggression can be an eye-opener. Increasingly AVP is running workshops in the community for people with anger or mental health problems referred by GPs or social workers. The movement was started about 40 years ago by Quakers in the USA working in prisons. It has now spread worldwide with participants from 60 countries attending a recent conference in Ireland.

Alison Rimell spoke of a newer initiative called "sublimewe" which she has been involved with for the past year. She has just returned from co-facilitating a 6 day event in Slovenia. She explained that sublimewe is a lived set of values and principles, and a synthesis of the exemplary models and practices for individual resilience, resonance and resourcefulness. Participants gain an experience of the me/we continuum where "everything matters" and which is enabled by 3 speaking tools which support curiosity, appreciation and awareness through self-connection. An intended outcome is to support each participant in being fully him/herself and living his/her dreams in the bigger vision of a world that serves and receives all. Every cluster or gathering is unique, and participants co-create both their aspirations and a common shared vision. The aspiration is that this is a start in enacting and upholding structures of belonging which generously curate currencies of grace, goodwill, genius, gratitude and gifts.

The meeting then considered four extracts from QF&P (24.21, 24.22, 24.25, 24.26) in a worship sharing manner. The recognition that violence might be needed on some occasions to prevent a greater evil was difficult for some of us to accept. Mention was made of the relatively peaceful approach of Glasgow police, both at Faslane and in dealing with disorder in the city centre. **Daphne Wassermann** (*Glasgow Meeting*)

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Billy Johnstone

13 April 1951 - 9th July 2013.

Billy Johnstone came into contact with the Society of Friends when he was considering how he might bring the whole of his life into unity with his strong Christian belief. His work in retail was not enough for him and he decided to make a plan, with his wife Gwen, to undertake a four year degree course to enable him to become a social worker. She would work to support him, then he in turn would support her to do what was her choice. They had been true partners since their early twenties, and when they made a serious commitment to something important, it was a commitment for life. Billy had made such a commitment to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), which he had joined when young, and to Loaves and Fishes, a small Glasgow charity which gave food and support to the homeless in the city, becoming a strong core member in both organisations, and being willing always to respond to demands at any times in day or night to do what was needed.

Billy was also a member of the Scottish National Party, and in taking his part in their work he met and talked to his Labour supporting neighbour at the election in East Kilbride. She introduced him to the local Meeting for Worship, which he soon joined. Although he had been an Elder in the local Church of Scotland, he really believed that "Thou shall not kill" meant exactly what it said and could no longer support the churches' belief in the possibility of a "just war". Billy could not be part of anything without doing his bit, and, through time, he was an overseer, Clerk to Overseers and often in charge of many one off jobs in the Society of Friends. East Kilbride Friends remember his organisation of trips to Cumbria to visit the Quaker Tapestry and Swarthmoor Hall, among other interesting places, particularly the time Billy organised the "Baillieston Dementia Bus" one Saturday when it was not needed elsewhere, to take us on an outing. When it broke down on the motorway the police response to our call was remarkably swift.

After Billy had qualified in his new career, and after Gwen had finished her degree, they went to live and work in Argyll and had probably the happiest time in their lives there. Argyll Friends remember him as a much loved member of their Meeting, who would arrive at "Bring your own lunch" Meetings with an extra packed lunch for anyone who had come without. They also remember wonderful Meetings with him in various lovely places in Argyll. As always with Billy, there are many individual reminiscences from the many who loved him and remembered him, including his clients, fellow members of A.A., those who worked with him and were helped by him in Loaves and Fishes. His many friends from childhood and from work, as well as Friends from all levels of the Society of Friends from local to national, have expressed their sorrow at losing him, but more importantly, their joy of having known him. He was, at different times, a key member of East Kilbride, then Glasgow, then Argyll and finally Glasgow Meeting again, and we all, as Argyll Friends wrote, "feel truly blessed to have had the privilege of having shared times together" and will miss "Billy's lovely warm manner, his skill, his compassion and his dedication".

Billy was born and brought up within the Glasgow conurbation, a place very divided socially in the "old days". Efforts have been made by many people to encourage reconciliation within the city, and Billy was a key member of this movement, due to his contacts across all sections of society. This was demonstrated at his funeral, a funeral being held at far too young an age. While Glasgow still holds the Fair Holiday in July, most Glaswegians who are able to, take a holiday in June, before the English school holidays start. Many F/friends were booked to be away at the time of Billy's funeral. In spite of this the large Crematorium was full, with 3 or 4 rows of people having to stand at the back. Many were anxious to speak of what he had meant to them and what he had done for and with them, and the Meeting for Worship there was a profound experience.

Later, there were many requests for a further, Memorial Meeting, so that absentees from the first could come. We had to hire a large hall to hold everyone. This was also filled with those who had known Billy well. Gwen had chosen Billy's favourite Beatles' song to be played as we left. The song was "All you Need is Love". No-one moved, and it became part of the Meeting, encapsulating as it did the gift that Billy personified for those who knew him.

Open for Transformation: being Quaker. *The 2014 Swarthmore Lecture by Ben Pink Dandelion.*

“The way in which we relate to the secular world and are influenced by it seems to me to be the biggest challenge to our future as a religious society...” (p68 *)

We have been infected by the cult of the individual, encouraging a diversity of types of participation and commitment, and “... have adopted diffuse patterns of believing that are optional, personal and private.” (p34) And so “we could end up with a purely folklore Quakerism, full of past tales that merely preserve the institution, whereby we become players in our own museum.” (p58)

BPD recognises anxiety, uncertainty, conflict, diversion within the Society, wrought in large part by worldly dissipation. He advocates an evangelical revival in Quakerism, by restoring the primacy of our spiritual experience through the gathered Meeting, and recognising fringe interests and power groups as distractions. Perceived ills in Quakerism, like falling Membership and permanent Attendership, dreary Business Meetings, and “...worshipping not in silence but the silence.” (p29), are attributable to the secularisation of the Society.

His criticism is penetrating, and, I feel, well recognised. His solution is not radical, in one sense, being a reminder to get back to what has always been there – our spiritual basis. “We have come at times to put faith and worship second to thought.” (p86) “We are not wrong to affirm ‘what it means to be a Quaker’, but we have been waylaid by individualism if we see it as a question, or if we feel we can only respond by treating a multitude of mutually exclusive responses with equal weight. We know from QFP what it means to be a Quaker, and we ourselves assembled its contents as our core insights – but we then somehow decided to make our core insights optional. We may or may not discern to revise our current book, but surely we need to adopt it, properly.” (p64). He reminds us that spiritual encounter in MfW can be transformative, and in his lecture he advocates that we should be open to it. That is all that is needed.

His repeated references to Secularisation do not take issue with those areas of life where Quaker views and practices are little different from non-Quakers. The general democratisation of secular institutions and individuals’ habits in this country has drawn religious sects and The World together. We can be distracted from this fact by dwelling on those areas where there is divergence, and it is easy to see Quakerism being absorbed into The World. It is clearly this creeping secularisation he is targeting, when there is no creep of religion or spirituality the other way. It is spirituality that BPD sees as the core and perpetuating aspect of Quakerism. Perhaps we would need to become a closed sect to preserve it so.

John Lethbridge (*Dumfries Meeting*)

** Page references refer to published text of 2014 Swarthmore Lecture*

Two curiosities from the archives: can you help?

Among a number of documents relating to the various burial grounds which Friends have used since the 17th century, two documents stood out as being unusual, not to say unique in this particular collection: thanks in large part to the World Wide Web, the mystery of these documents has been solved, at least in part.

The first document is a plan of St. Leonard's cemetery in Lanark with two graves marked. An inscription records that, on 6 January 1920, Mrs Jeanie [sic] Fleming paid £4.10s for graves 57 and 58, which are marked on the plan. A note in red records the transfer of lair 58 "in accordance with letter dated 6th Feb. 1954", for which the fee of 2/6 was paid. There was no indication of any link to Friends which would explain the plan's presence among these documents, so I contacted South Lanarkshire Council, whose website indicates that they are now responsible for the cemetery. They replied quickly to tell me that there are no interments in lair 58, but that Jeanie Fleming and her husband John are in lair 57. The very helpful clerical assistant in the council department also sent me a scan of the relevant pages of the lair book showing that John had been governor of the poorhouse in Lanark and had died in 1920: Jeanie was simply recorded as his widow. Also included with the email, however, was a scan of the letter from Jeanie effecting the 1954 transfer. In it she expresses her wish to be buried in the same grave as John and "the other lair to be used by any necessitous cases who are members of the Society of Friend [sic]".

So that solved one mystery, but who was Jeanie? The books of members and attenders first record her as a member of Glasgow Meeting in 1926, with her address as Matron in the Lanark poorhouse. By 1932 she had moved to Crosslaw House, Lanark and then in 1939 that address is scored out and Inezlea, Douglas Street is substituted: she remains there until her death in 1954. At the time of writing I do not know anything more about Jeannie (the extra 'n' appears in 1942), but it is intriguing (and hopefully not macabre) to think that, thanks to Jeannie's generosity, there is a grave in St. Leonard's for a Friend who may need it.

The second document is in some ways even more puzzling. It is a copy of the will and settlement of Joseph McIntyre, watchmaker of Comrie Street, Crieff which he wrote in 1869: from the wording he was clearly a member of Friends. Unfortunately, I cannot find any record of Joseph in the membership lists I have. The 1841 and 1851 census records show him living at High Street, Crieff with Mary Mcallen or Maccallum, his mother: he was born c.1806 in Fortingall, Perthshire. The last census entry, for 1861, records that he is living alone at Northside Comrie Street. The valuation roll for 1872 lists him in Comrie Street, but by the following year the house was owned by the "representatives of the late Joseph McIntyre".

His will contains some interesting wishes. He states that he believes that "preparing for future contingencies neither hastens not shortens the dissolution of this mortal body" and that next to the scriptures, "the best elucidation and defence of Divine Truth is contained in the Apology of Robert Barclay" (of which more below). He names a number of well known Friends of the period as Trustees for his estate: they include William Smeal, a Glasgow grocer, and Helenus Gibbs, "Bootmaker in Edinburgh". They are to realise the capital tied up in his property, although he leaves

his Gaelic books to the Ossianic Society of Glasgow and his scientific and horological books to the Horological Society of London (he was, after all, a watchmaker).

Two items are especially of interest, however. Firstly, the interest or income from any residue of his estate is to be held in trust for Edinburgh Two Months Meeting and “laid out in the purchase of 'Robert Barclay's Apology', for gratuitous distribution”: he even specifies the edition to be so distributed. Was that wish ever carried out, I wonder and what has happened to the interest?

Secondly, he directs that his “mortal remains shall be interred in the burial ground belonging to me, at Inveroar, Glenlyon, along with my deceased Relatives, and my Celtic race”. Inveroar caused some problems at first, as no online gazetteer had any record of it. However, the 19th century maps of that area available on the National Library of Scotland's web site show a small collection of houses at Invervar, about 6 miles west of Joseph's birthplace of Fortingall. That this was the place seemed to be confirmed when one of these maps also quite clearly showed a small, roughly triangular space in a nearby field and marked Grave Yard! Using Google Earth and Google Street View, it was possible to confirm that this structure still exists. I shall be in the area early next year and I hope to visit this previously unknown burial ground.

However, if anyone can shed any more light on these two Friends, please get in touch with me. I would like to fill out their stories.

Paul F. Burton (*Glasgow Meeting*)



Consultation on way ahead for Quakers in Britain 2015-20

You might recall a rather useful booklet published by Britain Yearly Meeting called 'A Framework for Action'. It summarised what British Quakers stood for and wished to see happening at all levels. A bright and colourful document it can be found on line at: <http://www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/A-Framework-for-Action-web-pdf-version.pdf>

Well, it was set for a 5 year period and runs out this year, so it is time to think of a replacement. As with many documents of this type, it is the process of getting to it which may be more significant for us than the result.

Meeting for Sufferings, the British Quaker representative body has initiated a consultation towards a new document, and we can all take part, as individuals or as meetings. Area Meeting will have this on its agenda for the next two meetings, but time there is very short, so local meetings and individuals are encouraged to participate directly from now. Details follow below. If you are not able to look at all this on line (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/way-ahead>) let me know and I can copy you the material.

Long Term Framework Working Group

In July 2013, Meeting for Sufferings set up the long-term framework working group (paper MfS/13/07/15 and minute S13/07/16) and asked it to initiate a consultation process to develop a document to be used between 2015 and 2020. The role of the working group is to consult with as many parts of Britain Yearly Meeting as possible, and to collate the results of the consultation.

The framework will set out the broad leadings for areas of Quaker work in Britain and the group will produce a draft for consideration by Meeting for Sufferings. The new document will be one of a series of agreed long-term frameworks and a successor to A framework for action 2009-2014.

The consultation letter from the long-term framework working group asks local meetings, area meetings and other Quaker groups and individuals to discern what Quakers in Britain are led to do together. The working group does not intend to list specific projects and programmes but to enable Quakers in Britain to consider how their leadings and activities can encourage more Friends to work together on shared concerns and to speak in unity to the world. The working group offer these questions as prompts to your discernment:

- What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?
- What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?
- What are we led to do together?
- How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

With the discerned input from all parts of Britain Yearly Meeting, the long-term framework working group can start to develop a document to describe who, what, how, when and where Quakers in Britain are and want to be over the next five to ten years. The group hope that this will enable all the various groups that make up 'Quakers in Britain' to see how their leadings and activities can contribute to fulfilling our shared aspirations and to work together more on shared concerns.