

## Winter

### My work in the fourth Quarter of 2023 and looking ahead to 2024



*Our over-decorated Christmas tree*

I have a love/hate relationship with autumn and winter. Every year I am surprised that I don't feel the same or want the same things as I do in summer. I crave or need different comfort drinks, meals, evening activities and clothes. It takes a while to remember to give myself grace and embrace change and challenge with the season.

Marking the high points and holidays in winter gives moments of light, opportunities for joy and connection. I enjoy the slide towards Christmas, the tree goes up on the first weekend in December and I start planning food and presents. This year we had 13 friends and family around our Christmas table.

Now at the start of 2024, it's hard to look back to the last few months of 2023. I want to keep looking forwards, planning for new things, new points of joy and connection, in my work and outside it.

I think Quakers in Scotland by and large have a lot to feel joyful about at the end of 2023. Many meetings are finding that they are growing, new Friends are being appointed into exciting new roles. Friends are experimenting with new ways of working, learning and being together.

### Ways in which I can support you:

#### **New offer: Exploring the Quaker Way**

I am supporting my colleague Craig Barnett in running online learning opportunities for new(er) Quakers. Do please pass this information on to anyone who you think might be interested:

*Exploring the Quaker Way* is a monthly series of informal sessions for newcomers to meet online and discuss different aspects of Quaker practice. Each session involves small group sharing and listening, and we begin and end with a short period of silent worship. They are led by staff from [Quakers in Britain](#) and [Woodbrooke](#).

The next sessions will be on **15th February and 21st March** 2024. All are from 7pm-8.30pm on Zoom.

You are welcome to attend one or more of these sessions, and you can join on any of these dates for the first time.

To sign up, or to contact us with any questions, please use the short form here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Yv2VExZSCD>

#### **Current Opportunities that I can provide for Your Meeting:**

My ongoing work for Quakers and Meetings includes activities I can run to support your work and learning:

- Quaker networks for role holders, such as Elders and Pastoral Care Friends.
- Support for Quakers – whether those are as individuals, groups, local and area meetings, or General Meeting.
- RESTORE workshops – RESTORE was created after Covid to allow Friends to reflect, learn from their experiences and plan for the future. It is a great model for reflection after the meeting or group has gone through a difficult time.
- Gifts Workshops - Until we know ourselves and each other, how can we organise ourselves effectively, appoint Friends to roles and build our community?
- In person “getting to know you” visits to your meeting – do invite me, I would be delighted to meet you!

If you would like to know more about all of this work, I have put information up on the Quakers in Scotland website – please check here [\[https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings\]](https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings)

## Highlights from my work – October – December

### Journey of Hope



*Journey of Hope participants at Stormont*

Autumn was partially taken up with an intensive pilgrimage about reconciliation in a Christian context. I travelled to Northern Ireland, Coventry, Dorset and London to learn from different organisations involved in reconciliation. Each journey covered a different aspect of reconciliation. Reconciliation with self, with community, with faith, with the earth, with protest.

It has been fascinating to stretch my brain in a way that I think I have only really done once since university 20 years ago. It has been incredibly valuable and I have learned a lot which I have already used and will continue to use in my work.

I have been tracking the journey through this blog [Blog – Faith, life and goblins \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.wordpress.com). I aim to put a new blog post out every Monday.

### Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group

This is the group that General Meeting for Scotland has asked to consider how best to join together the charities of Quaker meetings in Scotland. They have also been asked to think about how one might amalgamate the area meetings in Scotland.

A lot of the work of this group has been focussed on thinking about the practicalities of joining the charities (General Meeting for Scotland, the four area meeting charities and Dundee Friends Property Trust) into one body. This has meant writing a lot of documents and consulting both with Friends and legal and charity advisors.

The next stage of this work is thinking less about the legalities and more about how we work together as Friends to worship and be in community together. How could we do this in the best way possible?

If anyone wants to join in with this thinking, please email me and let me know.

### Network meetings

I have been delighted by the success of the current role holder network meetings. Currently I run networking meetings for:

- Elders and Pastoral Care Friends
- Friends involved in nominations

I have set the dates for these meetings, and am about to set dates for:

- Trustee meetings
- Clerks Meetings

### Visit to St Andrew's Local Meeting

I had the pleasure of travelling to St Andrews meeting for the first time to clerk a meeting for them. The meeting went well and it was lovely to meet some of the Friends who worship there.



*St Andrews Quaker Meeting House*

## Things to look out for in 2024:

### George Fox turns 400 in 2024

Here is a bit more information about what is planned - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/celebrating-400-years-of-quakers>

Would your meeting or worshipping group like to plan something to celebrate 400 years of Quakerism? Get in touch if you have an idea you would like to explore.

### Children and Families Weekend for Friends across Scotland

The provisional date for this weekend is the 3rd - 5th May (still to be confirmed).

### Summer Shindig

The dates for Summer Shindig 27th July to 3rd August. They are currently looking for volunteer staff to support the event:

Testimonials: <https://docs.google.com/.../1C3f0TV2PusH3R.../edit...>

Application form: <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSe4z!.../viewform>

Job description: <https://docs.google.com/.../1ictxrObPK1zdEGSQy.../edit...>

Condensed Pathfinder: <https://docs.google.com/.../1OPhnSGNaFw8BowjnSX6F.../edit..>

### Yearly Meeting

The dates for Yearly Meeting 23-24 July 2024, it will be held in Friends House in London <https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/yearly-meeting-2024>

Adults can sign up to volunteer for Yearly Meeting programmes with children and young people. More info here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/2024-volunteer-information-booklet>

## Opportunities for connection and learning:

### Opportunities for Parents, Children and Young People:

Please consider passing this information on to other parents/carers or young people in your worshipping communities:

1. [Giant Online Childrens Meeting](#) on the first Sunday of every month.
2. Parent epilogue with Woodbrooke, second and fourth Monday of month <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/quaker-parent-epilogue/>
3. Europe and Middle East Section - youth group which meets online regularly and in person annually: <https://fwccemes.org/emes/emes-youthgroup>
4. Rising Up!, the newsletter for Young Adult Quakers [YAQ Update: Autumn 2023 \(mailchi.mp\)](#) You can subscribe to this newsletter [here](#).
5. [Conversations With Our Children: living as a Quaker](#) on Tuesday 19 March. This is a "pay as led" session, run by Woodbrooke and it would be great for Quakers with children and young people in their families and meetings.

### Woodbrooke's 2024 programme

Woodbrooke, Britain's Quaker Studies Centre, have released their new Spring programme. Do have a look and see if anything appeals to you. You can find the information about their upcoming events here - <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>

### Discovering Quakers website

The Discovering Quakers website is run by Friends who want to encourage those who might find a home in Quakers to attend and try out meetings. It is full of articles, blogs, posts, videos and podcasts, and you can also join online events organised by the group. To find out more, please visit their website <https://discoveringquakers.org.uk/>

## Contacting me:



If you are interested in finding out more about me, I have a webpage and interview video on our Quakers in Scotland website. To visit the page, please go to <https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

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