

SFN

Scottish Friends Newsletter

August 2004



Residential Meeting

Edinburgh 27&28 November,

Don't forget to put this date in your diary. Full details and booking forms will be included in the next issue of SFN. Already confirmed is Rowntree Fellow, Roy Stevenson, who will be speaking on 'Freeing the Spirit'.

There will be a full children's programme and more besides.

How could you resist?



Our cover picture this issue is that of a young Palestinian boy, a resident of the Dheisheh refugee camp, just outside Bethlehem. See page 15 .

Consenting adults

During the forthcoming checking of Friends details for the 2005 Book of Members and Attenders, going out to Meetings in September, Overseers in each Meeting will be asking for specific permission from each adult to keep on the Friends' database and publish their details and those of their family if appropriate. This will be in the form of a consent form, and will need to be signed either by the individual or by the Overseer to confirm accuracy and that permission has been given.

We will require permission from/for everybody who appears in the book, so do please ensure you speak to your Meeting Overseer and confirm your details are correct and your wishes regarding what, if anything, we publish.

The consent forms will shortly be distributed to Overseers.

Graham Marsden Administrative Secretary, GM for Scotland

..SFN..next issue..SFN..next

The deadline for all copy will be Saturday Sept. 28, 2004. Please send all material for the next issue, preferably by e-mail and in plain text or Word format, to

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General Meeting For Scotland

12 June 2004 - Inverness

Every just-demobbed clerk will recognise the feeling of immense satisfaction at the first meeting under a new competent clerk. It's not only the admiration of the new clerk's style but the freedom to chat unfocusedly at lunch time, without the shopping list of people one *must* consult. At our biennial opportunity to meet Friends in the most northerly of our regular locations, it was so for me, though I did fail to speak to all the 36 people present.

For me living just outside Glasgow, it meant a 16-hour day, which was a salutary reminder of what Inverness Friends undertake when our meetings are at so-called 'central' locations.

We have had the benefit of a part-time paid administrator for five years now, and we recognise that the time for trial periods and short-term contracts is over; a small group will update his contract and job description.

We listened appreciatively to Testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the lives of Basil Kift and Philip Giles. Following that we considered testimonies in general. At GM we have noticed an 'explosion' of testimonies for the lives of well-loved deceased Friends. We have had 19 in the last 4 years, compared with 6 in the previous 15 years. Our Assistant Clerk has written an excellent essay



*John Melling
(All line drawings by Bridget Ramsay)*

highlighting the difference between an obituary describing an interesting life and a Testimony recalling manifest spiritual qualities. We shall return to the subject after this has been widely circulated. Meanwhile it was clear from the discussion that Friends do enjoy reading obituaries, and would like The Friend to resume publishing them.

We agreed to move GM's bank account to the Co-Operative Bank from the Royal Bank of Scotland because of the latter's involvement with the damaging Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. We also approved the sending of letters to the Palestinian Delegation and the Israeli Embassy to express Friends' extreme disquiet at the worsening situation in Gaza and the West Bank,

resulting from a lack of political will to come to any agreement.

Our subjects for 2004 are connected with outreach, and we listened to two very different experiences of this. Jo and Jim Wickens have attended Inverness Meeting for 19 years. Anybody in the North of Scotland who has been in touch with Friends' House to request a visit has received one from Jim and Jo.

Consequently they have undertaken "Travelling in the Ministry" on a scale undreamt of by even the best-informed office in Friends' House. They have nurtured individuals and Meetings in Orkney, Lewis, Harris, Skye, Appin and, conspicuously successfully, in Ullapool, where a Meeting has recently been established. They reminded us that in the Highlands one measures distances in hours, not miles. Even the crow-flights would be long, but cars have to



Andrew Farrar



Pat Lucas

go round sea lochs or catch ferries; they themselves live a mere hour from Inverness Meeting.

Pat and Phil Lucas are the wardens of Edinburgh Meeting House, in the very centre of Edinburgh, the haunt of tourists by the thousand. They gave us a glimpse of the variety of people they are able to hold conversations with. Outreach is not defined as converting people to Quakerism but as an equal sharing of valid experience. In this spirit they talk with the people who hire the meeting house and enquire about Friends by post and phone. (It is they who send out enquirers' packs on request.)

In Edinburgh Meeting House during the Edinburgh International Festival, some Fringe performances take place and Friends run a café. This is a major opportunity for contacts with performers, audience and the general public. All the time, and concentratedly at the Festival, Pat and Phil combine their quiet presence with an infectious enthusiasm.

Margaret Peacock
West Scotland Monthly Meeting

Kindrogan - two perspectives

The theme for the annual Scottish Friends' Spring Conference this year was Restorative Justice. This seemed like a fairly heavy subject for a family gathering at which Friends like to relax, enjoy the company of people they may not have seen since last year, and generally soak up the atmosphere of the very beautiful countryside in which Kindrogan Field Centre is situated.

However, we were fortunate in luring our main speaker, Marian Liebman, away from the southern delights of Yearly Meeting, even though she did have to travel from Bristol. Her plenary session set the tone with an informative and clear account of the principles and practice of Restorative Justice in criminal matters, interspersed with personal, and often humorous anecdotes. Her depth of knowledge and wealth of experience in this field gave us an overview of the potential benefits to society if Restorative Justice is put into practice. Eileen Schott, an Edinburgh Friend who works in Community Mediation with SACRO, gave us a Scottish perspective and talked about the benefits of mediation and reparation in the area of youth justice services.

The process is costly in terms of resources, but because the results are proving so positive in the areas where projects are taking place, Government is recognising the benefits. Investment in a process which involves offenders and victims communicating, and leads

to healing and a greater understanding for both parties, can only be worthwhile. In a world that often seems oppressed by conflict, it was heartening to hear about the positive work being done in this field.

On Saturday afternoon there was a choice of activities for all ages; a pottery workshop, a community mediation workshop, 'healing plants' walk, pond dipping and hearing about The Tibetan Art of Positive Thinking. We had a fun ceilidh in the evening with a particularly hilarious puppet show put on by the teenagers. On Sunday Marian led a session on Healing our Communities followed by meeting for Worship on the lawn in brilliant spring sunshine.

*Dorothy Hay
Central Edinburgh Meeting*

Isn't it boring, sitting in a car? It is for me - I'm not the driver. But on Friday, I was too excited even to worry. We were going to Kindrogan!

When we got there, we were a bit late so we went to the office to register, wrote out name tags and went in and had tea.

Mum kept fretting that it would rain before we could put up the tent, but it didn't, and we got it up quite easily. Then we went into the children's bit, because Mum was helping out and I just tagged along. We - I say 'we' because I did join in - discussed the next days lessons, drank tea, and finally

went to bed.

In the morning, we got up at about eight o'clock and had breakfast. After breakfast, I was intending to go to the shop, but instead I found nearly all the Quaker children waiting in the corridor - the shop was not yet open. After a while though, the man came along and opened it, and I got my postcards. After that we made our packed lunches. Once again, the food was excellent. We walked to the children's bit, played lots of games and listened to a story. Then we made things. It was probably the best arty thing I've ever done - there were loads of materials laid out and we just did whatever we wanted. I made two sock puppets, and because they looked like puppies I named them Dogsboddy and Doggerl. Meanwhile several mobiles were coming together, and what looked like a football bot taking shape on another table. We were all really sorry when we had to stop and have lunch.

After lunch we had to choose whether we wanted to do pottery or pond dipping. I chose pottery. The lady divided us up into rich people and poor people (not by wealth, by picking names out of a hat). I was a poor person and I really think that we had more fun than the rich people. They had all the fancy tools and the best of clay, while the poor people had to bash up a whole load of rocks into clay powder, add water, and knead it into clay. It was great fun.

Tea was a sort of nut cakey thing with sunflower seeds in it. It tasted alright. After that, instead of doing another pottery session, I went for a

walk in the woods with mum.

Then there was the ceilidh. There were some dances and then people did lots of different things. Poems, songs, scenes from books, games, football and even a very funny play about 'de-mugging' whatever that was, somehow wove their way in, and I enjoyed it hugely. Finally we went to bed exhausted but very happy.

In the morning we woke up a bit late, so we just had a quick breakfast and made our packed lunches. When we got to the children's bit we had a story, played chinese whispers, then went outside and played such games as hopscotch, skipping, hide-and-seek and 'horse-jumping' - a game where you have a skipping rope swaying back and forth and take turns to jump over it, steadily raising it higher and higher until you can't possibly get over. Great fun.

We ate lunch wherever we wanted to. Angus and Hannah's mum had out a picnic rug, and we sat there and played with their baby brother Harris. My brother would make a face, Harris would laugh and so would we - when Harris laughs it's infectious! It did rain half way through, but we simply moved our rug to underneath one of the sycamores and carried on, without a single drop of rain falling on our heads due to the thickness of the canopy of leaves. Then we had some free time, so I played piggy-in-the-middle with Angus and Hannah, and then everybody started leaving so we just sat and waved. I felt really sad when we had to leave.

Eilidh Johnstone Kerr

Consultation on family law proposals

Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Liaison Committee

Family Law fills a gap when families break down and can no longer agree on when to see each other, or how to organise their money. The Scottish Executive proposes to reform the existing law to put children's rights and needs first. It asked the Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Liaison Group to discuss its proposals on 25 May, as part of a Scotland-wide consultation of interested groups.

Two firm proposals had emerged from a previous consultation exercise and will be included without further discussion:

- the periods of non-co-habitation required to constitute grounds for divorce will be reduced from 2 years to 1 with consent, and from 5 years to 2 without consent. We were told this conforms to a Scots law tradition of a 'clean break', that discourages false hopes in children that their parents will get back together.
- secondly, unmarried fathers who jointly register the birth of their child with the mother will acquire parental rights and responsibilities. The Executive asked us to discuss three new proposals.
- People are under the false impression that common law marriage gives them certain rights. It does not, and the future bill would for the first time introduce legal

safeguards for cohabiting couples. In future if one partner dies, or the relationship breaks down, a former co-habitee will be able to apply to a court for financial provision.

- Married step-parents could also acquire rights and responsibilities through a court under the new law, provided both birth parents agree they may.
- Grandparents, however, will not get an automatic right of contact with grandchildren after their parents have split up, despite the lobbying of a grandparents' rights group. The Executive does not consider it appropriate, but is looking for other ways to promote contact between children and the wider family.

We discussed all five points in fact. In practice it is hard to know that you have a right, if you must first go to court to establish it. Much education will be needed before married step-parents and former co-habitees can take advantage of the new opportunities they will be given. On a philosophical level, what is an unmarried father? Is it a biological dad? Or is it necessarily a man at all, in the context of parenting rights and responsibilities? We got no definite answers to these questions at the meeting.

As children are supposed to be at the heart of the new law, I found it odd

that they will have no say on whether to have contact with grandparents, or whether married stepparents should have rights over them. Most people agreed that it would be difficult to organise and put great pressure on children. This is true - except that the alternative might put even greater pressure on them. It seems wrong to confuse a 'right', with difficulties in implementing it. If we do, we could abolish paid sick leave in the workplace and 24-hour duty solicitors straightaway.

Churches being what churches are, the Parliamentary Liaison Group is a largely male affair. The meeting began with visionary words about 'marriage' and the 'family', that sat rather oddly with the bloodied smithereens that arose in the discussion.

Sometimes you feel the Communion of Saints is rather a cool place! Probably the greatest contribution to our discussion came from the person with a broken marriage, stepchildren, half brothers and rival grandparents.

The meeting ran over time and was fascinating to the end. All credit to the lawyers who encouraged criticism and debate on proposals that must have been hard fought in the Scottish Executive and dear to their hearts. They were unfailingly receptive, with only the faintest shifting of feet betraying discomfort on tricky issues, like the absence of any reference to the Civil Registration of Same Sex Partnerships in the new family law.

*Marjorie Farquharson
Central Edinburgh Meeting*

Meeting

The sound of the world,
the silence of Meeting.
The stir of the world, the stillness of meeting.
The faces of friends, immobile, unspeaking.
The faces of Friends, solemnly speaking.

The eternal minute, the swift flight of hours.
Born out of nowhere the unforeseen thought.
The memory of youth, the elusive now.

The despair of the world, the joy of new life.
The pains of the flesh, the grief of departure.

The out breath of effort, in breath of renewal.
The rhythm of blood, the dance of the living.

The Word in the silence, the song in the soul.

The clock ends the hour, the rustle of
garments,
the shuffle of feet, the opening of smiles,
movement and handshakes, eyes meeting
eyes.

Reading of notices, reflection on matters,
resolution, dissolution:
couples and triplets in earnest discussion.

The babble of voices, bustle and laughter,
kettle clatter, water rush, cup rattle, packet
crinkle.

Diminution to quiet susurrations...

The call of the world, the gradual dispersal.
The room emptied out, of Quakers and
meaning.

*Neil Mochrie
Polmont Meeting*

A Testimony to the Grace of God as seen in the life of Peter Tennant 27.iv.1913 - 27.ix.2001



*Peter Tennant
in younger
days,
shearing
sheep*

Peter Tennant was born into a family with many privileges. He was the youngest son of the youngest son of Sir Charles Tennant of The Glen, an Ayrshire industrial baron who was one of the founding fathers of Imperial Chemical Industries and progenitor of a political dynasty. Being born into affluence does not however guarantee happiness and Peter's childhood included unhappy experience at preparatory and public schools.

After University Peter worked with housing associations in London, where he met Valerie Nettlefold, who became his wife in 1938. Through his social concerns he became a convinced pacifist, which did not go down well in a family with strong political and military traditions. When war was declared in 1939 Peter became a

conscientious objector and joined the Friends Ambulance Unit. He was appointed second in command of the China convoy and retained his connections with those he got to know in the FAU years for the whole of his life. As one of his colleagues has written, "the bible was his source book in those early FAU days and he gave to each of us in the unit a pocket version of it." Several of these bibles are still in regular use. In another colleague's words: "I still take it to Meeting though its print is now too small for my fading eyesight and it is beginning to show more signs of old age than I do myself." In 1942, most of the Unit was in China but part was in Burma; Peter was with this Burma section when the Japanese advance cut the links to China, and he was one of the group of

114 people who, with General Stilwell, walked out of Burma over the Chindwin River and the Naga Hills. Peter then commandeered air transport to return "over the Hump" to the main body of the Unit in China. In 1943, he went to the United States to recruit and train Americans for the China convoy.

On return to Britain he attended Meeting in Reading and joined the Civil Service working on housing and New Towns but finding this unsatisfactory he and Valerie reconsidered their priorities and lives and moved with their young family to Inverrossachs near Callander in Perthshire where they began a 27 year period of hill farming, forestry and generous hospitality. Always an innovator in his agricultural practice Peter was an early exponent of natural cultivation and a member of both the Soil Association and the Henry Doubleday Research Association when these were seen as eccentric. His worries about the changes in the ecology of our forests brought about by blanket planting of conifers led Peter to experiment with naturalising blue gums in Perthshire, but even with carefully sought seed from high altitude in Tasmania, eucalyptus was not an economically viable crop in Scottish conditions. During these Perthshire years the family grew up; his daughters, away at school, could rely on a weekly letter from their father. Getting to Meeting involved the 90 mile round trip to Perth, a journey Peter made frequently and punctually, often with visiting Friends from his extensive American acquaintance. In

the late 1960s a Meeting started closer to hand, only 19 miles away in Dunblane and Peter was a staunch supporter of this small new venture encouraging the early development of an active study group to help us come to know each other in the things that are eternal. It was only in 1970 that Peter was at last persuaded to apply for membership; the Monthly Meeting was so startled, most Friends having assumed that he had joined years before, that his visitors were appointed to welcome him, there and then, and he subsequently became a valued Elder and representative on Meeting for Sufferings. As Peter approached normal retirement age he came to the realisation that he wished to work for God rather than Mammon and a whole new phase of his and Valerie's life began. They sold the estate and went to Northern Ireland to work at Corrymeela, but first they went round the world. They visited Chile to look at the trees, encountering base Christian communities on the way. Further visits to family and friends took them to New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and India before coming home via Afghanistan [there was a war on in Iran] and Greece. Their globetrotting complete they settled on the slopes of Knocklayd near Ballycastle in County Antrim where Peter involved himself in the life and work of the Corrymeela Community and in wider aspects of peace making in Northern Ireland. One living memorial to Peter is the garden at Corrymeela where thousands of trees had to be planted and nurtured to shelter a once bare clifftop site from the

harsh Atlantic winds before a garden could be laid out. The golden garden there was filled with plants given by their friends and family for Peter and Valerie's golden wedding. Other less tangible memorials are in work done to establish the Committee on the Administration of Justice [CAJ], Northern Ireland's independent civil liberties body, and in dogged and obstinate persistence to make policing more accountable and to increase respect for human rights. When increasing frailty forced Peter and Valerie to return to Scotland, Knocklayd Cottage became a second rural centre for the Community and its work.

Peter was a quiet unassuming man who nevertheless carried authority. As a colleague at CAJ has written: "Here was someone who clearly came from the establishment but was not at all afraid to speak out when the state was doing something wrong. He had a strong sense of right and wrong and spoke up loudly and clearly when he thought something wasn't right, though always in a calm and effective way. He presented real challenges to civil servants whom he would frequently argue with. They never quite knew what to make of him and how to deal with him. It was always a treat to have Peter on a delegation."

A person of great personal integrity who made no parade of his intellect, Peter was a willing supporter of seekers on their own spiritual journey, but a friendly and rigorous critic of sloppy thinking and a persistent questioner of woolly-minded Friends. He was one of the quartet of Friends who initiated the

Open Letter Movement in the 1970s, encouraging seekers to share their findings and to pursue leadings; he was also a staunch supporter of those undertaking courageous witness under concern and maintained his interest in such witness by those he knew, work such as that of Laurie Baker in South India and Ellen Moxley and Helen Steven at Peace House. His ministry in meeting was not regular, but frequently drew together the strands of what had seemed a bitty and disparate meeting towards the end of the time of worship. Latterly he came to meeting in his wheelchair and his only ministry was in his still quiet presence. When his failing body meant that he could no longer travel, meeting was taken to him in his home, or in the nursing home where he spent his last year. The depth of worship was in no way curtailed by unfamiliar surroundings or background sounds; all who attended these meetings remember them as a gift and privilege.

Peter led a life in which the integration of worship and politics, faith and the world, was manifest. He was human, and had his failures and stumbling. But he had a faith that this world was a place where good could overcome evil, and where it was his responsibility to live by the Light that was given to him.

Those of us who knew him saw a Friend who recognised precisely what was required of him, and did his best to act justly, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with God.

*Christine Davis
Dunblane Meeting*

The General Assembly of The Church of Scotland - 2004

John Melling shares his impressions of a week on the Mound

The Church of Scotland broke new ground in 2004 with the appointment of Dr Alison Elliott as its first female Moderator. The Kirk's traditional reformed church theology is complemented by widespread concern for the world.

A little bit of history is helpful in understanding the workings of the General Assembly. When the 'civil court' of the old Scottish Parliament moved south following the Act of Union in 1707, its 'spiritual court' was protected by the passing of the Barries Act, which gave the Kirk rights over doctrine and ministry. The resulting legislative framework, characterised by motions, amendments, addenda and counter motions underlies the workings of the Assembly to this day.

Each year the General Assembly has a 'Blue Book', this time comprising some 666 pages. This contained the 37 Reports to be received by the Assembly during the week. Each report included a 'Proposed Deliverance' calling for specific actions. These were to be voted upon in detail by the Commissioners of the Church. This year there were 821 Commissioners divided equally between Ministers and Elders, and representing the Presbyteries.

First time Commissioners together with the 19 delegates from other Churches in Britain and Ireland and 35 visitors from Churches across the world

benefited from a briefing session on the Friday evening, although at the time it was difficult to understand all that was said!

On the Saturday morning I found myself placed alphabetically between the delegate of the Methodist Church and a much respected Roman Catholic sister. The Assembly elected Alison Elliott Moderator and received the Lord High Commissioner, Sir David Steel, as the Queen's representative.

The garden party at Holyrood that afternoon was notable for the small number of clerical collars in evidence. Mary Latham, the previous Assistant Clerk of General Meeting kindly accompanied me when, on finding a table, we sat talking with two guests from a spiritualist church.

Back at the Assembly Hall during the evening session, there was an interesting debate on the Deliverance from the Artistic Committee, who pleaded for respect for church fabric when making alterations. A contrary view, that today's priority was for open worship space, led to the incorporation of an amendment respecting both positions.

In the evening, the outgoing Moderator, Dr Torrance, gave a deep thinking address urging acceptance of social changes.

Each morning the Assembly in session commenced with worship,

characterised by the loud rendering of a psalm, a New Testament reading, quiet reflective music and prayers.

On Monday, the implications of a severe budgetary deficit were considered. In particular the allocation to the Board for World Mission for 2005 was to be cut by nearly £500,000, some 40%. This was resisted by the chairman of that Board, who said it would severely affect overseas work. A visitor from Nigeria said his Church was feeling increasingly neglected. After hearing that many congregations are struggling financially, the Assembly approved the Budget without amendment.

Later that day, proposals to streamline the Kirk's central administration were approved. A new body, the Council of Assembly, is created and the many existing Boards and Committees are replaced by six Councils. Concern was expressed over staff redundancies, and that the new Council would have too much power. Although the debate was not easy, the proposals were accepted. I thought it remarkable that both a slimmed-down committee structure and a co-ordinating group were agreed at the same time. There are shades of the experience of Friends here!

The fourth day, Tuesday, was 'Church and Society' day. A broad approach to religious education in non-denominational schools with an emphasis on the spiritual development of all members of the school community was accepted, but not before some had urged that religious observance in schools should continue

to reflect the broadly Christian tradition of Scotland. Next, the Convener of the Church and Nation Committee presented its wide-ranging 75 page report. This both gave an update on present work and called for action on poverty, pensions, the media and privacy, responses to crime, advocacy, Israel - Palestine, Burma, the UN, a constitution for Europe, the European identity and trade justice.

The General Assembly called for a Public Inquiry into the government's decision to join the USA in waging war on Iraq. Speaking to this on the Supplementary Report from his committee, the Convener said, "The Report makes clear our belief that we always need to see how the world looks from the perspective of the poor and the weak." Nearer home, a Highlander compared the holding of asylum seekers in Dungavel Detention Centre with the treatment of his forbearers during the Clearances.

On Wednesday, after a Report on Ecumenical Relations, the Assembly turned to the Report of the Board of National Mission. This included hospital and university chaplaincies, congregational development and parish staffing.

An overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh seeking to delay a National Plan for a more rational distribution of Ministers across Scotland met with widespread resistance, most vocally expressed from Caithness. Interestingly, when a vote was first taken by the Commissioners standing in their places, the issue seemed fairly evenly divided, but when the proponents

called for a card vote, the overture was heavily lost.

Arriving on Thursday morning, I faced three rows of men and women in clerical collars, each encased in military uniform. The Assembly heard of the difficult role of military chaplains, and the lack of Church of Scotland applicants to become army chaplains.

A high point was the Report of the Youth Assembly, 18-25 year olds, during which several of its members gave reports and handled questions with confidence. That evening I attended the High Commissioner's Reception at Holyrood Palace - a fitting ending to an exciting seven days.

There had been many opportunities for ecumenical contact during the week, both by day and at evening events. The Committee on Ecumenical Relations and the Board of World Mission had together looked after the delegates and visitors from the other churches. I have clear memories of some of those who I was able to talk with, and also of the courtesy and consideration of our hosts.

Despite a severely falling membership of 20% over the past ten years, those who attended this General Assembly were left in no doubt as to the vitality of the Church of Scotland in seeking to advance God's work in the world. I am very grateful for the experience. I hope such opportunities can be shared out among Friends and that in some way General Meeting can reciprocate the goodwill shown to us on these occasions.

*John Melling
Inverness Meeting*

Our Society has been reviewing its structures and governance for the last 10 years. The present review was set up by Yearly Meeting 2002 as the working party on REpresentation, Communication and Accountability in our STtructures (RECAST). This group produced its 'Emerging Proposals' in March this year. It is asking for responses, both from individuals and from meetings at local and area level by the 10th of September. It will bring its report and proposals to the residential Yearly Meeting at York in July 2005.

Meeting responses should be by minute to the Recording Clerk but individuals may also send them using the email facilities at our website - www.recast.quaker.org.uk Here you can also find our minutes, proposals and discussion about our work. This site is part of our response to Communication and Accountability.

*Andrew I Farrar
Central Edinburgh Meeting*

Meeting for worship in the Western Isles

A small group of Friends and attenders will be meeting for worship in Stornoway at the Newton Community Centre, Seaforth Road, at 11 am on the fourth Sunday of each month from August to October 2004.

Contact 0845 458 3821

David Sanders

A land divided

Having been offered a place to go on a solidarity trip to Israel-Palestine in March this year, I wasn't left with much choice. I've been fascinated by the place since my discovery of the driving British Israelite ideology underpinning some strands of Unionist politics in my native Northern Ireland. The interweaving of land and identity, and the inalienable link between the two has, since then, struck me as a major cause of conflict, and it is an idea whose genealogy stretches to Israel-Palestine.

The trip was organised by the Youth Work co-ordinator of the Iona Community, and funding sourced from the British Jesuit Order, and from members of the Iona Community. Nine of us travelled in late March, our arrival coincided with the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the leader of Hamas. At the heart of the trip was a desire to show solidarity with young people in this troubled area, especially those working for peace, and through techniques of peer education to raise awareness of the situation in the UK. In all, we met with nine groups in our ten days, and every attempt was made to make the itinerary as balanced as possible.

Two of our encounters stand out in my recollection of the trip. The first was the trip to the Dheisheh refugee camp, just outside Bethlehem. What follows is a short vignette of that visit, which I hope gives some flavour of our experience.



Security wall or barrier to peace?

Having got into Bethlehem itself by back roads, avoiding Israeli road blocks, and having paid a visit to the University, which was covered with posters of Sheikh Yassin, we moved on via the Church of the Holy Nativity, to Dheisheh, a refugee camp that has, since 1948 been home to Palestinians whose families had to flee from west of Jerusalem and Hebron, in the face of Zionist forces. The camp is less than half a square kilometre, and is home to 11 000 displaced people.

We arrived to find a seemingly abandoned revolving gate, and went into the Ibdaa Cultural Centre, a community initiative to empower the children and young people of the camp. Proceeding up 4 flights of steps to a cafe, we passed murals depicting the flight of the refugees in 1948, through intifada to the present day. Following a quick briefing in the café, we were taken on a tour of the camp. The amenities, provided by the UN

agency UNRWA seemed clearly lacking, and the inhabitants had to work hard to keep the streets clean.

What most struck me was the remarkable similarity between the little alleys, steeply rising streets and crumbling houses, with the accommodation photographed by Thomas Annan in the slums of Edinburgh, prior to clearance in the 1870s. The streets leading to and from the Cowgate in Edinburgh were the home to many families displaced by clearance in the Scottish Highlands, and famine in Ireland. Only through concerted programmes of civic redevelopment could the problems faced by these poor be, in part, addressed. With a greatly politicised context, there doesn't seem to be that hope for the people of Dheisheh. In leaving the camp, we were allowed the opportunity to buy some embroidery, and to look at photographs of the camp's history.

In conversation with our guide, I asked about one photograph, showing the eight metre fence erected by the Israelis in 1985, and removed in 1996, in which the now redundant gate was the only means of entry and exit. I commented that life behind the fence must have been very difficult. Referring to the regular Israeli Defence Force incursions, he said that, no, now life was much more difficult. In many ways this reinforced much of what we heard elsewhere about how obvious physical barriers, and tactics of oppression, have been replaced by more intangible, but still very real methods.

The right to return, which the



Posters of Palestinian 'Martyrs' festoon the walls of the refugee camps. No distinction is made between those killed by Israeli security forces and those, like the young woman in this poster, who killed herself and others in a suicide bomb attack.

inhabitants of the camp take as imperative, must constitute one of the most difficult and intractable problems causing conflict anywhere. It is difficult to see a solution to a problem which will necessarily mean either the continued displacement of some people, or the new displacement of others. Here the politics of land and identity comes to the fore, and should pose challenging and, in some ways impossible questions for all of us.

Peter McColl

Central Edinburgh Meeting

Reaching out in Friendship

Pat Lucas tells us a bit about the work of the Outreach Function Group

In recognition of the need to co-ordinate Friends' activities at a national level, a number of function groups have been formed. A full list of these can be found at the beginning of the book of Members and Attenders.

Over the next few issues of SFN, we will be taking a look at these function groups to find out how they operate and just what it is they actually do. First up is 'Outreach' which is convened by Pat Lucas, who took some time out from her busy schedule to tell me a bit about what Outreach is, and how we as a Society here in Scotland go about it.

So why do we have Outreach? It's because "we feel we've got something really good to share", says Pat. But how do we go about that sharing? When I think about Outreach, I confess I think rather queasily of evangelical Christians standing on their soap-box or the latter day equivalent thereof, earnestly trying to save the souls of anyone within earshot. But for all that some of the early Quakers were no shrinking violets in the public speaking department, I've never seen this as being the Quaker way. And neither it is.

Outreach Quaker style is very much about responding to requests for information. Enquirers come through two main routes. There are those who respond to adverts placed in the press

inviting people to find out more about Quakers and what we believe; and there are those people who walk in off the street where we have meeting houses, who perhaps after months or even years of walking past decide to come and to learn a bit more about us.

In both cases all enquirers can be given an 'Enquirer's Pack', which contains a tried and tested collection of leaflets and booklets, including 'Advices and Queries' and 'A Light that is Shining' by Harvey Gillman. Personal callers will also be able to chat with whoever is on duty, and in both cases, they will be invited to attend a Meeting for Worship to experience Quaker worship for themselves. In some cases this will coincide with periodic meetings for Enquirers, typically held once a month after Meeting for Worship.

So much for Outreach, but what, does the Function group do and how is it organised?

Its membership comprises a representative from each Monthly Meeting. Because its membership is so dispersed, "we try and conduct most of our business by phone", explains Pat. She continued, "the main part of our work is to organise an Enquirers' Weekends, typically this might happen every two to three years." The most recent of these was held in Nairn last November. "It's really a case of responding to demand", Pat explained.

And, just like the Enquirers' Pack, the weekends have a tried and tested formula, which comprises of three segments; Worship, Testimonies and the Basics of Quakerism.

But while organising a meeting ever two or three years is hardly an arduous task, Pat and her colleagues are working on developing the resources around the country to support running Enquirers' Weekends. In practical terms that means identifying individuals able and willing to lead the various segments of these Weekends, so that they can be staged without obliging people to travel from one end of the country to the other.

But something Pat would like to see travel from one end of the country to another would be an exhibition on Quakerism. Putting such an exhibition together is the Outreach Group's next goal. "It could be used in libraries, schools, or other public spaces, and we would hope that local meetings would be keen to request it be sent to their part of the country", said Pat.

And that's about it for the Outreach Function team. Which function team will next out of the hat? Don't miss your next action packed issue of SFN.

Michael Collie

Invitation to Angus

I have a flat attached to my home - ideally place to visit our beautiful county of Angus (even without a car). I only require that you to pay the electricity bill and look after yourselves. Please contact me for further details.

June Braithwaite tel 01307 462206

Funeral and Memorial Services

Joyce Smith

We record the death of Joyce Smith, Mother of Tara Smith of Central Edinburgh Meeting. Joyce died on July 19 and her funeral was held at Dunfermline crematorium on 27th July. Joyce was a member of the Society for many years and attended both Cockermouth and Carlisle Meetings. When she became too frail to attend she decided it was appropriate to resign her membership. Her final years were spent in a nursing home in Fife to be near her family. Our thoughts are with Tara and Cathie and the rest of the family.

Norman Cartwright

Norman Cartwright of Borders Meeting died on May 10. He was cremated privately and a Memorial party was held for him by his family on 29 May at Bolton Village Hall, near Haddington.

A prominent Quaker, Norman was the MM Clerk of South Scotland MM circa 1966.

Anne Wagner

Anne Wagner of Central Edinburgh Meeting died on March 29. A Meeting for Worship for a funeral was held at the Meeting House in Victoria Terrace on Monday April 5, followed by internment at the Woodland Burial site on Corstorphine Hill, Edinburgh.

Ruth Buchan

A Memorial Meeting for Ruth Buchan was held on Saturday March 27 at the Central Edinburgh Meeting House, in Victoria Terrace.

Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network

Following the appointment in 1999 of a Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer (Rev Graham Blount) to serve the Scottish churches in building and maintaining a constructive relationship with the new Parliament, an early development was the initiating of the Network, social inclusion having been declared to be at the heart of the philosophy, and of the political processes designed to promote 'a Scotland where everyone matters'. Subsequently the Roman Catholic Church appointed a Parliamentary Officer with a remit to serve the purpose of that particular denomination, but continued to have representation on the Network.

Over the five years of its existence there have been continuing themes, e.g. housing and homelessness, debt on our doorstep, poverty and social justice, racial justice, asylum issues, active communities - progress, or otherwise, being reported on at each meeting. Subgroups have been formed for more detailed work, co-opting as special expertise is needed. Engaging directly with the decision makers has been a strong feature; politicians of all parties, including government ministers, being asked to speak, outline their priorities, and to listen to the concerns of the church representatives.

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office provides a monthly update of Parliament business, listing current consultations, giving summaries and the most important developments. A

recent innovation to the update has been an interview with a MSP, revealing something of the person behind the party label. The office also provides briefing papers on issues which are highly controversial, usually mainly factual material, but at times including questions to be pondered on, e.g. The Scottish Housing and Homelessness Bill.

Representatives are not expected to speak for their denomination or group, but to try to express what principles and approaches they feel their particular faith group would want emphasised. Some bring special expertise, but most simply have a degree of social concern, are interested in making policy work for the benefit of all, especially the socially-excluded, and are comfortable with the ecumenical framework in which it is being attempted. It is assumed, though not required, that representatives will give, from time to time, reports on some aspect of the Network's activities to others.

In the period of my involvement I have found meetings of the Network invariably interesting, informative, thought-provoking. They bring a deep sense of partnership in a cause. Though dealing with some of the most serious issues of our lives, they are from heavy-going - humour abounds. I hope Quakers will continue to contribute to this immensely valuable enterprise.

David Turner
South Edinburgh Meeting

Book Review

A Living Faith An Historical and Comparative Study of Quaker Beliefs

by Wilmer A. Cooper

"When asked what Quakers believe, many Friends can do no better than to recommend a book to the questioner. From now on this is the book to recommend" Gordon Browne New England Meeting.

All of the subjects which Quakers so often hesitate to discuss among themselves or with new comers are fully covered by the author. Each chapter ends with six or more suggested 'Questions for Discussion'. So in addition to being informative the book would be ideal for use in a Quaker study group. "The book attempts to deal systematically and comparatively with Quaker beliefs, starting with the historical background of the Quaker beginnings in England three and a half centuries ago and taking into account the substantial changes that have taken place in the intervening years'

I will use chapter 3 a ' Quaker View of God' as a sample of the depth and style of writing. 'In systematic theology it is customary to consider the classic arguments for the existence of God: the cosmological argument from first cause; the teleological argument from design; and the ontological argument from the perfect idea of God, which presupposes existence. But Friends have long maintained that such logical

claims can never convince anyone of the existence of God, let alone prove Gods existence. Rather Friends have insisted that to know and claim that reality God must be experienced spiritually within. Thus Friends have never begun their search for God in the realm of logic, nor in the external world of nature, nor in the far reaches of space and time. For them God is an infused Spirit rather than abstract external being' Personally I have always found theological and philosophical studies interesting but never in the final analysis fully satisfying. I would compare them to describing a heavy snow fall to someone who has never seen one. All the scientific prove, analysis and description can never come close to the magic of the experience.

Friends believed that God as spirit was full disclosed in Scripture, especially in the book of Psalms and in the New Testament writings of Paul and John. A favorite passage in the latter is John4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" and later 'Insofar as there is a gulf between God and ourselves, this immediate experience of God bridges that gap and brings us into the presence of God so that our experience becomes firsthand

rather than a secondhand report about God`. At the end of this chapter one of the `Questions for Discussion` is `Does "that of God in every one" express the essence of Quakerism? If so explain what it means`. To the first part my simplistic reply would be "Yes" the second part I am still thinking about! All quotations used in the text are numbered and the sources are given in the fourteen pages of notes. This is the second edition of the book and as a post script the author includes `the most formidable review` of the first edition on which he makes his own comments. Interesting and something I have never seen done before. The

author and his wife are members of the West Richmond (Indiana) Friends Meeting so the book is at times from an American viewpoint. However not enough to reduce its overall value for the UK reader. Reading all the books in the `Notes` and `select bibliography` would keep you going for years. An excellent book and a worthy addition to any Quaker bookshelf. Very highly recommended.

Jack Squires A Living Faith An Historical and Comparative Study of Quaker Beliefs by Wilmer A. Cooper. 2nd edition £15-50 plus £1-40 P& P from The Quaker Bookshop.

Testimonies to the grace of God in lives - an enduring presence

In November 2003, Central Committee brought their concern over the writing of testimonies to General Meeting for Scotland. The assistant GM Clerk, John Melling was asked to prepare a paper. Initially the committee circulated this paper to the Clerks of Monthly Meetings and the Convenors of MM Elders seeking comment.

The paper was then presented to General Meeting on the 12th of June 2004 and the decisions made to circulate it to each Friends Meeting in Scotland and also publish it in the Scottish Friends Newsletter. John would be happy to receive comments by 31st of August to him at 86 Culduthel Park, Inverness, IV2 4RZ.

The advice in the current Quaker Faith and Practice at paragraph 4.24 that "a testimony should not be a formal obituary or eulogy, but should record in thankfulness the power of divine grace in human life" is not always easy to carry through.

The following paragraph, 4.25, a Minute from the then Hertford

monthly Meeting of 1780 records " the purpose of a testimony concerning our deceased worthy Friends (is) intended as a memorial, that they have walked as children of the Light, and of the Day, and to excite those who remain to take diligent heed, and to yield to the teachings of the still small voice, that they may follow them as they followed

Christ, the great captain of their salvation". Much of this expresses Friends' interest in the working of testimonies today, but how is it carried out?

Historically in Britain the issue of records concerning deceased Friends in the Ministry began in the 17th century. "An early record maintained by London YM is now lost but a series of volumes begun in 1740 were maintained until 1872 with retrospective entries copied up from 1719. These volumes are known as Testimonies concerning Ministers deceased. From the 19th century (they) contain minutes from Quarterly Meetings recording the lives of Friends rather than Ministers. From 1861 Quarterly Meetings were at liberty to prepare a testimony concerning any Friend 'whose life was marked by conspicuous service to God and the church' ". (text typed up in Friends' House library subject files c.1970)

An early American testimony written around 1690 advises "it is a justice due to the righteous, and a duty upon us, to contribute something to perpetuate the names of such who have left a fragrant behind them, and through faith have obtained a good report" (Samuel Jennings's testimony concerning John Eckley of Philadelphia.)

Coming forward to the 20th century London Yearly Meeting Church Government of 1931, in use for more than three decades, stated "A Monthly Meeting may issue a testimony concerning the life and service of a deceased member whose life has been

marked by devotion to the cause of his Lord and to the service of the Church. The object of such a Testimony is not eulogy, but to preserve a record of Divine Grace in the lives of (wo)men". This last sentence bears a close similarity to para 4.24 in the current QF&P. The text goes on to refer to progression of a testimony to YM "only if it is likely to be of service to the Society", this is in line with our current practice.

In today's fast moving world Friends face a double challenge, to concentrate on the Divine, and to write a short but rounded record. The first is not easy as it necessarily relates to our temporal experience; the second increasingly important if posterity is to hold learning from an inspiring text in an age of complexities, speed and an increasing multiplicity of knowledge and communication. Friends can be long-winded. This puts some off from joining in our Business Meetings for worship.

A testimony should radiate the Grace of God as shown in the life of the Friend who has passed from this world. It differs from an obituary account of achievements, yet a few milestones in the life of the deceased will serve to illuminate the spiritual gifts bestowed.

Date of birth, date(s) of marriage(s), and date of death describe the setting of time. This is a necessary aid to living Friends. It is also a recognition of the times in which the life is set for posterity, where future Friends can relate the spiritual gifts received to the cultural context of the era. Reference to

immediate antecedents can anchor the recall of a name for more distant Friends. Reference to children can demonstrate the enrichment of life.

Recognition of a spiritually lived life and its application characterises the preparation of a Testimony. Worship through quiet waiting upon God prayerfully alone or where two or three are gathered together in Meeting is the hallmark of a Quaker. This does not deny the devotional or biblical emphases in other traditions. As seekers after Truth, Friends should be open to new learning as God's revelation continues in the world.

It is against this background that the application of talents whether within the life of the Society or in witness in the wider world are described. There is a temptation to link these to a career pattern or an extended voluntary body commitment, and hence border on an obituary. Rather, it is the spiritually inspired application of the talent for good that matters. Examples of the flowering of each talent in the life pattern of the departed Friend can then be quoted. If carefully knit together these convey an image of the whole.

Writing a testimony to the life of a departed Friend may not be easy. How far do we understand the familial and cultural background, the stresses and successes in that life? Did the light shine forth in life? Where we see glimpses of the inner spiritual life, how do these reflect in outward activity?

Were outward concerns truly a reflection of inward Grace? How does economic comfort sit easily with God's Will? Then we come back to what to

include, what to leave out and how to outwardly reflect a spiritually inspired life to future generations.

Not far distant may be the expectations of relatives of the deceased. When a close relative died I had anticipated a prepared obituary in The Friend but instead I read a note from one who had only known her in her last years. I know a Friend now who feels hurt that no testimony was written around her partner who died some years ago. On another occasion a Friend who was to die shortly afterwards made plain that he did not want a testimony written to his life. It is difficult to know the aspirations of family members, and particularly so when anxiety and grief intrude. With a little passage of time, such aspirations if known, should not cloud the consideration within Monthly Meeting of how appropriately to remember a Friend. Such an interlude of perhaps a few months may also help the Meeting in it's discernment as to whether to prepare a Testimony to the Grace of God in a life. It is the Light shining in a Life that matters.

That Meetings might hold a short record of the lives of members is commendable. That these should be developed into Testimonies is not necessarily the right use of time for the living. It is difficult to distinguish between the Martha and the Mary, and neither should we judge. Meetings need prayerful thought before committing the strengths of a life to a Quaker Testimony.

*John Melling
Inverness Meeting*

Scottish Episcopal Church Synod 2004

Edinburgh June 10-12

This was the second year in a row which I represented Friends at the annual Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Although the Agenda this year was not as momentous as last year, when the decision to appoint women bishops was agreed, there were still many interesting discussions.

There was a request from the Glasgow and Galloway Diocese for a report on the progress of 'an exploration of issues surrounding the Arms Trade as the most pressing global issue'. This referred to a discussion at the 2001 Synod which had led to the setting up of a working party which included several prominent Quakers. I was disappointed that the enthusiasm of 2001 seemed less evident, although a full up to date statement was made.

Alastair Cameron of Scottish Churches Housing Action, addressed the Synod about current needs and was warmly received. One recommendation agreed was to ask all those involved in disposing of Church property to consider, as a preferred option, its possible use for affordable housing for rent. The following day, when the future of a large property was being debated, this recommendation was brought firmly into the discussion.

It is always of interest to hear of the initiation ceremonies of other Churches and Faiths. Quakers may have problems with rituals, but I think

few would have difficulty with the now accepted Episcopal Church blessing on those of any age when baptised, 'May the Spirit of God be in you, wisdom and understanding keep you, the power of God encircle you and God's truth lead you into freedom'.

Greater unity between several denominations had been worked at for many years, but when discussions demanded action, the difficulties become more obvious and hesitations grew. One member seemed to catch the feeling of many when he said, 'it could be the Spirit is leading us on a different path, we need to listen with all our hearts and minds'.

As last year, I found much to think about from this Synod, and I was particularly heartened by the emphasis again laid on the need for dialogue when differing views are strongly held. There was a wise suggestion that the word 'nevertheless' should always be in our mind after our most emphatic statements.

It is good to have the opportunity to observe another religious group discussing matters which have relevance for ones own, and I have really enjoyed these two opportunities to hear the Scottish Episcopal Synod at work.

*Sylvia Massey
South Edinburgh Meeting*

South Edinburgh Meeting

. For the last three months or so, South Edinburgh Meeting has been temporarily homeless while renovations have been carried out at the Open Door, the ecumenical drop-in centre in Morningside. We have become the early shift at Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, meeting at 9.30 in the morning and attracting some support from Central Edinburgh Friends who prefer an earlier meeting. We have also had house meetings at various Friends' homes within the Edinburgh area, which have been much appreciated and the Friends involved have thoroughly enjoyed visiting each other's homes.

It has been more difficult to keep in touch, especially for those without e-mail and find out what is going on but we have managed. We have also missed our mini-mart, an invaluable source of home made jam, marmalade, scones and cakes. We have however enjoyed the greater contact with Central Edinburgh.

We hope to be back at the Open Door in mid July and to have our basement room provided with a window. We are very pleased to have David Somervell accepted into membership. Juliet Balfour has started Meetings for Worship at Heriot-Watt University Chaplaincy on Fridays at 5.15 in the afternoon and is hoping to be recognised as Quaker chaplain, which will enable her to be included in the chaplaincy's information services. Hannah Reade and Sam Turner went to Junior Yearly Meeting. Hannah has

been awarded a 2 year scholarship at the Lester B Pearson College, Vancouver Island. The college is described as a 'dynamic international community where 200 people from over 80 countries live, study and serve the community together, promoting international understanding'. Sam Turner is going to Guyana for 12 months with Project Trust, teaching science and maths at a secondary school. We are grateful to Peta Sandars for having been our correspondent for the Scottish Friends Newsletter. She has faithfully contributed to the newsletter during this time but has now laid this work down

David Bell

Education for Peace

There was a good turn-out of Friends for a debate on Education for Peace in the Scottish Parliament on 24 June led by Chris Ballance MSP. Here is a short extract from Chris' speech.

"How do we work for peace? What is being done at the moment and how can the Scottish Parliament enrich the process? Our attitudes affect others. A violent person tends to provoke violence, just as a cheerful person might cheer us up. To move to a more peaceful society, we need to change minds. That means education. Peace education should start when we are young and continue all through life. Peace has to be based on educating ourselves and educating society—all of society."

A full record of the debate can be found on the Parliament's website at www.scottish.parliament.uk

Our website, QuakerScotland

From meeting to mouse

Quaker Scotland has a website - did you know? - at www.quakerscotland.gn.apc.org. Or maybe it's easier just to type "Quaker Scotland" into your favourite search engine. It is visited by about 70 people each day, and as we have only 700 members, you can immediately tell that it is not just read by Scottish Quakers. Visitors read an average of 2-3 pages each, some browsing a lot, others dipping and leaving. Numbers of visitors have been rising steadily and have doubled in the last three years. These figures must mean that it is now a significant component of our outreach work. So could some of you check it over?

Joe Latham established the site in 2000 - a huge amount of work - and he maintained and developed it highly professionally until his sudden death in October 2003. Only a few weeks earlier he had carefully taken me through it, preparing to hand it on, but it was a shock to have to take it over without his support. Fortunately he had made sure that it sensibly organised and it was well developed. So the site has records of (almost) all General Meetings in the last 3 years, as well as information about all our constituent PMs, their meeting times and places, with photos. There is important information also for seekers, the curious, those doing school

projects, and for Friends and attenders.

Actually its up-to-dateness has deteriorated a bit since Joe stopped badgering people to send information, so now I need your help.

What should be there but isn't?

Generally it isn't worth re-doing things that others have already done well somewhere else on the Internet. But location or society-specific information is invaluable, and will be read.

What is there that shouldn't be?

Should Minutes of meetings, and other useful/informative documents, be posted on the website? This could be from PMs and other bodies if Friends wanted. Would we like to have access to our membership database online? * Other ideas? Remember that information that changes often needs lots of someone's precious time to keep it up to date.

Keeping up to date with changes in meeting details, times, and contacts, is the most difficult task. Actually it's impossible. If all the changes were sent to me, keeping the pages up to date would be a nightmare. So I don't know if it's good or bad that you don't do that. But now, advances in technology mean that we could move to a system where clerks (or other local representatives) could make direct changes to their meeting's entry, without requiring any knowledge of how to make webpages. It could make

the website much more useful and responsive. Is this something we should invest in? It wouldn't be very expensive, particularly when compared to printing costs - but I suspect we'd have to run both for the foreseeable future. But you could still get to the website when you'd lost the paper copies.

Here's another mind-boggling thought - we could do the same with our membership database, so that it

could be changed at any time, and I wouldn't be one of David and Ida Turner's children any more!

Please send your thoughts and comments. As a background, the website costs us about £150 per year at present. Or something like that, I forget that, just as I forget our web address. Maybe it's time we got quakerscotland.org.

*Neil Turner (South Edinburgh meeting),
neil.turner@ed.ac.uk, 0131 447 0060*

A note on George Fox's 'Tryacle Bible'

To any who may have wondered like me why George Fox's Bible was known as the 'Tryacle Bible' I offer the following. In fact I did ask Colin George when he came to our Dumfries Meeting with his brilliant show 'Meet George Fox'. Unfortunately 'George' did not know which somewhat surprised me. However when I thought about it I suppose 'George' is around 380 years old so the occasional lapse of memory is perfectly understandable?

The 'Tryacle Bible' was commissioned by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury in 1561 and when published predated the Kings James version which most of us grew up on. The Bible gets its name from Jeremiah Chapter 8 verse 22. Jeremiah is complaining about the lack of doctors and medicine in Gilead. Gilead is an area of land in Palestine. It stretches from the Dead Sea to Lake Galilee on the East bank of the Jordan.

The first line of the verse in the 'Tryacle Bible' reads "Is there no tryacle in Gilead". In various other translations the word treacle is given as 'balm', 'balsam' or 'medicine'. I am no classical scholar so can't comment on the actual translation. Certainly 'tryacle' or 'treacle' as we would now spell it was used in Biblical times as a medicine against poisoning and snake bites. Many sources seem to agree that the 'Balm of Gilead' refers to *Balanites Aegyptiaca* (L) Delile a small shrub which is still found in North Africa and from which an oil is extracted. The oil is reputed to have medicinal properties.

Finally I must add that I have never actually seen the page referred to in Fox's Tryacle Bible, (Any offers from Swarthmore Hall gratefully accepted!) So if you can add to or correct anything I've said please let me know.

*Jack Squires
(Dumfries Meeting)*

General Meeting for Scotland

Perth - Saturday 11 September 2004

'Christianity is not only a faith but a community and in our meetings for church affairs we learn what membership of that community involves'

Quaker Faith and practice 3.03

An Invitation to all Friends and Attenders to come with 'hearts and minds prepared to General Meeting for Scotland. We would be glad if Attenders would let the Assistant Clerk John Melling know so that we can welcome you properly.

Where?

St Pauls Centre, New Row, Perth, which is central for public transport and parking (see map) Contact for enquiries is Constance Tonge Tel. 015577 863 824

When?

Perth friends will welcome us with coffee from 10am and the meeting starts at 11am.

Agenda items include further considerations of RECAST (Representation and Accountability in our Structures and Communications), Nominations, an item regarding the Scottish churches Housing Agency

from our representative John Foster, and a concern arising from considerations at The Retreat (the psychiatric hospital founded by Quakers in York) to appoint non-Friends as Governors.

In the afternoon session we continue with our theme of 'Outreach' with Steve Cappleman who is one of the Outreach Co-ordinators from Friends House. Steve will talk on 'Outreach and your Meeting – a More Visible Presence' and will engage us in workshops on effective outreach.

We share a responsibility for conducting our business, so please, if you can, come along. You'll be warmly welcomed.

So, looking forward to cheerfully greeting you in Perth.

*Pamala McDougall
(Clerk)*

