

# Scottish Friend

January 2006



**Name this Newsletter!**  
**See enclosed Questionnaire**

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I'm not sure I'm going to go on writing editorials, but I expect you expect me to set out my vision in this my first issue. Vision? That's a bit highfalutin' when I can only print what I get. At present the regular range is: Clerk's invitation to next GM; Report of last GM; Reports from GM representatives; and Testimonies. It is nice to have articles that are timeless - scholarly, humorous or passionate - or even whimsical musings like the captions to Fat Cat. Please put your pens to paper and send as soon as possible. The deadline is whenever the invitation to June GM becomes available - probably about three weeks after March GM. Please email to [nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk] or post to me, Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, Glasgow G62 6LN (0141 956 1183)

In order to start with a clean slate there are a few things I need to add to the last few newsletters.

In Jeny Faulkner's "Arran Passion", page 5, bottom right column, the sentence finishing "as we" should continue "as we are caught up in a scene, and moments of laughter together."

The first three GM reports of 2005 were written by Rachel Frith, Alyson Buchan and Mary Dower.

Peter McCaffery wrote "A year of Christian Aid".

Barbara Potter wrote "a week at Pendle Hill".

David Turner reported on the Community Justice Network Meeting.

Cover Photograph - Glasgow Meeting House, the location of our last GM.  
Photograph by Joe Latham.

**Quaker Tapestry 2006 Programme  
Embroidery Workshops at  
The Exhibition Centre, Kendal**



Tapestry Stories - Tutor: Alison Burnley  
Secrets of the Stitches - Tutor: Bridget Guest

Fri, Sat	21, 22 Apr	Foundation or refresher course	£75
Thurs - Sat	11 - 13 May	Lettering and design course	£100
Fri, Sat	7, 8 July	Foundation or refresher course	£75
Thurs - Sat	10 - 13 Aug	Foundation or refresher course	£90
Thurs - Sat	28 - 30 Sept	Lettering and design course	£100
Fri, Sat	20, 21 Oct	Foundation or refresher course	£75

Course fee includes VAT, lunch, refreshments, tuition and a choice of sewing kit with all the materials needed to complete the embroidery.

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**JOHN WIGHAM (ENJOYMENT) TRUST**

**Anne Miller**

We are in the happy situation of having a modest bequest to disburse. John Wigham directed that grants should be made to 'deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures of life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life'.

We welcome applications from Quakers and non-Quakers resident anywhere in Scotland, for grants large or small. £500 will normally be the maximum. Applicants may obtain an application form from an overseer. Further information may be obtained by telephoning 01620 829 117. The completed form should be passed to the overseer who will countersign it to the effect that the applicant is known to them, and that the applicant appears to fulfill the above criteria. The overseer will then forward the completed and counter-signed form to arrive by 31 March or 30 September. Applicants will normally hear the results of their applications within 8 weeks of these deadlines.

## **Rehabilitation in Scotland's prisons**

**Mike Brown**

At General Meeting on 27.11.2005 Scottish Friends were told that Scotland's prison population is set to increase, but no new money will be available for prisoner rehabilitation services such as health, education and addiction treatment.

After expressing concern over cuts in rehabilitation funding, General Meeting for Scotland accepted the offer of a visit from Alec Spencer, Director, Rehabilitation and Care, Scottish Prison Service.

He told Friends that Scotland had one of the largest prison populations in relative terms, with 129 prisoners for every 100,000 of the population. Some 6,700 people are currently in prison. Four per cent are women. Most prisoners are serving sentences of under four years. Many fine-defaulters serve only a few days.

The Prison Service believes that most female prisoners and many males should not be in prison but subject to community sentences. There is concern that courts are not always aware of alternative sentencing options.

Alec Spencer said Scotland's prison population is expected to continue growing but the £240M budget has been 'flat-lining' for three years. He explained that efficiencies were used to enable pay to keep pace with inflation, allow new building and improve the rehabilitation services.

Friends welcomed new legislation from the Scottish Parliament setting up community justice authorities bringing together prisons, police and social work and opening up opportunities for voluntary organisations. However, Friends remain concerned that only so much money for rehabilitation can be freed up by efficiency gains in a static budget. GM will continue to focus on this concern.

When Jim and I retired to the Black Isle in 1985, a small group of Friends had been meeting in various unsatisfactory places in Inverness since the 1960's, and in Scaniport Hall from about 1974. In the early days the new Meeting had been supported by some Aberdeen Friends who travelled the 110 or so miles to join them in worship once a month. Indeed, we learned that Ernle and Edna Beyts and some of their family used to park their camper van overnight at the Scaniport campsite for this purpose. We have followed their example in the Highlands and Western Isles -- though we stay in B&B's.

There were two small Meetings in the Highlands by 1985, one at Scaniport and the other in the Findhorn Centre. Both owed much to the devoted work of David and Ida Turner. In the summer of that year three married couples, including ourselves, started attending Inverness Meeting -- four long-term members of the Society and two Church of Scotland inquirers (one of them a Church of Scotland elder). The six of us almost doubled the regular attendance and this greatly helped the Meeting when David and Ida moved to Edinburgh soon afterwards.

As the local Friends who would have been suitable convenors felt too heavily committed elsewhere to be able to accept the extra responsibility, I volunteered -- and started the following Sunday! As Christmas and New Year approached, we decided to write to all the far-flung Friends and would-be Attenders who were on the Inverness membership list, inviting them to attend a New Year get-together -- not really appreciating the distances, problematic ferry crossings, weather problems and so on that would have been involved. They all replied. No one came -- but everyone seemed pleased to have heard from us.

The following autumn John Massereene-James in South Lochs, Lewis, applied for membership. Jim and I were asked to visit him, and so started our travels to the West. Having made friends with John and Gill Massereene-James, we went again the next year and tried to visit each of the few scattered Friends on Lewis. We have kept this up each year since, except for those Friends who have more fully integrated with Harris & Lewis life, some of whom attend local churches. We have

kept in touch with one such family, John and Judith Dick, and on one or two occasions they have attended small meetings on Harris. Harris was added to our itinerary when John and Robin Goodman wrote to Friends' House expressing an interest in Quakers, and after reading the literature asked to be visited. Our Meeting was asked to arrange this, and we duly spent a glorious sunny day with them on the west coast of South Harris. John and Robin are now members and have been joined on Harris by David Sanders from south-east England -- he lives about an hour away from the Goodmans. Recently two inquirers in northwest Lewis have become interested and have been visited -- one would like to join and one to attend -- but small numbers and local factors have combined to make a regular meeting impossible. Some Friends and inquirers have met for worship in twos or threes in their own homes; the Goodmans are always glad to arrange a meeting for holiday-making Friends, and David Sanders worships once a month in the Stornoway Community Centre, keeping the door open for inquirers or visiting Friends. The Free Churches' strong influence, which makes the Outer Isles less attractive to incomers, makes it difficult to foresee any significant change.

In the far North, we visited Orkney a number of times after the authorities' scandalous treatment of four families wrongly accused of child abuse -- as the subsequent judicial inquiry established -- and visited Caithness and Shetland Friends several times in the course of these journeys. But the development of our contacts in the Western Isles left us with inadequate energy for both areas. Similarly, at one time we were visiting Fort William Friends for a few years after we were asked to visit an inquirer there, who has since joined the Society but is now working in England. Local Friends have now joined with some of the Argyll Friends to form Appin and Lorne Meeting. Over the last ten or twelve years several more Friends have moved to live on Skye, and of course are scattered over the island, though most are on the east side. We began to travel via Uig on Skye to get to Harris and Lewis on our annual trips, rather than via Ullapool, and this made it easier to visit Margaret Free in Melvaig (ten miles north of Gairloch) and an inquirer in Lochcarron village. At first we were calling on Jo Fox on West Skye and Ruth and Carel Goodheir in Portree; Jo Fox would arrange one of

her meetings for worship in her home, so that we could meet other members, attenders and inquirers. However, attendance fluctuated greatly.

Nevertheless, more people on Skye began to ask us to include them in our annual visits, and about two and a half years ago there seemed to be the makings of a regular Quaker meeting for worship, despite the scattered distribution of interested people. Two or three Friends and Attenders in the north of the island decided -- despite strong ties with local churches -- to meet for worship monthly, and Ruth Goodheir, who took an art group in Portree drop-in centre, was able to arrange for its use. The response was strong, and now Skye Meeting Friends meet in the new (and very attractive) drop-in centre once a month, and -- after Jo Fox voiced a concern for Friends in south Skye -- a smaller group also meets in Breakish village hall near Broadford a fortnight later.

The Meeting is now included in the GM Book of Members & Attenders, and recent attendances have been around twelve to fifteen in Portree and six to eight in Breakish. Attenders outnumber members on Skye by about five to three, but several Friends have not so far joined the new community, and a more realistic ratio would be about five to two. Neither group has quite stabilised yet, and no young families have joined in, but the prospects for Skye Meeting seem good -- more promising perhaps than those for Inverness.

The new Ullapool Meeting is perhaps the most remarkable. In early 2003 there were five members and one would-be attender on the northwest coast between Melvaig, Aultbea and Oldshoremore, whose nearest meetings were Inverness and Caithness. When, about eighteen months ago, Marcia Angel rang up from Ullapool and asked where there was a Quaker meeting for worship with a Sunday School which she and her family could attend, it seemed impossible to meet her needs, especially as they have no car (and there are no bus services on Sundays). However, it did not seem impossible to Marcia, and through her gentle persistence, and with the help of David Sanders, who lives on Harris but uses the Ullapool ferry, a meeting for worship has been held in Marcia and Ian's home on a week day every month in 2003, which

we were able to attend, and in the Community Centre on Sundays in 2004. The members' experience, strengthened further when Helen Steven and Ellen Moxley moved into the area, has given the small Meeting an excellent start, and two local inquirers have recently attended. The appearance of these new worshipping groups on Skye and in Ullapool has been very heartening. We have continued to join Skye Friends in Breakish once a month, but hope later on to get occasionally to other gatherings of Friends and Attenders who are still on the Inverness Meeting list -- they have not been forgotten!

This report was given to General Meeting in June 2004

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## **Disability Equality**

**Hilary Davies**

Over the last 18 months, Friends in Scotland may have become aware of increasing attention being paid to the way in which people with disabilities need to be more fully included in all aspects of the life of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. This requires more focus on the support needs of individual disabled people as well as encouraging each person to make their full contribution to Quaker life, rather than occupying the role of passive bystander.

In March 2005, a Minute from West Scotland Monthly Meeting focusing on the need for inclusion of disabled people, was discussed at Meeting for Sufferings. Minute 8a of 5th March 2005 from Sufferings was then sent to Central Committees asking that attention be given to this concern and to Woodbrooke Trustees for information; in order that a further Sufferings discussion may draw on the experiences and understanding of F/friends throughout the Society, those present were also asked to take it back to their own meetings. The discussion is to take place at Meeting for Sufferings in February.

Have your Monthly Meeting and Local Meeting given time to this concern?

Perhaps you were able to take part in the Workshop at Residential



Yearly Meeting in York where a group of F/friends met to reflect on the experiences of people with disabilities within Britain Yearly Meeting. Thoughts and feelings were shared openly by disabled and not disabled F/friends. It became clear that changes are needed if people with disabilities are to be equally involved in the life of Quakers in Britain. There was a shared understanding that the Testimony to Equality requires of us a greater consideration of the inclusion of those who have disabilities. Those outside the Society need to experience the Religious Society of Friends as informed about, and valuing of, people with disabilities.

One outcome of the meeting was a decision to set up an Internet or email group, focusing on experiences of disabled people in the Society of Friends, where F/friends can share their concerns and offer support to each other. Work is under way to identify how to carry this forward. To find out more, contact Margaret Boland at [m.a.b.boland@btinternet.com](mailto:m.a.b.boland@btinternet.com)  
Can you help with this work?

A very small group in West Scotland Monthly Meeting is working to give a focus to this concern and to steer towards future developments which may enable Quakers in Britain to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. At this point, members of the Group are in touch with Friends' House staff and staff at Woodbrooke to discuss issues affecting disabled people. The Group would be interested to hear from others in General Meeting for Scotland who are actively involved in this concern or who would like to become so. The Group is aware that the experiences of visually impaired people are strongly represented in its discussions but the voice of other disabled F/friends is missing. If you are able to contribute to the diversity of knowledge and experience from which this work can grow, the West Scotland Group would be delighted to be in touch with you.

Contact Margaret Boland or  
Liz Anderton on 0141 955 0053  
Or Hilary Davies on 01786 821 210.

On behalf of Friends I attended a one-day conference in September 2005 devoted to 'God's vision for the Church of Scotland in the 21st century'. It was organised by the Panel on Review and Reform, which was anxious to profit from any insights that might be forthcoming from other denominations. Of course the attendance was largely from the Church of Scotland, and a lively and enterprising crowd they were. Quite apart from the ecumenical component, there was equally a concern to learn from modern social science, and one of the two main speakers was Alan Harpham, a director of Modem, a company that applies group dynamics to the service of the church. He rather dazzled us with diagrams, but clearly the message was that churches needed to make the fullest possible use of all its members, not just the clergy. Here one might suppose that Friends could have a real contribution to make, and the contribution surfaced in a way that might have startled Alastair Heron. Alastair, as most of us know, is worried about our having lots of attenders who do not become members. The same phenomenon afflicts the Church of Scotland: people nowadays are apt not to join things. I remarked in the small group discussion to which I was assigned that in our meeting for a number of tasks we didn't pay much attention to whether people were members or not. This was mentioned in a subsequent plenary, and was apparently felt to be an Interesting Insight. Don't fuss too much about people signing on the dotted line.

The other main speaker was Alison Elliot, in 2004-5 Moderator of the General Assembly. She spoke about leadership, contrasting the founder of the Iona Community, George MacLeod, with the present leader, Kathy Galloway. He was a leader in the traditional mode, a big man in every sense, leading from the front. Kathy's preoccupation was rather with keeping in touch with every part of the Community, so that she knew where it could make its most effective impact. I suppose leadership is bound to be a concern where ministers and clergy play a crucial role, but I felt that Friends had something to learn here too.

In my small group I suggested that an important part of the Church of Scotland's usefulness was that it was emphatically an establishment organisation, thoroughly respectable. The rest of the group were not

very keen on this, but I think it is true. When a Moderator turns up at an anti-Trident demonstration at Faslane it makes much more impression than it would if the Clerk of General Meeting did the same. Which brings me to my final point: that the day made me conscious of a genuine sense of common purpose that unites Friends with the other churches. Some Friends believe that it isn't honest for us to imply that we accept the substance of creeds when many of us don't find traditional Christian language at all congenial. For myself I find language of any kind inadequate to express my faith. What I do know is that over many years I have been trying to undermine the culture of war that prevails in our civilisation, and that somehow my fellow-underminers have tended to be Christians of one kind or another. Just coincidence, perhaps.

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## **An Experience in Dialogue**

**Margot Tennyson**

“When we consider with what feelings you must have come here, a place where under the Fascist regime you have been humbled, you have been persecuted and forced to leave your homeland where the suffering of your families and friends took place and for many had a terrible end. Hesitation and hope unite in this meeting to which we have invited you. An invitation which, in spite of many understandable doubts, you have accepted. We are concerned that we may not find the right tone, that we may misunderstand each other, that you might sometimes find us not sensitive enough and that old wounds will be torn open. We hope that you will recognise how much we welcome you, that you will feel and experience our goodwill, and how ashamed we are about the things that happened after 1933. We accept what our Bundespräsident Richard von Weizsäcker formulated when he said that 'Reconciliation without memory is not possible.' We don't therefore want to repress all those terrible things that happened, but we shall do everything in our power to prevent a repetition. Work of sorrow can only be successful when we meet each other and walk along a shared path. I would be very happy if you could already, after this first meeting, have the

impression that a dialogue with us over the next few days will be worthwhile.”

These words came from the heart of the mayor of Moenchengladbach and went straight to the heart of the 162 Jewish visitors who once were citizens of this town. They had come from all corners of the globe and each had brought a companion, usually the husband or wife, and several came with their children. My invitation had come to me in a strange way via the QPS Peace Committee, and when I was first shown the letter I was not sure whether I wanted to go. I had been back to Germany several times over the 50 years I have lived in England but, in the end, my total commitment to dialogue and meeting people gave me no choice. I had to go and was delighted when my daughter Ros wanted to come too. And now I am back home I know that the experience has been important for both of us. Naturally we met only the people of goodwill, just as the Germans met only those Jews who wanted a dialogue; otherwise they would not have come. The townspeople had done everything in their power to ensure participation of as many people as possible in this venture. On arrival at our hotel rooms, we each found flowers donated by local florists, cards of welcome painted by the children of the local schools, and a bag with two volumes of a remarkable document produced by a local lawyer, under concern, of the history of the Jews in Moenchengladbach from Roman times, donated by the town. So far I have only studied the bits that relate to my family and friends. It was quite overwhelming to find documented here the exact details of my parents during the war, myself and my friends. It was painful reading most of the time but also strangely healing because we were, so to speak, recognised as individuals and sorrow was expressed for what had happened. Even the local, internationally-known, football club offered free tickets to anyone who wanted to come, the new art gallery would not take any money from us for the entrance fee. Most of all we appreciated and were moved by the way the local school children had got involved. Many of us went to speak to the local schools, and I went to the 'gymnasium' in my own village and talked to a class of 17-year old girls and boys about my experiences. There was a general feeling amongst those of us who undertook this task that the parents had not really told their children what had taken

place. After a great deal of thought and heart-searching I came to the conclusion that I would have found it impossible to burden my teenage children with all the facts of the holocaust. These were just too frightful and could become an intolerable burden to the young, who, after all, had not been born when it happened. There has been a tremendous input over the last few years in telling the young these appalling facts. I began to be concerned about the whole question of collective guilt, in which I do not believe. When I asked the youngsters to whom I spoke, they admitted that they had had a lot of repetition of these events in their history and political lessons. I expressed my concern to the headmaster and class teacher and the hope that the time had come when one should concentrate more on mutual understanding. As yet there does not seem much teaching material available on that level, and I am sending some from here.

One of the evenings we spent in the protestant church for a concert: a Jewish cantor was singing, and a group of young men sang Gregorian chants. The cantor had come from some distance for this concert, and his voice was something very special. He started with Psalm 121: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth....." At the end he invited us in the packed church to join him in a chorus of "Hallelujah". While doing so we experienced an extraordinary sense of joy, a joy that was won through sorrow, and there was a great sense of unity among us. I don't think that any of us who were there will ever forget this experience.

(Originally written for Hampstead Meeting Newsletter )

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### **Book Search**

Sandy Gilchrist, of Tweeddale Meeting (01899-221 350) is trying to locate copies of the following books to purchase second-hand. If you are dispersing your library, please give him a ring.

William Marwick - Short History of Friends in Scotland.

Burnet - Story of Quakerism in Scotland

Richard Allen - "Yours in Friendship"

## **General Meeting for Scotland - Glasgow, 25-27.11. 2005**

**Alison Burnley**

At our annual residential meeting for Friends in Scotland, we heard from three people from three world faiths: Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. All three commented that they only had twenty minutes but they still managed to give us an over view, at the same time going into some depth when describing their own feelings. They had already given us a sheet with some basic information which was informative and helpful. Interestingly some of us had met both Ravinder Kaur Nijjar and Diane Wolfson on other occasions.

Javed Ali knew Friends well enough to say that he hoped that it was alright to call us Christians! Diane Wolfson said at the outset of her talk that she had always wanted to thank Friends for the help they gave to the Jewish people during the holocaust and this was her first opportunity.

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar spoke of the time that Guru Nanak lived in the Punjab, 1469, and how it was a time of tyranny and repression, with a strict caste system and how he turned the whole thing upside down and said everyone was equal. There were moments during her talk when we all felt like saying 'yes!' as many of the principles of Sikhism are also an important part of Friends beliefs.

Javed Ali pointed out that it is often necessary to separate religion from culture. It is also important to remember that only 15% of Muslims are arab. The Qur'an is not meant to be read; it is for recitation to a tune.

The true Qur'an is written in classical Arabic - other translations or commentaries are only interpretations. All three of our speakers spoke of the importance of their holy writings which give guidance, advice, and spiritual insights. Dietary laws are simple but made complicated by living in Britain - however they do not allow themselves to be hampered by this and take their own food along (not an unknown practice among Friends!). Food labelling is now clear for vegetarians and for Kosher food.

For Diane Wolfson the lighting of the candles at sunset at the start of the Sabbath is a very special time; the next 24 hours are for her a spiritual day, and she feels transformed. (If one lives where the sun does not set it has been decreed that you live by Jerusalem time.)

All three of our visitors made it clear that we are all responsible for our own actions and behaviour; that we should look after our neighbour; be kind; and serve God and humanity. Only in Sikhism is every one equal; in Islam and Judaism people are equal but different. We warmed to the saying in Islam "what comes from the lips reaches the ears; what comes from the heart reaches the heart". Javed Ali also told us that the Qur'an needs to be interpreted to those of us who do not understand. Those who do understand see it as a map, as an astronomer or traveller does the stars. They all spoke of the blessings of the times of prayer that keep them centred on God.

Ravinder has the words 'wonderful God' going through her head all day. They all spoke of the importance of teaching their children and helping them to achieve what I suppose we might call grace.

It was a day for understanding and listening and understanding others and others' ways. We all responded to different aspects of these three faiths but I hope we can all develop our understanding. We also as members of General Meeting for Scotland had some business to do, which we managed at the beginning and end of the two days. Nominations and appointments are an important function as we try to work closely with the other churches in Scotland and with the Scottish Parliament. Christine Davis brought us up to date on the Stewardship committee of the Yearly Meeting. This was complicated and we paid close attention as it will be a major item at Yearly Meeting in May. This committee is working really hard and we all should thank them for their labours.

We also had an instructive morning with Alec Spencer from the Scottish Prison Service, hearing how they are trying to get real worth out of their budget, as well as provide care and rehabilitation for prisoners while in prison and prepare them for release. Too many people in prison come from backgrounds with poor education, bad housing, drugs in the family, other family members in prison, and not many employment options. If things in prisons are to change these are matters which need to be addressed. It is a matter for society as a whole. Alec Spencer was not, I think, surprised at the level of questions after his talk!

To round off the weekend I went to hear some lovely music from India - a perfect ending to a good General Meeting.

# GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Edinburgh 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006 11am

'Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do?' - Advices and Queries 37

'If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands'. Advices and Queries 38

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

A Guid New Year to you all!

We start the first GM of 2006 with a new theme - 'Living Our Testimonies Today' and begin by exploring our testimony to Truth and Integrity. This has a special significance for Quakers and the media and we have asked Eudora Pascall, Media Relations Officer based in Friends House, to lead our afternoon session. The topic will be timely and useful as GM has just set up its own media working group to bring suggestions and proposals on how to take the matter forward in dealing with media issues in Scotland.

Business matters include hearing an update on matters concerning children and young people in our Society and in the Scottish political scene; the tabular statement (do figures matter?); our Treasurer's Report and Accounts; and more on GM website matters. Quite a varied agenda but we must not forget the social side to our meeting. I would like to meet with as many as possible so please come to meet me and others to -----

Hear about our Quaker work

Make decisions on how we do things

Uphold our Quaker business method

Be involved in inreach, outreach and learning

Meet other interesting people

Be encouraged and encourage others

Be refreshed (and enjoy GM tea! )

Please let the Assistant Clerk, John Melling, know of any attenders who intend being with us, for recording purposes.

Pamala McDougall, Clerk.

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