

wsqn

- connecting local meetings



August 2022

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Front Cover

Travelling around the Borders and seeing the devastation caused by forestry, it was wonderful to see the blazes of purple from the Rosebay Willowherb – also one of the first plants to recolonise the wasteland of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Gerald Winstanley

from Fire in the Bush 1649

But when the imagination is fed upon, and delighted in, as it is this day amongst most people; this is he that puts all out of order, he corrupts the five senses and makes mankind walk disorderly.

While mankind lives out of himself, feeding his imaginary fancy upon outward perishing objects, then the creating Spirit, and the living spirit are at variance and opposition.

James Nayler

From Love to the Lost 1656

. . . his eye and his ear being led out to carnal things . . . the serpent being above upon the earth, catcheth the thing into the imaginations . . . he beguiles and so keeps the creature in itself, that he regards not the seed of God.

And all you who are gone out in anything from Christ the true pattern and example, you are gone into the imaginations of men and so are become servants of men, and out of God, herein.

This is taken from Stuart Masters' course on the Theology of James Nayler. Here he is showing each is concerned with the world gone wrong and how to fix it, and to distinguish between false faith and one alive and living.

Spiritual bondage: key is the sense that ' humans fell from a genuine Wisdom of God and Divine vision and understanding of all things and into their own notions and imaginations, their own limited perceptions of things which is in all sorts of ways inadequate . . . '

Stuart Masters will be running an on line course at Woodbrooke in the Autumn on the subject of James Nayler and the Diggers.

Report of West Scotland Area Meeting 6 June 2022

Gisela Creed, Glasgow

A smallish group (23) gathered by Zoom (including 4 attenders), representing all LMs apart from Lanark and Mull..

We began with a period of worship during which we heard part of 10.03 from QF&P. This describes how our Quaker community can grow by worshipping , caring ,sharing and working together.

Before I report on the highlights of this Area Meeting, I want to mention a number of routine matters which we dealt with :

1 Finance: We accepted the examined accounts for 2021 and agreed to allocate a budget of £250 to the work of the Gender Based Violence Group. Thank you to the hard working treasurer.

2 Reroofing of Glasgow Meeting House, we accepted the following recommendations from trustees: Reroofing to go ahead promptly , irrespective of whether the MH is retained or sold, in order to secure the value of the building as an asset. Glasgow property committee has been asked to obtain up to date quotes for the work , the following funds would be available :

15k Glasgow property fund ,10k AM building reserves, 56k Glasgow Meeting House development fund (Jenny Auld and Jean Laurie legacies) ,

3 The timetable for final discernment of the future of Glasgow Meeting House was confirmed, culminating in Glasgow Local Meeting on the 26th of June and an Area Meeting on the 23rd of July, both meetings to be clerked by Phil Lucas from SEAM.

4 Wigtown Meeting House: Friends in Wigtown are considering the sustainability of their meeting and would like to operate more simply by shedding some of the administrative burdens, as part of this they would like to investigate the implications of selling their meeting house. Trustees support this start of a courageous journey and have asked for a small group of trustees and a Wigtown Friend to seek advice from 2-3 estate agents on sale of the meeting house and report back in due course. Area Meeting agrees to this approach and wishes Wigtown well in their considerations.

5 Membership: an application was received from Laura McMurtrie who has so far only ever attended Ayrshire Meeting by zoom, she lives in Somerset. We welcomed Laura, who was present at our meeting, and appointed Peter Christie and one other (to be confirmed) as visitors to support Laura through this time and report back in due course.

6 Nominations: we particularly noted the high number of vacancies for overseers in Glasgow and discussed briefly the structural and personnel problems of finding friends who are willing and able to take on these roles.

Now for the highlights:

1 We heard a really encouraging, interesting report from **Willoughby Densham about his experience at Junior Yearly Meeting** in April 22. The event was packed with thought provoking presentations and workshops covering topics such as exploring privilege with Helen Minnis, climate justice, Quaker prison chaplaincy and the revision of QF&P. There were lots of fun activities to choose from culminating in the “Trashion Show” where rubbish was turned into style! Read the full report, attached to AM minutes.

2 Andrew Tomlinson , the Parliamentary Engagement Office, gave us an enthusiastic and promising report about the intense work of the PEWG and their priorities :

The climate emergency
Economic Justice
Peace Education

I think, I was not alone to feel a deep sense of gratitude to Andrew and the working group for taking on these tasks so effectively and representing Quaker views successfully in the corridors of power. Later in the year GM will discern new priorities for the advocacy work of the parliamentary engagement working party and all Quakers are invited to contribute to the process. Andrew very much welcomes contacts from interested individuals at andrewt@quaker.org.uk

3 AM finished with Friends **sharing some of their experiences from the recent BYM**, held for the first time as a blended meeting, with around 400 attending in person and many more on Zoom. For many of us the highlights had been Helen Minnis’ Swarthmore lecture, a riveting and hopeful action provoking presentation. We also mentioned some of the moving and thought provoking ministry during the worship and business sessions and finally resolving, based on our decision of becoming an anti-racist organisation, to look at ways to make meaningful reparations for our failings .

Special AM to discuss the future of Glasgow Meeting House 23 July Daphne Wassermann, Clerk to Glasgow LM

Special meetings were held by Local Meeting in June and by Area Meeting in July. It was agreed to continue in the present building for ten years unless extraordinary circumstances arise. This allows us to plan ahead for maintenance and building improvements as well as developing our activities and spiritual life.

Area Meeting minuted the following.

“Glasgow Local Meeting’s minute refers to its wish to remain in the present building for the next ten years and to devote its energies to four key tasks:

1. realizing our core mission,
2. building the fellowship of our community,
3. planning the maintenance and development of the present building and
4. funding the expenditure involved.

Area Meeting trustees hope that, within the next twelve months, clear and practical planning for the way forward may be identified.

We accept the Local Meeting’s minute and ask it to work closely with AM trustees to:

- a) define in detail the implications of its vision;
- b) identify a plan which will demonstrate ways of making its use of the present meeting house sustainable over the ten year period it has named, in line with this vision and
- c) present its plan to this Area Meeting by January 2023.”

At our subsequent Local Meeting for Business on 7 August we agreed to lay down the Meeting House Development Group which has worked for many years to discern our vision for the Meeting and its building.

Property Committee is moving forward with building work to replace the roof, carry out ongoing maintenance and explore ways of improving the fabric of the building.

We will appoint a small group, including a Trustee, to develop a strategic plan based on our vision. This group will co-ordinate closely with Property Committee and other Local Meeting groups and committees.

Our vision will inform our fundraising. As the building is owned by the Area Meeting and the existing Funding Group is an Area Meeting appointment we ask Area Meeting to set up a funding-raising group with a separate bank account.

Other activities

As well as our regular Meetings for Worship on Sundays and Wednesday we have other activities.

Time for Stillness is now weekly on Tuesdays at 8am.

Experiment with Light on Wednesday afternoons, and the Young Friends Epilogue on Wednesday evenings continue. Other groups meet for worship or discussion on-line.

With regard to social witness, the Climate Café continues to meet about monthly. Friends help with weeding the Labyrinth in Maryhill on the first Saturday of each month and a litter picking session was held.

Our children meet every Sunday although it is a very small group. Teenagers attended Shindig.

Report on Meeting for Sufferings 2 July 2022

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

Meeting for Sufferings is the representative body for Quakers in Britain, with members from each of the 70 Area Meetings, and also some other bodies like General Meeting for Scotland. The minutes from this meeting in others can be found on the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) website (<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>), and detailed reports are given in *The Friend* (8 and 15 July).

This was a full meeting, ranging over much of what affects Quakers today. To sum it up, it was about taking stock. Where are we being led and how do we respond to the demands of where and how we are in modern society? It was helpful to be able to vocalise and share on the topics that came under this question.

We began with a presentation from Grace Da Costa, public affairs and media manager for BYM, arising from the concerns that led to the recent forming of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group. Her article in the Friend (<https://thefriend.org/article/creeping-authoritarianism-grace-da-costa-makes-the-case-for-resistance>) reflected the unease felt by many of us at the direction of politics and governance in Britain. 'Creeping authoritarianism' was the phrase used. Much of Quaker work at UK level has been to try to influence Bills going through the UK Parliament – like the Police Crime, Sentencing and Court Bill – by reflecting the insights from our testimonies. This emphasis on Faith in Action, was complemented by other staff explaining to us the framework used by BYM for Speaking Out which enables our work to reach a wider audience. They gave us a greater understanding of the communications strategy and its workings. You can read their presentation in the Sufferings papers with the minutes.

We in Scotland have started to grapple with potentially radical change in the way we are organised in our structures, like in area meetings, which has been difficult for many of us to grapple with. Hence it was interesting to hear about

emerging patterns for area meetings in London and Wales & the Marches. We are all facing considerable problems in finding Friends to serve in roles, work within the changing demographics of a mainly ageing membership and so on. Quakerism could die as an organised Society unless we adapt to fit the times we live in, and other areas of Britain are ahead of us in this. This sharing of experience gives us more confidence to think about what we need and how to provide it without exhausting ourselves in trying to run things.

In afternoon we reflected together on the Yearly Meeting held in May this year, particularly on what Meeting for Sufferings needs to do as result of minutes made by YM. We began the discussion of what were the implications of the idea of making reparations from the effects of the Atlantic slave trade. There will be more on this as we grapple with the idea. We also heard from our Trustees on all the 'nuts and bolts' they do on our behalf. Part of this was about the deepening relationship with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre as the 'learning arm' of the Society. We are fostering the relationship with Woodbrooke to provide learning for us all, even as the future of the Woodbrooke site is uncertain. After some further routine items, we turned to the war in Ukraine. Oliver Robertson, as secretary of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, brought us up to date on how we can respond to the war, which tests our peace testimony. QPSW has a dedicated webpage on the BYM website to help us.

Thus a demanding day, but it showed how Meeting for Sufferings is the best body to respond to ongoing events rather than Yearly Meeting itself. That can't easily delve into detail or keep tabs on developments. This is why we have Meeting for Sufferings.

Faith

Mike Shilson, Mull & Iona

What is faith?

Faith is not a thing that can be bought in a shop

Faith is not a noun ~ It's a verb.

Faith is "faith-ing." It's an activity. It's a function.

And the function goes like this:

"I open myself up to the central intelligence of the universe, so that I might live for the purpose for which I was made."

So, it's an attitude of surrender that seeks to be in truth

Of letting go of how I would like the world to be, and asking the Spirit:

"How do you want me to understand you?"

Our Faith in the Future

In 2015 Meetings for Sufferings approved *Our faith in the future* which aimed to paint a picture of what Quakers in Britain seek in a future where we let our lives speak.

It offers a simple and clear point of reference to consult. Enabling us as individuals or meetings to discern and decide what actions we can take to support the Society to achieve this vision.

For more details of the six themes go to:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future#heading-1>

Currently many parts of the Society are being reviewed; Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, the Book of Discipline, the committee structure of Britain Yearly Meeting, and several Area Meetings and General Meeting for Scotland are considering their form to ensure our structures are fit for the future and support us towards this vision.

All this work is grounded in the primary purpose of the Religious Society of Friends, to provide the opportunity for members, attenders and enquirers to gather together for Worship in loving, inclusive communities. Communities that understand and live by our Quaker discipline of waiting for, and following God's guidance, seeking '*What love requires of us*'. It is from this discipline that ...we may then be led into action individually or working with others. Sharing our insight and experience of action based on spiritual guidance not on personal or political viewpoints.

I hope as we move forward with any changes we are led to implement, that they engage, excite, and energise us all to be '*patterns and examples*' so that the name and purpose of Quakers continues to be known and respected.

Kate Gulliver, Ayrshire

Quaker Week 24th September – 2nd October.

JYM 2022 Report for West of Scotland Area Meeting Willoughby Densham

Between the 9th and 12th of April 2022; I attended Junior Yearly Meeting at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. We met for four days with a theme of: "Compassionate listening and spiritual engagement: How can we strengthen our faith community to make space for action?". In total there was 53 participants with 11 adult volunteers. This was my first JYM and it felt well planned and thought through by both the arrangements committee and adult volunteers.

Each day began with morning worship after breakfast. Most of our time was spent in base groups where we discussed the talks as well as performed activities and games. Even mealtimes provoked discussion as many of us were joined around the table by guests, speakers or workshop leaders including Carolyn Haymans, Martin Wall and Suze Lidbury.

We were treated to a session with Helen Minnis of Glasgow meeting who had been tasked with the Swarthmore lecture in 2022. She explored privilege and how it affects people differently as well as discussing stereotypes. Workshops were also held later in the weekend by: Teresa Parker, Ellis Brooks, Hannah Larn, James McCarthy, Paul Parker, and Olivia Hanks, which either discussed the theme directly or an important issue of the moment such as climate justice. I attended the workshop about climate reparations where we read previous stories of reparations to people and if they were adequate or insufficient. Here I learned that a major gain of money or land can still not replace the loss of lives and devastation that could have occurred. We also learnt about the impact of the climate crisis in rural Africa and The Solomon Islands. This led us to discuss suitable reparations for them.

I also attended two optional sessions where I learnt about Quaker prison chaplaincy as well as the revision of our book of discipline. These were extremely eye opening as we learnt of the help provided in prisons by Quakers and the important and difficult task for renewing our book of Quaker faith and practice to present us in the modern day and improving accessibility for all users.

On one day we also had activities of our choice which included: climbing, arts and crafts, aerial adventure, archery, and kayaking. I took part in climbing where extreme human feats were performed driven only by the need to beat the other quaker (a rare moment of competitiveness in Quakerism). Another notable event was the Easter Egg Eggstravaganza in which the aim was to be the most average team. A team as good as us struggled with the mediocre task of being average.

The highlight of the entertainment was the Trashion Show where rubbish became style. From gigantic towers anointing heads and dresses from binbags to cardboard boxes on noses and ears, fashion was reinvented that night.

Many young people would agree with me that the greatest thing about the event is the accepting atmosphere which resulted in everyone feeling comfortable and respected and was a nice break from hectic life of exams and work. I met many new people and fostered new friendships while strengthening current ones.

We held a Meeting for Business (my first) in which we discussed: how as Quakers can we transform thought into action? As a consensus we felt that to act we may often need to streamline the Quaker business process to take the action needed that is important. However, we also felt we must not jump into action without taking time to listen. We felt it was important to support those who required it and to reach the root cause of a problem rather than dealing with what it has caused.

At the event I learned that it is important to strive to deal with the root cause of an issue and pull it out rather than tearing at the leaves of the weed which will just grow back. It was felt that as Quakers we hold a strong position that can advocate for change, and we realised that many do not have this privilege. Therefore, we felt it important to support those who are oppressed and cannot speak their stories so easily as well as listening to the opposition to learn from them and understand everyone's beliefs.

Overall, the event strengthened our view of our faith, and highlighted that we must listen to others to educate ourselves and understand, even if the truth is hard to hear. We felt that we must act on our decisions and not waste more time as we have held many discussions on current issues but feel it has resulted in little action, while also realising change is an ongoing process that must continue to improve our society.

General Meeting See articles below in the Scottish Friend
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Calling for General Meeting for Scotland Elizabeth Allen, GM Clerk Report of the General Meeting for Scotland in June Jill Tutton, ESAM
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From other churches

<i>Report</i> - United Free Church of Scotland Women's Home and Overseas Committee Ladies Day Stella Cranwell, Perth LM

<i>Report</i> - Representative Spring Synod: Methodist Church Kate Arnot, SEAM
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<i>Report</i> from General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Elizabeth Allen and Mary Woodward .

<i>Report</i> - Scottish Episcopal Church General Synod Mary Woodward, SEAM

Taking positive action with our money

I have just taken part in a 4 week online programme 'Taking Positive Action with our Money' through Woodbrooke, with a tutor from ECCR (*The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility*). The aim of the course was to learn, discuss and reflect on how to connect our values and our financial decisions, to shape a fairer, more sustainable world.

My interest in this course stemmed from conversations in our Climate Cafe meetings when I realised how much my pension fund was investing in fossil fuels on my behalf.

In our first week we looked at our own values and attitudes towards money and explored how our financial decisions impact on the world around us.

In week 2 we considered where we keep our money in banks and saving accounts and I was relieved to know that my current account with Nationwide does not invest in fossil fuels but I need to take action on my John Lewis credit card, either to change or ask them to divest.

We then looked at where and what we spend money on and what sort of carbon footprint we make. Retailers and manufacturers are aware that many consumers are thinking about ethical issues when making purchases but getting to the truth about their claims is not always easy.

In week 3 we learnt about pensions and investments. This included finding out about different approaches to ethical investment including divestment, engagement and impact investing. Once I started to look at savings and investment companies I had used I noticed how the language of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) was being used in their literature. But we need to beware of 'greenwashing' and to look a little deeper before deciding where to save or invest our savings or pension.

In our final week we identified practical steps we had taken and planned to take in the future. Writing this article was one of them.

This was the first time Woodbrooke had run this course and I would thoroughly recommend it to individuals or Meetings, it works well online.

There were many useful links during the course here are a few:

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility <https://www.eccr.org.uk/>
Money Makes Change <https://www.eccr.org.uk/blog/are-you-banking-on-a-better-world/>

Ethical Consumer <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>

Good with Money <https://good-with-money.com/>

Good Money Week 3-7 October <https://www.goodmoneyweek.com/>

So
How
Does
Our
Spirituality
Meet
The
World
Today?

Community in Earthly Treasury

Alastair

McIntosh

In his magnificent book, *The World Turned Upside Down* first published in 1972 and now in Penguin, the historian Christopher Hill describes the 17th century English Revolution through the eyes of the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and early Quakers. It's a complex story as England began the revolutionary transition from monarchy to partial democracy. It might speak today to those whose spiritual life leads them into social awareness, or vice versa.

The Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and early Quakers found in early translations of the Bible a liberation theology – a theology that liberates theology – filled with what a theologian has called “texts that linger, words that explode”. For all its antiquated but poetic language, it therefore rather delights me to see a copy of the Geneva Bible sometimes knocking around on the benches of our Glasgow Quaker Meeting House.

Liberation theology expresses God's “preferential option for the poor”. As Pope Francis puts it in his great ecological encyclical, *Laudato Si* (158):

“In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and *a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.*”

After all, in Luke 4 Jesus had proclaimed his mission statement as being to bring good news to the poor, comfort to the broken-hearted, sight to the blind, liberty to the prisoners and the oppressed, and “to preach the acceptable year of the lord”. That phrase means the Jubilee, the periodic cancelling of debts to iron out accumulated economic inequalities, and redistribution of the land, because land is life and central to God's providence.

The Levellers were for equal rights for all. The Diggers reclaimed land robbed from the common people as the Enclosures took hold (and later, in Scotland, we could add the Lowland and the Highland Clearances). James Naylor was a Ranter-come-Quaker

who got so high on the Holy Spirit that to shut him up they bored his tongue through with a red-hot iron, and branded “B” for blasphemer on his forehead.

And us, today? In in the face of fuel poverty, kleptocracy, democratic deficit and blatant political cruelty? “What canst thou say?” Here are some words drawn from *A Watch-Word to the City of London* (1649), written by Gerard Winstanley who may have become a Quaker:

“All men have stood for freedom ... and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it Freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he hath enemies... True freedom lies in the community in spirit and community in the earthly treasury, and this is Christ ... spread abroad in the creation, restoring all things unto himself.”

The Cailleach of Ferry Wood

Ed Tyler, Argyll

I’m writing this as spring slides into summer, nearing the longest day. The wood fills me with awe. It’s mostly oaks and they’ve sent out big flappy clusters of pumped-up leaves. Great nodding pom-poms burst out of tiny scaley buds. Every May I fret about them: will they get torn off by cold storm winds, or dry out so that they suffer from mildew? Now it’s June and neither of these things has happened, so I can rest easy.

Each year is different. It’s the sixth year since Carina and I became “stewards” of it.

“Buying it” sounds wrong, “owning it” even worse, as does the word “it”- better “they”. “Stewardship” sounds almost as bad. The best way I can describe it is to express some of the feelings I have towards the wood:

I have a strong sense of reciprocity. I receive so much from the wood – it nurtures and heals, relaxes, gives me joy, feelings of abundance and wild entangled complexity, mystery, beauty...the list goes on. I hope that I give something back in return, that I journey through the wood with an open heart, with curiosity, with a sense of wonder at all its incredible creatures.

I know all this comes with the privileges that come with ownership. Carina and I can freely wander through the wood without being at all anxious, for were it somewhere else we might be worried about bumping into the owner or their family, or a gamekeeper. The wood is surrounded by an estate, and this estate is largely owned by one family.

If anyone presides over the wood, it’s the Cailleach, the crone of Celtic mythology. The Goddess in the third aspect of the feminine archetype: virgin,

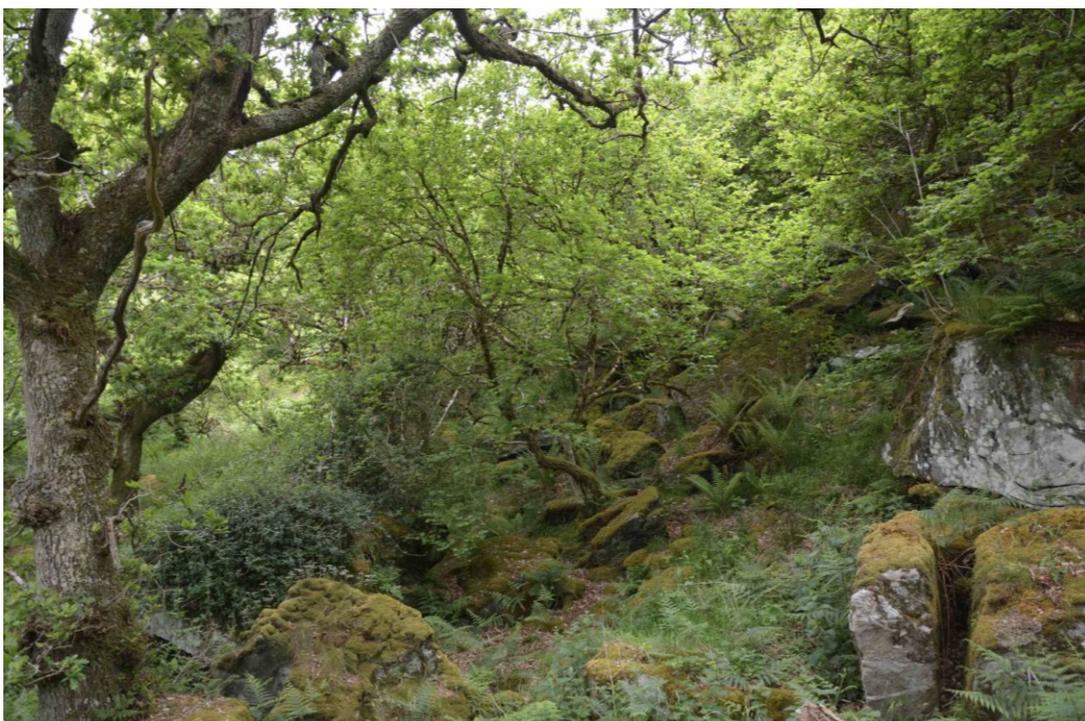
mother and crone. Thanks to my 1:25,000 OS map there is a feature within the wood called Creag na Cailleach (pronounced “Calleach”) – Crag of the Cailleach, referring, I think, to a rocky ridge visible from the sea, which at one point becomes more than a rocky slope, turning into a proper cliff face. The Cailleach can fly, so this is a good place for her to take off.

Her partner is the Bodach, and a few miles to the north there’s an old farm-toun named after him. I sing in the local Gaelic choir and some of our songs feature both the Cailleach and the Bodach. By singing I feel we’re summoning them in some way. In our own limited but hopeful way we’re keeping Gaelic traditions and myths alive. I honour the Gaels’ ancient, earth-based wisdom.

You only have to walk through the wood with an open heart to feel the shadowy presence of the ancient Celtic beings, who were once regularly sung, told, charmed and summoned into existence by a community of believers.

I chose Quakers because I know that my fellow Quakers are happy for me to follow this path. The Celtic way has become my way thanks to my inhabiting the Gaeltacht – the region of Scotland where Gaelic was once commonly spoken, where it was once the main language.

I’ll finish with a Celtic story. In winter the Cailleach rules, but every spring she is defeated by Breej, the young woman, who has been captured by the Cailleach and forced into being her servant. But she turns the tables and casts her Green Mantle across the land, causing the oaks to come into leaf, and all the other trees too (birches, rowans, willow, gean, cherry), and causes plants like the primrose and bluebell and ransoms to bloom, and the insects, frogs and toads to metamorphose into strange new flying, jumping beings. Including, of course, the midge!



The patio area is awash, or should that be 'abuzz', with solitary bees. Not that they seem very solitary, given their density. They are quite fascinating to watch and, I am told by the local beekeeping society, are very unlikely to swarm. So we walk among them, going about our various garden tasks. They are an annual feature of our garden, appearing as if by magic and then, just as suddenly, they all disappear one morning. But for the time they are with us, this is as much their garden as it is ours. As it is the garden of many other species of bees; a delightful myriad of insects; birds of all complexions (including, very thrillingly given they are still establishing their numbers in Scotland, nuthatches); and at least one squirrel. It is increasingly said that if you provide the right conditions - suitable plants and food, and places to live (including longer lawns, which also sequester carbon) - 'they' will arrive and thrive. And they have! It is an enormous pleasure, a joy, to witness - and to know that in our little corner we are managing to sustain those to whom this planet equally belongs. **Sarah Jones,**

A Ripple Effect

Mike Shilson, Mull & Iona

When "things" seem immense, it's awesome to realise the ocean is made of single raindrops.

When we created the community orchard in Dervaig on the Isle of Mull, I didn't envision the lovely ripple effect it would have on children in an Edinburgh primary school.

The community orchard with over 150 fruit trees and soft fruit bushes, was formed on a bracken covered area within walking distance from Dervaig village and its primary school; on land that was a former rubbish tip belonging to Forest Land Scotland (previously called Forestry Commission).

The vision was to create a "re-creational space" ~ a refuge to nourish both the body and the mind.

It has been a great success, particularly during Covid, as it has been a safe hub for the community.

But what's this to do with a primary school in Edinburgh?

Each of the fruit trees in the orchard is adopted by members of the community; some trees are in memory of a loved one.

A primary teacher, who works in Edinburgh, liked the idea and created a similar garden at her school where children could plant a tree in memory of someone they miss ~like a divorced parent.

She said "it's very moving to see children quietly sitting in front of their tree, or talking to it."

Volunteering at Brodick Castle Park, Isle of Arran

Connecting with the Spirit of Nature. Helen McLean, Arran

Just before 'Lockdown' I joined the team of Volunteers, assisting the Park Rangers, at Brodick Castle Park. Luckily, towards the end of the Pandemic, we were allowed to work outside again in the fresh air which was a blessing.

I started as a Volunteer three years ago, working on the pathways and forestry surrounding the castle, working in the fresh air and being part of a team seemed the right path to take.

We're called the 'HOT team' – 'Healthy Outdoors Team' which consists of 12 volunteers from the age of 45 up to 80 years old. We work once a week all year round, clearing overgrown vegetation, paths and ditches, keeping the woodlands and surrounding areas clear and manageable. Once in a while, we have been known to take down the odd tree on its last legs, so to speak or trees that aren't indigenous to the island. We often say, how lucky we are working with nature which is an amazing experience and so rewarding.

One of the many things I enjoy about being part of the HOT team, apart from sharing a common interest is the camaraderie which is incredibly motivating and uplifting.

Confession time - I love trees and am not immune to hugging them. It may not be rational, but when I'm near one of these quiet giants, I feel like they are kin—ancient grandparents, or at least benevolent witnesses of history and time.

Sometimes, while working in the various areas, especially in the woods, I feel a spiritual connection with nature and I give thanks to the 'Light' for the opportunity of the experience. Watching the yearly cycle of plant life that keeps on giving is amazing; the small insects going about their business, the birds singing in the trees, the branches dancing in the breeze, shaking off the morning dew that glistens in the sunlight and if we were lucky, we see the odd red squirrel busily going about its morning business.

In a logical and busy world, when we don't have time to think let alone feel, to connect with the spirit of nature, whether we believe they actually exist or not, can help us evaluate who we are and which path we're on, reminding us of our place and priorities, it can be a powerful and vital tonic.

I've learnt such a lot of being part of a team working on the land and in the forest, nature also enjoys the benefits from our labour as we clear shrubs and choking roots, making space for future growth. I look forward to many more years of such beneficial work and being part of the 'HOT' team.

Thoughts from ferns

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow



I'm edging my way up a very steep slope on my hands and knees, reaching a ledge and edging along it to a rock face. Quite a long way down to the loch below! There is a satisfying 'ah ha!' from those in front of me and as I take my turn, I look at a small plant sitting contentedly in a damp crevice. It is the alpine woodsia. We are in Perthshire, up a cliff, a not

uncommon consequence of being in the British Pteridological Society (BPS). Pteridophytes (Greek for 'feathery plants') are the ferns and their allies, and it is a hobby of mine to search for them and get to know them. I meant to do mosses when I retired, but a friend of a friend was in the BPS and invited me along, and I found it a congenial way of operating and stayed. (I also found two others from Glasgow Meeting in it! Quakers, you can't get away from them!).

Alpine woodsia is a very rare fern left over from the end of the ice age and restricted to a few nutrient rich rocks in the Highlands and Snowdonia. You are unlikely to find it unless you are shown it. Here we found twelve plants in one its most successful locations. The BPS monitors the plant's distribution and so we know how it fares over time and how changes in climate and land management affect it. No plants are taken, but in some cases, spores are obtained to grow a reserve population in pots at Edinburgh Botanic Garden.

Ferns are a fascinating group of plants. They were the first group to adapt to life on land by inventing tissue that could conduct water and nutrients (like our blood) and so grow taller than the ground-hugging mosses. Grow tall they and their allies did, forming the coal-forests of the Carboniferous. I've got some fossils in my study. Then they had to re-invent themselves after the seed-bearing and flowering plants evolved with more efficient ways of adapting to the environment. Ferns didn't die out but took opportunities that remained. Bracken, the most ubiquitous fern, is an example of this success, being found in all continents other than Antarctica and highly successful in competing with flowering plants.

I took photographs of alpine woodsia, aware that this might be trophy hunting. I have also learned to look more. Have you noticed when visiting a place on holiday that you take photograph of something notable but actually never look

at it after you bag the picture? So after the picture was taken, I resolutely stop and look. What a beautiful plant, with its veins in the leaves and reaching for the sun. This is an individual organism like us. Similarly, taking time to appreciate where you are as you eat lunch perched on your cliff gives allows a sense of time and space.

Hence I find my interest is also an aid to spiritual practice. Basically, it helps me develop awareness by finding a sense of the immense time they have existed and how they respond to the environment in which they live. Also an appreciation of how amazing they are, which you get by looking. Part of the spiritual learning is to recognise that in myself that can use what I look for as a way of 'getting' – an obsessional need to find and possess. I've been there. I'm reminded of Isaiah, berating us a bit:

You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them. (Isaiah 6:9-10).

Tact may not have been Isaiah's strong point, but to me what he is saying is that we need to use our inward eye and ear (regardless of having working eyes and ears) to become aware in a way that gives a sense of unity with creation and understanding of our own part in it. We can live our lives blocking this out. Not all of us have ready opportunities to develop this: life can be tough and what I am saying may be a woke luxury, but I feel there is something deep here, that we have to go through the barriers in our lives somehow to reach that sense of oneness and outwardness. There is a constant refrain from those who have gone before: live in a way that harnesses the spirit. Part of that is developing what earlier Quakers called the discipline: listening (seeing), waiting, understanding so we become aware of the deepness all around us. Perhaps others can relate their own experience of this in future articles to help us.



Quaker Concerns

Climate Change

A quick summary of the Conversation from the Climate Cafe, 17th July:

- Climate change is accelerating faster than previously thought, and it's already having devastating effects.
- There's no safe level of global warming. We've already warmed by 1.1 degrees and we're at risk of triggering feedback loops. Every tenth of a degree of global warming is dangerous and puts the world at greater risk.
- To give ourselves the best chance, we need to stop, and reverse global warming.
- The lion's share of emissions reductions must occur this decade.
- Scotland and the UK need to cut our greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, race to net-zero emissions by 2045, and then keep drawing carbon out of our atmosphere.
- We need action from all levels of society, but without government-level action this will be incredibly hard, if not impossible.
- Government will act on their plan when we create the social climate that allows *and demands* action.
 - We can each help create this social climate by:
 - Engaging our MSPs and MPs,
 - Standing up to private interests,
 - And having conversations with people who are concerned, but not yet committed, to bring them on board.

If you're ready to get started, there are some great tips for having effective conversations with people about climate change in C4C Australia's [Climate Conversation Guide](#) - an excellent resource!

Contacting your MSP / MP: Thank you for pledging to contact your local MSP/MP. The best thing people can do to get focused on an issue is to make a lot of 'noise' - let's get your MSP/MP working for you!

[Here is an excellent website](#) where you will find contact details for your local MSP, MP and councillors.

Further resources include:

Scottish Parliament guidelines on [Issues your MSP can help you with](#)

Friends of the Earth's guide on [How to lobby your MSP](#)

RSPB's guide on [Contacting your MSP to help nature and the climate](#)

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland's guide on [Meeting with your MSP](#)

The Climate Coalition's guide on [Writing to your MP about Climate Change](#)
Campaign against Climate Change tips on [Influencing your MP on Climate Change](#)

Hubbub's template for [Writing to your MP](#)

Here are 2 powerful messages you can take to your local representatives ([source](#)):

To your MSP: The Scottish Government must tighten up plans to meet 2030 targets with a focus on decarbonising homes, transport and industry. Chris Sark says 'we haven't seen those kinds of policies'.

And to your MP: The Scottish and the UK government need to cooperate on carbon capture and storage and the UK government needs to stop supporting new oil fields.

If you are interested in hosting an **MSP / MP Engagement Group**, please email c4c@scottishcommunitiescan.org.au. We will support you in getting started. An MSP Engagement Group provides an easy, effective and fun way to take democratic action while being supported by others. You can also [check out C4C Australia's resources here](#).

Monthly newsletter: I've signed you up to our mailing list - you should now receive SCCAN's monthly newsletter, which will keep you up to date with all the latest community climate action news, events, consultations and all that SCCAN is doing!

You can follow us on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Youtube](#). You will find relevant articles, consultations, events and ideas.

In case you didn't get around to it at the Conversation, here's the link to **become a SCCAN member**: <https://www.scottishcommunitiescan.org.uk/join-us/>. We're a network of community groups and individuals all across Scotland tackling climate change. Membership is free.

Climate café

The Glasgow Quaker Climate Cafe will continue on Thursday 15 September, in person from 5.30 in Elizabeth Fry for a light snack and catchup, and in the Meeting Room and on Zoom from 6.30 till 8.00.

On 15th September, the guest speaker, will be Chris Carus of Loco Home Retrofit. This is a co-operative pioneering a community-based approach to home energy decarbonisation. Cutting home energy emissions is one of the biggest challenges we face.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83544021477?pwd=LzI2ZHdJeGNvZTNic1lVbURUR9MUT09> Meeting ID: 835 4402 1477 Passcode: 349969

From Friends Journal, and extracted from A Hard Conversation about Humankind

May 1, 2022

By The Population Working Group of Quaker Earthcare Witness

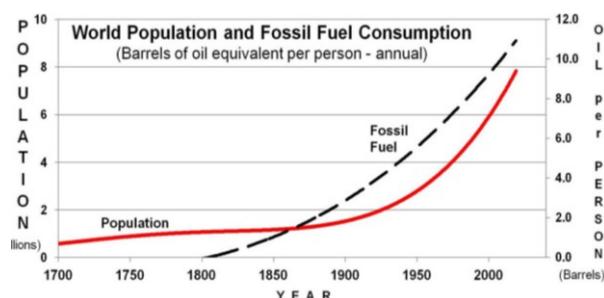
For most of us, it's been very difficult to wrap our arms around the real drivers of our environmental crises. Might that be because we are an integral part of these drivers? Is this the classic elephant in the room? Are humans the elephant? If we look deeply into our Quaker mirror, we may well see that the answer is clearly yes to all three questions. The real drivers of the crises are population and consumption (affluence). So, yes, there are really two elephants, and we are in the picture! But these issues are truly immense, well beyond the scale of elephants. How could so many of us possibly continue to ignore them?

The Population Working Group of Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) comprises Quakers dedicated to understanding human population dynamics and the interaction with planetary ecosystems. We have a deep concern that humankind is out of sync with the earth and no longer sees it, senses it, or values it as our home. Fossil fuel is one of those resources found to be very convenient for the building of our global civilization. As our numbers have increased, our uses of fossil fuels have dramatically expanded and are threatening not only our human civilization but also the non-human populations on Earth. . . .

Environmental scientists and scholars who point out the danger of overpopulation do so for two key reasons. The first is that this is causing ecocide and the extinction of life on Earth. The second is that the first reason is likely to lead to famine and war, and the major loss of human population.

As Friends, we have a fundamental commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict. And we need to see the coming struggle over Earth's resources as a call for our action. The QEW trifold "Friends Witness on Population" provides useful insights, encouragement, and more direction. . . .

See the lengthy debate and statistical analysis in the actual article.



Well before critical awareness of the population level needed for sustainability arises, universal access to a range of safe and effective contraceptive options and family planning services needs to become available. The UK-based group Population Matters notes that "Empowering women is the most effective way to reduce fertility rates and achieve a sustainable population size that respects the limits of Earth's carrying capacity." Educating girls and securing women's rights to high-quality family planning would be the most powerful combined solution to climate change. The QEW trifold "Empowering

Women: The Link to Population” is a great resource on these issues. It is estimated that the world faces a \$5.3 billion funding shortfall for providing the access to reproductive healthcare that women say they want. The QEW program “Quaker PopOffsets” offers people a means of offsetting their carbon emissions by helping fund voluntary family planning and education for those who currently may not be able to access them.

What Leadership Opportunity Do We Have as Quakers?

As Friends, can we sense the calling to a new understanding of our role as humans on this earth to find an equitable, sustainable balance with the environment and to accept a leadership role in the change process? Quakers found their role in opposing slavery and then again in opposition to war. Environmental crises and justice for Earth’s human and non-human populations are now facing us with a new challenge. And like slavery, we must admit our role in creating the problem as we assume our role in meeting the challenge.

Youth are raising their voices and demanding progress toward saving the earth for both them and their children. QEW is a leading voice for ecological sustainability and environmental justice in the Friends community. And Quakers have an established international credibility for fairness, objectivity, and moral leadership. That foundation will allow us to raise our voice in a larger conversation with other religious and equity-focused organizations that are also recognizing the gravity of environmental concerns but have yet to adequately acknowledge the population dimension. This is how and where we as Friends can individually and collectively start to make the larger changes that are needed.

10 Actions Friends Can Take

1. Contribute to family planning and girls education through the PopOffsets program of Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW).
2. Support organizations providing empowerment of women and reproductive health services, such as Planned Parenthood.
3. Support organizations getting the message out, such as Population Connection and Population Media Center.
4. Learn about population at the interactive Data Query website of the United Nations Population Division.
5. Support those who choose to have only one or no children, adoption, community living with shared child-rearing, or celibacy.
6. Ask your Congresspersons to provide adequate funding for family planning services to the millions of women worldwide who lack access.
7. Join the Population Working Group of QEW and support QEW’s efforts and publications on population.
8. Discuss these matters with your family, friends, and colleagues.
9. Invite a member of the Population Working Group to speak at your quarterly or yearly meeting.
10. Read online materials about human population (e.g. Population Connection resources).

Gender-based Violence

WHY SHOULD THE CHURCHES SUPPORT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROJECTS AS A PRIORITY?

Misogyny arises from a patriarchal culture that devalues women.

A patriarchal economic system is about growth and development, creating wealth that then creates a hierarchy of status and value, with women at the bottom and indeed often regarded as property. It is essentially an exploitative culture of people and the Earth.

Judeo-Christian culture is the basic support of this system in our society so any change must start there.

Further, the role of the church in setting the mores and norms of our culture is a major player in setting attitudes. This is well recognised in African churches that support Side-by-Side – e.g.. Kenya and Ghana in campaigning against FGM. Domestic Violence is one of the forms this takes in our society which has greatly increased during lockdown

Christian teaching in both the Old and New Testaments emphasises the need to support the ‘widows and orphans’.

NEWS

Side-by-Side for gender justice will this year see 6-8 ‘churches’ in Scotland (that includes your gender-based violence concern of WSAM) working towards a joint effect to highlight this year’s UN 16 days action on Violence against Women.

Our group highlighted the 15th August as the anniversary of the Taliban taking over Kabul and asked all members to pray/hold in the light the women of Afghanistan.

Our work on the trans issue and women has been put on hold whilst we seek to be better informed. See *Wendy Reynold’s review of The Transgender Issue, An argument for Justice by Shon Faye.*

We are collecting a register of organisations involved in gender –based violence issues with hope to bring them together to do further work.

We approached QCCIR after the addressed General Meeting in June. We were concerned that their priorities were race and climate change, and begged them to look at women’s issues too.



Women in Red Hats. Are older women becoming increasingly isolated and ignored? We have examples of older Asian women, who often do not speak English being discarded in widowhood – see the work of the Well in South Glasgow. In India they congregate at one particular temple where they pray in payment of a bowl of rice and 2 Rupees. The younger widows often end up as second wives, or worse. What happens in our own culture?

Women in Red Hats –you’ll have heard the poem by Jenny Joseph

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.
But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.
But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.



On Benmore Garden facebook page there were two funny old women peering at a tree – lichen spotting, you know. All cares to the wind, lurking. *What interesting specimens. It's a xxxxx (Was Margaret paying attention there?) Soldiers in red hats marching up the tree. And ther'another, and another. That one is justna moss. Lichens aren't green. What's next on the map? Funny map. Left or is it right. What's that nedy bit? Can't find 7 but up and up. Jings how high – my legs are wobbly. And those steps down to the ferney. Got a parachute?*

Next outing on 1st September to Hill House in Helensburgh. More civilized for older women. 11ish.

Women's spirituality is a difficult issue. Thoughts of witchcraft or darker things to do with wombs and blood and the mysteries of life! Is it fear that fuels misogyny?



Watercolor, gouache, graphite, colored pencil, and collage on Arches paper. © Liz Darling 2014.

Grandmother Isabelle Meawasige
24 June at 21:47

Today is indeed, a day of mourning. We stand in solidarity with our sisters to the south of that colonial border, knowing that what is done to one woman, is done to all of us. Gichi Miigwetch to Liz Darling Art for sharing this powerful poem and art piece.

Please do check out their page and support their work.

And considering the rows in USA over abortion, the following poem may have some significance.

Right To Life

By Marge Piercy

A woman is not a basket you place
your buns in to keep them warm.
Not a brood hen you can slip duck eggs
under.
Not the purse holding the coins of your
descendants till you spend them in wars.
Not a bank where your genes gather
interest
and interesting mutations in the tainted
rain, any more than you are.
You plant corn and you harvest
it to eat or sell.
You put the lamb in the pasture to fatten
and haul it in to butcher for chops.
You slice the mountain in two for a road
and gouge the high plains
for coal and the waters run muddy for
miles and years.
Fish die
but you do not call them yours
unless you wished to eat them.
Now you legislate mineral rights in a
woman.
You lay claim to her pastures for grazing,
fields for growing babies
like iceberg lettuce.
You value children so dearly
that none ever go hungry,
none weep with no one to tend them
when mothers work,
none lack fresh fruit,
none chew lead or
cough to death
and your
orphanages are empty.
Every noon the best restaurants
serve poor children steaks.
At this moment
at nine o'clock
a partera is performing a table top
abortion
on an unwed mother in Texas
who can't get Medicaid any longer.
In five days she will die of tetanus

and her little daughter will cry
and be taken away.
Next door a husband and wife
are sticking pins in the son
they did not want.
They will explain
for hours how wicked he is,
how he wants discipline.
We are all born of woman,
in the rose of the womb
we suckled our mother's blood
and every baby born has a right to love
like a seedling to sun.
Every baby born unloved, unwanted,
is a bill that will come due in twenty years
with interest,
an anger that must find a target,
a pain that will beget pain.
A decade downstream
a child screams,
a woman falls,
a synagogue is torched,
a firing squad is summoned,
a button is pushed
and the world burns.
I will choose what enters me,
what becomes of my flesh.
Without choice,
no politics,
no ethics lives.
I am not your cornfield,
not your uranium mine,
not your calf for fattening,
not your cow for milking.
You may not use me as your factory.
Priests and legislators
do not hold shares
in my womb or my mind.
This is my body.
If I give it to you
I want it back.
My life
is a non-negotiable demand.

"and you will be like God"

Film Reviews

Coming out of COVID includes many are looking again at their relationship to Nature. The media, not to forget David Attenborough, have presented us with excellent nature films. Some go a bit beyond. Here are two films to challenge and educate.

SHAPING SCOTLAND'S LANDSCAPE BBC Scotland

Five programmes. Here I refer to the second.

Geology Professor Iain Stewart calls the Highland landscape DEAD and goes on to explain it is not a balanced ecosystem. How did it get like this? He goes back in history – sheep and the Clearances come into it of course. Changing land use has had varying effects – sheep, forestry, deer parks. Land ownership, as large tracts in the hands of the few, has increased our alienation and distance. The beautiful vistas of Victorian artists, and the Tourist Board, are unnatural. Like a good geologist he builds up the layers of destruction. It has been going on for a long time.

But he also goes on to talk of the movements that turned the tide, or are turning it, the mountaineering clubs, the rambling movement after the war, the Crofting Act. And of course he mentions the example of Eigg where local folks reclaimed their land.

I found the extent of the degradation hard to bear. He recommends work by Fraser Darling to look at renewal and environmental stewardship.

RIVER on BBC I player

Lasting one hour with a text written by Robert MacFarlane this is a spiritual experience. The wonderful photography follows a river from its upland source all the way to the mouth and its junction with the sea.

The music keeps pace with the rhythms of the river. You can feel yourself merging with the rushing waters and swaying with the eddies.

Robert MacFarlane asks some very pertinent questions of how we see the river, and often how we do not see it in some of its stages. How do rivers fit into our urbanized life? Where is their place in our economy? These are deep searching questions but we are not encouraged to intellectualise. This is a journey we share, or are allowed to share with the river. Does the river care? It is ephemeral and just flows on. But how does this reflect our own life and our place in Nature?

Unfortunately, when I last looked, I could not find the film on Iplayer. Do persevere. It is worth searching for.

CND Cymru

10 August at 22:48 ·

****When the Wind Blows****

Tributes have come in to mark the death of author and illustrator Raymond Briggs. In addition to creating the Christmas classic, The Snowman, he is perhaps best known in CND circles for creating the haunting parable about nuclear apocalypse - When the Wind Blows. BFI takes a look at the graphic novel and the subsequent film adaptation on its website.

<https://cnduk.us12.list-manage.com/track/click...>

Based on Raymond Briggs' graphic novel, the 1980s animated classic When the Wind Blows is one of the most powerful depictions of nuclear armageddon ever made. Why does it continue to hit so hard?



22 January 2018

By **Neil Mitchell**

When the Wind Blows (1986)

As a youngster growing up in the 1980s in a tiny village in the heart of the Cotswolds, I can attest to the fact that no part of the country, however remote and bucolic, was impervious to the threat of the Cold War escalating into a full-blown nuclear conflict. Regular news reports and documentaries reminded us, seemingly daily, of the potential for catastrophic political meltdown and the apocalyptic horrors that would unleash. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) became ever more vocal and visible, and popular culture was awash with nuclear war-themed films, comic strips, songs and novels.

Among these, the anarchic post-apocalyptic world inhabited by Judge Dredd in the weekly comic 2000AD, **Mick Jackson**'s utterly terrifying

1984 TV docudrama **Threads** and Frankie Goes to Hollywood's chart-topping pop classic 'Two Tribes' all had an impact on my raw emotions and impressionable young mind. And then there was **Jimmy T. Murakami**'s animated version of **Raymond Briggs' When the Wind Blows**.



First published in 1982 as a graphic novel, and subsequently dramatised both for the stage and a BBC Radio 4 play (featuring the voices of Peter Sallis and Brenda Bruce)

before Murakami's version, Briggs' tale of nuclear war as experienced by loveable elderly couple Jim and Hilda Bloggs is an unforgettable experience in all of its mediums. Briggs was initially inspired after watching a chilling Panorama documentary entitled *If the Bomb Drops*, which exposed the shortcomings in British civil defence spending and preparation. *When the Wind Blows* (1986)

Adapted for the big screen by Briggs himself, Murakami and his extensive technical crew employed a striking combination of hand-drawn and stop-motion animation to warmly and then devastatingly bring to life Briggs' characters, the numerous fantasy/dream sequences and the soon-to-be nuclear-ravaged, picture-postcard surroundings of the Sussex countryside. To accompany the heart-breaking imagery and dialogue, **Roger Waters** and the Bleeding Heart Band conjured up as atmospheric and haunting a score as would be expected of an erstwhile member of Pink Floyd.

For any viewers who had experienced Martin Rosen's captivating yet emotionally gut-wrenching animated adaptations of Richard Adams' *Watership Down* (1978) and *The Plague Dogs* (1982) and somehow still laboured under the misconception that British animated films were just for kids, **When the Wind Blows** would be the final nail in the coffin.

Unbearably grim, stark in its outcome and stridently anti-war in its message, *When the Wind Blows* is made all the more powerful because of the intimate, beautifully realised portrayal of Jim and Hilda's loving relationship and quiet life. The isolated, rural world of Jim and Hilda (voiced by veteran British stars John Mills and **Peggy Ashcroft**) is one of plates of sausages and chips, radio plays and proudly tended cabbage patches. Working class, gentle and devoted to each other, the retired couple also naively believe in the wisdom of the powers-that-be; "Ours is not to reason why" as Jim informs Hilda, in a screenplay that's at times pointedly satirical.

The couple are fruitlessly nostalgic for the Blitz spirit of the Second World War, convinced the government-issued Protect and Survive pamphlets are worth the paper they're printed on, and blindly under the



assumption that there can be a winner in a nuclear war. These sweet, unassuming retirees represent an ailing, rose-tinted worldview and way of life that's woefully unprepared for the magnitude of devastation wrought by the bomb. When it finally drops, Jim's typically British and succinct reaction is "Blimey".

Book Review:

The Trans-gender Issue, an argument for justice by Shon Faye

Wendy Reynolds, Argyll

Written by a trans woman with a strong commitment to feminism and trans rights, this book explores the many facets of trans history and the trans gender experience.

She is a skilled writer with strongly held opinions and, in this thoroughly researched book she extensively covers these issues.

This is a dense information filled book that requires time to read and digest and its scope it difficult to cover in limited words.

Trans people have clearly been unjustly treated by society and the medical establishment. For example for a trans woman to be offered transition, either with the NHS or privately, she must demonstrate to the clinicians that she is 'feminine' and more 'feminine' than many if not most older cis women.

Faye explores lived experiences of some exemplar trans women, trans health care and transitioning, class issues around gender, the sex industry, the responses of the state and law and transsexuality in the feminist movement.

This is a comprehensive and well written book although a little dense at times and well worth reading. As it is written exclusively from the view point of a trans woman, it ignores or minimalizes the confusion of many and the often irrational fears that some cis women have when they feel that trans women enter women-only spaces. This book should go some way to ameliorating these fears.

James Lovelock died 26th July aged 103.

He is well remembered as the instigator of the Gaia phenomenon to explain the Earth as a self-regulating system, like a living organism. Today it is the standard way of thinking about the environment.

He was brought up in a Quaker Meeting and attributes his Quaker background as helping him to 'see a bigger picture'.

Important concepts like God and Gaia are not comprehensible in the limited space of our conscious minds, but they do have meaning in that inner part of our minds that is the seat of intuition. . Perhaps this is why early Quakers knew that the still small voice within does not come from conscious reckoning.

See *The Revenge of Gaia* and also his more detailed obituary in The Friend 12th August 2022.

ACTION / EVENTS

Quakers join calls for closure of Gaza to end after 15 years of collective punishment

Sixteen UK charities including Quakers in Britain, CAFOD and Christian Aid are asking the UK Government to take urgent action to end the blockade of Gaza.

IYM 2022 PUBLIC LECTURE

AUGUST 16, 2022 QUAKERS in IRELAND

'Embodying the Quaker Testimonies in Service of a Living Planet: The Challenge of Asking Beautiful Questions' was the title of this year's public lecture, which took place on 12th August during Ireland Yearly Meeting 2022 at Stranmillis College, Belfast .

Quaker illustrator, editor and environmental consultant, Lynn Finnegan, delivered an inspiring and challenging lecture on the topic.

She encouraged us to be guided by the divine Inner Light and the Quaker Testimonies of peace, justice, truth, equality and simplicity, which she described as anchors to live by.

Lynn challenged us to each find our own way to love the Earth, reminding us that faith and action nourish each other.

She also asked us to consider whether surrendering ourselves to the way of Love might, perhaps, be our spiritual gift to the environmental movement.

A Climate of Insecurity for COP27- African Women Raising Their Voices for Feminist Climate Justice

30 August - 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Join us for this online event in the lead up to the UN Climate Conference (COP27) to take place from 6-18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

This webinar "A Climate of Insecurity for COP27-African women raising their voices for feminist climate justice," invites you to listen to feminist activists and women human rights defenders' lived experiences of the impacts of the climate crisis on the African continent. Panelists will share why the climate crisis is a feminist issue, and how it affects and compounds other challenges in their region. From Zimbabwe to Cameroon, from Ghana to South Africa, speakers will shed light on the interlinkages between the climate crisis, gender, and issues such as conflict, food security, and livelihoods. With COP27 taking place on the African continent, and droughts, wildfires, flooding, and soaring temperatures accelerating in their countries, panelists will share key demands for COP27 to effectively address the

climate crisis and alleviate the worst impacts on the African continent.

Date and time: **30 August, 7 PM CEST/6PM WAT/1PM EDT**

Languages: English, French, Arabic

Co-moderators: Tamara Lorincz, WILPF Canada and Katrin Geyer, WILPF International Secretariat

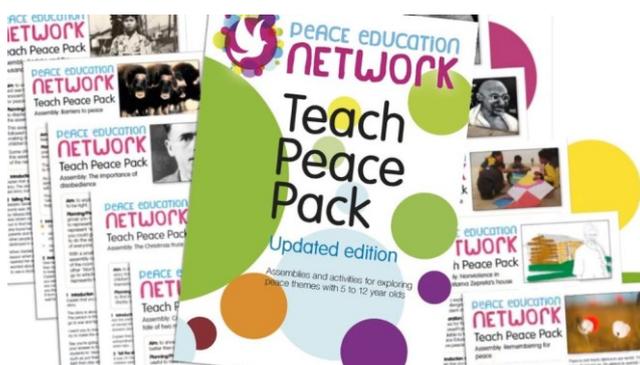
Opening remarks: Sylvie Ndongmo, WILPF International President

Panelists: Aubine Zambou, WILPF Cameroon, Mpiwa Mangwi, WILPF South Africa, Ayo Ayoola-Amale, WILPF Ghana, Edwick Madzimure, WILPF Zimbabwe

Register: <https://bit.ly/3AmO4AJ>

Peace Education teaching pack awarded major prize

A Peace Education Network teaching pack, designed and produced by Quakers in Britain, has been chosen by teachers for a major award.



Teach Peace Pack, photo credit: Quakers in Britain

Quakers, who co-chair the Peace Education Network with Pax Christi, were inspired to create the Teach for Peace resource by a Quaker grandmother, Celia Davies.

Celia was concerned that the expansion of combined cadet forces, and the increasing role of the armed forces and arms companies in education, left no room for peace at her granddaughter's school.

Designed for primary school students, the pack offers 10 comprehensive assemblies, follow-up activities and resources that make the case for peace.

The popular pack, which has been revised and reprinted several times and is available in Welsh and English, is a top five resource in the inaugural Global Dimension Awards 2022. A secondary version is due to be completed soon.

Reboot the Future, an organisation which works with a network of 17,000 educators for a more sustainable and compassionate world, hosts the resources on their Global Dimension hub.

Other meetings for worship

Youngish Friends' fortnightly epilogues are continuing by Zoom on Wednesdays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81286554225?pwd=ay9GNVg5Z0JmTThocjkxc0R2dVlaUT09>

Meeting ID: 812 8655 4225

Passcode: 972888

Further information from Leilani Rabemananjara. leilanirabemananjara@gmail.com

Early Sunday Meeting for Worship on Zoom:

Seeking a deeper connection with the Divine in silence.

Some of us will join in worship on the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.45 for 10am. The half hour session will still allow those minded to attend their own Meetings at 11am.

We hope to create a space for those who want to explore the relationship with the God of their hearts. Contact Margaret Roy for further information

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7613798296?pwd=enZDWS9iRHNHUIIZR2dBb3N2YjBoZz09>

Meeting ID 761 379 8296

Passcode EwLWed

Sunday evening Area Meeting for Worship

The meeting is open from 7.15pm to give time to say hello and settle in, the worship starts at 7.30pm for half an hour after which there is time for chat.

Details are circulated weekly.

If anyone has any difficulties please call Kate Gulliver on her mobile 07596 725387.

Friends Fellowship of Healing

5 September at 7.30

A Meeting for Worship for Healing is held 7.30pm to 8.30pm on the first Monday of each month.

Experiment with Light

Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm For further information margaret.roy@btinternet.com

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292595017?pwd=NWdORXY2WkJFU2NUakgrNThKVUR2UT09>

Meeting ID: 862 9259 5017

Passcode: 040620

Time for Stillness'

Tuesday 10th May we will be beginning ' - fortnightly periods of quiet reflection, in the Meeting House. From **8-8.30am** we welcome all to the Elizabeth Fry room for some morning stillness and reflection. And if you're lucky you may get a brew after!

It is for seasoned Friends, those dipping their toes into the Spirit and for the harried commuter. All are welcome. So please do come along and drop-by.

News from Local Meetings

Wigtown Meeting have, after a gap of over two years, resumed in-person Meetings in the Wigtown Meeting House. We have continued to take precautions by efficiently ventilating the Meeting Room and most Friends continue to wear masks for the time being. However, the long Covid period has seen a falling off of numbers attending. Some Friends are still unable to take part in in-person gatherings, mainly for medical reasons, while several attenders and one or two enquirers did not find the Zoom-enabled Meetings very satisfactory and dropped out of circulation despite the Clerk maintaining regular email contact. But we hope and expect to be able to rebuild the Meeting from this current low base. **Chris Baldry, Acting Clerk, Wigtown QM**

Dunblane Meeting for Worship is held at the Braeport Centre, a community centre run by Dunblane Development Trust. On 13 August there was an Open Day where all those who use the centre were invited to set up a stall. It was a warm sunny afternoon and we did not really expect many people to come specifically to find out about Quakers but we set up our stall, along with some 17 others, hoping that there might be some passing interest. The 'others' ranged from the Development Trust's appeal for funds for their renewable energy project *Help Braeport Go Green* and their Green Travel Map of Dunblane to courses run by Craft Central and jewellery for sale in aid of the Uphill Trust which funds the building of a primary school in Uganda.

We enjoyed the opportunity to chat to each other and to meet friends old and new. And indeed some people of all ages did stop and enquire about Quakers. Friends House had sent us some new leaflets, posters and booklets which adorned our stall and although we had some good conversations we did not manage to persuade folk to take many leaflets away! One exception was someone especially impressed by our testimony to equality and took a copy of *Advices and Queries* and another person liked that children are welcome, A number of those we spoke to were younger and the 'chatterbox' with information about Quakers (pictured) was attractive to youngsters. Overall we felt that it was time well spent.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8th October Area Meeting 11:30 am – 4 pm
5th December Area Meeting by video/telephone (7-9 pm).

We confirm the dates for the holding of Area Meeting in 2022 and January 2023, subject to the necessity of holding the meetings by Zoom rather than at these venues.. Some venues will be announced later.

10th September GENERAL MEETING 10.30 am

12th November GENERAL MEETING 10.30 am



Hold in the Light

Ann Rado, now living on Isle of Bute, who is 90 on 31st August

Mike Nellis just out of hospital after an emergency operation.

Maureen Anderton, alas back in hospital.

All those with COVID. There seems to be many at present.

West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions or the next issue of WSQN is 15th December 2022. And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not send in articles over 1000 words

Copy should be sent in Word format only to the editor Margaret Roy.