

## **TAYSIDE QUAKER**

Vol 35 No.10 December 2011 – January 2012



### **Meetings for Worship**

**Dundee Meeting House, Whitehall Crescent. Sundays at 11.00 am**

Children's Meeting, first Sunday of each month

Children's Contact: Clare South

Tel 01828 628643

**St Andrews Meeting House, 2 Howard Place. Sundays at 10.30 am**

Children's Meeting - each Sunday during school terms

Enquiries: Margaret Hannah. 01334 477929

**The Subud Centre, 7, St Leonard's Bank, Perth. 11.00 am**

Second and last Sundays. Children's Meeting by arrangement.

**Lethendy** on third Sunday

### **Angus**

Montrose Day Care Centre at **11.00 am** first, second and third Sundays

Lilac Cottage, Montrose at **11.00 am** on fourth Sundays

### **EAST OF SCOTLAND AREA MEETINGS IN 2012**

Sat 11 February, Dundee. 11.00 am

Sat 12 May, Angus. 11.00 am

Sat 18 August, St Andrews. 11.00 am

Sat 27 October, Perth. 11.00 am

### **GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND**

Sat. 3 March 2012 at 11.00 am in St Matthews Church Hall, Tay Street, Perth.

## Welcome, Friends.

This month TQ has been produced without an editor. Area Meeting has already thanked Constance – our long-serving editor – for her efforts over the years. Her hallmark remains in this issue with the seasonal graphic on the cover. A lot of readers have commented about how much they have appreciated Constance's editorials which have often been surprising, amusing – but always thought-provoking. Please continue to send your reflections to the new editor, Constance!

In October, Area Meeting appointed Claire Broadhurst of Dundee Meeting as our new editor, to serve for 12 months from 1 January 2012. We look forward to her first issue, due in February 2012, and hope she will stamp her own mark on *Tayside Quaker*. Please support her by sending her contributions.

The end of December sees two other departures of long-serving servants of ESAM. Alyson Buchan is stepping down as Co-clerk after giving unstinting service to Area meeting for many years. Pam Brunt, too, is relinquishing the role of Treasurer, which she has occupied for a long time. She will continue as Assistant Treasurer for a further year, while her successor, Len Goad, settles in as Area Meeting Treasurer. We thank Alyson and Pam for their tireless service.

### **East Scotland Area Meeting**

**Saturday 11 February 2012.**

**11.00 am – 4.00 pm.**

**Dundee Meeting House, 7 Whitehill Crescent, Dundee.**

Two major items of business follow up initial discussions at last Area meeting:

*Strengthening our Area Meetings  
Economic Justice and Sustainability*

(See related features elsewhere in this issue of *Tayside Quaker* and insert on sustainability)

In October we minuted that 'We do not do enough worshipping together'. With four Saturday meetings in 2012, we have the opportunity to spend more of our time together in worship. Please come and join us in Dundee.

Attendees are welcome at Area Meetings, but please let the Clerk or Assistant Clerk know in advance if you plan to be present.

**Clerk:** Philip Bryers. 01738 560250 [p.bryers@virginmedia.com](mailto:p.bryers@virginmedia.com)

**Asst. Clerk:** Margaret Berwick. 01382 330217. [varneyguard-loves@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:varneyguard-loves@yahoo.co.uk)

## **East Scotland Area Meeting: Sunday 30 October 2011**

### **Extracts from Minutes**

Meeting for Sufferings. 1 October 2011. Alistair Milner reported on the discussion about the Government's economic cuts and the possible responses which were suggested. Friends were encouraged to lobby their elected representatives.

He has also shared with us a series of questions about Area Meetings. The questions, and an accompanying paper from the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, are challenging. We agree to discuss them at the next Area Meeting.

Paul Parker's paper describes Area Meetings as 'communities of worship and support seeking the will of God and putting our faith into practice in testing times'. He stresses the important role of elders in strengthening the spiritual life of Area Meetings. We do not do enough worshipping together.

'Quaker nominations - Exploring good practice.' Woodbrooke. Senga Munro has reported on this conference, held on 24 – 26 October 2011. She found the spiritual depth of the event valuable and it helped her to deepen her Quaker faith. She has commended a book entitled '*Freeing the Spirit*' by Roy Stevenson (who led the conference). It contains many ideas on discernment. Those who took part in the event will keep in touch to share their experiences in the practice of nominations.

NFPB/QPSW/Woodbroke conference. 'Economic justice and the sustainable Global society'. Len Goad has reported on this conference held in London on 24 September 2011. The four speakers gave vivid examples of the parlous state of the world, as evidenced in financial chaos, global warming, and in many other spheres. Their presentations can be read in full on the BYM website. Jonathan Dale attempted to answer the question 'What can we do?' He urged us to put our resources of time and money into places which are 'more compatible with the Kingdom'.

In our discussion we have been reminded of the words of William Charles Braithwaite in 1919 (QFP 23.05) and also that by starting small big changes have been achieved in the past.

We have received a list of questions arising out of this conference which will be considered at a follow-up seminar at Woodbrooke on 4-6 November 2011, at which Cathy Kinnear will represent our Area Meeting.

We agree to brief Cathy on our comments on the questions and ask her to report on the seminar to our next meeting. We hope the conference might give us a sense of vision that there are alternatives. We will make time to give deep spiritual consideration to the issues raised at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011 and by this conference and seminar.

## **Meeting for Sufferings. 1 October 2011**

The weekend of 1 October was a very hot weekend in London. Fortunately Friends House air conditioning was working well!

We first considered government economic cuts, which was introduced by Catherine West, a Friend and the leader of Islington Council, and Michael Bartlett, Parliamentary Liaison Secretary. We heard many examples of the disproportionate impact of the proposed cuts on the poorer members of society. We minuted ways in which Friends could challenge this from the perspective of spiritual values, morality and social welfare, both in the political sphere and in local communities. We supported our Parliamentary Liaison Officer's lobbying of the House of Lords in respect of the Welfare Reform Bill. But remember the cuts are not yet as severe in Scotland as in England.

Secondly we discussed 'Strengthening our Area Meetings', and we were greatly helped by a paper produced by Paul Parker, Recording Clerk. This paper is included, in part, below. Our minute started with the following: "The purpose of area meetings is to build communities living under the guidance of the Spirit - worshipping together, supporting each other, testing concerns, being inclusive of attenders and visitors, and enjoying social time together."

We heard about some area meetings experiences of telephone conferencing and video conferencing. We challenged our area meetings with three questions:

- Are our area meetings clear about their purpose?
- Are they fit for purpose?
- What support and advice would meetings welcome to help change the things which need changing?

We received a paper entitled 'Membership of Meeting for Sufferings' following Yearly Meeting 2011. As from Yearly Meeting 2012, there will no longer be two representatives from each area meeting, but one, and area meetings are asked to appoint one representative and an alternate. This should mean each area meeting should always have a Friend in attendance. It was stressed that continuity and consistency in regular participation is important. It is intended that both the representative and alternate will receive all the papers.

Alistair Milner

## **Strengthening our Area Meetings**

**Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Britain Yearly Meeting.**

### The purpose of Area Meeting

- How clear is your Area Meeting about its purposes as defined in *Quaker Faith & Practice*?
- Does your Area Meeting spend a right proportion of its time on
  - testing and supporting concerns, and upholding Friends acting under concern,
  - referring wider concerns to Meeting for Sufferings when appropriate
  - managing membership matters including welcoming new Friends into membership and releasing Friends whose connection with Quakers has faded away, and ensuring records are accurate
  - encouraging and ensuring arrangements for eldership and oversight are in place?
  - ensuring the right holding of Meeting for Worship and Business Meeting across the Area Meeting
  - appointing, working with and supporting Area Meeting trustees and treasurers to ensure proper stewardship of resources: financial, human and property?

### The effectiveness of Area Meeting

- How good is your Area Meeting at its job?
  - How accessible are Area Meetings for Business - to older Friends, younger Friends, Friends in full-time employment, Friends with children?
  - Is your Area Meeting for Business well attended? Is it a 'must-attend event? Does your AM use agenda time creatively to allow the spirit to move?
  - Does the conduct of your Area Meeting for Business enable Friends to gain understanding and experience of the Quaker Business Method?
  - Does your AM use committees and trustees well to help it manage the volume of required business?
  - How aware are Friends in your Area Meeting of the work of Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, and of the centrally managed work?
  - Does your Area Meeting struggle to find suitable nominations? Is your AM the right size, or should it consider the adventurous step of

joining with another?

- Is your Area Meeting a true worshipping community? What would help foster this? Does your Area Meeting ever meet for purposes other than business?
- Are your Area Meeting, and its members, willing to shoulder responsibilities, or do they expect that 'someone else will do it'?

#### What support does your Area Meeting need to function well?

- Is your Area Meeting aware of the support it can draw on, and what types of support does it make use of to strengthen and nurture itself and its membership?
  - Support for treasurers and trustees from Quaker Stewardship Committee and Quaker Communications
  - Support for Elders and Overseers from Quaker Life
  - Support on property matters from Quaker Finance and Property
  - Support and ideas for Outreach from Quaker Life and organisations such as Quaker Quest
  - Support for archivists from Friends House Library
  - Guidance for Registering Officers and advice on church governance from the Recording Clerk's Office
  - Ideas and resources for work with Children and Young People from Quaker Life Children and Young People's Staff Team
  - Books and resources from the Quaker Bookshop in the Quaker Centre
  - Support for Local Initiatives from Quaker Peace and Social Witness
  - Training in Quaker roles available from Woodbrooke
  - Conferences and courses at Woodbrooke and other Quaker venues.

### **Strengthening our Area Meetings: Quaker Life Representative Council**

Meri Goad

A common purpose brought f/Friends together from across the length and breadth of Britain for a powerfully intense weekend at the Quaker Life Representative Council (QLRC) Meeting 28-30 Oct. 2011. A shared hope and time together on the beautiful Woodbrooke campus formed or strengthened bonds of friendship and inspired individuals with ideas and resolve with which to return to their local and area meetings.

The method we used to engage with the subject of 'Strengthening our Area Meetings' was Appreciative Inquiry (big 'I'): taking a good look at the situation in a positive light: being realistic meant avoiding Pollyanna (rose-tinted glasses) but also Eeyore (who wants to be a grump?) But 'I' also involves going further than

looking at our situation: it involves having a shared dream - the most important concept of the whole weekend for me. Having glimpsed what an AM (the community as well as the meeting) would look like in our dreams, we then investigate ways in which this, or parts of this, can be made reality. Amazingly, some of these steps can be very small and manageable!

I have four images impressed on my mind which encapsulate the essence of the weekend for me. The first image consists of gentle raindrops landing on the Woodbrooke pond. Concentric ripples spread across the surface, some large, some small but when they met, they passed through each other without disruption to the increasingly complex pattern. This reminded me of A.M.s across the country where many participants make up a beautiful pattern, working and growing in harmony together.

Another image is of giraffes made out of only newspaper and sellotape (don't ask!) but which were capable of supporting a glass (made out of glass, not plastic!) These fragile yet sustaining constructions encapsulated, for me, our vulnerability and our strength. In order to be strong together, we need to be able to trust each other sufficiently to allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Do we know each other well enough for that? **An individual who is deeply-rooted in their faith nourishes the life of a Meeting and is able to transform a community.** I learnt this weekend how much we rely on such nourishment from individuals.

Paul Parker, visiting QLRC from Friends' House, gave us a verbal image in the first few moments of his talk. He suggested that Friends were about to go 'Whoosh!' The facilitator of my house group later added, "Light the touch-paper and stand well back!" This, of course, is our vision. **I truly believe it is the spiritual discipline of individuals that will make Paul Parker's vision into a reality.**

The final image showed a vibrant A.M. through the medium of an abstract painting by Linda Mugatroyd. A few broken grey horizontal lines at the bottom of the picture spoke to me of a lot of hard work making up the bedrock of the Meeting, upon which light, golden bubbles rose upwards, expressing joy, laughter and togetherness in which everyone was participating. **One of the indicators of the life of a meeting is the warmth with which the members welcome each other and visitors. How interested in others do we prove to be?**

The house group of which I was a part had a dream - and that was that the Area Meeting community would share a dream! **Do we have a shared vision of where we are going?** We do not need to do the whole process at once but having a vision means going where the Light is and small steps (even sharing a dream together?) are enough to start! **Is there enough interest within A.M. to discuss this and take it further?**

My thanks go to our Quaker Life Representative, Carol Rogers, who supported

me in going to the conference as her deputy.

What did this intense weekend have to offer East Scotland? There are various gems that I brought back with me:

I really appreciate aspects of our AM which I may have previously taken for granted.

We need to make time to look honestly at the positive aspects of our AM, valuing the best of what is already working well.

Then the key is to be able to dream - imaginatively, creatively and even fancifully. Being able to put 'on hold' our negative assumptions has such a freeing and unifying effect!

Whilst still holding the dream, we can bring in the practicality of working out how these ideas would look in reality and the small steps to be taken one at a time...

So, are you ready to dream?

Meri Goad.

### **East Scotland Area Meeting: Elders' retreat. 5 – 6 November 2011**

In the peaceful, tranquil atmosphere of The Bield retreat centre near Perth 10 of us met with Jenny Routledge from Norfolk and Waveney AM, who is under Concern about the role of eldership, and Jane Pearn, clerk of Kelso Meeting who was Jenny's accompanying elder.

Following Jenny's article in the November 2010 edition of Quaker Voices, and my participation in the 'Midwives of the Spirit' course at Woodbrooke, I was led to suggest elders might benefit from Jenny's leadership of our Retreat. This turned into a re-treat for me and an inspirational retreat for AM elders. Our overall theme was 'Living Eldership' and Jenny introduced us to the concept and value of spiritual accompaniment and accompanying eldership. Jane took no vocal part in our retreat but brought a supportive love and the presence of God, upholding us all with prayer as we worked through the programme. It was good to hear the summing up of her experience with us, that she had listened to deep honesty and caring for the life of our meetings.

Jenny's Concern is for reclaiming and revitalizing eldership and the impact that it has on the spiritual life of individuals and of our meetings. Her Concern arose during her time at Pendle Hill in the USA as a resident student and is supported by her LM and AM. She shared her journey with us, its ups and downs, its joys and tensions, and her passion for strengthening the role and function of elders. We shared this aim.

We were invited to join in several exercises which encouraged us to explore how we do things now and how we could improve our eldership. There was a sense of deep fellowship, of getting to know each other in 'the things which are eternal' and a growing sense of re-visioning our task as servants of the meeting as elders. We are optimistic that our meetings will benefit from our Retreat, as we have done so on a personal level.

The ambience at The Bield helped us to relax and enabled us to take full advantage of the programme. We joined in with the Bield community in half an hour of worship on Saturday morning in the lovely ecumenical chapel - but for me the whole of the Retreat was worship sharing.

The elders are grateful to AM and the Camfield Trust for funding to allow the elder's Retreat to happen.

Pamala McDougall

## **Local Meeting News**

### **DUNDEE MEETING**

My apologies, again, for the long gap since my previous contribution of Dundee News to Tayside Quaker. I'm also sorry to say that I have had so little time and energy in recent months that I haven't been able to seek out much news myself. So, first of all, an appeal to fellow Dundee F(f)riends, please feel free to contact me ([a.fearfull@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:a.fearfull@dundee.ac.uk)) with any news or information that you would like to see included in the monthly TQ publication. I need to have this by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of each month in order to be able to collate it and send it to the Editor in time for it to be included. It will be great to hear from you, especially since I have had so much difficulty in getting to meetings this year due to my work and home responsibilities.

One person that I have been in touch with by text and email is Terry Winterton. Terry, as most of you will know, has moved back to England and has bought a house in Nantwich, which he loves. He sounds very settled and this has been marvellous to hear, though I have missed him very much as, I am sure, have all F(f)riends from Dundee Meeting as well as further afield in our region. Terry is taking a Masters degree in Counselling at Keele University, a place that I know, from professional association, has a lovely green campus. I'm sure we all wish him the very best with this endeavour. Terry's personality, his personal generosity and zest for his own life and that of other people, will undoubtedly make him extremely effective should he elect to become a professional Counsellor on completion of his degree.

I do not think I am revealing any confidences when I write that Dundee Meeting has struggled over the past 18 months in maintaining and perhaps even

understanding our collective identity. With this in mind, some of our Elders and Overseers have devised a questionnaire that seeks to draw out from us what we want and need from our Meeting. Andrew Phinn (Overseer) and Donna Morgan have recently sent out this questionnaire to those who continue as Members and Attenders, as well as to those whose attendance has lapsed. We have been warmly invited to complete and return the questionnaire. We have been assured that this action constitutes neither a poll nor a voting process but is, rather, an attempt to 'begin to discern the best way forward for our Meeting'. For myself, I believe this action presents a wonderful opportunity to us all to (re)recognise and (re)engage with, the light and life that has surely been at the centre of our Meeting for a long time. Again speaking personally, I feel that other elements of my life have got in the way of my ability to participate in this and, while it remains difficult to get around those elements, I feel encouraged by this action to try to navigate them more effectively. I hope that others feel the same. I wish to use this publication to thank wholeheartedly everyone responsible for this initiative and look forward to enjoying my own greater engagement as well as that of others. Finally, with this in mind, I would urge all fellow F(f)riends at Dundee Meeting to complete and submit their questionnaires and enjoy the forward movement that this involvement will surely bring.

Wishing everyone a lovely Christmas time and a wonderful 2012 ☺ Anne Fearfull

### **PERTH MEETING**

At the Local Business Meeting on 6 November, it was agreed to discontinue Meetings for Worship at the Subud Centre on the first Sunday of each month. Instead, Elders and Overseers were encouraged to arrange meetings for worship and discussions elsewhere. There are no arrangements for first Sundays in December and January.

We **will** hold a Meeting for Worship as usual on Christmas Day, 25 December, at the Subud Centre at 11.00 am.

Our annual post-Christmas 'bring and share' lunch will take place at the Subud Centre after worship on Sunday 8 January 2012.

### **ST ANDREWS MEETING**

At the end of October many Friends were delighted to stay on after MfW to hear Len Goad interview Nan Stewart about her early life. Many of you will know that Nan is in her 90s and memory of her childhood life in Dundee came alive without much prompting from Len, an unrecognisable world for most of us today. We heard how she came to Quakers after the war by way of being, as Len described, a hippy, as for a time she lived in a commune, and then a conscientious objector

- what better grounding for a Quaker! Thank you Nan for sharing with us a time of your life that for many was pure history from a very personal perspective.

Our six Kindler sessions have come to a close. Many of us who attended will miss the stimulation that each of these thoughtful sessions inspired both on a personal level and as a meeting together to participate, exchange and be open about our spiritual journey. I am sure there will be another Kindlers next year after time to draw breath.

Our meeting has received a DVD of the Swarthmoor lecture "Costing not less than everything" and it is hoped that in the new year we shall have an organised viewing together with a discussion although no date has yet been decided; something to bear in mind.

Our December collection is in aid of STEPS (St Andrews Education for Palestinian Students). St Andrews University has waived the tuition fees payable by 2 Palestinian students on taught postgraduate courses of one year duration. All other expenses must be met by the STEPS Foundation that means accommodation, food and other living expenses. This is particularly welcome and has arisen from the unequal access to education open, and in some cases not open, to Palestinians students, in this case higher education. Israeli students do not have the same and numerous obstructions to negotiate, just one example being lengthy waiting at road blocks, just to physically arrive at school.

QASTA (Quaker Action St Andrews) has sent a submission to the BASIC Trident Commission. The Commission is independent and cross-party and asks 3 questions. 1. Should the UK remain a nuclear weapon State? 2. If it should, is Trident renewal the only or best option that the UK can and should pursue? 3. What more can and should the UK do to more effectively promote global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security? Having said NO to question 1 the submission went straight to question 3. A copy has been sent to each Local Meeting for those who may be interested to read the whole text.  
Jill Marshall

### **New book announcement** ***Open to New Light***

Our Friend, Leslie Stevenson, St Andrews Meeting, has a new book being published on 1 January 2012. It is entitled *Open to New Light: Quaker Spirituality in Historical and Philosophical Context*. It is published by Imprint Academic, price £17.95. The publisher describes it as follows:

This book is about "the meaning of life" or "the spiritual quest". It offers a selective and critical evaluation of some central strands of Western

religious and philosophical thought over two and a half thousand years. It starts with Socrates' philosophy of life, and the Greek tradition of philosophy that he initiated. It gives its own "take" on the teaching of Jesus, and on the long and controversial history of Christianity. There is a chapter devoted to George Fox and the beginning of the Quaker movement, suggesting some surprising parallels between the undogmatic spirituality of the Quakers and the heavyweight philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It recommends a non-literal interpretation of language about God, with some reference to Austin Farrer on "poetic truth". It is intended for the intelligent general reader – it is accessible but not "dumbed down", knowledgeable but not overburdened with detail, critically argumentative but not prejudiced.

**Next issue: Copy date – 20 January 2012.**

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### **Quote for the month**

**"If only I may grow firmer, simpler, quieter and warmer."**

**Dag Hammarskjold.**

### **Postscript.**

There was not enough space to include the material relating to the workshop and conference on 'Economic Justice and the Sustainable Global Society'. This should reach you as an insert to the paper magazine or as an attachment if you receive *Tayside Quaker* in electronic form.

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All opinions in Tayside Quaker are those of the individual writers and not necessarily of The Religious Society of Friends.

**APPENDIX: QPSW NFPB WOODBROOKE EVENTS ON  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY  
(Cathy Kinnear's report from Woodbrooke to follow)**

**Questions for Area Meeting Representatives to the Woodbrooke  
seminar 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2011.**

The second part of this programme of events is the Woodbrooke seminar to which Area Meeting Representatives have been appointed. At this seminar we will take some of the learning from the conference further and consider what Friends might do and what they need in order to do it.

It might be helpful for representatives to gather some thoughts from their Area Meeting before coming to the seminar and to this end we have devised a number of questions which may aid reflection. Please do not think that all the questions must be answered. Reflections on these issues will continue for some time and Friends and meetings will be in different places. If there is the opportunity to consider some of the questions before the seminar there will be some time to share those responses.

- What do you see as the relationship between economics (production, consumption, marketing, financial institutions) and faith?
- What helps and what hinders you in making these connections and act faithfully in relation to the economic system?
- How do you feel influenced and constrained by the economic system? Do you think that our current economic system is broken? If so, how might it be 'fixed'? Or, what can/should we put in its place?
- Yearly Meeting asked us to move out of our comfort zone. How do you define your comfort zone and what might moving out of it mean for you?
- How might we support one-another as a Quaker community to engage more powerfully and faithfully with our economic system?

- How do we "face our responsibility as one of the nations which has benefitted at other's expense, to redress inequalities"?
- Yearly Meeting encouraged us to "practice speaking truth to power at local level" – what will this mean in practice? What truth will you be speaking? Can you see opportunities or merely obstacles?