

West Scotland

Quaker News

August 2010

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individuals. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

From the Editor

This edition of the Newsletter has a couple of articles (pages 9 and 14) which should stimulate thought and discussion amongst us - so please let's have your reactions and comments for the next WSQN.

My apologies to readers who were unable to view the June issue of WSQN online; I was unable to upload it to the website because its size considerably exceeded the allowance at the Quaker Scotland website. (However, the web manager now has managed to edit it and make it available online.) Despite my strenuous efforts to reduce file sizes for the current edition, this continues to be something of a worry. Hopefully, the present pdf file size of approx. 2MB will prove acceptable.

The deadline for the next edition of WSQN is 22nd September. Copy should be sent (preferably by email) to the Editor, Bryan Bowes at: botany64@waitrose.com Tel 0141 942 3346; 3 West Chapelton Lane, Bearsden G61 2DF

Clerk's Letter - Personal Narratives

As many Friends will know, Quakers played a vital role in facilitating the mass evacuation of Jewish children from Nazi Germany in 1938-1940. Jewish parents could not accompany their children on the start of their journey, as the Nazis banned Jews from having access to railway stations. To help, Friends organised to be present at the stations and to travel on the trains with the children as far as the ports. At Liverpool Street Station in London, Quakers helped to make sure that each child was met and had someone to care for them.

Following our business session at Area Meeting in Tarbert on 28th August, we are going to hear the personal story of Eva Shrewsbury, the daughter of a non-practicing Jewish family in Germany. Before the war her father had a successful business in Germany and, as he thought the family was well assimilated, he stayed on after others had fled from the increasing Nazi persecution. However, by 1939 the family was sufficiently concerned to send Eva and her younger brother out of Germany on a Kindertransport train. She was eight years old. The children arrived in England and Eva was housed for the duration of the war with a Quaker family called Bedford, who lived in Marple near Manchester. Her brother was with another family nearby. We are very privileged that Eva has offered to share her experience with us and I hope Friends will come to meet her. Like Eva, we all need to speak our truths.

Stories and myths abound in our culture. From infancy they have helped us make sense of the world and feel safe in it. Our childhood fairy tales are about the struggle between good and evil, where good always triumphs. Even as adults we are fed myths, which we are often quite happy to swallow without question. They become unchallenged assumptions.

Picking up on our childhood learning, the press continually tell us stories of bad people in the world who do bad things; but reassure us that when the good people catch them, they will be put into prison and all will be well. Experience tells us that this is not so. To challenge the myths we need to hear the real stories. When someone who commits a crime is given a custodial sentence or a community sentence, what are the affects on the perpetrator, on their family and friends, on the victim, on the professionals involved? Knowing what actually happens practically and emotionally, helps us understand the implications of our long accepted criminal justice practices. What works? What creates problems for the future? What benefit might there be in doing things differently?

I am a member of the Crime Community and Justice Group of Quaker Peace and Social Witness and we are analysing the personal narratives of those who have been sentenced or have been affected by the sentencing of someone they know. We want to know what it was like going through the court process and what were the positive and negative effects of the sentence on the narrator. We are asking what was worst about it all and what might have made things better. We need Friends within our Area Meetings to collect the stories of people they know who received a prison or community sentence. Those you speak to can be assured that their privacy will be protected. A "Learning from Experience" pack, with guidance on collecting the stories, is available from me or from the Programme Manager, Paula Harvey, telephone 020 7663 1036 or e-mail paulah@quaker.org.uk . Do you know someone who has a story to tell? Are you willing to collect it?

West Scotland AM at Wigton, 19th June 2010

We met on a beautiful day at the new Meeting House in Wigtown and it was really lovely to have our Quaker 'family' to visit. After visitors had had tea/coffee and a good look round, we moved across the way to the Baptist church for the Meeting proper – our first example of outreach: we were borrowing their hall and facilities for the meeting, and we'd also borrowed chairs for our own Meeting House from the nearest bookshop – and each neighbour was delighted to have been asked.

After settling for the business meeting there was the usual request for someone to write up a report – my word! Quakers can be decisive and move fast sometimes! I offered to do the job but had no pen: witness sudden flurries of activity as everyone rushed to get me a pen before I changed my mind!

We began by hearing about a request to join the Society and other requests to be released from offices: as so often with Life, a joy was tempered by sadness and the acknowledgement of the hard work and commitment of Members to the various offices they had undertaken. A few minutes were given to silently upholding those Members.

Some time was given to discussing the lapsed practice of giving a copy of Quaker Faith & Practice to new Members – which did confuse me as I officially joined just over two years ago and I was offered a book (I chose 'Sing in the Spirit' as I already had F&P and I miss my singing!). A decision was made to ensure that this practice is continued and that it does not become a hit-&-miss affair. It was recognised that enquirers have often bought their own copy of F&P; so it is not always an appropriate choice to mark their membership and an equivalent alternative should be available. I am glad this decision was made: I know Quakers don't go in for fuss and ceremony but, when one has made a momentous decision to join any group, it is good for the occasion to be marked in some tangible way.

We heard from the Trustees that there will be a change to the format in which our accounts are submitted and that insurance with respect to all aspects of the buildings owned by Area Meeting has been arranged. What a minefield the Trustees have to manoeuvre with regard to Health & Safety legislation, Employment Law, Memoranda of Understanding, insurance, risk assessment and Data Protection! I had to deal with several of these in my job and it is no joke – but the hardest part about it, I found, was the way various Laws and contracts were so excessively worded with the deliberate intention of trying to avoid any and all liability! What a contrast with Quaker plain-speak and sense of responsibility! I would love to see Laws and contracts written in Quaker style!

The most thought-provoking item of the day, for me, was the presentation by Paul & Rachael Milling about their journey as part of a convoy taking aid to a camp in northern Gaza. The trials they and their companions endured, and the fortitude with which they did so, were humbling. But how can this situation have existed for all these years and the World not have at least ameliorated it? Why is it that the Palestinians – who are most definitely not without blame in the ongoing conflict – have not had support from the World? (Even the reactions of people in all the countries the convoy drove through were interesting: in Europe there was no

reaction at all – they were 'invisible'. Yet from Turkey on they were hailed and feted.)

That old God, money, is involved in the cash paid by the USA to both Israel and Egypt – which latter came as a big surprise to us and explained why that country not only does not help with aid to the Palestinians but actively thwarts the efforts of others to do so. The number of deaths is disproportionate by any statistical analysis, and the types of action taken against the general population of Gaza falls into the category of 'war crimes' – but still it goes on. (Yet in other countries and in other circumstances, I know the World has labelled such behaviour of an aggressor as 'war crimes', so what's different here?)

I was left appalled at what was going on yet uplifted that two caring and brave people – and Quakers to boot – were doing something about it. They acknowledge that we can't all be like them but suggested that we could still do something: uphold them spiritually; raise money for them to continue the work; and lobby politicians, especially Barack Obama.

In one day, I encountered every aspect of Quakerism: friendship; spirituality; corporate decision-making; living our Quaker beliefs. No wonder it's exhausting!

Elizabeth Duncann (Newton Stewart)

QPSW Spring Conference 2010

Thanks to the sponsorship of AM, I was able to attend the Spring conference this year at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire over the weekend of 26-28th March.

The weather was glorious and I had a very pleasant drive down from Cumbria where I had overnighted at my daughter's. I managed to find the Hayes at the first attempt – almost unheard of given my propensity for getting lost! It is a lovely venue in a tranquil setting, yet suburbia is just outside the gates.

One unexpected joy was that the first person I spotted as I entered the foyer to register was Anne Wilkinson – the very same AW whom I had met at Birkenhead Meeting when I started my Quaker journey.

The Friday evening began properly with our meal, for which we were assigned a table with our 'base group' and our group leader for the weekend, and another very pleasant observation was that there were people younger than me at the conference! Conversation flowed and in no time we were ready to move to the lecture hall for the main presentation. (For subsequent meals we were encouraged to move around the tables so that we could meet as many new Friends as possible.)

The theme for Friday night was 'chance conversations and net-working'. Helen Drewery gave the main presentation, introducing the theme by setting it in a historical perspective: e.g the conversations between active Quakers, sometimes over dinner tables, which led to the movements against the slave trade and prison conditions. She moved on to give examples of such consequences in modern terms, the most notable of which was the reason behind the Alliance forces sealing-off

the records building in Prystyna when that city was finally taken. This meant that refugees who had previously been stripped of all their identity papers when fleeing to the West were able to re-assert their identities. All because of a dinner-party conversation at which a Quaker presence subsequently used 'networking' to ensure the appropriate bodies were aware of the need for such action. It still took nearly two years.

Several QPSW senior staff then introduced themselves and gave an example of a significant conversation that they had either been privy to or had witnessed bearing fruit. (I say 'senior' in that they were heading up initiatives – some of them were young enough to be my children!!)

Saturday was a heavy day. After breakfast there was an optional MfW and then we met with our base group when the leader gave a brief introduction to the rest of the weekend and what our sessions together were for. (Stuart Morton, our leader, headed up two initiatives in the Indian subcontinent: one involved getting a fair deal for people over land-rights and the other was involved conflict resolution in Nagaland.) At that first session we were encouraged to bring up any queries we had about the work of QPSW and this led to quite a lively discussion. John Drewery (husband of Helen, and of Quaker News) came to our sessions and was able to give extra input in some areas – though he said he had to be careful not to breach confidentiality since he was privy to so much of his wife's work. (He had come to conference primarily so he could actually spend some time with his wife!)

After lunch we went to our first workshop and mine was on “A Persistent Process - Networking for Peace in South Asia”, led by Stuart Morton. Stuart explained how he came to work with a group called Ekta Parishad based in India. The mandate was to help people regain previously owned land or gain new land that they needed to farm to make a living – land had been taken from many people because it was needed for various reasons by industry or by the Government – including for turning into eco-areas! The leader of Ekta Parishad had once had a contact whose impact stayed in his mind and eventually he turned up at the door of Friends' House and asked to see someone – that someone turned out to be Stuart and QPSW became involved.

Similarly, regarding Nagaland: some of the Naga people had had contact with Quakers in their recent history so when their conflict became more obvious to the world, it was a QPSW sponsored group that was accepted by both sides to help with a resolution.

Stuart's absolute passion for his work was inspiring.

There was entertainment planned for Saturday evening which I had intended to go to, but I suddenly felt so tired I just went back to my room!

Sunday began with our breakfast chats and some went off to a MfW again, then we went to our second workshop: mine was “Working Together for Change” led by Sue Smith & Kiyoko Miyamoto. It was based on Turning The Tide ideas and we explored how we felt we, as individuals, could make a difference where injustice was evident. Would you fill your shopping trolley to the brim with goods that had come from unethical sources and then make a scene at the checkout, refusing to pay and stating why? Would you participate in a protest outside the store for the same reason? Would you quietly write to the chief executive and ask that the store refrain

from selling certain goods? We are all able to participate at some level in bringing about change where needed. Indeed, one exercise was to tell a partner of something we had done to help improve our local community – simple things like shopping or dog-walking for the housebound; decorating or gardening for the elderly/disabled; running local self-help groups; manning the help-lines for, say, The Samaritans; leading protests against developments detrimental to the local environment.

After Sunday lunch we packed up and then headed for the main conference hall again for a full MfW. I ended up sitting next to Helen Drewery and, from her shaking and quiet agitation, I knew we were in for ministry: indeed she soon stood to say that a song had been going round and round her head and that she felt compelled to sing it, and would we please join in if we knew it. JOY! RAPTURE! I could sing in a MfW! The song was one I did know - 'Last night I had the strangest dream' (I can still hear The Spinners singing it from the 70s when I went to their concerts- we didn't call them gigs!). So we sang – and it was wonderful and so meaningful – and Helen's awful cold was not at all evident during the singing, yet returned immediately after – divine intervention or what??

I and others were a little concerned at the lack of evidence on which to judge the success of various endeavours – especially when Stuart told us of the very high percentage of resolutions that break down again. And we would have liked evidence that the financial costs were justified -as a Trustee of another charity I know we can be given accounts without breaching any client confidentiality. Also, why don't people know of QPSW's work as they know of the Salvation Army's work, say?

I have to say that The Hayes Centre is not actually fully accessible and I and another lady had to raise certain issues with the duty manager. Something to bear in mind if going there.

One poignant aspect of the weekend was that there was another group sharing the conference centre that weekend - a group of US Air Force families from Lakenheath and Mildenhall on a church-organised session. I met one lovely lady (Annette) from that group on the Saturday morning (Don't laugh too much but I went to bed Friday evening, utterly exhausted, with dire warnings about losing an hour because of the clocks going forward ... so I put my clock forward on Friday night and presented myself for breakfast at 7:20 Saturday morning!! This meant I had time to 'kill', so I went for a walk and thus met Annette – see there's a reason for everything.)

So Annette and I had a wonderful conversation ranging from different parts of the USA (I had lived over there for a while and two of my daughters still do); to living in the UK (Annette has moved several times as part of military life); to the benefit of children to a church group; to the boisterousness of the American group of the quietness of our group; to war and pacifism; to God or that which we call 'God'.. And at the end she swept me into a moving embrace and kissed me warmly as only Americans can do. But I felt I had connected in a way that QPSW would quietly approve of and which may even possibly lead to the type of consequences that had been at the heart of our weekend.

Elizabeth Duncann (Newton Stewart)

Quaker Quest Glasgow, May 2010

The series of Quaker Quest meetings in May was in many ways a journey for those involved. An experience of teamwork, an experiment in outreach, an evaluation of what works and what doesn't work, and a personal spiritual journey for all those involved in the process.

I witnessed the unfolding of that process both in the planning meetings, training and preparation and also as a participant and supporter of each of the four sessions. As I was a speaker in the last session it would be fair to say I knew what I was letting myself in for! However the end result for me was one of spiritual and emotional pain, as well as a deep satisfaction in sharing my Faith and my story.

The pain arose out of the deeply personal telling of my journey in combatting mental ill-health and in coming to terms with my sexuality; both of which still carry a degree of stigma and misunderstanding. My reaction was a surprise to me because I have told my story a number of times - as part of my work as a trainer in mental health awareness. However each time is different, as each time the "audience" is different. What I value is that I have, in the Quaker family, the support and love to come to terms with these difficult issues and be valued as myself. For that I am eternally grateful and welcomed the chance to add my story to the wonderful mix of diversity that is Quakerism!

Derek Read (Glasgow)

This was the second series of Quaker Quest organised by Glasgow Quaker Meeting. As in the first series in May 2009, it consisted of four public meetings aimed at the general public as well as at newish Quaker Attenders. Each meeting considered an aspect of Quakerism and consisted of short presentations by three Quaker speakers, space for group discussions and questions, and finished with a period of Quaker Worship.

Derek was one of the speakers in the last of the sessions which was on Quakers and Diversity; the other themes were 'Quakers and Peace', 'Quakers and Worship' and 'Living with Doubt: Spiritual Journeys'.

This was a very successful Quaker Quest Programme in Outreach terms. There were 25 different members of our target audience who attended over the four sessions and several people new to Quakers have begun coming to Meetings for Worship on Sundays and on Wednesdays.

We have built up some experience of running Quaker Quest Programmes and this will certainly help us in the future but we would also like to share this with other meetings in West Scotland and perhaps further afield. If any meetings would like to run a Quaker Quest Programme, we would be more than willing to support them with their planning, with providing some of the speakers, lending our Quaker Quest banner, etc. Please contact Pete Stuart (pete.stuart1@btinternet.com).

Pete Stuart (Glasgow)

Outreach and Disclaimers

We are very much exercised, as a Religious Society, by the concept of Outreach. How do we reach outsiders and let them know that we still exist and didn't fade away after Elizabeth Fry reformed women's prisons? So we have, annually, an Outreach Week during which we try to remind people of our existence and what we stand for.

Surely if Outreach is to have any real effect it has to be more persistent and more informative than a once-a-year event which can be easily forgotten or confused. We must try to explore areas of everyday life which could be used to remind people of what Quakers believe.

One such area came recently to my attention. We produce magazines regularly, such as the one you are reading, giving examples of personal insight and experience; these are probably picked up from time to time and browsed through by non-Quakers. However, such articles are personal, and do not therefore explain Quaker beliefs.

Our magazines use an editorial disclaimer, to protect both the editors and the Society of Friends, if some article expresses an extreme opinion that might cause prejudice against us. This disclaimer usually takes the form "The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society as a whole". Which leaves the question: "Then why were these opinions included?". Surely not just to pad out a limited number of contributions!

But there is a valid reason in Quaker belief for publishing unpalatable views; therefore should we not include, as standard practice, an explanation of this reason in every use of the disclaimer? We believe, as a Society, that leadings from the Light Within, divine inspiration, the Word of God, - call it what you will - come to us through the words of other people; therefore, it would be wrong to discriminate against any opinion simply because it is not standard Quaker belief. To do so would be denying our own belief that all people in the Society are equals, and would risk depriving someone of the help he/she might receive from some aspect of an article that "spoke to their condition".

I suggest an extended/explanatory Disclaimer should be included in all Quaker publications as a matter of practice. It might be worded as follows:

"Quakers believe that God speaks to us by means of somebody else; which inspiration is recognised by the person who needs it when the words mean little to others. Thus we must publish articles even if not expressing the views and needs of every Friend – even when perhaps found distasteful – because the writing may have meaning for a person who needs that insight.."

Jane Abbott (Dumfries)

Three Gates for Anglesey Abbey National Trust Gardens, near Cambridge

Where an Augustinian priory once stood, in the last century the 1st Lord Fairhaven quietly developed an estate at Anglesey Abbey. He added art treasures to the house and placed classic statuary imaginatively within the formal and landscaped gardens. Since 1966, when he gifted it to The National Trust, the estate has now become a major attraction for its horticulture, wild life and art; and for research and education within these fields.

The winter walk is a special attraction. I was asked to design gates at three thresholds here: to mark the start, the walk's interface with the large landscaped east lawn at halfway and it's end. Conscious of the need to create the balance and harmony already existing between nature and man, my aim was to create finesse and lightness of line coupled with a boldness of form. There is a very large and dominant beach hedge. This, together with autumn colours along the walk, implied that two of the gates should be made of a weathering steel: a non-rusting steel which turns a deep orange hue when exposed to the elements and does not need painting. This choice fitted the design brief to keep future maintenance low. Stainless steel detailing was used to comply with this and allow a visual complement (photo 1).

Gate three required a different colour concept due to its position within a silver birch grove (photo 2). This is made in steel and galvanised to echo and give strength to that dark area of the birch plantation.

John Creed (Glasgow)



Photo 1 (by Bryan Bowes)



Photo 2 (by Bryan Bowes)

**A Quaker Scientist:
Lewis Fry Richardson, FRS (1881-1953)**



Richardson's House at Kilmun, by Holy Loch *(Photo by Ben Mitchell)*

Lewis Fry Richardson (FRS) was a distinguished meteorologist, an applied mathematician (including applications to human conflicts) and a Quaker who spent 27 years of his adult life in West Scotland, first as superintendent of the Eskdalemuir Observatory from 1913-1916; later as Principal of Paisley Technical College and School of Art (1929-1940) and finally in an active retirement in Kilmun near Dunoon (see photo).

He was born to a Quaker family in Newcastle, attended Bootham School, where he acquired his interest in meteorology, partly from his much older brother Hugh who taught there. "He taught us how to observe and describe, while he supplied us with very little information." Richardson obtained a Cambridge degree in science in 1903.

There had been a magnetic observatory at Kew, but when London's transport was electrified there was too much interference for good magnetic readings and the Eskdalemuir site (9 miles over a hill east from Moffat) was chosen as being far from large population centres and the railway. In Richardson's day it was run by the Meteorological Office.

"In August 1914 I was torn between an intense curiosity to see war at close quarters, an intense objection to killing people, both mixed with ideas of public duty, and doubt as to whether I could endure danger. After much difficulty I extricated myself from Eskdalemuir Observatory in May 1916 and joined the Friends Ambulance Unit. In September 1916 I was attached to a motor ambulance convoy lent to the French army. We carried the wounded and sick of the 16-ième division of infantry." Richardson remained there until 1919.

During these years he had time to develop his ideas on how to build mathematical models for weather forecasting. He even had the manuscript for his first book with him in France; it was lost during a battle but found again. The atmosphere is divided into many compartments and calculations are done to work out how what happens in one compartment will affect the neighbouring compartments a short time later. The difficulty is that a huge number of calculations have to be done very quickly. He envisaged thousands of people doing calculations at the same time under the supervision of a controller. His idea is the basis for modern weather and climate forecasting, but it requires enormous computing power and he recognised that it wasn't a practical proposition at that time, though he did live to see his ideas used on electronic computers.

Richardson returned to the Met Office in 1919 but he left a year later when it was taken over by the Air Ministry, because he would not work for the military. (Chemical warfare was being considered at that time.)

He then studied psychology and devised mathematical ways of looking at relations between countries, and the circumstances that lead to wars. He published privately a paper *Mathematical Psychology of War* which he had written in France as early as 1919. There is an Institute for Conflict and Peace Research in Lancaster University that bears his name.

Although he corresponded with others, most of his research work was done alone or with members of his family. In fact he enjoyed solitude. He was regarded by some as an eccentric. His last years were preoccupied with writing such books as *Arms and Insecurity*, which existed only on microfilm until 1960. The time was not right for

the public to have an appetite for technical analysis of the problems. His work has come to the attention of the peace-studies community only after his death.

At his home in Kilmun, he and his wife “devised ingenious ways of consuming the vegetable harvests as they ripened , such as dishes of broad beans for breakfast, lunch and tea in August!”

I haven't yet discovered whether he was an active member of our Meeting.

Jane Mitchell (Argyll)

For further information see

www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Biographies/Richardson.html

<http://rsbm.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/obits/9/1/216.full.pdf+html>

<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146%2Fannurev.fluid.30.1.0>

Scottish Friends Summer Gathering, Kindrogan (11-13th June)

A full report on this early summer get-together (held at Kindrogan Field Centre, ten miles east of Pitlochry) has been written by Edward Tyler and will appear in the next issue of Scottish Friend. Sadly, it seems unlikely that the event will be held again next year; but perhaps Edward's report will stimulate more general interest in developing a replacement event(s).

The photo below - of a talk/discussion on Greening our Meeting Houses - gives a flavour of what you missed at Kindrogan.



Photo and text by *Bryan Bowes*

Quakers - are we really Christians?

I am putting my fingers to keyboard – the modern equivalent of putting pen to paper - partly because of a recent item in the *The Friend* but also because of my thoughts about the direction Quakerism is now taking. These arose from my week's working retreat in France, with a very small group of members, at the end of March in the Congenies garden and its attached Quaker burial ground.

It is possible to discuss 'peace' without direct reference to any kind of spirituality but we didn't do that. The issue of 'spirituality' was central to the week's deliberations and thinking and we spent many useful sessions in silence - both at work and at meal times - which I think we all found helpful. However, we did not really spell out what each of us meant by the word 'spiritual'.

What was particularly striking for me, as someone who has an arms's length link with the Society of Friends, is how little old-style 'theology' there is now in Quakerism generally. So I wasn't wholly surprised to read that some Quakers have been shouting about the publication of a crucifixion image on the front of *The Friend*. In my early childhood I went regularly to the Quaker Sunday School in Warrington and it was there (probably as much as at the Church of England primary school I attended) that I heard the main Bible stories and parables. We learned of Jesus's miraculous birth and his awful end on the Cross leading to the 'salvation' of humankind.

Moving forward a good few decades, I can't remember ever hearing anything like that when I helped with the Glasgow Children's Meeting. As far as I remember, there were no bible stories and one or two parents actually insisted that they didn't want their children exposed to anything remotely 'Christian' in content: what had brought them to the Quakers were the bad experiences they (not their kids) had had in other churches.

These past events, together with the complete absence of anything remotely approaching a 'Christianity-oriented' discussion of the Peace Testimony during my Retreat in Congenies, have led me to think that many present-day Quakers do not recognise Christianity as the underpinning theology of Quakerism.

Is it enough to claim that Quakers uphold something called 'Christian values'? What is the basis of those values, if it isn't to be found in the life of the man called Christ, his teachings and final fate? Someone at Congenies said: 'I am a Quaker because I like the other people who are Quakers and I feel they have the same priorities and values as I do.' Liking your fellow worshippers may be one important factor in why you attend one Meeting rather than another, but is it really a sufficient reason for being a Quaker? You could just as easily be talking about your membership of a social club or political party. Equally, I can't see how you can claim to be a member of a Religious Society unless somewhere in there is a belief in a deity/higher being, or something of that kind. If you have what you call 'Christian values', but you hold those values without any belief in God - in fact an outright rejection of God, as I've heard once or twice - aren't you actually a humanist? Wouldn't you be better joining the Humanist Association? Why do you come to Quaker Meeting at all?

Could it be, I wonder, that the central feature of a Quaker Meeting in the UK - the meeting in silence and the non-directive worship - are the Achilles heel of the Society? They allow Quakers to sit together in apparent harmony -perhaps in real harmony too sometimes! - while perhaps disagreeing at the most profound level about the nature of faith and salvation etc.

The outcry about an image of the crucifix, on the front cover of *The Friend*, as mentioned above, is symptomatic of a malaise in the Society: a refusal to confront what it is you sign up to when you become a Quaker. This is perhaps another example on which Quakers like to pride themselves is a strength; that fabled willingness to 'see the other side' of every question. Far be it from me to counsel fundamentalism, but some clarity about what Quakers do and do not believe would be very helpful, even if it means a few Members leave and some Attenders decide not to join after all.

Rosemary Milne (Dumfries)

Comment from the editor:

If you go to the Humanist website (www.humanism.org.uk), it makes interesting and thought-provoking reading. Here you can check your personal beliefs against the ten questions which, it claims, distinguish between a religious and humanist world-view.

*For example: **Question** - " Does God exist?: **Possible Answers** - 1. I am sure there is a God ruling over the universe; 2. It depends what you mean by God, but I think so; 3 .I don't know; 4. There is no evidence that any god exists, so I'll assume that there isn't one."*

My own answer to the question would be no. 2 (whilst in answering most of the remaining nine questions, I remained sitting on the side-lines), so I wonder just where this puts me in relation to Rosemary's stimulating article?

Dominion?

A man meets a lion in the jungle. "Why do you kill so ferociously?" asks the man. The lion replies: " I only kill to eat - what's your excuse ? " I am serving the Lord." replies the man. "Goodbye then.", says the lion.

Bill Bingham (Glasgow)

**Next AM in Tarbert on Saturday 28th August,
hosted by Argyll Meeting (11.00 for 11.30).**

Location: Templar Hall (conspicuous by its smoked-salmon colour) in Harbour Street, Tarbet, by Loch Fyne. Parking is usually available in the street. At 09.00 hrs there is a bus from Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station, but it only arrives in Tarbet at 12.15. Please bring a packed lunch

Your deadline for contributions to the next issue of WSQN is 22nd. September - please send to the Editor (details page 2).

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