

West Scotland

Quaker News

October 2011

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

Correction. The article in August's Newsletter entitled *Brodick Conference on Conflict* should have been headed *Discussion on Conflict held on Arran at Brodick*. Thank you Jeny Faulkner. Also, apologies in advance for any mistakes in the current Newsletter - my printer is not working and hence I cannot make corrections to it from a hard-copy.

St. Martin's Cross, Iona. This magnificent 8th Century Cross still stands on its site, by the Cathedral, which has occupied for over 1000 years



The ***deadline*** for the next issue of West of Scotland Quaker News is November 10th. Copy should be sent to the editor Bryan Bowes, preferably in word or plain text email to: botany64@waitrose.com or by post on paper or disc to:
3 West Chapelton Lane, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 2DF.
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Clerk's Letter

Might your Meeting invite a speaker from the new Quaker Peace and Social Witness Speakers' Programme?

I am writing this on the train coming back from my second Quaker Peace and Social Witness speakers training session, in Friends House, London. It started at 10.00am and we finished about 4.15pm. I'm exhausted but it has been a worthwhile day.

The QPSW Speakers' Programme is a new initiative. It aims to use Friends serving on QPSW Groups to be the publicists of Quaker central work on peace and social justice: I serve on the QPSW Crime Community and Justice Group. I'm among the first batch of speakers to be trained, along with Friends from Quaker United Nations Office Geneva Committee, Turning the Tide Group, Overseas Peacebuilding Group, Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel Group, Quaker Prison Ministers' Group, Placement's Group, Peace Campaigning and Networking Group and others.

So Friends are you familiar with the work of these programmes? You may have heard a talk from an Ecumenical Accompanier, who has just returned from Palestine. This is perhaps the best known QPSW work but there is more, much more going on. For instance at our training session, Sue from the Turning The Tide Group, showed photographs of Turning the Tide's work in Kenya. We saw young Kenyans training others in non-violence, to prepare them to lead a student protest aimed at taking a government department to task over its corrupt practices. They succeeded in bringing about the change they were seeking, without any violent incident and this was in a culture where violence at demonstrations is the norm. Several years ago Kenyan Friends asked QPSW Turning The Tide to train local resource people in non-violence and non-violent direct action. The idea was that they in turn would train others. The pool of Turning The Tide facilitators in Kenya is expanding and with this the understanding of practical non-violence grows.

The work of Britain Yearly Meeting on peace and social issues is carried out by QPSW. This is our work. We pay for it, many Friends are involved in it and it is in our Local Meetings that the concerns arise which, after a process of discernment, may become corporate Quaker work. It is most appropriate that those Friends involved in the work speak about it. From what I've heard so far at the training sessions, the presentations will be inspirational. We should rejoice that we have such a great resource in our Friends. Their energy, their commitment and their enthusiasm is refreshing. But, of course it is! We are talking about putting faith into action, witnessing and our witness is born of our passion, not of our plans.

Helen Bradford is the QPSW Speakers Programme manager. To book a speaker, email Helen helenb@quaker.org.uk or telephone her on 0207 663 1071 - or you could ask me directly!

Elizabeth Allen (Lanark Meeting)

Report of West Scotland AM in Tarbert, 27th August 2011

The Meeting was held in the Templar Leisure Centre, which is in a delightful position overlooking the harbour in Tarbert. Twenty-two Friends arrived from all over the northern part of the huge area that Area Meeting covers. We were warmly welcomed by Argyll Friends with refreshments and affection. It is always such a pleasure to meet Friends from other Meetings, particularly for those of us who come from small rural communities. There was time for conversation and exchanges of news before the Meeting gathered, to say nothing of a hasty visit to the local bookshop!

The business that arose amongst the worship was varied. The Deputy Assistant Clerk read the heart-warming Epistle from the young Friends at Yearly Meeting in Canterbury. It was good to know that they felt their contributions had been heard and that they had felt a valued part of the Gathering.

Robin and Christine Davis, who had been present in Canterbury, spoke of their experiences in the heat and multitude of Quakers! Christine read us Minute 36, "Gathering up the Threads," that had emerged at the end of the week after groups of all sizes had freely considered a Quaker response to Climate Change "as led". It was a very moving minute, reflecting the need for all groups and individuals to respond thoughtfully and imaginatively to the great challenges that are present and that will arise in the future. The intentions were clear but the details were left to develop and flourish as Meetings and individuals found ways and means. Meetings are encouraged to get a copy of the CD of the Swarthmore Lecture.

As the treasurer was not able to be present the Annual Report and Accounts were delayed.

Billy Johnson and Elizabeth Allen are to visit Beth Laidlaw, who has applied for membership. The resignation from the Society by Jack Squires was accepted with regret and love.

The Nominations Committee Report, which was obviously the result of hours of work, was presented before lunch and followed up in the afternoon. It was agreed that there should be a clerking team with some dedicated roles within it. This will provide continuity and training and would also ease the burden on one or two individuals.

Margaret Peacock was delighted to see that there will be three Telephone Conference Area Meetings next year. She was proud of us! She suggested that the Clerk should send a copy of the minute from the last Area Meeting, when it was decided to meet in this way, to Meeting for Sufferings. It is good to be embracing new technology and reducing our carbon footprints. The physical meeting and gathering of Friends from a variety of Meetings, which is so vital, will take place in Glasgow and in the north and south of the area in the other months.

After a period of worship in which we dwelt upon the call from Yearly Meeting, Argyll friends - who had given us wonderful soups and breads at lunchtime - provided a splendid tea. Sadly, we ferry users had to forgo this! But it had been

great to be able to get to Area Meeting from Arran. It had been a happy day and a very positive first experience of a Meeting for Worship for Business Affairs for my Attender companion.

Judith Baines (Arran Meeting)

A Reminder About Gift Aid

With the new tax year the basic tax rate is still 20% but some tax thresholds have changed. The amounts you can earn before being liable to pay tax for 2011-2012 (and for comparison for 2010-2011) are as follows:

Age	2011-2012 This Tax Year	2010-2011 Last Tax Year
Below 65	£7,475	£6,475
65 - 75	£9,940	£9,490
75 and over	£10,090	£9,640

The changes in tax allowance for those below 65, those between 65 - 70 and for those 75 and over will mean that anyone whose income was just above the tax threshold last year may not be paying as much tax or perhaps no tax this year. What follows is a maths lesson in how Gift Aid is calculated. If you are not mathematically inclined you may wish to skip to the last two paragraphs!

To figure out how much Gift Aid to pay a charity on a donation, the Revenue does the following calculation:

Let X = the amount you have to earn to have £1 after tax to donate.

Then $X - (\text{tax paid}) = 1$.

For a 20% tax rate this becomes $X - (0.20)X = 1$

Hence $0.8X = 1$

Which gives $X = 1.25$.

This means for each pound you donate, 25p has been paid in tax and this is the Gift Aid the Revenue gives to the charity. To calculate the Gift Aid due with a tax rate of 20% the Revenue simply divides the amount of the donation by 4.

For example, if Eve is age 60 and earning £7,000 per year, then last year she would have paid tax on $£7000 - 6,475 = £525$. The total she could have asked charities to reclaim in Gift Aid would be $£525/4 = £131.25$. If she was contributing more than £525 to charities then she should have asked only some of them to reclaim Gift Aid so that she did not exceed her limit of £131.25 in Gift Aid. If Eve asked charities to reclaim more Gift Aid (say £150) she could be asked to refund to the Revenue the amount extra claimed ($£150 - 131.25 = £18.75$). In the current year Eve would not be paying tax as an income of £7,000 is below the £7,475 allowance. Eve should not ask charities to claim Gift Aid on any of her charitable giving in this tax year.

As another example, if Adam is age 78 and earning £10,200 per year, then last year

he would have paid tax on $\pounds 10,200 - 9,640 = \pounds 560$. He could have asked charities to reclaim a total of $\pounds 560/4 = \pounds 140$. However this year he would pay tax on $\pounds 10,200 - 10,090 = \pounds 110$. His total Gift Aid reclaimed should not exceed $\pounds 110/4 = \pounds 27.50$. It will be his responsibility to be sure that of all his charitable giving, no more than $\pounds 110$ of his total donation is used to reclaim Gift Aid. He might wish to ask all of his charities to stop claiming Gift Aid on his contributions.

If you have been claiming Gift Aid on your contributions but think you may fall below the tax allowance threshold please let me know and I will stop claiming Gift Aid on your contributions. Otherwise you may be asked to repay to the Revenue any tax reclaimed by charities above the level of tax you actually pay.

If you have any doubts about your Gift Aid or other aspects of you're giving, please contact Margaret Morton, Martha Hatch or your LM treasurer. I would also like to call your attention to the report John Lethbridge wrote about the Annual Conference of Treasurers in the August Newsletter.

Martha Hatch (AM Assistant Treasurer)

An Eye for an Eye

Two particular stories caught my attention in *The Scotsman* on August 3rd. The first was about an Iranian woman, Ameneh Bahrami, who had acid thrown in her face by a man, Majid Movahedi, who was angered by her rejection of him as a suitor. Not only was she horribly disfigured in the attack, she was also blinded. The perpetrator was arrested, and the Iranian court sentenced Movahedi to have one of his eyes burned out with acid. According to the report, Ameneh was present in the operating theatre where doctors were preparing to carry out the sentence; the victim begged for mercy. Ameneh, we're told, stopped the proceedings (as was her right under the law) because, she said, "The world is watching us." The acid-thrower will be given an alternative sentence by the courts. "I forgive him." Ameneh later declared. The second story in the newspaper involved another woman, Hanne Fjalestad, who tried to shield her young Norwegian friends from the gunman, Anders Brievik, in the recent dreadful massacre in Utoya. Apparently, 43 year-old Hanna charged at the killer in an effort to stop him, and he shot her dead. Hanna's young daughter survived the attack. One thing becomes clear to me through all of this. Many people on earth have turned their backs on religious faith because they can find no validation for belief in what, at times, is undoubtedly a very cruel and violent world; can we blame them? Especially when our 'Holy Books' seem to promote the idea of a vengeance-seeking deity who apparently behaves in a similar violent and retaliatory manner against those of his creatures who dare to offend him. If I believed in such a god, I would begin to suspect that those outside of organized religion were correct in their assumptions, and that such a god was actually the product of very disturbed human minds. Prior to his conversion, of course, Paul of Tarsus believed in just such a god. Paul, at that time, was great student of *The Law*, and had studied under Rabban Gamaliel. Paul's rigid and uncompromising religious perspective, undoubtedly allowed him to participate in the Taliban-style murder of Stephen. He was later to write his famous "Though I speak with the tongues ... and have not love ..." (*Letter to the Corinthians*). Paul had encountered *The Light*. Whatever else he may have been, the rabbi Yeshua was clearly a healer and a teacher, and there is no record of him ever having killed anyone during his brief time on earth. On the contrary, he seems to have rejected violence utterly. The

gospel of Matthew in fact, tells us that he declared that to even *think* about killing our fellow men is a sinful act. It is becoming ever clearer to me that Yeshua's legacy now rests with organizations such as *Amnesty International*, *The Red Cross*, *Medicines Sans Frontiers*, and *Oxfam*. Hopefully it is also with *The Religious Society of Friends* who have rejected the authority of an unchallenged priesthood, ancient, unreliable, and very inconsistent writings, and who today bear witness to "The promptings of Love in our hearts." For that, it seems to me, is the hallmark of the Holy Spirit. If I am wrong in this assumption, then sadly it would appear that I have spent much of my adult life barking up the wrong tree entirely, and that would be a very great pity indeed.

Bill Bingham (Glasgow Meeting)

Some thoughts on Defence and the UK Economy

Global finances are in total disarray: I can neither understand what is happening nor the root economic problems which underly the unfolding crisis. Nor can I understand why our economy should always need to grow; there is already enough wealth in Britain, if only it were earned without blood-on-our-hands and shared more equably.

According to the *Campaign Against Arms Trade* website "in 2007, the value of legal arms sales around the world amounted to approximately \$60 billion" whilst Peter Feuilherade writes (*Technorati*, September 16th) that Britain has the world's second-largest defence industry with sales of £22 billion in 2010 - £9.5 billion of this resulting from sales abroad. A headline in *The Guardian* (17 August) states "An aircraft carrier being built in Scotland is crucial to the future of the UK industry." The MoD feared that cancelling the order would have lead to "the demise of the shipbuilding industry." The *Scotland Office* published a report (March 2010) showing that the MoD had awarded over 700 contracts in Scotland alone: these were directly supporting 7,000 jobs and many additional ones amongst sub-contactors. The proposed replacement for the Trident fleet, with which the Government seems determined to proceed, is estimated to cost a minimum of £25 billion; again this would "benefit" Scotland's economy, as would the maintenance of the associated infrastructure at Faslane.

But how, in the twenty-one years since the ending of the *cold war* in 1990, have we reached this terrible dilemma of relying on an armaments industry to help "save" our economy? Surely, if the Tridents, aircraft carriers and all the sundry weapons produced by the "defence" industry were recycled, the resulting huge savings of moneys and expertise could be used to progressively re-orientate and rebuild Britain's infrastructure and so help to heal our fractured society. We would all live then in a much better and happier country but there are no indications that the UK Government, or that in Scotland, are willing to proceed along the disarmament road. What can Quakers do?

Bryan Bowes (Milngavie Meeting)

Cambridge War Memorial - Marching off to War with a smile on his Face and Rose on his Helmet!



" My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori " (Wilfred Owen: *from Dulce et Decorum est*)

Dictionary translation: *It is a sweet and seemly thing to die for one's country*

Advices on giving Spoken Ministry

For most of us giving Spoken Ministry within the life of the Meeting for Worship is challenging and Friends of any age may need guidance in this area of our Witness.

Early Friends were aware of the need for discipline by individual Friends within Meeting for Worship. William Britten, in a Tract published in 1660 entitled *Silent Meeting, a wonder to the World*, defined three such acts of discipline: a "Spiritual Watch, a Spiritual Touchstone and a Spiritual Scales". Friends today may well understand these to mean the watchfulness or waiting on the Spirit, the need to try each word or thought arising and to discern if they might help to deepen the Silence. If today you feel prompted to speak during a Meeting for Worship, the following self-tests may be helpful:

Does what you are bringing arise from your immediate thoughts or from the very deepest part of yourself - is this from me or from the Holy Spirit/God? If what you wish to share arises from your own immediate thoughts, then it is best to let those prompting remain within the silence. However, if you feel that they are from the very deepest part of yourself/Holy Spirit/God, then ask yourself whether these promptings are a ministry for me personally or for the whole meeting? If for you personally, simply ponder them within the silence. But if you feel they are for the whole Meeting, then ask yourself whether this ministry is for now or does it need to be deepened so that it can be shared at another time?

If you feel it is for pondering, this imposes a duty not to forget it but wait to give it until you feel again the inner promptings. Do not worry if you do not discern the right time or place in which to give your ministry. (It has been the extraordinary experience of many Friends down the centuries that if they fail to give the ministry, the Spirit moves another Friend to give that same ministry). However, if you discern that now is the time to share the ministry, the final question to ask is: has this ministry already been given, but possible in slightly different words, within this Meeting for Worship?

If your ministry has already been spoken, then hold your own expression of that ministry as strongly as possible within the silence, that the truth as expressed by another may enter even deeper into the hearts and minds of all those gathered in the silence. If your ministry has not already been shared, and you feel it will not break but help to deepen the Silence, then rise and wait till the Spirit moves you to speak.

Malcolm Whalan

Note from the Editor: These *Advices on Spoken Ministry*, which Margaret Peacock believes may be helpful to us in Ministry, are an edited and abbreviated form of an article first published in the *Scottish Friend* (October 2007): it was from the epilogue given by under-19s. to the *Summer Gathering* that year in Stirling.

Area Meeting in Lanark Saturday October 15th

AM in Lanark will be in St. Nicholas Church Hall, Castlegate, Lanark (ML11 9DZ) at 11.00 for 11.30. St Nicholas Church stands in a prominent situation at the bottom of Lanark High Street. The Hall is a separate building in Castlegate, which is on the left hand side behind the church. St Nicholas Hall is about 10 minutes walk from Lanark Railway Station and there is car parking across the road.

*"Oftentimes I have heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and an intruder upon your world..
But I say that even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each of you,.
So the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest which is in you also.
And as the single leaf turns not yellow but with the silent knowledge of the whole tree,
So the wrong-doer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of you all."*

*Extract from **The Prophet** by Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)*

"There is, however, much work still to be done, in creating a right understanding of the nature and causes of crime, and in emphasising the need for redemptive treatment rather than retributive punishment. Society is in a measure responsible for the criminal, a fact which emphasises the duty of meeting moral failure by redemptive care. Evil can only be finally overcome by good."

*Extract from **23.94, Quaker Faith and Practice***

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