

The Northern Quaker

Autumn
2013



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Comments

Welcome to the 2013 Autumn edition of the Northern Quaker. “Pride cometh” After being so smug at producing the Summer edition roughly in time, I have to apologise for the lateness of this edition. Excuses? I have been on a secondment in Oman for the last five weeks, but before you express any envy, the site was a six-hour drive from the capital and the temperature 40+, although slightly better than the 50+ degrees in July. The few days in the capital was an opportunity to glimpse life in a highly religious (albeit relatively tolerant) society where the call to prayer rings across the city from the many mosques in the same way that church bells would have filled the Sunday morning air in our society in the past.

Anyway, enough of excuses. This edition should really be re-named the Jane Booth newsletter as Jane has not only (with only mild arm-twisting) contributed her own articles, but also persuaded a friend and her daughter to write pieces. As you will read, the occasion was her wedding to Paul, and Jane’s description makes a refreshing change to the excess which is part of

most weddings: making one's own cake is not unheard of, but how many brides cycle 20 miles to their wedding?

IT problems have meant only a part of Eleanor Fairclough's report on Pluscarden has been received, so apologies to Eleanor and the readers. However I have commissioned pieces from the two guest speakers at Pluscarden which will appear in the next edition.

Speaking of which; to avoid arm twisting, emotional blackmail, or tears (mine) so please don't be afraid to send contributions in any form to myself: Harry Horsley, 11 Cottown of Balgownie, Aberdeen AB23 8JQ Tel. 01224 706989 harry.horsley@uk.bp.com or harrydhorsley@gmail.com

Announcements

Offer of service forms

Dear Friends

The Area Nominations Committee needs your offer of service forms! If we want a vibrant and supportive Area Meeting, we need to know about Members and Attenders who are prepared to help build up the work of Friends in North Scotland

Offer of service forms are available at your Local Meeting

Send your form to Carel Goodheir, his address is on the form
We look forward to hearing from you

David James Convener Nominations Committee

Residential General Meeting for Scotland

Residential General Meeting will be held in Aberdeen on November 16th/17th and will focus on social and economic issues. Our speakers will be Val Brown

of Christian Aid, who will talk about their Tax Justice Campaign, and Suzanne Ismael of QPSW's Economic Justice Group. More information and booking forms will be available at the end of September.
Bronwen, GM Administrator, Scotland

A Quaker wedding - a guest's perspective [\(back to contents\)](#)

An invitation to a wedding of an old friend is always special. I have known Jane since 1972 and was honoured to be included in their special day. I had never been to any Quaker Meeting before and Jane very sensibly sent me a link to a website that outlined the different elements of the ceremony. I can recommend this to anyone who knows there will be people coming who have no prior experience. The registering officer took time at the start to ensure we all understood, but I appreciated being able to enter the meeting informed and my mind ready to be quiet and respectful.

The marriage ceremony was a special and emotional experience. All the guests signing the certificate was a way of showing our love and support for a special couple. I had told myself I wouldn't speak in the silence. I sat thinking my own thoughts of what statement I might make; everything I wished for their future and those who are most involved in their daily lives. Much to my own surprise I found myself standing up and having the courage to speak that consolidation of my love and hopes for them and their family. How generous afterwards to have the reassurance from Peter McCaffery that my words had been appropriate and fitting for the Quaker way. This moving ceremony was all part of a welcomed day where I was made to feel a valued contributor of a chance for two people to show everyone their commitment to each other.

Ruth Collin

A Quaker wedding [\(back to contents\)](#)

It was a driech day when I set off towards Aberdeen, perhaps not the sort of weather a bride hopes for on her wedding day, but since I had decided to cycle the 25 miles to the meeting house I was just glad that it was not too windy. Pedalling in gave me plenty of time to reflect, and to rehearse the marriage declaration I had memorised.

The decision to get married had followed the decision to move into a new home together. I had strongly wanted it to be a Quaker wedding because I am a Quaker and being a Quaker informs my life every day. It seemed only natural for me to look to the meeting for their support. The simplicity of Quaker weddings also appealed to me. I had not wanted the big white dress or a lot of fuss (and expense) the first time I got married, which took place before my involvement with Quakers. Before the area meeting could consent however, it was suggested that Paul and I went to a Meeting for Clearness to ascertain whether this was the right course for us to take. Like the visits prior to membership, it is difficult not to think of a meeting for clearness for marriage as some sort of test, so we approached it with some trepidation. I had been divorced, and Paul, though 'well kennt' by Pluscarden regulars, is not a Quaker. Did we fully appreciate the Quaker understanding of marriage? What if they said no? Quakers believe in the spirit behind the words of George Fox, who said that 'marriage is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses'. As someone who is somewhat agnostic but with a sense of the numinous, I have to do a lot of translation in my head to make sense of religious language and I sometimes worry that my faith in any divine presence is rather vague. The least religiously-worded of the marriage declarations calls on 'divine assistance', and I had to be sure we were both comfortable with that. In the event, we found the meeting to be a very joyful and positive experience and felt particularly blessed that Juli and Dave had travelled from all the way from Forres to be there.

A Quaker wedding may be simple, but the Quaker paperwork is not! There are a couple of forms to fill in for a non-Quaker marriage. Quakers not only have to fill in these forms, but also Forms A and B and/or C, Form D if you live in

England or Wales, and Form E. I think there is even a Form F. Peter guided us through these with minimum pain and frustration. Paperwork done, we set a date and handed out leaflets (which I also studied carefully, never having been to a Quaker wedding myself) to our guests. I had the unusual experience of being asked what to wear, but sought advice myself on Quaker bridal attire. Friends lent me dresses and I finally decided on one shortly before the day with the help of my daughters. The vegan wedding cake was a real communal effort, baked by Dawn (who I had met via freegle), fondant icing wrangled onto it by Paul and I, and beautifully decorated by my friend Ruth (who had arrived the night before, probably not expecting to play such an important part in the last-minute chaos). Ellie and Gillean had made the groom, complete with kilt and mattock, out of clay for the top of the cake. I had re-learned how to make origami cranes on the Peace Pilgrimage, and my daughters had made about 100 for the buffet table.

I arrived early, in good time to have a shower, rush off to buy blotting paper (I was determined to use a fountain pen for the certificate rather than a biro - call it my bridezilla moment) and get changed. The meeting started with an explanation from Peter about Quaker weddings and then we settled into the silence. We had decided that I should stand and speak first, so I listened and waited for the right moment. A ray of sunlight broke through the clouds and shone through the window. I stood up. Although I had memorised the words, I half-read them from the certificate in front of me as I didn't trust myself not to say something daft, such as taking Paul to be my wife and promising to be unto him a faithful and loving husband (or launching into the Brownie Guide promise, which had been ambushing my rehearsals on the bike). The presence of Friends and family, the collective silence and the words offered are precious to us both.

Of course things went wrong, from bringing the wrong pair of tights (laddered, but I think everyone was too astonished by my red shoes to notice), forgetting to bring the salads from the fridge, to the hire car company losing our booking to take guests back to the house. Nothing critical though, and we were overwhelmed by everyone's kindness and generosity in making the day so special.

The sunlight which was breaking through while we were in the meeting house eventually prevailed and the afternoon weather was nicer than we could have hoped. We were able to spend our wedding night in a tent in the garden.



Jane Booth,
Banchory/Aberdeen meetings



Meeting for Sufferings 6th July 2013 [\(back to contents\)](#)

Recent government reforms of the welfare system in our own country, including cuts in benefits to some of the most vulnerable in society, have focused minds. This report of the meeting in London on 6 July centres on two main items of business related to economic justice and equality.

In the first, the meeting was asked to consider a World Council of Churches paper with the title *Economy of Life: Justice and Peace for All*, brought to it by the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR). The meeting wholeheartedly welcomed this paper, which is a call to action resulting from six years of consultations and studies linking poverty, wealth and ecology. It calls for a process

envisioned as a flourishing space where churches can learn from each other and from other faith traditions and social movements about how a transformative spirituality can counter and resist life-destroying values and overcome complicity in the economy of greed.

It was encouraging to see the meeting able to engage with others in what is clearly a shared concern, overriding theological differences.

The other main agenda item, 'Government cuts: welfare reform', follows on from work done in the last two years and especially from minutes received from area meetings. Area meeting concerns include: the injustice of cuts that disproportionately fall on the most disadvantaged members of our society, in the face of growing inequality (and while for example the government maintains a commitment to the Trident nuclear weapons programme); abusive language about unemployed people, and misrepresenting facts; and the need for a Quaker public statement.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) have prepared some helpful notes with the title 'Government Cuts: Welfare Reform – what Friends can do'. BYM staff have also prepared a survey, which can be completed by any Friend, and which Jane Booth (Palmer) has circulated to local meetings. It is hoped this

survey will gather useful information about the concerns that Friends are identifying and acting on locally. This will in turn help staff to advise Friends and meetings, including Meeting for Sufferings. Please ask if you would like a copy; it can also be completed online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/qwelfare>

The Economics, Sustainability and Peace Group (ESP, the committee of Friends that oversees QPSW's work on economic justice) is clearly concerned about the specific impact of benefit reform. However, it has not come through as a strong priority for ESP's limited resources, compared to more structural issues to do with the causes of inequality – for example, those which are highlighted by Close the Gap (www.church-poverty.org.uk/closethegap). Additional work laid on QPSW would involve changing priorities and laying down or cutting back on current commitments.

The government and some of the media regularly misrepresent the poor, and Quakers have joined with other faith groups to ask the prime minister for an apology on behalf of the government. A very useful paper, *Truth and Lies about Poverty*, has been produced by the Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Churches and the Church of Scotland. It sheds light on a range of false beliefs that underpin public opinion and government rhetoric and policy. However, it is disturbing that these 'comfortable myths' are also commonly believed by churchgoers.

A public statement (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.21) was issued in 1987 and holds good today. As regards a Quaker voice being heard, the sense of the meeting on 6 July was that adopting a radical concern and staying with it for the long haul has in the past proved fruitful (for example with slavery; same-sex marriage; the issue of child soldiers). Can we identify a concern that will speak simply and clearly, eventually changing hearts and minds? Meeting for Sufferings will return to this in October and has asked QPSW to explore in the meantime what area of work might be appropriate.

In the last year or two the discernment of Sufferings has been to devote more resources to advocacy work, especially among central decision-makers in the

UK. Now, Meeting for Sufferings is in the process of drafting a replacement for the *Framework for Action 2009–14*, which will guide centrally managed Quaker work over the coming years. And Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is seeking guidance for YM agendas in 2014–16.

There are then openings at the heart of Quaker work, for a concern for economic justice.

David Sanders, Skye Meeting

North Scotland Area Business Meeting held at Pluscarden 24-25 August 2013 [\(back to contents\)](#)

Thirty-four Friends and Attenders were present during all or part of this area meeting, with a large number from Skye, and even our most northerly Friend, Elizabeth Nicolson from Unst in Shetland. Other meetings represented were: Aberdeen, Banchory, Elgin, Forres, Inverness, Lochaber and Lorn, Orkney, and the new meeting in Connel.

The first substantive item on the agenda was Alex Page's proposal for a Quaker Day Book, or Quaker History Engine/database. He intends to ask the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for funding totalling £79,500 over three years to enable him to create a website making information about early (1600-1720) Quaker history accessible. This had already been brought to the area meeting in Thurso in May, where a discernment group had been set up. We heard the report of this group, and Diana Brockbank as member of the group spoke to it. After a long discussion and many questions the meeting recognised the project as a quest worth pursuing, while pointing out that the AM itself is not in a position to make a substantial financial contribution to it. We encouraged Alex to keep contact with Ben Pink Dandelion, tutor in Quaker studies, and also with the Jordans meeting's Quaker history group, who are doing similar work so as to avoid overlap. Our own discernment group is willing to continue to support Alex.

We considered applications for membership by Marian Burrell, Skye, and Linda Mitchell, Lochaber & Lorn, and Connel, and were pleased to welcome them into membership later during the meeting, as they were both present. We agreed to recognise the growing group of Friends in Connel, some of whom also attend Lochaber & Lorn meeting, as constituting a local meeting, with Ian Johnstone as clerk and David James as treasurer and Elder/Overseer.

We began an interesting consideration, introduced by Tom Sayles, of possible implications of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route on the Kingswells Quaker Burial Ground, where Quakers, including some prominent Aberdonians, were buried from the 1690s onwards. It is no longer open for burials, unlike the Kinmuck burial ground. It has no headstones, but is surrounded by a dilapidated stone wall with a plaque on one side. It is possible that there might be a compulsory purchase order as the ground lies close to the route and new business centres. The question arose: is the ground important to us? Are Quakers attached to places? What if we get an offer of a sum of money for the ground with an offer to transfer the remains somewhere else, money which we might put to a good, quakerly use? Or should we resist and respect the spirit of early Friends to uphold the burial ground? Complicating all this is the fact that it is not at all clear who owns the site! We shall return to this at the next AM in November.

We made various appointments to AM posts (Gabrielle Anderson as E/O for Aberdeen, Ann Millar to Nominations Committee) and to conferences (Derek MacLean to the QPSW/QCEA conference in Brussels, Eva Deręowska to the conference on "Faith, what's God got to do with it?", and Jane Booth on a consultation on revision of QFP, together with a young person).

We heard reports (some of which will appear in this issue of *Northern Quaker*) by David Sanders on Meeting for Sufferings, from Diana Brockbank on General Meeting for Scotland, from John Melling on Ireland Yearly Meeting, and from Juli Salt on the Centenary Conference of Northern Friends Peace Board. Her report was a fitting prelude to the presentations by the two QPSW peace workers later in the day.

We finally considered a minute from Inverness meeting relating to the recent welfare cuts, which expressed concern that Britain Yearly Meeting had not made a public statement on the cuts, which have fallen particularly heavily on the disabled, poor and vulnerable. Inverness Friends are particularly worried about the impact of the so-called Bedroom Tax. We agreed to forward both the minute from Inverness and that of AM to MfS, while also urging Friends to write to their MPs about this concern. We noted that MfS will return to this in October.

After a good area meeting, which extended into the Sunday, we ended with thanking the organisers, and especially our caterer, Anneke Kraakman, whose last year of service this was. She will be a hard act to follow!

Eva Deręowska, Aberdeen Meeting

NSAM residential weekend August 23-25 2013 [\(back to contents\)](#)

We gathered in the tranquil surroundings of Pluscarden Abbey's lands. St. Scholastica's residential block was our base for meals (prepared by our resourceful and efficient Anneke and her volunteers) and for social time and Epilogue each evening. Some people camped in the harvested field nearby; men and boys' accommodation was in the Guest Wing of the Abbey.

Some of us attended evening service of Compline in the Abbey and our early morning Meeting for Worship was held outside one of the mornings. The weekend is an occasion to renew friendships and get to know fellow Quakers as well as conduct business, worship together and learn about this year's theme: Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Business was considered in the Village Hall, a mile away.

Our two young speakers for AM were from the Peaceworkers Programme, about to complete their one year placement. They proved to be lively and inspirational, giving us a picture of what faith in action actually is. The placements are not in Friends House but a scheme to support individuals and

small organisations, proving how an individual can indeed make a difference. It is our contributions to Britain Yearly Meeting that make this work possible, Friends.

Owen Everett worked with War Resisters' International and Forces Watch. He was funded to produce and edit a book "Sowing seeds: the militarisation of youth and how to counter it." During his year he had researched the ethics of UK military recruitment and listened to the views of young people, made valuable networks and gathered some revealing facts about the influence of the military in public life.

Rhiannon Redpath had been placed with Gender Action for Positive Situations (GAPS) whose work includes the No Women No Peace programme campaign which focuses on women's rights in Afghanistan. This tiny organisation works to raise awareness of the matter in the UK, putting on exhibitions, active on social media and providing written material and to support women in that country, where Rhiannon is due to go for some months later this year.-- Rhiannon and Owen showed a 10 minute video film they had made about the Peaceworkers Programme, which this year also made two placements at QUNO, Geneva and two in Burundi. It was a privilege to share some of their enthusiasm and optimism in the work they do on our behalf.

Eleanor Fairclough, Inverness Meeting

Pluscarden weekend: a short reflection [\(back to contents\)](#)

You will read the report of the area meeting in the Northern Quaker, but the Pluscarden weekend was much more than that. What was enjoyable about it?

- o Getting to know so many people who were just names to me before
- o The beautiful setting and peaceful, welcoming atmosphere of Saint Scholastica's (I've discovered at last who she was)
- o Compline in the Abbey
- o And above all, the contribution of the two young peace workers who did so much more than talk to us.

Both of them have just come to the end of a year's placement, Owen working to combat militarization in society, for instance Army recruitment activity in schools, and Rhiannon with 'Gender Action for Peace and Security', which concentrates on the effects of war on women and children, the necessity of involving women in the Peace Process. 'No women, no peace' is their slogan. Rhiannon is going to Afghanistan for the next few months, but we hope to see her in Skye next May.

Their presentation was stimulating and involved us all in thinking and talking, and it's sent me back energized, and feeling even more that there must be a role for our Meeting to find for itself, in the bigger scheme of things. We may not have any young Quakers in our Meeting, but they're out there. There are so many like those two, full of enthusiasm: can we adopt some? What sort of support and help can we give?

Marian Burrell. Skye Meeting

Wot, no flowers! [\(back to contents\)](#)

The growing practice amongst bereaved people to request "no flowers please" or "family flowers only" or "donations to so-and-so charity" should be a cause for slight concern.

The giving of flowers, whether it be for a glad or sad occasion, says something no words can express. How often has one felt the inadequacy of words when writing to bereaved friends or relatives. It does not have to be an expensive or elaborate tribute. The single rose says as much as a beautifully made-up coffin cross. But to be told that one's gift is unwanted, albeit for a good cause, is unkind. Did Jesus himself not rebuke his disciples when Miriam of Magdala poured oil "worth three hundred pence" over his feet. The poor will still be with us for a long time yet.

How else can the little girl next door express her feelings of loss for a kind neighbour if she cannot leave a posy on the doorstep? What better way to celebrate the life of a friend than to give a beautiful wreath, sheaf, or spray?

Like most things, fashions in floristry are always changing. Fifty years ago, florists were still being offered wire frames for empty chairs, harps and anchors. I have even had a request for flowers with which to line the inside of a grave.

The advent of crematoria has led to simpler designs of floral tribute. As there is no grave on which to leave wreaths, sheaves of flowers that can be taken home or sent to hospitals have become popular.

People especially today often begrudge the cost of funeral flowers. Yes, the price should only reflect the cost of flowers, accessories and professional skill of the florist. Without mention of the stress levels associated with the need to beat the clock!

Surely it would be better to request flowers AND donations.

Roger H Quinn, inverness Meeting

Link Weekends for young Quakers in Scotland [\(back to contents\)](#)

Once or twice a year, some young Scottish Quakers aged 13-17 meet up for the weekend for a link event. These weekends each have a different theme in which we explore in many different ways, either through interesting talks, done by staff or other people, or an interactive activity.

The theme for the last weekend, held in April at the Quaker Meeting house in Glasgow, was 'Communities: What Happens When.....?'. The previous link had led on nicely to this through the themes. We were focussing on what it is like to be part of a community and how that community might work together to operate. Unfortunately it was hard to find an outside talker, so it all lay on the staff, who managed to pull it off well. First, in groups, we got to build our own

town using drawings or building blocks, where each community would be. All the towns would be different, as we got different amounts of money to spend. This was a fun activity and it made us think what would be the most necessary stuff for a community to survive. Later on in the day, in different groups, we had to create and draw our idea for an activity a community would enjoy doing. Every group had different ideas, from an after-school club to a giant ferris wheel which went underwater.

Overall, Link weekends are fun, active weekends that bring us young Scottish Quakers together in a Quaker environment. I would recommend it to any Scottish Quaker aged 13-17 who would like to try something different and have lots of fun!

Gillean Palmer, Aberdeen Meeting.

JYM 2013: Talking About Quakerism– Is It “Oat So Simple?” [\(back to contents\)](#)

Back in April this year I was lucky enough to join Junior Yearly Meeting, situated in the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster. Quakers of ages 15-18 planned and attended five fantastic days of connecting with old and new friends, through Murder Mysteries and adventure trails, and exploring Quaker values and beliefs through discussion groups. I found JYM 2013 to be another wonderful and inspirational way to learn more about Quakerism, and the atmosphere provided by both staff and young friends helped build a supportive community in which to do so.

As one of few Quakers at my school, I am often asked questions on Quakerism, admittedly usually involving porridge oats and cheesy flavoured crisps. However no matter how many times I'm questioned about Quaker beliefs, I still find it hard to talk about Quakerism and explain exactly what Quakerism stands for. At JYM we explored the theme; 'Talking About Quakerism – Is It “Oat So Simple?”', and I realised that Quakerism isn't something with a precise dictionary definition. It is the freedom of self-interpretation that strengthens each individual's beliefs and Quakerism helps you believe what you want. To me, being able to share and respect each

individual belief, no matter how different, gives these Quaker events a strong connection within the community.

Sunday afternoon held an interesting discussion in which Paul Parker shared the idea of banishing four aspects of Quakerism into *Room 101*. This was a new way of looking at Quakerism, essentially picking out its 'flaws' and getting rid of them. One aspect to change was early morning Sundays, which was highly popular among around 100 teenagers! However Paul also suggested banishing Quaker membership, and JYM itself. Although I had to disagree on the latter, it did make me think about the restrictiveness of these aspects.

Theme tapas gave each of us the opportunity to dabble in a few sessions, run by an adult volunteer or guest facilitator, that were focussed on different parts of the theme. One session I chose to attend was; *Joining the Dots: trying to make sense of being a Quaker*. This aided me in thinking about how each aspect of Quakerism; worship, sustainability, spirituality, young persons events, connect and shape my choices in everyday life, away from events such as JYM.

Hearing and talking about Quakerism and other people's faith made me realise how different an individual's belief can be, and how difficult it can be to express that. Discussions provoked by the session, *The God I Don't Believe In* particularly intrigued me. As someone who is unsure about their belief in God, the Spirit and their faith, it is reassuring to share doubts in a friendly and positive environment. JYM is a fantastic opportunity to relate to the spirituality of others, and within that learn more about your own spirituality and what makes it unique to you.

Being able to explore Quaker spirituality and aspects of Quakerism helps develop our own understanding of what Quakerism means to us, as well as our confidence to share our beliefs to friends outside of Quaker events. The energetic and friendly vibe provided by everybody involved in JYM is fantastically welcoming, and friendships and memories I have received from Young Friends events such as JYM makes them the highlights of my year!

Ellie Palmer, Aberdeen Meeting.

Northern Friends Peace Board, (NFPB) Centenary Conference 15th June 2013 “Peace in All its Height and Breadth” [\(back to contents\)](#)

This was held at Friargate Meeting House, York, where the original NFPB office was, lots of overviews and reminiscences in the morning e.g. one talk by Andrew Farrar (Edinburgh,) not only whose grandfather worked in that office, but his father was also very involved. NFPB originally covered England North of the Trent, and later included N Wales and all of Scotland.

So NFPB began before WW1. Looking back, the challenge of this day was “not to see 100 years of NFPB History as hitting our heads against a brick wall.” But then NFPB is about building a culture of peace.

Over the decades it has challenged society where possible, to get this message over by many, many writings and events. E.g. “To mark 100 years of Quaker peace witness in the North, NFPB organised a 35 mile walk of witness from 29th June to 5th July. The walk began at Richmond Castle, where the ‘Richmond Sixteen’ (conscientious objectors in WW1) were imprisoned and the walk ended at Menwith Hill, the US Air Force electronic communications base on the North Yorks moors. This linked two significant sites of peace witness which span the Northern Friends Peace Board's first hundred years.” There are so many organisations involved in Peace promotion – confusing to the uninitiated like me. Paul Rogers a lecturer in Peace Studies at Bradford University, now in its 14th year, was the guest speaker. The Peace Studies was helped to be founded by Quakers, and Rotary International is very involved. I was surprised because he spoke so well, I knew he was kind of revered- which tends to put me off people. But he gave facts in an uncharged way – stayed with “what is.” He told us:-

- Relatively with all that is going on in the world we are slightly more peaceful than the 1990's (Balkans, N.Ireland etc)
- Peoples personal experience of violence in England now is not as bad as it has been in 16th Century e.g. War of Roses saw 30,000 killed in one day- that's about 1/5th of the population then!!

- There are less nuclear weapons. In the 1960's there were something like 60,000 – we definitely still have the capacity to destroy ourselves, but it's not as bad as the cold war – still about 5-6,000 deployed.
- Sometimes bad events help to create good outcomes e.g 1952 – the Great Smog of London said to have killed 4,000 people in 4 days (epidemiologists think maybe 12,000), - cinemas closed when customers in the tenth row couldn't see the screen!!!!- this led to the clean air act.
- 1858 the “great stink of London” led to Bazlegettes sewers and almost ended cholera etc
- On the bad side is the current “Ecocide” – my wording. He talked of new security threats because of what is happening to the environment, with global warming he suggested food shortages caused by drought, and a domino effect where we might, for example, see large numbers of people from Africa trying to get in to Europe

In other words we have the positives versus the hugely daunting!!!!
And so he continued with more interesting facts and lost me!- too much – I'd gone off on a thought!!

I escaped at lunch to a small café across the road, being joined by 2 others. This was owned by a tattooist. His tattoo parlour with 5 practitioners was upstairs. The café was light and airy and arty, with Buddha's and wise sayings painted on the walls, could have been a Quaker room, with trendy young people serving, apart from his mum and dad in control!! This made us ponder on the different ways we do our searchings' on our life's path.

In the afternoon we were offered an hour and a half of workshops – the choices:-

- Skills for peace work
- Oil, peace and conflict
- Nuclear weapons
- Culture of Militarism in Britain
- 2014 Centenary

I chose a Culture of Militarism in Britain, thinking along the lines of “what can we do to replace the military then”?? (Hadn't realised what militarism meant!!)

So you need to know where I am coming from literally and metaphorically speaking. Geographically about 18 miles one way from my home is the army base of Fort George, at Ardersier, home to “The Blackwatch, the 3rd Battalion of Scotland. They have been in Afghanistan a lot.

7 miles north is Kinloss Barracks, a new army base housing the 39 Engineer Regiment – much to the relief of Forres as RAF Kinloss was closed 2 years ago. The fence line borders the main part of the New Age group “The Findhorn Foundation” which has an NGO for Peace, and many who come visiting our LM, and members of Forres LM are connected to or visiting the Findhorn Foundation.

Then about 18 miles north East is RAF Lossiemouth (Lossie) with fighter planes.

I have been here for nearly 40 years.

At the time of my arrival, newly a Quaker – my thoughts had changed to more Quaker thinking, from being a child of WW2 parents (themselves the children of WW1) where the only books in the house seemed to be WW2 stories which I enjoyed and the main talk WW2- I knew no difference. The closest I had to a brother is my cousin who joined an army corps – Signals – at 16.

On moving here I had a housewarming and the other single women I worked with wanted me to invite my 3 single RAF male neighbours. But I wanted nothing to do with a bunch of hired murderers. Out of politeness to my colleagues, who did not think as I did, I invited them.

I was the one who married one of them, J. He had joined the RAF at 16 ½ . I don't see personnel in the Forces as evil monsters, many of whom see their roles as peacekeepers, but I might not agree totally with their thought processes.

The workshop I chose “Culture of Militarism in Britain” was not as I expected. It was along the lines of “Forces Watch:-

Challenging military presence in education

The armed forces visit thousands of UK schools each year, providing free resources, presentations and recruitment activities. The Government’s ‘military ethos and skills’ programme includes a number of initiatives that will see more military-led activity in schools. Forces Watch are concerned about the armed forces being promoted to children within schools and colleges. (Google Forces Watch for loads more info - I did.)

My group had the same ... enthusiasm, anger, arrogance... energy... as I all those years ago. Whilst I agreed with much of what was said, I had also the experience that my cousin and husband had done extremely well because they had joined the forces. Of course both are nearer 70 now. They signed up in peace time not even expecting to go into war. I have no experience of the “square bashing army”. That’s something else.

I maintained that 16 – 18 year olds in the joining the forces with “trades” do have the chance of some most excellent training. But I conceded that today’s youngsters probably will go into active war. They will probably have devastating experiences, physically and emotionally.

I maintained that parents in the forces also do not want their children joining up. Many in the Forces do not agree with the wars our government is sending them in to.

Our group modified its statement to something like “we agree that the forces can offer a positive experience/ good training for 16-18 year olds- but to what purpose.”

So Friends – what do you think?? Well - Id like a way out of banging my head against a brick wall on all this hopeless war stuff!!

Juli Salt NFPB rep, Forres Meeting

Kingswells Burial Ground [\(back to contents\)](#)

At our Area Meeting on 25 August in Pluscarden, Tom Sayles spoke about the dilemma that may arise for Friends as a result of the building of the Western Peripheral Route, which will pass close to the Quaker Burial Ground at Kingswells. Friends were buried there from the 1670s onwards, including Alexander Jaffray, who had been Provost of Aberdeen in 1649 and 1651. (Among the material about him available online is a two-page summary of his life at <http://www.ninetradesofdundee.co.uk/files/City%20History/People/Grissell%20Jaffray/Jaffray.pdf>.) There may be either a compulsory purchase order or a commercial bid for this land in the near future, though at present is hard to predict how things are likely to work out. The following is an article from Tom Sayles who is one of the Trustees of the North of Scotland Quaker Trust.

Peter McCaffery, Aberdeen Meeting

Quaker responsibility for and attitude towards burial grounds [\(back to contents\)](#)

A question was raised at the recent North of Scotland Area meeting in Pluscarden for which the meeting is seeking views from members across the area.

The North of Scotland Quaker Trust (NSQT) appears to have responsibility for two burial grounds on the outskirts of Aberdeen at Kinmuck and Kingswells. We say appears to have because whilst title to the Kinmuck burial ground is the responsibility of the Trustees of the NSQT, the position is far from clear in regard to the one at Kingswells which is situated very close to a proposed bypass route for Aberdeen and lies almost adjacent to a rapidly developing shopping and Business park.

Trustees of the NSQT and others have dealt with the maintenance and upkeep of the burial grounds (especial thanks to Anne and Colin Miller), but have recently addressed the question as to what the attitude of the Area

meeting would be if the Trustees were approached either by developers or as a result of a compulsory purchase order to sell the Kingswells site and agree to removal of the mortal remains of both Members of the Society and other local dignitaries who are buried therein.

Trustees each have different views on the mortal remains of our predecessors and indeed their own potential remains at some stage in the future. Historic Scotland has expressed an interest in the Kingswells site as being of significant local historic interest.

This matter was considered by Area meeting with varying views expressed including the following ;

- We have the responsibility to preserve burial grounds as an historic monument to our predecessors – both Quaker and non Quaker
- Once we are dead, the future of our remains is irrelevant, it is the memories of when we were alive that are important. If money is offered for the removal of the remains, this could be used for the benefit of current and future members and realistically, if the current site were to be replaced by a more prominent plaque celebrating the passing of these individuals, it might have more significance to the public than the current burial ground which is difficult to access.
- This issue should be determined by the NSQT Trustees and members of Aberdeen meeting

Clerks of local meetings are asked to draw this matter to local members and provide feedback to the November Area meeting at which further consideration will be given in anticipation of offering some guidance to the NSQT Trustees.

Tom and Phyllida Sayles, Orkney Meeting

Dates for your diary ([back to contents](#))

Area Meetings for 2013: 9 November: Inverness

Area Meetings for 2014:

- 15 February Forres
- 17 May Lochaber and Lorn
- Depending on availability of Pluscarden our residential AM will be held on one of the following weekends, 22-23, or 29-31 August, or 5-7 September.
- 8 November Aberdeen

General Meetings for Scotland in 2013: November 16/17th Aberdeen (residential)

Online newsletters available on the GM website: <http://www.quakerscotland.org>

- *Tayside Quaker*
- *West of Scotland Quaker News*
- *Northern Quaker*
- *Scottish Friend*

Courses and conferences: remember North of Scotland Quaker Trust has funds for attendance at these events. Check the Woodbrooke catalogue at www.woodbrooke.org.uk or tel. 0121 472 5171

Contributions will be most welcome to future issues of *The Northern Quaker*

The deadline is two weeks after Area Meeting. Please send contributions to:

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