Tayside Quaker

Vol 42 No 4 October 2018



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If you get Tayside Quaker by email, you have the advantages of receiving it earlier and seeing the pictures in colour. It also saves the AM money.

Closing date for the next edition is Saturday 19 January, 2019

Please send copy to the editor, Felicity Bryers

felicitybryers@virginmedia.com

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East Scotland Area Meeting, St Andrews, 3 November 2018

Dear Friends,

The next Area Meeting will take place in St. Andrews, at 11 am with refreshments available from 10.30 am. All are welcome. The venue is the Quaker Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews. It is quite close to the bus station, and there is charged parking in the Argyle St car park a few minutes' walk away. Soup will be provided at lunchtime, but please bring your own sandwiches to supplement this.

There will be a few items of business in the morning, but the bulk of our time together will be with our visiting speaker, Geoffrey Durham. He has written a number of excellent introductory books about Quakers and Quakerism, and is writing a new one called "What do Quakers believe?". If you're not sure about how you would answer this question, or even if you are, do come along! (Geoffrey also had a career as a magician.)

The topic will be "Quakers Sharing Experience". Personal experience lies at the heart of the Quaker faith, yet we rarely talk to one another about it. Quakers Sharing Experience sessions explore our most resonant stories of spiritual encounter and growth and examine their unique power to enrich our religious lives. They offer the chance to hear, pass on and respond to the deepest callings of the Spirit wherever we have found them. They provide an opportunity for sharing, for learning and, above all, for knowing one another in the things that are eternal.

This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about our faith, and about each other, without any pressure. Please come, and do encourage others who may not be regular participants at Area Meeting. Attenders are very welcome, but it would be helpful if they could let me know in advance on 01334 474129 or robin.waterston128@gmail.com.

In friendship, Robin Waterston Clerk

Quaker Quicks – What do Quakers Believe? Geoffrey Durham

To be published March 2019 by Christian Alternative Books



WHAT DO QUAKERS BELIEVE?

Geoffrey Durham

"So what do you believe?" It's the question Quakers are always asked first and the one they find hardest to answer, because they don't have an official list of beliefs. And Quakerism is a religion of doing, not thinking. They base their lives on equality and truth; they work for peace, justice and reconciliation; they live adventurously. And underpinning their unique way of life is a spiritual practice they have sometimes been wary of talking about. Until now. In What Do Quakers Believe? Geoffrey Durham answers the crucial question clearly, straightforwardly and without jargon. In the process he introduces a unique religious group whose impact and influence in the world is far greater than their numbers suggest. What Do Quakers Believe? is a friendly, direct and accessible toein-the-water book for readers who have often wondered who these Quakers are, but have never quite found out.

East of Scotland Area Meeting (AM), 18 August, 2018 Perth

Over twenty of us gathered on a bright day at the Subud Centre in Perth; our opening reading was two poems from John Lampen's Swarthmore Lecture 'Mending hurts' and we returned to the theme of forgiveness in the afternoon.

Among our morning business we heard from Robert Thompson of his first visit both to Meeting for Sufferings and to Friends House, Robert described this as a "double delight". Some of the topics addressed at Meeting for Sufferings were the treatment of children in Israel/Palestine; acknowledgement of Quaker combatants in WW1 and the revision of Quaker Faith and Practice.

Our morning discussion was in response to a request from Meeting for Sufferings to respond to a concern raised by Southern Marches Area Meeting about restoring truth and integrity in the public sphere. We were asked to consider specific questions, in particular if we agreed that we were living in a 'post-truth' world and if so, if there was something that Quakers, as a faith body, are called to do. We acknowledged that this is a complex subject but rejected the term 'post-truth' accepting that there has always been lies and manipulation of facts. What is new is the widespread use of social media and the way information is distributed and shared and the wide dissemination of misinformation, including by forces actively trying to undermine democracy. We concluded that we do share Southern Marshes concern and are encouraged to be 'pattern and examples' (George Fox). We supported the interim report of the parliamentary select committee on disinformation and 'fake news' and hope that their recommendations will be acted on. We recognised the value of our GM parliamentary engagement officer and also the role of schools to provide balance and support for pupils. We would not however support diversion of resources from Quaker work on this issue,

but would encourage our parliamentary engagement officers and committees to work in this field when they are able.

Within membership matters we were delighted to welcome Linda Jones from Dundee Local Meeting into membership.



Robin Waterston, Adwoa Bittle and Anneke Kraakman enjoying the sunshine at lunch time

In the afternoon Pam Brunt gave a thoughtful presentation on forgiveness, following a course at Woodbrooke. Pam advised us of the centrality of forgiveness within the Christian faith and quoted the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". Pam described how difficult and complicated forgiveness is, both towards ourselves and to others and how it is natural to want to retaliate or seek revenge.

Pam told us about Simon Wilson, who set up the 'forgiveness project'. Simon had been seriously injured in a hit and run accident, where the driver was never identified. Simon lived with anger, fear and bitterness for some time, but once Simon was able to accept his situation, he gradually moved to a place of forgiveness. Simon still feels anger at times and has to work on this daily; but with forgiveness came healing and a release of positive energy.

Pam suggested that forgiveness is not forgetting, or giving in, or condoning, it is an on-going healing process that has many stages with the hope to bring harmony rather than pain.

Pam also spoke of 'false forgiveness' where there is denial of harm with the risk of perpetuating abusive behaviour, as in situations of domestic violence and also 'premature forgiving', for example in conflict situations such as Northern Ireland, where relationships have not been restored effectively and past hurts can be revisited.

We reflected on the long and on-going process of forgiveness; the letting go of the need for revenge to allow healing to begin. It is a gift to ourselves and can be offered as a gift to others.

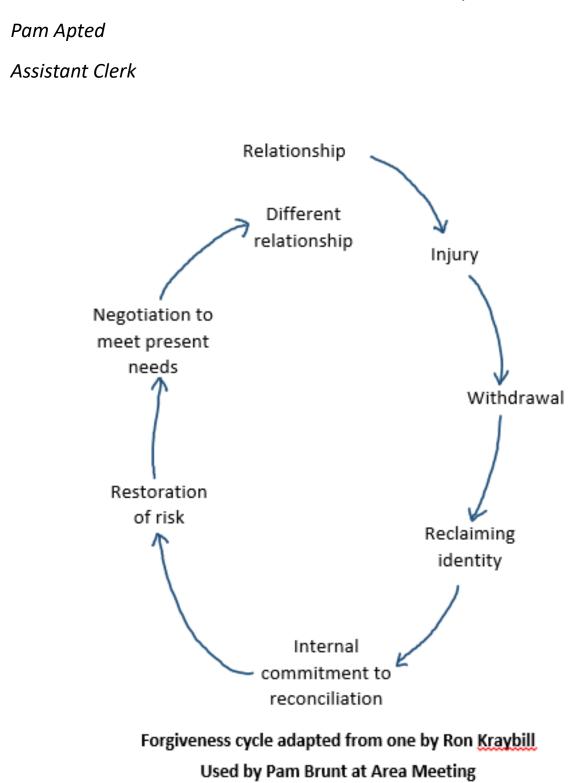
Reflecting on Pam's thoughtful presentation I was reminded of Gordon Wilson, whose daughter Marie, died in the Enniskillen bombing and whose moving words to reporters, "I bear no ill will, I bear no grudge" inspired others to join him in working for peace.

A Song for Forgiveness

I saw him standing in the evening light; I tried to pass, pretended not to see. He picked the one remaining apple from the tree, And offered it to me.

I put my load aside, reached out my hand;I felt the tears run down my dirty cheek.He drew me from the path, we sat down side by side, And found we could not speak. The end of day, the trees, the dusty road,And one lone bird gave thanks for him and me.The night no longer threatened loneliness and hate,But peace and mystery.

John Lampen



Meeting for Sufferings, Friends House, 7th July 2018

I arrived in London for my first Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) on the Friday evening to 30°C heat on Euston Road. It had been a number of years since I had been in London so I immediately felt like a little country mouse in the middle of the heat, noise and vast numbers of people, who all appeared to be moving at speed!

On Saturday morning around 80 Friends gathered in the Large Meeting House at Friends House for the first Meeting of the new triennium. Clerk to MfS, Anne Ullathorne, led us through a full and busy agenda. She began with a very helpful Induction to the workings of MfS. Following a show of hands it was clear that a good number of those present were "first timers" like me.

A highlight from the day for me was the process of receiving Minutes from Area Meetings. Topics covered included Israel/Palestine, Circles of Support and Accountability and the upcoming revision of our Book of Discipline.

For lunch Friends moved into Home Groups and I enjoyed meeting Friends from Wales and other Friends from Scotland. We discussed ways of better preparing for MfS and also ways of taking MfS back to our Area Meetings.

Other topics covered during the day included Court and Prison Register, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees report and Quaker Recognised Bodies.

As well as being my first MfS this was also my first visit to Friends House and I was greatly impressed by the clean, bright and orderly appearance of the building. I was also aware of the historic significance of the many years of Quaker witness carried out in this fine place. The July 7th Meeting was reported in the Friend on the 13th, 20th and 27th of July and the full Minutes and reports can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/mfs

Robert Thompson

Shindig, 28 July – 4 August, Ackworth School, North Yorkshire

Summer Shindig is a residential summer camp for young Quakers aged 11-16, mainly from Scotland and the North East of England. Further information can be found at <u>https://summershindig.wordpress.com/</u> Financial help is available from Area Meeting.

Two young Quakers from Dundee describe their experience this year:

Thank you so much for contributing to the fees of Shindig; it is the highlight of my summer, and it being the fourth time that I went I knew how much I would enjoy it.

This year we had the theme of bridges and had talks by three people about them. One of the talks was about borders and about the struggles it takes to cross them and how building connections and bridges with other people would help calm the borders and make crossing them easier. Another talk was by a former Shindig young person about the conflict in Bosnia and how it was continuing even though the war has ended; he also talked about how building bridges between religions would help ease tensions. There were also loads of other things in Shindig that I enjoyed like the trip to York city centre, participating in the art group and meeting all the young Quakers and building relationships with them

Thanks again for making it possible to have all of these wonderful experiences and meeting all of the Quakers who also attended.

Ailsa Phin

Thank you very much for helping fund my Shindig trip. I have really enjoyed going for the last 5 years. It has become an essential part of my year. I particularly enjoyed this year as a 16 year-old leaver because I got to host A-worth and I made lots of good friendships with new people from different cultures.

The talks during Shindig this year were also very inspiring and educational. I enjoyed the first day's talk which was about border crossings. The second talk was about the conflict in Bosnia and the UNO University and its role in the conflict. The third talk was my favourite. It was about becoming an ally and protesting for people who couldn't for political reasons. It was my favourite talk because it may me want to become an ally and it taught me about something that I did not know existed.

In conclusion I have enjoyed all my years at Shindig and I am very grateful for your funding.

Robyn Phin

It was only after working with 'Questabout' that I realised how hard it is to be a Quaker teenager. Young people are thrown together at school with all sorts of people, whereas their parents may well be able to move in a selected circle. The rules of social intercourse in schools are usually not as refined as in the office. While Dad and Mum may work beside people with whom they disagree, politeness will prevent too much overt friction; the boy or girl from a Quaker family in an area where the majority of people have more conservative attitudes may be made to feel very isolated. Not many people will be challenged to a fight at the office, but many Quaker teenagers have to defend daily a peace testimony which they may not yet have worked through for themselves. It is here that support from older Friends not in the immediate family can be vital.

Hugh Pyper, 1986, Quaker Faith and Practice 22.68

Northern Friends Peace Board, Lincoln, September 2018

At the end of September I visited Lincoln for a meeting of Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB), and Lincoln is about as far south as you can get and still be in NFPB territory. However, with the hospitality and generosity of local Friends this long journey was trouble free.

As usual part of the day was taken up by administrative business like nominations and a financial report but this did not take long. In the members news section we heard of many peace related activities including a report from Janet Fenton about the 'Nae Nukes' rally at Faslane the week before that successfully welcomed international guests to Scotland and celebrated the work of ICANN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.). For those of you who like to look ahead, next September the DSEI (Defence and Security International) arms fair will be coming back to the Docklands Exhibition Centre in London; details of the Quaker response to this are still in the planning stage but expect more updates as the DSEI gets closer.

In the afternoon we heard from members of Lincoln meeting about their involvement with the International Bomber Command Centre. Many RAF bomber squadrons were based in Lincolnshire during the Second World War. Quakers have a long standing commitment to peace and nonviolence while the bombing campaign against German cities is a controversial event in our past, many German civilians died, many British and Commonwealth air crew also died. The International Bomber Command Centre has three main goals... remembrance, recognition and reconciliation. The centre includes a list of the aircrew who died, only the names, no ranks or awards are included, two peace gardens and an exhibition that includes the effects of the bombing raids on the ground.

These things happened; even if Quakers never endorsed the bombing campaign it was carried out by our country, which sent young men to

carry out these acts. Remembrance, recognition and reconciliation is about not forgetting and in this spirit members of Lincoln Meeting volunteer at the Centre and help with their educational activities.

Peter Cheer

Peace Gardens (from https://internationalbcc.co.uk/about-ibcc/peace-gardens/)



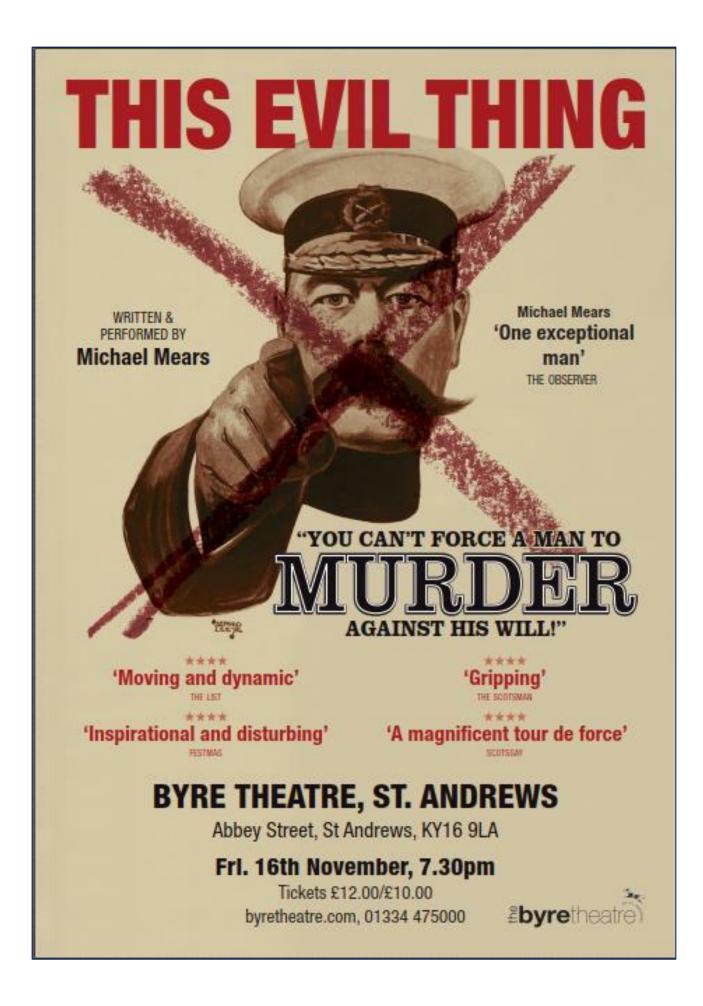
The International Bomber Command Centre features two peace gardens set across 10 acres of landscaped grounds. Each offer quiet, contemplative space and they are free to access.

The Lincolnshire garden

- 27 native Lime trees have been used to mark the stations
- The Garden plays host to the Ribbon Of Remembrance
- Over 8,000 Lincolnshire daffodil bulbs have been planted
- Wild turf has been used in areas including poppies

The international garden

- Commemorates the support of 62 nations
- Includes a planting bed incorporating international species
- Promotes peace and reconciliation
- Incorporates the Peace Grove, providing that private, quiet moment



This Evil Thing

St Andrews Byre Theatre, Friday 16th November, 7.30

This play about Conscientious Objectors in WW1, written and acted by Michael Mears, was first performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 2016. Since then it has been shown in many places throughout England - in Quaker Meeting houses, schools, public halls and theatres. It has been greeted with great acclaim as a most powerful and moving creation. Now Michael is doing a tour of Scotland and will be coming, especially for us, to the Byre Theatre in St Andrews at 7.30 on Friday November 16th. He hopes that many members of our Area Meeting will be able to attend.

One review tells us:

The Non-Conscription Fellowship was founded by Fenner Brockway and Clifford Allen in November 1914. After conscription was introduced in 1916, the movement's leaders were jailed, and Bertrand Russell and Catherine Marshal stepped in as chair and secretary. This Evil Thing tells that story but also that of the conscientious objectors (COs) themselves. Around 16,000 COs refused to sign up. Many of them were forcibly enlisted and then subjected to military punishments; a number were taken to France to face execution (although this was later revoked). Here, in this original solo work, the play's author and lone actor, Michael Mears, turns our attention to the men who refused to fight, and asks us to understand their heroism.

At the heart of This Evil Thing is the story of Bert Brocklesbury, a 25-yearold teacher, Methodist lay preacher and absolutist (meaning he refused to serve even in a non-combat role) from Yorkshire, who lends the facts of the play personality and warmth. In the production Michael plays around 52 characters. It opens with him stuck in a ditch 3ft by 2ft and 10ft deep as he depicts a conscientious objector confined there for days as punishment. The ditch is filled with water and he must stand on two narrow wood planks. It is a horrendous feat of endurance and a harrowing sight, but it makes a clear point: these men weren't cowards, far from it, they were willing to suffer and even die for their moral principles.

How a lone actor with few props (the planks of wood are two small upturned drawers on which he balances) conjures such a visceral scenario is testament to Michael's exemplary acting and his superbly crafted play. The actor's sole assistant is a clever soundtrack — choral song, gunfire, judge's decrees, Pathe-style news bulletins and the like, which lend the performance dimension and texture. Michael switches seamlessly between his many roles: he's a stretcher-bearer ducking fire on the front, a barking sergeant, a worried girlfriend, a troubled dad, an army officer, a philosopher, a politician, a campaigner... the effect is of a master storyteller at work as Michael weaves the compelling tale of peacemakers fighting against the tide of popular opinion and the iron-fist of the military. The story is so absorbing, however, you don't really notice the acting process. Like most in the room, I am smitten by this revelatory tale of the conscientious objectors and their plight, as if rethinking truths we had previously taken for granted. Like the conscientious objector stuck in that dark hole, we look up and see the light.

Another writes:

This is a moving and dynamic retelling of a hidden story from the last century. There were 16,000 conscientious objectors who opposed fighting during WWI. This one-man show, written and performed by award-winning actor Michael Mears, tells the tale of one of these brave 'conchies'. In this urgent and physical performance, Mears plays tribute to Bert Brocklesby – a schoolteacher who refused to bear arms and was silenced, starved and almost shot. Mears convincingly intersperses historical re-enactment with his own self-questioning, even asking what he would have done, had he been born at the time. In the cold face of war, Mears thinks he might not have been so brave. But his play is his own daring ode to the 16,000. Mears does their plight justice in a series of gritty displays of the violence faced by these men. The set of simple wooden boxes is used in innovative ways to create makeshift prison cells, court-rooms and trenches......

Please come and bring your friends including school children. Because of some strong language (from the sergeant-major!) the play is recommended for 12+ age group.

Julia Prescott

This is from a sermon by Reverend Ratliff in Houston, Texas. The sermon was so interesting I actually got out a pencil and paper and took notes....

The seven steps to get out of a rut:

- 1. Assume responsibility for your own life.
- 2. Believe that you can change.
- 3. Clarify what you really need.
- 4. Stop worrying about what other people will say.
- 5. Stop waiting for ideal circumstances.
- 6. Do it now whatever you seek today.
- 7. Be bold and dramatic.

Connie Wright

News from Local Meetings

Perth

This entry is about celebration and enjoyment.

Diamond Wedding



Alan and Barbara celebrate 60 years of marriage

Perth Meeting extended congratulations to two of its long-standing members, Alan and Barbara Legg, who recently celebrated their diamond wedding. They met in 1953 at Porlock in Somerset, a holiday venue of the Co-operative Holidays Association. Barbara was almost 17 and had just taken her GCSE O levels, whilst Alan was just about to begin his teaching career. Five years later, once Barbara had gained her degree, they married. The wedding took place in a village Baptist Church, south of Birmingham, whilst the reception was held at Barbara's family home and in their garden. Sixty years later, their celebrations took place at Altskeith Country House, overlooking Loch Ard. After what Barbara described as: "a sumptuous lunch" the day developed into: "a wonderful and joyous celebration". Alan sang a version of Gilbert and Sullivan's "I've got a little list", featuring all the guests present, followed by musical items from their granddaughter and her friend, both students at the Glasgow Conservatoire. The music was interspersed with games and the day finished with the cutting of a Diamond Wedding cake and a cup of tea.

I asked Barbara what she thought was the secret to a long and happy marriage. She reflected that many years ago her granddaughter had asked her who was her best friend and she had had no hesitation in saying that was her husband: "So, maybe friendship, doing many things together along with that original spark, which keeps a relationship special. And of course being lucky enough to still be alive and kicking long enough to reach sixty years of marriage!"

Away Day

On a lovely autumn day in September a group of us went to Adwoa's home for our Away Day. The theme of the day was "Getting to know one another better", a topic that has been on our minds in recent years and one that we continually try to address in many different ways. On this occasion it was through enjoyment – just having the time and space to enjoy being in one another's company. The day was a mixture of structured and unstructured sessions with opportunities of being in the company of Friends but also of being alone, of being quiet and more reflective.

Because a new Friend had joined us, the day began with everyone introducing themselves. Originally, quite a short introduction had been intended, but as it developed each person spoke of how they were feeling. This afforded the whole group a glimpse of the lives we all lead outwith Perth Meeting and the events, thoughts and feelings each person was bringing with them to the session. It gradually became obvious that this was a most fruitful session, as it's rare that we speak openly of what is on our minds when we arrive at any meeting.

The group then held a brief Meeting for Worship. The main morning session followed, during which we were able to focus on our Meeting and how we might strengthen our community. We were presented with a table full of picture cards from which we each chose one we thought spoke of our feelings about Perth Meeting. Working in small groups of three, we first reflected on each other's cards, then explained why we had chosen our own particular picture. When we gathered back as a full group we offered just a phrase or a few words to sum up the various discussions. Overall, this was a very powerful session, giving us so much to think about and ponder on during the afternoon.

Over a leisurely shared lunch conversations flowed. During the afternoon some Friends went for a walk, others sat and talked together, whilst others watched or took part in a demonstration of shiatsu. The day finished with Worship Sharing, during which Friends reflected on the day. There was a strong feeling that we needed to continue to meet in this way.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who made the day a success, but particular thanks to the planning group of Brian Anderson, Anneke Kraakman and Marion McGivern for an uplifting and memorable day.

Enid Harding

How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal...

Advices and Queries 18

St Andrews

The summer months have been relatively quiet with many Friends on holiday.

On Saturday 29 September St Andrews Ffriends hosted a lunch to celebrate our dear Nan Stewart's 100th Birthday which is on October 4th. It was a really moving event with Friends joining us from Perth and Dundee. Daughter Sheila and husband Iain had brought Nan from North Berwick, where she now lives, to spend the weekend in Dundee as Nan expressed a wish to visit the newly opened V & A Museum of Designever up for a new adventure!

In honour of Nan's Centenary there were 3 cakes signifying 1 0 0. Recognising the challenge of blowing out 100 candles we opted for a large pink candle remembering Nan's love of the colour pink.

Nan and Sheila joined us on the Sunday for Meeting for Worship which was an added delight. Nan was as sprightly as ever and Ffriends had a chance to recall shared moments through the years.

Sunday 30 September was special as we held an All Age Meeting for Worship which was led by Genevieve Orr. With the help of props and an imaginative presentation she told the story of Noah's Ark. Most of our children are preschool age and Genevieve held their attention and encouraged their participation which added to the joy that was felt by us all.

Buša Cochrane-Muir

Birthday celebration



Friends in St Andrews Meeting were delighted that Nan Stewart came back to celebrate her 100th birthday with them. Friends she had known in St Andrews were joined by others from Perth and Dundee for a joyful lunch in the meeting house. A cake made of three different cakes which made the number 100 was cut by Nan who spoke about how much she missed the meeting and her friends there. She knew it was better to be near family in North Berwick but her Quaker friendships from her days with Alf in Dundee and latterly in St Andrews held a special place in her heart. Julia Prescott spoke about how important Nan was to the meeting, serving in many capacities as elder, overseer and clerk and recalled drama activities and discussion evenings which Nan had introduced. Isobel Taylor (a mere 97 year old) described Nan as "a hard act to follow". An astonishingly sprightly Nan, always a person engaged and interested in the world, was staying with her daughter and son-in-law in a hotel in Dundee for the weekend so that she could revisit old haunts as well as see the new V&A museum. Everyone there said what a lovely afternoon it was, sharing food, fellowship and friendship with a remarkable Friend.

Quaker wedding

John McCaffery and Aasta Eik-Nes were married under the care of St Andrews Quaker Meeting on Saturday 1st September at Comrie Croft.



Nearly eighty family, friends and local Quakers gathered together, sitting on hay bales in a woodland clearing to witness Aasta and John take each other as partners in marriage. John is the son of Peter McCaffery who was a member of Aberdeen Quaker Meeting. His partner Aasta is from Norway. They walked together into the meeting for worship, John in his kilt and Aasta in traditional Norwegian dress which had belonged to her grandmother. Spoken ministry reflected the happiness that surrounded this couple in their love for each other and the love given and received by their friends. John's brother Martin read a most moving excerpt from a letter their father

Peter had written for his sons when the boys were very young. In it he expressed his hope that they would find loving partners with whom to share their lives. As we upheld this young couple, surrounded by woodland, with a gentle hint of rain and a bright sky above the canopy of trees, it was clear to us that John and Aasta felt blessed to have found each other.

Joyce Taylor

Meetings for Worship

Dundee Meeting House, 30 Whitehall Street, Dundee DD1 4AF Sundays 11.00 am

St Andrews Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews KY16 9HL Sundays 10.30 am

> Children's Meeting - each Sunday during school terms Enquiries: Genevieve Orr (01333 360396) Midweek Meeting, Thursdays 1.15 – 1.45pm

Perth: The Subud Centre, 7 St Leonard's Bank, Perth PH2 8EB Second and last Sundays of each month 11.00 am

Children's Meeting usually last Sunday of each month Children's contact: Dorothy Aitken (01764 652398)

East of Scotland Area Meeting

Saturday 3 November 2018, St Andrews Saturday 16 February 2019, Dundee Saturday 18 May 2019, Perth Saturday 17 August 2019, St Andrews Saturday 30 November 2019, Dundee

General Meeting for Scotland

17 November 2018, Perth 9 March 2019, Glasgow 8 June 2019, South East Scotland 14 September 2019, North Scotland 16 November 2019, East Scotland (Perth) 7 March 2020, South East Scotland