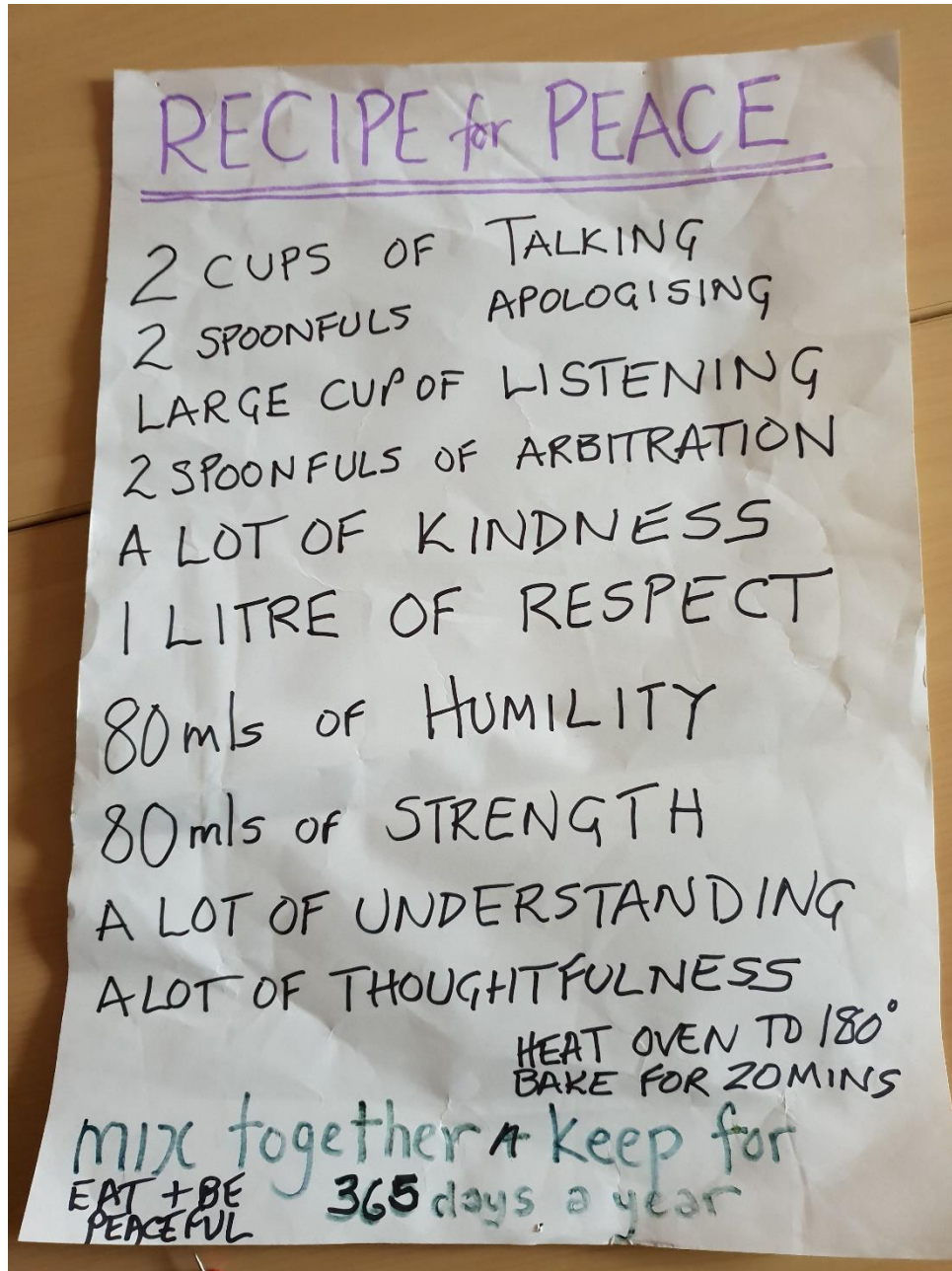


Tayside Quaker

Vol 43 No 1 January 2019



Written by children from St Andrews Meeting

Contents

Children's activities in St Andrews	Page 3
Clerk's invitation to Area Meeting	Page 4
Report of November Area Meeting	Page 6
Diversity survey	Page 8
Exciting news for Dundee Meeting!	Page 9
Meeting for Sufferings, November 2018	Page 11
Interfaith	Page 13
Link weekend September 2018	Page 16
Northern Friends Peace Board, November 2018	Page 18
Red and white together	Page 21
Remembrance	Page 23
A roving mind	Page 24
The sense of the sacred	Page 25
Why?	Page 26
Elders Retreat	Page 27
Ice Concert	Page 29
This earth is a garden	Page 29
News from local Meetings	Page 31

Tayside Quaker is available by email and on paper. If you would like to be added to the email list, please contact the editor at [**felicitybryers@virginmedia.com**](mailto:felicitybryers@virginmedia.com)

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 13 April 2019

Please send copy to the editor, Felicity Bryers

felicitybryers@virginmedia.com

East Scotland Area Meeting
Scottish charity number SC0020698
All opinions in Tayside Quaker are those of the individual writers and not necessarily of The Religious Society of Friends.

Children's activities in St Andrews

Children in St Andrews Meeting have been busy! Our cover picture shows their Recipe for Peace created on a Sunday in November.

Recipe for Peace

2 cups of talking

2 spoonfuls apologising

Large cup of listening

2 spoonfuls of arbitration

A lot of kindness

1 litre of respect

80 mls of humility

80 mls of strength

A lot of understanding

A lot of thoughtfulness

Heat oven to 180°. Bake for 20 mins.

Mix together and keep for 365 days a year.

Eat and be peaceful.

Daniel and Joseph
from St Andrews with
vegetables they
planted in the
Meeting House garden



East Scotland Area Meeting, Dundee, 16 February 2019

Dear Friends,

The next Area Meeting will take place in Dundee at 11 am on Saturday 16th February, with refreshments available from 10.30 am. The venue is the Central Baptist Church Halls, 9a Ward Road, Dundee DD1 1LP. It is about 5 mins walk from the High Street or 10 minutes from the rail station. * See map.

Drug misuse, alcohol dependency, gambling addiction, use of cannabis by young people – do these social problems seem too difficult? Are you affected by any of this, either directly or indirectly? Are changes to the law needed? What can we do? Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs is a charity that works by giving advice, arranging meetings, publishing briefings and information and facilitating links between Quakers concerned with these questions. Our speaker for the morning session will be Alison Mather, Director of QAAD, who will help us better understand these important issues.

In the afternoon our business session will include a report from Meeting for Sufferings, the annual financial report, and an important update from the Dundee Friends Property Trust on progress with the building changes. We will also think together about the new priorities for our parliamentary work.

Please come, and do encourage others who may not be regular participants at Area Meeting. All are welcome, members and attenders alike.

In friendship,

Robin Waterston,

Clerk

Travel directions to Area Meeting in Dundee



**Exit the railway station, turn left and cross over the road towards the Club Bar opposite. Walk up Union Street which is to the right and cross the road at the traffic lights. Past the big church on the left (and penguins on the wall) enter the first glass door of the Overgate Centre. Leave the Centre via the exit immediately opposite. Keeping to the left walk straight ahead along Barrack Street. At the first set of traffic lights turn left and the Baptist Church is 50 yards on the left.*

For car drivers, parking is a bit tricky. The nearest car park is a multi-storey at West Bell St, Dundee DD1 1LX, a few minutes' walk from Ward Road.

East of Scotland Area Meeting (AM), 3 November 2018

St Andrews

“Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal....” George Fox 1657.

Amid blustery winds and muted autumn colours, over twenty Friends met in St Andrews for our Area Meeting. We held a short business meeting in the morning, but the main activity was a workshop led by Geoffrey Durham and assisted by Lea Cowin.

Our business meeting, included information about the redrafting of the guide to East Scotland Area Meeting, copies of which are now available in our local meetings and also on the ESAM website.

We heard of the Elders Retreat, held in September at the Atholl Centre, Pitlochry. The group explored the joys and challenges that eldership can bring, recognising that the responsibility for eldership rests not only with the elders but with the whole meeting.

We heard the happy news of the Quaker wedding of Aasta Eik-Nes and John McCaffery at Comrie Croft, Crieff and also the acceptance into membership of Susan Milne of Dundee Meeting.

We were delighted that Geoffrey was able to bring the workshop ‘Sharing Quaker Experiences’ to Scotland; Geoffrey explained that the workshop has not been running for long and they are still learning and adjusting it.

Geoffrey is well known to Quakers for his excellent introductory books about Quakers and also, to some, for his previous television career as a magician; he still has, I found, a certain stage presence; he is warm, smiley and funny at times, but also passionate about sharing his own journey to Quakers and encouraging and enabling others to do the same. Like most good ideas, the idea of Quakers Sharing Experiences, is a simple one, that is creating a safe and comfortable space for us to share our own spiritual

journeys, to find words to express what really matters to us – and by telling our stories to gain a deeper understanding of ‘that which is eternal’.



Geoffrey Durham and Lea Cowin at Area Meeting

We were divided into groups of 3 or 4 and asked to take it in turns to talk about a range of topics for set periods of time, from one minute, to four minutes. We were asked not to interrupt the person who was speaking, and it was emphasised that we were to feel comfortable, that no-one needed to share information they did not wish to and could indeed remain silent if they chose. The topics were wide ranging from the general: “say something about your name”; to the more specific: “describe a meeting that was special for you”. There was also the more bizarre challenge, when we were handed out some miscellaneous items to talk about (what can you say about a battery?), so thinking up responses was not always easy but often interesting and thought provoking. There was humour and emotion and some frustrating moments, when for example the speaker ran out of time at a critical point in their story. There were some silences, but there was generally a gentle hum from all the little groups in the room. It was challenging and mentally

taxing, but I found it uplifting too especially when someone else was able to find the words to 'speak to my condition'. It was a rare opportunity for self-reflection as we tried to convey our own tales, and also for me humility as I listened to others and I felt grateful to those able to find words for experiences which are so hard to define. The time limit was a difficult discipline to obey, as well as not interrupting, (I did on a few occasions, just in an encouraging way), but the main lessons for me is that listening with a kind heart really is a gift we can give each other and that the conversations must continue, if only just to hear the end of the tale!

Pam Apted

Assistant clerk

Diversity Survey

A survey has been launched to examine the diversity of the UK Quaker community. It has been prepared by Edwina Peart, the new diversity and inclusion project coordinator, with the agreement of Meeting for Sufferings. Topics include ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, health impairments, and class. The responses will be used to gauge where currently we are in terms of inclusion, and to chart a path for development. "In five- or ten-years' time we can use the survey to check on our progress and see what worked."

All are invited to complete the online survey, which can be found at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/quakersurvey. Or you can get a paper copy from your local Clerk.

Robin Waterston

Exciting News for Dundee Meeting!

A lovely five storey building in Dundee looks out on Whitehall Crescent with the letters MEETING HOUSE carved into its stone face. This Grade B listed building has been the home of Dundee Quakers for 125 years and is familiar to Local and Area Meeting Quakers and others throughout Scotland and beyond. It is also noticed by many who have glanced in passing, hired the rooms or lived within its walls.



For the last few years however, we have been holding our meetings in office premises round the corner because our Meeting Room is up a flight of stairs which makes it inaccessible for people with mobility problems. We are fortunate to have found a venue nearby which is accessible, but this is not the ideal situation. We know it is possible to hold Meetings for Worship anywhere, but we all miss the atmosphere and history associated with our own place.

Now that it is possible to return to our own Meeting House as our long-term tenants are leaving we can remodel and renovate the ground floor and basement to meet our own needs with an accessible entry and a lift between floors and also be more visible to the general public.

We have decided to start fund raising to help raise the amount required. The total cost is estimated at around £120,000, so with £50,000 earmarked from the Dundee Friends Property Trust reserves and the Trust applying for grants from a number of other sources, including the Meeting House Fund of Britain Yearly Meeting, a shortfall of around £50,000 will need to be raised locally. A small group has been appointed to co-ordinate this work which has ambitious plans including a pop-up shop selling books, bric-a-brac, plants and clothes; a stall in Dundee centre selling soup and rolls along with a display of our campaign; a recipe book to be called 'The Quaker Baker' and a benefit concert - all throughout the next year!

We are also seeking donations from grant giving Trusts and individuals such as yourselves. Can you please help Dundee Friends to achieve our aim by supporting us with a donation or with good-as-new items for the shop?

We have attractive ball point pens with our name and website details inscribed which you could offer to sell! Please contact Marion Sharkey (dundeequakermeeting@hotmail.com) regarding donations and gift aid forms or contact any member of the local fund-raising group below.

Thank you.

Pamala McDougall - Co-ordinator (pamala.mcdougall39@btinternet.com)

Norman Alm - Co-ordinator

Jean Stewart - Group Treasurer

Marion Sharkey - Administrator



Meeting for Sufferings, Woodbrooke, 23 – 25 November 2018

The November Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was a residential weekend at the warm and welcoming Woodbrooke. A very full agenda began at 7.15pm on the Friday evening and took the gathered Friends through until 12.30pm on Sunday.

The bulk of the weekend concerned the presentation and follow on discussion of several reports from both Central and Standing committees. Rowena Loverance spoke on behalf of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and Jocelyn Bell Burnell on Quaker Life Central Committee. The report from Quaker Peace and Social Witness was presented by Jeff Beatty. We also heard from Ann Floyd from Quaker World Relations Committee. These reports and discussions gave an uplifting and wide-ranging picture of the work that is being done on behalf of all Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM).

Meeting for Sufferings also received and endorsed the Strategic Priorities from the BYM Trustees:

1. Thriving Quaker Communities
2. A sustainable and peaceful world
3. Simple structures and practice.

Being only my second MfS, I was very interested in experiencing the process of discernment when a report was being considered on Sunday morning from the Review Group set up to review the Committee on Clerks. This Committee nominates names for clerks/assistant clerks for YM MfS and BYM trustees. The Review Group's recommendations were only partly accepted following a large number of spoken contributions. The recommendation that the Committee on Clerks be laid down was not accepted.

Later in the final Sunday morning session the BYM Sustainability Group was laid down and will be replaced with a substantive agenda item on Sustainability at MfS once a year,

On a personal note, I welcomed the reports from other European Yearly Meetings and was pleased to hear of the close relationships that exist, despite the current political uncertainties, with Friends in Belgium/Luxembourg, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

The November Meeting for Sufferings was fully covered in the November 30th and December 7th editions of "the Friend".

All papers and minutes can be found on the BYM Website

Robert Thompson

New office bearers in our Meetings

Dundee Meeting

Clerk: Pamala McDougall

Assistant clerk: Martin Pippard

Administrator: Marion Sharkey

Perth Meeting

Clerk: Jill Tutton

Overseer: Peter Cheer

St Andrews Meeting

Elder: Julia Prescott (for 1 year)

Overseer: Carolyn Burch

Interfaith

I have been asked to write a piece about my work in the interfaith endeavour, and to report on a couple of events which took place during “Scottish Interfaith Week” which occurred last November.

I have represented Dundee Quaker Meeting with the Dundee Interfaith Association (DIFA) since its inception some twelve or so years ago and, in turn, represented DIFA on the national body “Interfaith Scotland” also since that time.

I am passionately committed to this work and I have little doubt you would agree it is mighty important for our times. It is the principal reason (along with diminishing health) I am seldom seen at other important Quaker meetings these days. There is only so much one can do properly.

Religious conflict is some of the worst conflict of all – wars and even butchery on behalf of religious beliefs have scoured human history, and whilst we, as Quakers, have had no part of it, others have, and my association with the mainstream churches – once Catholic, now Episcopalian – facilitates my being able to speak also on that issue, where it matters.

It is appropriate, I think, to tell you that we, at DIFA, have suffered a hiatus for the last couple of years, after several years of exceedingly good work. A chairperson resigned, and our management committee folded.

The good news is, after a lot of work and effort, we have got a new management committee together, and some weeks ago, at Dundee University Chaplaincy, we re-launched. DIFA is alive (possibly using a different name) once again. I will keep you informed of developments.

During this local hiatus, however, Interfaith Scotland, the national body, has flourished, and I have continued to work with them throughout this local unhappy matter.

We at Interfaith Scotland are blessed by having an outstanding director, Dr Maureen Sier, whose skill and charisma no doubt contribute to the organisation's being enthusiastically supported financially by the Scottish Government.

The central office is in the Springburn district of Glasgow, and along with the director, there is enough money for an excellent Development Officer, Frances Hume, along with clerical assistance. We are also blessed by various organisations, or people, that offer voluntary assistance. For example, we have had a young and very enthusiastic German trainee pastor with us for the last year.

I hope this gives you the general background to what is going on in Scotland on the interfaith front.

Let me now turn to Scottish Interfaith week which was held in November.

I am delighted to be able to tell you that over fifty interfaith events, all over Scotland, took place that week. There are interfaith groups, like our local DIFA, at work all over the country; the Fife group, for example, is exceedingly active and functioning outstandingly well.

We at DIFA, during that week, simply offered our re-launch at Dundee University Chaplaincy, but an outstanding presentation also took place at the Al Maktoum College of Higher Education here in Dundee on Thursday of the week in question.

Al Maktoum offers, throughout the winter period, first class lectures on interfaith matters (see <https://www.almcollege.org.uk/>). On this occasion they offered a full day's symposium on local and wider issues. There were talks on matters ranging from religious commitment in Scotland to the jute trade in Dundee.

One statistic that caught my eye was that 70% of 18-24-year-olds in Scotland no longer have any religious belief.

We had a talk from a member of the Anne Frank Institute. We all know about Anne Frank, but did you know that they have created an Institute that sends its participants to schools all over the country to talk about peace and reconciliation? Such talks have even taken place in Dundee schools.

Another point was a comment from a member of a panel that was created to promote a question and answer session during the day. The person in question, the Dean of the local Episcopalian Diocese, made what I believe is an excellent point in relation to interfaith work, namely that since people seldom change their religious views (and please note the Interfaith movement is an ardent non-proselytising one) we should in our exchanges concentrate not on beliefs but on values. Isn't that an excellent idea?

At DIFA, we have a humanist on our management committee (and a Big Noise in Humanism at that!). He is a man who, important for our age, insists that belief is just as important as faith. My experience is that quite a number of Quakers would share that view.

I hope I have given you a general overall picture of what is happening on the interfaith journey here in Scotland. Incidentally I also have links with Interfaith England where the story is much the same as here and I have, on Dundee's behalf, also attended meetings in England over the years. That, however, is another story.

I will henceforth do my best (which I confess I have not always done) to keep you informed and for you to be involved in this important matter for our age, to the extent that you wish. Meanwhile please know that I am happy to work at this endeavour on your, as well as my own behalf.

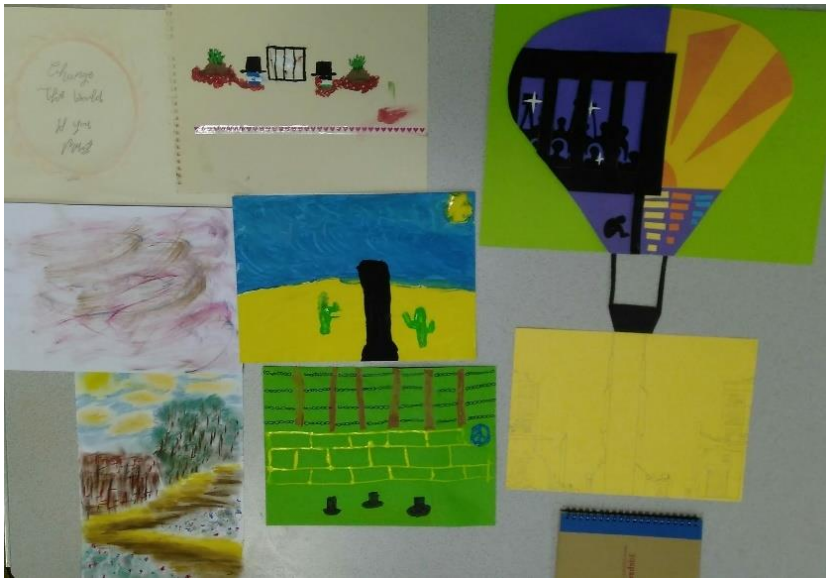
I can be found on kenriley3@juno.com if you wish to discuss anything or wish to know more about what I have written here.

Ken Riley

Link weekend September 2018

Over a dozen teenagers gathered at Edinburgh Meeting House, where we engaged in an excellent workshop from Solutions not Sides – a London based charity looking at resolving the Palestine/Israeli conflict. In the afternoon we were encouraged to give a creative response to what we heard, some writing poems and a play and others using multi-media arts materials to create some very evocative pieces of art.

Genevieve Orr



Art work created at the Link weekend



A poem written at the Link weekend:

The Roundabout

The roundabout just sat there
Amid the chaos of houses and traffic lights
Directing traffic without regulations
Traffic lights have rules and slows traffic down
Angry blaring of horns showing
Displeasure at being stopped
The roundabout just sat there
The traffic not stopping as it drove around it
Options to go in any direction to wherever
Think of the possibilities
Houses have walls dark and looming
Tall and unrelenting with no compromise
No way through
The roundabout just sat there
A small haven of beauty
A tree, a bush, a pile of stones or a flowerbed
No dead ends
If you miss your turn off just go round again
Cars crash and cut across others, trying to get away
The roundabout just sat there
The cars all go the same way make way for others, drive alongside then
The roundabout just sat there
Unresisting, not controlling, just guide
The roundabout just sat there...
Just sat...

Bruce McQuaid

Northern Friends Peace Board, Sheffield, November 2018

Due to some showery weather and the low late November sun on my way to the latest Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) meeting in Sheffield I saw no less than six rainbows! Thanks must go to Sheffield friends for their hospitality.

At the start of the day we had the members forum when we heard about inspiring peace actions from across northern Britain. Among these was an update from Hannah Brock the coordinator of Quaker Voluntary Action letting us know about the QVA volunteering opportunities in Britain and abroad. Of particular relevance to us in Scotland was when Hannah asked for suggestions of future QVA projects in Scotland. If you have any ideas of short projects that would suit a group of Quaker volunteers, then contact Hannah to discuss it (www.qva.org).



Also mentioned in the members forum were Roots of Resistance, Quakers Against the Arms Trade and the film War Child. Roots of Resistance are campaigning against the Defence and Security Equipment International arms fair which will be taking place in East London next year. DSEI 2019 is some way off and planning is at an early stage but you can find out more at <https://rootsofresistance.org.uk> .

War School (<https://www.war.school/>) reveals how the British government is spending £100m of new public funding and using more than 40 new strategies to promote military values to the public and entice

children into the armed forces. Screenings will take place in 2019; meanwhile you can watch a trailer on the film's website.

After the members forum we heard from Sue Beardon on the work of the Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations before splitting into small groups to explore the difficult relationships between religion, violence and non-violence. This exploration has arisen from the 2016 Trondheim Statement on Religion and Violence by the World Council of Churches, you can read it online at

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/statement-on-religion-and-violence> .

In the afternoon Celia McKeon introduced us to 'Rethinking Security' (<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>). Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists who share a concern about the current approach to national security in the UK and beyond. We believe that this approach is a significant barrier to progress on a range of progressive agendas for peace, justice and ecological sustainability. They are committed to building a much richer understanding of what security really means, and of what is required to tackle insecurity and build a more just and peaceful world. What do we mean by security and how can we promote it? Rather than defining security as the absence of risk, it should be understood as a shared freedom from fear and deprivation, and the freedom to live well.

We also heard about recent activities and staff changes at Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Included in this was the response from The Board of Jewish Deputies to the decision by Britain Yearly Meeting not to invest in firms that profit from illegal settlements in Israel / Palestine. This was the act of small clique of Quaker bureaucrats...did they mean Meeting for Sufferings? If this interests you, look at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-will-not-profit-from-the-occupation-of-palestine> .

Among the internal NFPB business of the day was a review of our finances. The true picture of the board finances has been distorted by one-off payments and a very generous legacy. Excluding these items NFPB is running at a deficit. In the long term this will not be sustainable, and we are looking at ways of raising money from Quaker and other grant giving trusts. However, we also agreed to make a small donation towards the appeal raising money for an Opposing War Memorial in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. This had been a long-standing ambition of the Edinburgh Friends, Geoffrey and Elizabeth Carnall, who were active in the work of NFPB for many years. If you would also like to support this appeal there is more information at <https://opposingwarmemorial.wordpress.com/> .

Peter Cheer



The display of crafted poppies made in St Andrews for the 11th November and which were hung outside the meeting house.

Red and White Together

When I asked our local Church of Scotland minister and his wife, a hospital chaplain, if I could leave white poppies and explanatory literature before Remembrance Day in the church vestibule, they invited me to help prepare the exhibition within the church. I have always felt part of the community but for the first time in the 25 years we have lived in the village of Inverkeilor I found myself sitting with members of the congregation, many I know well, attaching white poppies along with red ones to the waterfall of poppies flowing from the pulpit and round the font. The members of the congregation had knitted, crocheted and sewed hundreds of red poppies, and some white poppies, in preparation for the display.

This opportunity was deeply meaningful for me. It gave me the chance to talk about the growing influence the sale of white poppies has become and to explain the origins and background of the poppies. I wear both a red and a white poppy as a personal statement, but respect and understand those who wear just one, including Quakers.

White poppies are now sold and distributed by the Peace Pledge Union. Any money raised over and above the cost of producing, distributing and publicising the poppies goes towards the education and campaigning work, thus promoting nonviolent approaches to conflict and working for peace. These aims resonate well with Quakers.



Last year cards were produced by Quakers in Britain on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland which give information and promote the use of white poppies, and these have been well used this year.

I enjoyed my time helping with the display in a community spirit and felt moved to attend the Remembrance Day service at which I was warmly welcomed. On leaving the church we were offered a red or white poppy with a tag attached with a name of a local man killed in WW1 taken from the War Memorial situated in the graveyard.

Learning more about this young local man and the sacrifices he and millions of others, including Conscientious Objectors, made in both world wars has increased my appreciation, understanding and the vital need to continue to work for peace. Both red and white poppies are helpful reminders.

Pamala McDougall.

Deepening worship

Our Quaker faith is grounded in our worship and witness. These go hand in hand: our experience in meeting for worship gives us the strength to work in the world; our experience in the world draws us back to meeting for worship. And, crucially, our meeting for worship deepens when our Quaker communities thrive.

That's why in 2019 we need to focus on finding ways to nurture our Quaker communities. How can we be more loving, more inclusive? How can we learn together, find new ways of worshipping together, deepen this worship, and welcome more seekers in?

Paul Parker (Quake, January 2019)

Remembrance

They stand, heads bowed
The Ministers in black.
Their poppy wreaths
Their offering of remembrance.

How many more
Remembrances
Must we have
Before we learn?

How many bombs
Must be dropped
On Yemen's poor
Before we say---

Enough, no more!
Lest in selling
Britain's bombs
We sell our soul.

Flanders' poppies
Shame us all!
The dead cry out
For peace not war.

Barbara Legg

A roving mind

As a nontheist, what do I do in Meeting for Worship if I don't have a god to worship? A good question! And one I have often asked myself. It's all too easy to drift off into wondering what I'm going to have for lunch, whether I remembered to feed the cat, and other inconsequential musings.

Michael Wright, one of the founder members of the nontheist group of Quakers, has a mnemonic – ACTS – which he practises at Meeting. A is for Awe – at all the wonders of creation; C is for Concerns – for anyone who needs his help and for all the conflict in the world; T is for Thanksgiving - for all the good things that have come his way; and S is for Self-examination – what could he have done better and how can he make amends? A more detailed explanation of these is given in the Quaker booklet 'Through Us Not From Us'.

In a recent nontheist newsletter there was a report about part of the annual conference when those present compiled some reasons for going to Meeting for Worship. They were:

- to find a space behind/below oneself, the ego
- to have a piece of the action, to be a part of the whole
- to be part of a community of shared values
- to get in touch with the teacher within
- to try to discern what love requires
- to preserve an empty space for selfless thought
- to centre thoughts on each Friend present

One of the contributors to the latest newsletter, Audrey Regan (whose permission I have obtained to quote her!), describes it as 'finding a quiet and creative peacefulness'. She goes on to say 'The important thing is that everyone will find something special about sharing in that time

that we set aside and in being with others in an inclusive, loving, non-judgemental acceptance of our differences’.

Even for those who do have a god in their lives these suggestions may still be helpful.

Sheila Phillips

The Sense of the Sacred

On Monday evening (Oct 1), a small group of Friends quietly gathered in St Andrews Meeting House. This was the second of three gatherings for worship-sharing to consider 'The Sense of the Sacred'.

Months before (June 3), Zinaida Lewczuk had presented three meditations during the AM retreat at The Bield, near Perth. Some of the participants, at least, had felt that day to be very deep and significant in their spiritual walks. Subsequently, the St Andrews elders planned, with Zinaida's permission, to take some of her questions from those meditations and give them more time and space in the opportunity that worship-sharing provides.

We discovered that what was revealed really deserved still further time and contemplation! The more time that was given to each question, the more the question's significance seemed to shift. Questions include:

- What is most precious to me?
- How can I stay open to the mystery?
- What is most worthy of protection?

Such questions may then invite further personal exploration on an individual level – the boundaries disappear into infinity!

Meri Goad

WHY?

Some months ago I was prompted to voice my thoughts that, whenever we decide to do, offer to do or feel obliged to do something - no, these three action starters do not spring from the same inner roots - we should first ask ourselves why we wish to do or become involved in whatever we are about to add to our existing, routinely committed duties.

This short 'ministry' subsequently led to the request to explain this philosophy in more detail. Thinking how best to do this took me back to my early childhood years when, almost every time I was told to do something, or given an explanation to one of my inexhaustible questions, my, to me, 'logical' response would be 'Why?' or 'How?'.

This all important 'Why?' was not a matter of deliberate defiance to do something or mistrust, but an intrinsic need to establish the true need/reasons for the task demanded of me or the basis on which the information of a given belief/dogma was based. Needless to say, the replies always had to be tailored to my growing understanding.

Far from outgrowing this analytical examination of causes, actions demanded, or beliefs held, (mine and those of others) the 'Why?' has remained a very important, integral part of my entire life.

When it comes to our intended actions, whether motivated by love, kindness, generosity, self-sacrifice (in time, money, personal effort etc.) or motivated by the opposite emotions, they not only deserve but must always be subjected to an honest, careful analysis of 'Why?' we feel moved to respond (positively or negatively) to human needs in the way we do. The answers are not always simple or clear cut, but this honest self-analysis is the first step to our emotional growth and inner harmony. Many of our 'noble' deeds are rooted in our deep-seated needs to have a purpose for living and a visible link with our own kind or even a sense of guilt. If the deeper, inner motives are negative, honest insight can help us

to face our true self, leading to healing and even reconciliation as we learn to re-establish harmony within ourselves and with life in general.

In short, we must take time to, firstly, be truly honest with ourselves before we can be truly honest with others about the real reasons why we respond to life's demands in the way we feel we must or should do.

'WHY?' is the key to spiritual growth and wisdom.

Anne M. Lindsay

Elders Retreat, September 2018

Area Meeting (AM) Elders met on a beautifully Autumnal Pitlochry weekend at the Atholl centre.

We began by exploring our responses to the question "Quakers can believe anything, right?" to which the short answer is "Not true". The more lengthy considered responses surround this report along with some photos.

We explored potential issues of difficulty within local meeting and at area level, with a view to sharing learning and we read with interest Minutes brought by our recently appointed Elder from 1982 which spoke to our condition! We feel strengthened in our role by meeting with each other regularly at Area level and working things through together. Our experience is enriched by responding to each of our concerns as individual Elders and as representing local meeting.

We discussed Meeting for Worship "etiquette" and acknowledged the practice of regular revisits of acceptable behaviours within our Meetings. We value that everyone in Meeting for Worship can take responsibility for





Eldering, whilst recognising that having a duty elder present is always reassuring for those gathered.

We held a relaxing evening with singing, sharing memories and a reading from one of Lancashire's finest comic writers, Stanley Holloway.

We give our profound thanks to the AM for making this nurturing opportunity possible.

Genevieve Orr

Prayer (1)

Prayer the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth
Engine against th'Almighty, sinners' tow'r,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days world-transposing in an hour,
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted Manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices; something understood.

*George Herbert 1633
Contributed by Barbara Davey*

Ice Concert

Thanks to the winter for giving us these fantastic instruments.

Terje Isungset

The musicians, in furs and ear-flap hats,
are ready to play. Their instruments
have been sliced from glacier ice,
chain-sawed and chiselled,
sculpted to an orchestra of dreams.

Mittened fingers tap a xylophone,
the sound is pure as winter.
At minus thirty the ice is crisp
though the lucent keys remember
the flow and ripple of water.

A fairy tale horn curves a double stem,
soars upward in glassy lily-mouths.
Wind chimes hang in rows like stalactites;
some sound the way caves might sing,
some ring like wine glasses.

And now a voice, a wordless song.
It dips and circles, a young woman
singing the seasons in their cycle,
leading us again and again to the ice.

Paula Jennings

This Earth is a Garden

Quaker Voluntary Action Gardening Retreat , October 2018, Swarthmoor Hall. About 10 people, not all of whom liked gardening, came together – why had they come?



The Cool of the Day

Do you like my garden so free?

Through the gate we worked, in the cool of the day, weeding, composting

Finished the task in one day

We walk in the labyrinth,

in the orchard,

in the quiet garden.

We walk

Could you live in this garden?

You may live in this garden if you keep the waters clean.

Damsons , apples and pears

You like barrowing the compost to the side of the burn?

Prune the climbers along the wall of the Hall?

I like forking the nettles and the docks with two friends
Around the apple trees we are a team
We do the same the next day.

We like Chi Kung every morning
Worship in the Hall every morning
Reflection every evening
We cooked and cleaned, saw the sea and listened.

Why had we come?
What is the Journey of Gardening good for?
To work with others, get through a crisis, be part of something
To feel one's body work, to think, to see the birds in the sky
To honour the history of this land
To work in silence, to prove it can be done pure and free ... to be free.
My motivation – but the others?

*Anneke Kraakman,
inspired by the song "Now is the Cool of the Day",
performed by Coope, Boyes and Simpson
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzVcdi1xrYw>)*



News from Local Meetings

Dundee

Starting from 6th January 2019 Meeting for Worship will be held at 11am in the Wederburn Room of The Steeple Church, Nethergate, Dundee which is adjacent to the Overgate Centre. There is a lift and doorkeepers will be at the main doors to guide Friends to the room which is on the 2nd floor. This is a temporary move due to an unexpected lack of availability at Whitehall Street where we have been meeting. We will continue to meet at The Steeple until we can move back into the Meeting House, hopefully in the autumn of this year.

Pamala McDougall

Clerk, Dundee Meeting

<http://www.quakerscotland.org/dundee>

Perth

Pacifism under test

In November Felicity and Philip Bryers hosted an extra meeting at their home when we were introduced to a DVD produced by the Quaker Service Memorial Trust entitled *Pacifism Under Test*. Meeting, as we did, a week after commemorations had taken place to mark 100 years of the end of WW1, this was a timely opportunity to consider the nature of pacifism then and now.

The DVD was a series of talking heads arranged on specific topics. There were contributions from a variety of people, holding a range of views.

Some were Friends, some not; some began as pacifists, some didn't, and some changed their viewpoint as their involvement in the war developed. It was a thought-provoking DVD.

Thanks to Philip and Felicity for hosting this meeting, for introducing and guiding us through the various sections of the DVD and for the lunch, which everyone enjoyed.

Experiment with Light

Looking forward to the summer, Perth Meeting will be holding an Experiment with Light Workshop at the Bield Retreat Centre on June 29th. In a change to the original plans, this event will be led by John Lampen and Lesley McCourt, while the Elder will be Barbara Davey. The event is being organised by Kevin Franz and myself and we are very much looking forward to this opportunity of strengthening and renewing our spiritual pathways, both individually and as a wider meeting. Further details will be circulated in the coming weeks.

Changes and a Farewell

The New Year has brought a number of changes to the roles Perth Friends fulfil for our Meeting. Jill Tutton is now Clerk and Peter Cheer has become an Overseer. More changes can be found in Meeting News for January 10th, 2019. These changes have caused Oversight Lists to be re-arranged. For those new to Quakers it might be useful to explain that Elders and Overseers devise this list so that every Friend in Perth Meeting has a named point of contact. Should you wish to check who your Overseer is, there is a copy of the new list on the noticeboard.

And now the farewell – this is my final entry in Tayside Quaker as Perth Correspondent, a role I have fulfilled since the summer of 2015. I should like to thank everyone who has, over the past few years, assisted me to write the pieces either by sending me ideas, suggestions, reflections or photographs.

It has been such a pleasure to write about Perth Meeting; indeed, being Perth Correspondent has been the most straightforwardly enjoyable role I have fulfilled in a Quaker setting. This has been, in no small part, because of the support and encouragement of the editor, Felicity. It is now the right time to pass on the writing to a new correspondent and for me to say – thank you for reading!

Enid Harding

St Andrews

Discoveries

The October Discoveries evening was led by Nicky Stubbs who talked about her experience of A Course in Miracles (ACIM) – a transformational, psycho-spiritual course with forgiveness and eternal love at its centre. Nicky has been a student of ACIM for about five years and her talk introduced us to key elements of ACIM which she felt has much that is complementary to the Quaker way. There were also possible similarities to Eastern beliefs, especially as found in the Bhagavad Gita. Nicky told us how being a student of ACIM was ongoing, and to reach the end of the Workbook's 365 lessons was just a beginning! We had a brief go at a couple of the lessons that encouraged students to move away from being judgemental and fearful towards an awareness of Love's presence. The evening gave all of us much to think about. It was led with sensitivity by Nicky and she provided a valuable opportunity for us to know one another better in the things which are eternal.

Barbara Davey

More Discoveries

To mark the start of “winter time” at the end of October we were invited to join a Labyrinth Walk with friends before Meeting for Worship which took advantage of the clock change.

November turned out to be a busy time with Area Meeting, the afternoon being given over to Geoffrey Durham's “Sharing Quaker Experience”. The afternoon was followed by a bring-and-share supper at Joyce Taylor and Huw Lloyd-Richards home. This gave opportunities to further explore those issues that had been raised earlier.

Later in the month we held a Discoveries morning at the home of Pam Brunt and Robin Waterston, “In conversation between Kate Douglas and Pam Brunt” who have known each other over many years both in and out of Meeting. It was interesting to learn of their work crossover and how Quaker values informed their work in Social Work and Women's Aid. They both agreed how important Meeting for Worship was in affording them spiritual support and growth. Previously there had been more children and young people attending and although many did not continue to attend their nurtured values have remained. All in all, this was an enriching morning spent with two dear friends that valued the opportunity of reflecting on their lives and where they have been taken.

In December we met at the home of Joyce Taylor and Huw Lloyd-Richards where Paula Jennings read some of her poetry. Paula is able to paint a rich tapestry of colour and texture with her words. It promoted much discussion, recognising that each of us look at words with diverse eyes that enrich what is laid before us. Paula was generous in providing us with copies of the poems she read. We appreciated her openness to other possibilities of different interpretation. Her voice was an important element to our enjoyment and understanding of her poetry.

These Discovery events bring us together and give us an informal setting in which to explore and develop our friendships.

Buša Cochrane-Muir

Meetings for Worship

**Dundee: Wederburn Room, The Steeple Church, Nethergate, Dundee
DD1 4DG (adjacent to the Overgate Centre).**

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: Anneke Kraakman (07746 117 762)

East of Scotland Area Meeting

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

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*