

West Scotland

Quaker News

July 2014

Clerk's Letter	2
Centenary of outbreak WW1	3
Faslane's future plus Scottish Peace Network Events	4
June Area Meeting by telephone	5
June Meeting for Sufferings	6
Testimony for Alison Davis	7
Appreciation of Jean Pilborough	9
Meetings in Skipness & Mull and Iona	9-10
2013 Milngavie Meeting Report	10
Curriculum for Quaker Excellence	11

Clerk's Letter

Well, not long now. I expect we've all been thinking deeply about our approach to the referendum and its result. Unlike some of you, I've not been able to take part in much consideration and discernment in Quaker terms. I've been concerned too at times about some of the ways the campaigns have been presented. It seems some of those writing letters to the Herald find it difficult to hear where others come from. This led me to try a personal spiritual discipline: to let go of my possession of my particular view to the referendum question. Detachment is much easier when there is nothing to grip us personally. And as the bard knowingly puts it:

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

Part of this task I've set myself is to try to examine all those emotions, prejudices and assumptions behind my viewpoint. It's much more fun listing those of others. I've also got to guard against the self-satisfaction that can arise – 'my daddy 's more humble than your daddy' type of thing. One way that's helped this process is my trying to get into the shoes of those who view things differently, to try and understand what they see and where they come from. It's been an interesting experience. I can respect them more now, I hope. I've looked again at the wise Advice: 'think it possible you may be mistaken', and worked through Advices & queries with the question in mind to see what more light can be given me. 17 is a good start of course. I'm grateful to Friends who have been able to express our collective insights and experience, based on recognition of the holy potential in each person. And the trying to put things in place so society can work to the betterment of us all: individuals, community and ecosystems.

The result so far is that I feel I understand more where I come from, and might even keep with my viewpoint, but from a deeper commitment to the desired end results as well as this particular step on the way. And I'm surprised to find I am also more open to accepting and working with the result, whatever.
That's me. How are you doing?

Michael Hutchinson (*Glasgow Meeting*).

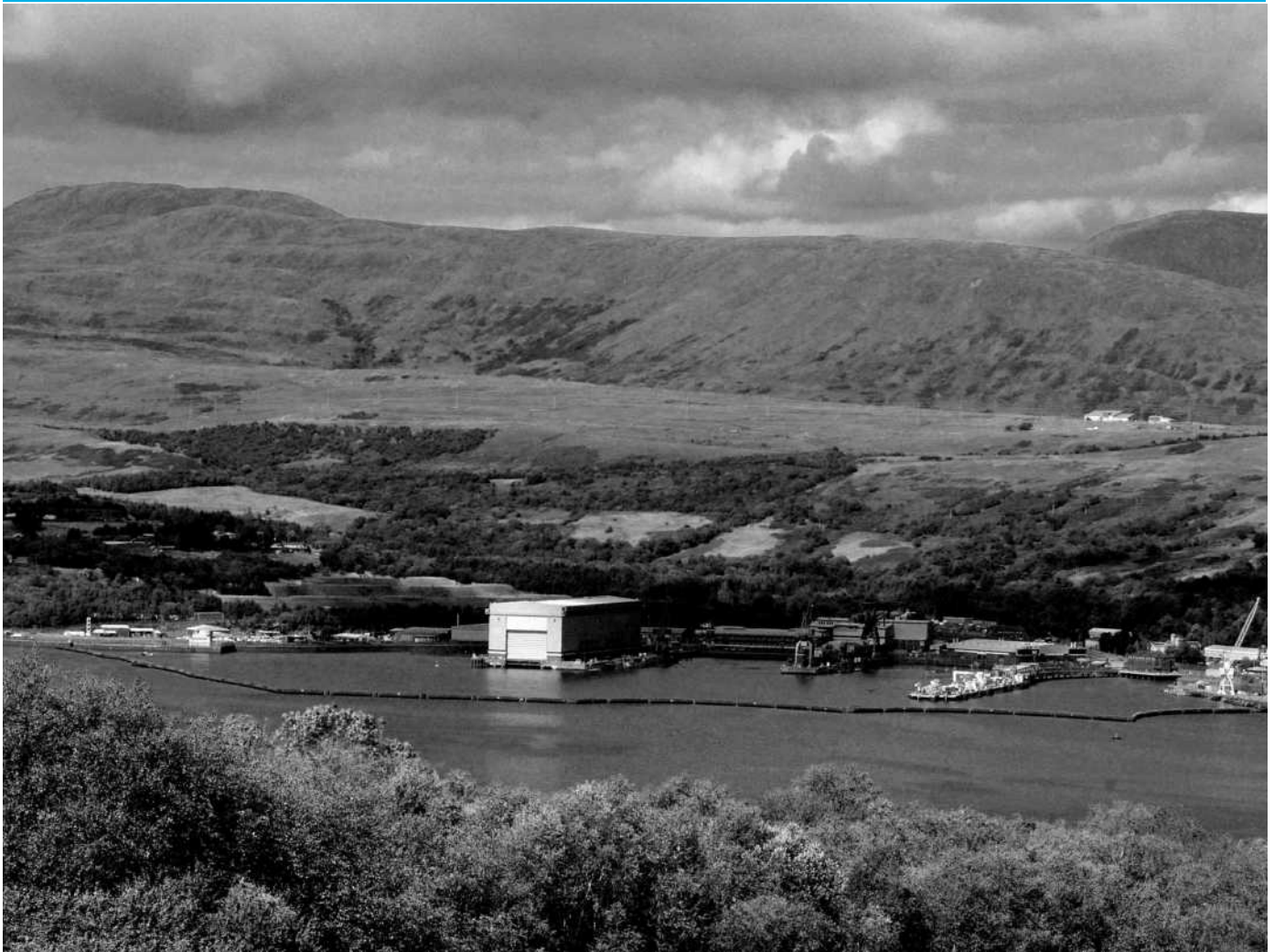
The training of men to kill each other is a violation of the sacredness of personality for it is a crime against that of God in every man. It requires an inhumanity and a blind obedience, that is a negation of responsible service to our fellow men.

QFP 23.93

August 4th Centenary of Outbreak of WW1: What have we learned about preventing wars over the last 100 years?



In an independent Scotland, what would happen to Faslane?



Scottish Peace Network

The Scottish Peace Network invites you a gathering on the Centenary of the start of First World War hostilities, Monday 28th July in the Peace Garden in Barshaw Park, Paisley. Gather at 6.30pm at the Barshaw Park car park off Glasgow Road to walk together to the peace garden. There will be readings from poetry of the many nations whose people were killed in the conflict. If possible bring some flowers to leave at the Peace Pole, and an umbrella if necessary.

In Glasgow, SPN are also organizing: 1. A vigil at the Livingston statue outside Glasgow Cathedral, 10 am - 4 pm, on Friday 1st August, the last full day of the Commonwealth Game, with a banner "1,118,750 Commonwealth lives wasted 1914-18". To volunteer to take part email ilindsay22@yahoo.com. 2. A gathering "1914-2014: No More Wars" at the Donald Dewar statue, Buchanan St, 10.30-11.30 am, on Monday 4th August, the centenary of the official declaration of war. This is to counter the glorification of war of the government WW1 events taking place at Glasgow Cathedral (Service 11-12), and George Sq (wreath laying 11.30, military march past 12-12.30). Come at 9.30 to help leaflet around the city centre. For information on the SPN, go to <http://www.scottishpeacenet.org.uk/>

Area Meeting by telephone conference 16 June, 2014

Nine out of the twelve local meetings were represented at this meeting, which had a very full agenda.

There were some connection problems. A fault can result in an automatic voice saying "Caller, XX, has left," followed a few minutes later by "Here is, XX." (XX is the recording of the participant saying their name.) Some of the time the Clerk was not able to hear what was being said, but he coped very patiently with this. Also there are other extraneous noises: people muttering, coughs, and the pleasant chimes of a clock for each hour. I am aware that I made my contribution to such noises!

There were inspiring and moving items - the testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Alison Gean Davis of Dunblane - and the reports on visits to two people who became members at the meeting, Isobel Thomson of Arran and Nuala Watt of Glasgow. Alison was a lifelong Quaker who was passionate about everything she did. A long illness claimed her last year and three children are now motherless. Isobel comes from the Church of Scotland and Nuala comes from an atheist family. There was much food for thought about beliefs in the two reports and it was good to welcome two new Friends.

The main substantive item was the report of the communications group. There was a reminder of the need to accommodate those with impairments (a matter that the Area Meeting raised as a concern about ten years ago) and also to be clear and avoid jargon. There was an appeal that each local meeting should inform one of the area meeting publications about events they arrange, and also celebrate such events by reporting on them afterwards. As I see it, there is a problem here in that those who attend the area meeting or who read the minutes know what was discussed at the time. How do we ensure that the knowledge remains available? Perhaps there should be formal job descriptions passed on to those who take up publication roles.

(I have had a look at some websites that were mentioned in the meeting and cannot resist commenting on these although the matter was not part of the meeting itself. Work has been done to ensure that the Glasgow meeting website www.glasgowquakers.org is accessible. It is indeed attractive and has a lot of useful information and links. There is also an older web page www.quakerscotland.org/glasgow ; I think this should have a link to the new webpage.)

At this point there were still several items to consider and 90 minutes had passed. The more urgent ones were taken and some others deferred. The meeting closed after two hours. This was quite a long time for everyone to be sitting still being attentive.

Jane Mitchell (*Argyll Meeting*)

Meeting for Sufferings June 2014

There are a number of items from our meeting on Saturday that you might want to share with your Area Meetings:

Work in Europe. We heard about the work of European Friends, both through the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section (EMES)

- Ukraine: we received a briefing note from Gloucestershire AM together (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Gloucestershire-AM-paper-re-UkraineCrisis.pdf>) with a copy of the minute from EMES. If Friends wish to offer financial support, this can be done via EMES' website <http://fwccemes.org/> or the Executive Secretary, Marisa Johnson, P.O. Box 1157, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9XQ (telephone 01223 479585; email emes@fwccemes.org).

- QCEA: It was good to hear from our representative about the work of QCEA. More information on this can be found on QCEA's website - www.qcea.org - including the details about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Friends are encouraged to respond to the EU consultation. If Friends wish to support the work of QCEA financially this can be done through 'QCEA British Committee' (Simon Bond, 1 Lynton Green, Maidenhead, SL6 6AN, United Kingdom); for more information contact Simon (telephone 01628 631216; e-mail simon@armitage.biz).

Education. A threshing conference will take place on 29-31 August at Woodbrooke. The invitation to attend will be circulated in the clerks mailing. Please let interested Friends know.

Long Term Framework. This Group presented a proposed consultation document to be circulated to all Friends for discussion in the Autumn. In the light of the very helpful consideration from MfS the group will continue to improve the consultation document with a view involving wider body of Friends in the discussion. Please encourage your AM/LMs to set aside time in the autumn for this.

Nominations. Now is the time that Nominations Committees throughout the Society are girding their loins for the big challenge for filling all the posts necessary so that the Society can continue to bear our Quaker Witness to wherever we wish to take it. This is vital at all levels Local Meeting, Area and General Meeting and Britain Yearly Meeting. At BYM there is an offer of service form! Also if Friends (or maybe nominations committees) have useful comments on how to enable participation for more Friends this can be sent to Suze Lidbury (Events & Committee Services Team Leader) by email suzel@quaker.org.uk or posted to Friends House. Also, a reminder that a Young People's Participation day will take place alongside Meeting for Sufferings in December and we will be asking young people if they would to travel to London for this event. Details will be circulated soon. We are hoping to hold Meeting for Sufferings in the newly refurbished Large Meeting House on that day, so there will be space enough for us all to share in worship together at the start of the day, before going our separate ways.

Peter Christy (MfS rep)

A Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Alison Joan Gean Davis 11 October 1969-1 September 2013

Alison was a passionate woman who lived her life by her beliefs. A Quaker, feminist, massage therapist, artist, poet and mother Alison challenged society's, and indeed individual's conventions, about what it was to be all of these things.

Alison was born to Christine and Robin at 11.22 pm, 7 minutes after her twin sister Marion. Alison always maintained that Marion did nothing special with those 7 minutes. Being Marion's twin was a very important part of Alison's identity and she always expressed sympathy for the non twins of the world.

Born and raised in Dunblane in a Quaker family Alison made Quakerism her own. She and her family spent a year in Canada when Alison was 8, where the welcome of Hamilton Meeting, and the experience of travelling among Friends across the country, lived on with her. Many of the friendships begun then are still alive, into the next generation. Active as a young person in the Leaveners, at the Canadian Friends' Centre at Camp NeeKauNis, at the Honduras World Conference and with Northern Friends' Peace Board, her Quaker faith also took her to Iona Abbey to work in the cafe where she met her life partner Mark Hughes.

Alison and Mark had a Quaker Celebration of their Commitment on November 20th 1993. They felt marriage was not an option for them until it was possible for all couples, regardless of their sexual orientation (Quaker faith & practice 20.46). On what should have been their 20th anniversary, 20 November 2013, new legislation in the Scottish Parliament took Scotland one step closer to equal marriage, finally realised on 4 February 2014. From their commitment celebration Alison and Mark took the mutual name Gean, Scots for the wild cherry tree, which their three children have as their family name.

To Alison life was a spiritual and creative journey. She was committed to processing even the most difficult of times as part of her evolution. Alison had a personality that challenged. Her relationships with loved ones were passionate and could be fraught. Alison loved the rain, writing letters, Lord of the Rings, reading books in one sitting, labyrinths and everything to do with the sea. She possessed a wicked sense of humour and had a fine appreciation of satire and the absurd. She had a laugh bigger than her body. In true Quaker fashion Alison loved to challenge authority, any kind of authority, and this became difficult to balance for her when dealing with doctors and her cancer diagnosis.

Alison loved to learn. She had two Masters degrees, one in Scottish History from St Andrews and the second in Peace Studies from Bradford. During a year out from her Scottish History degree she attended Woodbrooke College and her terms there were transformative and inspiring. She was a lively presence in many of the classes and activities becoming particularly engaged with Peace Studies and Women's Studies. During her time there she became interested in massage therapy and when she and Mark returned to live in Dunblane in 1999 she opened her own massage therapy practice, Gean Therapies. Her initial interest in remedial massage mushroomed into a wide range of therapies that had Alison travelling to the States and England to further her studies. With the birth of her first child Caitlin in 1999, Alison with

typical passion studied to become a doula (birthing partner) and her practice attracted women pre and postpartum who felt supported and healed by Alison's talent and knowledge.

During her time with cancer Alison rejected the term 'battling with cancer' because she did not want to embrace violent language and fight her body, but rather work with it. She therefore chose to 'live with cancer'. Alison struggled to balance her beliefs about alternative therapies with the invasive and aggressive cancer treatments of western medicine. She managed a mixture of both, finding anaesthetists who were willing to chant positive affirmations whilst she was undergoing surgery. In these years she lived with a highly disciplined diet, supported steadfastly by Mark. Even when she was given weeks to live and some of us would have been on the chocolates and champagne Alison was planning her juicing regime for her return home.

When surgery and cancer drugs robbed her of her ability to work in massage Alison turned her energy to her long term passion for poetry and photography and found new visual expression in constructing 'altered books'. In June 2013 she participated in Forth Valley's Open Studios event exhibiting her deconstructed books and photographs and she sold her book of poems and photos, Sea Remedies.

As her health failed and she struggled to achieve normal daily activities, including washing her masses of curly hair, she ministered on her life as a 'lily of the field' (Matthew 6:26). Alison, the beautiful lily, felt tired as she described it, of 'germinating in the mud'. Alison had spent time in Canada, South America and Australia and during her last weeks of life friends and messages poured in from around the world. She made peace with her death and consoled her friends and Friends who were devastated to see her dying. Alison truly radiated peace and was an inspiration and a source of strength to those of us privileged to visit her. Alison loved well and was well loved.

When Alison died peacefully at home 6 weeks before her 44th birthday she left behind three of her proudest achievements Caitlin, Arwen and David who were then 14, 11 and 8 respectively.

Those of us who knew and loved Alison are left with both an enduring sense of her presence as well as her absence.

Signed in and on behalf of West Scotland Area Meeting held 16 June 2014.
Michael J Hutchinson (Clerk West Scotland Meeting)

The emphasis on personal action, which in the case of war means abstention, inevitably raises the problem of where one draws the line. In the total wars of the first half of this century, Quakers accepted non-combatant service with the armed forces, served in .. Friends Ambulance Unit, relieved the sufferings of civilian war victims, did alternative civilian service ... went to prison for refusing any service which might assist the war effort ...

Wolf Mendel, 1974. QFP 24.12

An Appreciation of the Life of Jean Pilborough

We will always remember Jean as a strident campaigner. She was well known in Dumfries and Galloway, partly because she had taught and been head teacher in several primary schools in the Stewartry, but also because of her frequent letters to the local press and her speaking out at public meetings. She was particularly outspoken on the danger to the local community represented by the use of depleted uranium shells at the Dundrennan Military Base. When we began to hold regular Meetings for Worship at the gates, she joined us there, and that was when we first met her.

Soon she began to attend Wigtown Meeting (having previously attended Castle Douglas Meeting). Her health deteriorated following a bad car accident (not her fault) a few years ago. She became housebound and was well cared for by local services. She fell and broke her pelvis a few months ago and spent her remaining months in hospital. In these declining years she was visited by Quakers from Castle Douglas and Wigtown Meetings and by her local friends and neighbours in St Johns Town of Dalry.

She died on 7th June following a serious stroke while in Dumfries Hospital. She was 86. Her brother and a great niece were able to be with her in her final few days. Jean left her body to Glasgow University for medical research.

A non-denominational memorial service was held on 17th July in the Parish Church in Dalry. (*An appreciation prepared by Wigtown Meeting.*)

Mull & Iona Meeting in Sunny July



Ten Friends met for worship and lunch in Fionnphort on a glorious July day. The sounds I heard outside were of sparrows, the wind and occasional passenger announcements from the Iona ferry.

Jane Mitchell (*Argyll Meeting*)

May cluster meeting in Sipsness

In May Friends from both Arran and Argyll Local Meetings clustered together for a Meeting for Worship at Skipness Village Hall. 12 Friends attended, six from each meeting. A neat, ordered symmetry. Two dogs were also in attendance: both from Arran. Their affection and contributions were much appreciated. This is one of an ongoing series of cluster meetings in which Arran and Argyll take part. Cluster events have taken place at Skipness over many years: it is a great opportunity for Arran folk (plus other islanders of course) to renew and refresh friendship with mainland folk and vice versa.

The Skipness Spring event nestles in with the larger event that happens in March at Inverary and which was featured in the last issue of the newsletter. We are already planning next year's March 2015 event which may be at a new, larger, venue - please check the next issue for an update.

Edward Tyler (*Argyll & Islay Meeting*)

Milngavie Meeting Report for 2013.

It would be easy to look back at last year's report and repeat it. But we cannot do this in a year which has seen two of our most faithful members lose their spouses, one of whom was a very regular Attender. (Please note the difference between titles when the initial letter is in lower case or upper case.)

We have however welcomed several newer members from local Meetings, and, despite often frequent absences to visit our widespread progeny, our attendances have only rarely fallen below double figures. We have no children in the Meeting, although many of us have children and grandchildren who have left to live elsewhere. Once a year we welcome the American family who appear on our membership list.

We have held Meeting regularly twice a month and had a number of useful verbal contributions, Quaker Faith and Practice and Advices and Queries have been used, most often for silent reading. After Meeting we continue to value our extra thoughts that did not seem suitable during the silence.

Age and dispersal prevent our taking part in a specifically 'Meeting project' but we are individually involved in numerous local and national activities. In particular advertisement of our regular meetings and contributions twice a year to the 'Yours Faithfully' column in the local newspaper keep us in the public view.

Financially we are in a healthy position, but Edith Garty's Bequest will run out in two or three years and this may affect our assistance to Glasgow homeless. Our special collections for individual charities have been maintained at over £700.

Margaret and Norman Peacock (*Milngavie Meeting*)

Curriculum for Quaker Excellence

I have, through my storytelling work in Primary schools, taught myself a great deal about Curriculum for Excellence. This, and my work with the Quaker Children's Committee in Glasgow, have lately led me to consider if there is some harmony between the two.

Curriculum for Excellence, the educational framework in Scotland, aims to do some very positive, almost Quakerish things. It is flexible, person-centred and holistic, and has at its core the four capacities: that children should be helped to become Responsible Citizens, Successful Learners, Effective Contributors and Confident Individuals. How well do these capacities resonate with our own testimonies of Peace, Equality, Truth, Simplicity and (though I personally am more comfortable dealing with the original four) Sustainability?

Peace – Does Peace lead to responsible citizenship? It ought to go without saying that responsible citizens don't drop bombs on people, but on a more local level, the way we are taught to approach conflict matters a great deal in the quality of our citizenship. Does it lead to better learning? Its absence is certainly disruptive to learning. Are we more confident if we are more peaceful? I think so: creative approaches to communicating non-violently help us to become assertive, not aggressive.

Equality – We are more confident individuals when we appreciate our own equality. We are more responsible citizens when we respect the equality of others. We are more effective contributors when we value our own and others' contributions. And we are more successful learners when treated as equals with our peers.

Truth – Can we support the four capacities through truth? Is honesty important to learning and citizenship?

Simplicity – This may be the hardest testimony to pin down usefully. Yet I feel learning can be facilitated with a simple approach. The very word "facilitate" means to render simple! There is also a definition of Simplicity which I have found works for me: non-cynical delight. When children delight non-cynically in learning, do they learn better?

Sustainability – Can children grow to be effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners without understanding the value of sustainable living?

It strikes me that these are two sets of values, which have been developed independently of each other, but which bounce off each other very beautifully, in a way that certainly merits deeper thought and study.

Alastair McIver (*Glasgow Meeting*)

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

Area Meeting Argyll 23 August

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