



February
2013

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Scottish Friend

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St. Andrews Friends' Meeting House MP
Last GM (residential) was held in St Andrews

Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 30 April to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website and can be emailed to you at the same time as it goes to the printer. If you would like an email copy instead of a paper one, please email scotfriends@gmail.com, to let Bronwen Currie know. You are strongly encouraged to do this, in view of escalating postage costs - and of course you get the photographs in colour, as an incentive!

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.

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YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

Phil Lucas

General Meeting for Scotland has a new Parliamentary Liaison Function Group responsible for advocacy work with the Scottish Parliament on issues of concern to Quakers. Its tasks include monitoring the Parliament's work to identify issues of interest and concern to us and liaising with the work of Britain Yearly Meeting to ensure our work with Holyrood and Westminster are co-ordinated where this is appropriate. But the following part of our remit is equally important:

To monitor the experience and interests of Scottish Friends through the database maintained by the GM Administrator and through contact with the proceedings of General Meeting and its interest groups and networks.

If we are to do this, it is essential that we know just what are the experience, interests and passions of Scottish Friends. To be effective, we can't afford to rely on information we pick up informally; we need you to tell us.

Our GM Administrator has a skeleton database of Friends' experience and interests but flesh needs to be put on the rather bare bones. PLEASE HELP.

If you have experience, interest in or passion for any issue which may at some time be helped along by our Parliaments in Holyrood or Westminster, please register this with Bronwen. Just give your name, your Meeting and the issue(s) regarding which you have experience or concern to Bronwen Currie at ScotFriends@gmail.com or 01496-850006 or Taigh na Torraig, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, PA49 7UN. And if you know of any shy Friends, who may be hiding their experience and concerns

under the nearest bushel, please ask them if you can submit their entry for them!

It will also greatly help our work if we can be told when Local Meetings in Scotland or their representatives have meetings with or lobby their MSP, MP or MEP. Please report all such activity, the subject matter and any outcome to the convener of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, Elizabeth Allen at esallen@msn.com or 01555 661975



The future of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)

Margaret Peacock

It is good news that Scottish Churches House is being leased for ten years, and is no longer a drain on ACTS' finances. The house has occupied the attention of ACTS' churches' representatives for several years, and ACTS is now re-inventing itself to take account of its new freedom. Last October the representatives met overnight at the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge. After the normal business we turned to what Friends would call a threshing meeting. It was introduced by a guest speaker - Natasha Klukach, programme executive from the World Council of Churches in Geneva. From her scholarly introduction I appreciated several of her statements, which I reproduce here.

"Over the years the experience of and with the Orthodox member churches demonstrated that another means of making decisions other than majority voting needed to be found. The adaptation of structures to a different time is quite simply part of the ecumenical journey, not a task that befalls us because things are suddenly all going wrong."

"It's good for us in this thinking about ecumenical organizational structures to be clear about what they have given us. The kinds of structures we have in place, whether councils or churches together, have given us a way of talking to each other, a place to meet where we just simply weren't before."

"We have learnt in our experiences with our brothers and sisters of other faiths that often it is our ecumenical structures that make a good and visible starting point for interfaith relations"

"God has given the churches many rich gifts and blessings. Among them are unique expressions of faith, ways of worship, sacramental life, special insights into justice and peace and reconciliation, understandings and experience of mission, different ways of offering prophetic witness in the world and financial and human resources. As long as we in our churches see these gifts as our own, perhaps from a perspective of self-preservation or protection or perhaps because we aren't certain how they will be received by others, the potential of the gifts cannot be realized. We need, as churches, to recognize that the gifts we have are properly for the building up of the fellowship of the whole. We cannot be afraid to lose ourselves in being part of a fellowship. The starting point of fellowship means willingness to bring all of who I am and what is mine. Can each of the member churches of ACTS identify what it brings to the fellowship? More challenging is the question: can the member churches name any things that they are holding back? "

"The Spirit who resides in our expression of the Church reaches out to embrace the same Spirit who resides in our fellow Christians and in the experience of the Church to which they belong."

Later Douglas Galbraith, convener of ACTS, referred to the well known passage in 1 Corinthians about "many [different] members but one body" He interpreted this not as diversity needing reconciliation but as specialised members being necessary for the functioning of the body.

A small group will bring suggestions to the next meeting on 27 February.

Trident, Call to Action for Quakers in Scotland

Elizabeth Allen

Do you have an interest in disarmament issues and in Trident in particular? Are you willing to put the Quaker point of view on Trident to your MP and MSP?

In Scotland, we have on our doorstep the military means of annihilating vast populations, Trident. Why? We are told it is there for our security. This military concept of security is at odds with the experience of many that it is poverty, hunger, disease and climate change which are the real threats to humanity. As Quakers we are committed to promoting the concept of human security, which links security to the meeting of human needs, rather than to protecting national sovereignty. Getting rid of Trident is an important step in this direction. If you want to know more, briefing material is available from Britain Yearly Meeting.

In his article, "Your Country Needs You", Phil Lucas introduced the work of the General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group. Trident is the first focus of the Group's work and we are looking for Friends from throughout Scotland to speak out about the replacement of Trident. We hope Friends will do this together and to facilitate communication we are developing an email interest group on the issue of Trident. The email group will be administered by a member of the Function Group, and will be used to advise you about potential actions that you might take in this campaign and to send you updates. You would only be sent emails by the list manager, rather than receiving emails from everyone on the group.

If this is for you, please contact the convener of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, Elizabeth Allen

email essallen@msn.com or Tel. 01555 661975.

Report of GM for Scotland 17-18 Nov 2012.

Ann Millar

St Andrews LM hosted our residential meeting with the theme of Peacemaking: vision for the future.

Before addressing the theme, in the morning we worked through the local business, which included a report by Roz Currie on Summer Shindig 2012, when 51 young people spent a week building a community with a strong Quaker ethos, particularly felt in the deep involvement in the evening Epilogues.

Also we heard an update on the post of a part-time Parliamentary Liaison person - based in Scotland, but to be part of the BYM Parliament Liaison Team. This post is to enable Friends in Scotland to play a more effective advocacy role, particularly with the Scottish Parliament. The team and BYM trustees were asked to explore the way forward.

We heard a report from a small working group from East and North AMs, monitoring the changes at the Ury estate near Stonehaven where Robert Barclay is buried. In particular the Barclay mausoleum and graveyard are in a vulnerable condition. The group is in contact with the family, the present owners and the developers.

In the afternoon the theme was addressed by Philip Austin, Mary Alice Mansell and Janet Fenton. Philip reviewed the history of the Northern Friends Peace Board, which celebrates its centenary in 2013. He emphasised its role in peace-making by bringing groups together and led a discussion on the role individuals can play. He asked us to consider what political and

practical steps we could take to contribute to a resilient and peaceful society.

Janet Fenton and Mary Alice Mansell told us of their work with 'Scotland's for Peace', a coalition of organisations working for a more peaceful future. They also encouraged us to become more involved in peace issues particularly non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Janet, who had attended a conference in Vienna with assistance from Quakers, stressed the unwillingness of UK diplomats to discuss nuclear issues.

On the Saturday evening Alastair Reid and Jasmine Perinpanayagam showed a film and spoke about Quakers in Kenya which contained harrowing testimonies of violence to individuals but also showed positive inter-relations at a range of Quaker Meetings.



Equal Marriage Bill Consultation

Phil Lucas - for the GM working group

Friends will be aware that the Scottish Government has published its proposals for marriage equality in Scotland and is seeking the views of everyone who lives in Scotland.

The General Meeting working group is preparing a Scottish Quakers group response, which will reflect our strong support for the bill, since it meets so well the requirements we outlined in our response to the initial consultation. But it is also important that as many Scottish Quakers as possible send in individual responses. The easiest way to respond is on line, so if you don't have internet access you may wish to meet with a Friend who does.

The link is www.equalmarriage.org.uk/consultation

The Equality Network is, as ever, being very supportive of our stance and has published a very useful guide to help you with the process. You can find this on their website; just type Equality Network guide to the consultation into your browser.

The deadline for the receipt of responses is 5 pm on March 20th.

Meeting for Sufferings at Friends House 1 December 2012
Kevin Franz

I was glad to experience the 'new look' Meeting for Sufferings at a stage when, in the words of the Clerk, it was growing as a worshipping community and on a day when the agenda was less busy.

Section 25:08 of Quaker Faith & Practice was read in the opening worship and its final sentence illuminated our work:

'...we have to accept our position in the world with as much grace, responsibility and fortitude as we can muster, and try to grow up to our mission of love in this tangle of prospects and torments.'

In his final report as clerk of BYM Trustees Jonathan Fox spoke about the Vibrancy in Meeting Project, setting it in the context of the changing demographics of the Society. It prompted for me the core question of how the Society in its 'mission of love' is to remain both rooted in its traditions and free to develop its distinctive character.

That mission of love is enabled by our ability to fund the centrally managed work. In his report Peter Ullathorne, YM Treasurer, revealed that although the accounts for 2012 were likely to show a surplus there had been a decline in contributions and the shortfall met by substantial legacy income. This financial profile is of concern to Trustees and should be of concern to all Friends.

The major focus of the day was a report by the Minute 36 Commitment Group. Friends will recall that the Group was set up after YMG 2011 to help take forward our commitment to become a low-carbon sustainable community. It has no easy task and it has been hampered by the modest response of meetings to its climate impact calculator. The Group, whose membership reflects the wide range of opinion within the Society, asked for the help of Sufferings, asking if the concern was seen by Friends as a spiritual one and what concrete assistance the Group could offer to meetings.

We heard of many small-scale initiatives which Friends are engaged in and of the role of QPSW in advocacy and Woodbrooke in training. But as we sought to respond a number of underlying questions emerged. Is the concern seen by Friends as a spiritual issue, and what meaning does that phrase have for us? Is our commitment prompted by fear and guilt more than by love? Do Friends look for co-operation with other faith groups, some of whom may be further on the journey than we are? Do some Friends who were not at Canterbury in 2011 have difficulty in uniting with the concern, and if so what does that tell us? Most tellingly, do Friends fear 'critical comparison' between one local meeting, one Friend and another?

Reflecting on the day I was struck by the theme of France YM: *'Let us make our future together'* and its encouragement: *'we are equal, so let us all be active participants'*.

Letter from Meeting for Sufferings 1st – 3rd February 2013
Jane Pearn

Dear Friends

This time, we met at Woodbrooke over a weekend: for me it was a productive and positive experience. Congregating from all over Britain for a day in London only 5 or 6 times a year, it's hard to build up any sense of community. Here, we had the chance to hear each other's voices, and to start to work together as a group. One of the purposes was to explore our role, how it meshes with Britain Yearly Meeting and with the various groups within it. As you might imagine, we spent some time considering our relationship with BYM Trustees, a role which was until quite recently fulfilled by Meeting for Sufferings as a whole. I think it's fair to say that this didn't work terribly well. Separating the roles allows Sufferings to have time for reflection, and for vision. More detailed work, and the practicality of our vision, is the domain of Trustees. As Jennifer Barraclough, new Clerk of Trustees, put it: 'It's like a married couple – you both know there needs to be butter in the fridge. But one of you knows how much there is.'

The image of marriage came up several times, and led naturally to trust and communication, both of which underlie any successful partnership. As Friends ministered during our sessions, a 3D picture began to emerge instead of a flat diagram.

'Trust depends on communication.'

'Trustees mustn't make decisions we're unaware of.'

'We must listen to the other as our Friends and colleagues, doing things we wouldn't want to do ourselves.'

'Never forget the importance of love.'

'Britain Yearly Meeting is one body. Clerks, committees, task groups, are all servants of the Meeting.'

'The importance of listening.....'

'Taking responsibility for being connected... the information is there if you look for it....'

'Trustees might sometimes ask us for guidance and discernment...'

'Visioning is about the future... we need to be forward, not backward-looking'

'Marriages can involve disagreement. Quakers sometimes think that agreement is all...'

And we thought about other relationships – individuals with their meetings; local meetings with Yearly Meeting; and allowing time and space for Friends in their local meetings to 'own' decisions made elsewhere. We asked how Area/General Meetings can be assured that the minutes they send receive due time and attention. Do their minutes always give enough background information to be helpful? (No) Again and again, the importance of effective communication leading to mutual trust, in turn leading to better communication, as we become sure that we are being heard.

Jennifer Barraclough again, sharing a notice she had in her office while Director of Woodbrooke:

'The biggest problem with communication is the belief that it has taken place.'

There was time for other activities: including designing a poster to show what Meeting for Sufferings is for. My group imagined a ship, with Sufferings guiding it between the islands of Yearly Meetings, where major decisions about direction are made, while we keep it from icebergs, navigate stormy waters, and try to steer a true course using the chart given to us at the last island. And on board of course are the trustees, ensuring that we have provisions for the voyage.

Hmmmm...needs further work.

There was a larger than usual group at Woodbrooke with Rex Ambler and Tim Peat Ashworth as tutors.

It was not an ordinary Bible study posing the questions: did the Bible have anything to say to Quakers today; how did the early Friends use the Bible; was the Bible an authority to Friends today?

The Early Christians did not have the Bible we use today. Instead they had an experience of God. Rex drew our attention to eight people in the Bible who had an encounter with God. What they had in common was to ask God, who are you? Then from the encounter to ask themselves, who am I? It was an experience that drew them beyond their known reality and usually involved a struggle with themselves. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Job, Jesus, Paul, the Apostles. George Fox and the Early Friends also knew the experience of dread and transformation encountering God. There is much fear in the encounter because we will never again be the same.

Tim Peat Ashworth spoke of Paul and the Early Christians, of the difficulties of keeping to the Way and thus what Paul was conveying in his Epistles. God's prophecy is an on-going revelation which was recognised by Early Friends and split us off from many other non-conformist movements. *The Light will reveal your condition. The day is coming when I will write my word in their hearts.* Christ came to teach his people himself. *The sheep that belong to me hear my voice.* Tim drew his famous diagram to illustrate Paul's message. With the coming of the Spirit we are not only pulled out of slavery but receive a new perception.

We worked in groups to attempt to understand our own condition in relation to the Spirit, how we embodied the interaction of the spirit with all life.

We concluded that the Bible gave us freedom to explore the nature of God, and truth. It was similar to Quaker testimonies showing us the encounters of others with the Living Spirit. And it left us to question, do we know what is the true Light?

NB, Woodbrooke on the Road brings tutors to local areas which cuts travel costs for all of us further afield, and lowers our Carbon Footprint as Quakers!

"The new Books of Members and Attenders for 2013 are now out and should shortly be available from Local Meetings. Please check your entry as soon as possible and email Bronwen at scotfriends@gmail.com (or phone her on 01496-850 006) if you spot an error. She will put a list of errata in the April edition of Scottish Friend (and only in the April edition - you only have the one chance!)"

SUMMER SHINDIG 2012

Compiled by Bronwen Currie

At General Meeting in St Andrews in November, Roz Currie, co-ordinator at the 2012 event, showed a video made by the young people at Northern Young Friends Summer Shindig. It was an inspiring opportunity to see and hear just what Shindig means to its young participants. But only a small proportion of Friends in Scotland General Meeting got to see it. So, having received a number of wonderful reports written by other youngsters, plus the enjoyable account written from the staff point of view, I thought we could do no better than to string some excerpts from these together, to give all Scottish Friend readers a flavour of Shindig.

"When I was first told that Summer Shindig could change your life I did not think it was true. How could one week a year change someone's life?

But... After learning to swim, going on the longest roller-coaster in Europe and being in a musical about cake I can say that I was wrong!.....

The topic of this year's Summer Shindig was "It's Not Fair" which included thinking about how some adults discriminate against young people, gay marriage and many other pressing matters. We had talks on these topics from three different speakers, and then broke into our discussion groups to do activities on the themes of each talk.

One of the epilogues was in our discussion groups, in which my group thought about a story about two men and some starfish. We then decorated our own starfish using wax crayons and floated them in our "pond" (see-through plastic tub of water

with blue tea lights in) whilst saying something we did to make a difference to the world." *Lilith*

"What I particularly enjoy about Shindig is the opportunity to reflect. The talks are always an interesting insight into some current issue, with the theme of this year being Equality. Meeting for Worship is held in the mornings, and epilogue in the evenings gives a great opportunity to look back on the day." *Ben*

"Shindig is an amazing week and a gathering like no other. Over the four years I have attended Shindig I have made some fantastic friendships and I will look forward to attending next year and the year after. Shindig is a perfect mix of spirituality and humour and this makes it an unforgettable experience. Without Shindig I would be a different person and the memories from Shindig will stay with me forever." *Marcie*

And from the staff:

"I was pleasantly surprised and perhaps humbled by the open and grown up attitude the young people in my discussion group had when we discussed marriage, civil partnerships and sexuality... . Their opinions really impressed me, and were in some ways more natural than my own. They seem to have grown up with the opinion that 'gay is okay' imprinted on their outlook on life, and others. It makes me smile to know that we are becoming more and more open and accepting to difference and to know that I have had the privilege to work with young people who are going to make sure that the next generation shines.

All in all I think we can describe Summer Shindig 2012 as a sensational success. Many of the staff team commented that it

seemed the smoothest event in a long while and that is due to an amazing mix of young people, staff, clerking team and venue. Most of all, it was brilliant fun! Thank you all for your continuing support, it is much appreciated."



General Meeting for Scotland

Will be held in Glasgow Friends' Meeting House,
38 Elmbank Crescent

The meeting house is on the south side of Elmbank Crescent, next to Scottish Opera and opposite the multi-storey car park next to Charing Cross station. Charing Cross has trains every 10 minutes or so on the low-level line westbound from Queen Street, and there are now half-hourly trains direct from Edinburgh.

The 747 bus to the airport goes from the bus station on the half hour till 10-25, and every 20 min thereafter, along Bath Street, returning along Sauchiehall Street. The 23 bus leaves Central Station (Hope Street) ¼-hourly, e.g. 10-04, also along Bath Street then Sauchiehall Street. You may prefer to walk from Central. Go down the escalator to Argyle Street level. Walk westwards to the motorway, then up the hill beside it to Elmbank Crescent. ~20 min,

Glasgow Friends will offer tea and coffee on arrival. You should bring your own lunch, but soup will be provided. After the meeting there will be the usual refreshment to see you on your way.

General Meeting for Scotland

Glasgow 2nd March 2013 11am until about 4pm.

"Our sense of community does not depend on all professing identical beliefs, for it grows from worshipping together, knowing one another, loving one another, accepting responsibilities, sharing and working together.

Quaker Faith and Practice 10.03

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our speaker for the afternoon session will be Paul Burton, who oversees the keeping of our documents and records. Friends have had a reputation for maintaining good records since the 17th century, so just what do we have from more than 350 years of the Society in Scotland? What do our records tell us about the Society and how can we ensure that today's records are available to future generations of Friends, scholars and others with an interest?

In the light of recent developments over the Ury Estate, this presentation will also look at Robert Barclay, the early Quaker theologian, and features of the Barclay family.

In the morning session we will discuss a variety of business items including a report on the work of the Parliamentary Liaison group that we set up last year.

Please join us in Glasgow, keep up to date with Scottish Quaker work, meet Friends from across the country and uphold our business method, depending as it does on good participation from as many of us as possible.

Robin Waterston, Clerk