



October
2017

Scottish Friend



On the plinth
A PARLIAMENT THERE SHALL BE
DONALD DEWAR
1937 - 2000
SCOTLAND'S FIRST - EVER
FIRST MINSTER

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Please send material for next *Scottish Friend* by 13 October 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 Marion Sharkey 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.



Remembrance Day

Robin Waterston, St Andrews Meeting

Last November, St. Andrews Friends organised and staffed a stall in the centre of town distributing white poppies. The purpose was to give members of the public an opportunity to wear a white poppy, either on its own or along with a red one, in remembrance of all victims of wars, civilian as well as military, and foreign as well as British. There was a positive response from a number of passers-by and some good conversations ensued. We plan to do the same thing again this year. In addition, the question has arisen about possible participation in the official wreath-laying ceremony.

This would require permission from the British Legion, but we have discovered that the Scottish Branch have a policy against white poppy wreaths at the ceremony. There is some feeling that Friends might approach the Legion with a view to discussing this issue. At the same time, there is recognition that this is a delicate matter, with potential for strong feelings, and that we need to exercise careful discernment. At a recent business meeting, it was suggested that we raise the question in Scottish Friend, to get an informal sense of feelings from Friends more widely before we proceed any further. If anyone has any thoughts or suggestions on this matter, please contact Robin Waterston, robin.waterston128@gmail.com or 128 North St, St. Andrews KY16 9AF".

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Working towards economic justice in Scotland

Phil Lucas, East Lothian Meeting
(for the GM Parliamentary Engagement Working Group)

Friends will be aware that GM's Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG, previously known as the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group) organized a symposium on economic justice in Leith last October, which attracted over 200 participants. I described in the last issue of *The Scottish Friend* the follow-up seminar, which identified the following priorities for our work:

- o To change the narrative on tax and welfare;
- o To explore further the implications of introducing a Citizen's Basic Income;
- o To encourage better education on economics and taxation policy, not only for the common person but also in academia, where taxation seems to be a neglected subject.

The PEWG has now agreed that by adopting the second of these we shall automatically be tackling part of the first. The replacement of parts of our outdated taxation and social security systems by a Citizen's Basic Income is already adopted policy of the Scottish Green Party and has support of many on the left of Scottish politics and even some on the right. Should Scottish Quakers adopt it as one of our chief recommendations for creating a fairer and more equal Scotland?

Basic Income is an unconditional, non-withdrawable, tax-exempt income for every citizen as a right of citizenship. It is a radical alternative to key elements of the current social security system, which, having developed piecemeal over the years, is ramshackle and does not fit a fair and equal society which values human rights and dignity. We understand that the Councils in Fife, in the City of Glasgow and in North Ayrshire have expressed their willingness to host BI Pilot Projects.

We urge all Scottish Quakers to learn more about Basic Income so

that you can contribute to the debate as it develops. Annie Miller, a retired economics academic and member of South East Scotland Area Meeting, has been working on the subject for years and is publishing a book on her work in July (*A BASIC INCOME HANDBOOK* from Luath Press Ltd www.luath.co.uk £9.99). She has produced a briefing paper as a quick introduction for those who know little about it. This is obtainable from me or any other member of the PEWG. We would encourage all Scottish Quakers to learn more. A very readable and already published introduction (which Annie also recommends) is *Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen* by Guy Standing from Pelican £8.99.

The Right Attitude of Soul in Meeting

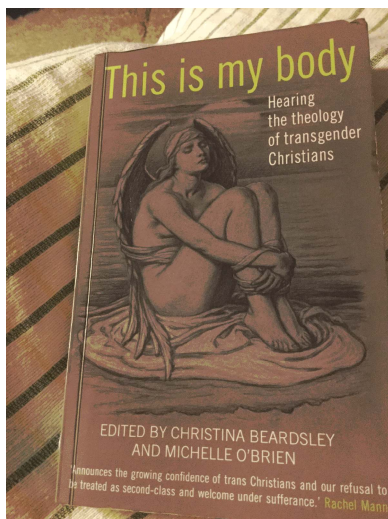
The Meeting affects the ministry quite as truly as the ministry affects the Meeting. If those who come together do so in expectant faith, and in genuine love and sympathy with one another, striving to put from them thoughts of criticism and fault-finding, and praying earnestly that the right persons may be led to speak and the right messages be given, they will not go away unhelped. It is in such an atmosphere that the Holy Spirit can work effectively to bring forth the utterances that are needed, and to check those that are not required. On the other hand, the spirit of indifference or of cold and unfriendly criticism injures the whole life of the Meeting, and we need not wonder if in such an atmosphere speakers mistake their guidance.

Yearly Meeting 1911, in *Christian Practice* 1911

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Review by Zemirah Moffat, Glasgow Meeting, 9th June 2017

This is my body:
Hearing the theology of transgender Christians.
Eds Christina Beardsley and Michelle O'Brien.
Darton, Longman and Todd 2016.
ISBN 978-0232532067 £14.99
Copy available in Glasgow Meeting House Library



I highly recommend this book *This is my body* (2016) to all who are interested in spirituality, sexuality and gender. It is a two hundred and twenty page book inspired by Sibyls, the UK's Christian spirituality group for transgender people (sibyls.gndr.org.uk). The first section of the book reviews current theological, cultural and scientific theory, and the history of transgendered Christians; and each of the 10 chapters and 12 personal stories are written by past and present members of Sibyls. Each author is diligent and meticulous in their telling of their own story and the story of the group. Pain and suffering is palpable, as is hope.

Sibyls began in 1996 and *This is my body* tells the story of its development practically, socially, culturally and personally, and - within my knowledge at least - is a seminal and unique piece. Not only did it ground me in contemporary theory, it brought me to laughter, indignant anger and vindicated my own understanding of the synergies, connections and links between spirituality and sexuality.

Their stories take us into places of exclusion, forbearance and welcome. I had a laugh-out-loud moment when I read the story of one transsexual woman who, when kneeling at the altar for communion, having for years knelt in pain and confusion as a man, simply spoke a silent "hi" to Jesus, as she was now, from her female heart (p151). And Jesus, to her amazement, replied "hi" right back, and Light and knowledge flooded her being. And this flood of Love, she convincingly writes, exponentially magnified her love for and capacity to love others.

Getting beneath the labels is a theme throughout the book that is brilliantly explained through this wee piece of poetry (quoted p17) attributed to a Robert H. Schuller:

I am not who I am
I am not who you think I am
I am who I think you think I am
Thank goodness God knows who I am

But putting the theory to one side, some of my favourite passages are within the personal reflections at the end of the book. For example, the last chapter is written by a retired Anglican priest, and although himself not a trans-person, he speaks convincingly of how listening to, walking alongside and working with transgendered Christians enriched his ministry. Within these testimonies breakdowns become breakthroughs, and gender transformations are not limited to the physical, social, personal and psychological, but are fundamentally spiritual, revelatory and transformative.

Writing this in the concluding hours of our 2017 General Election, the day after the Scottish Episcopal Church affirmed same-sex marriage, and the day before I lead a session to Scottish Friends on our contemporary concerns regarding gender and sexual diversity, I sit here in wonderment. So much change. So many forces. So many lives at stake. But within our stories, his stories, her stories and their stories; within the stories that we hold within our bodies, there are answers; and reading, questioning and listening to our own stories and those of transgendered Christians, is a very good place to start.

**George Fox preaching in Ulverston Church,
as recalled by Margaret Fell.**

"What had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say `Christ saith this, and the apostles say this'; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light, and hast walked in the Light, and when thou speakest is it inwardly from God?"

Friends frequently quote "What canst thou say?" as an invitation to articulate an opinion. The full quotation clarifies that the opinion must have been tested against the Light.

Dunblane Preparative Meeting

Crawford Logan

I thought you might like these pictures of Meeting for Business (or PM, as I still prefer) in Dunblane on June 4. We had had to give way to the next booking in the hall, so reconvened in my car! Fairly unusual. Featuring Margaret Boland, Margaret Munro, Helen Baker, Aileen Maxwell and Tim Denvir.

With good wishes

Crawford Logan



**Church of Scotland General Assembly
Edinburgh 20th - 26th May 2017**

Pamala McDougall, Dundee Meeting

Moderator!

The resounding shout heralded every entrance of the Moderator and was called out when anyone wanted to address the assembly. The retiring Moderator, Rt. Rev. Russell Barr, gave his retiring address with highlights from his year in office, with homelessness being high on his agenda. He then introduced the new Moderator, Rev. Dr Derek Browning who is seconded for one year as minister of Morningside Parish Church in Edinburgh and prior to his present post was minister of Cupar Old Parish Church for 14 years. He told us he had decided to use his year in office to explore and promote issues around hospitality and welcome; adding it is how we treat the stranger and the vulnerable in our communities is key to how we express our Christian faith.

I had been well briefed and prepared for this Assembly, having been privileged in attending on two previous occasions, one representing ACTS and the second for GM. There was also a wealth of papers, information and a huge book of our equivalent of 'documents in advance'. I also knew that if there had been a stamina pill I would have taken several!

As it was, spouses were invited and my husband James accompanied me to the opening ceremony and to one of the three social events. After the first day spouses could sit in the public gallery to observe whereas we visitors were seated in the body of the kirk and invited to speak if wished.

Moderator!

This assembly was notable on several counts.

1. There were two prominent empty seats with the names of two

women ministers from the Sudan who were prevented from coming by the refusal of the Home Office to grant visas for the visit despite the church sponsoring them. There had been protests by the church and at the last minute the women were granted visas but were prevented from boarding the aircraft. There was indignation and anger from several commissioners (ministers and elders from the floor) and a letter of concern was to be sent from the Assembly to the Home Office.

2. The Manchester bombings happened at the beginning of the Assembly on Monday 22nd May killing 23 people, including the bomber, and injuring many more. The whole Assembly was affected, with prayers and a minutes silence observed. A letter of condolence was sent from the Assembly to those involved.

3. It was agreed to apologise individually and corporately for failing to recognise the Christian vocation of gay people - although this was vigorously debated. As one speaker asked "How can we apologise for others?", but the motion was carried.

4. The Assembly heard from Prince Ghazi of Jordan who outlined his world vision with the Princess Royal as Lord High Commissioner representing the Queen, and a friend of the Prince looking on from the Royal Box. The Prince is one of the world's leading Muslim scholars, a dignified, quietly charismatic speaker, who gave a profoundly pessimistic address but with an alternative hopeful future if only mankind recognised the dangers and changed our ways of being. He started by condemning " in the strongest possible terms" in his own name and in His Majesty King Abdullah 2nd all terror attacks on innocent people." They do not represent our religion and I believe they will find this country is made of sterner stuff than they might ever imagine". The Prince works to promote better understanding between Muslims and Christians, and has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Although bleak at times, his speech resonated with the Assembly as he urged us to broaden our visions and deepen our knowledge in the pursuit of peace.

5. Lastly, a lengthy discussion on ministers being allowed to conduct same-sex marriages. The debate was courteous, often very personal and emotional at times but in the end it was decided to remit the matter to its legal questions committee to examine what issues needed to be explored, with a report to be compiled for next year's Assembly. Last year the Assembly voted to allow people in same - sex marriage to become ministers so this will be seen as another step forward towards resolution next year.

Moderator!

The style of the Assembly is set by the Moderator and this year was such a mixture of sadness, joy, elation, and disappointment but with this Moderator - humour and wit! At the opening ceremony when the visitors were introduced to the Moderator one by one, I advised him 'in a sea of words remember the value of silence' which he remembered later at one of the social gatherings on the 24th May when I confided to him that we share our birthdays - on that day! So we toasted each other on a Happy Birthday.

So much to report - so little space, but the highlights for me were:-

*The rousing hymns of my childhood, thoughtful prayers, inspirational worship and the interesting and interested people I met.;

*Being a social ecumenical Friend I enjoyed the social events, especially the reception hosted by the Princess Royal at Holyrood Palace when I gave a potted account of Quakerism to her husband Vice-Admiral Timothy Lawrence after spotting my Quaker badge;

*The high tech facilities - huge screens with words of hymns, texts of deliverances (submissions) and microphones with the facility to accept identity cards which then flashed on the screen, and for electronic voting (but not for me!)

*The deliverance of reports with members of the various committees on stage to support their convener.

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*The many outstanding reports , but the Crossroads report which is at the heart of social witness struck a chord with me. Alastair Cameron is Chief Executive of the Scottish Churches Housing Action - and a Friend of SE Scotland AM- is featured in the present edition of ' Crossreach News'. One report I was eager to hear was the Ecumenical report presented by weel kent faces of those I am personally familiar with as GM Representative Friend. It was noted that Ireland did not send a representative to this Assembly because of issues around same-sex marriage.

*Humour lightened the often lengthy and difficult topics. At one time an anxious voice tried to connect electronically and asked " have you got me yet?" The Moderator's response in a knowing voice " Oh yes, we've got your name alright! Then there was the jar of Modertorial jelly babies offered to the Moderator to 'tide him over until lunch!

Moderator!

So many words - so little silence to reflect and digest. What to leave out of this report?

The service of commitment of the Assembly at St Giles Cathedral?

The plethora of fringe events?

The useful resource booklet ' A Guide to Supporting people with Dementia in the Local Church' ?

The free WiFi available?

The wonderful arrangements and welcome to visitors?

Sharing my Quaker insights and hearing others in response?

Thank you to *GM* for supporting
me financially in attending the
Assembly.
Next year it could be you!



Imaging for peace

Neil Crabtree, Brora Meeting

There can be few things more shocking than to see young Muslim males killing themselves in order to cause mayhem and death among an unsuspecting public; not only in this country but also in Europe, America and the Middle East. The problem is enhanced by the inability of the security services and politicians to cope with this phenomenon and to reassure people generally. Unfortunately these attacks will continue to increase as long as there are angry frustrated and socially unfortunate young men who seek their revenge on society through jihad.

Although I don't have any answers, ten years ago I experimented with Imaging as a tool for focusing on the behaviour of young males in Inverness. This involved speaking with various related organisations and members of the public and projecting the results into the future - a 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. The resultant document, written for a wide audience, describes a time when environmental rescue provides a rite of passage for all teenage males in Inverness. <http://neilcrabtree.blogspot.com>

I am planning on using this technique again to contribute to the wider debate about the condition of many young Muslim males, only this time I am searching for the ideas and insights of Quakers. This is because it is a delicate subject and I know that Friends will see God within those that commit atrocities.

Please send all contributions to Neil Crabtree, Dutch Cottage, Backies, Golspie, Sutherland, KW10 6SE

Scottish Episcopal Synod Report June 8th -10th 2017 Edinburgh

Sue Lycett, St.Andrews Meeting

Now, why was I asked to attend this, the Episcopalian Synod in Edinburgh this year and how can I make it interesting for you?

There were about 120 delegates made up of bishops, clergy, laity and guests from other denominations/religions meeting at a church in Edinburgh.

We were allocated a table at which we sat for every session. I found that a great help as it meant we had a sort of family with whom to relate and whom I could question if needed.

The guests were also given a buddy. Mine was a delightful gentleman from near Aberdeen and he took very good care of me all the time. The Methodist minister also commented on how delightful his buddy was. He had a lady. It was a real pleasure to be looked after by a man again.

Every day began and ended with a worship time including prayers, hymns and psalms. It was grand to hear the organist letting rip at times! Sometimes I found it a little difficult to be bombarded with so many words but maybe that is because I am becoming more used to the Quaker silence, despite having been brought up in the Presbyterian and Baptist traditions.

The sessions dealt with a variety of topics, budgets, investments, Church structure/members/doctrine/recruitment/mission, climate and global warming and youth. It all sounds very dry but in fact was not as each topic was introduced by a different person, which of course allowed differing styles.

In many cases the discussion was very similar to that found at YM as we are all wrestling with the same sort of problems and trying to find the best solution and, as far as we can ever know it, do God's will. When the Sikh lady arrived she joked that she had arrived at the

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Gudwara's business meeting! She also greeted us as all children of God.

One of the most interesting sessions was that on same sex marriage to which about 25 people spoke. They of course had opposing views and used a variety of quotations from the Bible to add weight to their argument. The discussion was very courteous and considerate, organised in a very smooth way. Then there was a vote taken and there had to be a two-thirds majority for it to be accepted. As no doubt you heard on the news, it was accepted. Had I been clerking the meeting at that point I am sure I would not have let it pass as I did not feel that the house 'was of one mind'. Strange as it was only passed with 1 vote.

I did not feel it necessary to contribute to the discussions other than on our table but my buddy commented that he had learned a lot about the Quakers; more than he felt he would have done by reading. I DO hope that he learned the good things!

Sue Lycett

On June 27th it was announced that the Episcopal Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church elected Rt Rev Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness as the new Primus to succeed Most Rev David Chillingworth. A card has been sent on behalf of GM to congratulate him and welcome him ecumenically to his new post.

Pamala McDougall, GM Representative Friend.

Annual Assembly <19>
of the Congregational Federation of Scotland.

Douglas Shaw, Lanark Meeting

This event was held in Larkhall in April, and I was a little apprehensive as this was my first time as an Ecumenical Representative, but when I arrived I received a very warm welcome.

The Congregational Federation of Scotland consists of those churches (around 30) who did not join the United Reformed Church of Scotland but stayed in their own group, and have a relationship with the National Federation in England. Interestingly Independent or Congregational Churches trace their history back to the early 17th Century, when religious toleration was not widespread;

Oliver Cromwell was probably in greatest sympathy with these kind of independent Christian communities.

The main business decision was to give the Council the authority to decide the contentious issue of their donation (£2 per head) to the National Federation based in Nottingham. There was much discussion on this issue and although heated at times a consensus was reached with no abstentions or No's. Very different from our Quaker business way, but I felt a coming together of all behind their decision.

Mission Reports and Ministry Reports followed next; it was suggested that churches should link up and work together and share stories, and take part in ecumenical activities where they existed.

There was a report from most churches, and very interesting report on Ecumenical Relations which I found particularly meaningful in its "call for God's help in discovering ways of supporting and encouraging church groups and denominations who have very different beliefs, ways of serving, different strengths and weaknesses." Also being a small denomination can make one feel inferior. There was a proposal to twin with Independent churches in Ireland and the URC in Scotland.

After lunch we all split into groups and discussed and filled out a questionnaire on our spiritual gifts and what is service to God. The headings in the summary included evangelism, giving, teaching, leadership, prophecy, shepherding, mercy and service. I think this exercise would be of use to Friends with some amendments.

General impressions were of an Association of church communities who were seeking to be led by the spirit in all their activities, and very willing to engage with other denominations.

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Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 in Warwick University

Jill Slee Blackadder

Quakers in large numbers have to be seen to be believed and Yearly Meeting gatherings are always spectacularly exciting, frustrating and exhausting. Friends of all ages, from nought to ninety plus, from all corners of the earth, not just the U.K. homed in this year on the Warwick University. The range of action groups, projects, concerns and art and craft skills that they were involved in were reflected on the two evenings of the Activity Fair is bewilderingly diverse.

The "What"s of Quakers included prisons, peace, justice, mental health, refugees, poverty, militarisation, torture, homelessness, drugs, alcohol, and were as diverse as the "Where"s: India, Bolivia, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Congo - and these are just a selection. If you add on poetry, music, song, dance, acrobatics, healing, and sustainability, it becomes virtually impossible to answer the question "what do Quakers do ?"

The daily programme of sessions takes a lot of time to take in and choose from. You need to get rapidly familiar with the venue lay-out, or you can easily get lost and end up arriving late, or in the wrong meeting altogether. An immense amount of preparation goes into the week and all of it deserves to be acknowledged and appreciated.

"But there is something warm and endearing about a space taken over by hundreds of Quakers" - at least, that's how I feel on arrival at Yearly Meeting Residentials. Cries of delighted recognition ring out on every side; there are hugs all round, and saving of chairs for friends, too much of which can make it a bit isolating for first timers and those coming alone.

The sentimental tone goes through several seismic shifts as the week gathers pace. By mid week, it turns into "Quakers look exhausted and wretched today," as if they are searching desperately for something or someone, but they can't remember who or what !

But by the end of the week, by now familiar with the campus, united with friends, contacts and committee colleagues, the faces are exhilarated, animated and energised.

This time an extra effort had been made to remind us of the need for keeping a looking eye and a listening ear out for anyone who might be feeling a touch of the QYM blues. We had been invited to bring a gift or two; to offer a helping hand, or to accompany someone who had expressed a need. There was a great sense of caring and awareness everywhere, along with mobility scooters and special wheelchairs.

Quakers are unbelievably noisy when they get together. Maybe it's a way of making up for all that silence! They are a gloriously colourful lot too, but in very different ways. You can watch the passing hordes in long hair, cropped hair, purple, grey, green, red and brown hair; long beards, trimmed beards, bald, shaven, shaggy, pony tails and perms. Quakers hurry past in long skirts, baggy breeks, shorts, hats of all shapes and sizes, sensible sandals, high heels, rainbow jackets -
- - - .

Outward appearances may vary between extremes, but there is no doubting the expressions on the hundreds of happy faces as the week reaches its last hours. Optimism, renewed enthusiasm, cheerfulness, were in somewhat short supply at the beginning, as Trump, Brexit and Militarisation clouded the general mood. But now Friends and visitors were heading home, maybe knackered, but refreshed and ready for action. Connections have been made, systems are all on "go" and cloth bags are bursting with materials ready to reinforce Quaker Meetings back home, support enquirers and enliven meetings for worship for months to come.

This was a warm, strengthening Y.M.G. and with hearts, heads, hands and feet in balance, most Friends departed better able to live out their lives, working with others in the world, with at least most of their dots and commas intact.

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting 12-14 May 2017
"Quaker lives, personal lives- what can I say?"

Marion Fairweather Glasgow meeting, BYM representative.

Belgium and Luxembourg YM was held in a peaceful youth hostel at Maldegem in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium, half an hour away from Bruges, attended by 29 Friends and attenders.

One of the most striking parts of the week was planning the weekend using an "Open model of organisation". On the first night Friends were invited to offer to facilitate sessions in the weekend, the sessions on offer were very varied from exploring how best to reach out to the Flemish community, Quaker spirituality and the blues and the chance to watch the film "Shawn the Sheep".

The timetable for the weekend grew out of these sessions, with participants able to move sessions around the timetable to try and ensure that everyone was able to attend the sessions they were most interested in. This method had been tried at 2016 BLYM and had been a revelation allowing Friends to share their skills, interests and experiences and for everyone to have an input into the process, rather like in Meeting for workshop - everyone was able to have an active role in it.

While the main language of the event was English, there was a great deal of conversation in French and Dutch (or Flemish) and this became one of the themes of the weekend. Friends spoke of their concern that they have felt that they "ought" to speak in English in Meetings and that, to better welcome new attenders a greater effort needs to be made to use their native tongues and to encourage multi-lingual Meeting for worship.

BLYM are working with Friends in the Netherlands to develop Quaker Faith in Practice in Dutch and they also hope to develop it in French so that new Friends can read it in their mother tongue. Two Friends are getting married this summer and their wedding will be in French and English, allowing all their friends and family to feel a part and, if they are called to, give ministry, regardless of what is their first language.

Since I've been back I've swapped pizza recipes and given holiday tips for Friends visiting Scotland this summer. At the BLYM over meals, there was a lot of discussion around Brexit and the impact that it will have, particularly for Friends from the UK who are working in Brussels and are facing the uncertainty around whether they can continue to stay and work in Belgium. Friends were very touched by the letter of greetings from Meetings for Sufferings and the warm sentiment of fellowship and unity which it expressed, regardless of the outcome of last year's referendum. Over the course of the weekend I learned more about the on-going work for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and will be speaking on behalf of QCEA for the June special collection in Glasgow Meeting.

I felt very privileged to have been able to take part in what one Friend described as a "pearl" of an event, it felt particularly important that Friends reach across borders to each other and that bonds between yearly meetings are strengthened.

**General Meeting for Scotland
Glasgow 10 June, 2017**

Phil Lucas, East Lothian Meeting

We spent the morning responding to a minute from North Thames Area Meeting about gender identity and inclusiveness. Several members of the Scottish Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community, some of whom, who gad about as a group and call themselves the Gallivanter, were present to share their experience with us. One of them, who had spent five years in a civil partnership, addressed the plenary session, which was at times emotionally charged. She told how much she valued the support of her local Quaker meeting down south during that partnership and through its break up. We are troubled by words and finding the right language. Identities are shaped through dialogue but words are moveable and don't have to concrete us in. 'It's all about otherness and the right to be oneself.'

We divided into groups using a variety of methods - discussion, worship-sharing, silence-based worship - as we helped each other address these sensitive issues. We were reminded that we all have elements of gender diversity within us and our minute reflected the openness, the discomfort and the challenge of this diversity. The session was clerked by Adwoa Bittle with great sensitivity. We appointed a small group to help our GM Committee decide how best to continue our consideration of diversity and inclusion at a future meeting.

Our afternoon session included, as well as regular housekeeping business, a brain-storming session, led by Joyce Taylor and Rosemary Hartill, on communication, using the helpful guidance of Britain Yearly Meeting's document 'Our Faith in the Future'.

How can we improve communication among ourselves? How can we better communicate to the outside world where we are, what we do and why we do it? How can we improve our website? How well are we adapting to the increased importance of social media, especially for the benefit of younger people? How does this all fit into our ongoing consideration of the role of *General Meeting*, which will be the main agenda item at our meeting in March 2018. There were many ideas and processes for us to take forward.

We concluded the day with a lively report from Mairi Campbell-Jack, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, on the work she and her support group are doing. Our petition, presented jointly with ForcesWatch, on the military recruitment of children is still being taken forward by the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament, who have taken it very seriously. They have requested and received a response from John Swinney and have been helped by the positive input of a Tory member who served as an officer in the Black Watch.

October's very successful symposium on working towards economic justice in Scottish society has been followed up by a smaller seminar of invited participants, including academics and politicians with special interest or expertise in this field. The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (the re-named Parliamentary Liaison Function Group) will be exploring how best to follow this up at its next meeting. It will involve building on our links with other groups which share our interest and concern. *General Meeting* is proposing to use a generous legacy to help us work with *Yearly Meeting* to increase Mairi's hours to make the work she does even more effective.

This was an engaging and stimulating meeting and I was glad to be there.

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**Do you wish you had been at
the symposium organised by our
Parliamentary Engagement Working Group?**

Do you wish you had been able to hear
GEORGE LAKEY
speak at Yearly Meeting Gathering?

**". A DIVIDED BRITAIN:
WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM
THE NORDICS?"**

*George Lakey's newest book has a provocative answer
October 7-9th 2017 (save the dates)*

The good news is there are three opportunities coming in October for you to have another chance! American Quaker and author of *Viking Economics* George Lakey, is on a UK book tour sharing his thoughts and research on how Nordic civil societies mobilised and brought about a non-violent transformation in their economies and societies.

George will speak in Perth at the Subud Centre on 7th October, then at Glasgow Quaker Meeting House on 8th October, and finally in Edinburgh on 9th October at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

Please **save the dates** and **spread the word!**

Directions to Bell Street Car Park in Dundee

I will assume that you are approaching Dundee from the West - A90

As you approach the first roundabout on the edge of the city, pull over into the right lane so that you can drive along the river to the city centre. (A85)

Pull over into the right hand lane as you come under the rail bridge past Tesco so that you can head east for Broughty Ferry and Aberdeen. (A991) - (a bit of a slalom course round Riverside Roundabout)

Once you have passed the ramps off the road bridge move over into the left hand lane so that you can turn left (still A991 - E Marketgait) after the Holiday Inn Express at Arnold Clark's Vauxhall garage.

Take the second exit up the hill into a tunnel at the next roundabout.

As you emerge from the tunnel (still A991) go straight on at the next roundabout and the entry ramp to the Bell Street Car Park will be on the left in perhaps a few hundred yards.

It's an ugly and expensive multi-storey car park

Bell Street Car Park 0-2 hours £4.60

4-6 hours £6.60

6-10 hours £8.70

You need to exit on foot onto West Bell Street and Abertay University. Head left to Constitution Road, turn right for one block then right along Ward Road to the red sandstone Baptist Church and its modern halls (On the map which can be accessed via the link below the marker is on the wrong side of Ward Road)

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@56.4624177,-2.9749534,18z?hl=en>

General Meeting for Scotland
9th September 2017
Central Baptist Church Halls
9A Ward Road, Dundee, DD1 1LP

Dear Friends and Attenders,

Our next *General Meeting* will be held on 9th September in the Central Baptist Church Halls in Dundee. The satnav will get you there, but parking may have to be in Bell Street car park - 100m away, according to its website. Directions on previous page. Coffee will be available from 10:30 with Meeting for Worship starting at 11 am. Lunch (soup provided) will be at 1 pm and we hope to finish with cakes at 4:30.

Your Central Committee has listened to the many comments we received asking for more community building time and more worship together. We will plan the day to include these elements around required business.

We will be hearing from Ian Boa, the Assistant General Secretary of ACTS (Action for Churches Together in Scotland) on how ACTS is faring.

Please do come. All decisions made are in your name and if you are not there, well what can I say!

Please remember to bring a packed lunch.

Papers and agenda relevant to GM will be circulated roughly a week prior to GM. If you do not receive them please ask Marion Sharkey (scotfriends@gmail.com) for a copy. Reading the papers beforehand helps to prepare the heart and mind.

If you have any questions or need anything please contact me, your clerk, at adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk or 07854 177 450.

With Friendly greetings,
Adwoa Bittle