



Oct 25

Scottish Friend



Photograph 1: Autumn in Glencoe village.

Scottish Friend is distributed by Jane Booth, on behalf of the Quakers in Scotland.



Photograph 2: A sign directing to St Cuthbert's Way near Kelso.



Please send articles as an editable attachment to amer.s.syed@gmail.com or typed or hand-written documents to *The Editor Scottish Friend, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL* to arrive by 5 February 2026. If you submit images, please ensure that they are about 1 MB in size.



Scottish Friend will be posted on the QiS 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 your Administrator know. You are strongly encouraged to do this in view of escalating postage costs.

*Published by Quakers in Scotland, 01382 730 842. www.quakerscotland.org
(Quakers in Britain website: www.quaker.org.uk).
Printed on recycled paper by Print Force, 0141 956 1052.*

Contents

1	QiS affairs	3
1.1	Calling letter Michael Hutchinson, QiS Clerk	3
1.2	Report of the GM for Scotland on 7 Jun Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM	6
1.3	GM for Scotland – laid down after 218 years Piers Voysey, North Scotland AM	8
2	Meetings for Sufferings Report Elaine Millar	10
3	Ecumenical Matters	12
3.1	Finland Yearly Meeting Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM	12
3.2	Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM	16
3.3	United Reform Church Synod Derek McLean, West Scotland AM	20
3.4	United Reform Church Synod Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM	22
3.5	Churches Together in England Racial Justice Working Group Derek McLean, West Scotland AM	24
3.6	St Ninian Declaration – completing the triangle Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM	26
4	Book of Discipline Revision Committee Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM	27
5	Parliamentary Engagement Working Group	29
5.1	A round-up of the year Sarah Komashko, Parliamentary Engagement Officer	29
5.2	Message from Carolyn Burch and Richard Ragget, Co-conveners, PEWG	33
6	Community Matters	34
6.1	A testimony to community - Emily Provance in Dundee Craig Wilson, East Scotland AM	34
6.2	Ulrich E. Loening Family and colleagues including Alastair McIntosh, West Scotland AM	37
6.3	John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust—a Beneficiary writes Kirsten Nielsen	42
6.4	John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust—Forest Discovery Week Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM	43
6.5	Update from STEPS Ellen Colingsworth, East Scotland AM	43
7	Poetry corner	44
7.1	One Hundred and Eighty-ninth Sunday of War and Peace Pilgrimage Lysana Robinson, North Scotland AM	44
7.2	My Journey Sila Collins-Walden, North Scotland AM	45
8	Letter to editor	45
9	Notices	46
9.1	French Student working on Quakerism in Scotland Dimitri Wiart	46
9.2	QiS Community Building: Families Weekend 2026	47

1 QiS affairs

1.1 Calling letter

Michael Hutchinson, QiS Clerk

Dear Friends,
Greetings to you all!

Our next meeting of QUAKERS IN SCOTLAND will be in two parts:

On Thursday 6th November 2025 online from 7 pm (see the link at the end of this letter)

and

on Saturday 8th November, at the Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace EH1 2JL, and online by Zoom, 11 am – 4:00 pm (drinks 10:30)

The Quakers in Scotland meeting is an opportunity to meet together with Friends from across Scotland. In a spirit of worship, we attend to our church affairs, and matters concerning the spiritual life and witness of Quakers in Scotland.

Our agenda for the first full meeting of Quakers in Scotland, reflects both continuity and change. We will work with our trustees and working groups on ongoing work but also start working together on how we engage in fostering our Scottish Quaker community in this new situation. We expect three Area Meetings to be laid down on the 8th November.

Please do join us! All are welcome. Edinburgh/South East Scotland AM Friends will be providing hospitality for those coming to the meeting house. **A soup and bread and cheese lunch, with hot drinks, will be provided but please bring anything further you might need.** After preliminary refreshment from 10:30 am, we will start with open worship at 11.00, break for lunch from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm and our afternoon session will finish by about 4.00 pm, following which there will tea.

As we continue to experiment with how we take the business, the now usual preparatory pre-meeting by zoom on Thursday 6th November at 7pm will take some of the required business as a formal part of the meeting. There should still be time for some queries about the agenda. The link is at the end of this letter

PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR SATURDAY MEETING for security online and to give us the numbers coming to Edinburgh so we can plan hospitality and use of space. Use this link, however you attend:



<https://shorturl.at/IFQw7>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Please note *that you will receive Zoom log in details even if you have registered to attend face to face– this is a default setting of the registration set up. Note the registration form shows that zoom will be open from 10 am, but the meeting doesn't start until 11.*

Contact our Administrator, Jane Booth (scotfriends@gmail.com or 07747 396456) if you need any assistance.

THE BUSINESS BEFORE US

On Thursday evening we will take: The record of new members and deaths; Dates and venues adjustments for next year; The Meeting for Sufferings report.

As part of that we will hear how we might engage on gender issues to support the continuing discernment of Meeting for Sufferings, the Britain-wide representative body for Quakers.

We will look at our Local Development Worker priorities for 2026 and receive a minute from South East Scotland AM on transatlantic slavery.

On Saturday morning

We will meet with Young Friends present;

We will hear from our Trustees, including how financial matters will be taken;

We will hear from the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group on their Peace witness work and on their priorities for the next three years;

We will have the annual report from our Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group.

On Saturday afternoon

We have our Nominations Committee report, including how they might work in the new setting.

We will engage with the papers produced by the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group on how QiS might operate in taking on the roles of (at least) some Area Meetings.

Papers for the meeting will be placed on the QiS website, and an agenda sent out about ten days before the meeting. Draft minutes to work from will be issued a few days before the meeting. **The link for the Thursday evening meeting**

follows:

Topic: Quakers in Scotland first part

Time: Thursday 6 November, 2025 07:00 PM

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 876 0407 2179

Passcode: 326134

One tap mobile

+443300885830,,87604072179# United Kingdom

+441314601196,,87604072179# United Kingdom

If you have any questions, please contact me, your clerk, by email scotfriend-sclerk@gmail.com or telephone 0141 770 7865. Also email the clerk if you need instructions on how to get to the Meeting House, etc.

Our Administrator, Jane Booth, can also add you onto the emailing list if you are not already on it (scotfriends@gmail.com).

Michael Hutchinson, Clerk
Susan Mitchell, Assistant Clerk.
Quakers in Scotland.



Photograph 3: Cellar Dyke, East Neuk, Fife. *Photo supplied by Juliet Henderson.*

1.2 Report of the GM for Scotland on 7 Jun

Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM

One of the many joys of General Meeting for Scotland is that it rotates among the 4 Area Meetings. This time we met in Aberdeen the granite glistening in the infrequent sunshine as, this being a Scottish summer, the rain was more frequent.

We were 75 Friends, 28 in person and 46 on zoom with one visitor.

We recorded 4 deaths but 3 new members, 2 transfers in and 2 terminations plus 1 resignation. So our membership remains more or less stable.

Regular business items, some annual, were appointments and nominations, and later on our Local Development Officer, Zoe Prosser, spoke to us on how we can undertake nominations well in a manner that includes us all. The clerks of all Area Meetings were asked to work with Zoe to hold an open meeting to consider the potential for our nominations process and to bring forward a name for a new clerk of Nominations. We heard from Trustees of General Meeting that there is a surplus of £6,068 for 2024 but because of transitioning to Quakers in Scotland there is a need to be prudent in terms of reserves as there are expected associated legal costs.

It is always a joy to hear of the annual weekend for families and this year was no exception. The theme of the weekend was peace and peace building. We are grateful to all those who contribute so much to the success of these weekends.

In May 2026, elections will be held to the Scottish Parliament. Our Parliamentary Engagement Group continues to work hard, along with the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, to liaise with Members of the Scottish Parliament and take forward Quaker concerns. The Scottish Parliament views itself as progressive and, because of the list top up system, has a wider representation than Westminster. Currently it is widely expected that some MSPs will be elected in 2026 representing Reform. Members of the PWEG are meeting with those writing party manifestos for 2026. We are pleased that Quakers can contribute to Time for Reflection to the Scottish Parliament. The most recent was on the day of the major debate (and free vote) on the proposed Assisted Dying Bill. So, the message about more honesty and integrity in listening and speaking, and finding kinder ground in debate, proved timely and was referenced during the debate. We agreed an additional funding for a key partner in the work Stop Climate Change Scotland in view of the importance of the work.

However, the most substantive item of business was the transition to Quakers in Scotland, a single Scottish charity, which could involve laying down General Meeting for Scotland, the 4 Area Meetings and Dundee Property Trust. Much work by many individuals has been undertaken over a decade and on 7th June we took forward our discernment and agreed to the transition of General Meeting for Scotland to Quakers in Scotland. 3 Area Meetings and Dundee Property Trust have already agreed to join Quakers in Scotland. The other Area Meeting is still discerning a way forward in relation to Quakers in Scotland. We require to set up a bank account for the new organisation and are delighted that a Treasurer for Quakers in Scotland was appointed. The Half Yearly Meeting for North Britain

was established in 1786, becoming General Meeting for Scotland in 1807. We have now reached the next stage in our history and evolution.

Meeting for Sufferings are to be asked to approve the transition of General Meeting for Scotland to Quakers in Scotland.

Finally we are aware of the exciting opportunities before us as we begin thinking as Quakers in Scotland. It is up to us to make it work for building and strengthening our community. Our exercise today has strengthened this resolve to find ways forward for all of us. We thank the Co-ordinating Group and others working on our behalf to make this happen.

General Meeting was a day of optimism with the wind of Spirit, so near to the date of Pentecost, moving us to seek to put our faith into action.



Photograph 4: Cairn at the summit of Càrn Dearg near Loch Ossian.

1.3 GM for Scotland – laid down after 218 years Piers Voysey, North Scotland AM

Saturday, 20th September 2025, Perth

General Meeting for Scotland (GMS) has met, for the last time, in the AK Bell Library, Perth (and online) on 20th September 2025. The final GMS minute was signed off at 2.15pm, to be followed by the opening of the first meeting of Quakers in Scotland (QiS). Our Clerk and Clerk of the foundation trustees explained clearly and minuted carefully the process to lay down GMS as a Quaker body and a registered charity and to set up QiS, which is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). It felt like a well prepared and compassionately curated process. There was no fanfare, but quiet contemplation and heart-felt ministry giving thanks to God and to those who had visioned, and held, and guided the process of transformation first mooted in 2016; with encouragement to live adventurously.

Alongside the 'switching on' of QiS we heard from representatives who witness on our behalf. This includes young Friends and volunteer staff who had been at Shindig this year. Irrespective as to whether participants were 'old hands' or 'fresh-faced' to Shindig, the feedback mentions the welcome, being valued, being heard, the relaxed and trusting environment, and the opportunity to wind down at the end of a day with 'epilogue' as positive experiences from the week.

The theme for Shindig 2025 was Embracing Differences. Workshops and living together for a week demonstrated that communities are stronger when they practice accepting, celebrating difference, valuing and learning from each other. "We are all different – We are all the same!" We came back to this in the report from Meeting for Sufferings where we hear that in relation to Trans rights and Women's rights we are still struggling to find the words and practice that meets everyone's needs. This question arose: "How do we, with tenderness, live with and listen to the people with whom we don't agree?"

We also heard from Friends who had been to the Central European Yearly Meeting and Nordic YM. We are delighted that Friends are able to represent us and share news and experience across borders and cultures, but we are aware that without personal connections it may be difficult to sustain a Scottish presence at these gatherings.

Rosie Roberts reported on the renewed focus on mental health awareness amongst Friends with the launch of Quaker Voices on Mental Health, in book form and online: <https://quakervoicesonmh.org.uk/activities/qvomh-book/>.

Richard Raggett, joining us online, spoke of the ongoing Parliamentary Engagement work. Richard spoke of the experience of growing into the role of working group member and now convenor, from a starting point of not being politically engaged. Now, knowing politicians personally he won't let statements such as "They are all the same" or "They are only in it for themselves" go by without challenge. In January, our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group is going to need new members and new convenors to guide our priorities and work on parliamentary engagement, which ranges from climate justice to land reform

while linking with other Quaker bodies such as the Community Justice Working Group.

GM brought 102 people together and we got through a packed agenda, without missing lunch and comfort breaks along the way. We skimmed over deliberation where it was not needed and paused to uphold, listen and add to draft minutes where it was required. In a comment about our current demographic, a Friend suggested that she has known most in the gathered Meeting for 40 years! Still, seeing younger faces in the Meeting and hearing about the strength of Shindig gives confidence of our future presence and relevance in Scotland.



Photograph 5: Looking towards Benmore Glen and Crianlarich from path.

2 Meetings for Sufferings Report

Elaine Millar

The minutes and papers can be found on the [Quakers in Britain website](#)

I am your representative for General Meeting and West Scotland Area Meeting, and there is also a representative for East Scotland, South East Scotland and North Scotland – that’s four of us – less than a handful. When we move to Continuing Yearly Meeting in 2026, my hope is that many more Friends - attenders and members - will consider joining the reps, to be part of our discernment.

I attended this meeting online, but still very much ‘in-person’ because I find I must make extra efforts to ignore distractions at home - especially in the form of messages firing into in-boxes, my cat demanding strokes and family members blundering into the room by mistake!

I was glad to be reminded by our own Elizabeth Allen, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) assistant clerk that ‘routine business’ is never routine. And so it proved to be with the first item, renewing the registration of three Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRB). The third of these, the Quaker Socialist Society (QSS) raised a question about whether it is right for a political-sounding group to be given QRB status. To which the answer came, it is not political with a capital P, with no affiliation to a specific party, but rather is rooted, for over 100 years in the ethical socialism inherent within our Quaker testimonies.

More non-routine, routine business followed, with the adding of thirteen names to the Prison and Court Register. The current trend of conflating activism with terrorism means we will witness more commonly the criminalising of public protest. Indeed, on the day we met it became a criminal offence to support the group Palestine Action.

This led us directly into our first session, a workshop on Quakers and Protest, led by Lyndsay Burtonshaw and Ailish Carroll-Brentnall, staff members from Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Faith in Action Team. The slides for this have been made available to us to run our own workshops and I will pass these on for meetings to use. The takeaway message is you can still protest, resist and dissent but it is wise to make informed choices about where your actions now sit within the law. Websites Liberty (www.libertyhumanrights.org) and Green & Black Cross were recommended for advice. The latter focuses on England & Wales, but their website signposts to SCALP: Scottish Community & Activist Legal Project (www.scottishactivistlegalproject.co.uk).

However, Lyndsay and Ailish focused more on the emotional and spiritual aspects of activism, and the importance of nurturing interpersonal relationships within our local and area meetings, where a range of different attitudes to protest can lead to divisions. We were urged to use our Quaker practice of spiritual discernment, through meetings for clearness and threshing meetings. Clarifying our natural leaning towards roles they described variously as ‘a rebel’, ‘a citizen’, ‘a reformer’, or ‘a social change agent’ can bring greater understanding of each other. When we enable these roles to work together, ours is a stronger more coherent body and voice of protest. Above all, the value of upholding each other

is powerful. Lyndsay testified to this as she related her own experience as one of the ‘Stansted Fifteen’ group of protesters found guilty of blocking the take-off of a deportation flight at Stansted Airport, a charge which carried a potential life sentence: she found the upholding of Friends as a balm. She asked that when we find the actions of ‘a rebel’ to be unfathomable, to think, how can I support them from where I stand? How can I show love and light to them? Immediately following this excellent session, rather aptly we received a minute from Westminster meeting detailing events when the police raided the meeting house to arrest the six attendees of the protest group, Youth Demand.

The other minute, received from Worcestershire and Shropshire area meeting concerned the implications of the recent Supreme Court judgement (on the meaning of ‘sex’ in the Equality Act 2010) for transgender inclusion and single-sex spaces. Note, this case was brought by the group, ‘For Women Scotland’ against Scottish ministers. I have been made aware that this issue is also live within Quakers – and not just in the reductive terms of toileting arrangements - and is at risk of becoming polarised and divisive between Friends who wish us to stand up for transgender people’s rights for inclusion, and Friends speaking up for women’s right for single-sex spaces. Both groups express fears, and both must be heard and must hear each other: perhaps sharing about ‘needs’ rather than ‘rights’ would help this process? Meeting for Sufferings was asked whether we wish BYM staff to add to our position of support for transgender people with public advocacy, leading the way for non-Quaker groups, but it felt clear that we are not ready, having work to do within Quakers first.

Our minute on this read, “Spiritually-grounded conversations and opportunities for learning from our lived experiences will aid this [understanding]; we hope that ways will be found to facilitate this”. But I realise, with hindsight this leaves it wishy washy. We need to do this work now, among our local and area meetings and general meeting, so that Quakers in Scotland have something helpful to offer to Quakers in Britain.

I want to leave this report here – with a call to action - although there is more to report, not least that General Meeting’s minute informing of our move to Quakers in Scotland was accepted and we are held in the Light by Meeting for Sufferings as we move forward.

Please refer to the minutes on the Quakers in Britain website to hear about our trustees’ report; progress on ‘new ways of belonging’ with proposals regarding membership; and consideration of handing on the functions of Meeting for Sufferings to Continuing Yearly Meeting.

3 Ecumenical Matters

3.1 Finland Yearly Meeting Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM

Aito Centre, Tampere 16-18 May 2025

Once again, I was delighted to be appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting [BYM] to attend Finland's YM gathering and the Lutheran centre just outside Tampere. On my first visit in 2019 I was warmly welcomed into this small and loving Quaker community, and the warmth of the welcome each time just gets greater. I appreciate being seen as an honorary Finn, part of the family, and am very interested to see the progress of ongoing concerns and the emergence of new ones.

In 2019 I think I and Michael Eccles, Executive Secretary to the Europe & Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation, were the only 'outside' visitors to the Gathering: this year's had a very international flavour. Jess, an American, was visiting from Estonia where she has been working on a project with Estonian Friends and also doing some work for the AFSC [American Friends Service Council]. Having visited Estonia the last time I was in Finland, and met one of the Quakers there, I was very interested to hear her update on Quakers in Estonia – including a suggestion that Finnish Friends might like to make a day trip over to Tallin to worship together. Julia, from Vienna, was representing Austria YM and EMES, Michael Eccles being prevented. Elke and Dominic were visiting from Sweden: Elke, an American, is a regular attendee at the online worship sessions, while Dominic is originally from Lithuania. We were joined for part of the weekend by a couple from Nepal who had recently moved to Helsinki: I was very sad that they had to leave part way through the weekend to deal with an urgent matter, as this meant I had little opportunity to talk to them. And then there was me, on my umpteenth visit.

Finland YM is tiny in comparison with BYM, and their concerns sometimes very different – their way of conducting business between their twice-yearly Gatherings works well for them – an executive committee handles necessary business, while a separate group attends to the detailed planning of the Gatherings. There is no need for the major structural reorganisation BYM is currently navigating!

Some years ago, Finnish Friends took the decision to lay down all committees except that which was essential to keeping YM going. What I have seen on my visits since 2019 is the gradual emergence of things if and when they become necessary, such as a group to deal with the sizeable archives which needed a home when the Friends' Helsinki flat was sold. Last year I was invited to join Sue Glover Frykman of Sweden YM in a session on eldership, which gave Friends the opportunity to practice discernment around some of the 'typical' issues elders might need to address. Currently elders are appointed for the duration of Gatherings, but not for the rest of the year.

A concern for the pastoral care of Friends, some of whom are very isolated, resulted in the formation of a small group to consider this. At this YM it was proposed that a group be set up representing both Finland's three regular 'physical' worship groups [Helsinki, Tampere, and Oulu] and those who do not have

a regular meeting to attend except the twice-monthly Zoom worship sessions. Care-taking needs to be intentional, not just ‘random and haphazard’. It was decided that this would be a ‘holy experiment’ for one year. I hope I will be able to attend next year’s YM and find out how it’s got on...

Reports from the worship groups [two of which I’d been able to visit prior to



Photograph 6: Walled garden in Dumfries House, Ayrshire.

attending YM] were lively and fascinating. Helsinki worship group has quite a number of worshippers, but rarely much consistency from week to week. However, Quaker study sessions are held on weekdays and there is now a regular “Spiritual Jam” meeting, initiated by a Quaker but open to anyone who wants to talk about spiritual matters, share spiritual experiences, or talk about what they’re reading. Tampere Friends are a more coherent group, and at their last meeting [which I attended] they began to explore a Friend’s concern that they act together to “take our beliefs into the world”: I look forward to hearing from my Tampere Friends how they are progressing.

The group in Oulu is much younger, and at present meets once a month – sadly, I wasn’t able to visit them this time. I was really glad to meet Raimo again – we’d met briefly on my visit to Oulu in the autumn, and in a number of Zoom worship sessions. It was his first experience of YM, and he was initially apprehensive – but he had a really good time and I hope will become a regular presence at the Gatherings. Much happens online in addition to the regular Sunday worship on 1st and 3rd Sundays. Following the publication of a Finnish translation of Thomas Kelly’s *A Testament of Devotion*, Friends have been meeting to read and discuss it: there is also a regular meeting to discuss BYM’s *Advices and Queries*.

Business items included the consideration of whether the YM reserves needed to be as high as they are [as a result of the sale of the Helsinki flat some years ago]. Perhaps spending some of it wisely might be in order? Communication within the YM needs attention: a small group is working on this. The website

is in urgent need of an update – is it better to try to fix the current one or start again from scratch? The comms group was asked to investigate the cost of a new one and report to the autumn Gathering. An application for membership was welcomed, and a clearness meeting was held during the weekend to start the process. I was honoured to be invited to take part.

In other sessions during the weekend we touched on themes I found echoed the following weekend at BYM.

A Lutheran deacon, Reija Jarkkola, who works with voluntary workers in the church, began by asking us, *in this time when everything seems to be in crisis, what can an individual do to change the world? But let's not ask the huge questions: instead, let's ask **what and how can we be together?*** We need to move from individualistic thinking to being together as a network - *what we are, rather than what we do.* The Covid times showed how we could find creative ways of being together – why can't we do this when there's not a crisis? It's a slow, deep process of individual change, not to create individual acts but to grow better relationships. Let us use our Utopian imagination – how would a fairer, more just world work? As a start, what one thing would I like to be different in this world?

Timo Virtala from Tampere talked about the power of non-violence. He began with a photo of one person standing in front of many tanks in Tienanmin Square in 1989: that non-violent resistance was crushed, but the Berlin Wall came down through non-violent protests and action. Violence and unsuccessful quiet protests make the news: Timo told us of many peaceful examples of great societal change, and said that research suggests that these are more effective and longer-lasting than the violent ones. It's important to acknowledge that non-violence doesn't always work. It's important to plan, organise, research and find strategies that can work. He suggested that non-violence is a power we can use, develop, test, and make even more efficient. We can choose to give in to power, or refuse and defy it – and we must be prepared to face the consequences. In a presentation that cited many other examples, both successful and not, Timo didn't offer any easy solutions, but a great deal to think about. He mentioned a video *A Force More Powerful*, which I've not yet investigated.

Four of those present at AitO took part in a panel on a theme very close to that of BYM this year – describing how they themselves were building peace and hope in their lives. Among the questions they were asked: *tell us what you do; what motivates you to do it?; how does your faith relate to this activity?; what does it give you yourself?; do you have any tips for other Friends?* Jess has spent much of her working life teaching conflict-resolution, peace-making and meditation techniques; Aino has for some years been taking a small group of young people who otherwise would have no contact with nature on forest trips – short ones at first, but getting longer as they grow older. Pirkko's working life was as a social worker: now she is retired, and has impaired vision, she helps others around her who have similar impairments. Kaia Maria has realised from her own life experience that *when a student is ready, the teacher comes*, and is writing a book about this. Again, this was a very rich session, with much to think about, including *how do you discern what to say yes or no to?*

Our closing session allowed us to share our thoughts about the weekend. Being able to use the language in which we were most comfortable, and develop new understandings; seeing the *shining example of caring and sharing* as one Friend looked after another, seriously vision-impaired, Friend; *I came as a mess, and somehow found / received everything I needed*; having the planning group make the Gathering arrangements freed the Clerk and executive committee to concentrate on the Meeting for Worship for Business, while the team of Elders appointed ‘clicked’; *we need visitors to bring content but we also have things to give*; appreciation of the translators during the weekend who were expressing the deepest things in their second or even third languages; the spirit of family and home which stays all weekend despite all the comings and goings. I think my favourite contribution was from our Clerk, Toni, who reflected that if Quakers were an animal, he would say ‘capybara’, because *it hangs out peacefully in different situations with many different animals, and has no natural enemies*.

And around all that wrapped a cocoon of love, caring, and sharing that blessed and enriched us all. I personally basked in the warmth of that love, which feeds me when I come back to the UK and plunge into all that engages me here. There was fellowship, quiet conversation, solitude, laughter, and always loving care for each other – not least during the Saturday night sauna session, during which we could dip or plunge into the lake: there was always someone willing to stand on the verandah and make sure we surfaced again. It chimes so well with everything that Emily Provance talked about in her Swarthmore lecture the following Saturday – the bonds of communities that we forge, however transiently, that add more Light to this darkening world.

I had arrived in Finland with a letter of greeting from General Meeting for Scotland, and Finland’s clerk, Toni Hämäläinen, wrote this in reply:

We worshipped together, seeking ways to nurture peace and hope within ourselves and we prayed to have courage to live that in our communities, wherever we may be. It was so nice to have our ‘honorary Finn’ Mary with us once again.

The Light is everywhere

Greetings to Friends in Scotland!

In Friendship

Toni Hämäläinen

Clerk, FYM

Prior to the AitO weekend, I had spent time travelling in Finland, visiting and staying with Ffriends, and doing my best to improve my Finnish. Always there were deep and meaningful conversations, and strengthening of bonds between us. Having heard Emily Provance, this year’s Swarthmore lecturer, saying that she has realised she is indeed travelling in the ministry: she hasn’t a message to deliver – her ministry is that of listening to others - I realise that this is my ministry too: to listen, and then to tell others what I learn, doing my little bit to strengthen the ties that bind us into the Society of Friends.

3.2 Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM

”Strengthening the Nordic Quaker Community” Solborg Folkehøgskole Stavanger, Norway 3-6 July 2025

I was very excited to be visiting Norway, both to attend Nordic Yearly Meeting for the first time and finally to visit my Ffriend Lilian Aarek, with whom I did the Equipping for Ministry course 2016-18.

Stavanger used to be a smallish town with a deep-water harbour on the west coast of Norway: it expanded rapidly in the oil boom. It now hosts gigantic cruise ships which dock alongside smaller craft of all sizes, dwarfing them. I stayed in a hotel before and after the Gathering: it was lovely to be able to spend time with her and her family and see her home.

When I arrived, the town was gearing up for a visit by the royal family as part of the celebration of the bicentenary of the first organised emigration from Norway to America. On 4th July 1825 the sailing ship *Restauration* set sail from Stavanger with 52 passengers on board. They included two known Quakers, one of whom gave birth on the journey. The ship was expecting to land in Massachusetts but for a variety of reasons made landfall at New York instead.

On Friday 4th July 2025 a replica of the *Restauration* set sail for New York



Photograph 7: Somewhere in Glencoe.

after a ceremony in Stavanger cathedral, in which one of the local Quakers took part. Many of those present at the Gathering went down to the harbour to wave goodbye to the *Restauration* and its crew. The journey downtown wasn't straightforward, and my health is not what it used to be, so I chose instead to visit the nearby art museum, which kept me entranced for several hours.

The Gathering itself was richly rewarding. Quakers from Denmark, Finland,

Norway and Sweden spent the long weekend looking at strengthening the Nordic Quaker community. The main speakers were Michael Eccles of EMES [Europe & Middle East section of Friends World Committee for Consultation] and Julia Hinshaw-Ryberg. They invited us to *reflect on how we can be relevant to each other and to the Quaker family more widely, and in society in general.*

The one lone Dane present had not long discovered Friends, and was part of a very small meeting in Aarhus: I kept checking up on him over the weekend, and was glad that he really enjoyed the experience and would happily come again. There were three Finns [plus myself as an honorary Finn] and a sizeable number of Norwegians and Swedes. Many overseas visitors came: mainly from Europe, with one visitor both representing Sierra Cascades YM and being assistant clerk to Moscow Meeting. With such a rich linguistic mix, English was the common language and, where another language was in use, someone always made sure to translate for those who didn't understand.

Michael and Julia had originally planned separate sessions, but decided jointly to present both the Friday night and Saturday morning sessions. A common theme throughout the weekend was Paul's description [1 Cor 12:12-13] of 'the body of Christ' – one entity made up of many different parts, each with their own particular function. If one part of the body suffers, or rejoices, all suffer or rejoice with it.

The four Nordic Quaker communities are all different, but also intertwined, and all exist in a Lutheran context. Like many of the constituent members of EMES, there are people who live in one country and worship in another. EMES's function is *connecting Friends, communicating, networking, and nurturing Meetings* across Europe and the Middle East. We were invited to share with a neighbour *what connection with or knowledge do I have of other individual Nordic Friends or YMs?*

EMES's vision statement *is for a thriving, vibrant, and inclusive spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East, united in transformative faith and love, working with others and actively living out Quaker testimonies.* Which of these words stood out as most important for each of us? Someone suggested more regular meetings for Nordic Quakers – once or twice a year, with the assistance of Zoom: someone else added "welcome to the organising committee"...

The Nordic YMs are all within the liberal Quaker tradition – a minority within a Quaker minority – and are some of the oldest YMs within EMES. They have much they can share with 'younger' YMs: their experience of survival, of growth and decline, of being faithful, of structures that work, and new ways of doing things. Like many other EMES YMs, they also experience tensions, growing pains, and conflicts: they are small and geographically spread, and they too have language differences – one of the reasons for the prevalence of the English tongue throughout the weekend. Small numbers need not be a problem – the mustard seed is the smallest of seeds from which can grow a mighty tree! And one benefit of using a language which is not your native tongue is that you think carefully about which word to use...

Michael Eccles talked about his work as executive secretary to EMES, and the 'listening visits' he makes to YMs. He goes to listen, to learn about Friends' per-

sonal lives as well as their spiritual ones. With no expectations, and no agenda, these visits are much more powerful than if they were meticulously planned. It was particularly good to hear of his and others' recent visit to Ramallah and Ukraine. Would Nordic Friends consider travelling with no agenda? Links could be made between places in different countries and create networks to *join the smallnesses*. The one Friend in Iceland could also be invited to take part. Covid brought about the realisation that meetings could be held online or blended: extensive and expensive travelling is not always necessary. *If you are inspired by the idea, if it brings life, just do it...!*

The Saturday afternoon offered the opportunity to participate in a wide range of workshops, each listed with the language in which it would be conducted. I chose to attend one in which Eivind Bryne talked about early Quaker history in Norway and in Stavanger in particular, in which his own family played a significant part. One thing that particularly struck me was that the painter Lars Herterig, seen by some as the Norwegian van Gogh, and whose paintings I'd admired the previous day in the art museum, was supported throughout his life by local Quakers. British Friends Stephen Grellet and William Allen had visited Norway in the early 19th century, and reports from Meeting for Sufferings to Britain Yearly Meeting from the 1850s onwards mention regular visits to Stavanger and other parts of Norway.

The second workshop subjects included Gaza/Palestine, climate and environmental issues, and 'Giraffe language' – but sadly I couldn't investigate any of these. I'd been invited to present a session on the revision of BYM's book of discipline. A goodly number of Friends, with wide-ranging experience of books of discipline including *Quaker faith & practice*, attended. They were very interested in my account of the BDRC's work so far, and had much to contribute. One Friend commented that when he first found Friends his own book of discipline seemed very dry and off-putting, but that another, more friendly and approachable text made him interested in exploring further. Norway YM had suggested re-working Advices and Queries, hoping that everyone in the YM would be involved in the process: some Friends have produced draft text but as yet the rest of the YM had not taken part. The Friend from Sierra-Cascades YM, which had split from NorthWest Pacific YM over the latter's attitude towards LGBTQIA people, said the new YM could no longer use the latter's book of discipline but were not yet thinking of writing their own. Ingrid Greenhow, who has been appointed Clerk to the new Continuing Yearly Meeting's agenda committee, also came along and was most interested in hearing a first-hand account of the BDRC, with whom she will be working closely.

After all that hard work and many engrossing private conversations, Saturday night was a chance to let our hair down and socialise. Nordic YM has a 'Eurovision' tradition, and this year's Gathering was no exception. Four of the young people present were invited to represent Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Excerpts from Nordic Eurovision entries in past years were played, some of which went back several decades: we were invited to join the appropriate representative and, if we felt so led, dance along to the music. We were also completely free to stay in our seats and do nothing of the sort!

I found it fascinating, not least because most of the music was new to me – but it also revealed which Friends knew a huge amount about Eurovision! One highlight was hearing an extract from a Swedish entry – a gentle love song – and then being told that the singer [who'd been consulted beforehand] was present among us. Her father had written the song, which we then heard in full. The final number was Abba's *Waterloo* – and I couldn't stay in my seat, but had to join the suddenly very large crowd of dancers at the front of the hall.

Sunday was taken up with remaining business and a closing meeting for worship. During the business session we heard from the group who'd been focusing on the situation in Israel/ Palestine: they'd had a text exchange with a medic in Gaza who'd outlined all the possible ways of getting help to the people there and explained what was most needed and how it could be got into the area. The exchange ended "*Thank you for listening and for truly wanting to understand*". Various safe ways of contributing financially were outlined. We also heard an epistle from the children and young people, and the epistle from Nordic YM itself.

We parted, hoping to meet again in the summer of 2028, when the Gathering will be organised and hosted by Sweden Yearly Meeting.

I left, sorry to be leaving Friends old and new, and aware that I could easily become an EMES groupie...There's an all-age Gathering in Cologne next August, Nordic YM somewhere in Sweden in 2028, and other opportunities to gather with Friends and YMs throughout the area, all of which I'd love to attend. I had a wonderfully enriching time in Stavanger, learning so much, making new friends and re-encountering old ones: realising yet again how wide and strong is the web that stretches around the world, uniting 'all Quakers everywhere'.

I had come to Stavanger with a letter of greeting to Nordic YM from Friends in Scotland, and was delighted to bring this reply back with me:

Dear Friends in General Meeting for Scotland

Thank you for sending your, and now our, Friend Mary to our Gathering. We have had a few blessed, gathered and stimulating days together. Mary has contributed to this with her presence and also by leading a workshop on the revision of BYM's "Faith and Practice"

Thank you!

In Friendship

the clerking team for Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering

Ulrika Mars Jon Øgard Schjelderup and Aino Vesanen

(Sweden YM) (Norway YM) (Finland YM)

3.3 United Reform Church Synod Derek McLean, West Scotland AM

Saturday, 8 March, Glasgow

It was a great joy to attend this synod on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, particularly as Orkney Meeting now has a home with the Peedie Kirk, the URC in Kirkwall.

When it was formed in 1972 the URC made a commitment to be an ecumenical church. The Synod was formed in 2000 when many of the Scottish Congregational Churches joined the URC which was already united with a small number of Churches of Christ. This ecumenical focus reflects the commitment to live out the prayer of Jesus ‘that they may be one’. A quarter of the congregations are part of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs), most of whom are united congregations with other different denominations to form a new united church. Since 2010 the Synod has been part of a new national ecumenical partnership EMU (Episcopal, Methodist and URC).

There are two Synods each year and their function is to approve resolutions to go to the two General Assemblies for discernment.

The theme of the conference was *Living the hope with courage and defiance*, 1 Peter 3:8 – 16. The Moderator in her opening ministry referred to the words of Peter to always be ready with gentleness and reverence, to love our neighbours and as a community to deal with suffering. At a time when oppression is on the increase we need hope which encourages creative expectation. The celebration of 25 years of the URC in June will take the theme of *Living the hope within*.

The proceedings framed by worship and hymns were conducted in a spirit of love and right ordering. I was struck by the inclusivity of the words of the hymns. On each item of business any participant could speak and decisions were reached by voting.

The number of matters raised in this one day Synod was extensive and included:

- *Condition of Church buildings* and the problem of shrinking congregations unable to fund building repairs. There is a need for a new funding system so that all churches can meet their legal and governance commitment in a fair and equitable way. Local Ecumenical Partnerships have a system that works.
- *Cluster model of shared mission and ministry* set up to fulfil the aspiration to provide a share of settled ministry to all congregations has not been met. Difficult to envisage how it might be met with the constraints of a reducing availability of ministers.
- *Mission Committee* – Dementia Awareness day held in Livingston, *living well with dementia* and being a dementia friendly church, followed by session with theological reflections on the dementia journey and God as the guarantor of our personhood. Plans for future day on neurodiversity. Grant awarded to Nairn URC for ecumenical school chaplaincy project. Celebration of 80 years of Christian Aid – churches asked to join tree planting project. Synod adopted the environmental policy and encouraged local churches to assess their environmental impact, and to join ECO Congregation Scotland.

A Church with people on the Margins. This report described the commitment to ending poverty and advocating on issues of economy, inequality, environment, asylum and migration. It also commits to anti racism, tackling modern day slavery, and finding social justice housing solutions when church properties and land are no longer required.

3 inspiring projects which reflect the commitment to prioritise resources to support churches located in areas of the most significant deprivation:

Church Angels Project, Port Glasgow (a non referral food bank) was formed in response to statistics indicating that 600 children in Port Glasgow did not have a hot meal every day. Service users include families from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Kuwait and also local people who are on benefits, or working, but just don't have an income that covers all their outgoings. There is a café running alongside the foodbank. Remand prisoners from the local prison help with shopping and stacking shelves.

Priesthill URC, in an area of high deprivation with a lack of community space, has developed the hall as a community hub, open every day. This allows for the integration of a wide range of agencies and local charities which work together to help local people grow in confidence and take charge of their lives.

Drumchapel Friendship House held an August Funday to welcome local refugees and asylum seekers. Regular users of the center prepared dishes from Syria, India, Pakistan, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

There was a comment from the floor that people living with neurodiversity and Transgender women and men are people on the margins.

Racial Justice In 2024 the General Assembly agreed a confession and apology on behalf of its predecessor body for the transatlantic slave trade and to develop a policy of reparative justice. The apology was offered together with the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. There are plans for antiracist training and working with other churches including Friends. In 2023 a reparations visit was made to Jamaica.

- *Ecumenical Officers Report* described “Thy Kingdom Come”, an initiative along with other Scottish churches to renew commitment to prayer running from Ascension Day to Pentecost, with online provision of daily prayer material. 6 new ministry of Word and Sacraments posts have been created with a call to ecumenical working. URC representatives on the Church Leaders Forum and Ecumenical Officers Forum are working to develop the Scottish Christian Forum, Scotlands ecumenical body.
- A Local Resolution from Helensburgh URC brought the concern that the Church avoid investing in companies which benefit from occupation in Palestine and asking that the Synod’s investments be reviewed.

I was particularly impressed by the radical ecumenism of the URC and the commitment to addressing poverty, injustice and racism.

3.4 United Reform Church Synod Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM

Saturday, 4 October, Livingston

The United Reform Church (URC) Synod was held in Livingston on Saturday 4th October. I had planned to go to Livingston but on the Friday evening I could barely see across the street because of the monsoon like rain, the trees were bending with gale Amy, Scotrail advised, if trains ran, they would be on reduced speed and the police said essential travel only. In the event, probably it would have been OK to travel and certainly looking on zoom the room was full, probably with those who have cars. There were representatives from the Episcopalian Church, Methodist and Salvation Army in Livingston and a representative from the Scottish Congregational Federation also on line.

The morning began with the Moderator, Lindsey Sanderson, welcoming us “May God, the Creator, gather us together and bless us.” A hymn and prayer followed by a reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 17 in which the disciples plead for their faith to be increased. A reflection on this followed in which, although the Kingdom of God is among and within us, the disciples and ourselves live in challenging times where our world is increasingly manipulated by suspicion, mistrust, hatred and violence. We are active participants in the coming Kingdom of God. Like ourselves, the URC has a decline in people able to fulfil roles and responsibilities and a concern for the maintenance of its buildings. The agenda today has a significant focus on financial resources and how these are used with a £2.5 million fund to make supportive grants to churches, relieving burdens. Projects which will bear fruit and bring about renewal.

This was followed by recording those ministers, elders and deacons who had died since the last Synod and, after another hymn, recording and welcoming those in new roles or attending for the first time. Usual practical issues followed e.g. approval of the minutes of the last Synod. The report from the Synod Executive Committee was accepted.

2 papers on congregations dissolving were discussed. Such dissolution is deeply emotional and the particular circumstances of Hamilton and Greenock West showed this to be so. The work, witness, fellowship and friendship of the 2 congregations was remembered in prayer as the 2 treasured places of worship have been closed.

A long session on finance followed, some of which lost me completely but URC members also seemed, at times, confused. There was a clean audit and the Synod has had surpluses for the past five years, due, in part, to the sale of churches. After much discernment, it was agreed a facilitation group would meet over lunch to bring back amended proposals which passed.

The afternoon session had an online report from the Mission Committee, with videos, and future day events notified. Two further reports from the Mission Committee and the Ecumenical report followed. I was interested as your representative on the World Day of Prayer (WDP) that the Convenor of the WDP asked for this to be included in the Ecumenical report next year. (Agreed). Both were positive reports and, from the floor, it was said how wonderfully affirming

a previous report by Quakers had been of a URC Synod.

The AGM followed, and was brief, the main focus being that the Synod is now a limited company. New Directors were elected to this. Questions followed.

A lovely poem concluded this part of the Synod with applause and laughter.

The final part was a traditional church service with an elaborate and lengthy process around an appointment to preach (I was very struck by the difference with ourselves where anyone can give spoken ministry in even their first Meeting for Worship).

I would like to thank GM for thinking of me to attend. I found the Synod to be positive, and focussed on the Kingdom of God within and among us. As I was in Livingston I was unable to thank the Moderator and others of the URC support for our recent statement.



Photograph 8: Windmill near St Monans.

3.5 Churches Together in England Racial Justice Working Group

Derek McLean, West Scotland AM

Explaining the purpose and vision of the Working Group, Shermara Fletcher, CTE's Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations, says:

“CTE's newly established Racial Justice Working Group gathers to provide support, share best practice, discuss theological and ecclesiological issues and provide the opportunity to implement solutions to ensure our Member Churches are beacons of racial justice best practice within their own structures. The vision is to foster deep relationships, ecumenically breakdown negative perceptions of the other and to ensure that global majority diasporas living in the UK find safe, equal and equitable spaces to flourish in British society. The church is committed to be being at the forefront of this change.”

“In 2020, the momentous murder of George Floyd brought to light the deep-rooted issues of racial tensions, disparities, inequity and injustice happening across the globe, and in particular to people of African descent. This global awakening also exposed the underbelly of racial divides and systemic injustice in the areas of health, housing and education to mention a few. It is in this context that churches have come together to denounce racism, lament and seek ways to ensure a fair, equitable and flourishing society for all, even in the face of uncertainty and discomfort.”

“CTE's Racial Justice Working Group seeks to help churches come together at the national level, sharing resources, insights and expertise with one another. We also work alongside CTBI in their work on racial justice.”

The Gift of my Neighbour: Learning from Diaspora Communities

Saturday, 24 May 2025

The London Jesuit Centre, Mount Street, London

Andrew Lane and I attended this conference as we are serving jointly on the Churches Together in England Racial Justice Working Group for the next three years. We expect to attend our first meeting with the group in the near future.

This first conference, which took place on the eve of the 5th anniversary of George Floyd's murder, was organised by CTE Racial Justice Working Group, the Society for Ecumenical Studies and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The aim was to explore some of the riches in terms of new life and fresh theological perspectives offered by Churches whose roots come from beyond the UK. This was a wide ranging conference exploring themes of race, belonging and justice. Delegates were invited to engage in 'receptive learning' from non-Western Christian traditions.

Rev. Israel Olofinjana, Director of the One People Commission of the Evangelical Alliance spoke about race and climate change. He said that the transatlantic slave trade was integral to the industrial revolution, and described the myth of colonial conservation which assumes that indigenous people can't manage their own affairs. He spoke about intersectionality, the discrimination faced by women of colour through gender and race. He referred to the concept of Ntu in South

African Bantu philosophy which emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of community. He described the African influence on Celtic spirituality, and the influence of the renewal of Franciscan mission spirituality on Afro-Pentecostal theology. He reminded us that Augustine was African. He referred to his personal anguish at living with racism: he said that race is a corporate responsibility and asked how the burden of racism could be shared. He reminded us that Africa's history is much bigger than slavery.

Rev. David Whyte, District Superintendent of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in the UK described his church:

a priesthood of all believers
priests are bi vocational, the day job rooted in ministry
preached word and testimonies are central
church as resistance to marginalisation
communion a shared responsibility
purpose of preaching to take congregation on a journey
black church a spiritual refuge and political agency
emphasis on literacy and leadership training.

Rev. Whyte's church is next to Andrew's school in Handsworth, Birmingham.

Dr Dulcie Dixon McKenzie, Director of the Centre for Black Theology Queen's Foundation Birmingham told us that as second generation Windrush she was concerned that there is currently no shared history from an Afro-Caribbean perspective on the development of their Pentecostal church in the UK and little written documentation of Windrush history. In talking about ecumenism she emphasised valuing the history and experience of your neighbour. She showed us a video of her congregation singing gospel songs and the joy and the energy was contagious. She referred to two African diaspora theologians James Cone and Anthony Reddie.

We finished the day singing gospel songs with two acclaimed gospel singers from Songshare, an inspiring experience and a good way to bring us all together to celebrate how much we share. The day was a rich and transforming acknowledgement that our neighbour is not a threat but a gift.

After spending the day with members of the CTE Racial Justice Working Group we very much look forward to working with them.

I came away from the conference with 2 gifts, 2 challenging gifts:

- Israel Olofinjana's question how the burden of racism can be shared
- The names of theologians James H. Cone and Anthony G. Reddie.

I'm now reading Anthony Reddie's latest book *Living Black theology: Decolonising Knowledge*, a book that explains how the burden of racism can be shared.

3.6 St Ninian Declaration – completing the triangle Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM

On 16th September this year, Mark Strang, Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and Leo Cushley, Roman Catholic archbishop, signed the St Ninian Declaration – a declaration of friendship between the two churches in Scotland. This completed a trio of historic agreements between the three largest denominations in this country, following the Columba declaration and the St Margaret declaration.

The 2016 Columba declaration between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church acknowledged past differences and unloving conduct towards each other, and expressed a desire to work in partnership where possible while acknowledging doctrinal difference. In 2022 the St Margaret declaration of friendship, saying similar things, was signed in Dunfermline Abbey by Archbishop Leo and the then Moderator of the Church of Scotland, as part of the 950th anniversary of the Abbey.

The celebrations and signings of the St Ninian declaration delightfully reflected the accord between the Episcopal and Roman churches and their desire to co-operate. I was unable to attend the morning's service in St Mary's catholic cathedral or the study session that followed, but I was a delighted participant in the service at St Mary's episcopal cathedral, where members of both cathedrals' choirs joined together to sing evensong.

I had expected simply to be in the congregation, but when I arrived I was invited to join the other 'ecumenical delegates' in processing into the choir stalls behind the two prelates, adding a vibrant note of orange and scarlet to the more restrained ecclesiastical garments worn by everyone else... Evensong itself was a musical delight, and representatives from both denominations read the lessons and led the prayers before we heard the whole declaration read, again, by an episcopalian and a catholic, responding to their *God who calls us to unity with we commit to walk together*. The declaration was duly signed and the signing applauded.

We'd had very little to do in the service up to this point – listening, and occasionally responding – so I was delighted to be able to let rip in the final hymn. The words were new to me, a very fitting celebration of being both together and different, but the tune was wonderfully well-kent and I sang lustily. After a final blessing from the two prelates, we set off into the autumn evening, rejoicing in the completion of the ecumenical triangle.

4 Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Mary Woodward, SE Scotland AM

July 2025 update

Your committee held its usual online evening meeting to deal with ‘ordinary business’ – receiving documents, arranging buddies for those prevented, etc, and met in Leeds over the weekend [two Friends joined us on line].

Despite the extreme heat, we worked very hard. The amount of business on the agenda meant we had an extra session after lunch on the Sunday – but at the end of a very demanding weekend we had a very strong sense of accomplishment and the stirrings of excitement as we begin more clearly to see the way ahead.

On the Friday evening, we took time to reflect on our work so far. Being asked to produce “appreciations and questions” as a response to some of the papers we considered this weekend was surprisingly difficult. It’s much easier to criticise a paper than to appreciate it, and framing potentially hurtful criticisms as questions not always easy. “How could this be shorter?” “What could be not here?” are much easier to receive than “TOO LONG!”

We were definitely feeling daunted at the prospect of having to produce a complete, ‘good enough’ first draft by the end of next year. Paul Parker, our recording clerk, was with us for the weekend, and heartened us by reminding us of the previous ‘daunts’ we have experienced, and how we found out how to work and grow through them. Our current ‘daunt’ is to get the new Book to a manageable size – and to begin to come to terms with letting it go. We have worked on the text for a long time now, and will have to accept giving it to Friends to do with as they will...

Our Review of Banked Texts group has been working hard, looking at all we’ve written so far, working out what needs re-working, where there is overlap or duplication of material, and where there are gaps. One mammoth task has been the compilation of a spreadsheet recording all the anthology quotations within our work, so we can see duplications and gaps. The whole draft text will be available for us to read later in the year. It will also be sent to an external reader who is familiar with Friends [yet to be appointed] for comments and suggestions.

The completed draft will be handed over to Friends House [FH] publications team to be turned into the Book which Friends will be invited to read and reflect on in the first half of 2027, before it comes to Yearly Meeting Gathering in July. Our Communicating with Friends group is already working on how to prepare Friends for this and provide a ‘study guide’ to assist with reading the text.

We looked at various draft texts, including the Relationships one on which I’ve been working. This was considered in tandem with the Personal Journeys one. The two have much overlap and duplication, and a new group has been set up to work further on them, possibly combining them into one ‘Life Experience’ text. It was good to lay down this text – we had taken it as far as we were able – and to turn my attention elsewhere. I have now been appointed to the group working on finding sources for Non-Text Material, and look forward to exploring this new area in company with good friends on the committee.

We considered a suggested numbering scheme for our text: page numbers work well in a printed book, but not in an electronic version. Our Advices & Queries group also reported on the huge amount of work they've been doing. They want the text to be encouraging, supporting and upholding Friends, and to challenge without judging. Our group working with FH publications team suggested that it would be helpful to have samples of text which might use colour or shading to make reading accessible and clear to as many people as possible.

Many of our topic groups have now been laid down, having completed their tasks. Three new ones were set up, including the Life Experience one mentioned above. Much amusement arose from the formation of a SPIES group [considering Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Equality and Sustainability]. More practically, a group to look at, and draft text for, gaps in our text, will work with the Reviewing Banked Texts group.

Our final session on Sunday looked ahead at our Next Steps. Green and orange post-it notes made clearer the steps we would be taking, and how they would mesh with and complement the work of our external reader. There will come a day when we hand over our text to FH publications team; perhaps we need to mark this in some way at one of our meetings in the first half of next year. A final sharing of "what am I taking away from this weekend?" reflected our relief, greater clarity, and the stirrings of excitement we are beginning to feel –even though there is still a vast amount of work for us to do!

Our key messages:

1. *All the topics we originally identified for inclusion in the new Book of Discipline now have content either complete or in development, and we are on track to have the complete first draft of the new book ready by late 2026 for inclusion in Documents in Advance ahead of Yearly Meeting in July 2027.*
 2. *We have started work to prepare resources to prepare and assist Friends across Britain in how best to engage (read, reflect, respond) with this complete first draft in early 2027.*
 3. *We are planning to engage an external reader to help us in preparing our draft for sharing with the wider Yearly Meeting.*
 4. *We are working with members of Crynwyr Cymru-Quakers in Wales on plans for incorporating Welsh language content in the new book.*
 5. *We are looking forward to sharing our proposed 'tree' structure for the Book when we report to Meeting for Sufferings in December 2025.*
-

5 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

5.1 A round-up of the year

Sarah Komashko, Parliamentary Engagement Officer

This is a slightly early round-up of the year as I prepare to embark on an adventure of a year's parental leave. I leave you in good hands though, with Lucy (LucyR@quaker.org.uk) here to help resource and equip you in this coming Scottish election year. Before I step away, I wanted to reflect on the work that the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) and I have undertaken on your behalf in 2025 to date.

This year we been going through a discernment process to help consider our priorities as PEWG for engaging with the Scottish Parliament. This allows us to focus our time and efforts on the key concerns and leadings of our Quaker community, shaped also by insight into where there are opportunities to make an impact. Our proposed 2026-28 priorities will be brought before Quakers in Scotland meeting in November.

I enjoyed meeting in person with those at WSAM and SESAM area meetings at the start of the year, and continue to be encouraged by emails from Friends across Scotland about what you are doing in your own personal or group capacities in terms of engaging with your MSPs. Remember that while the PEO's focus is on the PEWG's priorities as discerned by Quakers in Scotland corporately, we are also happy to help when we can in terms of any specific questions you have about political engagement or how best you might be able to interact with your MSPs.

With the Scottish election coming up next spring – and with around 1/3 of MSPs already having announced they will be stepping down regardless of the result – there will be a great opportunity to be engaging with your representatives from the very start of their political journey as candidates. If you don't want to miss hearing about specific opportunities for engagement, please email LucyR@quaker.org.uk to be added to the fortnightly PEO email.

Earlier in the year I spoke with Margery from Glasgow, who shared this excerpt from a poem by Drew Dillinger with me. I found it very powerful, and it reminded me of the special place and opportunity that Quakers have when engaging with our political representatives, for hope, creativity, plain speaking, and persistence. MSPs are people too, and connecting with them on a personal level can have impact beyond what we may see. Over and above specific policy hopes and aims that PEWG has, it is so important to retain the humanity in relationships with our representatives, and encourage them to act with truth and integrity.

When you're next reaching out to an MSP, I wonder whether you'd consider making the communication more personal, or including an inspiring quote?

It's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep.

my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the Planet
was plundered?
what did you do when the Earth
was unravelling?
surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?
as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?
did you fill the streets with protest
when democracy was stolen?
what did you do
once
you
knew?"

Peacebuilding

Arms Industry Funding

Throughout 2025, we have continued to engage in dialogue with the government about Scottish Enterprise (SE)'s funding of arms manufacturers. With the current crisis in Palestine, along with others such as Amnesty International we focused concerns on the human rights checks which don't disqualify companies from receiving public funds if the company supplies components which are then used by countries like Israel which are accused of human rights abuses. Last summer we spoke with SE directly on this topic.

This work resulted in a debate in February 2025 in which MSPs voted for a review of SE's human rights filters, and some provisionally promising recommendations about increasing the 'teeth' of the checks, and increasing their frequency. We are continuing to speak to SE about how this will be implemented.

There was a further update in September 2025 in which it was announced that Scottish Enterprise / Scottish National Investment Bank will "pause new awards of public money to arms companies whose products or services are provided to countries where there is plausible evidence of genocide being committed by that country."

While this is welcome, the new criterion only explicitly excludes countries where there are concerns about genocide, rather than wider criteria of any human rights abuses. In the same speech, the First Minister also confirmed a change in policy that will allow these agencies to give support to produce munitions (rather than the previous policy of only investing in arms companies' other projects).

We will continue to work with Amnesty International and other allies like Campaign Against the Arms Trade to maintain pressure about this.

Peace Education

Ellis Brooks from Quakers in Britain continued to build on our network in Scotland, and co-hosted the official launch of EIS (The Educational Institute of Scot-

land, the nation's largest teachers' union) Peace Education guidance to teachers at their conference on the 17-18 January in Glasgow. You can read the policy at <https://www.eis.org.uk/policiesandguidance/educationforpeace>.

Quakers in Britain have worked with the Open University to produce a free course on [Principles and Practice of Peace Education](#), drawing lots on the work done in Scotland. It's around 12 hours of self-directed study and explores how children and young people might be empowered to build peace with themselves, their communities, and the wider world. The course is relevant for educational practitioners and school communities but will also be useful for anyone working with children and young people in informal and community settings.

Scottish Peace Platform

Beyond Borders were announced as the winners of the Peace Platform pilot funding, and we have engaged with their consultation process about what shape this initiative should have. It is good to see lobbying work in this area paying off, after the engagement of the previous PEO Andrew Tomlinson on the Peace Institute report, and subsequent work continuing to press MSPs to keep this initiative alive, and to provide the requisite funding!

The Peace Platform does not intend to have an advocacy role going forward, so the PEWG / PEO's involvement with the Platform will be minimal, but at an inception day workshop that I attended the organisers were clear on Quakers' relevance to and interest in peace work in Scotland. At a minimum, the platform looks to be a useful place to share the peace education resources that colleagues at Quakers in Britain have created. Individuals and organisations are able to sign up to the platform via the website: <https://scottishpeaceplatform.org/>.

Climate and economic justice

Work with SCCS

We have continued to work closely with SCCS this year, joining with them in consultation responses and in supporting their mass lobbying event in September 2025. I was involved in organising this as well as giving training beforehand online and on the day in person about how to target which MSP or MP you can speak to most effectively.

Over 250 people attended, and 27 MSPs were there to speak to their constituents. Some meetings were more fruitful than others, given the discrepancies between the number of MSPs and constituents in each region, but overall it was a significant moment to show the amount of support that climate action still has in Scotland, and we hope that MSPs who are 'friendly' to the cause felt encouraged to see the strength of feeling. Some Edinburgh Friends and I were able to meet Jeremy Balfour MSP, who couldn't attend on the day, as a follow-up to the Lobby Day, so there are wider ramifications and conversations happening!

This year, SCCS have also been focused on links with the Poverty Alliance, and the opportunities there are for climate action to reduce social inequalities. A good factor for us to bear in mind and emphasise in our work on climate justice.

Speaking to the Scottish Government on loss and damage and heat in buildings

In the spring/summer we wrote to First Minister John Swinney about a number of issues in his Programme for Government, and particularly noted our concern about loss and damage funding and the heat in buildings bill. As a consequence he invited us to meet with his policy delivery team on these two issues.

At the meeting, I, Carolyn and Richard were encouraged to see the care and concern from the officials on the importance of these two topics. They specifically thanked us for the work we are doing in keeping bringing them up with MSPs and Ministers, as it helps the officials to show their importance to the public – a great validation for the work that we’ve been doing and continue to do.

While the team cannot confirm loss and damage funding for next parliamentary session – it will be down to whoever wins the Scottish election – they are currently gathering best evidence from the projects that have been undertaken so far using the funding and using it to encourage both the Scottish Government and other sub-national states as to the significant effect that well-targeted funding can have.

COP30 Motion

In news hot off the press, we have secured a motion and Members Business Debate on COP30 and the importance of loss and damage funding, led by Nicola Sturgeon and scheduled to take place on 5 November. Lucy will be writing to the GM mailing list with details of how you can be involved to ask your MSP to support this motion, and speak up about the importance of loss and damage as a climate justice issue.

Health and Climate

It’s been interesting this year to see an increased focus on the health benefits of climate action – following on from our event last year on the subject, which now seems quite ahead of the curve! There have been various briefings and debates on this, and Friend Lesley Morrison and I had a good meeting with Paul Sweeney MSP in April about health and climate links particularly in relation to housing. Paul Sweeney was one of the MSPs that came to the Climate Lobby and was engaged on the issues being discussed there.

Health and Climate is a good reminder of the ‘win win’ policies that are attractive to politicians due to their benefits for everyone.

Manifesto engagement

As parties look towards the next Scottish Election, they have been preparing to write their manifestos. We engaged with them at an early stage, sending our own short policy proposal documents both for the [work of PEWG](#) and also of the [Community Justice Working Group](#). We were able to meet with the Scottish Greens, Scottish Labour, and the SNP to discuss our proposals in greater detail,

and have also sent on the documents to all other political parties represented as of May 2025 in the Scottish Parliament with requests for meetings.

Times for Reflection

As part of Quaker witness, individual Quakers have the opportunity to offer a Time for Reflection to open the Scottish Parliament each Tuesday. Contributions are sought from different faith groups (and those of no faith), and it is a nice way to interact with MSPs and provide them some food for thought as they start the business in the Chamber each week. This year, Friend Richard Raggett gave a really thought-provoking reflection calling for “[listening, respect, and kinder ground](#)” in May, and Friend Neil Crabtree spoke in June about “[a contemporary rite of passage](#)”.

We’ve had a really good run of contributions from Friends over the past few years, and invite you to consider whether you might have a short thought to share with MSPs? Listening or reading to past submissions may help spark some inspiration and ideas for what to say, and Richard Raggett has some guidelines to help you structure your talk.

The PEWG currently includes: Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett (NSAM; Co-Convenors), Ed Tyler and Katie Aspinwall (WSAM), and Gareth Rae and Carol Jennings (SESAM). If you would like to find out more about how we work and what we are doing, please get in touch with us. [Click here](#) for copies of our consultation responses, statements and information about our other work.

5.2 Message from Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett, Co-conveners, PEWG

A special Meeting on our Advocacy through the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group was held on 23rd October 2025, the aim being to help find ways of maintaining our testimony and witness in Scotland and supporting our Parliamentary Engagement Officer through fostering a strong PEWG. The meeting provided an opportunity for a fruitful discussion, so many thanks to all who took part. We need new convenors and members of the group for 2026 onwards: might you be able to offer service or think of others we might approach? We want to feed names into our Nominations Committee. If you think you can help, please contact us as the group’s co-convenors. Carolyn Burch (ecarolynburch@gmail.com) and Richard Raggett (richardjraggett@gmail.com).

6 Community Matters

6.1 A testimony to community - Emily Provance in Dundee Craig Wilson, East Scotland AM

Friends, joined by guests from St Andrews and Central Fife meetings, were blessed with a visit from Emily Provance as part of her travelling ministry on 19 July 2025. Since January 2019, Emily has been travelling in the ministry full-time, visiting and supporting Friends across the globe. Amongst this work, Emily delivered the latest annual Swarthmore lecture entitled ‘A Testimony of Community.’ It was this same theme that provided the fertile ground for discussion in Dundee.

It was in community that our discussion began, first with coffee and catch-up, and then gathered in silent worship. We listened to an introduction from our Friend, Pamala McDougall, who reminded us that Scottish Quakers have form in providing Swarthmore lecturers – Jonathan Dale (1996) and Christine Davis (2008) being but two examples. We also heard that the topic of community was opportune, given the time of ongoing organisational change as we journey from ‘General Meeting for Scotland’ to ‘Quakers in Scotland.’ Introducing Emily, we learned of her monumental achievement of reading all the Quaker Books of Discipline. The common threads from these books, along with insights from her global travels, were woven into her discussion.

Emily began by inviting us into dialogue with her, asking us to help her shape the discussion in a way that felt resonant in the context of our meetings. As a guidepost, she mentioned that her goal was to learn together ‘what Friends can say about how we should live in community.’ Friends, in turn, shared concerns about global conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan. They asked, what can Friends do, individually and corporately, as members of a global community. Some Friends also acknowledged the challenges of entering dialogue with those with whom they profoundly disagree, particularly those who may express racism and other forms of bigotry. Additionally, we questioned whether the formal structures of our meetings always serve us, or whether, at times, we serve our structures to the detriment of community expression.

Sharing with us her gifts as a facilitator, Emily helped us find structure and commonality between seemingly disparate threads. When conflict arises, she mentioned the need for flexibility of approach. Conflict may look different when it occurs within our own communities, having actively chosen to live together, versus between communities that may merely tolerate – or actively dislike – each other. We brainstormed some of the tools we have available to us in our Quaker communities when navigating conflict. Emily helped us remember that whilst we may each have our individual concerns, there is great value in the careful discernment and testing of our leadings as a collective.

It may be that individuals may need to express strong emotions on an issue before navigating a path forward. Our Threshing Meetings can provide an outlet that allows for the expression of different perspectives without aiming for immediate discernment. If a concern or leading lies more with an individual or



Photograph 9: Emily surrounded by Dundee Friends. *Photograph supplied by Craig Wilson.*

small group, they can be supported through a meeting for clearness, or by Elders and Pastoral Friends. Our day-to-day decision-making practices are grounded in waiting worship. At our best, we try to make room for individual contributions, whilst aiming to be sensitive to the promptings of the light as a collective.

With Emily, we discussed that our spiritual practice does not end within the confines of our meeting houses. We are led to live our testimonies, and look for that of God in everyone, in the world around us. In a time of seemingly irreconcilable conflicts and deep divisions, this is a deeply challenging task. However, we were reminded that sometimes a big difference can be made through even the smallest of actions. Can we listen to a friend in need? Give our time to a local community group or charity? As one Friend mentioned: “I may not be able to change the world, but I can write a letter.”

It is in recognising our own spiritual gifts, alongside our limitations and boundaries, where we can be most in service to our meetings and our communities. Friends mentioned the importance of keeping ourselves nourished, physically and spiritually, before entering challenging conversations. At times, we may recognise that a particular subject matter may bring up difficult and complicated emotions. During these times, it is important to put the care of ourselves first, drawing a boundary, and leaning on the solidarity of community to support us. We may recognise that there are a lot of different and creative ways to express ourselves,

and what we each feel capable of doing may fluctuate throughout the seasons of our lives.

At times, Quakers have been known to shy away from conflict, fearing the impact upon our communities. Despite having a wealth of spiritual resources, we may not always know the clearest route through hardship. Ultimately, our conversation with Emily helped us remember that sitting with difficulty and complexity can be the first step towards resolution. Quaker testimonies, Simplicity, Truth, Equality, Peace, and Sustainability are intentionally open-ended and incomplete. We remain open to the possibility that through asking questions, and looking after one another, that the light will guide our efforts towards healing and wholeness.

Dundee Quakers thank Emily Provance for visiting us, sharing her gifts, and for facilitating tender conversation. We wish her well on her journey and hope that she will visit us again. Haste ye back, Emily.



Photograph 10: Autumnal path in Ardgour.

6.2 Ulrich E. Loening

Family and colleagues including Alastair McIntosh, West Scotland AM

Pioneering molecular biologist who led the Centre for Human Ecology

Dr Ulrich Eduard Loening BA DPhil, biochemist and human ecologist. Born: 18 June 1931 in Berlin. Died 10 July 2025 in East Lothian, age 94.



Photograph 11: *Photo courtesy Stuart Platt and supplied by Alastair McIntosh.*

Born into a respected industrial and scientific family of Jewish origin, Ulrich was the only child of Lilli and Erich Loening. His grandfather and great grandfather had managed Berlin's notable bronze foundry Gladenbeck which cast the four equestrian statues at the Hohenzollern bridge in Cologne. His father was a photo-chemist who developed early colour printing methods.

In 1937, the family was advised to leave Germany immediately. They emigrated to London where Erich set up a colour printing company, Belcolor, which, however, closed in the early years of WW2. He then worked until retirement in the Kodak photochemical laboratories, and his later work contributed to the manufacture of computer chips.

As the tourniquet of war tightened, the police turned up in 1941 and took Erich, as an 'enemy alien', into internment on the Isle of Man. Ulrich, then nine years old, recalled giving him a shilling to ease the suffering of such knock-on uprooting.

The family found what they would describe as a place of "welcome and shelter throughout WW2" in Jordans, Buckinghamshire. The village of Jordans was built in the 1920s by the Quakers as a self-help community, around the historic Jordans Meeting House.

The Quakers were conscientious objectors, both in WW1 and WW2, engaging instead in medical and refugee relief for which they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

According to Ulrich's family, "He attended many Quaker meetings and was guided by their ethos and morals all of his life.... His lifelong interest in green issues undoubtedly stemmed from his teenage years in Jordans." His father, who had never before wielded a spade, became adept at vegetable growing, even becoming Secretary of the gardening club with his teenage son as deputy!

The lad attended Gayhurst preparatory school, followed by Merchant Taylors' and Oxford University. He obtained a doctorate in biochemistry in 1958.

By delightful coincidence, on the 18th of June 1933, a little girl Franziska was born in Berlin's La Charite hospital where, two years earlier, Ulrich had come into the world. The two met 22 years later playing music in Oxford. She played violin and he had inherited his father's love of the cello. They married in the Jordans Meeting House in 1957, and throughout their near-on seventy years' marriage, music constellated their lives.

In 1959 Ulrich, with Francesca (Franziska), came to Scotland on a three-year Agricultural Research Council research fellowship at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. At the end of this he was offered a junior lectureship in the Botany Department at Edinburgh University, and in 1969 he transferred to the Zoology Department where he continued in molecular research on both animals and plants.

He both designed and built the equipment that was required to determine, with great precision, the size of large molecules. As Professor Saveria Campo who worked with him on papilloma virus recalls, "Those were exciting times: Ulrich had developed polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and Ed Southern had developed the Southern blot. These two techniques allowed, respectively, the analysis of RNA and DNA during the dawn of molecular biology."

Ulrich's understanding of science was always broad-ranging. In 1972, his colleague the geneticist Conrad Waddington had founded the School of the Man-Made Future, which the university shut down after his death in 1976. Largely through Ulrich's efforts, it was re-established as the Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) and he became its director in 1986. The CHE addressed transdisciplinary questions which ranged from why organic agriculture is healthy for the soil, to planetary "limits to growth".

In the late 1970's, global warming had been creeping up the agenda, but the UK lacked a coherent energy strategy. Margaret Thatcher's government favoured the mega technology of nuclear power, which Ulrich was actively against. He helped set up a cross-party coalition, the Parliamentary Liaison Group for Alternative Energy Strategies. Made up of concerned MPs and Peers, with a full time Westminster parliamentary liaison officer, it sought to bring new insights into renewable energy for a sustainable future.

This was followed by the formation of the Lothian Energy Group in 1982 and the renewables exhibition, "Living with Energy". Hugely popular, it was launched in Edinburgh in 1983, before touring the UK.

Come 1992, and with a tiny cohort of part-time colleagues, he established the UK's first master's degree in human ecology. The CHE prioritised quality teaching over research and consultancy. Much loved by his students, his teaching style cultivated their critical faculties. He would walk into class and throw out a gam-

bit, “Nuclear power may be the answer!”, then after a short pause, “But what was the question?”, and question why we need all this consumption and why not more energy conservation.

The CHE was challenging to mainstream academia, whether questioning the sustainability of industrial farming, raising the alarm on climate change, or pressing the case for Scottish land reform. In 1996, after a protracted struggle, the university closed it down.

A New Scientist editorial opined that “at considerable loss to the university’s intellectual tradition” it had “decided to be rid of its outspoken Centre for Human Ecology” and “a tradition of fearless inquiry will be broken.”

However, through the efforts of its former students, staff and scholarly well-wishers, the MSc course ran on. Initially this was through the Open University, then at Strathclyde University until it contracted its social sciences teaching in 2010. Today, the CHE (but no longer the MSc) continues as a small but independent educational unit based in Govan.

“Human Ecology” is puzzling to most people. As Ulrich wrote in an essay in *Radical Human Ecology*: “Most people readily appreciate what gorilla or elephant ecology is about; but not when applied to humans.” Public policy, he continued, must move towards “fitting our activities into nature’s patterns, making us more fit to survive.”

For this, “The attitude of Human Ecology is vital to stimulate imaginative creativity for solutions ... to How, Where and in the end Whether humans live on the Planet.”

Central to the CHE’s success was Ulrich’s and Francesca’s hospitality, not just in Edinburgh, with dinners round the student-made elm wood table after the Tuesday public lectures, but also out in East Lothian where, with their own hands-on effort and skills, they had renovated the derelict coach house at Ormiston Hall.

Here students graduated under the ancient Ormiston Yew Tree. Scholars gathered for small but weighty conferences. Travellers from around the world were welcomed by the Loening household through Servas, an organisation devoted to “connecting for peace”. Francesca wrote two simple-living handbooks, *Small Change* and *Too Good to Waste*, both used by schools and community groups.

Together, they gardened and kept bees. Ulrich created Lothian Trees and Timber, a small company promoting sustainable forestry and the use of Scottish hardwoods for furniture and stringed instruments. It never made money, it made music.

While not subscribing to any formal religion, Ulrich maintained a lifelong connection to his German Jewish roots, and remained a fervent European.

In May this year he attended a conference in Athens, and into his last weeks, while already seriously ill, he completed papers and worked on his autobiography until he died in July.

He is survived by Francesca, his three children Gica, Adrian, Nicolas, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Photograph 12: *Photo courtesy Stuart Platt and supplied by Alastair McIntosh.*



Photograph 13: Sculpture at Knockan Crag, near Ullapool.



Photograph 14: A field of corn in Cheshire.

6.3 John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust—a Beneficiary writes Kirsten Nielsen

Last year my car was beyond MOT, and Edinburgh was about to become an LEZ (low emission zone), so that was that. My old bike had gear issues, meaning I couldn't get to my allotment as often as I'd like on it: going home, with the work done and fatigue setting in, is all uphill!

Enter my good luck, when a dear friend said she'd sponsor me. Sponsor me? Was I about to walk, run, ask for donations on behalf of something? Not at all. Apparently there is this super organisation which you can apply to for money to increase enjoyment! 'Gift horse' and 'mouth' – I was so not going to be looking in that!

So I had a sponsor; and a purpose (actually, two: a visit to family in Denmark or an e-bike); and I set about drafting an email. What a mess! I thought, when it was done. But the board of the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust were lovely people who seemed to understand. Eventually I had to pick which of my enjoyments was my greater desire. I admitted that buying an e-bike with less than the biggest grant available would be a bit of a stretch; those things are not only pricey in themselves but accessories like the lock/pannier rack/basket/spare battery all add up too. My luck was still going strong: I'd found the one thing for which chronic illnesses and a desire to garden and help a few people out were actually a positive. I got a full grant.

My biggest purchase in years is a folding e-bike in blue – which I hope will be less attractive to thieves than grey or black. Riding it home from the shop it went fast! As if to prove a point, the wind was at my back too. It was a bit unnerving to feel the motor kick in, even when I only put it on sparingly and in 'eco'. My second ride was to the allotment and back. Finding that 25 minutes there and 45 minutes back, huffing and puffing, sweating and wincing from pain, had been reduced to 20 minutes each way was just the best! And I used 'normal' and 'sport' function too, even putting the lights on going home. Freedom!

All in all I am so grateful and I want to thank each and every one who got me my latest iron steed. Thank you so much.

All Meetings have paper copies of the application form for a grant from the JW(E)T; a digital copy is available on request. Please contact Joanne Power for any queries concerning possible applications, or to request a digital form. Email: power.joanne@virginmedia.com or tel. 07787782021.



Photograph 15: by Kirsten Nielsen.

6.4 John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust–Forest Discovery Week Kate Arnot, SE Scotland AM

I am so grateful for this opportunity to attend the Forest Discovery week 21st to 28th November at the Trees for Life Centre at Dundreggan. The fierce storms meant that getting there was slightly complicated, but once there, we enjoyed a week of sunshine, mists and light rain to explore the area, enjoy the magnificent oaks, birch, Scots pine, rowan, juniper, aspen, alder, and learn more about the forest and its ongoing regeneration. We were a group of 10 from all over the UK with 2 Trees for Life leaders, including naturalist Dan Pulpit and shared cooking and dormitories.

The dormitory living, with 4 others, was the first I had done in a number of years and was not without its challenges, but the accommodation was warm, welcoming with plenty of bathrooms and hot water. We developed a real community feel over the week and shared some brilliant meals.

Highlights of the week included finding a boar print (though not the boar, which was, perhaps, fortunate considering how large they are) and witnessing the natural rewilding of birch, juniper and Scots pine making its way up the previously barren hillside through self seeding and natural regeneration.

I requested financial help to go on this week because I was finding it difficult to find joy and hope in the world with all the destruction of the natural environment and felt that immersing myself in nature may help to restore a sense of hope and positivity. Meeting with other people in such a positive project has had that effect and I am hoping to attend a week helping in the seed nursery at Dundreggan next year. Thank you John Wigham.

6.5 Update from STEPS Ellen Colingsworth, East Scotland AM

Good news is to be celebrated! Thanks to generous support from Quaker Meetings, five Palestinian scholarship students, funded by STEPS*, are settling in to their various Masters degree courses at St Andrews University. For Abeer, her journey from Gaza to St Andrews was harrowing. She was awarded her scholarship two years ago, but was not able to exit Gaza. Thanks to huge efforts by the University, the local MP, and finally the UK government, she was air lifted on the emergency flight reported in the news in September. She joins two scholars from the West Bank, and two from Gaza who exited Palestine earlier.

**STEPS, St Andrews Education for Palestinian Students, funds air fare, accommodation, maintenance, visa and medical insurance costs for two students. This year a new STEPS discretionary award was provided by the University for two additional scholarships. The University waives all tuition fees.*

7 Poetry corner

7.1 One Hundred and Eighty-ninth Sunday of War and Peace Pilgrimage

Lysana Robinson, North Scotland AM

I have been writing, spontaneously and unedited, each week during my Sunday morning hour of silence since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. It was my intent to write every Sunday until there is Peace in Ukraine. I now hope to continue my Pilgrimage until there is also Peace in Gaza.



Photograph 16: *Photograph supplied by Lysana Robinson.*

Storm Amy has passed through.
She was truly ferocious, felling trees,
blocking roads, taking down powerlines.
The Highlands and Islands are now
without electricity again, this time
it may be for several days.

What a wake-up call this is.
Twice in two months and yet
it's only early autumn.
Our survival is always fragile.
But mankind's cleverness, it seems,
has made us more vulnerable.

I'm gazing at my idyllic view,
as usual, it's Sunday morning.
Some trees have fallen to Amy.

I'm alone with my thoughts,
outside world communication is severed.
Is no news good news, I wonder.

Maybe electricity is not our friend.
Without it, modern warfare would cease,
the climate we all depend upon
would have time to stabilise,
we would focus on our neighbours,
our food sources and our survival.

7.2 My Journey

Sila Collins-Walden, North Scotland AM

Life is a journey, like travelling on a train, passing through the stations
making stops along the way....should I stop here?

Life can be disappointing, roughs and tumbles along the way
There are dreams, inspiration, there are hopes, there is happy, there is sad ,
There are many roads, many paths to choose but which one?

We don't always choose our own path, or do we?

Life is like a river flowing down-stream, bubbling, splashing over rocks, on its
journey under the bridge

Life divides, life entwines, complex, obstacles, rocky, smooth, like riding on an
ocean wave, what is our purpose, our destiny?

We learn about ourselves through our journey, we evolve through life's journey
from childhood

school days, love, marriage, giving birth, my thoughts deep thinking of my life's
journey, the young girl I once was...locked inside me, middle age?... I glance in
the mirror..... old age.. ah!

8 Letter to editor

My first introduction to Quakerism was in December 1988 at an Enquirers' Gathering in Liverpool. I was reluctant to travel alone but so many signs kept prompting me to go; like magazine and radio items relating to Liverpool and constant Beatles' songs. When a huge lorry passed in front of me with LIVERPOOL written in large letters along its side, I gave in! I became very involved with Quakers - though remained an attender. I am not out so much now but did attend a small Meeting in Millport last year, Zoom making it possible to reach out to many others. I sometimes take part in Findhorn Foundation's weekday meditations - 9.00-9.30 am. I visited the Foundation in Forres a few times, many of their beliefs being reminiscent of Quakerism.

I have a large folder which contains items gathered over the years which were of interest to me. An Advices and Queries - 1995 (reprint) includes: 'Hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God', seems to say it all. It was rather sad, though, to read in an undated, but very old Quaker 'Peace and Service' booklet: 'The World needs peace as never before...' Will we ever learn? I also found a poem by (the now) King Charles. It is entitled 'Soul of Mankind', with the following passage:

'.. it seems to

Me that only through the development of inner

Peace in the individual and through the outer

Manifestation of that reflection can we ever hope

To attain the time of peace in this world for

Which we yearn'.

It is good to know that King Charles holds such views.

With Love and Light

Anne Drysdale

9 Notices

9.1 French Student working on Quakerism in Scotland Dimitri Wiart

I am a French student in religious anthropology at the Practical School of High Studies (EPHE) and the School of High Studies in Social Science (EHESS), and I am starting my work on a master's dissertation on Quakerism in Scotland. My goal with this dissertation is to understand Quakers, the way an individual develops their belief system and the relationship between faith and other aspects of a person's life.

My research is going to take place for the next two years. I will try to come to Scotland as much as possible, and normally I will spend a few months there during the spring of 2027. I already had the pleasure to meet the Quaker meeting of Edinburgh in 2024, and was very kindly welcomed. My goal is to meet as many people from different backgrounds, to be able to talk with them, and simply to be with Scottish Quakers, to understand their point of view as individuals.

The reason I'm sending you this mail is to introduce myself, because I hope we will be brought to talk during those two years. Also, I would like to be added to any newsletter or mailing list you might be administering, and if possible to be informed about upcoming events or meetings at your convenience. If by any chance you happen to think of anybody who could be interested to exchange with me, or that you believe I should contact, I would be thrilled to have this opportunity.

I would be delighted to discuss my research further with you and learn more about the Quaker community in Scotland.

Thank you in advance, I look forward to being in touch.



Photograph 17: An inquisitive calf in Ardgour.

9.2 QiS Community Building: Families Weekend 2026

Supplied by Anne Kitchen, Deirdre Armstrong, Mary Troup and Mary Alice Mansell

The Children and Young People's Advocates have been organising a Families Weekend in Pitlochrie for several years. The dates for 2026 are 19-21 June. The venue is Pitlochry Youth Hostel. The numbers will be limited to about 40 so put a marker in your diary and let your AM Advocate know of your interest .

We hope that this will provide an opportunity for Friends in Scotland to build closer relationships across the country.



Photograph 18: Lochan na h-Eaglais, Corran.



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