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If you get Tayside Quaker by email, you have the advantages of receiving it earlier and seeing the pictures in colour. It also saves the AM money.

Contributions are welcome, closing date for the next edition is 23rd July 2022
Please send copy to the editor, Peter Cheer

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All opinions in Tayside Quaker are those of the individual writers and not necessarily of The Religious Society of Friends.
Editorial

Unfortunately I have not had space to include all of the contributions to this issue. If you intend to write something for Tayside Quaker please let me know in advance if you can, it makes planning easier.

The front cover was chosen to remember a much loved Friend Margaret Berwick, a member of Perth Meeting, who died in March. It is a picture of the bus shelter at Bottomcraig (near Balmerino, Fife). Margaret wrote in 2019: Gandhi waiting for the bus has become something of a local tourist attraction. A local artist, who prefers to remain anonymous, chose the figure less for his spiritual inspiration than because the ‘lotus’ position avoided the challenge of drawing seated legs. However Gandhi and his quotations are the cause of much interest and discussion among bus passengers and it is not unknown for drivers new to the route to stop for him.

Peter Cheer

Experiment with Light

Experiment with Light has been practised in St Andrews since 2011 when Friends attended a workshop in Dundee on EwL. From there interest was shown and a group was established in St Andrews. There were Friends from Dundee, Aberdeen and St Andrews. Through the years this group has had Friends who came to experience and benefit from this practice. Some have stayed and others have moved on – all in all it has been a very positive tool in helping us look more deeply at our spiritual journeys, recognising each of us can be at a different stage, seeking answers that will build on our knowledge and understanding. Encouraging Friends to become more open in their search and giving each of us the opportunity to develop within our Meetings both local, area and indeed nationally. Developing a sense of deeper community.

This practice can be done individually but in coming together there has developed a deeper wish to explore and experience our spiritual journeys.

During this really challenging period of pandemic our meeting in St Andrews was temporarily put to one side. We hear too often about the negative aspects of the pandemic but the Light shone bright and Perth Meeting who had formed an EwL group arranged to continue with the help of zoom. Perth invited St...
Andrews and then when interest was shown, Dundee aqlso joined. In October 2021 we began meeting and worshiping together with EwL In February 2022 East Scotland Area Meeting agreed to support an area wide group enabling all three Meetings to come together. We continue on the 1\(^{st}\) Sunday of the month at 10.30am which at present is supported by all attendees. Perth LM remain responsible for the zoom hosting with all members participatting in leading the group. This has given members further insight into the several meditation choices which has brought a sense of recognising the benefit of different takes usually with an introduction. We are all afterall individuals with individual needs and thoughts. Diversity brings a richness that when shared grows and reaches out. It is like running water feeding thirsty plants.

*Busa Cochrane-Muir, Edith Harding*

**Perth in stitches**

![Tapestry panel showing bridges over the River Tay](image)

The result is a beautiful tapestry panel showing the bridges over the River Tay and depicting some of the interests and activities found in and around Perth. Stitches were contributed by:

- Liz Grant, Provost
- Colin McMahon, Chief Executive, Horsecross
- Dylan Easton, first team player for St Johnston, now plays for Air-drieonians
- Representatives from Scone Palace, the Black Watch and Perth Museum

Members of the public were also able to add a stitch while the tapestry was on display in the AK Bell Library. For two weeks people came from the local area to add their stitch. From people who had never used a needle to experts from an Embroiderer’s Guild – from children from a local primary school to people
who thought they would never stitch again due to failing eyesight. The plan for this panel had always been for it to be put on permanent display in Perth where it can be enjoyed for many years. Now that it’s complete, the finished tapestry is exclusively available to view for contributing bodies

Adwoa Bittle

Book of Discipline Revision Committee – update March 2022

The committee met again by zoom at the end of January this year

Our clerks gave a report to Meeting for Sufferings last December, which was well received [and prompted an Area Meeting to invite us to talk to them]. We began considering what part we wanted to play in the ‘special interest groups’ [now re-named Faith in Action] in the days before Yearly Meeting in May – something I’m very happy to hand over to others, as I’ll be representing you at the Church of Scotland General Assembly at that time. It is hoped to present sessions bringing Friends up to date on our work so far, inviting creativity around our work, and outlining what we are doing with the submissions we have already received.

Reviews into aspects of our central governance structures will inevitably impinge on the work that we are doing on church government [how we do things]. Several of our ‘task groups’ gave reports of their progress. The Communicating with Friends group is working on creating clear guidelines for our visits to Quaker groups – both for the inviters and for those committee members doing the visits. A visit to an Area Meeting was made in February: two more are due this month and group members are working on sessions to present at BYM. The Tagging group is continuing its work on submissions already received [around 750 so far].

At the moment, most of our work is on Church Government, where we need to demonstrate the unity of our Quaker practice. When we work on other sections we will want to show the rich diversity of our Quaker experience.

We began to look at when and how we might start sharing text that we have written. Up till now only the Trusteeship and Charitable Status group has involved non-committee people with their work – seeking the advice and
understanding of a few relevant individuals. In the future we will want to share more widely some of our writing, beginning with [we hope] submitting sample draft text to Meeting for Sufferings in December.

In small groups we shared our experience of Membership and what it means to us. This enables us to get to know each other better – especially those members appointed after lockdown began, who have not had the opportunity to meet any of us in person. Sharing our thoughts once we were all together again gave us useful material for when we return to working on the topic – but we wondered how representative our thoughts are of the Society as a whole.

I leave you with the Key Messages from the committee, with a reminder to look out for the BDRC sessions in the week leading up to BYM 2022.

We continue to liaise with the various review groups of BYM central governance, so as to inform our relevant church government text.

We are developing the ‘voice of the book’. There are some sections where we need to show unity of practice and others where we want to represent diversity of experience.

We have looked at all of the 750 plus submissions sent by Friends so far to understand the range of contributions. We thank everyone who has made suggestions. There’s still plenty of time to send more ideas and you can do this here https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/ (or email qfp@quaker.org.uk)

We are looking forward to BYM 2022 and will be offering Faith in Action sessions to share about our work so far – more information coming soon.

Thank you for your interest in our work, and your prayerful support without which the task would be so much harder.

Mary Woodward
One never knows what adventure lies ahead. Area Meeting continues on zoom.

Our opening reading was taken from Advices & Queries 22 which encourages openness and the upholding of our journeys in life. To be understanding and forgiving of others remembering each one of us is a unique precious child of God.

The receipts and payments accounts were received and accepted. There had been little expenditure on activities during the year due to COVID restrictions on in-person meetings instead using online facilities. The November 2021 Business Meeting decided to donate the savings to BYM and Dundee Friends Property Trust so that the year has ended with a small surplus in line with ESAM's reserves policy of £6,000.
Both Pam Brunt and Marion Sharkey were thanked for their work on our behalf.

The Tabular Statement 2021 was presented by Pam Apted details of which can be found in the Minutes. During the Year one Friend was accepted into membership.

Meri Goad, Convenor of ESAM's Nomination Committee spoke to the nominations report having been circulated in advance which can be found in the Minutes. At present no names have been brought forward for the posts of AM Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. This matter needs to be resolved by June 2022. Friends were reminded that the responsibility lies not just with our Nomination Committee. The challenges of our Area Nomination committee are also face by our local committees.

The death of Renie Mudie on 2nd January was recorded. Her funeral was held on Thursday 13th January at Parkgrove Crematorium Friockheim, Angus.

The Meeting agreed happily welcomed Liz Dennis into membership of East Scotland Area Meeting.
An overview of the work undertaken by the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Andrew Tomlinson and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) had been circulated prior to the meeting. Letters had been received from Andrew and co-convenors, Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett outlining the three main priority areas discerned by General Meeting:

1. The Climate and Ecological Emergency
2. Economic Justice and Land Reform
3. Peace Building, tackling Militarism in Schools.

Martin Pippard spoke of the PEWG work and encouraged friends to let General Meeting Nominations Committee know of any Friends who are particularly interested in this work of the PEWG and or any Friend who has expertise or special interest in the three priority areas. Friends were encouraged to look at information on the Quakers in Scotland website www.quakerscotland.org

Experiment with Light Group is now an Area wide group. You can find further details in a separate article in this TQ issue.

In the afternoon session Alice Curteis and Anneke Kraakman our Quaker Life representatives introduced us to the topics discussed at the two Quaker Life Representative Councils held in 2021 Alice on Diversity, sharing some key incites from a talk by a Friend relating to the lived experience of a trans woman. Anneke spoke on Living Our Beliefs in Troubled Times using the tool RESTORE. After a discussion in break out rooms, we were able to share some meaningful reflections. Anneke encouraged us to push our boundaries, take risks, move out of our comfort zones and be willing to let go, following the promptings of love in our hearts.

Buša Cochrane-Muir
Meeting for Sufferings 4th - 6th March 2022 At Friends House, London and online

God comes to us in the midst of human need, and the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response. Quaker faith & practice 23.48

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) took place over three days in March with around 40 Friends, including myself, attending in person and the remaining representatives attending online. At Sufferings in December, we’d been reminded of how living in community is a vital part of our spiritual lives, and our March Meeting was an opportunity to sense more of the spiritual heart of this new Sufferings community that I was now a part of. Undoubtedly, the blending of online and in person attendance poses particular demands, especially in terms of the online Friends not simply being onlookers, and there sometimes seemed a disparity between the two presences. One of the most dynamic elements of the weekend for me were the small Saturday afternoon discussion groups when Friends spoke refreshingly and deeply, exploring together how we might make MfS simpler, more inclusive and more sustainable.

Much of this meeting’s business focused on developing church structures fit for the next generation, and on how we organise ourselves as a worshipping community: we heard from our Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, and from the Trustees working on simplification, as well as from the group reviewing Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering (YM/YMG). In this consideration there was a strong theme of ensuring that there was good coordination between all of these and of course, with the revision of Quaker Faith and Practice. It was agreed that the remit and membership of the group looking at YM/YMG should be expanded to include the review of MfS, addressing issues of accountability and transparency, with an aim of reporting to YM in 2023.

When we look at our past we can see the length of time needed for transformation. We are a small church with the pretensions to change the world. But first we have to let God change us – to empower us to be better Friends, and more active in our own work. We should not be creating structures to work for us, but empowering each other to do the work laid on each of us. However we
plan ... the Spirit is unchanging and will always lead us... All is interconnected, worship with action, wisdom with love.

We must look to our meetings, to our love for each other, and our corporate discipline. We must look to ourselves, to speak of our lives and to let our lives speak. Above all we must look to the Truth. We have an Inward Teacher who teaches, guides and commands us. When we know what we have to do, how to do it will come. Q f&p 29.02

We’d heard this passage read in our Friday evening opening worship, and certainly throughout the weekend there was a heartfelt desire expressed in ministry that we make more time for discernment through worship, for listening to an Inward Teacher.

One specific matter came up for Area Meetings (AMs) to address - in response to our growing understanding of the hurt felt from the historical connotations of hierarchy and oppression, we have all been encouraged to experiment with alternative terms to 'overseer'. AMs are asked to send minutes with details of the progress made on this by the end of the year, within the wider context of our responding to racism, which is a key theme for Quakers in Britain.

We met at a time when major armed conflict has arisen again in Europe, and the agenda was changed at short notice to allow Friends to reflect on the crisis in the Ukraine. During Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning we heard prepared ministry from Oliver Robertson, Head of Worship and Witness at Friends House, and his offering is printed in full in TQ. The worship that followed bubbled over with contributions from Friends near and far, until an elder thankfully asked us to pause and join together in holding the silence.

Barbara Davey    St Andrews Meeting

This is a brief note, a fuller account was given in The Friend March 11th and 18th 2022. Friends wishing further information are referred to the BYM website: (https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes) and you are welcome to contact Barbara Davey, East of Scotland representative.

barbaradavey52@hotmail.com
Those who have known me long enough, are aware that over the Forty plus years I have been associated with Dundee Meeting, I have been involved in what one might call “Religious Reconciliation”

I was one of the founder members of “Dundee Inter-faith Association” which has evolved into “Faith and Belief Dundee”. I have represented, these local groups on the national body now named “Inter-faith Scotland”

I was asked by Area Meeting if I would represent them at an upcoming conference held at Woodbrooke by QCCIR (Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations).

I was happy to do that, but had (because of my deteriorating mobility) to be amongst the thirty or so others who participated by Zoom – there were about an equal number in person at Woodbrooke for the Conference

So I went expecting to discuss issues surrounding Quakers and their involvement with people and organisations of other faiths, but it was not so., hence the title

The occasion proved to be a heart-searching investigation of how and where the Religious Society of Friends stood after the Pandemic.

It was an extremely interesting and absorbing occasion, but the account that follows has little or nothing to do with Inter-faith matters, but I trust, nevertheless, you will enjoy reading about what contemporary Quakers across the UK feel about the current state of the Society

I am going to have to discipline myself to write what I hope will be a readable article, but could easily write the best part of a book about it all!

Probably ninety eight percent of the attenders were aged Fifty - Sixty plus.

There is nothing wrong with this, of course, but it is an indication of who Quakers mostly are in these times. Indeed, our first speaker Alastair Mcintosh from Glasgow Meeting observed.

“It is no use in trying to elicit interest in being a Quaker from among the people among whom I live in the Govan district of Glasgow”.

Their has to be a different path.

So, to the Conference itself

After introductions and welcomes, we were broken up into groups of about seven (a Zoom group in my case), what most interestingly and compellingly came across from my group, was that most had more or less “enjoyed” the Pandemic, as indeed I did myself.

It said, in its own way, quite a bit about a Quaker life, in that people were glad
not to have to be so busy. As one lady put it:
“I closed the door and welcomed not having to do things”.
Alastair McIntosh was superb. He is an expert in Climate Change and has just written an influential book “Riders on the Storm”
What came across abundantly, is that Alastair is clearly an extremely devout Quaker, and offered several quotations from the Bible (especially the Parables) as well as expounding his ideas about Quaker Structures in traditional Quaker language –Discipline, Convincement, Discernment, etc
His final words on leaving us on the Saturday morning were - holding up a paperback copy of Luke’s Gospel:
“Get a read of this. He’s good on Women”
I look forward to meeting him “Post-Pandemic”. He certainly speaks my own language!
Another major theme at the Conference was to what extent the Quakers, in their practical concerns, were leaving behind their Spiritual Heritage
Let me begin by saying I found myself in the First Lockdown with only (at home) a single copy of “Advices and Queries”, but the 1967 or so edition. During Lockdown I joined a Bahai “Food for the Soul” gathering at 10 am each Sunday morning, and during these sessions quoted frequently from this copy. That edition differs from our current edition, what I discerned was its greater emphasis on the Spiritual Life.
Another point that was made during the Conference, related to one I myself experienced a few years ago attending a Quaker Meeting in Jesus Lane Cambridge, when someone proclaimed we are not “The Society of Friends but the “Religious Society of Friends”
I happen to agree with this, as it would appear many others at this Conference did. More than one person referring, during the Conference, to the words and work of George Fox. It would be difficult, to describe George Fox as anything other than spiritually motivated
You will gather from these observations that this Conference was, in general, committed to maintaining the spiritual heritage of the Quakers.
Another major theme was the Zoom factor – its benefits and disadvantages. Some Meetings have been bifurcated by it – some people taking it in their stride and others wanting nothing to do with it. The telling word “Conflict” cropped up on more than one occasion – people actually falling out over it. I am not aware that anything as extreme as this has occurred in the Dundee Meeting, and - I trust – in none of our other Area Meetings.
I think, a summary of Zoom at the Conference would be that “It’s better than nothing”. Those of us who could not travel to Woodbrooke, are grateful for
the technical wonder that is Zoom. For someone like us - No Zoom no Conference!

Another Conference theme was “Are Ends also Beginnings”? For myself, I cannot remember how many times in my life I have quoted TS Eliot’s axiom: “In my beginning is my End”

So, what point was the Conference making on this? Namely:
Is the way the Pandemic has affected the way we have conducted our Meetings for hundreds of years, the beginning of something new?

A second speaker, Alex Wildwood, is in no doubt that traditional Quaker structures need to change, and thus engaged more or less head-on with the notion of the earlier speaker, Alastair McIntosh, who spoke of Quaker structures being a “Trellis” around which the vine of Quaker belief and practice may grow to produce its own sort of fruit.

It has to be said that this notion of the “Trellis” took hold, and was frequently invoked during the Conference, rather than Alex Wildwood’s undoubtedly engaging and somewhat iconoclastic presentation, but overall, however, the whole discussion of Quaker structures and their current value was a major recurring theme throughout the Conference.

So, as you might expect, Eighty Quakers discussing a topic did not come to a definitive conclusion. but – I discern overall – that whilst we all loved Alex Wildwood’s enthusiasm and charm, most seem to favour Alex McIntosh’s notion of “The Trellis”

Another theme was Outreach. It’s no use trying to get the “Govan Folk” (as Alastair McIntosh put it) on our side, but we are who we are, and as an interfaith activist, I think we can move forward with love and appreciation that others share some of our beliefs but not all of them, and share what is important. I have mentioned, for example, the fruitful relationships I have developed with the Bahai Community. This is an easier assignment, I have found, than working with some other religious groups, but as Peacemakers, we must do the best we can. Along with Outreach, Alex Wildwood also introduced the notion of “Inreach” Looking at Ourselves.

That is what this Conference turned out to be, I hope this brief summary gives a sense of what we were here for, and an idea of some of the things that we - in our Area and Local Meetings – need to address for the future. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me at kenriley3@juno.com If you feel you want to discuss more. Thank you for the invitation to join this Conference.

Ken Riley
This is something Margaret Berwick wrote in 2012, which didn’t quite make it into Tayside Quaker. Margaret was always concerned about the climate crisis and sustainability issues. In the succeeding decade the world has moved on, but Margaret’s story is still of relevance.

On the road to Golgotha Jesus sat in his twin-seat biodiesel car. Its ethically emission-free engine laboured under the weight of a large timber cross tied on the roof rack. As Jesus changed down gently he hummed the tune of 'To be a Pilgrim' and smiled at Simon Peter who sat next to him trying not to worry about the noise coming from the protesting engine as it struggled up the Mount of Olives. It was a good club they'd formed, Andrew, Peter, James and the rest. Under Jesus' leadership they'd set up their own fuel pump – living bio-diesel produced, and very good value at £1.30 a litre.

True it was just for club members at the moment but they were publicising its benefits and one day most of the cars in Jerusalem would be running on it. They would feel proud of their efforts to promote 'sustainability'. Wasn't that the message Jesus had shown them with the loaves and fishes – share it out and there'll always be enough? He'd approved of the bio-diesel chip fat too; looked a bit sideways when tubby little Zacchaeus had come in for his third fish supper that Sabbath. Still, it helped to keep the car going and at least Mr Z was more honest than all those lycra-clad Pharisees riding their bikes with holier-than-thou expressions as they pedalled past the struggling donkey carts. Soon they were approaching Gethsemane and there seemed to be gridlock ahead. Several Roman constables were talking into their radios and some had tear gas canisters at the ready. There were tents in the road and a banner had 'Occupy' painted over its original sign, 'Hosanna'. Jesus and Peter tried to drive on – they were in ecological transport after all. This was "green and peaceful motoring" wasn't it? But some of the young campers protesting against corrupt mega-companies, saw the baulk of wood on the roof-rack and realised what great fuel it would make on their camp-fire. As they seized it, baton wielding Romans were pulling Jesus out onto the road and demanding his driving licence and MOT certificate. Unfortunately these had already been confiscated by the Sanhedrin so the Romans quickly impounded the little car, still with over 50 miles worth of bio-diesel in its economical tank.
"See how sustainable you are now," they jeered, "get walking." Poor Peter was terrified and thought he’d forfeit his fishing gear if he got arrested, so he ducked away among the trees. The last he saw of Jesus was a tall ragged figure plodding sadly up the hill joined by two homeless beggars vainly trying to sell their 'Big Issues'. Jesus couldn't quite believe how easy it was suddenly to achieve zero emissions. But the car question would certainly remain very troublesome.

Margaret Berwick

Together with Refugees

On March 21st St Andrews LM’s Sanctuary and Migration group joined up with two student organisations for a colourful event on Castle Sands. We were taking part in a national campaign coordinated by #TogetherWithRefugees to encourage MPs to make changes to the Nationality and Borders Bill (aka the Anti-Refugee Bill). MPs were to vote the following day on the Bill’s third reading.

We stood round a heart drawn in the sand displaying messages such as ‘No human being is illegal’, ‘Offshoring is inhumane’ and ‘How we treat refugees shows #WhoWeAre’. The idea was to gain as much publicity as possible for the overall message that we welcome refugees – all refugees - and nationwide that was achieved. However very few Tory rebels voted to uphold a number of important amendments that had been made by the House of Lords, and the Bill is just as inhumane as ever. By the time you read this it will probably have become law as it stands. We can only hope that the enormous resistance to this legislation among opposition parties and in the nation as a whole will bear fruit in as yet unknown ways.

Alice Curties
Save the Date!!
For: East Scotland Area Meeting
When: Saturday 7th May 2022
Where: Dundee Quaker Meeting House and on zoom
Time: 10:30am – 12:45pm (approx.)

Dear Friends,
I am writing to invite you all to our next area meeting on Saturday 7th May. This will be our first ‘blended’ area meeting and we are extremely grateful to Dundee meeting for their support in organizing this. This means that we will be able to have some Friends attending in-person and others joining on-line. This will be quite a learning curve for us, but great that things are moving forward and that we are able to explore new ways of meeting together. We are aware that Covid is still prevalent in the community and we will need to work within the current recommendations, including restricting our numbers, but I hope it will be a positive experience for all. The agenda and papers will be sent out prior to the meeting, with guidelines for those attending in person and the zoom link for those joining on-line.

Our area meeting will start with a period of quiet worship as we uphold all those caught up in the tragic war in Ukraine. This will be followed by a presentation from Andrew Tomlinson, the Parliamentary Engagement Officer. We are delighted that Andrew can join us. Andrew will speak about reviewing the priorities for the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and also specifically about hopes and plans for peace education. Andrew has drafted a Peace Education Advocacy strategy which will be circulated with the agenda. Our business will include our Trustees reports and accounts and much more.

I do hope you can join us, in person or on zoom, all are most welcome!

In friendship,
Pam Apted
ESAM clerk
News from Local Meetings

Our Discovery evening was held on zoom at the end of January when Alice Curteis gave a presentation on her experiences of the cultural life of Nicaragua entitled “Nicaragua: Reflections on the culture, history and why it is hard to get at the truth”. Having made many visits to Nicaragua Alice was able to paint a vibrant and at times turbulent picture that gave Friends a broader view of the country. It generated many questions and comments and enabled us to have a fuller understanding.

At the end of January it was agreed that the Meeting would stop zoom Meetings for Worship on Sundays and offer MfW on Thursdays and Sundays in the Meeting House. However it became apparent that there were those Friends who still had concerns about returning to the MH. It was therefore decided to continue zoom MfW on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month. The Children and Young Peoples MfW continues on the 1st Sunday each month. On the other Sundays Friends were invited to join Dundee LM, Perth LM or Woodbrook which have blended Meetings and contact details were provided.

Joyce Taylor had drawn our attention to a project “Trees for Life” which is being carried out on the Dundreggan Estate in the Highlands on rewilding Scotland and aims to provide more and better quality opportunities for visitors. A Visitor’s Centre is planned to open in 2023. It was agreed at a recent Business Meeting for Worship to go ahead and a recent donation enabled St Andrews Meeting to purchase 41 trees and it is hoped that this will be the start of Friends within the Meeting joining in and donating the planting of trees as means of celebrating events. It is known as the The St Andrews Quaker Tree Grove.

Elders had chosen another book to read and then for Friends to meet in the MH to discuss the Booker Prize Winner, Bernadine Evaristo's book “Girl, Woman, Other” which follows twelve characters of different ages from diverse backgrounds, some of whom cross paths. Their lives were journeys of discovery in an unfamiliar Britain. Much discussion was generated including gender, race and poverty, enlarging our understanding.
Perth meeting continues to have blended meetings and to welcome Friends from near and far who can attend by Zoom. In March a number of Perth Friends joined in a march for peace in Ukraine, joining members of the public and other faith groups in a march through Perth.

Friends in both Perth and St Andrews Meeting are mindful of Margaret's expressed wishes not to mark her death with a funeral or memorial meeting. We are led nevertheless to give thanks for the life of a dear Friend, and have decided to donate trees to the "grove" the Meeting has already set up through Trees for Life.

Friends across AM are warmly invited to join us in this, if they so wish. The cost of a single tree is £6. To discuss how best to make a donation, please contact Joyce Taylor
joyce.taylor650@gmail.com

Trees for Life is a charity working to rewild the Highlands by enabling the restoration of the globally unique Caledonian Forest which once covered much of Scotland.
https://treesforlife.org.uk/
The website is really lovely and has a wealth of information about the work that they are doing, growing seedlings, planting, encouraging wildlife and opening a visitor centre.

QLRC Gender diversity and inclusion

For your comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis
Gender diversity and inclusion

Last year both Quaker Life Rep Council (QLRC) and Yearly Meeting focused on justice, equality and inclusion. This theme included acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people into our communities. For my part I attended QLRC online as representative for East Scotland Area Meeting in April 2021 and - more recently - I spoke at Area Meeting on February 12th. At ESAM I passed on some of what I had heard at QLRC in a talk by Yvonne Estop-Woodon the topic of ‘Accepting gender diversity in our meeting and in wider
society’.
In this longer piece I’ve tried to capture more of the key elements of Yvonne’s talk so that readers of Tayside Quaker can learn, as I did, something of a trans person’s lived experience, and how to work towards acceptance of trans people in our communities. Yvonne kindly sent me the transcript to her talk and in some places I have quoted directly from what she said.
Our Quaker testimony of equality requires us to be inclusive of everyone. Each of us is unique, precious, a child of God: A&Q 22. As with other kinds of diversity, this may not be easy in practice. Yvonne acknowledged the difficulties, given that for some there will be barriers to acceptance. She suggested ways to move through the discomfort and to engage in the issues. This is essential work for Quakers because there are transgender Quakers, whether we are aware of them or not, and there are trans people who might find a spiritual home in Quakers.
A trans person knows that the person they are doesn’t fit well with the biological sex they were born into. It’s currently thought that about 1% of the population have this experience. Until recently it’s been more or less taboo to challenge the expectation that our gender and our sex must match and be either male or female. So it can be very isolating to know that you don’t fit this expectation. It can take years to come out; families and friends can be shocked and rejecting. You’re condemned to living with a complex paradox that wider society can’t accept.
To live truthfully involves being able to move away from society’s expectation towards your personal truth—very hard to do while facing discrimination, bullying and rejection. The support of a spiritual family helps.
“We do not hear much about trans and spirituality. But for something that seems so paradoxical, so disruptive, prayer, stillness and fellowship is of huge value. Self-knowledge brings us closer to the divine, even when all around there is argument and rejection. Faith helps. Many faith groups reject trans, just when the trans person might come closer to God’s love.”
At this point there may be a tendency to say ‘Yes that’s all very well, but ….’ because of the troubling issues around gender diversity that we hear a lot about. Yvonne suggests adopting the habit of saying ‘Yes, and …’ instead of ‘Yes, but ….’ so that we have a chance to hear more and keep talking, and so we can discuss and explore any of the concerns we may have without them becoming barriers to acceptance. For example ….
“Yes, and there is a trend, a culture around transgender, the numbers of people saying they are trans or non-binary have gone through the
roof. Support groups formed when trans was secretive, helped trans come out of the shadows, and campaigned for respect. This advocacy seems to have become an ideology that encourages people into medical pathways.”

Yes, and a male entering a woman’s realm carries male privilege, doesn’t know what it’s been like to grow up as a girl, and hasn’t experienced the sexism. Yes, and I’m afraid of bringing these things up in case I get trolled and accused of being a bigot and transphobic.

These were just some of the ‘Yes, ands….’ that Yvonne acknowledged in the hope that differing viewpoints can be expressed and listened to.

In the next part of her talk she put gender diversity into perspective in relation to a number of these complex and sometimes competing issues. For example, that discrimination against trans people is awful but that discrimination against ordinary women worldwide is worse because it’s universal.

For me, the most striking of these calls to put trans issues into perspective is this one:

“ It is an absolute disaster that there is a war of words between women and transwomen. This distracts us from trans inclusion, and distracts from the overwhelming issues of women’s rights and equality. In this war of words the only winners are unreformed men and patriarchal institutions – and that includes the faith establishment. It is not naïve or idealistic to work together for reconciliation. Quakers can do that, we have the means to find truth rather than consensus. It is what we as Quakers have to do.”

And this brings us to the final point - that Quakers should be trying to give unquestioning acceptance to trans people who are already in our meetings or who may find their way to us expecting and hoping for a welcome. Each and every one of us needs and wants to feel safe, welcomed, respected and valued. So we do know what this means, especially if we ourselves have ‘come out’ for some other reason such as being lesbian or gay, having a chronic illness or an addiction, being mentally unwell, or having suffered abuse. We know that being accepted includes being heard and believed, being listened to and included, and not being judged by appearance.

Alice Curties
Friends, let us hold in the Light the people of Ukraine. Let us hold in the Light the people of Russia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Afghanistan. Let us hold in the Light the people of Ethiopia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Myanmar. Let us hold in the Light those affected by conflicts we have forgotten or have never even heard of, because the consequences of war will scar lives just as they are doing in Kyiv. Let us hold in the Light the people working for peace. Let us hold in the Light the people who are not.

Prayer can be a great comfort, and a powerful spur to action. But what will comfort us and what will comfort others may be very different. We need to hear the voices of people affected by today’s wars, so that their lived experience can help us better understand how God is leading us in that situation. But whose voices are we hearing? Pay attention to the news you notice and the events that move you, as it can be a window into your priorities and your prejudices.

So how do we connect with people living close to armed conflict? During worship last weekend, one meeting put up on their walls the names of Russian and Ukrainian peacemakers. Many Friends have joined the online meetings for worship of Quakers in Kyiv, and of Friends House Moscow, which has been quietly building peace since the end of the Cold War. Whose voices should we be raising up? Which stories should we be challenging?

Oftentimes taking a pacifist stance, of faithfully maintaining ‘our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ’, is itself a challenge to a dominant narrative. Its value is often to remind people that there is another way, that even when war may seem the only answer there is still a choice and an alternative.

That alternative is not passivity. Friends and others have long experience of nonviolent resistance. People may nonviolently demonstrate, as thousands of Russians have been this past week, and being arrested for it – including children. People may refuse to support occupiers, both passively – such as not
going to work – and actively – such as damaging the weapons they are forced to make. Many of the most powerful acts of nonviolent resistance manage to both challenge the oppressive action and assert the humanity of everyone involved. When Syrian protestors gave flowers and water to soldiers, it showed both that they were not a threat (so making it harder to shoot them) and meant that the soldiers could see them as people like themselves. Such actions are not about victory over an enemy, but about turning an enemy into a friend.

One of the ways Quakers have often acted on our conviction that we are all God’s children, that everyone has value and worth, is to support the people shunned by others. This can be about practical support, and it can also be about reminding the rest of the world that these are people too.

When I think of the people who may be shunned, I think of conscientious objectors. It will take some considerable courage to be a conscientious objector to military service today in Russia and in Ukraine, though for different reasons. Quakers have long upheld the right to refuse to kill; how can we support those who are holding firm to that stance even in the most trying circumstances? Would we support COs who come to Britain? If we didn’t, are we confident others would?

When I think of people being shunned, I think of those people fleeing Ukraine who are not white. People of colour in Ukraine, students from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, have been reported to have been hampered or attacked as they tried to flee, denied support and accommodation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries because they are not Ukrainian. How can we support them, and in so doing uphold the notion that all refugees should be treated equally?

And when I think of people being shunned, I think of Russians around the world. It’s probably very lonely being a Russian in a lot of countries right now. Are we helping to ensure that any outrage over the Russian government’s actions does not turn into hatred of all Russians, those with no links to the government, no influence over its actions?
Many of us may be feeling, that’s all well and good, sharing stories and holding in the Light and so on, but what can we actually DO? How can we stop the bloodshed or at least mitigate its impacts?

We may be able to give money, to give time, to offer hospitality, to undertake relief work, to use our resources and our riches as individuals and as communities. But the reality is that the role we can play from here in Britain, at this time of war, may be more limited than we would like. Friends may be familiar with the hourglass model of peace work, where there is space before war and after war to carry out many actions for peace, but at the time of conflict itself, where the hourglass pinches in the middle, there is very little opportunity.

There can sometimes be a temptation to think of what great thing we can do, on a par with the times past when Quakers organised the Kindertransport or advised the Russian Tsar. But those things could only happen because of groundwork being done, relationships being built, for years beforehand. Have we built the foundations we need for such work today? Has someone else, so that our role is to support? We aren’t necessarily called to be amazing. We are called to be faithful.

One of the things we can get from our faith and our long-established testimony against war is a clear vision of the world we want to see, the divine commonwealth that God is calling us to live in. Some of the greatest strides towards that world have come after very dark times. What are the changes that are needed? What work do we need to do now to clear the way for such changes to happen? What are the existing institutions and practices that need to be celebrated and maintained, even if they are imperfect? What would need to happen for Russia’s neighbours not to see it as a threat? What would need to happen for a military alliance in Europe to feel unnecessary?

As Paul Parker was quoted last month, “war today is the failure of yesterday that leads to unimaginable human suffering on all sides. Imagine what could happen if we were willing to invest as much in peace as we currently do in preparing for war.”

Just imagine Friends. Then let us get to work.
Prepared ministry from Oliver Robertson, Head of Worship and Witness at Britain Yearly Meeting

TPNW Review rescheduled

The review meeting of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna was postponed because of Covid and will now take place in June. Details are still being worked out for attendance in person or remotely, so keep an eye on https://www.icanw.org/tpnw_first_meeting_of_states_parties_june_2022

18-19 June: Civil Society Meeting

ICAN will be organizing a civil society conference scheduled on 18th - 19th June ahead of the government meeting. The meeting will bring together hundreds of ICAN campaigners and others from around the globe - both in Vienna and online. The Forum will be held at the Aula der Wissenschaften, in central Vienna with capacity for up to 600 people. We are planning to open registration in early May. It will also be possible to participate in the forum digitally from home.

How can we live our beliefs in troubled times and how can we move forward together?

At both Quaker Life Meetings held in October 2021 and in April 2022 we have been looking at the Restore conversation. Through the pandemic all our meetings have changed. Restore is a way to support meetings and look towards an exciting future. There are seven key areas to focus on:

- Recognition of our experience of the pandemic,
- Empathy for the mixed emotions we have in response to all our experiences,
- feeling Safe,
- Trauma as a result of the pandemic, it is continuing,
- Opportunity to change what needs to be changed,
- Reconnecting after times apart,
- Engagement in our own spiritual health and Quakerism.

The areas interconnect and affect each other. I have also found it helpful to sit in a small group or on my own and move
through the key areas as a form of meditation.

Zoe Prosser Scotland's development worker holds Restore workshops with Local and Area Meetings.
contact Zoe on zoep@quaker.org.uk

Click the link to find more information about restore
https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings/restore

Anneke Kraakman Quaker Life Rep for AM
Meetings for Worship

Please note that alternative arrangements are in operation at present.

Dundee: The Meeting House, 7 Whitehall Crescent, Dundee DD1 4AR
Sundays 11.00 am
Thursdays 12.30 – 1.00 pm

St Andrews Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews KY16 9HL
Sundays 10.30 am
Children’s Meeting - each Sunday during school terms
Enquiries: Genevieve Orr (01333 360396)
Midweek Meeting, Thursdays 1.15 – 1.45pm

Perth: The Subud Centre, 7 St Leonard’s Bank, Perth PH2 8EB
Second and last Sundays of each month 10.30 am
Children’s Meeting usually last Sunday of each month
Children’s contact: Anneke Kraakman (07746 117 762)

General Meeting for Scotland

11th June 2022 West
10th September 2022 – South East
19th November 2022 - North
11th March 2023 – West.

East of Scotland Area Meeting

Saturday 7th May, Dundee
Saturday 13th August, St Andrews
Saturday 26th November, Dundee