During my visit to Finland Yearly Meeting's Spring Gathering this March I was warmly invited to attend Autumn Gathering in October. With the help of grants from the Pollard & Dickson Trust, the Francis Camfield Trust, and West Scotland AM, for which I am extremely grateful, I was able both to attend the Gathering and spend time with individual Friends in various parts of Finland.

Helsinki's worship group meets every Sunday. Sakari Oksanen had put me in touch with four of its members who were happy to meet and spend time with me during my stay in the city. Synnöve, Susanne, and Eivor are all Finns whose mother tongue is Swedish: I had deep Quaker conversations with them as they shared with me some of their favourite places in Helsinki.

Gwyndaf, who grew up Quaker in West Virginia but now lives and works in Finland, met me and piloted me to Meeting, after which we shared a wide-ranging Quaker conversation over lunch.

Meeting on Sunday was small. Synnöve, is present most Sundays, and is joined by a [usually] different small group each week. It being World Quaker Day, I was moved to minister about my joy in being able to join in worship with Friends in America, Canada, and Europe, as well as around the UK, during my twenty years as a Quaker. Afterwards, over coffee and cake, there was more wide-ranging conversation.

I then went to visit my friend Ville-Pekka and his family. I first met Ville-Pekka in 2019, at FYM and when he represented FYM at Britain Yearly Meeting in London. He is an isolated Friend whose work and family commitments mostly prevent him from attending the weekly Tampere worship group. It was a joy to share time with him and his family, and stay in his idyllic sauna house on the edge of the lake.

At the Gathering at AitO, just outside Tampere, I was warmly embraced by my adoptive Finnish Quaker family. I was honoured to be asked to serve as Elder for the Saturday’s business meeting—though I could only do it in English. The day’s business was, as usual, conducted mostly in Finnish [though non-native Finnish speakers can and do contribute in English]. Leena sat beside me and made sure I could understand what was going on. My Finnish is improving, but is as yet nowhere near the level required to play a full part in Quaker business meetings…

It was good to see the progress of various items of business I’d seen begin in previous YMs. The Finnish Quaker archive project is completing; the library project—how can its books be made available to Friends now that they do not own a flat in Helsinki? One Friend offered to scan all the hard copies of Quaker News [QN], going back decades, and add them to the Quaker archive.

The current QN editor wished to lay down the office. She gave feedback from a questionnaire sent out to gather Friends’ levels of interest in continuing or laying down the publication, and we held a threshing meeting. The need was clearly felt for some version of QN to exist, but the how and the who were not so clear…

An ad hoc group had formed around the need to assist with the funerals of several deceased Friends. Copies of memorial minutes for these Friends were collected.
Editorial

The cover photo this month is a photo taken by Anneke Kraakman during her travels in central Europe. This peace pole is in Bucharest. If you want to know more about the global peace pole movement then look at this wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_pole.

Peter Cheer

East Scotland Area Meeting August 2023

Area Meeting held on 12 August 2023

We met in Perth in an attractive new venue, the AK Bell Library, with good quality equipment to support those attending by zoom.

Our Nominations Committee had worked hard in preparation, and various names were proposed and appointments agreed. But their work is getting harder and there are still several important posts which will be vacant in January. We agreed that the committee might seek support from Friends in other parts of Scotland.

These difficulties set the scene for our deliberations on the structural changes being considered by the Options for Scotland 2 group. We readily united behind the proposal that planning for a single charity for Quakers in Scotland should continue, and that we work with Friends throughout Scotland in fleshing out other aspects of how best to organise ourselves as one body.

We recorded with sadness a number of deaths. And we happily received an application for membership, and appointed two visitors to meet with the applicant and report to a future meeting.

This led quite naturally to the next substantive item. Why do we have membership? Is it still necessary? We had been asked by Meeting for Sufferings (the representative body for Quakers in Britain) to consider these questions. They arose out of a disagreement last year as to whether non-
members could be appointed to Central Committees. In our discussion, there was strong support for the principle of membership, that it represented a visible commitment to Quaker ways and practices, and to “being Quaker in every aspect of life”. But we heard also of the need to respect all of our journeys and of the value and commitment of regular attenders. We felt that for many of our posts, willing attenders can be considered for appointment.

Next, we reflected on Quaker work with the Scottish Parliament through a report from the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group. We were pleased to hear that a new Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Sarah Komashko, has been appointed and that she is already busily at work on a range of issues including the climate crisis, peacebuilding and children’s rights.

Much detailed work was done last year at General Meeting level on creating an updated model policy on Safeguarding. We were happy to adopt the policy, which spells out the procedures to follow if concerns arise over the safety of a young person or an adult at risk. The new policy can be found on our website https://www.quakerscotland.org/east.

After a full session, we closed with some admin details in time for lunch. Thanks were given to our hard-working clerks Pam Apted and Alice Curteis, who had worked under challenging conditions (one in the room and one on zoom) but who retained their equanimity throughout.

Next Area Meeting will be on 2nd December in St. Andrews.

Robin Waterston
Thank you for the opportunity to attend shindig this year, I loved getting to see everyone again. This year I travelled to shindig on the train with friends which was something new for me as I’ve never really travelled anywhere far without parents, it wasn’t as scary as I thought it would be though, I really enjoyed the train there and back and being able to speak to people before we got to Ackworth. For dorms this year I roomed with Emily and Gaia, me and Emily decided we were going to room together months before shindig and then we asked Gaia to room with us as well and it was really fun. This years theme was ‘building communities’ which I found really interesting to talk about, it was good to chat about the different communities everyone is involved in (excluding shindig) and also what about shindig makes us such a great community. On Tuesday we had Mrs Zadie who came in to speak to us about managing communities, the main focus on the talk was about how it can be easy to start a community but keeping that community going can be quite a challenge. We also learnt about S.O.A.R which is an acronym used to handle disagreements within communities. We were taught to evaluate the strengths, opportunities, aspirations and resources, after this talk everyone felt readily equipped to take pm any challenges that building a community might throw at us. For our trip is on Wednesday I decided that I wanted to go to York again with most of my friends, even though the weather was horrendous we still made the most of it and had a brilliant time. At shambles market I bought 4 rings and a plush for my friends birthday which was a success in my eyes, after lunch we all met up at the cathedral to perform the yearly Hokey Cokey in the rain and a few tourists stopped to watch us before we all left to enjoy the rest of our trip. I’m really happy that I got to attend shindig this year, it gives me the opportunity to see the friends I made last year who live too far away for
me to visit. Overall I had a really good time and I’m glad I made the most of it, I’m already excited to maybe be going back next year.

Sue Holland Smith
Perth Meeting

Meeting For Sufferings October 2023

I attended Meeting for Sufferings as one of the two designated Friends from East of Scotland.

This was held over the weekend of 6-8 October 2023 in Leeds and also via Zoom. I attended Via Zoom. This was my first Meeting for Sufferings, and to be honest I had prepared myself for dutifully sitting through some boring bits, but found the whole weekend quite riveting and uplifting. The quality of the discussion was excellent throughout. Looking forward to going in person the next time.

Of the reports from various Area Meetings the one from Wales was particularly relevant to us as they have recently taken the step we are considering: having just one Area Meeting for the whole of Wales. They were very happy with how this was going. They reported on a very wide range of activities – clearly an energetic group.

The Memorandum of Understanding that sets in writing the relationship between Britain Yearly Meeting and the Area Meetings was discussed and approved for passing on to Yearly Meetings for a final approval. This has been after about 18 months of discussion and consultation, with Area and Local Meetings all being invited to put forward their thoughts.

Another issue that has been discussed extensively is that of Quaker Membership, and this was given a good airing again. It does look like we are edging towards a new arrangement, which does away with the Member/Attender distinction but somehow retains the integrity and uniqueness of Quakers. Exactly what form that will take is still to be determined. But the feeling of gathering was that we should move forward in a spirit of adventurousness.

Norman Alm
Dundee Meeting
Perth meeting hosted the Peace at the heart exhibition at the A.K.Bell library in October, the first stop after it was displayed at the Scottish Parliament, where a Parliamentary Motion calling for more backing and training for Peace education to broaden and build on existing good practice in Scottish schools.

You can read the *Peace at the Heart: A relational approach to education* at https://quaker.org.uk/documents/peace-at-the-heart, there is also an overview of Quaker peace education work at https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/peace-education/peace-education-case
The 75th anniversary of the Declaration on 10 December 2023, is a milestone celebration called Human Rights 75. Throughout the year, the initiative seeks to increase knowledge on the universality and indivisibility of human rights, especially among young people, inspire people to create a movement of shared humanity while empowering them to fight for their rights.

For 75 years, the core ambition of the Declaration has been to infuse societies with equality, fundamental freedoms and justice. It enshrines the rights of all human beings and is a global blueprint for international, national, and local laws and policies and a bedrock of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the decades since 50 countries signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we have pushed the frontiers in medicine, technology, the environment, social and political expression, economic and labour laws, and more. Progress is a process, and we have much to build on. The Declaration reflects an agreement that equality, freedom and justice are values that drive a thriving society when everyone could experience equal access to opportunities in these domains and any of their choosing.

The Declaration is a life guide encompassing 30 articles that address rights and benefits, which have been realized by many yet outside the reach of others. These include access to education, employment, fair pay, voting rights, healthcare and more; the values of free speech,
privacy, and mutual respect irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, or religion are evinced by the Declaration.

*Human Rights 75* is an initiative whose three main goals focus on universality, progress and engagement under the leadership of UN Human Rights, together with its partners. The initiative culminates in a high-level event in December 2023 that will announce global pledges and ideas for a vision for the future of human rights.

This article is based on material from the Human Rights 75 Initiative website at https://www.ohchr.org/en/get-involved/campaign/udhr-75

Deciding what to include in Tayside Quaker can be tricky when copy dates and fast moving events make pieces on current events difficult. The world is scarred by many conflicts and climate catastrophes, made worse by human induced global warming and at the moment much of our attention is focused on Israel/Palestine. You can read a statement by Quakers in Britain on Israel/Palestine at https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/statement-on-israel-palestine.

Here is a payer from the Iona Community (https://iona.org.uk/prayers-for-israel-palestine/)

God of mercy,
we lay before you the hearts, minds and bodies
of all those suffering from violence
in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.
Shower upon all the people of this holy land
the spirit of justice and reconciliation.
And so we pray: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

In you, Lord, all life is connected
and all the Earth and its land are to be cherished, not controlled.
Your gifts are for all.
Yet as we see the violence and hatred in the land called Holy,
and see the signs of climate breakdown,
help us all to work to live in communion.
And so we pray: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.
As people of many religions remind us:
All humanity is connected, no one is really free until all are free.
Help us to pray for all in Israel and all in the Palestinian territories.
We pray for those who live in fear of the other;
For all who consider violence to be the way forward.
We pray for all who by acting in hate dehumanise themselves.
And so we pray: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

News from Local Meetings

Perth

Our major event recently was hosting the ‘Peace at the Heart’ exhibition in the AK Bell Library in Perth. The exhibition was created by Quakers in Britain and focusses on peacebuilding in schools. It was on display in the Scottish Parliament in September. Unfortunately, our slot for hosting the exhibition coincided with extreme weather conditions and the library was closed for part of the time, so visitor numbers were small. But we had some interesting conversations with library visitors and staff and some fun activities with children. We felt that, overall, it was a worthwhile initiative and we learnt from the experience, and reflected on how we might do things differently in the future. Our thanks go to Stella Cranwell who put in so much hard work organising the event.

A new Meeting for Worship now takes place in Newburgh on one Wednesday during each month. Meeting for Worship in Pitlochry continues on one Sunday each month.

Our sharing circles continue to meet, sometimes in person and sometimes using Zoom, and have reported some stimulating discussions.

The singing group before Meeting for Worship is appreciated by those who participate.

Friends who work with the children are planning some All-Age Worship Meetings; the first will be in December.

We are sorry to be losing Chris Holmes who is moving to the Isle of Arran. We wish him well in his new home.

Felicity Bryers
How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal, bear the burden of each other’s failings and pray for one another. As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other’s lives, ready to give help and to receive it, our meeting can be a channel for God’s love and forgiveness. Advices and Queries 18.

11.00 – approximately 1.00pm

Venue: St Andrews in person

Dear Friends, please come and join us in person on 2nd December for Area Meeting at the St Andrews Quaker Meeting House, 2 Howard Place KY16 9HL. The agenda and other papers will be circulated before the meeting.

Refreshments will be available from 10.30 and soup will be provided for anyone who would like to stay on afterwards to eat their lunch. Please bring your own sandwiches.

The meeting will start with a short presentation by Kate Douglas and Anneke Kraakman on the Quaker Life Rep Council they attended in October. They invite us to take part in an activity called Corks and Boulders, which Zelie Gross (author of With a Tender Hand) presented at QLRC. CORKS AND BOULDERS: a metaphor, a way of looking at how we anchor our worshipping communities.

Our business will include updates on finances, nominations and the work of Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group, with reports from Meeting for Sufferings and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group.

All are welcome – members and attenders. Please do join us!

Alice Curteis Assistant Clerk
More than ten years ago, coming to London to join the demonstrations against DSEI for the first time, I was dismayed to witness that so many young people there approached the demonstrations with an aggressive attitude. My thought was “This is not going to help our cause”! Then I met a wonderful woman who was calmly (and bravely) talking directly to the ‘customers’ as they approached the Fair.

Betty Chapman had come with her Quaker group from Norway, and we became friends- in fact she was my inspiration to become a Quaker. So the next time I travelled from my home in Portugal to join the protests against DSEI , (in 2019), I went straight to Friends House, and encountered a warm and peaceful welcome. Throughout the demonstrations, my arrest and subsequent release, I felt completely supported. I felt at home.

This year I was again able to join UK Quakers at the ExCel Centre to witness against the Arms Trade. With the prevailing positive, peaceful attitude, moving songs and testimonies together with friendly, like-minded people, I felt at home, once again.

Denise Luxton, Portugal (reproduced from Around Europe 396, newsletter of the Quaker Council for European Affairs)
Most of the world’s Quakers live in Africa. It is also the continent with the largest number of Christians in the world. The 2024 World Plenary Meeting will be hosted by the Friends World Committee for Consultation’s Africa Section and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting.

The framing for both World Quaker Day 2023 and the World Plenary Meeting 2024 uses the word *ubuntu* known and used in various countries of Africa, and originating in Southern Africa. Ubuntu refers to the recognition that ‘a person is a person through other persons’, or more succinctly ‘I am because we are’.

The unity and interdependence affirmed in ubuntu is found in scripture, for example in Paul’s teaching that “the body is not made up of one part but many” (1 Corinthians 12:14), and “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28:).

This is also reflected in Jesus’ own words. When asked what was the most important commandment Jesus replied “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one…and the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your
neighbor as yourself’. There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:28-34)."

Quakers often speak of the divine as The Light, present in the hearts of all. This follows the Gospel according to John which speaks of Christ as “the source of life, and that life was the light for humanity” (John 1:4). In this context it is interesting to note that the root ‘ntu’ in ubuntu can be taken to mean both ‘human being’ and ‘God’s being’.

The word ubuntu itself can be found in the versions of the Bible in Bantu languages. For example:

- 2 Chronicles 24:22 (“King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah’s father Jehoiada had shown him”) in isiXhosa is “Ukumkani uYowashe wabulibala ubuntu awayebenzelwe nguyise kaZakariya”.
- Jeremiah 51:10 (“The Lord has revealed our righteousness”) in isiNdebele is “USomnini uvuselele ubuntu bethu!”
- Ephesians 2:8 (“For it is by grace you have been saved”) reads in Kinyarwanda as “Koko mwakijijwe n’ubuntu”.

In addition to its other meanings, in Kirundi and Kinyarwanda ubuntu means Grace. In Burundi, ‘living ubuntu’ also means to know an inward purity that informs how you live, in such a way that others would seek to do so too.

The engagement with ubuntu theology by Friends is in part due to the resonance with the recognition of ‘that of God in everyone’ as well as the relationship with Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and sustainability. In Southern Africa’s book of Faith and Practice, called Living Adventurously (https://www.quakers.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Living-Adventurously.pdf), ubuntu is described as being rooted in the “invisible circuit of connection between us all”.

Although the origins of ubuntu reflect a local agrarian society, it is increasingly used to consider the national and international level too. Acutely aware of the violent effects of inequality and environmental degradation, Friends in South Africa are seeking to manifest ubuntu by calling for systems of clean and abundant energy. They also advocate a universal basic income.

We pray to be enabled to be partners with God and one another in bringing about the change the world needs, and to find clarity on our role within that. This will be a collective endeavour.

(reproduced from FWCC website 11/2023)
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  
Meet by Zoom at 11.00am until 12.00 noon. With MfW from 11.15-11.45am, with  
social time before and notices/news afterwards.  
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  
meet by Zoom at 11.00am until 12.00 noon. With MfW from 11.15-11.45am, with  
social time before and notices/news afterwards.  
Children's contact: Anneke Kraakman (07746 117 762)

**General Meeting for Scotland**

- 9 March 2024 - South East Scotland AM  
- 8 June - West Scotland AM  
- 14 September - North Scotland AM  
- 9 November - East Scotland AM  
- 8 March 2025 South East Scotland AM

**East of Scotland Area Meeting**

- 2nd December St Andrews  
- 10th February 2024  
- 11th May 2024  
- 10th August 2024  
- 23rd November 2024