

# Tayside Quaker

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**Tayside Quaker** is available by email and on paper. If you would like to be added to the email list, please contact the editor at [\*\*petercheer@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:petercheer@hotmail.com)

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 July 27<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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East Scotland Area Meeting

Scottish charity number SC0020698

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

## Editorial

The cover photo this month is a poster from Quaker Week 2016, with a strap line that is still relevant today.

*Peter Cheer*

## EAST OF SCOTLAND AREA LIGHT GROUP

East of Scotland Area Light Group meets online on the first Sunday of the month at 10.30 and we welcome Friends who would like to join us. For those unfamiliar with Experiment with Light see <https://experiment-with-light.org.uk> where you will find a full explanation. Put briefly, a Light Group meets to share a spiritual exercise in the form of a guided meditation. Each session follows the same basic format, which is meditation, a period of private contemplation, finishing with a worship sharing/ creative listening session. One Friend normally leads the meeting and also chooses the meditation, whilst another acts as Zoom host.

### MEDITATIONS

Rex Ambler developed Experiment with Light having examined the experience of Early Friends and studied the writings of George Fox and, from this, grew the meditations and the concept of a Light Group.

While the meditations vary in their focus, it's fascinating to observe how one's own reactions also vary from month to month even to the same meditation. There might be a word, a phrase or an image that suddenly springs into life bringing with it a deeper meaning than previously experienced. This is also true when listening to other members of the group when their experience may be very different from one's own.

Often there is a range of reactions to the meditation from those present. Sometimes reactions can be very fresh and personal, but equally it can be a time of revisiting old issues that, as yet, show no resolution. On those occasions one might set aside the minutiae and respond to the bigger sense of the meditation and the atmosphere built within the group. Such shared experience develops a depth of understanding not only of the meditations themselves but also between each member of the group. In this way the group has become a place of peace, a safe space, offering a time of rejuvenation and rebuilding one's strength.

### AREA LIGHT GROUP

Just over a year ago, we held our first review, submitting a report to the Area Meeting and to the EwL Network.

Of course, meeting online enables us to extend a welcome to Friends from across a very large geographical area and while we are indeed an Area Light Group, we actually have had members ranging from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Glasgow area, Perthshire, Fife and Aberdeenshire.

Furthermore, the very nature of a Light Group where only one person speaks at a time, and that out of the silence, means that meeting online works extremely well.

#### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are always pleased to receive new members. As an established group we now have a core of members who attend regularly, which makes it smoother for a new person to follow what happens with ease.

*Enid Harding (Perth Meeting)*

*Busa Cochrane-Muir (St Andrews Meeting)*

## Meeting For Sufferings 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

Held at Friends House and by video conference 2 March 2024.

More Friends are returning to attending in person with around fifty (including myself) at Friends House and around sixty online. The Meeting began with our Clerk Robert Card welcoming Elizabeth Allen as the new Assistant Clerk. Following the usual agenda business of membership, appointments, Quaker recognised bodies and prison and court registration, Friends then discussed a report from Church Government Advisory Group on the term "overseer". MfS had asked AMs in 2022 to cease using the term and this item concerned how this will be included in the revision of Quaker Faith and Practice.

Friends then heard from Marisa Johnson, the new Clerk of BYM Trustees. After welcoming new trustees she spoke of ongoing issues regarding trust and critical comments made against trustees by some Friends. This can be disheartening as it is felt that the main purpose of trustees was "...to deliver what Yearly Meeting deliberated on".

Marisa then introduced a confidential minute regarding the Salter Lecture organised every year by the Quaker Socialist Society. The QSS had invited Jeremy Corbyn MP to deliver the lecture during Yearly Meeting. Following discussions between QSS and Friends House staff the BYM Trustees advised Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee that the lecture should not be scheduled for during YM but could take place at another time and date and indeed at Friends House. It was felt that Jeremy Corbyn speaking during YM itself could cause unwanted publicity and distraction. ( More details can be found in the Sufferings report in "the Friend" 8 March 2024)

The main business of the day was a report from the Group to Review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings (GRYYM) . Ann Kerr, a co-convenor outlined the detailed work that has been going on since 2019. From this a core proposal was that MfS would evolve into a "continuing Yearly Meeting" meeting four times a year with one resembling the annual YM. A major aspiration of the proposals from GRYYM would be clarifying the current membership, roles and remits of YM, MfS and BYM Trustees. The report was endorsed and will be sent to Yearly Meeting in July.

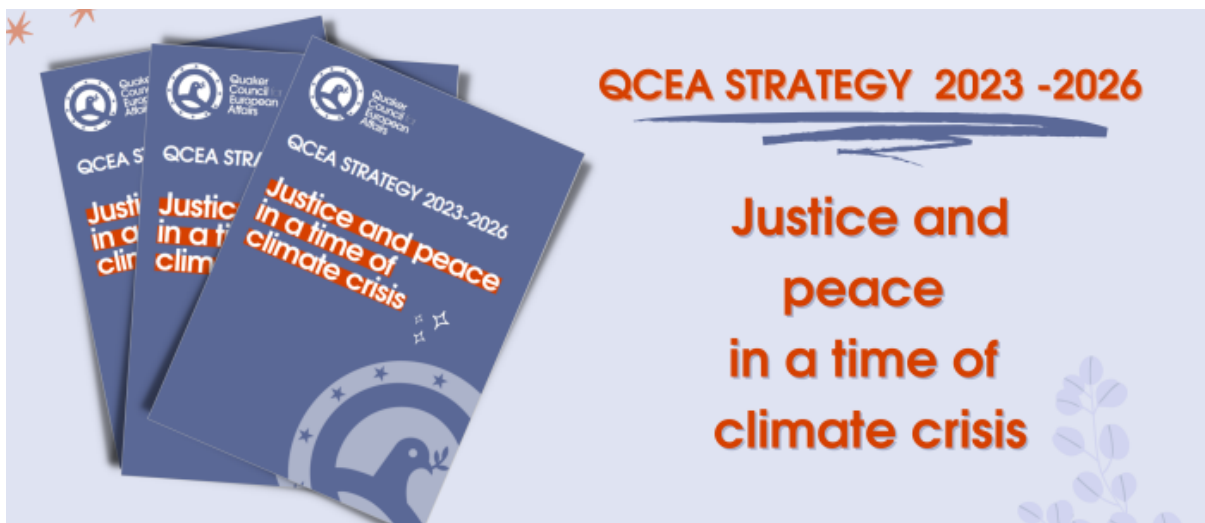
Other agenda items covered Letter of Greeting to European Yearly Meetings, Central Nominations Committee and Trustees Report.

Full minutes can be found on Quakers in Britain website and "the Friend" of 8 March.

*Robert Thompson*

*East Scotland Area Meeting representative.*

## Story Telling From the Front Lines, QCEA



Storytelling has been a crucial vehicle to build common narratives, understanding and mutual trust between and within communities throughout the centuries. Stories have the potential to create new meaning, stimulate empathy, build nuanced perspectives by countering misconceptions, and catalyse people's dreams and aspirations towards concrete community action. Yet despite its potential and documented added-value in the context of peacebuilding efforts, its application in the context of social transformation processes and policymaking remains limited.

You can read the full publication and find more resources at <https://www.qcea.org/peace/storytelling-from-the-frontlines/>

QCEA's publication *'Storytelling from the Frontlines: Forefronting the voices of communities most affected by militarism and the climate crisis'* brings a selection of stories from communities in disparate locations of the world who are united by the connecting thread of militarism and the climate crisis. Through storytellers' eyes, we see how militarisation and securitised responses negatively impact the natural environment that communities depend on to survive and thrive, as well as how militarisation hinders local efforts to tackle climate and environmental issues at the community level.

## FWCC World Plenary Meeting 2024



The Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting is a meeting for representatives from all four FWCC Sections to undertake FWCC business, surrounded by worship and fellowship with Friends from around the world. It is taking place on 5-12 August 2024 in South Africa but you can attend online. Details at <https://fwcc.world/wpm/>

## Health and Climate Event in the Scottish Parliament

(reproduced from <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/parliamentary-engagement/news/health-and-climate-event-scottish-parliament>)

Quakers in Scotland and Medact put on an event on 13 March 2024 in the Scottish Parliament to inform our elected representatives about the important links between climate and health. MSPs gathered with other guests to hear about constituents' concerns and potential solutions. This built on a Time for Reflection given in the Scottish Parliament by Lesley Morrison, a retired GP and Friend from Tweeddale, in April 2023: "Are we being good ancestors?"

The event gave MSPs the opportunity to consider that steps to mitigate the climate crisis will bring significant positive benefits not just for planetary health but for individual patient

health. MSPs were encouraged to look at all decision the Parliament makes through the lens of climate and health.

Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport Maree Todd took the time to attend and spoke about the importance that the Scottish Government places on reducing the health service's emissions and enabling Scots to live productive and healthy lives.

We heard from speakers including:

- Martin Pippard, a Friend from Dundee and a doctor, who spoke on the links between climate and respiratory disease.
- Pete Ritchie, executive director of Nourish Scotland who spoke about the impact of food and farming on health.
- Bridget Bradley, a social anthropology lecturer from the University of St Andrews, who is currently researching eco-anxiety.
- Isabelle, a young person who spoke about the impact that the climate crisis is having on young people's mental health.

There was then time for MSPs and guests to ask questions and have a discussion with the health professionals present.

Guests also watched a film commissioned by *The Lancet*, looking at the Carbon Cost of Healthcare and what some NHS Trusts are doing to ensure that carbon costs are considered when prescribing appropriate care. Doctors see this as integral to their vocation to care for our health. This film is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nap2p4EeUQo>, and the last few minutes carry a powerful message from Lesley while she was marching with XR Medics in London.

It was great to see the engagement from MSPs in the discussion, with interventions and comments from Junior Health Minister Maree Todd, event sponsor Christine Grahame, and Maggie Chapman, with several other MSPs listening in. Maree Todd highlighted that while the climate crisis is the single biggest health threat facing all of us, in reducing our emissions and adapting to the effects of the climate crisis we have a huge opportunity to improve the nation's – and world's – health. We reflected that this message can sometimes be lost. It is important to focus on the health benefits which can come from improved environmental measures like low emissions zones, or moving away from polluting heating sources; for example, reduced chance of asthma attacks.

Doctors and medical practitioners can do so much to improve climate and health outcomes; but politicians “do health on a large scale”, with the potential to have even more impact on constituents' health by seizing opportunities to influence regulations.

MSPs were given an information pack to reinforce this message and provide resources for them to respond to their constituents' queries on the topics of climate and health. If you would like to send a copy to your MP or MSP it can be downloaded from <https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/2024.03.13%20>

[Resource%20pack%20for%20Climate%20and%20Health%20event%20-%20online%20updated.pdf.](#)

## News from Local Meetings

### Dundee

Dundee Local Meeting decided to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox by sharing what it is like to be a Quaker in Dundee today. Pastoral Friends enlisted the willing help of a Dundee Courier reporter for a feature and the whole meeting was involved.



The heading of the feature read " City Quakers still keep the faith after 400 years", giving a brief history and the testimonies of several Friends who wrote about life as a modern Quaker. They shared how they discovered Quakers, and how their everyday lives are impacted by the Testimonies and our beliefs. They spoke about the assumptions that people have about Quakers, such as "They all wear grey and are like the Amish" and " They have all died out" ! Dundee Quakers, like most other Quakers, tend to work in quiet circles but sometimes it feels right to 'Let our Light Shine'. This piece of community Outreach turned into an enjoyable and worthwhile opportunity as Inreach, reflecting on our Quaker lives, dipping into Quaker history and reviewing our lives together as a community.



*Pamala McDougall*

## **St Andrews**

T After many cold and wet days Spring is at last showing it's face with bulbs blooming and with it the real motivation to get out in the garden and start digging. St Andrews Meeting continues to recover from Friends hesitant to attend MfW and the Meeting has regained it's vigor.

And Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March we heard from Martin Williams about his Cycle Journey Dundee to Dover in memory of his son Saul. (a separate article is included)

Our Discoveries sessions have taken a new turn in that it was decided to hold the first before MfW on a Sunday to gauge how popular this would be bearing in mind how busy our lives seem to be.

We have begun reading from the "big Red Book" (Quaker Faith and Practice) and looked at chapter 10 "Belonging to a Quaker Meeting". It turned out to be a well attended meeting with one and all participating and sharing their thoughts and reflections. The atmosphere was relaxed and proved a welcome start to Sunday worship.

Our joint Elders and Pastoral Friends meetings have brought us closer together. There is an overlap between these roles and it is proving to enrich communications which is bearing fruit.

Plans are now underfoot to arrange a monthly Discoveries sharing our stories with reference to the big Red Book which is adding to our existing knowledge.

*Busa Cochrane-Muir*

## **Perth**

We welcomed Martin Williams to Perth on his cycle ride from St Andrews to Dover. During his ride, Martin is stopping at Quaker Meeting houses to raise awareness about neurodiversity, suicide and suicide prevention, and also to raise money for his campaign 'Cycle4Saul'. Martin spoke about his son, Saul, who was on the autism spectrum, and who killed himself aged 40, in 2019 while studying at Goldsmith's for a PhD in art.

A monthly midweek Meeting for Worship is now being held in Friends homes in Newburgh. Alyson Buchan continues to host Meeting for Worship in Pitlochry on one Sunday each month. The Light group, which includes Friends from other Meetings, also meets on one Sunday a month.

How to use computing equipment in our Meetings for Worship so that we can be as inclusive as possible has occupied our time and energy.

Friends have appreciated Philip Bryers' summary in our Meeting News of points from Pendle Hill pamphlet 306, Four doors to Meeting for Worship by William Taber. The first door is: Before, the second door: Inward, the third door: Within and the fourth door: The door beyond.

*Felicity Bryers*

## **Martin Williams Cycle Journey Dundee to Dover in memory of his son, Saul**

We all come with some knowledge and thoughts on two very sensitive issues, that of Autism and Suicide. Your perceptions are challenged as are your thoughts.

Martin gave a very detailed picture of those individuals suffering on the autistic spectrum, how some deal with this and the links to suicide for many people. Saul had been undertaking his PhD studies at Goldsmiths College in London aged 41 when he ended his life.



Martin explained how social interaction is so very difficult for many sufferers. Yes some are able to hide these feelings but at what cost? Feelings of being different, of loneliness, being misunderstood are crippling. It can drain the person emotionally as well as physically to mask and camouflage. They are able to hide their emotions which can remain undetected by both families, friends and colleagues. Martin was able to describe how Saul dealt with such episodes. He painted a stark picture which should encourage people to discuss such sufferings and continue to build on their knowledge, understanding and compassion.

The second half of his talk was on the incidence of suicide among neurodivergent sufferers and the stages a person can go through in questioning what their life is worth and the strength needed. The support needed to carry on and the importance of the agencies available to offer help. The incidence in suicide is significantly higher in those on the Autistic Spectrum. Resources today are so stretched that many people are neither diagnosed nor offered the help they need.

Ask yourself, as we so often do in many areas of concern “what can I do?”

Autistic issues need to be brought into the open and be talked about with family, friends, colleagues and those we come into contact with. These issues are not easy but nevertheless necessary. Listening and sharing, showing understanding not only to the sufferer but to family and friends. How we acknowledge and support people is so important.

Martin certainly gave us examples affecting his son's life and those who suffer with some degree of autism. Martin by sharing his very personal story was not only brave but gave us a memorable tribute to his son, Saul.

We wished him well as he set off from St Andrews on his cycling journey to Dover. En route he will be stopping off at Quaker Meeting Houses where he hopes to continue sharing his story.

Many Friends will already have donated to his 635 mile journey. Travel well dear Friend.

*Busa Cochrane-Muir, St Andrews*

## Personal reflection on ESAM 10<sup>th</sup> February 2024

This Meeting was held in Dundee Meeting House and on arrival I was encouraged by the warm welcome on the pavement door. First it is always a relief to know I am not late as I manage to find free parking further and further from the centre of Dundee. Why this guilt? Well, so many Friends use public transport to be more sustainable, and yes I could have managed it for free by bus taking six times longer, lurking for connections, suffering travel sickness, but not have the flexibility to combine other messages on my return home.

The seating was just beginning to fill up facing the Clerk's table and with a comfortable view of the screen for the blended aspect. I would have had time even for a cuppa too, from the trolley, but I was organised with my own bottle of water. I had time to collect myself and jot down "23 in room, Online - Aberdeen Meeting House + 4 Forres, 2 Inverness, 1 Orkney".

The opening worship and reading of Qf&p 23.12 by Harvey Gillman 1988 on Corporate responsibility, stays with me as a gentle reminder of the use of Quaker 'testimony' and core truth. I would urge anyone to read and reread and ponder on it.

I knew Sarah Komashko was timetabled early on the agenda and was not disappointed in her presentation. She covered her background which showed just how thoughtful and caring her life is, and how eminently suitable her appointment as Parliamentary Engagement Officer is. She emphasised the importance of truth and integrity running through all levels of politics and the value of the Quaker quiet diplomacy. In the evening I emailed her, as we had all been invited to, to sign up to a targeted emailing every couple of months. I have had 3 emails so far, as straightaway she had sent me the last one.

[SarahK@quaker.org.uk](mailto:SarahK@quaker.org.uk) I find this a useful one stop, brief but informative source not only of her involvement but how individually I can keep up to date with developments in the Scottish Government and legislation.

The ensuing presentations and business on the agenda was ably facilitated by the Clerks - PWEg minutes proving how much goes on; spirited pressure to sign up to STOPECOP campaign (East African Crude Oil Pipeline). The two new

Membership applications afforded much joy and insight into interests of inspirational prayer, mystic traditions, living an authentic life, community, encouragement & support to be the best you can be, treasuring safe spaces for creativity, thriving on marginal wastelands.....The possible dryness of business was kept on track by humorous corrections to procedures and wording – we all learn something new everyday!

Overall the sense of connectivity with Friends from the North, International concerns and a very well run Meeting with very hospitable local Friends have stayed with me, as we were treated to choice of hot soup and an array of home bakes even though instructions were to bring your own lunch! My own wellbeing was heightened and uplifted by splendid views from the Tay Road Bridge and the coast road home. And it turned out with an added bonus, as I had time to visit the Tatha Gallery in Newport and was treated to the late afternoon sunshine over the silvery Tay framed in one of their windows.

*Jill Tutton, Perth Meeting*

## **East Scotland Area Meeting Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand. Isaac Penington 1667. QFP 10.01.

Dear Friends, please join us in person for Area Meeting at St Andrews Meeting House. The agenda and other papers will be circulated before the meeting.

11.00 – 1.00 aprox.

Venue: St Andrews Meeting House in-person only. 2 Howard Place, KY16 9HL

Refreshments (tea, coffee, cake, biscuits) will be available from 10.30 and after the meeting. If you would like to stay on afterwards to chat and eat lunch, please bring your own sandwiches.

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

*Alice Curteis Assistant Clerk*

## **Woodbrooke programme of courses and conferences**

Dear Friends, just a reminder that we are encouraging Friends to consider attending courses and conferences and have funds set aside to support this. Please do look at the Woodbrooke programme and if interested in attending an event please discuss it with a Pastoral Friend in your local meeting .

One event coming up later in the year, in person and online is 'The Future of British Quakerism' to be held at Yorkfield Park, Staffordshire from 18th-20th October. We are pleased that we have already received interest in this event and we are keen that we have a representative there. However we may be able to consider other names, so please discuss it with your Pastoral Friend if you are interested. See:

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/the-future-of-british-quakerism/>

## 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

Meeting for worship 11.00 – 12 noon, followed by tea and coffee.

Arrangements for children on 2nd Sundays (Contact Anneke Kraakman 07746 117762 )

Occasional all age worship (on fourth Sundays in five Sunday months – check details with correspondent)

## General Meeting for Scotland

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

Saturday 11th May

Saturday 10th August

Saturday 23rd November



